



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Traffic and Parking Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 17, 2025

6:00 PM

The meeting took place remotely via Zoom and was called to order at 6:07 PM by Chair Sait and adjourned at 7:29 PM on a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Burnley, Hardt and Sait), none against and none absent.

Others present:

Brad Rawson - Director of Mobility, Lillian Worth – Mobility, Brian Postlewaite – Director of Engineering, Peter Forcellese – Legislative Clerk.

Roll Call

Present: Ward Five City Councilor Naima Sait, Ward Seven City Councilor Emily Hardt and City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr.

1. Order
(ID # [25-1548](#))

By Councilor Sait, Councilor Wilson and Councilor Strezo
That the Director of Mobility discuss with this Council, strategies for improving the safety of users of the Community Path, as detailed within.

Chair Sait intends to keep this item in committee in order to receive regular updates on the matter.

Director Rawson spoke about the community engagement process saying that staff wants to keep the public updated on the city's plans and want to hear the concerns of the public regarding the Community Path. Transportation Planner Lillian Worth spoke about the work being done to set the stage and hear from the public, including the launch of a project website using flyers and press releases, conducting in-person pop up events to talk to users, and implementing an online public input map. Ms. Worth noted that staff is reviewing the 1,000 unique responses received from the public about safety concerns and will use that data to produce a report which will be posted on the project website when completed. Chair Sait asked that it be added to the city newsletter as well. The plan is to make improvements on the path itself and the next step will be to creation of a strategy document with recommendations and achievable goals.

Councilor Burnley inquired about interactions with the MBTA and Director Rawson noted that the path is owned by the MBTA and the city leases it for use as a community path. He told the committee that the MBTA has been pragmatic with the city and cited the recent light enhancement program on unlit sections of the path as an example. Ms. Worth commented that staff will be prioritizing items that don't require a lot of due diligence since the

community is interested in things that are less intensive.

Director Rawson spoke about the attached memo and the questions raised in it regarding public ways, speed studies, and vehicle types and Chair Sait noted that it was the recommendation of the memo's author, Brendan Salisbury, Legislative and Policy Analyst for the City Council that an ordinance to impose speed limits on the Community Path not be pursued.

Chair Sait asked about the Highland Avenue and other street improvement projects and Director Rawson commented that the community path is used so much because many streets don't have safe pathways for bicycles and bikers feel unsafe using Highland Avenue and Medford Street. Chair Sait asked about funding and Director Rawson explained that there are a variety of available funding sources for affordable items, but as January approaches, costs will become clearer and funds will be sought, but for now, it's too early to predict when and how much will be needed.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

2. Order
(ID # [25-1171](#))

By Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Wilson, Councilor Strezo, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Mbah

That the Director of Engineering update this Council and community advocates on current efforts to fix the unsafe crossing of the Community Path at School Street.

Chair Sait intends to keep this item in committee in order to receive regular updates on the matter.

Director Postlewaite presented 3 options that are being considered and said that all are possible to achieve, however, since the bridges are owned by the state, there might be pushback on some aspects of the plans. He presented the options, ranked by the city's preferred order and noted that there are tradeoffs in each of them and that they are still in the design stage. He also stated that staff is working on having a 2-way protected bike lane in all three options.

Concept 1 - construct fully raised crossing at this location:

The roadway would be raised to sidewalk level at the crossing, making the crossing wider and presenting a better visual to motorists. There are concerns about the raised roadway, so MA-DOT might have some objections.

Concept 2 - utilizing a double curb extension:

In the event that MA-DOT does not accept the raised roadway concept, this alternative would involve lowering the height of the sidewalk and extending bump-outs for transitioning the variances. This plan presents concerns about plowing with the bump-outs.

Concept 3 - curb extension on only the western side of the roadway:

This plan requires less construction and has the least impact to the bridge itself while still getting the job done.

Director Rawson told the members that these plans have not yet been reviewed by the city's Operations, SFD or DPW staff but will be prior to presentation to the state.

Councilor Hardt asked about safety in designs without raised characteristics and Director Postlewaite explained that mitigation efforts try to include visibility characteristics so that users are able to see one another and vehicular traffic. He commented that because of the bridge structure, this is a problem that may never be completely corrected. Speed humps are implemented to slow down traffic as it approaches the path crossing.

Councilor Burnley asked about using something other than hot top or concrete and Director Postlewaite explained that there are some lighter weight aggregates and staff will be looking at those, but the lighter ones are less durable. Bridges are intended to last 50 years or more, and a less durable material may need more maintenance, which MA-DOT might find objectionable, since they are responsible for bridge maintenance. He commented that technically, MA-DOT is responsible for the maintenance, but part of the proposed bump outs are city property, so something would have to be worked out.

Councilor Burnley asked about Lowell Street and Director Postlewaite noted that there is no good way to cross to the MBTA station from Vernon Street. Staff is looking at options, e.g., making a crossing at Maxwells Green, or considering using Vernon Street since it's city property and won't need state approval. The Director noted that designs could include a raised crossing where Vernon Street meets Lowell Street, tightened crosswalks that could improve pedestrian crossing, and drainage capabilities.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Referenced Documents:

- T&P - 2025-11-17 Memo (with 25-1548)