



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JAKE WILSON
MAYOR

THOMAS F. GALLIGANI, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Alex,

Thank you for taking the time to gather signatures and submit a traffic calming petition for Norfolk Street to the City of Somerville. This letter is in response to your petition. It 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 installing 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.

We generally prioritize speed hump installation on streets directly next to schools, parks, civic spaces, Community Path crossings, and larger affordable housing developments. We also prioritize speed hump installation on streets that have high traffic volumes and high rates of speeding compared with other candidate streets. 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.

There are many factors that influence which streets we consider each year, including but not limited to: 311 service requests, constituent requests that we receive via email, community feedback at our in-person outreach events, input from our City Councilors, recommendations from our City staff, and traffic calming petitions like the one you have submitted. 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. The petition process provides an important opportunity for community members



to share their advocacy and support for traffic calming, so City staff prepare formal response letters when we receive requests via petition.

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 should be prioritized and what traffic calming tools are most appropriate. The initial investigation and data collection for Norfolk 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 speed and vehicle volume data. We then review additional characteristics of the street such as width and nearby land use. We also check to see if the street has been identified for any street pavement and sidewalk work, or if the street is prioritized in City plans such as the [Somerville Bicycle Network Plan](#) and [Vision Zero Action Plan](#). Below are details regarding this assessment for Norfolk Street.

Neighborhood Context and Adjacent Land Uses

Norfolk Street is a residential street located in Ward 2, running approximately 720 feet between Webster Avenue and Cambridge Street. The northernmost 260 feet of Norfolk Street is in Somerville, and the remainder is in the City of Cambridge. It is about 26 feet wide from sidewalk curb to sidewalk curb.

Norfolk Street operates as a northbound one-way street for motor vehicle travel. Norfolk Street is not located directly next to any parks or schools. It is located near the intersection of Webster Avenue and Prospect Street which is slated to be redesigned and reconstructed as part of the [Union Square Plaza and Streetscape Project Phase 1](#). In 2025, the City constructed new accessible curb ramps and a sidewalk curb extension at the intersection of Norfolk Street and Webster Avenue. This neighborhood context is illustrated in Figure 1 on the next page.



Figure 1: Neighborhood context

Speed Data

The City collects data on motor vehicle speed and volume using Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) 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 2025.

Figure 2 shows a percentage breakdown of speeds for vehicles recorded in our data collection. The average speed of vehicles on Norfolk Street was measured to be 16 mph.

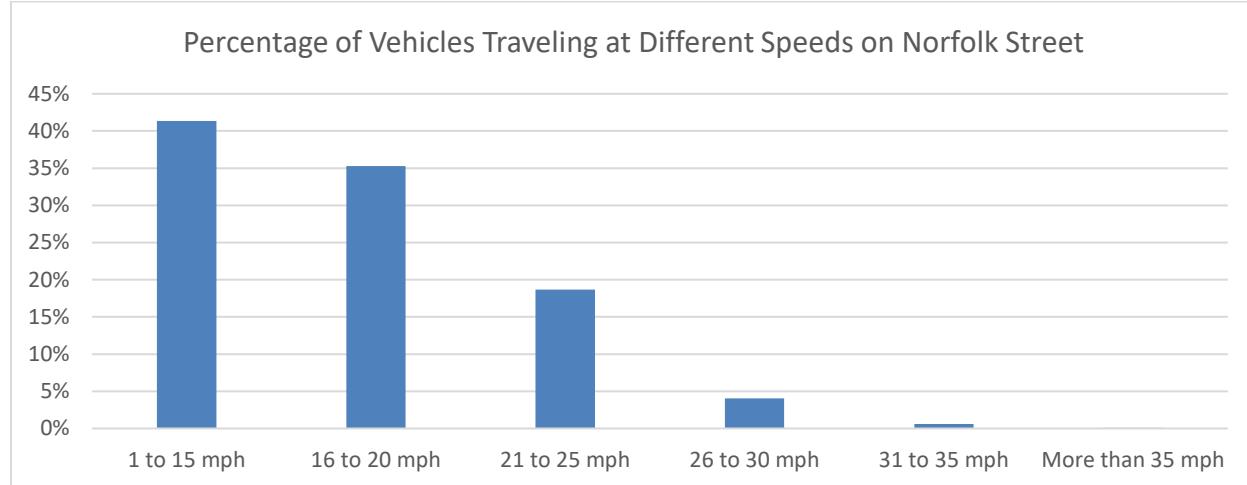


Figure 2. This chart shows a breakdown of vehicle speeds on Norfolk Street over the course of two days.

A way to measure speeding behavior is called the “85th percentile speed”. The 85th percentile speed is the speed at which 85 percent of people drive below on a road segment. The 85th percentile speed for Norfolk Street was 22 mph. Figure 3 shows how the 85th percentile speed for Norfolk Street compared to other streets in Somerville where traffic data was collected in 2025. We collected data on these other streets as they were also being considered for traffic calming or other safety improvements.

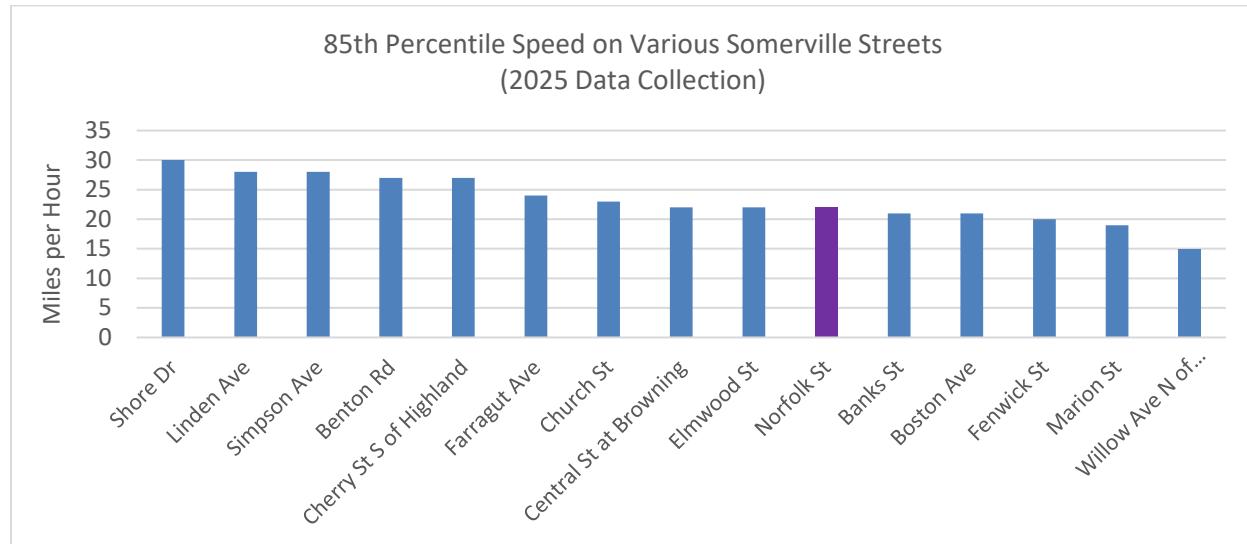


Figure 3. This chart shows the 85th percentile speed for all streets where traffic data was collected in fall 2025. The average 85th percentile speed across all streets is 23mph.

Volume Data

For Norfolk Street, our Automatic Traffic Recorder data indicates an average daily volume of 552 vehicles on a typical weekday, and an average of 75 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 48 seconds on average.

Figure 4 shows the average daily volume on Norfolk Street compared to the other streets in Somerville where traffic data was collected in 2025. We collected data on these other streets as they were also being considered for traffic calming or other safety improvements.

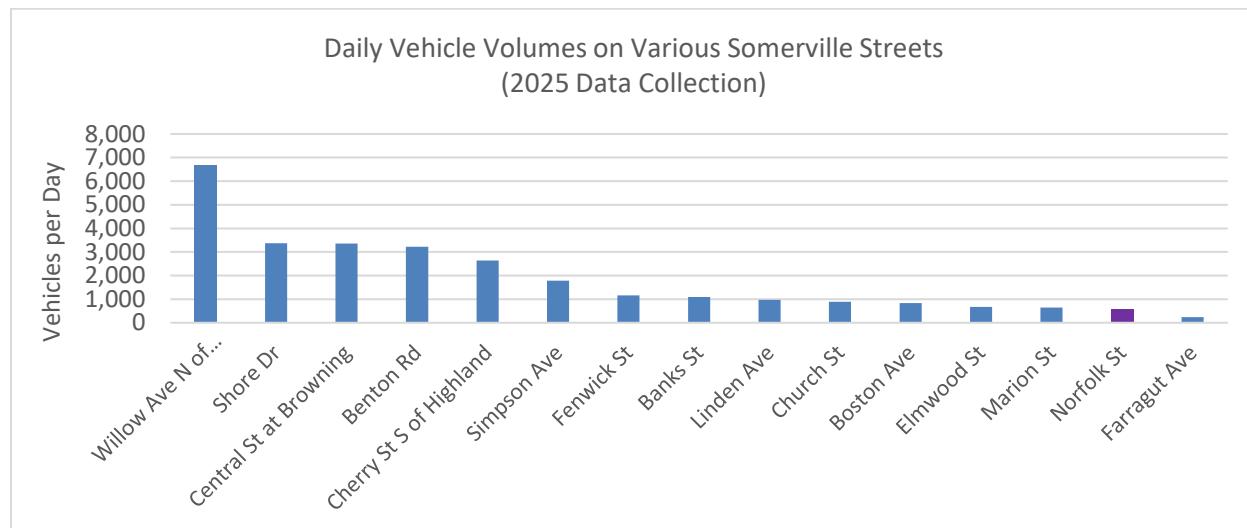


Figure 4. This chart shows the average weekday motor vehicle volume for streets where traffic data was collected in fall 2025. The average volume across all streets is 1,873.

Our speed and volume data also allow us to combine these two metrics to determine the relative frequency and severity of speeding behavior. 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 Norfolk Street, we recorded approximately 26 vehicles traveling over 25 mph on an average day.

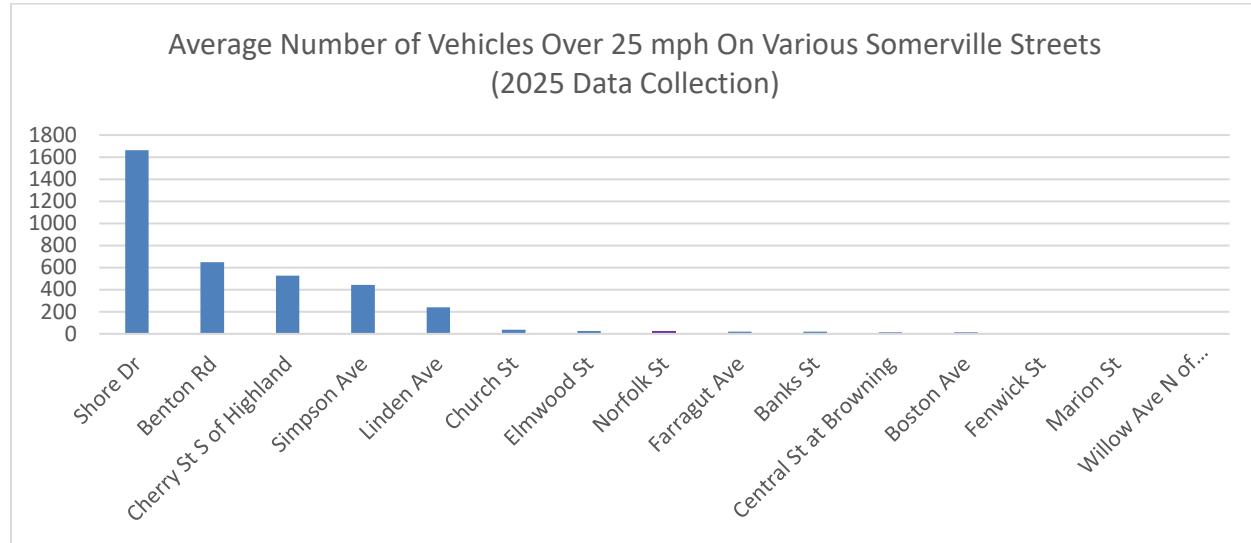


Figure 5. This chart shows the approximate number of motor vehicles that were measured traveling over 25 mph for streets where traffic data was collected in 2025. The average across these streets is 246 vehicles/day.

Next steps

At this time, the data indicate that Norfolk Street does not meet our priority guidance for Somerville's traffic calming program. The City prioritizes streets that have a minimum of 800 vehicles per day and 85th percentile speeds exceeding 25mph. Norfolk Street will remain part of our future consideration list, which is reviewed and updated annually.

Thank you again for your advocacy for safer streets and patience in our evaluation. If you are interested in staying in the loop on our Traffic Calming program, please consider subscribing to the [Mobility Newsletter](#). We also anticipate updating our [Traffic Calming map](#) on our [Traffic Calming webpage](#) in winter 2026 when we have identified which streets to prioritize for new speed humps to be constructed between 2026 and 2027.

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,


Brad Rawson
Director, Mobility Division