



# CITY OF CONCORD

## REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Robert J. Mack, PE, PTOE  
Traffic Engineer

**DATE:** April 17, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Report from the Traffic Engineer on behalf of the Traffic Operations Committee in response to a referral from Councilor Champlin regarding a resident request for 'Children at Play' signs on Chapel Street to slow traffic.

### **Recommendation**

Accept this report.

### **Background**

On December 6, 2017, Councilor Champlin forwarded to the City Clerk a constituent concern regarding speeding on Chapel Street and requesting Children at Play signs to slow traffic. City Council referred this request to the Traffic Operations Committee (TOC) on December 11, 2017. TOC considered this referral at its December 19, 2017 and January 16, 2018 meetings, including follow-ups by the Concord Police Department (CPD).

### **Discussion**

At issue is a resident concern on traffic speeding along Chapel Street. Requested is increased speed enforcement and the installation of 'Children at Play' or similar signs to slow traffic. TOC initially discussed this referral at its December 19, 2017 meeting. Because of the narrowness and shortness of the street, especially when parked cars are present, TOC felt that in general, excessive travel speeds would be unlikely. TOC felt that the perception of speeding would likely be limited to a small number of inconsiderate drivers; no type of signage can correct that behavior. TOC referred the resident's concern on speeding to CPD.

The City does not post signs such as Children at Play or Slow/Children as they are not Federally-endorsed signs. The intended message is not enforceable, it may be potentially confusing to drivers and it has not been shown to be effective in changing driver behavior. Allowing its usage also creates potential for the sign to proliferate exponentially since children can be expected on almost every street in the city; concerns include the proliferation of unnecessary signs; cost and aesthetics. Regarding safety, these signs may

also instill a false sense of security upon parents and children in the area. As such, not posting these signs has been accepted practice in the City for many years. A guideline statement with similar recommendation was accepted by City Council in 1998 (see attached report by Richard Perkins, former City Engineer, and dated December 26, 1997).

CPD followed up with five directed speed patrols on Chapel Street totaling 2.1 hours between January 6 and 18, 2018. The highest reported speed was 25 mph; no warnings or summonses were issued during these patrols. Sgt. Charlie Wroblewski of CPD reached out to the resident in January to discuss his concerns as well as inform him of CPD's enforcement actions. The resident welcomed the enforcement efforts and felt that the most egregious 'speeders' were pizza delivery vehicles. CPD later followed up with the management of the nearby pizza shop on N. Main Street.

Pursuant to a follow-up discussion with the resident on February 14, 2018, Sgt. Wroblewski reported that the resident was pleased with enforcement actions and noted that pizza delivery vehicles were now traveling noticeably slower. The resident also inquired if the Slow/Children or similar signs, or other traffic calming features could be considered for Chapel Street. As noted above, TOC did not endorse the addition of such signs. Further, TOC feels that the current parking of cars along Chapel Street creates a 'traffic calming' effect that likely exceeds any type of lateral width restriction that might be constructed along the street. The option of speed bumps might also be ultimately considered undesirable due to the location of residences very near the street coupled with the resultant 24/7 noise impacts of the bumps. A potential switch to one-way along Chapel Street has been discussed by TOC and the Parking Committee in the past, although that would not affect speeds. While on-street parking currently suppresses overall speeds to fairly low levels (as observed by CPD), the potential removal of on-street parking would certainly tend to increase speeds somewhat. Staff had left a message with the resident to call back if he wished to discuss these traffic calming options further; the resident did not respond.

In summary, it appears that CPD had rectified the resident's predominant concern, that being the 'speeding' pizza delivery drivers. CPD similarly handled the same complaint from a Chapel Street resident several years ago, and suggested that they will gladly do the same in the future if they are made aware of a recurrence of the issue. Staff notes that Chapel Street is among the neighborhood streets in the urban core that the Parking Committee plans to meet with residents regarding concerns with parking on their narrow streets. These upcoming neighborhood meetings will provide a great venue for folks to talk with a variety of city representatives regarding parking and any other concerns they may have. These findings had been shared in advance with Councilor Champlin.

Attachment: Guidelines on Installation of 'Caution Children' Warning Signs,  
Concord Engineering Department, December 26, 1997.

cc: Traffic Operations Committee