



**Diane Nichols Tradd**  
*Assistant City Manager/DPD Director*

**Craig Thomas**  
*Deputy Director*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*

FROM: Diane N. Tradd, Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

SUBJECT: MOTION OF 1/7/20 BY COUNCILOR ELLIOTT  
REQUEST CITY MANAGER PROVIDE A REPORT REGARDING STATUS  
OF SPEED LIMIT ON BILLERICA STREET

The Transportation Engineer and personnel from the Sign Department performed a site visit to Billerica Street. Per resident reports, Billerica Street has become a cut-through to access Interstate 495 and residents are experiencing speeding traffic. There was also concern that the police are unable to enforce a speed limit if there is not a sign posted. The speed limit in municipalities in Massachusetts is determined by Massachusetts General Law (MGL). As stated in MGL Chapter 90, section 17, the prima facie speed limit in a thickly settled area is 30 mph. Prima Facie is literally translated to mean 'on its face' and is taken to mean the default speed limit. Lowell is a thickly settled area. Unless otherwise posted or if a speed study has been performed on a state road, the speed limit on all Lowell streets is 30 mph and LPD states they can enforce the speed limit using the law.

Although posting a sign does not always translate to better driver behavior, it is possible that drivers commuting through Lowell are unaware of the 30 mph speed limit. The Sign Department will install two 30 mph speed limit signs. One will be installed on Billerica Street, near the intersection with Lawrence Street. The other will be installed on Easton Street near the intersection with Woburn Street. Easton Street leads to several streets which connect to Billerica Street.

The Transportation Engineer recommends considering creating speed limit signs which read '30 mph unless otherwise posted' to place on all the main roads into Lowell. Initial review indicate that would require 16 signs, at an approximate cost of \$150 each, for an approximate cost of \$2,400.

NV/ns  
1/28/20

cc: Natasha Vance, Transportation Engineer  
John Cooper, LPD Sign Division