



CITY OF WATERTOWN

TRAFFIC COMMISSION



Mr. Robert Airasian, Chair
Justin Hanrahan, Police Chief
Ryan Nicholson, Fire Chief
Thomas Brady, Director of Public Works
Steven Magoon, Community Development and Planning
Tyler Glode, City Engineer
Ms. Kelly Gallagher
Mr. Daniel Grieneisen
Mr. Ryan McMorrow

October 15, 2025 Traffic Commission Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Robert Airasian, Justin Hanrahan, Ryan Nicholson, Steven Magoon, Thomas Brady, Tyler Glode, Daniel Grieneisen

The Traffic Commission addressed the following items:

Item 1 – Mr. Magoon made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 4, and September 24, 2025 Commission meetings; Chief Nicholson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 2 – The Commission reviewed a temporary Handicap Only parking space in front of 21 George Street.

Resident Ms. Diana Lando explained that medical conditions in her home have worsened; she requested that the HP Only parking space become permanent. Three members of her household possess HP placards. Ms. Lando had many documents and doctor's notes to support her request. Ms. Lando stated that the HP space has been very helpful.

Mr. Airasian explained that the space was approved for a temporary period due to planned reconstruction of George Street.

Mr. Magoon suggested extending approval of the HP space until the future George Street project is completed. Mr. Brady reported that the George Street project would likely begin Spring, 2026.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to extend the HP Only parking space in front of 21 George Street for an additional twelve months; Chief Nicholson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 3 – The Commission reviewed a request by Ms. Lauren Passanisi on behalf of the Arsenal Park Residential Condominium Board of Trustees to install Dead End/Private Way Signage on Arsenal Street at Arsenal Court.

Board of Trustee Mr. Walter Marullo reported that many vehicles mistakenly turn onto Arsenal Court intending to access Arsenal Yards and Arsenal Park. The complex has experienced property damage at times due to vehicles turning around to leave the property. Mr. Marullo asked for Dead End signs at Arsenal Street.

Mr. Glode confirmed that Arsenal Court is a private way and was not opposed to furnishing and installing

signage.

Mr. Glode made a motion to install Dead End and Private Way signage at the entrance to Arsenal Court; Mr. Magoon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 4 – The Commission reviewed a request by Ms. Jessica Grimsby for the installation of a crosswalk spanning Galen Street at Maple Street. Ms. Grimsby could not attend the meeting.

Mr. Magoon asked Mr. Glode whether this location would meet the warrants for a crosswalk. He explained that installing a crosswalk where it is not safe is not recommended; the crosswalk gives the perception that it is safe to cross at a particular location. Mr. Magoon noted that there is no signal to help pedestrians at this location. Although he was sensitive to people who walk up Maple Street and want to cross, he was not sure it would be a safe crossing location.

Mr. Glode wanted to collect data and study the area prior to making a determination whether this is a viable area for a crosswalk. He reported that he could have a memo prepared for the next Traffic Commission meeting.

Chief Nicholson made a motion to table the discussion until further information is available; Mr. Magoon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 5 – The Commission received an informational presentation by Ms. Samantha Garwin of Summer Street regarding potential safety improvements to Summer Street.

Although Ms. Garwin understands that there are long-term plans to study and make improvements to Summer Street, she felt that some improvements are needed sooner than later. She has reached out to several neighbors for their concerns, and collected crash reports and vehicle speed data from the police department. Ms. Garwin provided an informational packet to the Commission.

Ms. Garwin distributed 250 surveys to residents of Summer Street and Fayette Street; she received 50 responses. Every person who responded was concerned with traffic. Top traffic concerns were speed, pedestrian safety volume of traffic and bicycle safety. In terms of pedestrian safety, residents were concerned with the Summer at Whites, Summer at Spring, Summer at Winter, and Summer at Forest intersections. Ms. Garwin noted that there are many vulnerable users that use Summer Street.

In the short term, Ms. Garwin requested an all-way stop control at Spring Street, installation of crosswalks at Winter Street, installation of in-street Yield to Pedestrian and Cross Traffic Does Not Stop signage at Whites Ave, and to prohibit commercial traffic on Summer Street.

A Summer Street resident who lives at the corner of Forest Street at Summer Street voiced her concerns about vehicles parking on Forest Street too closely to the intersection of Summer Street, and vehicles parked on the sidewalks on Forest Street.

Summer Street resident Ms. Emily Lavie works from home and reported that there is a lot of traffic related chaos on the street (car horns beeping, screeching tires, etc.) particularly between 7:45-9:00 in the morning and 2:30-4:30 in the afternoons. Ms. Lavie supported requests for all-way stops and less traffic on the street.

Resident Nyla Gislason has lived on Summer Street for 28 years and reported that motorists use Summer Street as a bypass to get to Watertown Square. At times, she finds it difficult to exit her driveway due to roadway congestion. She also sees vehicles accelerate rapidly as they travel west from Church Street towards Whites Ave. She would like to see vehicles slow down before they get to Whites Avenue. Mr. Magoon thanked Ms. Garwin for all of her work on this issue. Mr. Magoon asked whether the

intersection of Summer Street at Spring Street would meet the warrants for an all-way stop. Mr. Magoon also noted that the standards to restrict commercial vehicles are very high. At Winter Street, the topography may make it difficult to install crosswalks due to its steep incline, and asked whether Engineering could evaluate this area. Mr. Magoon also asked Engineering to determine whether Cross Traffic Does Not Stop signage would be appropriate for Whites Ave at the Summer Street intersection. In terms of slowing vehicle speeds, Mr. Magoon felt that it is more effective to make motorists feel uncomfortable by using traffic calming techniques than simply lowering the speed limit.

Mr. Glode reported that Engineering wants to perform a study of Summer Street and is waiting for all utility work to be completed. Due to utility work, traffic is being diverted from its normal pattern. Any data collected during utility work would be skewed. Summer Street is on the list of “Long Streets and Connectors” but there are no plans in the next three years to completely reconstruct Summer Street; nothing is planned, designed, or funded.

Chief Hanrahan reported that the intersection of Summer Street at Spring Street has been problematic for many years. Mr. Glode noted that an all-way stop may be warranted at this location, but it must be shown that an all-way stop would have prevented some of the collisions at this location.

Mr. Brady thanked Ms. Garwin for her presentation and work on this issue. Mr. Brady supported Mr. Glode’s points about traffic pattern diversions in the Summer Street area. Mr. Brady supported a traffic study when traffic patterns have returned to normal. He would like to get accurate data and asked for patience in this matter.

Chief Nicholson felt that improvements were a long way in the future and wondered whether anything could be done in the shorter term that wouldn’t be cost-prohibitive. He would like to provide relief for some of the concerns that were presented. Mr. Brady stated that a study will be conducted and any appropriate interim measures would be brought to the Commission for consideration.

Chief Hanrahan made a motion to ask DPW to conduct a traffic study of Summer Street when the time is appropriate; Mr. Glode seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 6 – The Commission continued its discussion regarding roadway design and potential parking restrictions on Russell Avenue.

City Manager Mr. George Proakis reported that Russell Avenue has been a complicated project and there have been many challenges. The Russell Avenue project did not follow the typical process; the design of the roadway and curb installation piggy-backed on the MWRA project which is nearing completion. Roadways are typically designed using the Complete Streets plan and engineering judgment.

Mr. Proakis reminded the public that the Traffic Commission reviews changes in traffic rules and regulations. The issue currently in front of the Commission concerns regulations on Russell Avenue from Mt. Auburn Street to Broadway. In terms of the upper portion of Russell Avenue, Mr. Proakis asked staff to collect speed data, and further assess driveways, hydrant locations, etc. He noted that road marking options will be considered after speed data is collected.

Mr. Brady reported that significant revisions were made to the Russell Avenue plan and, and that he is cautious of speed humps, etc. due to their impacts in residential neighborhoods.

Mr. Glode presented the updated plan that proposed prohibiting parking on the east side of Russell Avenue from Mt. Auburn Street to Broadway, and restricting two (2) parking spaces on the west side of Russell Avenue in front of #12 to Handicap Only parking. Prohibiting parking on the east side of the street will allow for the installation of a 4’ bike lane.

One member of the public asked whether a Stop sign could be installed on Russell Avenue at Brigham Street to slow traffic.

Maria Saiz of the Watertown Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee reported that she supports the City's Complete Streets program and supports separated bicycle lanes. She stated that the Committee wants to use secondary streets as access to move safely and comfortably. The primary streets are important as well, but cyclists would prefer to ride on secondary streets where traffic is more friendly. She felt that an arterial network of bike lanes using secondary streets is preferable. She asked that bike facilities be viewed as a complete network across the City.

Mr. Brian Homer of 26 Russell Avenue reported that some motorists are just going to speed, and a few do every night. Safety is foremost, but he was unsure whether road markings were necessary, and whether bike lanes on secondary roadways were needed. He felt secondary roads were already inviting for cyclists.

Andrew Goldhor, Priest of the Church of the Good Shepherd felt that restricting two HP spaces would not adequately accommodate the needs of the parishioners. He asked the Commission to consider restricting the proposed parking prohibition on the east side of the street to limited times each day.

A resident of 153 Russell Ave did not feel that marked parking spaces were appropriate for Russell Avenue because it is not a commercial area.

Mr. Magoon respected the Church's concerns, but he was not sure that limiting the no parking prohibition on the east side of the street would be effective. In this case, bicycle infrastructure is being created and the bike lane should always be available. Although the HP spaces across the street from the Church are less than ideal, he hoped that they would be some help to the Church. He also felt that it is important to provide a bicycle connection from Mt. Auburn Street to the high school

Mr. Grieneisen asked whether the bicycle and parking lane could be on the same side of the street. Mr. Glode stated that many options were considered but the safest situation based on predicted traffic flow was the one presented in the plan.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to prohibit parking on the east side of Russell Avenue from Mt. Auburn Street to Broadway, and to restrict two parking spaces in front of #12 Russell Avenue to HP Only Parking; Chief Nicholson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 7 – The Commission reviewed a request by Sgt. Sampson of the Watertown Police Department to restrict parking on the east side of Carroll Street, from Lowell Avenue to a point 47' north. Sgt. Sampson reported that when the intersection was addressed during the September 24, 2025 meeting, he neglected to request a parking restriction on the north side of the Carroll Street at Lowell Street intersection. Vehicles parked in this location hinder a pedestrian's ability to see vehicles traveling southbound on Carroll Street. The 47-foot distance encompasses the entire grass strip on the east side of the intersection.

Chief Hanrahan made a motion to prohibit parking on the east side of Carroll Street, from Lowell Avenue to a point 47' north; Mr. Glode seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

District B Councilor Lisa Feltner asked whether the new HP Only parking spaces on Russell Avenue would have curb cuts to allow access to the sidewalk. She also asked whether a crosswalk spanning Russell Avenue at Broadway would be considered. A crosswalk at this location would provide a safe crossing from the new parking spaces to the Church.

Mr. Magoon made a motion to adjourn; Chief Hanrahan seconded the motion. The motion passed

unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Sgt. David Sampson
Assistant to the Traffic Commission