



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

THOMAS F. GALLIGANI, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Chris,

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 Ivaloo Street, Harrison Street, Morgan Street, and Kent Street. We focused our data collection on Ivaloo Street and Harrison Street. This letter includes a summary of our findings and an explanation of 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 are selected 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 factors that influences this process, while also providing an opportunity for community members to share their advocacy and support for traffic calming on a particular street. All of 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 the petitioned streets
- Evaluation of that data

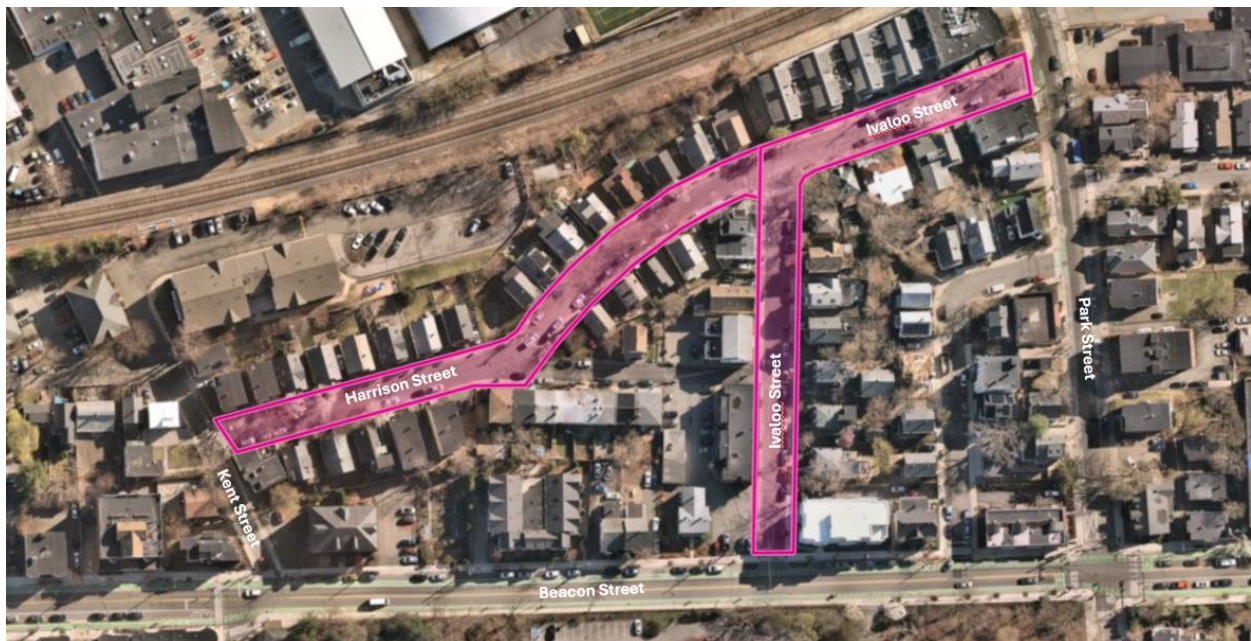
Following these steps, the City determines if traffic calming installations are warranted and what traffic calming tools are most appropriate.

The initial investigation and data collection for Ivaloo Street and Harrison 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, faith institutions 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



Ivaloo Street and Harrison Street are residential streets located in Ward 2, connecting to Park Street, Kent Street, and Beacon Street. Both streets are about 26 feet wide from sidewalk curb to sidewalk curb in most locations and are designated as [Safety Zones](#) with a 20mph 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 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 spring 2024.

For Ivaloo Street, the average speed was measured to be 20 mph. Figure 1 shows a percentage breakdown of speeds for vehicles recorded in our data collection. Most cars on the street are traveling between 20 and 24 miles per hour.

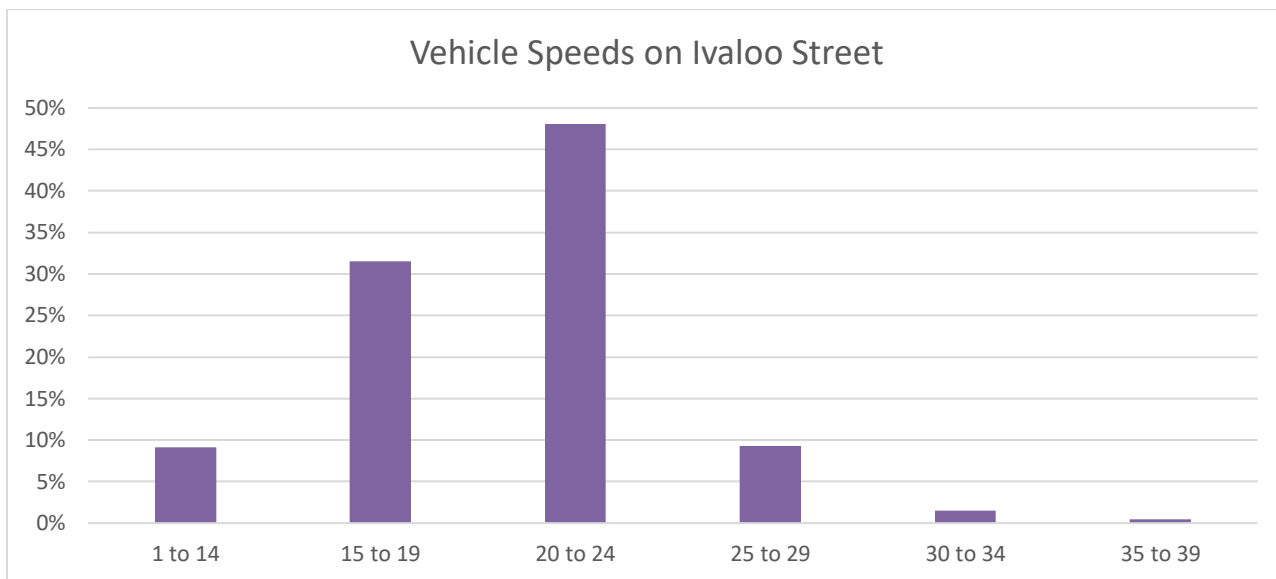


Figure 1. This chart shows the breakdown of vehicle speeds on Ivaloo Street over the course of two days.

For Harrison Street, the average speed was measured to be 19 mph. Figure 2 illustrates a percentage breakdown of speeds for vehicles recorded in our data collection. Most cars on the street are traveling between 15 and 19 miles per hour.

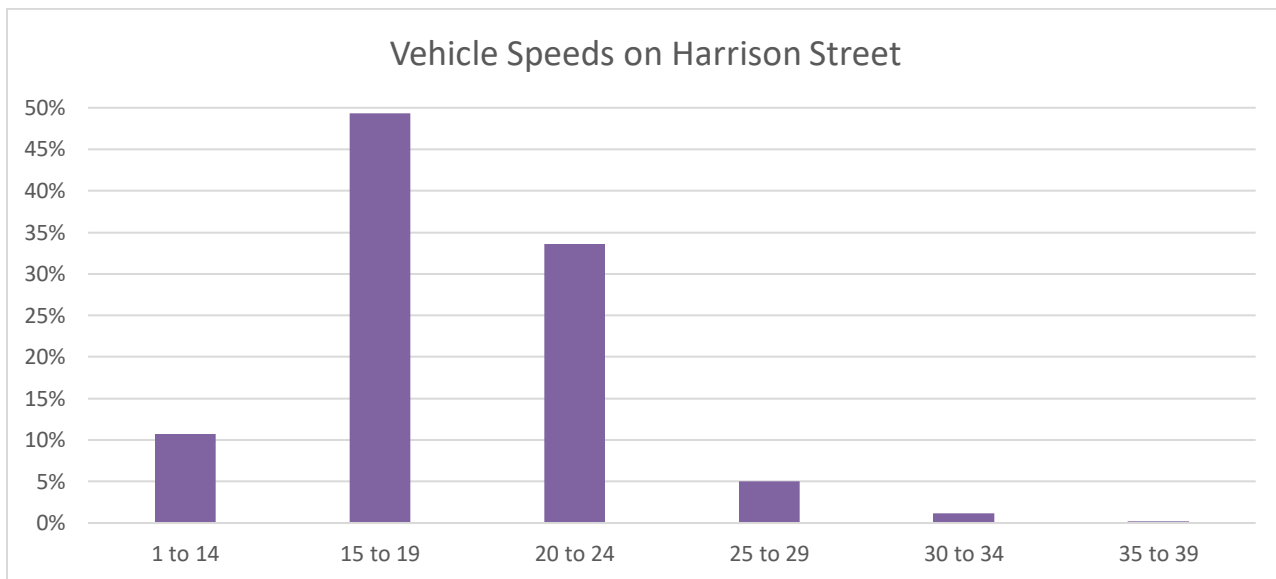


Figure 2. This chart shows the breakdown of vehicle speeds on Harrison Street over the course of two days.

Figure 3 shows how the average speeds on Ivaloo Street and Harrison Street compare to the other streets in Somerville where traffic data was collected in spring 2024.

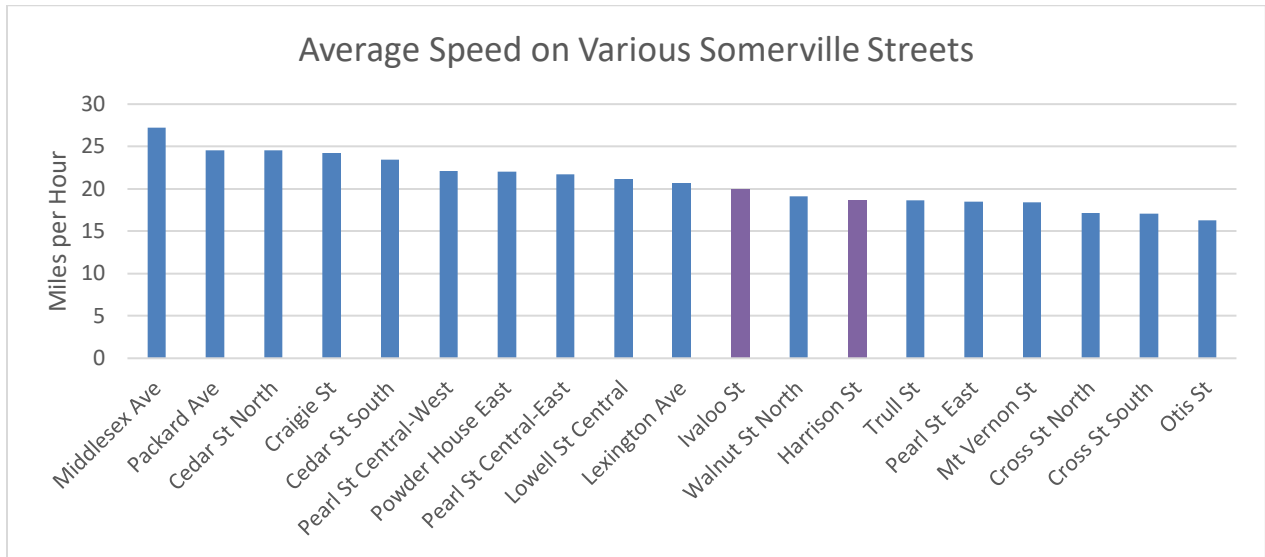


Figure 3. This chart shows the average motor vehicle speed for all streets where traffic data was collected in spring 2024. The average speed across these streets is 21 mph.

We are most concerned when we see average speeds exceeding 25 mph, but we still consider traffic calming on streets where we see average speeds exceeding 20 mph.

Volume Data

In prioritizing residential streets for traffic calming, we often look for streets with higher-than-average traffic 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 Ivaloo Street, our Automatic Traffic Recorder data indicate an average daily volume of 787 vehicles on a typical weekday, and an average of 98 vehicles in the evening peak hour. This means that if you were watching traffic during the evening rush hour, you could expect to see approximately three vehicles every two minutes.

For Harrison Street, our Automatic Traffic Recorder data indicate an average daily volume of 355 vehicles on a typical weekday, and an average of 33 vehicles in the evening peak hour. This means that if you were watching traffic during the evening rush hour, you could expect to see approximately one vehicle every two minutes.

Figure 4 shows how the average daily volumes on Ivaloo Street and Harrison Street compare to the other streets in Somerville where traffic data was collected in spring 2024.

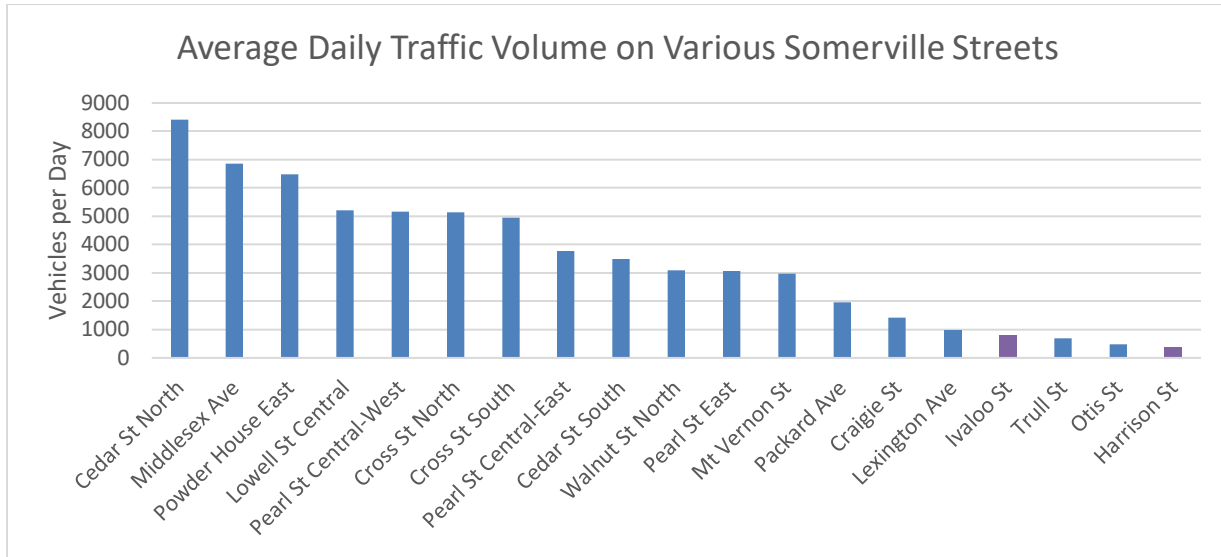


Figure 4. This chart shows the average weekday motor vehicle volume for all streets where traffic data was collected in spring 2024. The average volume across these streets is 3,400 vehicles/day.

While speed data 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 collect includes a metric of how many vehicles were measured going over a certain speed, in this case 25 mph. Figure 5 shows how many vehicles were measured going over 25 mph as an average of the two weekdays during which data were collected. For Ivaloo Street, there were approximately 51 vehicles per day traveling over 25 mph. For Harrison Street, there were approximately 18 vehicles per day traveling over 25 mph.

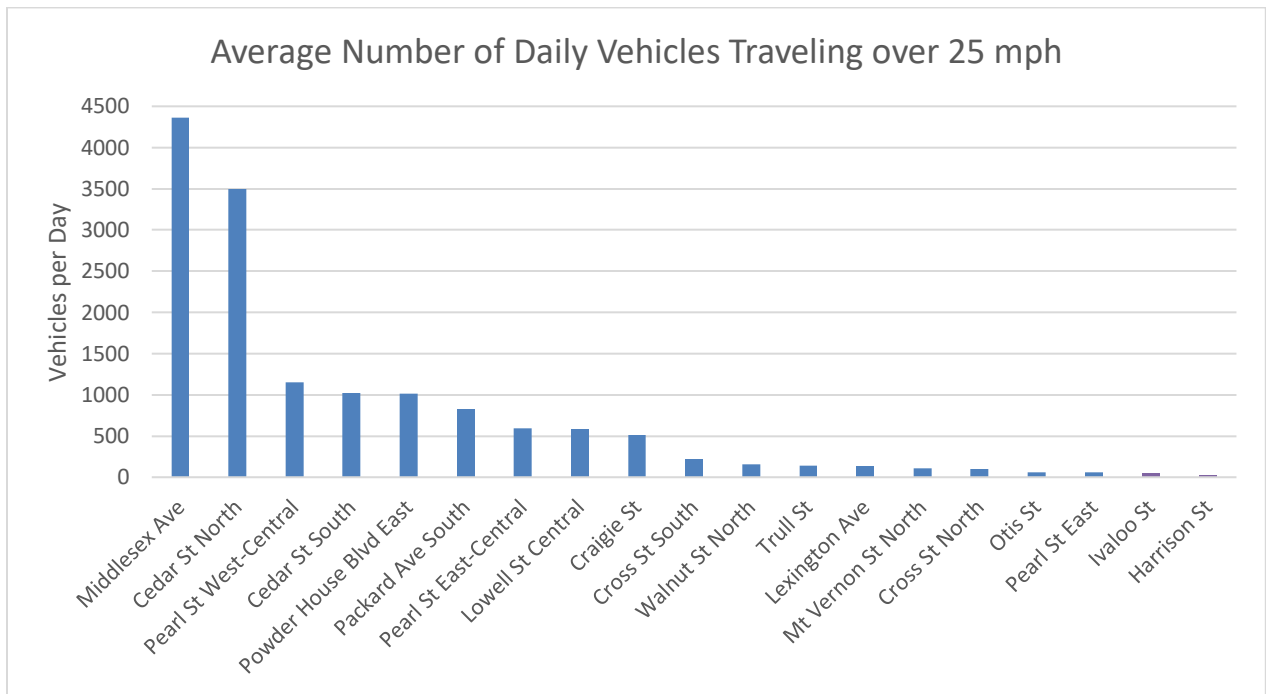


Figure 5. This chart shows the average number of motor vehicles that were measured traveling over 25 mph for all streets where traffic data was collected in spring 2024. The average across these streets is 770 vehicles/day.

Next steps

Based on our evaluation, Ivaloo Street and Harrison Street do not meet some of our priority considerations for traffic calming. The City cannot recommend using limited resources to prioritize physical traffic calming on Ivaloo Street and Harrison Street at this time. These streets will remain part of our evaluation database, which is reviewed and updated annually. In the meantime, the Somerville Police Department Traffic Bureau has been notified of your concerns and may increase enforcement activities to deter illegal speeding on these streets.

Regarding your request for Residents Only signage, this type of signage is incredibly challenging to enforce and would require a police officer to pull over people driving to ensure they are residents of Somerville. At this time, the City does not plan to put up more signage that restricts based on abutters or residents only.

Regarding your request for “Clear Corners” pavement markings near Park Street and Beacon Street, the City is prioritizing implementing new pavement markings on our high crash streets or in new construction projects. We are working to complete Washington Street at this time. We have not determined which street will be prioritized next, but we aim to confirm by early 2025. At this time, we do not install spot clear corners treatments but aim to implement a whole street at a time where we can review parking impacts, communicate to nearby residents and businesses, and adjust parking regulations to meet the changes. Ivaloo Street and Harrison Street are both designated as future “Neighborway” streets, and we anticipate proposing a more holistic clear corners strategy as part of that plan in the coming years.

We do aim to prioritize streets that are found to have the most serious safety concerns, such as streets with the highest speeds and volumes, and in the closest proximity to areas or facilities with a high rate of foot traffic, such as areas near schools or parks.

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](#) by January 2025. 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