



Evaluation of Traffic Sign Petition

Speed Limit Sign on Lincoln Street

April 19, 2023

Petition: Jason Davis request speed limit signage be installed on Lincoln St. in the vicinity of Gorham St.

Scheduled Committee Hearing: April 26, 2023 Traffic & Parking Committee, Item 9b

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. DTM staff could not find the petition online in advance of the meeting so there is not more information to go off of to determine the reason for the request and other solutions that may be available to address their needs.

Lincoln Street is classified by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) as an Urban Minor Arterial under City Jurisdiction. The roadway generally runs in a northeast-southwest direction. Lincoln Street pavement width is approximately 44' 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. Parking is ordained NO PARKING 11PM TO 7AM along the east side from Gorham to Dixon. Land use along Lincoln Street is a mixture of multi-family residential and commercial. There is a continuous sidewalk along both sides of the street and a WRTA Bus Stop located at the northeast corner of the intersection with Gorham Street. There is a marked crosswalk across the southern leg of the intersection, though there are no PEDESTRIAN IN CROSSWALK signage.

As stated previously, Lincoln 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 Lincoln Street in the vicinity of Gorham Street using the Streetlight Insight software platform. The Average Speed to the northeast of Gorham Street is 32 mph and the 85th Percentile Speed (the speed that 85% of all vehicles traveling at or below) is 53 mph. The Average Speed is 2 mph and the 85th Percentile Speed is 23 mph higher than the statutory speed limit which is an indication that the supplemental warning sign is justified in this location. The Average Speed to the southwest of Gorham Street is 33 mph and the 85th Percentile Speed is 54 mph. The Average Speed is 3 mph and the 85th Percentile Speed is 24 mph higher than the statutory speed limit which is an indication that the supplemental warning sign is 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 55 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 installation of a THICKLY SETTLED DISTRICT 30 MPH advisory sign (MA-W13-4) on Lincoln Street on both approaches to the intersection with Gorham Street.

Additionally, DTM recommends installation of PEDESTRIAN IN CROSSWALK signage at the crosswalk on Lincoln Street at Gorham Street. When lane markings are next updated on this segment, DTM will investigate lane marking improvements to better define the travel lanes and reallocated excess road space to other uses, such as defined on-street parking and bicycle lanes.

