



July 24, 2026

Mayor Jake Wilson
93 Highland Ave
Somerville, MA 02143

Somerville City Council
93 Highland Ave
Somerville, MA 02143

Sen. Patricia D. Jehlen
2nd Middlesex
24 Beacon St, Rm 424
Boston, MA 02133

Rep. Mike Connolly
26th Middlesex
24 Beacon St, Rm 167
Boston, MA 02133

Rep. Erika Uyterhoeven
27th Middlesex
24 Beacon St, Rm 473B
Boston, MA 02133

Rep. Christine Barber
34th Middlesex
24 Beacon St, Rm 167
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Mayor Wilson, Somerville City Councilors, Senator Jehlen, and Representatives Connolly, Uyterhoeven, and Barber,

Like so many others in Greater Boston, we on the Somerville Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC) are devastated by the recent death of [Louisa Gag](#). On the morning of July 9, while riding her bike to work, Louisa was struck and killed by a person driving a truck. The fatal crash happened near Roxbury Crossing at the intersection of Terrace Street and Parker Street in Mission Hill. This is an intersection [the City of Boston had flagged as dangerous](#) – lacking in “bike safety and comfort” – as early as 2023. The project to make this intersection safer has since been paused indefinitely. These details make clear that **Louisa’s death was preventable.**

Louisa was a dear family member, friend, and colleague to many. **She was also a dedicated public servant and pillar of the safe streets community in Greater Boston.** Louisa worked at Livable Streets Alliance for several years before becoming an Active Transportation Planner at the City of Boston in 2022. While at Livable Streets, Louisa served as a Policy Fellow for then-City Councilor Michelle Wu. Over the past two years, Louisa focused on a [major citywide expansion of Boston’s bikeshare system](#). [A City of Boston colleague said that Louisa](#) was “more responsible than any other individual for the amazing growth – and thoughtful growth – of our bikeshare system.”

Louisa’s impact extended to Somerville. In her role at Livable Streets, Louisa helped the City develop the [Vision Zero Action Plan](#) that since 2020 has shaped our community’s success on street safety. It is because of the City’s actions under Vision Zero that Somerville has not suffered a fatal crash for three years in a row. A [recent report](#) found that Somerville is “poised to be a national leader on traffic safety” because of our active commitment to Vision Zero. It’s also under Somerville’s Vision Zero Action Plan that PTAC was created. **Our committee and the entire Somerville community are indebted to Louisa.**

[At a July 16 vigil, hundreds filled Boston's City Hall Plaza to honor Louisa](#). Colleagues remembered her as “a harmonizer of conflicting perspectives and personalities,” the person they would turn to when they found themselves struggling. Boston Mayor Michelle Wu herself, speaking through tears, said: “**We owe Louisa more than our grief. We owe her our action. We have to do better.**”

It is in this spirit that we write to you now. **Louisa's death must be a wake-up call.** We must stop framing street safety as a battle of convenience between transportation modes, a zero-sum game with winners and losers. We must stop dehumanizing people on bikes, dismissing them as annoyances undeserving of safe infrastructure rather than as beloved members of our community. It is time to recognize street safety for what it is: a set of life-saving measures that prevent traffic violence from ravaging our communities.

In honor of Louisa's life and work, and to prevent future tragedies like the one that took her from us too soon, we call on you – our elected representatives – to do three things:

1. For our local officials, **recommit publicly and materially to Vision Zero**: We applaud Mayor Wilson for [fully funding the City of Somerville's Mobility Division](#) amid a year of budget cuts and staff layoffs. And yet, our Vision Zero Action Plan hasn't been updated since 2020. Many street safety projects take years to move from planning to implementation, even though community support is strong. Mobility staff are talented, thoughtful, engaged, and visionary – but they are at capacity. Now is the moment for strong executive leadership to accelerate us on a transformative path to Vision Zero: a world where we don't accept traffic fatalities as a given, where we invest in street safety because we know it saves lives.
2. For our state officials, **pass comprehensive Safety Camera enforcement legislation**: We are thrilled to see the recent adoption of [Senator Brownsberger's amendment](#) to [S.3178](#), which would enable municipalities to implement speed camera enforcement for school, safety, and construction zones. We call on future members of the conference committee to ensure this amendment is maintained during the reconciliation process. While this legislation is absolutely necessary, it is also insufficient. We call on the legislature to enable municipalities to implement speed camera enforcement beyond specific zones to ensure dangerous intersections and corridors are not omitted from this life-saving technology. Additionally, we call on the legislature to enable municipalities to implement red light cameras and expand automated curb enforcement beyond the current pilots. No amendments were introduced this session regarding the former technology, and [Senator Crighton's amendment](#) regarding the latter was withdrawn. PTAC has been advocating for Safety Camera enforcement legislation since 2021 ([Senate letter](#), [House letter](#)). Meanwhile, dangerous driving behavior like speeding, red-light running, and crosswalk noncompliance have continued to endanger community members on a daily basis. [In Somerville](#), many streets see over 500 speeding vehicles per day, while intersections under measurement have seen up to 7% of vehicles running red lights during evening peak hours alone. [Studies in other US cities](#) have found Safety Camera enforcement to have long-term effectiveness in preventing dangerous driving behavior, [Somerville's own automated parking enforcement efforts](#) have improved pedestrian safety and bus reliability, and there are [concrete strategies](#) for pursuing automated enforcement consistent with individual privacy and data security. It is long past time to pass comprehensive versions of this urgently needed legislation.

3. Also for our state officials, **pass and introduce new legislation to strengthen truck-safety requirements**: The 2023 Act to Reduce Traffic Fatalities [requires state-contracted trucks](#) to be equipped with safety side-guards, mirrors, and backup cameras to reduce fatalities of people walking and biking. This requirement was intended to reduce devastating right-hook fatalities – yet that is exactly the way Louisa was killed. Truck-safety requirements must be expanded to cover many more vehicles than those contracted by the state, since every truck poses a danger to people biking and walking on our streets. We support [Senator Brownsberger's recently adopted amendment](#) creating a presumption of negligence for drivers of heavy vehicles not equipped with safety equipment when they get into crashes with vulnerable road users. While we believe this proposed legislation would create a strong incentive for all heavy vehicles to be outfitted with safety equipment, we call on the legislature to explore further avenues to ensure all trucks on Massachusetts' roads operate with critical safety features.

[One of Louisa's former colleagues recalled](#) that “empathy came to her like breathing.” We on PTAC feel that we owe it to Louisa to carry on the legacy of her work as she would have: with compassion, empathy, and a deep understanding that street safety is about saving people's lives. We call on you to join us.

Sincerely,

The Somerville Pedestrian & Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC)

Ted Alexander
Ginny Alverson
Meredith Brown
Rachel Chiquoine
Laura Evans
Christopher Ferry
Susan Foley
Christopher Friend
Preston Gutelius
Satoko Hirai

Sebastian Lopes-Filho
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Steven Mulder
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CC: OSPCD Mobility, City of Somerville
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Burhan Azeem, Candidate for Massachusetts State Senate, 2nd Middlesex District
Tom Hopcroft, Candidate for Massachusetts State Senate, 2nd Middlesex District
Neil Miller, Candidate for Massachusetts House of Representatives, 26th Middlesex District
Olivia Gilligan Corsetti, Candidate for Massachusetts House of Representatives, 27th Middlesex District
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