



Charles D. Baker, Governor
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor
Jamey Tesler, Secretary & CEO
Jonathan L. Gulliver, Highway Administrator



November 28, 2022

Rhonda L. Nyman, Chair
Town of Hanover Select Board
550 Hanover Street, Suite 29
Hanover, MA 02339

Subject: Speed Limit Rte. 139 in Hanover

Dear Ms. Nyman:

MassDOT is responding to the letter received from the Town of Hanover Select Board requesting a review of the posted speed limits on Route 139 in Hanover.

MassDOT staff have carefully reviewed existing conditions on Route 139, as well as historical crash data and the 2020 corridor study prepared by the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) that was referenced in the letter. Based on our review of this information, MassDOT has determined that further evaluation of the posted speed limits on Route 139 is not warranted at this time.

Regulatory speed limits are established through a Special Speed Regulation in accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 90, Section 18. The numerical speed limit is determined by an engineering study conducted in compliance with standard traffic engineering practices as outlined in the Federal Highway Administration *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* and approved by the State Traffic Engineer and Registrar of Motor Vehicles as being consistent with the public interests. If this procedure is not followed to establish a regulatory speed limit, the speed limit would be in violation of MGL c. 90 § 18 and would be unenforceable.

The regulatory speed limit on Route 139 in Hanover was established through Special Speed Regulation 254-B, dated October 26, 1971. While this regulation was established many years ago, the speed data presented in the 2020 Route 139 Corridor Study indicate that the regulation is still consistent with existing roadway characteristics, and the established speed zones still represent the appropriate speed limit for each segment of Route 139.

MassDOT does not concur with the Corridor Study recommendation to reduce the regulatory speed limit on Route 139. The Study itself concluded that "...data suggests speeding is not a major issue on Route 139." It is important to note that the only segment of Route 139 where the Corridor Study indicates speeding may be an issue is the segment between the Rockland town line and the Pleasant Street/Circuit Steet intersection. However, the speed limit for this segment of Route 139 is incorrectly stated in the Corridor Study. The speed limit for this segment of Route 139 is 45 miles per hour in both directions. When the reported speed data for this segment is compared to the correct regulatory speed limit, it confirms that the existing posted speed limit is appropriate. Based on the reported speed data in the Corridor Study, a

reduction to the regulatory speed limit would be inconsistent with standard traffic engineering practices and would be in violation of MGL c. 90 § 18 and unenforceable.

MassDOT has initiated a capital improvement project for Route 139 in the area of Town Hall and the intersections with Main Street and Center Street. Through this project, operations and safety should be improved at these intersections. A reevaluation of the regulatory speed limit in this area may be performed at that time once work on the improvement project is complete.

Please contact Kenneth Charlton, District Traffic Engineer at (857) 368-5203 with any questions regarding this matter. The District is available to meet with the Town to discuss this matter in greater detail.

Sincerely,


Mary-Joe Perry (Dec 7, 2022 16:06 EST)

Mary-Joe Perry
District Highway Director

DMS/dms 

cc: MJP 
WDT  BT
KLC 
Files  KC