



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

October 14, 2020  
REPORT OF THE TRAFFIC AND PARKING COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mark Niedergang	Chair	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Vice Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Remote	

Others present: Suzanne Rinfret-Traffic & Parking, Brad Rawson-OSPCD, Sgt. Salvatore Fusco-Police Dept, Lt. James Polito-Police Dept.

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Chairperson Niedergang and adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

**Approval of the May 13, 2020 Minutes**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED</b>
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**Safety Issues**

**209363: That the Director of SPCD discuss implementing a "Don't Block the Box" campaign to ease intersection congestion at locations along Broadway, including McGrath Highway.**

Mr. Rawson stated this order was placed in the fall of 2019 after a perfect storm of events led to horrible traffic problems on Broadway and in this location. The closure of the bridges was one of many factors that contributed to a lot of pressure with the traffic. Mr. Rawson stated he had not received complaints this fall for the McGrath Highway area. He stated that in his and Mass DOT's and state police opinion, "Don't Block the Box" is only effective when there is enforcement, and if there is enforcement, then it is not necessary. Councilor Clingan stated he believes that "Don't Block the Box" can be and has been effective in some locations and Councilor Ballantyne agreed. He added that motorist need to be educated to learn to stop on the line at stop signs.

Councilor Ballantyne stated that on Broadway and McGrath the pedestrian walk sign near Dunkin Donuts does not work. Crossing over McGrath is still a problem and she would like more discussions on this issue and other data on this issue.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**202105: That the Administration develop a process for interim crosswalk painting and/or other measures to protect pedestrians when road work or other conditions prevent the immediate re-striping of road markings.**

Mr. Rawson has spoken with the Engineering Department on this issue. He said that they are aware of the problem and agree and are now putting language in contracts with construction companies that will require them to install temporary road markings in the interim between construction and striping of streets. He stated that temporary pavement markings, including tape were used by Green Line constructors during road work. The city has not used this in the past but is now looking into various options. Going forward, paving contractors will put down some temporary markings to make it safer for residents.

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]**

**AYES:**

Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**206407: That the Director of SPCD, the City Engineer, and the Commissioner of Public Works establish a written policy for deploying temporary safety and visibility materials for the period between street re-paving and re-painting.**

See item 202105

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

### Bicycling and bike lanes

**210593: That the Director of Constituent Services and the Chief of Police discuss tracking bicycle crashes and how 311 and 911 staff are trained to handle such calls.**

Mr. Rawson stated there are 50-80 reported bike crashes per calendar year, and this number has decreased over the last few years. He also stated that some crashes are not reported. Mr. Rawson stated the city educates constituents through links on the city's website and how to connect with legal resources. It was stated that if constituents experience unsafe conditions they should call 311.

Lt. Polito stated when calls come into police department, usually an officer responds and files a report. With 911, a record of the call will be available and can be tracked. Sgt. Fusco stated that a bike accident is treated like any other emergency. The cyclist should call 911 and report the incident because the cyclist may not realize they have been injured. Councilor Ballantyne wants education of both 311 and 911 call takers so they will provide information to constituents about what to do in the event of a crash. Mr. Rawson stated that there are meetings twice a month with the Mobility team and Constituent Services and he will make sure this on the agenda for the next meeting. Chair Niedergang asked for a short email to the committee on this matter to close the loop.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**209783: That the Director of SPCD and the Chief of Police discuss what can be done to mitigate delivery trucks' use of bike lanes and cycling tracks as parking when making deliveries.**

Chair Niedergang asked who is responsible for ticketing in these situations and who should the community contact to complain. It was stated that with COVID, there seems to be more deliveries. Ms. Rinfret stated it's difficult to ticket trucks because they often only stop for a minute or two and PCOs can't be everywhere and even if there is a complaint, can't get there before the truck makes the delivery and leaves. It is the same with people getting dropped off. Complaints can be called into 311 and someone will be dispatched to the location. If the driver is asked to move the vehicle and they do not, they are issued a ticket. A question was asked about USPS parking in the bike lane. USPS trucks do not have license plates and it would be difficult to track or to write a ticket. Councilor Ballantyne asked if installing flexposts could be used to change behavior on Beacon and Cedar Streets, and other travel bike lane areas. Mr. Rawson stated that flexposts have been a very effective tool for this purpose. In the next few weeks, flexposts and plastic bollards will be installed on Beacon Street where vehicle infringement on the bike lanes has been a problem. It was confirmed to call or email 311 with complaints about parking in bike lanes, not the Police Department. Sgt. Fusco will work with T&P and suggested that the Mobility Dept educate the Beacon Street businesses about telling their deliveries to share the roadways and not block the bike/bus lanes. Mr. Rawson had previously reached out to stakeholders like mom and pops stores in Winter Hill last year to work on frequency of big deliveries in the area. Mr. Rawson will reach out to the fleets of USP and FedEx to discuss deliveries during a certain hour. He will also reach out to businesses on Beacon Street to help build relationships.

Councilor Clingan asked how much commercial parking is there in the city. Ms. Rinfret stated it varies. Some metered areas have been used for loading zones between 8-12 or 7-11 am which seems to be working out well. There will be the need for more loading zones for the new developments to get the deliveries. Councilor Ballantyne asked if the city has collected data on UPS, USPS and Amazon deliveries that go to residences vs. businesses. Mr. Rawson will work on a more complete response for next meeting regarding the collection of data. Councilor Ballantyne asked if this would fall into Mr. Rawson's responsibility to reach out to UPS, USPS and Amazon regarding how they are parking in the city. Mr. Rawson will talk to the managers of those delivery truck businesses about issues the city is facing with parking on the street, blocking the streets. Mr. Rawson stated they have done that type of work previously to try to minimize cutting through the city. He will talk with his counterparts in Boston and Cambridge to find out how they handle this matter in their cities.

Lt. Polito was asked about delivery trucks parked on Alewife parkway blocking traffic and if someone could call 911. He stated that calls to 911 would be appropriate if there is some immediate danger, otherwise to call the police business line at 617-625-1212.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**210554: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Parking work with the Ward 3 City Councilor, Riverside Community Care, and residents on mitigating the parking and traffic**

**issues associated with the new Riverside facility at 117 Summer Street.**

This item was not discussed as Councilor Ewen-Campen told the Chair that community meetings are scheduled and positive dialogue seems to be happening towards resolution of these issues.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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**206202: That the Director of Traffic and Parking share how it enforces the prohibition of cars and trucks parked in bus lanes and bike lanes.**

See item 209783

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**210500: That the Chief of Police, the Director of Parking and the Director of SPCD discuss enforcement to eliminate delivery and other vehicles from parking on the Beacon Street cycle track, in order to provide a safe biking route for bicyclists.**

See item 209783

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**Holland St. and College Ave project**

**210542: That the Director of SPCD update this Council on the plans and process for the Holland Street and College Avenue mobility improvements.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**203446: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install additional pedestrian safety measures at the intersection of Holland Street and Cameron Avenue.**

Mr. Rawson stated there has been good participation from the community in the meetings. He has walked the area speaking with residents and businesses. He said there will be curb extensions and improved sightlines to make it safer for pedestrians and people riding bikes. He also discussed parking conversions for safer bike riding. There was discussion about restricting parking in the core of Davis Square and going towards Teele Square. Mr. Rawson talked about providing all bus facilities with dedicated bus lanes and peak hours on parking in both corridors. He anticipates another community meeting in November and will bring designs to residents.

Councilor Ballantyne stated she is concerned about the intersection of Cameron Ave/Holland St, she is not sure if anything will be improved from what she has heard about the plans. There was a lot of discussion with Tufts University and others on the intersection redesign previously. She would like to speak with the team about this problem area and believes that substantial work

needs to happen to make this intersection safer. Mr. Rawson will follow up with the project manager and with Councilor Ballantyne on this matter.

Councilor Clingan talked about the repaving and redoing of sidewalks on Medford Street. He said that Mr. Rawson had described both that project and the Holland St/College Ave project as “book jobs,” but the reality was very different for the two projects. For Medford Street, there were no community meetings, no public discussion about how to make the street safer and better for all. He questioned the difference in the process of one area of the city vs. the other. Mr. Rawson stated the Medford Street project started a few years ago and was not planned in the same way; projects that are launched now are more robust in terms of community engagement and involvement. He suggested doing a block walk with Councilor Clingan for the Medford area to talk about stakeholder interests.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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**Ward specific issues**

**210479: That the Director of SPCD deploy traffic calming measures to reduce speeding vehicles on Heath Street from Moreland to Temple Streets, on Sycamore Street from Medford Street to Broadway, and on Shore Drive from Rts 16 to 38.**

Mr. Rawson stated Heath Street was updated with painted crosswalks. Additionally, he stated there are no more traffic calming measures this season and he will put it on list for 2021. Sycamore Street will have a refreshed list of options for pavement markings. Striping plans will be discussed before implementing. The city will be working on traffic calming and bump outs to slow down speeds in the Community Path area on Sycamore Street. Mr. Rawson has spoken to the Councilor about Shore Drive and is close to finalizing design for traffic calming and one-directional biking. He is also working on a signage package and keying up a 2021 project.

Councilor Clingan would like flexposts in the areas as a temporary measure to slow down traffic or maybe a raised crosswalk near the Winter Hill School. Mr. Rawson said that pavement markings would be installed there in the next few weeks.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**208891: That the Director of SPCD deploy traffic calming measures on Jacques Street.**

See item 210479

Mr. Rawson stated that flexposts and saw horses have been effective as calming measures. It was suggested that maybe some painted bump outs would be effective, as well.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**209616: That the Director of Engineering install a crosswalk on Somerville Avenue at Kent Street and Spring Street.**

Councilor Ballantyne talked about the small mall with new tenants and how hard it is to cross the street and that there is a lot of jaywalking there. She said that people often run across the street to catch the bus. She talked to the ward councilor and he has heard similar issues with this area.

Mr. Rawson has started working with the Engineering Dept team to design curb ramps on each side to put in a crosswalk to avoid people having to walk far out of their way to cross the street where there is a crosswalk. He will continue working on this matter over the winter with Engineering.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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**209421: That the Director of SPCD implement traffic-calming measures for Central Street between Highland Avenue and Broadway as soon as possible, since traffic has increased dramatically with the Broadway reconfiguration, and will increase even more with the coming School Street closure.**

Mr. Rawson talked about plans for Central Street and around Hoyt Sullivan Park to encourage motorists to reduce speeds. There are crosswalks that could use restriping. The Chair suggested raised crosswalks for next year. Chair Niedergang said he likes the red paint across Central Street and welcomed Mr. Rawson's suggestion to put that in other intersections. Mr. Rawson said that when the Community Path is extended through Junction Park and across Central Street near Hoyt Sullivan, there will be a raised crosswalk on Central Street.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**209648: That the Director of SPCD use the \$220,000 in traffic mitigation funds paid by Maxwell's Green in 2011 for a traffic-calming table on Lowell Street at the Albion Street crosswalk. (3rd request)**

Chair Niedergang stated the flexposts have made a difference. He would like to see a stop sign there also. He asked if there will be a study now that the flexposts have been put out and when the neighborhood can expect to hear about the results. Mr. Rawson stated they need to review the data first before releasing the information. Additionally, they do not have reliable speed data and should have this in a couple of weeks.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

### Parking

**210673: That the Director of SPCD update this Council on the citywide parking study that began last year.**

Mr. Rawson stated that Traffic and Parking and Mobility are working in partnership on gathering data for the parking study. He stated the City Council approved a budget for the parking department to seek a consultant, but due to the Covid-19 spending restrictions, Ms. Rinfret and Rawson staff are using software to collect data and also walking the streets. Councilor

Ballantyne asked about the areas Mr. Rawson is collecting parking data. Mr. Rawson stated that Beacon and Washington Streets and also Pearl St have been the primary focus. Councilor Ballantyne also asked about the count since there are now fewer cars on the road due to COVID. Mr. Rawson stated the parking data is similar to historical data even though people are using vehicles less frequently. They are still collecting data to guide policy decisions. Councilor Ballantyne stated streets should be for everyone not just for primary use for vehicles. The streets have been seen as only accommodating vehicles and now designing streets for walkers and bikers should be a priority for the City.

Chair Niedergang asked what is the plan to reconvene the task force. Mr. Rawson stated that December and January would be a good time for the task force to reconvene and he will work with the City Councilors on a plan to put the task force back in place.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**210624: That the Director of Finance, the Director of Parking and the Director of SPCD discuss scaling parking permit fees with automobile size and efficiency.**

Mr. Rawson and Ms. Rinfret met on this matter. They have done preliminary case studies, but have not found any community that has implemented this approach. Ms. Rinfret looked into this, stating many people change their vehicles mid-year. The excise tax does change when the vehicles are changed and that might be used as a basis for making changes then to the permits. Councilor Ballantyne asked if the Traffic Commission can make these changes or if it is the state. Ms. Rinfret stated the state gives the municipality the data and that's how they collect the excise tax. The City will look at the fees and see what can be done. Councilor Ballantyne will follow up with Ms. Rinfret and Mr. Rawson in the spring on this initiative.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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**Mystic River bike and pedestrian bridge**

**210627: That the Director of SPCD update this Council on the Missatuck/Mystic River bike and pedestrian bridge project.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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**208684: That the Administration report on how the City could lobby for a wider width for the proposed bridge from Everett to Draw 7 Park.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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**Housekeeping - Items to be marked complete**

**201993: That the Director of Traffic and Parking stripe street arrows for Teele Square, in all directions, and on Broadway, at the intersection of Broadway and Route 16.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**204791: That the Commissioner of Public Works and/or the Director of Traffic and Parking install a second crosswalk at the intersection of College Avenue with Kidder Avenue and Summit Street, with additional pedestrian safety measures.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**204890: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install signs on the eastbound side of Broadway to restrict traffic on Victoria Street, Garrison Avenue and Farragut Avenue.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**205197: That the Director of Traffic and Parking Place a NO PARKING sign between 161 and 165 Broadway, between the bus stop and the metered spot, to increase vehicle visibility.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**206178: That the Chief of Police enforce the state law requiring a white light on the front of a bicycle and a red reflector or light on the back when operated from a-half hour after sunset to a half-hour before sunrise.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**206776: That the Director of Engineering consider using colored asphalt rather than paint, for bike lanes.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**206693: That the Director of SPCD or the Director of Traffic and Parking alter the cycle of the traffic signals at Lowell Street and Highland Avenue ASAP to allow more time for vehicles to turn onto Highland Avenue from Lowell Street, especially during the morning rush hour, to alleviate the traffic backup on Hudson Street when the Cedar Street/Highland Avenue intersection is closed for construction.**



<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**207279: That the Chief of Police enforce the speed limit on Sycamore Street, between Highland Avenue and Medford Street, and inform the Ward 3 Alderman on the outcome.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**207281: That the Director of SPCD work with the Ward 3 Alderman to address long-standing congestion at the intersection of Highland Avenue and Hamlet Street.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**207463: That the Director of Traffic and Parking explain the recent addition of NO PARKING signs on Glen Street and remove them if there is no practical reason for them.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**207894: That the Director of SPCD update the Ward 6 Councilor on the timeframe for acquiring new signal switching equipment to allow additional traffic/pedestrian cycles in Davis Square.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**207917: That the Director of Traffic and Parking implement traffic calming measures on Avon Street.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**208031: That the Director of SPCD use the \$220,000 in traffic mitigation funds paid by Maxwell's Green in 2011 for traffic calming on Lowell Street, between Highland Avenue and Albion Street, by constructing a traffic-calming table at the Albion Street crosswalk.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**208252: That the Director of SPCD perform traffic volume and speed studies on Summit**

**Avenue and Boston Street during morning and evening rush hours and report the findings to the Ward 3 City Councilor.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**208823: That the Director of SPCD provide information about ensuring that pedestrians on the Community Path can travel safely given the sometimes high speeds and volume of bicycles or scooters.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**208826: That the Director of SPCD provide an update on progress made on the 2017 Bicycle Friendly Community report card, including plans for actions steps on metrics where Somerville lags other communities.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**208921: That the Director of SPCD schedule a meeting with the residents of Partridge Avenue who filed a traffic calming petition, or respond to them with a written communication.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne

**209189: That the Director of Parking install the respective missing street signs at the intersection of North Street and Powderhouse Blvd.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED. [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	Niedergang, Clingan, Ballantyne