

ARLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

CHIEF OF POLICE
Frederick Ryan



Town of Arlington
MASSACHUSETTS 02474

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Marie Krepelka
Board Administrator

FROM: Officer Corey P. Rateau
Traffic and Parking Unit

DATE: July 28, 2015

RE: Westminster Avenue Traffic Concerns

Per your request, I looked to see if there were any reports of traffic concerns on Westminster Avenue. No complaints have been recently directed to our attention. There was some traffic enforcement activity on the street a couple of years ago and a few tickets were given out. Most of the recent complaints have been coming from Lowell Street, which has a long documented history of significant speeding problem. Maybe the recent uptick in activity from Lowell residents and recent discussions of potential engineering changes for that roadway has influenced on Westminster residents to get back onto the radar out of fear that traffic will divert to their roadway.

It's been several years (2007) since any data has been collected (after two incidents of cars crashing into the same residence on the bend, one of which was a fatality that had major mitigating factors other than speed). Despite the reports of constant speeding back then, the data showed an average of about 27 mph with the 85th percentile being around 32 mph, which is pretty much within tolerable range of a 30 mph zone (even radar is only accurate to +/- 1 mph and I don't think the untrained eye is really going to detect that extra 1 mph difference, nor in reality would you stop someone going so close to the speed limit). As with many other streets, there were incidents of vehicles traveling at an unsafe speeds but it was more of an occasional occurrence rather than a constant condition. However, I honestly can't recall whether or not the last set of data was collected before or after they put in the 4-way stop sign at Westmoreland in 2007

I think we should wait and collect new data in the fall after school has started so that we can get a more accurate idea of the traffic flow. I do recall that prior to 2007, we had to perform multiple counts because residents didn't agree with the recorded speeds being slower than what they perceived and found different reasons to state we were faulty in our procedures. I am fairly

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confident now as we were back then that we are properly collecting the data but would not collect any now while school is not in session to provide any such opportunities for criticism.

The following link is a list of contemplated engineering changes for Westminster Ave that were floated around back in 2007 at the height of the previous traffic concerns. Note that some of these have already been implemented and it has been reported that Lexington is supposedly redesigning the interchange with Lowell and Westminster.

<http://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showdocument?id=2612>

Please note that a patrol request has been entered for Westminster Avenue in the interim.

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From: Jim Hamilton <jimh02474@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Jul 8, 2015 at 4:22 PM
Subject: Westminster Avenue Safety Improvements
To: wchouinard@town.arlington.ma.us, fryan@town.arlington.ma.us, smbyrnel987@gmail.com

Dear Engineer Chouinard, Chief Ryan and Selectman Byrne,

I am writing regarding the chronic problem of excessive speed and continued threat to public safety on Westminster Avenue.

It all boils down to this. The stretch of Westminster Avenue from the Lexington line to the Five Corners intersection at Park Avenue Extension is generally long, wide and straight which promotes speeding.

Stop signs were placed at the intersection of Westminster and Westmoreland but these are seldom recognized or observed. It is not uncommon to witness little children from the nearby reservoir crossing this intersection to the sounds of screeching tires from motorists who come to a sudden stop.

My sense is that a solution is not signage. It is design. Traffic calming measures need to be implemented to cause drivers to slow down and increase safety. Rumble strips, speed bumps, elevated cross walks or curb necks are some examples I have seen elsewhere which offer cost-effective options.

This matter should not be new to you and conditions will only get worse unless concrete action is undertaken.

As such, I would appreciate your consideration of these suggestions and welcome the opportunity to continue the dialogue as you see fit.

Thanks you for your attention to this matter,

Jim Hamilton

138 Westminster Avenue

Arlington, MA 02474

[781.646.0568](tel:781.646.0568)

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July 28, 2015

Jim Hamilton
138 Westminster Avenue
Arlington, MA 02474

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

We are in receipt of your correspondence of July 8th in which you discuss safety improvements on Westminster Avenue.

Thank you for writing to the Board of Selectmen. Your correspondence will appear on the August 17th Selectmen's Agenda under "Correspondence Received". Although it is not necessary for you to attend the meeting, you may do so if you are so inclined.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Very truly yours,
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Marie A. Krepelka".

Marie A. Krepelka
Board Administrator