

Cape Elizabeth Town Council

Town Center Rt.77 from Hill Way to Fowler Road

Speed Limit / Crash Information

January 8, 2015

The above area was reviewed by the Cape Elizabeth Police Department concerning opinions on appropriate speed limits and how the area relates to MDOT crash data. The current speed limit in this area is 35 mph.

The crash data utilized was from MDOT and sampled the time period of 2011 through 2013. The speed surveys were done in January 2015 by the Cape Elizabeth Police Department. The following is an overview of data collected:

Town Center / Rt. 77 from Hill Way to Fowler Road

This stretch of roadway is now posted by MDOT at 35 mph. The speed details conducted by the Department were in the Town Center (Town Hall Area and across from the IGA). A total of 589 vehicles were clocked by radar. Of the 589 vehicles the highest speed recorded was 47 mph and the lowest speed was 21 mph. The average speed of a vehicle for the entire survey was 31.52 mph.

Crash data acquired from MDOT shows that the intersection of Rt. 77 / Shore Road / Scott Dyer Road during 2011 and 2013 is classified as a High Crash Area. This intersection had a total of nine crashes for the time period.

Of the nine crashes at the intersection of Rt. 77 / Shore Road area seven of those were property damage only. All of the crashes were during daylight hours with six of the crashes right at the intersection of the establishment that was called Jonsey's On The Run. The establishment now has changed to Cumberland Farms.

The intersection of Rt. 77 and the Pond Cove Shopping Center is also classified by MDOT as a High Crash Area. In turn this area also has nine crashes for the above time period. One of these crashes was a car / deer and four were rear end crashes. All nine crashes were property damage only.

Observations:

The area of roadway on Rt. 77 between Hill Way and Fowler Road has a large volume of traffic daily. Especially, when the schools are beginning or ending for the day and when there is an event in the community, for example, voting days, Beach to Beacon Road Race or holidays.

Speed does not appear to be a large factor here. The High Crash Areas do not appear to be the result of speeding vehicles however, more so to inattentive drivers and questionable turning movements. From the speed surveys completed it also shows that the average speed is less than 32 mph in a 35mph zone.

With that being said the Town Center will be growing due to recent land purchases and with that come more vehicular traffic and increased pedestrian traffic. At this time we now have pedestrian traffic that currently does not utilize the current marked pedestrian crossings to access Cumberland Farms from the Scott Dyer Road side. The area in front of Cumberland Farms does not even allow a pedestrian crossing because there is no sidewalk on the store side to receive a crosswalk.

The Town Center section of Rt. 77 is also very wide. With the inclusion of the bike lanes the edge to edge pavement is in the range of 40 feet wide. Having this width gives the appearance to drivers that there is plenty of room to go to the right of vehicle that is turning. It appears that this width allows more traffic turning and passing movements, which is a causation factor in the crashes along this stretch.

Recommendation:

For the future of the Town Center Plan, a discussion may want to take place to look at having MDOT review the Town Center area to see if 35 mph is appropriate. At the same time a discussion with MDOT could be held to see how the Town, in partnership with MDOT, could improve pedestrian traffic in the Town Center.

When asking MDOT to review an area for speed limit review sometime you may get a different result then you intended. What I mean by this is recently MDOT was asked to come in and research a road for a speed limit reduction for South Portland. MDOT did their review and when it was done they actually raised the speed limit on that road by 5 mph.

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Shore Road at the South Portland Line

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Shore Road / South Portland Line

With regards to the information provided for Shore Road at the South Portland Line Chief Edward Googins of the South Portland Police Department was consulted after he had a chance to review data collected by his Department on the South Portland side of the Town Line. It should be noted that there is a road name change once Shore Road crosses the Town Line into South Portland. The road name would then be Cottage Road. The speed limit is posted 30 mph.

On the South Portland side of the line twelve summonses were issued along the stretch between Sawyer Road and the Cape Elizabeth Town line in the last five years.

A speed survey was completed at the South Portland line in which 350 vehicles were clocked with radar. The highest speed clocked was 37 mph and lowest speed was 19 mph. The average speed of a vehicle in this survey was 28.26 mph.

In the last three years South Portland handled four crashes on their side of the line, but all were at Cliff Avenue, which is around the corner from the Town line.

On the Cape Elizabeth side of the Town line we have handled three crashes during 2011 through 2013. All of those crashes were further down from the line at Charles road.

Pedestrian traffic was also brought up as a concern at the Town line. There is a marked pedestrian crossing on the Cape Elizabeth side of the line at the end of the side walk next to the parking lot. The report was vehicles were not stopping for pedestrians in the crosswalk. The crossing was observed during the summer on three different sunny days for an hour each time. During this time frame the crosswalk was utilized by three people and there were no issues. The pedestrians were all walking from South Portland into Cape Elizabeth.

The edge to edge pavement in the area of the Town line is 34-35 feet. Therefore, this area is narrow for vehicular traffic, especially if vehicles are parked along the side of this stretch of roadway.

Observations:

The speed surveys that were conducted in this area do not indicate a speed issue. Matter of fact, when vehicles are parked along this area it seems to act as a visual speed deterrent because the road is narrow to begin with.

Crash data does not indicate that there is a problem along this stretch of road.

The pedestrian crossing is in such a location that installing markings is near impossible. Public works has installed a pedestrian sign however, this has been installed a great distance down the roadway because there is no area closer to install it.

Flashing pedestrian lights again raise the issue that there is no place to install them for this pedestrian crossing.

A pedestrian sign placed in the middle of the roadway would not be safe. Should vehicles park along this stretch of roadway it would not allow a travel lane wide enough for large vehicles to get through safely.

I have not checked with the businesses in the area, but feel that should parking be banned along this section of Shore Road it would virtually leave nowhere for patrons to park.

Recommendation:

Crash data and speed surveys do not indicate an issue with speed in this area. The area is too narrow to place a pedestrian sign in the roadway.

In conversations with South Portland Police Chief Edward Googins we both do not feel a reduction of the speed limit in this area is warranted.

One option to consider could be to restrict parking to one side of Shore Road in this area. By doing this it would give more visibility for operators of vehicles to see pedestrians waiting to enter the crosswalk.

The other option would be to look at the feasibility to reconstruct the area of the crosswalk or relocate the crosswalk to a better area.