



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Traffic, Parking and Transportation
57 Inman Street,
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Susan E. Clippinger
Director

Administration
Parking Violations
Resident Parking

RECEIVED
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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

December 18, 1997

TO: Robert Healy, City Manager

FROM: Susan E. Clippinger, Director *SC*

SUBJECT:: City Council Order #47 dated 11/24/97 and City Council Order #11 dated 12/15/97

RE: Report on the process time frame and criteria used by the Mass. Highway Dept. in deciding on requests to reduce the speed limit in a particular roadway
Whether the speed limit throughout the city can be reduced to 25 PMH

According to Section 18 of chapter 90 Mass. General Laws, all special speed regulations must be certified in writing by the Mass. Highway Dept. and Registry of Motor Vehicles that it is consistent with the public interests. In order for the state to make this certification, a city or town is required to submit a comprehensive engineering study for each street being considered for speed reduction. At a minimum, this study should include:

1. Street conditions with summary sheet.
2. Speed calculations on curves
3. Radar speed observations at strategic locations
4. Accident collision diagram
5. Trial speed runs by several drivers

Under normal conditions, the city's study can be completed in about 4 to 6 weeks. Our request and the study is then submitted to the District 4 Highway Director. The Mass. Highway Department and the Registry of Motor Vehicles reviews our request, visits the street in question and verifies our data.

The following criteria is used by the two state agencies and the Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department when reviewing and developing the speed study:

- A. The maximum safe speed for any street should not be higher than the critical speed determined by the horizontal and vertical safe stopping sight distance.

B. The maximum safe speed should be nearly the same as the speed at which 85 percent of the vehicles are traveling and should never be more than 7 M.P.H. below the 85 percentile speed or higher than the 95 percentile speed for vehicles using the street. In addition, the safe speed should generally be within the speed range established by the trial runs.

C. When the accident rate for a roadway is much higher than the average for other streets of similar design in the area, the estimated maximum safe speed should approach the lower limit of the above speed range (as shown in section "B" above). When the rate is average or below, the estimated safe speed values should be in the upper part of the above speed range (as shown in section "B" above).

After completing their review, the District 4 Highway Director sends his recommendation to the State Traffic Engineer who will notify the city if our request is approved. In the past, this has taken 2 to 3 months.

If our request for a special speed regulation is approved, the Mass. Highway Department will prepare a special speed regulations and forward it to the city for the signature of the Traffic Director. Two original copies are then returned to the Mass. Highway Department for final approval by the State Traffic Engineer and a Registry of Motor Vehicles' official.

The city normally receives the final signed special speed regulation in about a month. We will then install the speed limit signs normally within a week of receiving the regulation.

The state, by following the above procedure, requires an engineering study be conducted for each street or section of street before they will consider changing the speed limit from that which is established as reasonable and proper under Section 17, Chapter 90 of the Mass. General Laws.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL 349-4300
FAX 349-4307



21.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

December 22, 1997

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 29, regarding a report on the process, time frame and criteria used by the Massachusetts Highway Department in deciding on requests to reduce the speed limit on a particular roadway, received from Traffic, Parking & Transportation Director Susan Clippinger.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
attachment

Consent Agenda #21

S-792

Relative to Awatiing Report Item Number
Twenty-nine, regarding a report on the
process, time frame and criteria used
by the Mass Highway department in deciding
on requests to reduce the speed limit on
a particular roadway.

In City Council December 22, 1997

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