



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CITY COUNCIL

JUDY PINEDA NEUFELD
WARD SEVEN CITY COUNCILOR

To: Honorable Members of the City Council
From: Judy Pineda Neufeld, Ward 7 City Councilor
RE: An Update from the Parking Study Task Force
Date: April 25, 2022

Honorable Members of the City Council:

As the City Council representative on the Parking Study Task Force, I'd like to submit an update on the work of the Task Force since I joined in January 2022.

Background:

The Citywide Parking & Curb Use Study seeks to produce a comprehensive set of recommendations that will guide the City in bringing our parking policies and regulations in alignment with our goals, community values, and future needs. The Parking and Mobility Departments are working closely together to manage this study. In the fall of 2019, the Parking Study Task Force was created to serve as an advisory group for the study. It is made up of approximately 20 members, including representatives from the Parking Department, Mobility, Engineering, Economic Development, ADA Coordinator, SomerStat, Office of Sustainability and Environment, Police and Fire, Council on Aging, Commission for Persons with Disabilities, business owner, Bicycle Advisory Committee, Pedestrian and Transit Advisory Committee, Neighborways community representative, inclusionary housing representative, and the City Council. The city selected consultant Nelson\Nygaard in July 2021 for this one-year study.

2022 Task Force Work:

Nelson\Nygaard has been working to develop a comprehensive understanding of existing parking and curbside conditions, including a review of current policies and practices. There was a Parking and Curb Use Survey sent out, with results reported to the task force. They also recently developed a Somerville Parking Profile, which tells the story of our curbside use and its users. In it were parking personas that will help guide the development of the study's recommendations.

The Task Force has met in February and March, with a planned meeting for early May. During our February meeting, Nelson\Nygaard presented the Parking Profile they created. Some highlights:

- 52% of Somerville's curbside space is "vehicle-accessible" -- dedicated to parking or loading for vehicles. Another 19% is used as driveway curbside cuts. This means that 71% of

potential curb space (3% of all City land area) is allocated solely to vehicles.

- The vast majority (73%) of the 25,100 vehicle-accessible curb spaces in Somerville are primarily regulated to accommodate resident parking (Resident Permit Parking). Although only 36.7% of Somerville residents drive alone to work, 76% of households own vehicles and many do not have access to off-street parking, particularly those who rent and those residing outside of large mixed-use developments.
- Somerville's resident permit parking is 67% full on average during the overnight peak parking period (in observed spaces) with significant variability across subareas and individual blocks.
- Despite three-fourths of all curbside spaces being designated for resident-permit parking, the number of registered resident permits exceeds this supply by a ratio of 2.5 permits per space. Union Square, Prospect Hill, Duck Village, and East Somerville have the highest ratios of permits to spaces, as high as 3 permits per space, meaning that parking is, on average, more difficult to find in these neighborhoods.

The Profile also outlined all the different subareas on the city to analyze further curb use and needs by neighborhood.

At the March meeting, Nelson\Nygaard presented a future parking demands model with draft policy and infrastructure change scenarios. A discussion on the impacts on future parking demands and transportation trends included changes as a result of the GLX, continued residential growth, increased remote work, and demand for more public electric vehicle charging stations, to name a few.

Potential policies that Nelson\Nygaard is researching include:

- Demand distribution (for ex: demand-based curb and meter pricing)
- Demand reduction (ex: increase on street permit price)
- Capacity expansion (ex: adjusting meter start/end times)
- Safe and equitable access (ex: accessibility and universal design)
- Admin/Ops/Tech (ex: digitation tools)

Community Outreach:

There are also three public meetings incorporated into this study - the first one was held in November 2021, which focused on parking and curbside perception and concerns. The next two public meetings will be held in the spring (mid-May) and summer when the draft and then final recommendations are ready to be presented and discussed.

Sincerely,



Judy Pineda Neufeld
Ward 7 City Councilor