

Bay State Village Association
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Bay State Village, MA
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Transportation and Parking Commission
C/o 210 Main Street, room 18
Northampton, MA
01060-31992

Commission members,

We are very happy to see the effort you are making to address the need to calm traffic in Northampton. The attached Traffic Calming Request Form is presented with renewed optimism. The strategies outlined in the Traffic Calming Manual present great possibilities to make the streets safer in our neighborhood.

As you may be aware the Village Association has a long history of launching initiatives to address traffic dangers in Bay State Village. When the Clement Street Bridge was previously closed in the 1980's the association worked with the Saving Lives Program to reduce speed on Riverside Drive. This positive collaboration between the city and the neighborhood had a lasting impact. In 1993 we successfully petitioned the Department of Public Works to paint a double line down the center of Riverside Drive. In the winter of 2004 there was a sharp increase in crashes at the intersection of Riverside and Federal Street. Our Association entered a dialogue with the city regarding the dangers at the Federal Street intersection. That July then D.P.W. Director, George Andrikitis and then Traffic Committee member, David Narkewicz met with Association members at the Federal Street intersection. Several actions were taken that year which had some impact, including the repair of a broken pipe that contributed to icing problems. Nonetheless the Federal Street intersection is among those of particular concern.

Traffic safety is a constant topic voiced at Village Association meetings. Every three or four years our energies are directed towards specific actions. We have had *go slow* sign painting parties, created phone trees to call the police to request their presence to catch speeders and to request that the sign that displays the speed limit and your current speed be placed on Riverside. With all our efforts people continue to speed on Riverside and intersections are dangerous, more dangerous than they could be.

Riverside Drive presents the perfect opportunity to apply the strategies described by your traffic calming initiative. We also appreciate the opportunity to be proactive. This past year while the Clement Street Bridge has been closed

there has been a significant reduction in traffic volume on Riverside Drive. The bridge closing has not only reduced traffic volume but has kept away the commuting traffic. Commuters seem more likely to speed and are speeding through the neighborhood when there is the highest volume of pedestrians including students walking to school and waiting for school busses. Shortly the bridge will again be open. Combine that with housing developments on the old State Hospital grounds and at other spots on the other side of the bridge, we are about to see higher traffic volumes on Riverside Drive than we have ever experienced. The time to act is now. We look forward to your response to our request.

Sincerely,

Peter McLean
President, Bay State Village Association

Below are attachments to the Traffic Calming application

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2. Please list the street(s)/location/intersection that concerns you the most:

Riverside Drive is our main concern, including three intersections on Riverside. As for Riverside itself, it presents a long straight stretch of road that many commuters use to bypass other parts of Northampton, and it seems others use to test their acceleration capabilities. There are many children vulnerable on Riverside. There are numerous school bus stops that feed the elementary and middle schools. With Northampton High School at the end of Riverside there are many High School students walking and riding on Riverside. Also the Nonotuck Day School caters to our youngest citizens who go for walks during their day and some of whom walk and ride to school with their parents.

Maines Field provides a local park for families to take advantage of but many do not because walking or riding Riverside between Ladd and Landy is too dangerous. With thoughts of sustainability, there is also a noticeable increase in bike traffic on Riverside. Traffic speeds and dangerous intersections give a

Riverside biker more the feel of being on a highway instead of a neighborhood street.

The intersections:

1 Riverside Drive, Milton and Elm Streets

The motorist who is traveling east on Riverside and making a right onto Elm has poor visibility looking back onto Elm, where traffic is often also speeding. There is confusion regarding traffic coming down the hill on Elm from the High School; are they turning in front of me or are they turning onto Milton. And if a car is also coming off of Milton and onto Elm it becomes a hit the gas and hope for the best scenario. At the beginning and end of the High School day things are much worse.

2 Riverside Drive and Federal Street

Cars traveling Riverside have likely reached their top speeds at this point. A speeding car traveling east on Riverside has a poor view of the intersection. Cars crossing or entering Riverside from Federal have a limited view of what is coming from the west on Riverside. On this portion of Riverside there is sidewalk on only one side of the street. At this intersection the side walk changes from the north side to the south side of Riverside. Pedestrians need to cross Federal and Riverside. This is a dangerous intersection.

3 Riverside Drive at Ladd Street where it bends, turning 90 degrees.

At this corner the speed is posted at 20 miles an hour. There is good reason as cars do loose control at this corner. There are no sidewalks at this point. With The Village General Store at the corner there is increased pedestrian traffic, including many children.

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3. What time of day do the concerns you have seem most noticeable?

The traffic volume appears to be highest during the morning and evening commutes, shortly after 7:00 am to 9:00am and again 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm. The traffic at the High School is much worse at the beginning and end of the school day. Outside of these times, when the street is not cluttered with other traffic drivers have a chance to hit top speeds.