



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Traffic and Parking Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 24, 2025

6:00 PM

The meeting took place remotely via Zoom and was called to order at 6:01 PM by Chair Sait and adjourned at 6:50 PM on a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Wilson, Burnley and Sait), none against and none absent.

Others present:

Brad Rawson – Director of Mobility, Peter Forcellese – Legislative Clerk.

Councilor Burney joined the meeting at 6:10 PM.

Roll Call

Present: Ward Five City Councilor Naima Sait and City Councilor At Large Jake Wilson
Absent: City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr.

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [25-0161](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Traffic and Parking Committee Meeting of January 27, 2025.

RESULT: ACCEPTED
AYE: Ward Five City Councilor Sait and City Councilor At Large Wilson
ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

2. Order (ID # [25-0139](#)) By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Director of Parking place NO IDLING signs on New Washington Street, behind the Cobble Hill complex, to discourage large truck idling by the senior homes.

Director Rawson requested that this item be kept in committee.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

3. Order (ID # [25-0138](#)) By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Director of Mobility address the increased traffic along Lombardi Street, Mystic Avenue and Grand Union Boulevard due to signal changes.

Director Rawson stated that congestion is due to DOT roadway construction and that the project should be completed this construction season. Traffic signals in the area have been modified, however, all modes of transportation are experiencing congestion. Changes can be made to the signaling, however, those changes may affect signaling in other locations. Councilor

Wilson noted that the pinch point is on the down ramp to Sullivan Square and he inquired if that queue could be redesigned to alleviate some of the backups. Director Rawson commented that in the short term, he will check with city staff to see what signal changes might be feasible.

Councilor Wilson asked about the legalities and practicalities of posting DO NOT BLOCK THE BOX signage and Director Rawson replied that the roadway is jointly owned by the state and city. The city has made requests over the years and could ask DOT if it would permit the city to add the signage.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

4. Order
(ID # [25-0137](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin

That the Director of Mobility work with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to increase flex post usage and other pedestrian safety measures on crosswalks along McGrath Highway.

Director Rawson said that the city is working with DOT on this resurfacing project that is running behind schedule and that he's hoping to have the posts installed this construction season, with staff advocating for installation as soon as possible. He reported that DOT has designed and procured flex posts and he stated that all road users will benefit from having them in place.

Councilor Burnley asked about using another material for flex posts and Director Rawson said staff has advocated for more robust barriers but has been unsuccessful. He explained that DOT is outside its comfort zone since this project is in an urban setting, therefore DOT is treating this project as a pilot program.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

5. Order
(ID # [25-0126](#))

By Councilor Ewen-Campen and Councilor Mbah

That the Director of Mobility develop plans for a safe pedestrian crossing of Lowell Street, at Bailey Park, and additional traffic calming measures between Summer Street and Highland Avenue.

Chair Sait pointed out that no crosswalk exists at this location. Director Rawson said staff is receiving feedback from residents and that traffic calming measures have increased, including testing speed humps on steep grades. He noted that Lowell Street is an emergency response route, so any traffic calming measures are coordinated with the Fire Department. The Director went on to explain that crosswalks have their own installation criteria and a crosswalk can't be added where no accessible ramp exists, so installation of new crosswalks may involve cutting curbs and rebuilding sidewalk panels. Another crosswalk consideration is sightlines, i.e., making

sure that it's safe. The site in question is scheduled to be evaluated this spring and the committee will be kept apprised of any progress.

Chair Sait asked if any designs have been submitted to DOT and Director Rawson explained that this is an in-house project and that data is being collected now. Sight line evaluations and consultation with the Fire Department will follow that, with the expectation of having the crossings and calming measures done this year.

Councilor Wilson asked if any changes are coming at 125 Lowell Street and Director Rawson noted that specific types of mitigation were never decided upon and he stated that he would pull the files and look into the situation.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

6. Order
(ID # [25-0125](#))

By Councilor Ewen-Campen

That the Director of Mobility discuss with this Council the feasibility of signal priority for Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) busses in Union Square.

Director Rawson stated that this is a priority project and that it is feasible, however, there are many complications, and 3 high volume intersections that will need to be coordinated. The MBTA is investing time and money for signaling and the design should be finished in the first half of this year and will then go out to bid. Director Rawson is optimistic that this matter be implemented this year. Councilor Wilson asked about opportunities for more headway routes and the Director replied that the approved plan included 3 high frequency and 2 mid frequency routes, adding that the MBTA has been able to articulate a plan and to back it up with more frequent service.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

7. Order
(ID # [25-0038](#))

By Councilor Strezo

That the Chief of Police, the Director of Parking and the Director of Mobility discuss the previous and ongoing strategy for implementation and public education of drivers violating the NO LEFT TURN signage at the Somerville High School exit on Highland Avenue and Vinal Avenue.

Director Rawson acknowledged that the issue has been a challenge and he wished that there were more ways to discourage the turns being made. Mobility staff designed flex post patterns in 2023 that helped, however it's not 100% effective, since it hard to restrict one movement without affecting another. Staff is working regularly with the School Department relative to the safe practice for student drop off and pick up. Chair Sait asked what other outreach is being done and who is in charge to put a plan together with

the School Department. Director Rawson stated that there is an interdepartmental working group that meets monthly to discuss concerns and he noted that this particular issue has been discussed by this group. He will make sure that Mobility staff asks about safety refreshers/reminders.

Chair Sait will keep this item in committee so that the committee may hear from the Police Department.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE