



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Traffic and Parking Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 16, 2026

6:00 PM

The meeting was held virtually via Zoom and was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair Sait and adjourned at 7:30 pm on a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Wheeler, Mbah and Sait), 0 opposed.

Others present: Brad Rawson - Director of Mobility, Justin Schreiber - Senior Transportation Planner and Delaney Fisher-Cassioli - Clerk of Committees

Roll Call

Present: City Councilor At Large Ben Wheeler, City Councilor At Large Wilfred N. Mbah and Ward Five City Councilor Naima Sait

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [25-1707](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Traffic and Parking Committee Meeting of October 27, 2025.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wheeler, City Councilor At Large Mbah and Ward Five City Councilor Sait

2. Committee Minutes (ID # [25-1777](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Traffic and Parking Committee Meeting of November 17, 2025.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: City Councilor At Large Wheeler, City Councilor At Large Mbah and Ward Five City Councilor Sait

3. Public Communication (ID # [26-0086](#)) Pedestrian and Transit Advisory Committee submitting comments re: McGrath Boulevard.

This item was discussed with item 26-0060.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

4. Order (ID # [26-0070](#)) By Councilor Wheeler, Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Sait, Councilor Hardt, Councilor Link and Councilor Clingan That the Director of Mobility discuss with this Council the recommendations of the Pedestrian and Transit Advisory Committee regarding the 25% design documents of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation McGrath Boulevard project.

This item was discussed with item 26-0060.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

5. Resolution
(ID # [26-0064](#))

By Councilor Link

That the Director of Mobility, install a NO TURN ON RED sign at the intersection of Bow Street and Warren Avenue to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety, and report back to this Council on implementation timing.

Director of Mobility Brad Rawson reported that the team has reviewed the order and completed a technical evaluation, determining that a new sign should be installed. He added that installation is being scheduled, likely in the spring when the weather improves.

Councilors Mbah and Wheeler thanked staff for acting quickly and moving the project forward.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

6. Resolution
(ID # [26-0060](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin

That the Director of Engineering and the Director of Mobility work to block off the end of Virginia Street and Aldrich Street to through traffic.

Director of Mobility Brad Rawson shared his enthusiasm for the progress of the MassDOT project, noting that it reflects more than 20 years of work. Director Rawson stated that he feels confident in the current direction and appreciates input from community members and advisory groups, adding that MassDOT continues to meet regularly with advisory committees and the McGrath Coalition. He reported that the project is approaching the 25% design milestone, with construction anticipated to take approximately four years, with the goal of improving neighborhood connectivity and enhancing pedestrian and commuter safety. As the project advances, the next phase will focus on advancing utility coordination and drainage design, building on a framework in which street connections and crosswalk locations have generally been identified. MassDOT expects to begin construction in FY2027, with projected annual expenditures of \$20-30 million. Director Rawson noted that the next design milestone is anticipated in about one year and that there will be meaningful opportunities for community engagement. He also shared that the project team meets regularly, including weekly and biweekly meetings and design sessions, and that City staff have been invited into the process as collaborative partners, describing this as the most collaborative approach he has experienced.

Director Rawson reviewed the attachment T&P - 2026-03-17 dot-hwy-mcgrath-presentation-2025Dec9-1 (with 26-0086, 26-0070) and Senior Transportation Planner Justin Schreiber reviewed the PTAC - McGrath Boulevard attachment.

Councilor Wheeler noted that traffic planners use modeling software to simulate vehicle trips and assess the impacts of infrastructure changes. He also raised concerns from safe streets advocates regarding HAWK crossings and asked for clarification. Planner Schreiber explained that HAWK signals remain dark when not activated, which may lead drivers to become accustomed to not stopping, and that toward the end of a pedestrian crossing phase, the signal may flash red to indicate that vehicles may proceed even while pedestrians are still completing their crossing.

In response to a question from Councilor Mbah, Planner Schreiber stated that the design team has worked to narrow the roadway where possible, though MassDOT has not been receptive to more significant reductions. He noted that, due to sustained advocacy from community members, City staff, and mayoral administrations, raised crosswalks have been incorporated, despite not previously being implemented on a high-volume roadway of this type. Planner Schreiber also stated that while further reductions in posted speeds may not be feasible, speeds are expected to be lower at crosswalks; current speeds in the area are closer to 40 mph, and the team is continuing to advocate for design elements to reduce speeds, with the possibility of conducting a speed study after construction.

Chair Wheeler expressed concern about the proposed Z-shaped crosswalk on McGrath Boulevard, noting that the offset alignment may appear disconnected. Planner Schreiber responded that the design team is working to minimize crossing distances. Regarding median design, Planner Schreiber explained that medians are necessary for safety, particularly for turning movements, and to retain space for large trees. Sidewalks are proposed to be 8 feet wide, and at intersections, medians will serve as pedestrian refuge areas designed to accommodate individuals with mobility devices, strollers, and families. He added that the design preserves the potential for future north-south transit service; Bus Route 85 is expected to run along McGrath Boulevard, and the MBTA is considering bus stop options.

Director Rawson and committee members expressed appreciation for the contributions of advocacy groups and the community. He also noted that the City has not completed its technical review of the proposed Aldrich-Virginia Street intersection change and suggests a ‘wait and see’ approach, until after the McGrath project is implemented.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Referenced Documents:

- T&P - 2026-03-17 dot-hwy-mcgrath-presentation-2025Dec9-1 (with 26-0086, 26-0070)