

## MEMORANDUM

To: Public Health and Public Safety Committee  
From: Chief Femino, Somerville Police Department  
Date: July 10, 2023

---

**23-0913 That the Chief of Police and the Director of Mobility report to this Council on the methodology used for pedestrian and cyclist stops made by Police Department officers.**

Traffic Officers are assigned to areas where accidents occur frequently, or a high number of complaints are received. The goal of those assigned to the Traffic Division is to enforce and educate the public about traffic rules to eliminate transportation injuries and fatalities. In addition to regular traffic enforcement for motorists, the Municipal Road Safety Grant provides funding for educating cyclists and pedestrians to ensure compliance with traffic rules. During grant enforcement periods, written citations in the form of monetary fines can be issued. However, SPD relies heavily on issuing warnings to cyclists and pedestrians for violations for the purpose of educating the public. Issuance of a warning is not only a tool to educate the public but also allows SPD to track data under the grant.

**23-0912 That the Chief of Police halt the use of unmarked patrol vehicles for all traffic enforcement.**

The Traffic Division of the Department has been assigned one vehicle (Ford pick-up) that is currently unmarked. The vehicle is used for traffic and education enforcement, as well as transporting large items from one location to another (for example, barricades). The vehicle is funded by UASI funds and cannot be marked permanently as other municipalities can borrow this vehicle if necessary. However, the department is working to explore ways to add a temporary marking on the vehicle when it is being for enforcement and education purposes.

**23-0616 That the Chief of Police and the Director of Communications and Community Engagement discuss with this Council the viability of establishing a gun buyback event, focused on those who may be a danger to themselves, including strategic outreach involving community partners in the healthcare industry.**

SPD has organized gun buyback events since at least 2013 in conjunction with the Middlesex Sheriff's Department. This year, an event is likely to be scheduled in late July. SPD will work with the Director of Communications and Community Engagement to discuss strategic outreach to community partners, including those providing mental health services, to publicize this event. The event will be open to all those who want to participate to avoid stigmatizing any particular community.

Massachusetts' Red Flag law allows law enforcement to proactively remove weapons in the event they become aware of someone who is at risk due to mental illness or other behavioral

health issues. This allows SPD to work with the Community Outreach, Help and Recovery (COHR) division to prevent someone in crisis from accessing guns.

**22-2111 That the Chief of Police report to this Council, the percentage of requested traffic details for construction projects that have been filled by Somerville Police Department officers, filled by non-Somerville police officers, and unfilled, for the past three years.**

SPD will provide an audit of a variety of construction-season weeks over the past 18 months at the next Public Health and Public Safety Committee meeting.