

Updates:

October 28th - updated titles of section after feedback from meeting with Commission for Persons with Disabilities chair and member regarding proposal and upcoming meeting.

October 14th - Discussed with Harriotte Hurie around weight of handicapped vehicles may be over the weight limit we have specified. We are adding an exception.

Summary of goals:

Incentivize transit, walk, and bike trips as per Somervision.

Disincentivize motor vehicle trips as per Somervision.

Allow residents to use parking and parking tickets as a funding source to do the types of things the community wants (including lowering cost of parking for certain people and businesses) via a parking benefit district.

In general, we recommend implementing the suggested policies in the Citywide Parking and Curb Use [Study](#), and more specifically we recommend the following:

Formal Proposal:

Day Time and Night Time Parking Permits

Off-street parking access (related to Parking and Curb Use Study strategy B3). An address should not qualify for street permit parking if it has sufficient off-street parking for the number of vehicles owned at that address. In addition, since on-street parking is most scarce at night, that is the most valuable time to incentivize people to use their driveways. Offer two parking permits: one that is 24-hours , and one that is only for daytime use. The daytime-use only should be significantly cheaper. That way residents with driveways will still be able to go other places in Somerville, but will park in their driveways during the overnight hours when on-street parking is most scarce.

On Street Parking Cost

In addition, we recommend escalating cost structure by vehicle count per household/address (**Parking study strategies B1**) For example, annual base costs for addresses with no off-street parking could follow this schedule:

\$100 for first vehicle

\$200 for second vehicle

\$300 for third vehicle

If an address has off-street parking access to store some but not all vehicles at that address, the first permit cost should be higher, for example starting at \$200 instead of \$100. (**Parking study strategy B2, B3**). This pricing is based on the assumption that the first car will be parked in the driveway and use parking permits when parked elsewhere in Somerville. Permit cost could be discounted for low-income households. ([Parking study strategy B6](#))

Transition to monthly instead of annual permits ([Parking study strategies A5, A7, A8, A10](#)). The Parking Department could consider a different permit identification method for this item, for example a license-plate-based system instead of sticker-based. This could make monthly or even more short-term, flexible parking pass duration possible. It also makes parking prices more salient to Somerville residents, which could encourage people on the fence about selling a car to do so.

Add an additional cost for increased vehicle weight. For this, there could be \$100 extra added to the permit (or double the permit cost) for excessive weight (using Montreal's definition, defined as above 3,500 lbs gross vehicle weight rating for gas cars or above 4,500 lbs for EVs). We also suggest reviewing Chicago's [program](#) of four weight classes: less than 3,500 lbs, 3,500-5,000, 5,000-6,000, and greater than 6,000 lbs, with respective annual pricing from \$53 to \$235. Exceptions would be provided for wheelchair accessible vehicles. ([Source](#))

By incorporating higher costs for heavier vehicles, the city will more easily be able to cover increased cost of pavement maintenance and more curb space occupied by those larger, typically longer vehicles. [See City of Cambridge city solicitor opinion memo](#) and [agenda item](#) evaluating the legality of adjusting transportation fees related to this recommendation.

Safe vehicle screening

When applying for a parking permit, residents must answer one additional question about whether the vehicle has any of the following hazardous aftermarket modifications. If the answer is yes, the vehicle does not qualify for a permit. Examples are:

1. Illegal lifted suspensions, in excess of than 2 inches per CMR
2. Bull bars
3. Hub spikes
4. Modified mufflers and tailpipes (used for "rolling coal" and for startling bicyclists/pedestrians/outdoor diners)
5. License plates missing, defaced, or obscured by plate covers (used for ghost cars to avoid tracing to hit and runs and to avoid paying tolls)
6. Illegally tinted windows

In addition, we propose that parking enforcement officers who find these unsafe modifications on parked vehicles begin to enforce these as parking violations. (Discussions with Somerville Police Traffic Unit have indicated that unsafe vehicle modifications are not a focus, and that even if they were, they would only be enforced as part of a moving violation, not when parked.)

Parking Benefit District

Implement Somerville Citywide Parking District funded by revenue from the other proposal element. While Somerville doesn't currently have Parking Districts, we propose a citywide district (or neighborhood specific ones in the future) that the funding from increased on-

street parking permit fees goes to support. Oversight for this new parking approach could either come from existing bodies or a new steering committee as Brookline Village has done. Areas that have implemented Parking Districts, such as Northwest Portland, OR have already seen the benefits of being able to give out free transit passes to residents in the neighborhood, street beautification projects, or even money for businesses to pay for their customers' parking. [Link to Brookline Village Parking Benefit District Ideas](#). Either of these models can be localized to Somerville.

We encourage the City Council and the Mayor to bring these ideas to city staff to start the discussion on what is possible for leveraging Somerville's parking policies as a tool to create safer streets for all. SASS welcomes collaborative discussion with any elected official or city staff member who would like to discuss further.