



10 Dexter Street • Newburyport, MA 01950

March 1, 2023

Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
Paul Stedman, District Highway Director  
519 Appleton Street  
Arlington, MA 02476

[paul.stedman@state.ma.us](mailto:paul.stedman@state.ma.us)

Attention:

Brian Fallon, District 4 Project Development Engineer  
Zachary Veaner, MassDOT State Accessibility Engineer  
Francisco J. Lovera, MassDOT Complete Streets Engineer

[brian.fallon@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:brian.fallon@dot.state.ma.us)  
[zachary.veaner@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:zachary.veaner@dot.state.ma.us)  
[francisco.j.lovera@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:francisco.j.lovera@dot.state.ma.us)

RE: Storey Avenue (Route 113), Newburyport

Dear Director Stedman:

Newburyport Livable Streets, Inc. advocates for design and infrastructure policies that support safe and comfortable streets for all users. We are writing to you to request modest changes along a portion of Storey Avenue (Route 113) to make this street safer and more comfortable for residents to access by bicycle. Specifically, we ask you to consider (1) designating and signing a 25 mph speed limit on the easternmost segment of the street and (2) implementing new lane markings on that segment.

Storey Avenue is the location of Newburyport's two grocery stores, several banks, two pharmacies, an urgent care center, and a range of other stores and services. It is thus an important commercial district and employment center in the community. These services and jobs are extremely difficult to access by bicycle: there are no bicycle lanes along Storey Avenue between Low Street and High Street; travel lanes are excessively wide; and the posted speed limit is 35 mph. As a result, bicyclists must share the travel lanes with fast-moving vehicles, which discourages active transportation.

Storey Avenue is also the primary access for two of the City's affordable housing complexes: Clipper Way off Woodman Way, and the Kelleher Park development owned and operated by the Newburyport Housing Authority. Students from these affordable housing developments traveling by bike or foot have to use Storey Avenue to get to the High School, Bresnahan, and Molin/Nock Schools as well as the City's parks and athletic facilities.

MassDOT's *Municipal Resource Guide for Bikeability* recommends that separated bike paths should be used where daily volumes are 6,000 vpd or more or operating speeds exceed 25 mph. While both of these thresholds are exceeded on Storey Avenue (20,000 vpd and 35 mph posted limit), we recognize that it is not feasible to create separated paths within the available right of way. However, we strongly advocate for the highest feasible level of accommodation for bicyclists in this important corridor.

Newburyport has a citywide speed limit of 25 miles per hour, and the City has been working for many years to better accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, including placing bike lanes along High Street (Route 113/1A) wherever feasible. That leaves the “Three Roads” intersection (Storey Avenue/High Street/Ferry Road/Moseley Avenue) and the adjacent short section of Storey Avenue as the most significant obstacles to nonmotorized access to shopping and services in this commercial district.

At the eastern end of Storey Avenue, the Three Roads intersection is a broad expanse of pavement with no delineation of vehicular movements and no accommodation for bicyclists. At the City’s request, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission has developed a design proposal for this intersection to provide safer accommodation for bicyclists and pedestrians. MVPC’s preferred design concept would convert this intersection to a modern roundabout with separated bicycle lanes. However, MassDOT has identified concerns about the proposed roundabout design, and it seems that further redesign to address these concerns, and securing funding for implementation, will push off this needed project for some time.

We recognize that upgrading the entire length of Storey Avenue according to Complete Streets principles will be a major project. Nevertheless, there is a short-term and low-cost opportunity to provide safer speeds and a more balanced cross-section in the most critical easterly portion of the corridor. We ask that you consider implementing the following changes:

1. Place a 25 mph sign on the eastbound side of the Storey Avenue, approximately opposite the 35 mph sign on the westbound side. (This is where the four-lane cross-section transitions to two lanes.) This would direct drivers to slow down before entering the Three Roads intersection and would help slow traffic to the legal speed limit of 25 mph on High Street.

Note that there was a 30 mph sign at this location as recently as July 2015. The sign was removed at some point prior to October 2017, most likely because in June 2017 the City Council reduced the default speed limit in the City, including on High Street, to 25 mph. (See the attached images from Google Streetview.) Thus, adding a 25 mph sign would revert to the prior condition, signaling the beginning of the City’s legal speed limit.

2. Restripe the segment of Storey Avenue between the end of the four-lane cross-section (just west of Kelleher Way) and the Three Roads intersection so as to (1) narrow the travel lanes to reinforce the 25 mph speed limit, and (2) provide marked shoulders in each direction so that cyclists are not forced to ride in the travel lanes. This segment of roadway is approximately 550 feet in length.

These two simple actions would make this short segment of Storey Avenue safer for cyclists traveling to businesses on Storey Avenue, as well as for residents of Storey Avenue housing development needing to travel to schools, recreational facilities and other destinations in the City. They would also be a step toward improving Storey Avenue to better reflect the Complete Streets principles and guidelines adopted by MassDOT and the City of Newburyport.

Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
RE: Storey Avenue (Route 113), Newburyport

March 1, 2023  
Page 3

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you would like to contact us about this matter, please call Rick Taintor, President, at 978-872-8230 or email [rtaintor@gmail.com](mailto:rtaintor@gmail.com).

Sincerely,



Newburyport Livable Streets  
Rick Taintor, President

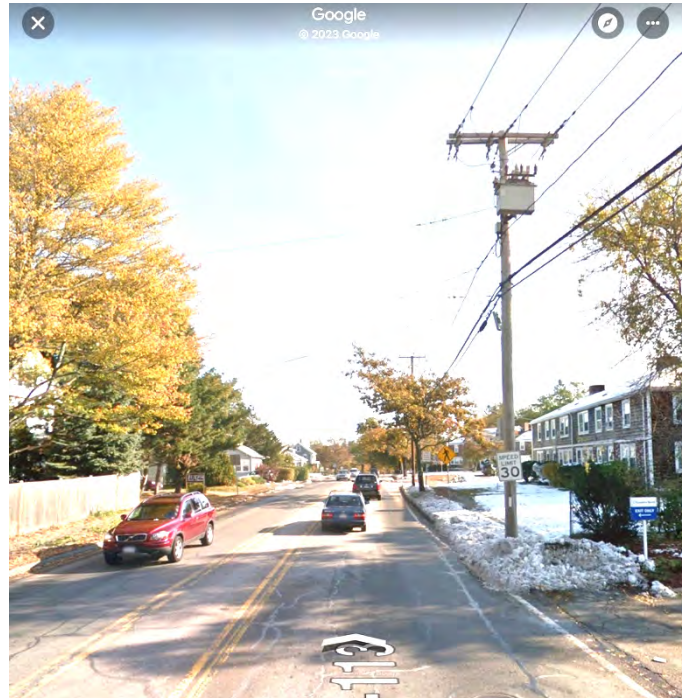
Cc: Mayor Sean Reardon  
Jerrard Whitten, Executive Director, Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

Storey Avenue – Proposed Speed Limit Sign Location  
Google Streetview Images

October 2011



July 2015



October 2017



September 2019

