



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR

THOMAS F. GALLIGANI, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Jim,

Thank you for taking the time to gather signatures and submit a traffic calming petition to the City of Somerville. The following letter is in response to your petition for Irving Street, which includes a summary of our findings and an explanation of the next steps. We will also publish this letter to the City website at www.somervillema.gov/trafficcalming.

Traffic Calming Program Background

Somerville is a [Vision Zero](#) city that is committed to improving safety on our streets. One way that the City makes progress toward this goal is by identifying locations where vehicle speeding is a concern and then building speed humps to reduce speeds. However, we receive more reports of speeding concerns than we can address each year and must prioritize which streets will receive speed humps.

There are many factors that influence which streets we consider each year, including but not limited to community feedback collected through outreach, 311 service requests, city staff recommendations, city councilor input, larger-scale street reconstruction projects and more. The traffic calming petition that you have submitted is one of the ways that we learn about where safety issues may exist, while also providing an opportunity for community members to share their advocacy and support for traffic calming on a particular street. All these inputs are then accounted for in a data-driven process that helps us determine which locations are the highest priorities and ensures that traffic calming interventions are equitably distributed.

Status of Your Petition

The traffic calming petition process involves several steps, including:

- Acceptance and certification of petition
- Collection of data for your street
- Evaluation of that data

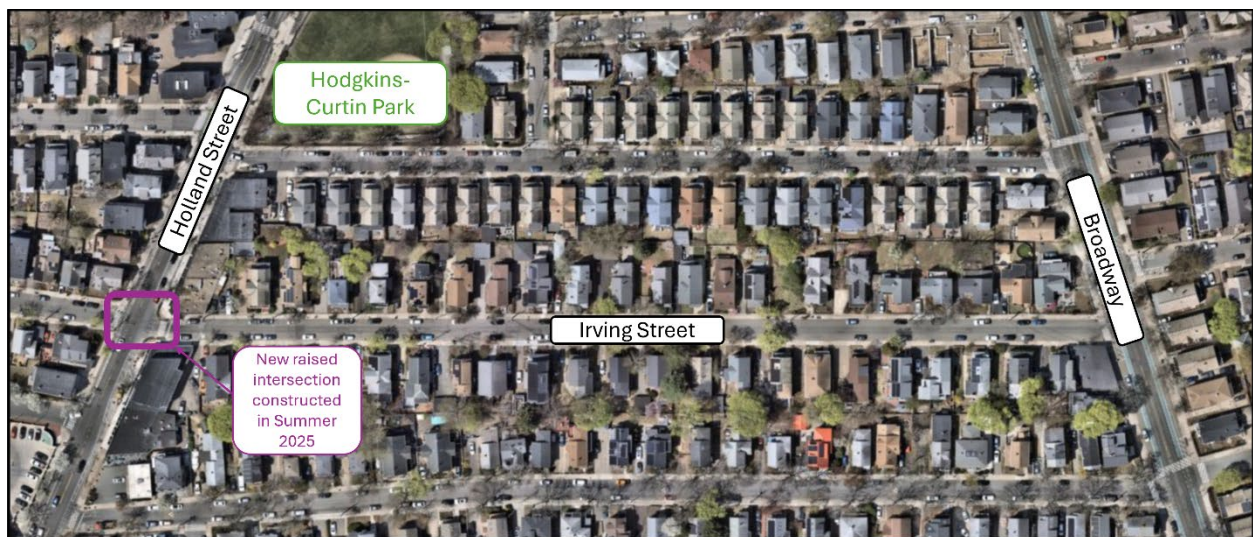
Following these steps, the City determines if traffic calming installations are warranted and what traffic calming tools are most appropriate.

The initial investigation and data collection for Irving Street has been completed. The next section of this letter will summarize the results.

Traffic Calming Assessment

To assess a street or street segment for traffic calming, we start by collecting and evaluating vehicle speeds and vehicle volumes. We then review additional characteristics of the street such as width and nearby land use, prioritizing streets that are near schools, parks, affordable housing developments, and Community Path crossings. We also check to see if the street has been identified for any street pavement and sidewalk work, or prioritized in City plans such as the [Somerville Bicycle Network Plan](#) and [Vision Zero Action Plan](#). Below are details regarding this assessment.

Neighborhood Context and Adjacent Land Uses



Irving Street is an approximately 1,160-foot-long street located in Ward 6, situated between Broadway and Holland Street. It is about 26 feet wide from the sidewalk curb to sidewalk curb and is a one-way southbound street for people driving. Irving Street is not located directly next to any parks or schools but is not far from Hodgkins-Curtin Park. Irving Street is designated as a [Safety Zone](#) with a 20 mph speed limit.

Speed Data

The City collects data on motor vehicle speeds and volumes using Automatic Traffic Recorder equipment placed on a street for two consecutive weekdays. These data help us to prioritize

traffic calming on streets where we see significant speeding. In response to your petition, the City collected speed and volume data in fall 2024.

Figure 1 shows a percentage breakdown of speeds for vehicles recorded in our data collection. The average speed of vehicles on Irving Street was measured to be 21 mph. We found that most cars traveled on the street between 20 and 24 miles per hour.

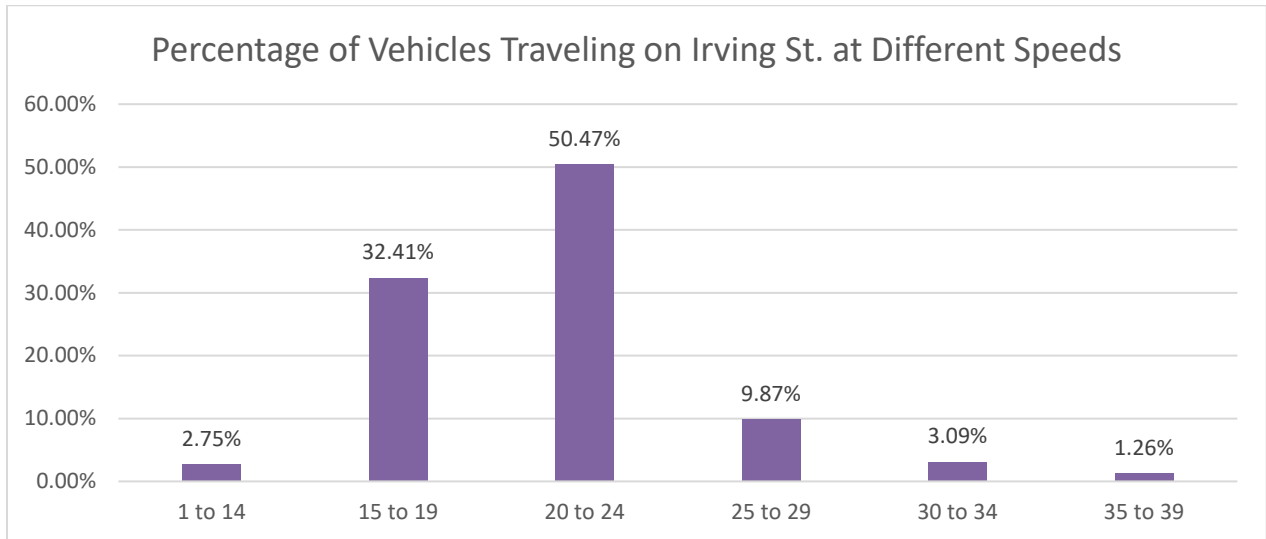


Figure 1. This chart shows the breakdown of vehicle speeds on Irving Street over the course of two days.

Figure 2 shows how the average speed on Irving Street is compared to the other streets in Somerville where we collected traffic data in fall 2024. We collected data on these other streets as they were also being considered for traffic calming or other safety improvements.

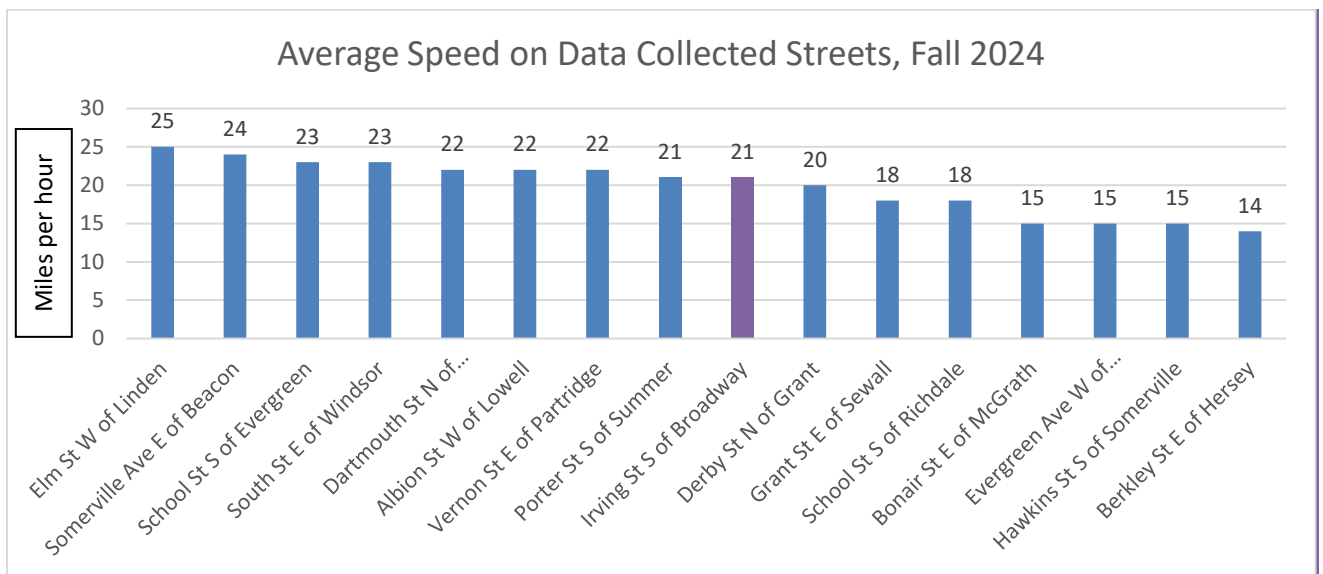


Figure 2. This chart shows the average measured motor vehicle speed for all streets where traffic data was collected in fall 2024. The average speed across all these streets is 19.8 mph.

Our highest priorities for traffic calming are on streets where we see average speeds exceeding 25 mph, but we still consider treatments on streets where we see average speeds over 20 mph.

Figure 3 shows how the 85th percentile speed for Irving Street compared to other streets in Somerville where traffic data was collected in fall 2024. The 85th percentile speed is the speed at which 85 percent of people drive below on a road segment.

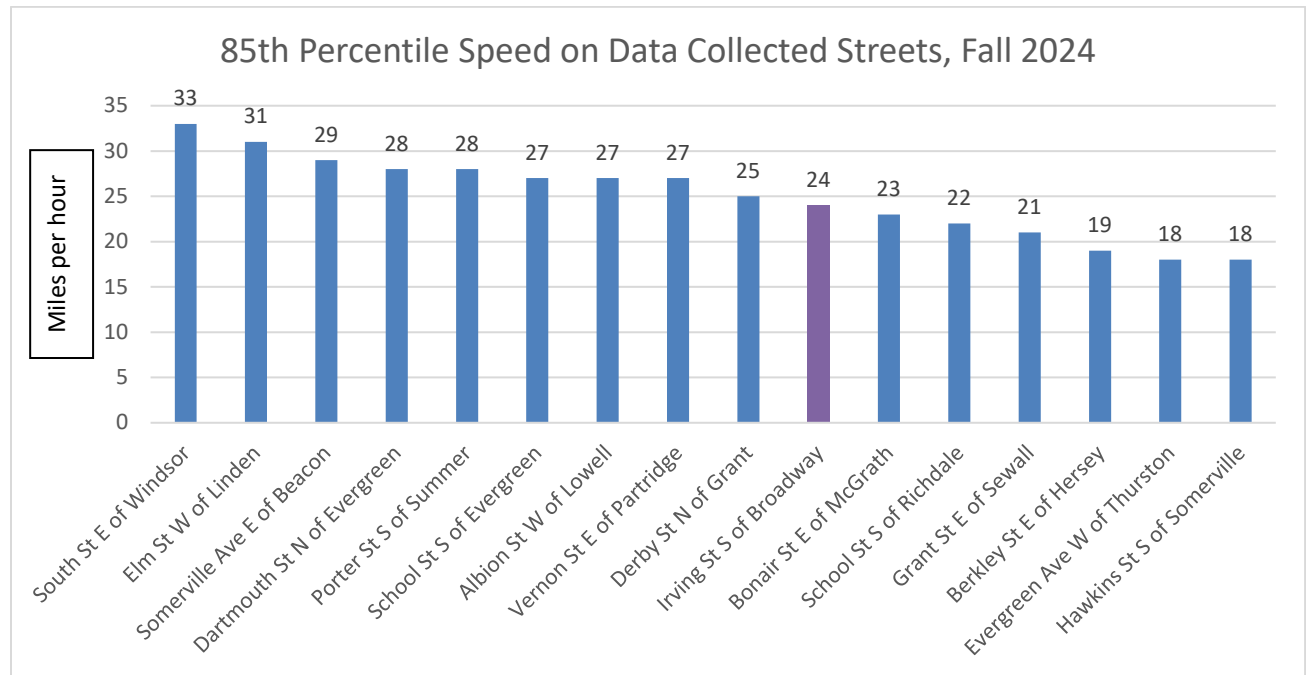


Figure 3. This chart shows the 85th percentile speed for all streets where traffic data was collected in fall 2024. The average 85th percentile speed across all streets is 25 mph.

Volume Data

In prioritizing residential streets for traffic calming, we often look for streets with higher-than-average volumes. Lower volumes do not preclude a street from receiving traffic calming, but we may be less likely to prioritize installing speed humps on it in the near future unless the street meets other priority considerations.

For Irving Street, our Automatic Traffic Recorder data indicates an average daily volume of 1,758 vehicles on a typical weekday, and an average of 96 vehicles in the evening peak hour. This means that if you were watching traffic during the evening rush hour, you could expect to see a vehicle going by every 45 seconds on average.

Figure 4 shows how the average daily volume on Irving Street compared to the other streets in Somerville where traffic data was collected in fall 2024.

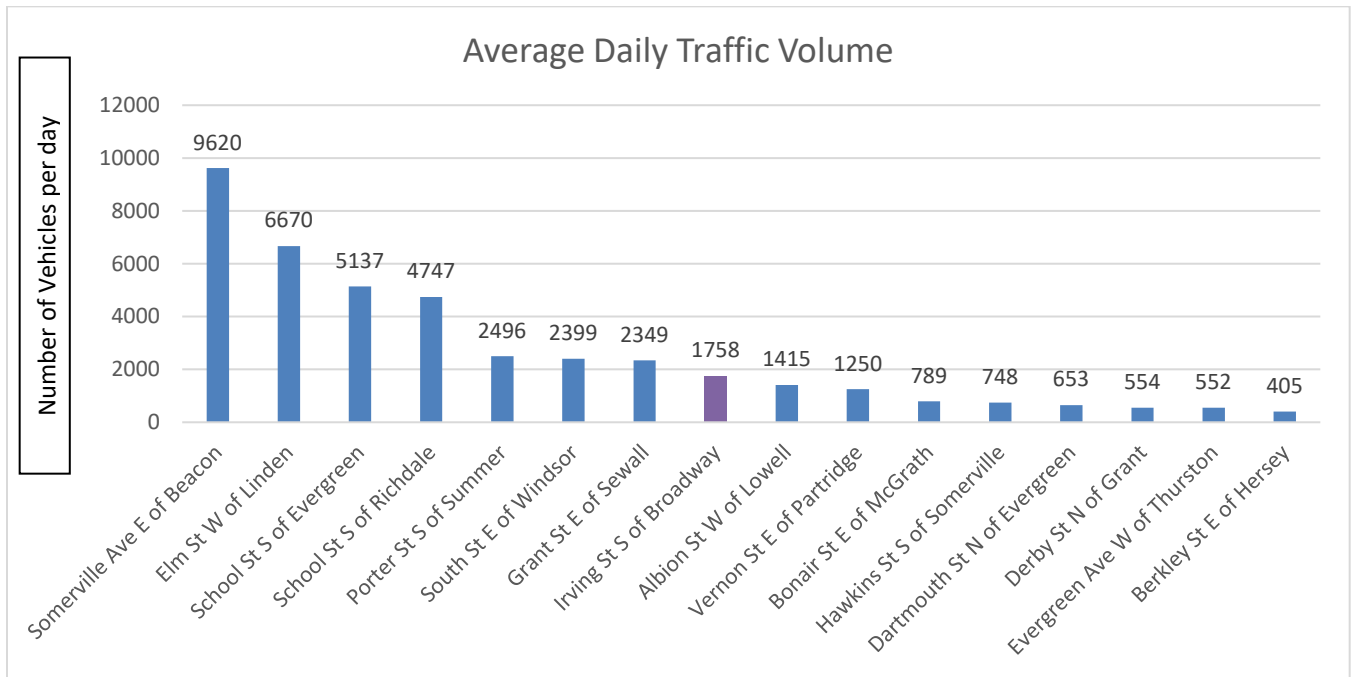


Figure 4. This chart shows the average measured weekday motor vehicle volume for all streets where traffic data was collected in fall 2024. The average volume across all these streets is 2,596 vehicles a day.

While speed and volume data on their own are helpful, we find that combining the two is important to determine where the most people are driving the fastest. The traffic data that we collected includes a metric that measures how many vehicles were measured going over 25 mph. Figure 5 shows how many vehicles were measured going over 25 mph as an average for the two weekdays during which data was collected. For Irving Street, there were approximately 187 vehicles traveling over 25 mph on an average day.

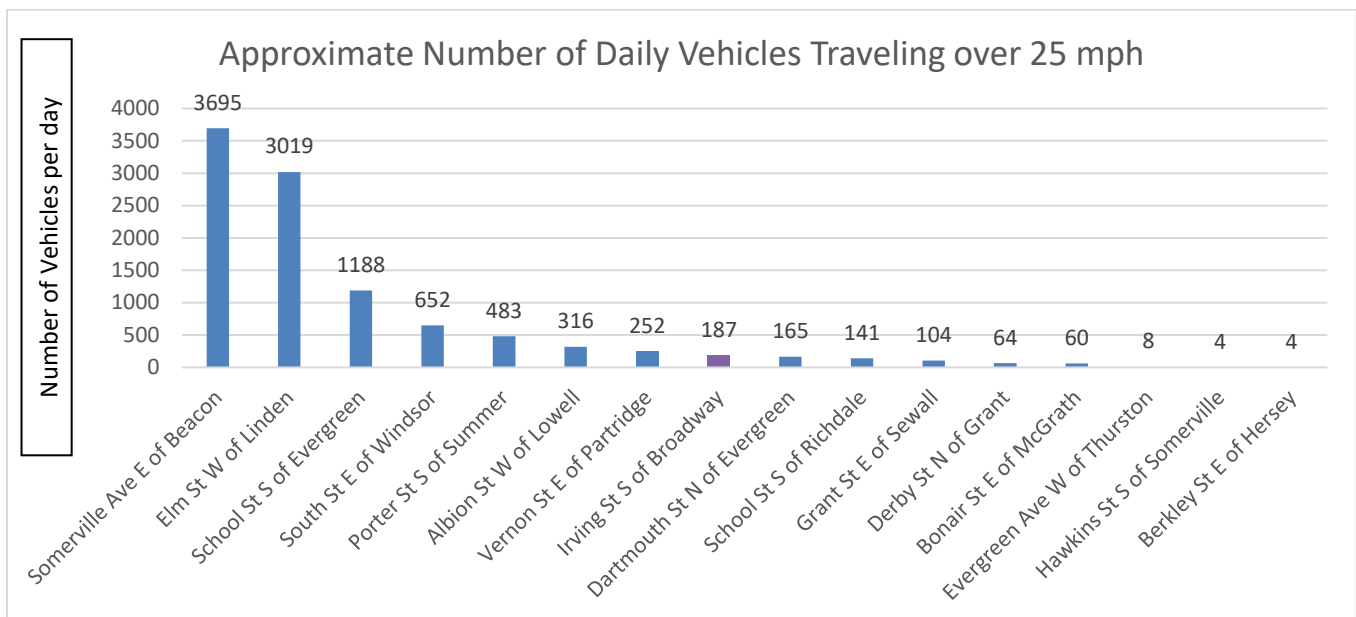


Figure 5. This chart shows the approximate number of motor vehicles that were measured traveling over 25 mph for all streets where traffic data was collected in fall 2024. The average across these streets is 646 vehicles/day.

Next steps

Based on our traffic evaluation and seeing that Irving Street meets some of our priority data considerations, we are considering it for our 2026/2027 speed hump list. We anticipate finalizing this list and publishing it in early 2026. If Irving Street is included on the final list, we will then be able to confirm with you that we will build speed humps in either 2026 or 2027.

We will reach out again when we have finalized this list. We also will announce our next batch of streets prioritized for speed hump construction in the [Mobility Newsletter](#) and update our [Traffic Calming map](#) on our [Traffic Calming webpage](#). Please consider subscribing to stay in the loop on a variety of Somerville transportation and traffic calming updates.

The City takes our Vision Zero commitment very seriously, and resident advocacy for safer streets is a critical element of our success in recent years. Thank you for being a part of that mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brad Rawson', with a long, sweeping underline.

Brad Rawson
Director, Mobility Division