



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Town of Arlington

Planning and Community Development Department, 730 Mass Ave,

Arlington MA, 02476

c/o Daniel Amstutz, Senior Transportation Planner

To: Select Board

From: TAC

Subject: Speed Safety Zone on Herbert Road at Magnolia Park

Date: December 12, 2018

Recommendation

The TAC has voted to recommend the Select Board designate a 20 mph speed safety zone on Herbert Road at the entrance to Magnolia Park. This would be the first speed safety zone established in Arlington.

Background

As part of the project to rebuild Magnolia Park, which is located southwest of the intersection of Hebert Road and Magnolia Street, the Arlington Parks and Recreation Commission (AP&R) asked TAC to evaluate installing a speed table at the intersection of Herbert Road at Magnolia Street. The purpose of the speed table would be designed to make drivers proceed at a speed of roughly 20 mph when passing the Park entrance.

The estimated cost to construct a raised intersection was over \$100,000. The estimated cost is high because there are several drainage catch basins, and utility man holes and gates that would need to be relocated or replaced to construct the raised intersection. In its memo of February 8, 2017 to the Recreation Department, the TAC reported that it thought that the significant cost to construct a raised intersection outweighed the potential benefits and, therefore, did not recommend it. As an alternative, the TAC said it would evaluate establishment of a speed safety zone at the Herbert Road entrance to Magnolia Park as an additional step to maintain low vehicle speeds.

Currently there are no posted speed limits on Herbert Road in the study area. On town-owned roadways with no posted speed limit or regulatory speed limit, a statutory speed limit of 25 mph was established in May 2017. This was done based on authority provided by new Speed Limit Regulations that became effective on November 7, 2016. These regulations allow the Town to change the statutory speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph and to establish new safety zone regulatory speed limits of 20 mph, similar to school zones. These safety zones can be established at park entrances, hospitals, senior housing and other locations where specific populations may warrant slower speeds. An engineering study must be performed to establish a speed safety zone, which must be approved by the Select Board (as the Town Traffic Authority) and reported to MassDOT.

Evaluation

The Arlington Police Department conducted automatic traffic recorder counts on Herbert Road on May 10-11, 2017 as part of TAC's evaluation of the speed table request. Table 1 shows the average daily volume, average speed and 85th percentile speed by direction. The average total daily traffic

volume in both directions on Herbert Road at the Park entrance is about 1,575 vehicles. The average speeds are 18 and 16 mph, respectively, eastbound and westbound. The 85th percentile speeds, which are often used to establish speed limits, were 25 and 23 mph, respectively, eastbound and westbound. The MassDOT recommends that 20 mph speed zones be established only where existing speeds are no more than about 25-27 mph. The current speeds are within that range and the proposed location is the type for which the speed zone is intended. Therefore, the TAC recommends the establishment of a 20-mph speed safety zone on Herbert Road at the Magnolia Park entrance. The limits of the zone and signing have been established by the state and can be implemented by the Department of Public Works and Police.

Table 1 Herbert Road Traffic Volumes and Speeds

Direction	Eastbound	Westbound
Average Daily Volume	839	735
Average Speed	18 MPH	16 MPH
85 th Percentile Speed	25 MPH	23 MPH

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Muise, TAC Chair

Transportation Advisory Committee Members:

Daniel Amstutz (Planning Department), Wayne Chouinard (Public Works Department), Lenard Diggins, Charles Giroux, Michael Gordon (Secretary), Pamela Heidell, Brian Kmetz, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Howard Muise (Chair), Officer Corey Rateau (Police Department), and Scott Smith,

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