

May 2, 2013

City of Somerville, Traffic Commission  
Mayor Joe Curtatone  
Alderman Rebekah Gewirtz  
Alderman John Connolly  
State Representative Pat Jehlen  
Matt Dias, Traffic and Parking  
Laura Accaputo, Commission Secretary (x7904)

Peter R Clemons  
15 Kidder Avenue, Somerville

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Kidder Avenue is a residential street that is in need of attention by the Traffic Commission. It was suggested that the Commission would review my requests at a future meeting once I submitted a letter of support from an Alderman. I have asked Alderman Gewirtz to support my request and the following solutions.

Somerville is densely populated and congested. It is important to recognize the value of safe walking conditions in this residential neighborhood. Kidder Avenue was a quiet side street. Kidder is not in the business district. Car and truck policies must be secondary to resident and pedestrian safety on our sidewalks and crosswalks. Young children daily walk to and from Brown School. Seniors walk to Powderhouse Park as well as to doctor and dentist appointments. Residents walk to Church services and evening functions. Car owners (drivers and passengers) are at risk opening doors to their vehicles on this narrow and heavily travelled street.

Traffic on Kidder Avenue must SLOW DOWN. I am submitting 5 specific solutions:

1. Creation and Enforcement of 20 mph speed limit (Reasons: Brown School, Narrow Lane Width, Side Lines, Heavy Volume, Numerous Driveways, Pedestrians including Children and Seniors, On-Street Parking, Etc.)
2. Painted Pedestrian Crosswalk and 3-way Stop Signs at Powderhouse Terrace and Kidder Ave intersection
3. Stop signs at ALL intersections between College Avenue and Willow Avenue
4. Enforcement of existing no left turn policy (between 7am - 9am) at College Avenue
5. Limits on Trucks (see Morrison Ave) Heating Oil. Postal. Fedex. UPS. Bottled Water Trucks. Delivery Trucks, Construction Vehicles. Repair Service. Also Buses.

As you already know Davis Square's inadequate traffic management has created a nightmare that has not been resolved since the subway station was opened in 1981. Each day (and night) Davis Sq experiences a back up of traffic on College Avenue from Highland Avenue to the rotary at Powderhouse. A large percentage of drivers see the backup and resolve to get around Davis by using Kidder to Willow to Highland. Increasingly this includes large trucks making deliveries to businesses in Davis and Porter. The resulting burden of this traffic pattern has made living on Kidder an unsafe and near intolerable experience. The volume and speed of traffic has not been addressed adequately. Mass DOT policies do not reflect the reality of our densely populated neighborhood. Kidder has a double yellow lane marking but 75% of vehicles on Kidder straddle the lane marking - in all towns a ticket violation - but totally ignored on Kidder.

FACT: Kidder's Curb to Curb width is 26'. Dividing 26' by 3 car widths (even side resident on-street parking) This means Kidder's lanes are barely 8 1/2 ft wide.

FACT: The nationally accepted width of an average car lane in urban areas is twelve (12) feet.

FACT: Engineers typically specify 12-foot lanes as ideal MINIMUM for motor traffic.

FACT: Somerville created bike 'Sharrows' on Kidder in 2012 (result: even more dangerous)

Just a little background. My name is Peter Clemons. My wife Marianne and I have lived in Somerville since 1973. We have owned our home at 15 Kidder since 1975. Kidder Avenue was a two way street with parking on both sides of the street. The same was true for both Francesca and Hall Avenue. During the last 15-20 years both Francesca and Hall became one-way (west only). Kidder thus became a heavily traveled route for a large number of people who have no alternative vehicle access to their streets and homes. The volume of cars and trucks on Kidder is larger than all other neighboring streets. For this reason alone Kidder deserves special attention. Thank you for addressing these requests.