



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Karen Hill, P.E., Transportation Engineer, staff representative for the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee

DATE: July 22, 2024

SUBJECT: Response to City Council Referral: Request to reduce speed limit to 15 mph on Birch Street.

Recommendation

Accept this report submitted by the Transportation Engineer on behalf of the Traffic Operations Committee and Transportation Policy Advisory Committee in response to a referral from City Council regarding communication from Councilor Schlosser on behalf of George (Brad) Cilley to reduce the speed limit on Birch Street to 15 mph.

Background

On May 13, 2024, City Council forwarded to the Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) a referral from City Council regarding communication from Councilor Schlosser on behalf of George (Brad) Cilley requesting that the speed limit on Birch Street be reduced to 15 mph.

Birch Street, a Class VI public highway, is a gravel road that connects Clinton Street to Iron Works Road. At their October 12, 2021 meeting, City Council approved a report to designate Birch Street as an emergency lane under RSA 231:59-a. Given these designations, the General Services Department does not regularly maintain or repair Birch Street; however, the road is regraded periodically as needed. Additionally, the General Services Department does not provide any winter maintenance on Birch Street.

Discussion

In advance of the TPAC meeting, the request was discussed at the May 21, 2024 and June 18, 2024 Traffic Operations Committee (TOC) meetings.

The City is permitted to regulate speed on Birch Street under RSA 265:60, Basic Rule and Maximum Limits. In accordance with that statute, assuming that no hazard exists which requires a person to drive a vehicle at a lower speed, the default speed for Birch Street is 35 mph because it is located in a rural residence district.

Section 265:63, Alteration of Limits, allows the City to, on the basis of an engineering or traffic investigation, decrease the limit outside an urban district but not to less than 25 miles per hour.

TOC reviewed speed data collected during the month of May on Birch Street, as follows:

Direction	Avg (mph)	85th (mph)
Southbound	19	25
Northbound	18	24

85th percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85 percent of the drivers travel on a road segment.

Avg = Average speed

mph = miles per hour

Based on this data, the existing average and 85th percentile speeds do not exceed 25 mph. The Committee concurred that significant speeding does not appear to be an overall problem on this street. The Committee recommends no action as the necessary traffic study would only potentially result in a 25 mph minimum posting, which is the speed that most vehicles are already traveling on Birch Street.

TPAC met on June 27, 2024 and concurred with TOC's conclusion.

cc: Traffic Operations Committee
Transportation Policy Advisory Committee