CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PARKING

June 12, 2026

RE: File Number: 26-1019 Resolution: 220848

That the Director of Parking discuss with this Council the possibility of administering a parking permit type intended for vehicle owners with driveways, at a lower price than standard residential parking permits, which would allow only daytime and evening street parking but not overnight street parking, and which would not be usable during street cleaning or snow emergencies

Dear Council,

The Parking Department has reviewed the possibility of creating a reduced-cost residential parking permit for vehicle owners who have access to off-street parking, such as a driveway, and that would allow parking on public streets during daytime and evening hours only, while prohibiting overnight parking, street cleaning parking, and parking during snow emergencies. While the concept may appear straightforward, implementation and enforcement would present significant operational and administrative challenges.

From an enforcement perspective, such a permit would require the City to verify compliance during overnight hours. The current residential permit system does not require staff to distinguish between permit classes based on time-of-day restrictions. Enforcing an overnight parking prohibition for a specific permit type would require additional overnight enforcement personnel. Based on current operations, this would necessitate staffing a full overnight shift of Parking Control Officers, resulting in substantial ongoing personnel costs.

Additionally, the City has no reliable mechanism to determine which residents have access to a driveway and which do not. Many residential properties contain driveways that are shared, restricted, or rented separately from housing units. In numerous cases, tenants elect not to utilize available driveway spaces because landlords charge an additional fee for their use. As a result, the mere existence of a driveway at a property does not necessarily indicate that a resident has practical access to off-street parking.

Administering such a program would require significant staff resources to verify eligibility, investigate disputes, process appeals, and continually monitor changes in occupancy and parking arrangements. These administrative burdens would be considerable and would likely outweigh any operational benefits realized through the creation of a separate permit category.

For these reasons, the Parking Department does not recommend the creation of a reduced-cost permit based on driveway access at this time.

Best regards,
Suzanne Rinfret
Director of Parking