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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

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November 17, 2003

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item No. 03-120, regarding speed enforcement and changing the speed limit to 25 mph on Montgomery, Jackson, Harvey, Dudley and Clifton Streets, as well as Awaiting Report Item No. 03-121, regarding speed enforcement, reinstalling a stop sign at the corner of Fairfield & Pemberton Streets, and changing the speed limit to 25 mph on Fairfield Street; Traffic, Parking & Transportation Director Susan Clippinger reports the following:

These Council Orders requested that the speed limit on six streets be lowered to 25 mph. The City cannot post this speed without permission from the Massachusetts Highway Department, and based on past experience with these requests it is highly improbable that MassHighway would grant such permission. Therefore, I do not recommend pursuing this action.

Currently, the speed limit on five of these streets (Montgomery, Jackson, Harvey, Dudley, Clifton) is unposted. Per Massachusetts law, these 'thickly settled' streets have a *prima facie* speed limit of 30 MPH (Chapter 90, Section 17). In order to reduce this limit, we must obtain a permit from MassHighway for a 'speed zone.' To apply for this permit, this Department must conduct a detailed speed study for the street in question and submit the results. MassHighway may (and usually does) conduct its own study to verify our results. This effort must be repeated by both the Traffic Department and MassHighway for each street.

After compiling this speed data, MassHighway will determine if a speed zone is appropriate for the street. MassHighway rarely issues speed zone permits for streets functionally classified as 'local' (all five streets in this Council Order are local streets).

The Department conducted a speed study on Clifton Street, which is likely to attract the highest speeds in the neighborhood. We found that 85% of the traffic is traveling below 27 MPH. Since drivers are already very near 25 mph, posting the street at this speed will probably not have a measurable effect on actual speed. Enforcement would not be effective even with a reduced speed limit as most cars would still not be in violation. Therefore I do not recommend requesting speed zones for these five streets.

In addition, the Cambridge Police Department conducted speed enforcement by radar from September 25th through October 6th on Montgomery, Jackson, Harvey, Dudley and Clifton Streets. During this period, there were no citations issued for speeding. The Department will continue to monitor and respond accordingly.

The missing stop sign at the intersection of Fairfield and Pemberton Streets has been reinstalled.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

Consent Agenda #6

Transmitting communication from Robert W. Healy, City Manager, relative to **Awaiting Report Item Number 03-120**, regarding speed enforcement and changing the speed limit to 25 mph on Montgomery, Jackson, Harvey, Dudley and Clifton Streets, as well as **Awaiting Report Item Number 03-121**, regarding speed enforcement, reinstalling a stop sign at the corner of Fairfield and Pemberton Streets, and changing the speed limit to 25 mph on Fairfield Street.

In City Council November 17, 2003

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