



Evaluation of Traffic Sign Petition

Speed Limit Signage Intersection of Ararat Street at Brattle Street
April 19, 2023

Petition:	Laura McCormick et al. request installation of speed limit signage at the intersection of Ararat St. and Brattle St.
Scheduled Committee Hearing:	April 26, 2023 Traffic & Parking Committee, Item 9a
Prepared by:	Todd M. Kirrane., Assistant Director

The petitioner has requested the installation of speed limit signage on Ararat Street in the vicinity of Brattle Street because she is required to cross the street mid-block in order to access a sidewalk and walk along the roadway with her dog.

Ararat Street is classified by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) as a Urban Minor Arterial under City Jurisdiction. The roadway generally runs in a east-west direction and provides a connection between Brattle Street and the Town of Holden and I-90 and points east in the study area. Ararat Street pavement width is approximately 32' curb to curb and provides one travel lane in each direction, on street parking is unregulated in the study area. The statutory (unposted) speed limit along Ararat Street is 30 miles per hour (mph) within the study area. Land use along Ararat Street is single family residential and parkland. There is a continuous sidewalk along the southern curb line and an intermittent one along the northern curb line.

As stated previously, Ararat Street is under the statutory (unposted) speed limit of 30 mph for a thickly settled and business district. This statutory speed limit is established under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 90, Section 17 and per the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's "Procedures for Speed Zoning on State Highways and Municipal Roads" this statutory speed limit is not allowed to be posted except for yellow warning signs when there is evidence of violations and there is a need to remind motorists of the statutory speed limit in the immediate area.



In reviewing whether this warning signage was needed, staff collected traffic speed for Ararat Street in the vicinity of Brattle Street using the Streetlight Insight software platform. The Average Speed is 23 mph and the 85th Percentile Speed (the speed that 85% of all vehicles traveling at

or below) is 33 mph. The Average Speed is below and the 85th Percentile Speed is only 3 mph higher than the statutory speed limit which is an indication that the supplemental warning sign is not justified in this location.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 90, Section 18 governs the approval of and posting of special speed regulations by a municipality. This action requires approval by the Secretary of MassDOT and the Registrar of Motor Vehicles following a study conducted in accordance with the Procedures for Speed Zoning on State Highways and Municipal Roads. This posted, regulatory speed limit is generally in line with the 85th percentile speed and done at increments of 5 rounded up. Given that the collected data may lead to a posted speed limit of 35 mph there would be no benefit for the city to going through the time intensive process to conduct the necessary counts and develop the report that may lead to a higher speed limit given the fact that higher motor vehicle speeds are known to result in exponentially higher degrees of injury and death when involving pedestrians, cyclists, and other vulnerable roadway users.

Recommendation

DTM recommends a vote to File this request.

When this minor arterial street is resurfaced at a future time under the city's Pavement Management program, DTM recommends that it be reconstructed with continuous, ADA compliant sidewalks on both sides of the street.

