



Evaluation of Traffic Sign Petition

Slow Down signage on Seattle St

April 19, 2023

Petition: Gwendolyn Bui request installation of Slow Down signage on Seattle St.

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

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The petitioner has requested the installation of a sign to slow down drivers and make them be more alert of pedestrians, children, and pets along Seattle Street.

Seattle Street is classified by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) as a Local Roadway under City Jurisdiction. The roadway generally runs in a northeast-southwest direction and provides a residential connection between Pasasdena Parkway and Chino Avenue parallel to Boylston Street. Seattle Street pavement width is approximately 25' 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 Seattle Street is 30 miles per hour (mph) within the study area. Land use along Seattle Street is single family residential. There are no sidewalks along the street.

As stated previously, Seattle 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 Seattle Street using the Streetlight Insight software platform. The Average Speed is 13 mph and the 85th Percentile Speed (the speed that 85% of all vehicles traveling at or below) is 24 mph. Both

the Average and 85th Percentile Speeds are below the statutory speed limit which is an indication that the supplemental warning sign is not justified in this location.

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), issued by Federal Highway Administration and included in Massachusetts General Laws, states that the purpose of “Warning” signs is to call attention to unexpected conditions on or adjacent to a roadway open to public travel and to situations that might not be readily apparent to road users. Warning signs alert road users to conditions that might call for a reduction of speed or an action in the interest of safety and efficient traffic operations. They further advise that the use of warning signs should be kept to a minimum as the unnecessary use of warning signs tends to breed disrespect for all signs. Because of this they removed from allowable use many previous signs including CHILDREN AT PLAY, SLOW, BLIND, DEAF, etc. Though many of these historic signs exist, FHWA and MassDOT believe that they are ineffective, breed a disrespect for all signage, and as a result municipalities are no longer allowed to install them on the public way. While there are other methods to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and other vulnerable roadway users through pavement markings, traffic calming, and signage – the low motor vehicle speeds combined with the lack of any reported crashes over the last 5 years does not warrant action at this location.

Recommendation

DTM recommends a vote to File this request.

