



THE SELECTMEN'S NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1

SEPTEMBER 13, 2016

A ROADS PRIMER TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

TRAFFIC is a constant concern to residents throughout our Town and to the Selectmen. This Selectmen's Newsletter focuses on Traffic Management:

DATA - How, when, and why do we collect it?

PROBLEMS - How do we diagnose them?

SOLUTIONS - What are the legal limitations and existing policies?



Traffic Management is an evolving challenge that requires constant monitoring and periodic reexamination. Roadway safety and usage, including traffic management, will be a topic at the November 12, 2016 *State of the Town Meeting*. Based on your feedback and professional resources, the Selectmen will be discussing what can be done to make our roads safer for everyone in the coming months.

We share the Town's sadness that two bicyclists recently died on our roads. Details and causation-analysis remain confidential until the District Attorney issues her reports, but we welcome questions and ideas regarding bike safety in general.

To enhance our public dialogue, this Newsletter is our attempt to convey a baseline of information regarding Traffic Management, as we now understand it.



GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

We are *blessed and cursed* by our proximity to highways. We use our roads and roadside paths for commuting, shopping, school trips, biking, running, and walking. We also share our roads and paths with non-Lincolniters.

Traffic *volume* during commuting hours clogs our main roads. Impatient drivers, often guided by navigation devices, use our secondary roadways as short-cuts.

Volume causes inconvenience. Excessive *speed* threatens drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

We also strive to preserve the *rural character* of our roadways, although safety is always paramount.

GENERAL APPROACH

We seek data-based *solutions*, within the bounds of law and policy. The Selectmen are charged with managing traffic, our roads, and roadside paths.

To identify challenges and mitigation options, the Selectmen may convene advisory committees comprised of volunteers with relevant experience/expertise and Town professional staff, often aided by our traffic consultant.



The Selectmen also recognize the *interconnected* nature of our roads and roadsides. Lincoln’s roads are connected to the non-Lincoln road system, are public, and are open to all. Meanwhile, changes to a Lincoln road will usually have collateral, perhaps negative, effects on other Lincoln roads.

MONITORING PROGRAM

Data is essential. A Police priority is to collect and analyze speed, volume, and accident data. Reliable data enables focused, effective diagnosis of problems and assessment of options.

The Police deploy *measurement* devices at selected locations throughout the Town at least annually to see trends, as well as at specific sites about



which we receive questions. Speed and volume data are recorded and organized for queries such as hour, travel direction, and average, 85th percentile, and maximum speeds.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH DATA?

If data *reveals concerns* at specific locations, the first response is to deploy Police resources, such as message boards and targeted patrols. In some cases, the Selectmen need to provide guidance, often with advisory input from other committees and agencies.

The data often confirms *volume* increases, primarily during commuting hours. The volume-impacted neighborhoods on main roads and shortcut-prone secondary roads sometimes seek mitigation for perceived volume, speed, and other safety issues.

The data usually tells us that most drivers obey the *speed* limit, but we understand that even a few outliers can pose a hazard.



We calculate the average and 85th percentile of speed. Why? Because *State law* prohibits municipalities from resetting speed limits at less than the 85th percentile, with very limited exceptions. Yes, you read that correctly, and we share your frustration. However, the data usually shows that both average and 85th percentile speeds are at or below our posted speed limits. Nevertheless, to deter the relatively few outliers who pose a hazard, appropriate resources are deployed.

The only exceptions to the 85th percentile rule are school zones and, under a very recent legal change that we are studying, certain “thickly settled” residential or business areas where speed can be limited to 25 MPH.

What about *accident data*? Although the number and severity of accidents on Lincoln’s roads (not including Rt. 2) are historically relatively small, we remain vigilant for specific trouble-spots, and we welcome questions and ideas regarding bike safety in general.



WHAT SOLUTIONS WORK (OR NOT)?

- ◆ **BUMPS:** They can be effective in parking lots and heavily congested zones, but usually not on most roads. Bumps can actually aggravate drivers to speed, be noisy, and delay emergency vehicles. The Town has tried and removed bumps (school zone) or rejected them (Bemis). The State induced the Sandy Pond Rd. S-curve bumps for water-quality protection. The early 1980’s-era Old County/Winter St. bumps, along with the one-way section, were our attempt to mitigate the impacts of the then-nascent Waltham-side developments, after the County rejected our request to close the roadway at the town-line.

- ◆ **SPEED LIMITS:** See 85th percentile issue described above.
- ◆ **CAMERAS:** These have not been used because of privacy and cost concerns, and because State-law prohibits camera-initiated ticketing.
- ◆ **ROAD USE RESTRICTIONS:** We have considered but thus far rejected rush-hour one-ways and turn-prohibitions, to maintain the interconnect-edness and public nature of our roads, as well as the Town-wide shared burden.



- ◆ **INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS:** Landscaping and signage have been tried, based on accident data.
- ◆ **WARNING SIGNS:** Informational signs (Settled Area, Children Ahead, etc.) are generally considered insufficiently influential on driver behavior to justify more signs along our roads.
- ◆ **NARROW ROADWAYS:** Stone walls and trees close to the roadway, as well as narrow, windy roads, can be speed-deterrents and are consistent with our rural aesthetic.
- ◆ **ROADSIDE PATHS:** New and improved paths are feasible, but, in our experience, only with unanimous neighborhood assent to the necessary easements and of course voter approval of an appropriation.



COMPLETE STREETS GRANT

We are pleased that the State recently awarded the Town a “Complete Streets” grant to study and potentially implement transportation infrastructure improvements to address the needs of all street-users. We are collecting baseline data, in anticipation of beginning to seek public input at the November 12 State Of The Town Meeting. For more information, please search “Complete Streets” on the Town website. You may also contact the Town Administrator (see next page) or the Director of Land Use, Jennifer Burney (burneyj@lincolntown.org).

WHO'S IN CHARGE...WHO DO I CALL??

The Selectmen have primary responsibility for managing the Town's roadways, roadside paths, and roadsides. The Selectmen approve design standards and request funding from Town Meeting, State agencies, and other sources. Our efforts are managed by the Town Administrator, who works collaboratively with the DPW Superintendent and the Police Chief.

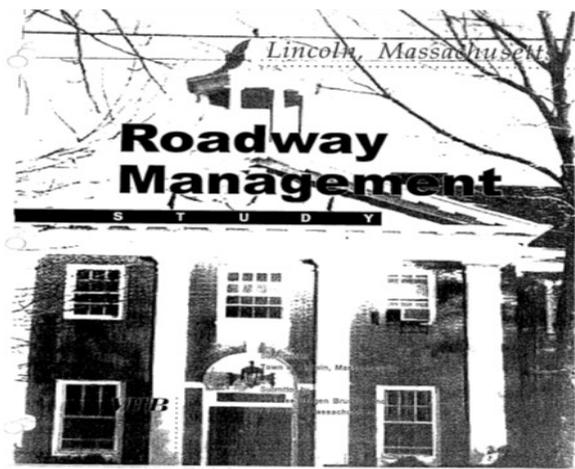


The *Town Administrator* is responsible for day-to-day oversight of Town services and departments and will respond to questions about Town policies and budgets. (Timothy Higgins, 781-259-2601, higginst@lincolntown.org).

The *DPW Superintendent* oversees maintenance of the Town's roads, roadside paths, and roadsides and will respond to questions about specific physical conditions (potholes, pruning, etc.) (Chris Bibbo, 781-259-8999, bibboc@lincolntown.org).

The *Police Chief* oversees monitoring of traffic and roadway conditions and enforcement of regulations and will respond to questions about traffic. (Kevin Kennedy, 781-259-8113, kennekev@lincolntown.org).

The Roadway and Traffic Committee (RTC), a Selectmen-appointed advisory committee of volunteers and staff, provides feedback to the DPW on compliance with Selectmen-approved roadway and roadside design guidelines. The RTC also makes recommendations to the Selectmen when requested. Questions or suggestions regarding road or roadside design are best addressed to the DPW Superintendent (see above).



STATE OF THE TOWN MEETING

We look forward to sharing more about our perspectives and hearing yours at the State Of The Town Meeting on November 12 (9:00 a.m., Brooks Auditorium). **SEE YOU THEN!!**

**Lincoln Board of Selectmen
Peter Braun, Chair
Renel Fredriksen
James Craig
16 Lincoln Road
Lincoln, MA 01773**

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VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR TOWN BOARDS and COMMITTEES!!

*Want to become more INVOLVED in community life? USE your experience or skills?
INTERACT with interesting people? GRAPPLE with interesting issues?*

REGARDLESS of how long you have lived in Lincoln or whether you have experience in municipal affairs, try this:

- **IDENTIFY** Boards that might interest you and fit your skills and experience (review Town web site and Annual Town Report).
- **ATTEND** some meetings and see them in action.
- **CONTACT** the chair or staff, or the Town Administrator (higginst@lincolntown.org)
- **SUBMIT** a "Volunteer" form (Home page of Town web site).

SUBSCRIBE TO THIS NEWSLETTER

- Town web site, Selectmen's page; Newsletter link: tinyurl.com/01773BOS
- Email to: Elderp@lincolntown.org.
- Choose "Notify Me" on Town web site Home page

SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS

- **TV:** Comcast #8 or Verizon #33
- **ON-LINE:** <https://lincolntv.viebit.com/#selectmen>
- **MINUTES:** lincolntown.org, Boards & Commissions