



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES**

October 17, 2018
REPORT OF THE TRAFFIC AND PARKING COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mark Niedergang	Chair	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Vice Chair	Absent	
Wilfred N. Mbah	Alderman at Large	Present	

Others present: Alderman-at-Large Mary Jo Rossetti, Suzanne Rinfret - T&P, Terry Smith - T&P, Brad Rawson - OSPCD, Adam Polinski - OSPCD, Annie Connor - Mayor's Office, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:35 PM by Chairman Niedergang and adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Approval of the June 4, 2018 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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205352: That the Director of SPCD report to the Ward 5 Alderman and this Board on the plans for closure of the Ball Square bridge and Broadway for GLX construction activity.

Mr. Rawson discussed the detours being implemented due to the GLX project and said that the Washington Street bridge is scheduled to close on April 15, 2019. Somerville has been working with Cambridge, Medford and the MBTA to mitigate the expected traffic problems. Mr. Rawson believes the contractor may have a financial incentive to work as quickly as possible, so he believes the Ball Square Bridge closure will not be longer than the projected one year.

The Committee discussed various methods of traffic calming, including safety zones, police presence, speed humps, raised crosswalks, speed tables, paint, bollards, on-street parking and street trees/planters.

Mr. Rawson confirmed that the contractor has regularly included first responders in quarterly meetings along with the city's Public Works, Traffic and Parking, OSPCD and other relevant departments. The Chief Fire Engineer has attended previous meetings to discuss response times.

Police details for the GLX project will be staffed initially by Somerville Police and then by other police departments and the MBTA Police. Alderman Niedergang asked Mr. Rawson to share a

plan of how police resources will be laid out for the various areas having bridge closures to ensure that there is sufficient police presence to manage the additional traffic on local streets.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205802: That the Director of SPCD report to the Wards 1, 2 and 3 Aldermen and this Board on the plans for any GLX-related closures of Washington Street, near the McGrath Highway underpass.

See discussion of item 205352.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204345: That the Administration review the traffic and pedestrian signals at the Powder House Rotary and propose changes to better address traffic flow and pedestrian safety.

See discussion of item 206693.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206271: That the Administration and the Traffic Commission make any changes possible to the traffic patterns and signal timing at the Powderhouse Circle intersection in advance of the closing of the Broadway bridge at Ball Square.

This is a priority area and the GLX is working on improving the signalization of this rotary, and may even purchase new equipment which may enable changes in the traffic signal timing that are not possible with the current outdated equipment.

See also discussion of item 206693.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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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.

See discussion of item 200640.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204792: That the Commissioner of Public Works and/or the Director of Traffic and Parking install an overhead Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon at the crosswalk at the West Branch Library, with bump-outs on either side of the crosswalk.

The WBL redevelopment project includes some plans for traffic calming and pedestrian safety at this intersection. Plans for adding a bump out and curb extension were confirmed and the Committee discussed adding flashers, bump outs and day-lighting areas in front of the library.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200640: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install a flashing PEDESTRIAN CROSSING sign and/or take other measures to ensure pedestrian safety at College Avenue at Kidder Avenue.

There were discussions about trying to get another crosswalk for College and Kidder Avenues and Mr. Rawson told the committee that OSPCD is looking into other safety measures for this area, as well. Alderman Mbah inquired about interim measures using asphalt to enable wheelchair access and Mr. Smith stated that all ramps have to meet ADA requirements and that interim measures are not permitted except when there are major street construction projects ongoing.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204216: That Director of Traffic and Parking install 20 MPH Safety Zone signage, including a "speed alert" sign and other traffic calming measures on College Avenue between Powderhouse and Davis Squares.

See discussion of item 200640.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202431: That the Director of Traffic and Parking work with her counterpart in Medford to improve the intersection of Broadway, Albion and Winchester Streets, where there is no signage or street markings.

See discussion of item 205352.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206739: That the Director of Traffic and Parking consider placing traffic safety signage at the intersection of Willow Avenue, Broadway and Bristol Road.

Mr. Rawson discussed shortened crosswalks at Bristol Road and proposed paint and curb extensions to slow traffic, noting that this is not likely to happen until the spring of 2019 at the earliest. A suggestion was made to install a YIELD sign for vehicles looking to turn.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206390: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Traffic and Parking report to this Board on plans to improve traffic signalization and flow at problem intersections such as Powderhouse Circle, Magoun Square, and others.

See discussion of item 206693.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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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.

Improving traffic signalization at key intersections has been an area of concern for Chairman Niedergang and Alderman Ballantyne for a long time. Mr. Rawson explained that many of the signals were installed in 1990 and have not been updated since then. Minor changes can be done to the signalization, e.g., adding a couple of seconds to a green light, but larger changes are difficult to do with the current equipment. Somerville staff generally has the ability to turn signals on flash but cannot re-time them. The Administration is developing a plan to upgrade the signals and signalization and this will be a topic to focus on in early spring.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

205795: That the Director of SPCD improve the Teele Square traffic signal wait time by reducing the 2 to 3 cycle wait time to on demand or one cycle wait time during morning and evening rush hours.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

206691: That the Director of SPCD prioritize for this Board the traffic calming projects in the City, and the process to determine those priorities.

Chairman Niedergang asked Mr. Rawson to explain how projects get prioritized so that he can explain the process to his constituents. Mr. Polinski spoke about re-thinking how traffic calming works with local streets and major roadways in the City. He said that they plan to have two buckets of funding; with 50% for larger projects and the other half for local streets so that small streets are also prioritized. He told the Committee that the City hired a consultant to develop a report using best practices with the Article 14 traffic-calming petitions as a test case. Data has been collected for those streets on vehicle speed and pedestrian traffic to help generate information. The consultant and City staff will also look at 311 requests to collect data and at BOA orders to gather information about specific streets and areas needing attention. Mr. Polanski stated that some of the traffic calming requests can be done quickly and inexpensively, such as with street painting, but some require significant funds. Special revenue sources that reload themselves each year from the user fees paid to the state by Uber/Lyft and then passed on to the City will be used to implement traffic calming programs. Chairman Niedergang asked for clarification whether the prioritization has happened yet. Mr. Polinski acknowledged that it has not, but they have been working on it, and plan to come in with funding recommendations in the spring of 2019. At the request of the Chairman, Mr. Rawson will email the Traffic Calming program slides used for this meeting to the BOA.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

205936: That the Administration work with this Board on a fund for traffic calming and pedestrian/transit infrastructure pilot projects through such sources as demand pricing for meters in business districts and the creation of incentives for residents to forgo residential permits so as to create more business permits.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206395: That the Director of SPCD update this Board on the Administration's traffic calming program, including a report on the traffic petition program and responses to and implementation of petition requests for traffic calming interventions on specific streets.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202590: Conveying an update regarding traffic calming petition procedures.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202862: That the Director of Traffic and Parking explain its policy of reporting back to citizens who submit traffic calming petitions.

The Committee would like some communication to go back to the community to let them know that the City has not forgotten their requests. Although Mr. Polinski has emailed some petitioners every few months, there is still a large backlog. Mr. Rawson will send an update to all the petitioners. The Committee asked that Mr. Rawson provide the BOA with some guidelines about communication with petitioners and to share a sample copy of the letter sent to petitioners.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202102: That the Director of Traffic and Parking, the Director of SomerStat or a representative of the Administration, report to this Board on the time frame for responses to the dozens of traffic calming petitions that have been submitted by residents over the past year.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201497: That the Director of Traffic and Parking report to this Board on the Traffic Calming Neighborhood Action Program, explain why it has taken over 8 months for petitions to be considered, and clarify when the 25 petitions submitted are likely to receive a response.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200782: That the Director of Traffic and Parking report to the Ward 5 Alderman on the Traffic Calming Petition that was filed by residents of Highland Road on October 3, 2015, and report to this Board on the process by which such petitions are considered.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205693: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Traffic and Parking report to this

Board on traffic calming options for Richardson Street.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205450: That the Director of SPCD provide traffic calming recommendations for Vinal Avenue.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205449: That the Director of SPCD provide traffic calming recommendations for School Street, from Highland Avenue to Summer Street.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206763: That the Director of Traffic and Parking and the Director of SPCD meet with Partridge Avenue residents and the Ward 5 Alderman to discuss traffic calming between Medford and Vernon Streets.

Mr. Rawson stated someone from his team will meet with the community and Chairman Niedergang will work with OSPCD to arrange the meeting.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205285: That the Director of SPCD share plans, when available, for its upcoming Vision Zero planning process.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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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.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205691: That the Director of Traffic and Parking report to this Board on the possibility of re-striping faded crosswalks whenever necessary, instead of once a year.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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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.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202104: That the Director of Traffic and Parking and the Director of Engineering report to

this Board on the timeframe for re-stripping crosswalks that are erased due to repaving or construction.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204965: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install a crosswalk at Woods Avenue and Route 16.

Alderman Mbah explained that this is an active area with lots of children and youth crossing the very busy and dangerous Alewife Brook Parkway there to get to Dilboy Stadium, the fields, and pool in that area. Mr. Rawson explained that while the Administration has been working on a crosswalk there for some time, the City still needs to get procedural approval from the state agency DCR. The next steps are civil engineering work and working with the state. The city is hoping for a spring or summer 2019 timeframe for construction.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201477: That the Traffic Engineer and the Chief of Police suggest traffic calming measures for High, Sterling, Fairfax and Gordon Streets and Woods Avenue and report back to the Ward 7 Alderman.

Mr. Smith will adjust the “Caution - Children at Play” sign on Wood Avenue, raising it to a better height on the pole so it is more visible. Alderman Mbah will email Traffic and Parking with the exact location for the other signs that he would like to be put on Woods Avenue.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206671: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install additional pedestrian safety measures at the intersection of Holland Street and Cameron Avenue. (2nd request)

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

This is a high-traffic and high-accident location and upgrades are scheduled for 2019. Short term changes would include painting, bump-outs and flashing signs.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206067: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install audible pedestrian signals so people can cross safely at the busy intersection of Highland Avenue and Central Street.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202274: That the Director of Traffic and Parking place a blinking crosswalk sign in front of the East Somerville library. (2nd request).

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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200054: That the Director of Traffic and Parking report to this Board on the feasibility of a flashing pedestrian walkway on Broadway near the East Branch library.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206579: That the Director of Traffic and Parking install 2 CAUTION: CHILDREN CROSSING signs on both sides of Lowell Street around 294 Lowell Street to accommodate the daycare center there.

Mr. Smith said that Traffic and Parking only installs one sign on one side of the street as that is usually sufficient. They will do so within the next week or two at the most.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206580: That the Director of SPCD install a crosswalk on Lowell Street at the Wilton Street bumpouts, as there is no crosswalk on Lowell Street between Magoun Square and the bridge.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205448: That the Director of SPCD provide recommendations on making the intersection of Summer and Central Streets safer for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202108: That the Administration work with the City of Cambridge to improve pedestrian safety at the intersections of Elm Street with Beech Street and Willow Avenue, including consideration of a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon.

Mr. Rawson acknowledged that this is a difficult intersection. Part of Beech Street is in Cambridge, but the area adjacent to Elm Street is in Somerville. The Administration has a plan for that intersection and work is expected to begin in 2019.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202107: That the Director of Engineering install a "bump out" at the terminus of the crosswalk on Elm Street west of Willow Avenue opposite Beech Street.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206766: That the Director of Traffic and Parking paint two additional crosswalks at the intersection of Cherry Street and Highland Avenue.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

206333: Traffic and Parking Director responding to Items from this Board's 5/24/18 meeting.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

206332: Traffic and Parking Director responding to Items from this Board's 6/14/18 meeting.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

206102: DPW Commissioner responding to various Board Orders submitted 5/24/18.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

202958: Assistant City Solicitor submitting an opinion regarding the posting of official Speed Limit signs.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

204287: Director of Traffic and Parking responding to #204236 re: the term of residential parking permits.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

199752: Traffic and Parking Director responding to #199586 re: "No Idling" signage at schools.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

204882: That the Director of Traffic and Parking add a second crosswalk and install a flashing PEDESTRIAN CROSSING sign on both sides of Summer Street at Cherry Street to enhance safety for children and parents walking to the Kennedy School.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

204880: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board whether he plans to propose to the Traffic Commission that 20 mph speed zones be adopted citywide.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

204258: That the Administration and Director of SPCD consider increasing the number of safety zones throughout the city.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

203599: That the Chief of Police enforce traffic laws at Cedar Street and Franey Road, as cars are making U-turns there and speeding over the Cedar Street bridge, and trucks are backing out into the street and blocking it.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

203598: That the Director of Traffic and Parking instruct Parking Control Officers to regularly ticket the NO PARKING spots on the east side of Cedar Street by Trum Field, particularly in the evenings and Saturdays.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

202975: That the Director of Traffic and Parking paint 20 MPH, highlighted in a circle, on Broadway and Powder House Blvd, to inform drivers entering Somerville from Route 16 of the city's speed limit.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

202728: That the Director of Traffic and Parking report to the Ward 5 Alderman on whether large truck traffic can be curtailed or banned on Cedar Street to avoid disturbing residents' peace and damaging their foundations.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

201708: That the Director of Traffic and Parking appear before this Board to address the on-line resident parking permit system and its turn-around times, lack of transaction confirmations, and long lines at the customer service counter.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

201621: That the Director of Traffic and Parking report to the Ward 5 Alderman on measures to reduce the speed of vehicles around Hoyt-Sullivan Park, including reducing the speed limit on Central Street to 20-25 mph. (3rd request)

Mr. Rawson stated that the blinking pedestrian crossing signs at this location and other traffic-calming measures have made a difference there. Mr. Rawson and Mr. Polinski presented data showing the percent of vehicles traveling above and below 25 mph and that speeds have slowed as a result of the work there.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

201150: That the Director of Traffic and Parking put up a second DO NOT ENTER sign on the west side of the entrance from Medford Street into the CVS parking lot.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

200526: That the Commissioner of Public Works repair the concrete on the pedestrian and bicycle ramp under the railroad bridge on Sacramento Street, between Somerville Avenue and Miller Street.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

200436: That the Director of SPCD update this Board on the Gilman Square building and when traffic issues will be alleviated there.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

19959: That the Director of Traffic and Parking consider installing signage or a mirror at the intersection of Woodbine and Lowell Streets so cars exiting onto Lowell Street can see oncoming traffic before pulling out.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

199586: That the Director of Traffic and Parking and the Director of the Office of Sustainability and the Environment report to this Board on the design, placement, effectiveness and enforcement of “NO IDLING” signs by all schools.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

199282: That the Director of Traffic and Parking suggest traffic calming measures on Pembroke Street to slow traffic that cuts through to avoid the traffic light at Central and Medford Streets.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

199280: That the Director of Traffic and Parking and the Commissioner of Public Works report to this Board on the placement of NO IDLING signs at all public schools.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

197023: That the Director of SPCD (T&I) develop a plan for a pedestrian crosswalk at Vernon Street and Lowell Street and report to this Board and the Ward 5 Alderman on how that would be incorporated into the Lowell Street bridge traffic calming project.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

Handouts:

- Traffic Calming (with 206691)

- 2018-10-17 Traffic and Parking Committee discussion slides