



December 20, 2020

Mayor Joseph Curtatone
City of Somerville
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02144

Dear Mr. Curtatone,

The Somerville Pedestrian and Transit Advisory Committee (SPTAC) is writing to advocate on behalf of Somerville residents and city councilors in their urgent plea to enhance the budget and staffing for the Mobility Division.

At the SPTAC meeting on Thursday, November 19, the committee voted to recommend to the Mobility Division to prioritize traffic calming at the intersection of College Avenue and Kidder Street. The Mobility Division will design and implement a temporary pedestrian island treatment on a trial basis and will then evaluate the results. This work is not within the scope of the 2020 or 2021 fiscal budgets and will add strain to an already taxed division.

Pedestrian safety is a public health issue. Somerville residents are multi-modal and each individual community advocates for their own interests. We understand budgeting is complicated, but the value of life must take priority. Safe streets must take priority. The Mobility Division must be adequately funded to do their best work. In addition to funding, we are calling to reduce operational bottlenecks that slow workflow progress, whether that be scheduling road painters, continued maintenance of temporary solutions, or enforcement of changes.

The main tenet of the 2020 Somerville Vision Zero Action Plan is that "one death is too many." In the light of the tragic killing of Leah Zallman by a motor vehicle driver, our residents are demanding a quick response from the City. Residents are tired of hearing "This is tragic." They want to hear, "We have the resources and a plan to address pedestrian safety." The action plan outlines specific goals for overall and yearly changes to our streets, and we must provide the funding to ensure these goals are met.

Councilman Niedergang [Ward 5] and Councilman Davis [Ward 6] submitted a policy order for City Council meeting on Tuesday, November 12: "That the Mayor make to the City Council a supplementary budget request to immediately add staff and funding to the Mobility Department, which plans and deploys traffic calming infrastructure, and that the Mayor increase the Mobility

Department staff and budget by at least 50% in the FY 2022 budget.” We urge you to adopt that order.

Sincerely,

The Somerville Pedestrian and Transit Advisory Committee

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