

BAY STATE VILLAGE ASSOCIATION, INC
298 RIVERSIDE DRIVE
FLORENCE MA 01062

February 6, 2012

Ned Huntley
Director Department of Public Works
Northampton Department of Public Works
125 Locust Street
Northampton, Massachusetts
01060

Dear Director Huntley,

The members of The Bay State Village Association (BSVA) were very pleased to have had the opportunity to host a forum to collect community reaction to the temporary speed humps on Riverside Drive. November 15th's forum was an important part of meeting our objective of promoting traffic calming and making the streets safer for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers in Bay State Village.

While the prospect of permanent speed humps raises a number of questions, including cost, location and the number of humps, the question addressed here is, does the neighborhood want speed humps? First here is a review of the efforts by the BSVA to promote an informed discussion and solicit substantial feedback from the neighborhood. The concept of traffic calming and the potential application to Bay State Village has been a regular topic over the past several years at BSVA meetings and functions and appears regularly in our news letters, emails and on our website, baystatevillage.org. It was particularly important to reach residents regarding the experiment with the temporary speed humps, notifying them why the speed humps were there, whom in city offices to provide feedback to and that there would be a forum. This information was posted on the web site, emailed on to our list of 95 people and featured in a hand delivered news letter to approximately 350 homes in Bay State Village. We wanted to hear from people, and we certainly have.

At the forum we had 27 people in attendance and 25 emails and letters have gone to the commission. Only 7 emails are from people who also attended the forum so between the emails and the forum we have heard from 40 different families and individuals. Included in the letters was one from Julie Guazzo, Director of the Nonotuck Community School located in the Feiker School building. She surveyed the 50 families enrolled at the school, 38 of the 39 who responded were in favor of permanent speed humps.

The input reflects both substantial support for the speed humps and serious objections. Objections came almost exclusively from those who live in the immediate vicinity of the speed

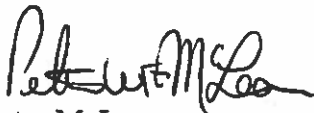
humps, citing noise from vehicles going over the humps, noise from vehicles slowing when approaching and accelerating after going over the humps, long lines of vehicles waiting to go over the humps and elevated levels of vehicle exhaust. It was argued at the forum that many of these problems would not exist with permanent humps which are quieter and vehicles could pass over at a higher speed. While those who objected were few, they had strong feelings about the impact the speed humps had on them. It should be noted that there is one letter from a Riverside Drive resident who said put the speed hump in front of my house. This suggests that if speed humps were to be installed it would be possible to find locations that are both effective and agreeable.

Those who have expressed support for the humps outnumber those who oppose them. Many families with young children have spoken in favor, fearing for their safety. One participant at the forum noted that 11 to 14 vehicles daily travel over 55mph, "Someone is going to get killed." It was noted that with sidewalks on only one side of the street pedestrians are forced to cross the street to access sidewalks and that bicycle traffic is increasing. The supporters were concerned that only two humps leaves long sections of Riverside where people still speed and that the positioning of the temporary humps did not slow traffic at the dangerous intersection of Federal Street and Riverside Drive.

Given there is both wide support and some strong opposition to permanent speed humps, we hope that the present situation does not mean the end of possible traffic calming measures on Riverside Drive. We urge you to continue to work with the BSVVA and Bay State Village residents to reach an agreeable solution that will provide safer streets in our neighborhood. There is no disputing the evidenced that vehicles travel too fast on Riverside Drive and there is no opposition to forcing traffic to obey the laws and travel the speed limit. We appreciate the approach the commission has taken by reaching out to the community and we appreciate Laura Hanson's expertise, time and effort. We recommend that you continue to look comprehensively at Riverside Drive, the speeding that happens over its entire length and the hazards at the dangerous intersections as well as other areas of our neighborhood. We are optimistic that solutions can be found that realize the objective of safer streets for all the residents of Bay State Village as well as those passing through.

Thank you for your attention,

Sincerely,



Peter McLean
President, Bay State Village Association



Vern Fath
Transportation Committee Chair

Cc: Counselor Gene Tacy,
Transportation and Parking Commission Chair
Counselor Owen Freeman-Daniels,
Transportation and Parking Commission Vice Chair
David Narkewicz, Mayor
David Murphy, Ward 5 Counselor
Laura Hanson, Traffic Engineer
Julie Guazzo, Director Nonotuck Community School
Tom Niels-Duffy, Nonotuck Community School Board Member