



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

DATE: November 12, 2019

SUBJECT: MOTION OF 10/01/19 BY COUNCILOR SAMARAS  
REQUEST CITY MANAGER INSTRUCT THE PROPER DEPARTMENT  
TO INSTALL SPEED MONITORING SIGN ON AIKEN AVENUE

The Lowell Police Department has been monitoring Aiken Avenue for speeding since the end of September. LPD reports that the enforcement has been effective in reducing speeding traffic and has no issues to report. Currently, the portable speed monitoring device is under repair so it cannot be placed on Aiken Avenue. Once the repair is completed, it will be located on Aiken Avenue.

The cost of a pole-mounted digital speed monitoring sign (also known as a dynamic speed display sign, DSDS), such as the one installed on Andover Street, can range widely, depending on the features of the sign. The cost will be between \$3,500 and \$9,000 plus installation costs and maintenance. According to industry data (by companies that sell the product), the DSDS are a proven traffic calming solution to raise the speed awareness of oncoming drivers. Studies repeatedly show that when alerted by a radar sign, speeders will slow down up to 80% of the time. Typical average speed reductions are 10-20%, and overall compliance with the posted speed limit will increase by 30-60%.

FHWA data on the effectiveness use of them is mixed. According to a number of studies available on the FHWA website, in general, most communities see some effect of lower speeds following sign deployment. However, the studies indicate that the signage has a negligible effect on lowering speeds over the longer-term. The conclusion of the studies was that a DSDS should be used as a temporary solution because its effectiveness reduces with time. The research also concluded that a DSDS is effective only for short distance, as drivers increase their speed after passing the DSDS, therefore, DSDSs should be used on critical points. A critical point could be defined as an area where the probability of crashes is high or safety is very important (e.g., work zones or school zones). When a DSDS is combined with another speed control device, such as a speed camera, its effectiveness increases.

NV/ns

cc: Natasha Vance, Transportation Engineer

