

Main Street Safety Task Group Report Bolton, Mass

October 1, 2002

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Main Street Safety Task Group Report

Objective

Our charge is to identify areas of safety concern along Main Street, to identify the factors that pose safety risks, and to suggest possible solutions to mitigate these factors. We have made an attempt to balance pedestrian safety with motorists' safety.

Approach

After designating the high priority locations and intersections, we discussed the situation with the Bolton Police, read existing traffic studies, and observed how nearby towns handle traffic and safety issues.

Observing our neighboring towns was an eye-opening experience. While we realize each town has its own unique geography and situations, we discovered most other towns have done a much better job than Bolton to control speed, mark school zones, and implement customized solutions to their unique problem areas. We strongly urge the selectmen, town officials, and residents to look closely at how our neighbors handle the issues raised below. Even though you have traveled these roads 100 times, you will see them in a completely different light. We believe you will notice the same marked difference that we observed. We conclude that Bolton has not kept pace with the increased risks associated with the increasing traffic volume, and Bolton has not demonstrated the level of care other towns have attempted to provide, and that pedestrian safety issues have been sacrificed to motorists' convenience.

To remedy this, we should start the process of evaluating and improving many areas in town, not just Main Street. Professional help and residents' support will be required to catch up to the level of protection we should be offering our children and residents, and to improve the quality of life in our community. This will be a continuing concern as the community evolves from a predominantly rural landscape into a suburban environment.

The rapid growth and change of our town and surrounding communities underscore the urgency of this task. Traffic and pedestrian safety should be an ongoing concern to all.

Organization

We have organized this report to describe the problems in the 3 highest priority areas:

- (1) the Nashoba Regional High School area,
- (2) Mechanic Street and Sawyer/Emerson School zone, and
- (3) the intersections of Manor/Harvard Road, Wattaquaddock Hill Road.

We first discuss speed because, while it may not be an issue in itself, it is a contributing factor to the safety of the other areas discussed. Following a description of each problem area we make several recommendations to alleviate the problems (lettered bullets).

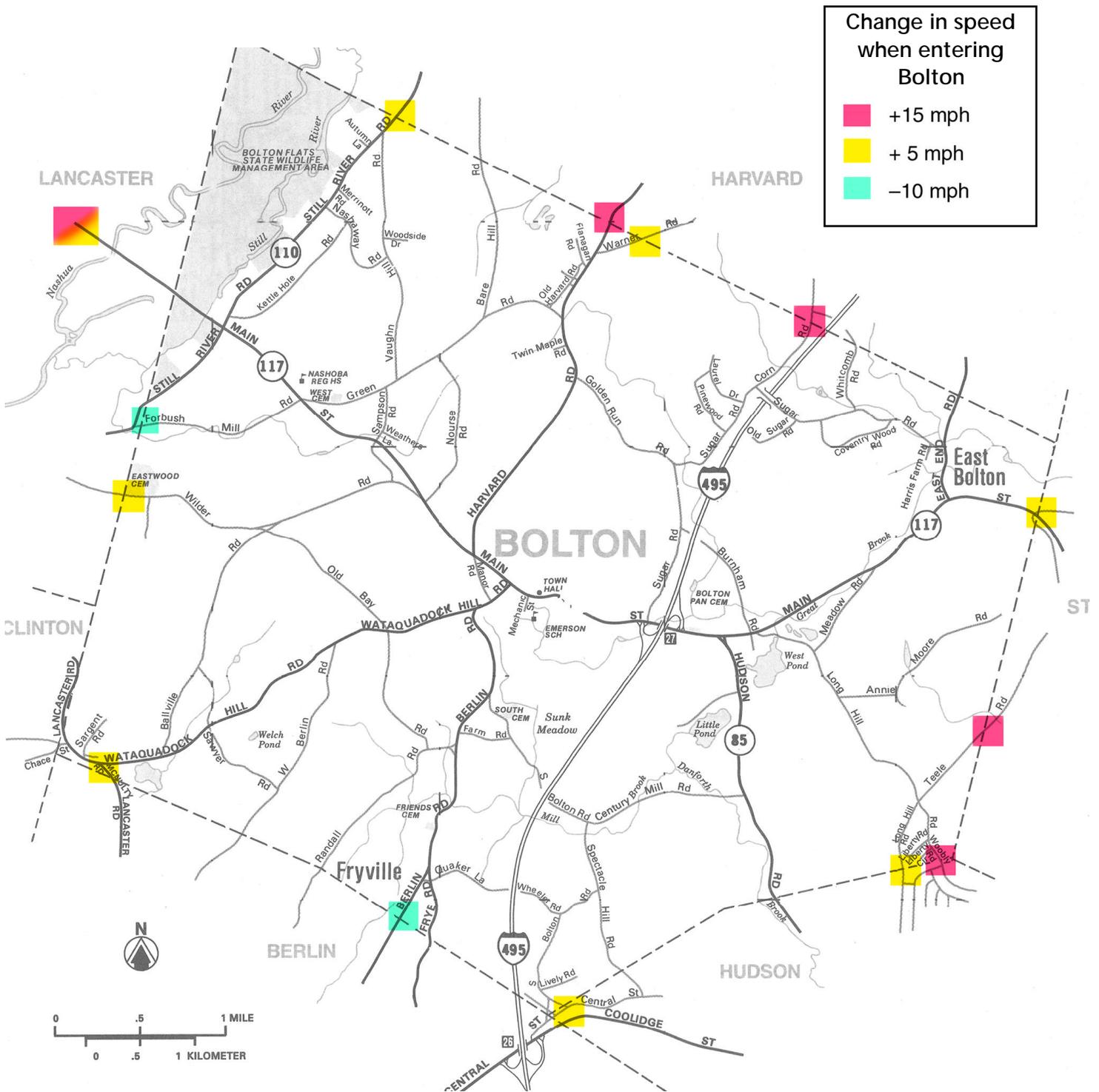
Speed Zones

Everyone always wants to lower the speed in their own town or on their own street. But it is evident from our observations that Bolton residents have a justifiable right to voice such desires. We studied neighboring towns on Route 117 (Lancaster and Stow), and towns on similar commuting routes (Groton, Littleton on Route 119). The overall speeds in Bolton are consistently higher than comparable roads in other towns, both on Route 117 and smaller feeder roads.

- **Bolton’s stretch of Route 117 has the highest speeds along its entire length from Leominster to Waltham.** See Exhibit 2.
 - The predominant speed of Route 117 in Bolton is **45 mph**, whereas in Lancaster it is **35 mph** and in Stow it is **40 mph**. The only length of the road in all of Stow and Lancaster that allows 45 mph is the short section before their border with Bolton.
 - The only place along the entire route from Leominster to Waltham where **50 mph** is allowed is the stretch between Long Hill Road and Meadow Rd. In fact, it is rare to find a 50 mph zone anywhere in our region other than divided highways.
- **Most drivers entering Bolton are allowed to speed up, both on Route 117 and many of the side roads. Many roads in Bolton are unmarked which means the default speed of 40 mph is allowed.** See Exhibit 1.

Entering from ...	Posted at	Speed in Bolton (within a mile)	Difference
FROM HARVARD:			
Still River Road	40 mph	45 mph	+5
Bare Hill Road	40 (unmarked)	40 (unmarked)	none
Harvard Road	30 mph	45 mph	+15
Warner Road	35 mph	40 (unmarked)	+5
Corn Road	25 mph	40 (unmarked)	+15
East End Road	30 mph	30 mph	none
FROM STOW:			
Main Street	40 mph (0.6 mile)	45 mph	+5
Teele Road	25 <i>mph</i>	40 <i>mph</i> (unmarked)	+15
FROM HUDSON:			
Hudson Road	40 mph	40 mph	none
Woobly Road	25 <i>mph</i>	40 (unmarked)	+15
Long Hill Road	35 <i>mph</i>	40 (unmarked)	+5
Spectacle Hill Road	40 (unmarked)	40 (unmarked)	none
South Bolton Road	35 mph	40 (unmarked)	+5
FROM BERLIN:			
Frye Road	40 (unmarked)	40 (unmarked)	none
Berlin Road	35 mph	25 mph	-10
West Berlin Road	40 (unmarked)	40 (unmarked)	none
Lancaster/McNulty Road	35 mph	40 (unmarked)	+5
FROM CLINTON:			
Wattaquodock Hill (Water)	40 (unmarked)	40 (soon 45) mph	none
Lancaster Road	40 (unmarked)	40 (unmarked)	none
FROM LANCASTER:			
Wilder Road	30 mph	35 mph, 30, 35, 40 (in 0.8 mile)	+5
Forbush Mill Road	40 (unmarked)	30 mph	-10
Still River Road	40 mph	40 (unmarked)	none
Route 117	35, 45	40, 30, 45	see above

EXHIBIT 1 Map of Bolton showing points of entry where there is a change in speed zone. (See also table).
 Red and yellow points are areas where drivers are allowed to speed up when entering Bolton; blue points are areas where drivers slow down, unmarked roads have unchanged speed.



Speed Zones (continued)

- Other town centers located along busy numbered state routes are protected by slower speeds, even if for very short distances:
 - Harvard: 20 mph (Routes 111, 110)
 - Berlin: 20 and 25 mph (Route 62)
 - West Acton: 25 mph (Route 111)
- The most pressing speed zone issue is the existence of signs along Main Street that MassHighway has deemed to be “illegal.” They have stated in letters to the DPW that Bolton must remove a sign which reduces the speed limit for eastbound traffic to 30 mph just before the dangerous Harvard Road/Manor Road intersection—effectively setting the speed limit through that intersection at 45mph. They have also asked for installation of a 45mph sign prior to the intersection for westbound travelers. Officials at MassHighway are disputing these signs because they were put up without following their procedures and gaining their official approval. MassHighway is delaying other traffic decisions (Woobly Road speed zone) and threatening to withhold highway funds if Bolton does not comply.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A Remedy the illegal signs issue.

- Hire and direct a consultant who will advocate for us in dealing with MassHighway to resolve this issue (and others). We need to emphasize safety issues, not just traffic flow, so that we can keep the lower speed limit in this fragile area. A temporary yellow (unenforceable) sign should be posted to keep drivers accustomed to the 30 mph area.

Excerpt from MassHighway manual about required studies for setting speeds:

“Chapter 90, Section 18 authorizes the posting of numerical speed limits on all roadways in Massachusetts. The foundation for the actual posting of a speed limit is a thorough traffic engineering study. After the study has been completed, a Special Speed Regulation is drafted and approved by the governing authority of the roadway, the Registry of Motor Vehicles or MassHighway. **All posted regulatory speed limit signs must adhere to this approval process. If a speed limit is posted without this procedure, it is in violation of Chapter 90, Section 18, and is therefore considered illegal and unenforceable.**”

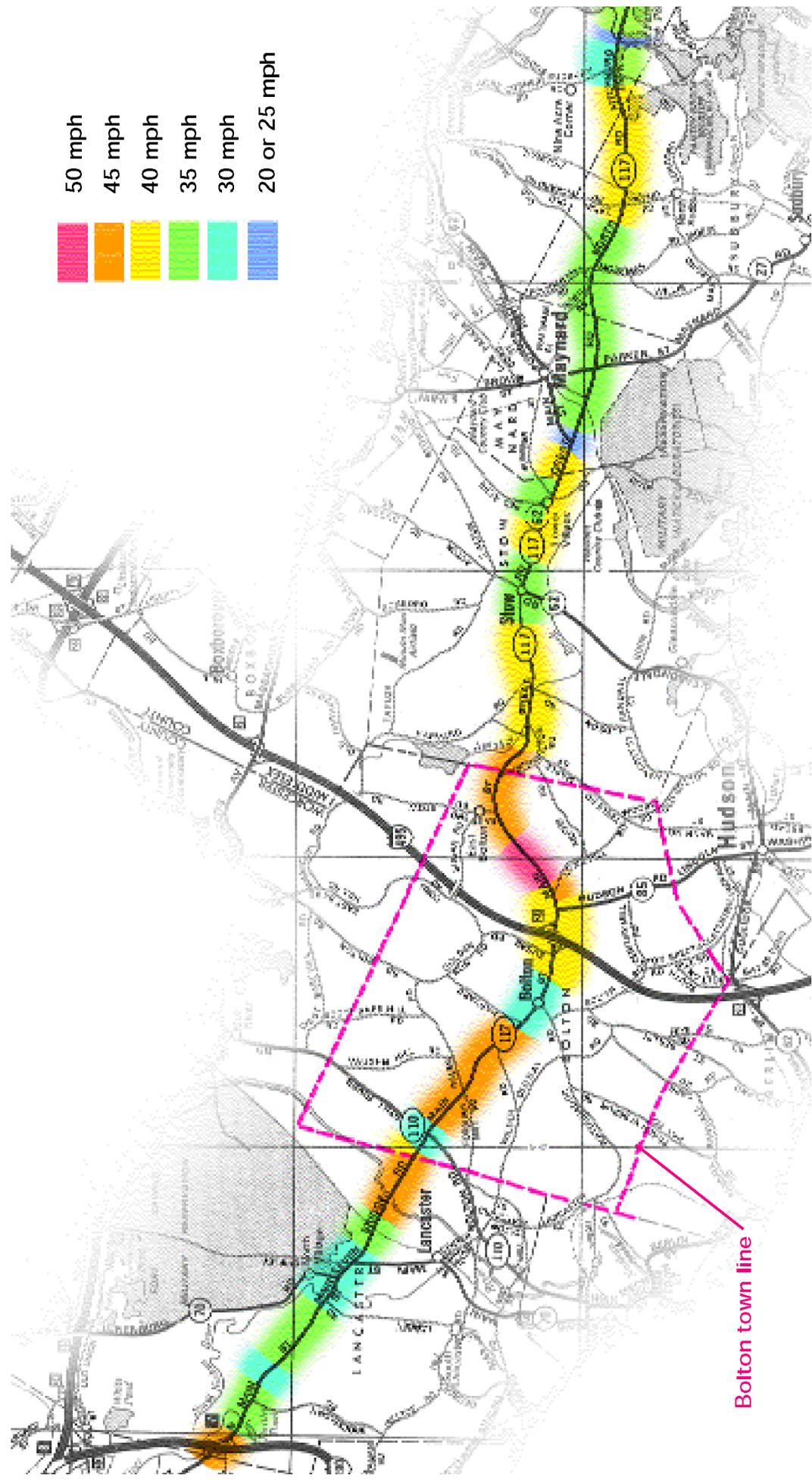
Federal Law (23-CFR-655) also requires that the speed limit be based on an engineering study.

See *Procedures for Speed Zoning on State and Municipal Roadways* (10 pages) attached at back of this report or at <http://www.mit.edu/~jfc/speed/MassHighway/manual.html>

B Create and appoint a more permanent advisory committee to monitor safety and traffic issues and communicate with other town committees to help us achieve a higher level of attention.

- Town of Harvard has a Safety Committee, see **See Exhibit 3**, their charter.

EXHIBIT 2 Speed zones on Route 117 from Lancaster to Route 126 in Lincoln. Bolton has the highest speeds and the highest average speeds.



HARVARD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Composition:

The Committee shall consist of seven (7) members appointed annually. The Board of Selectmen and Planning Board shall each designate a board member or representative of the board to the Committee. The Police Chief shall be a member of the Committee. The Superintendent of Public Works, Fire Chief, Ambulance Director, Tree Warden, and Town Administrator shall all serve as professional resources to the committee, attending meetings as requested by the Committee.

Charge:

Harvard values its winding, stonewall and tree lined country roads, the majority of which have been designated 'Scenic Roads' pursuant to state law and our local bylaw. Our roads are traveled by bikers, horseback riders, and pedestrians as well as vehicles. They are also increasingly used by commuters traveling through town between work and home. The safety of our roads for all travelers is becoming increasingly important.

The Traffic Safety Advisory Committee shall identify, investigate and propose solutions to safety concerns throughout the town taking into account the scenic nature of our roads, the diversity of their users and the need to encourage commuter traffic onto appropriate roadways. This shall include examination of:

- existing traffic patterns (commuter, commercial trucking, and within town)
- existing traffic accident documentation recorded by the police department
- excessive traffic volumes
- traffic speed and traffic calming measures
- safety for pedestrians, bikers, and riders
- parking
- dangerous or problem intersections
- emergency vehicle access

The Committee shall consult with the Superintendent of Public Works, Fire Chief, Ambulance Director, and Tree Warden in gathering information and before making recommendations. In addition, the Committee shall consult with the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, School Committee, and any other board or official having jurisdiction over a specific project prior to bringing a specific proposal to the Board of Selectmen.

The Board of Selectmen must approve any proposed remediation or mitigation measure prior to implementation.

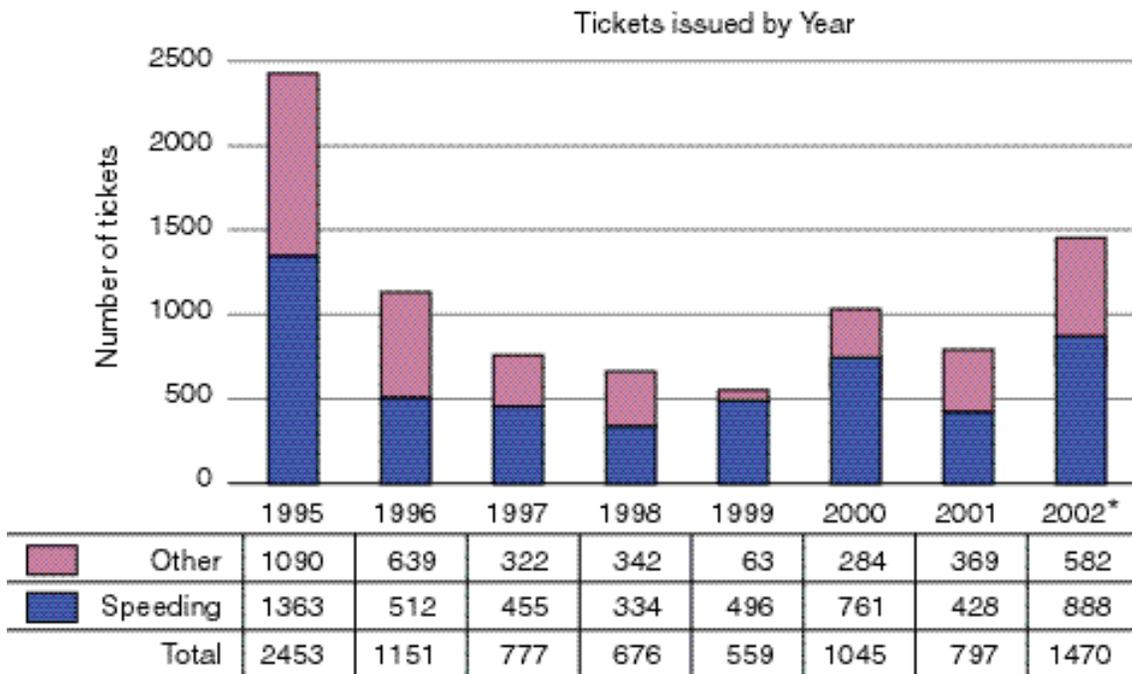
Reporting:

The Committee shall report to the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board at least twice per year.

C Increase police enforcement of existing speeds and behavior around schools.

- Extended police presence in the afternoon around schools, especially high school, to assist buses and student traffic exiting onto Main Street. This is essential until other solutions are implemented and evaluated.
- Consider reinstating a crossing guard on Main Street and Mechanic Street during school arrival and dismissal hours. Assist buses exiting onto Main Street.
- Since the March 2002 near-miss pedestrian incident and local citizen initiative about the crosswalks, we have noticed increased police presence and enforcement. Many neighbors in this area appreciate this, especially enforcement of the crosswalks.
- Increased presence and traffic control on Main Street in general.

EXHIBIT 4 Number of tickets issued by Bolton Police 1995–2002



* Figures for 2002 are through August 26, 2002.

Priority Areas:

1. High School Area / Green and Forbush Mill Roads

The Nashoba Regional High School area is a high priority safety issue.

There are many factors that combine to make this one of the most dangerous areas in town. These factors are not necessarily dangerous by themselves, however, in combination, they make this area a danger to both vehicles and pedestrians. These factors include:

- The busy high school driveway, which is situated at the top of a hill with limited visibility, aligned with the post office exit. There are many inexperienced drivers exiting and turning left. There are significant spikes in the volume of traffic for the opening/closing of school as well as special events at the school (some after dark).
- The school zone is not well-marked, therefore drivers are unaware they should exercise greater caution.
- A high number of entrances and exits: The high school, local businesses, post office, Green Road, and Forbush Mill Road all feed onto Main Street creating a confusing tangle of driveways, streets, and parking lots. To enter onto Main Street from any of these points is difficult due to the fast two-way traffic, combined with cars entering from any other point.
- A 45 mph speed zone—a speed too high to give drivers enough reaction time to the unexpected traffic or pedestrian behavior.
- A passing zone just east of the Green Road intersection which encourages speeding in this fragile area.
- No crosswalks, so pedestrians can (and do) cross at random places. Special events at the school (e.g. football games) require people to park on the south side of the road .

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- D** Increase signage warning drivers of existence of school; pursue official school zone status.
 - The existing solo yellow advisory sign “Watch for School Bus” is strikingly inadequate compared to other towns. Add updated signage. Add markings on pavement, either demi-stripes or “slow school.” **See Exhibits 5–6**
 - Pursue official school zone designation. We have been told this is not usually applied to high schools, but we have found two examples of high schools with school zone and flashing lights: North Middlesex Regional High School (Route 119 in Townsend) and Maynard High School (Route 117, separate school zones for the high school and grade school). The awkward location of NRHS makes it worthy of pursuing exceptional status. If this fails, more advisory signs and pavement warnings are needed. **See Exhibit 7**
 - Consistent police presence at school arrival and dismissal time, and for special events when pedestrians will be crossing from overflow parking areas.

E Seek better control and speed of traffic in high school area.

- Add a traffic light at Green /Forbush Mill/Main Street intersection, with pedestrian crosswalk and pedestrian activated light.
- Reroute traffic leaving school to exit onto Green Road, (right turn only) bringing traffic up to a stop at Main Street where visibility is better. An exclusion can be made for buses and trucks.

See Exhibit 8

- Consider adding a breakdown lane or a climbing lane eastbound on the hill approaching high school to prevent passing vehicles from crossing the double yellow line and/or accelerating speeds. We support this only if it makes it safer for the high school, not if it raises speeds overall.
- Eliminate passing zone east of Green Road.

F Other recommendations

- Add a barrier to modify Classic Pizza parking lot so drivers cannot cut corner entering Forbush Mill Road. Limit access to the intersection.
 - Clear brush from northeast corner of Main Street and Green Rd to increase visibility for drivers entering Main Street.
 - Consider/research the following question: If the official address of the high school were changed from Green Road to Main Street, would this help to add a school zone?
 - Add more lighting. There are evening events at the school (athletic events, meetings, performances) that require people to park on the south side of road. More light is needed for pedestrians to cross the highway. Police detail for larger events is needed.
- Please note the letter from MassHighway of May 2000 in the appendix. We discovered it mentioned many of these same recommendations.

D Mark and increase awareness of high school location.



EXHIBIT 5 Currently NRHS area has only one sign, which is not adequate for designating a school area.

D Mark and increase awareness of high school location.



EXHIBIT 6

Clinton High School, on Route 110 has:
new sign, flashers, and pavement sign (above) . . . preceded by
demi-stripes on road (below) and another sign (left)
all within 30 mph area.





EXHIBIT 7 Route 119 North Middlesex Regional High School in Townsend has flashers, school zone, and children in crosswalk sign.

E Route exiting traffic (student drivers) from high school to use Green Road instead of service road/driveway to improve visibility.



EXHIBIT 8 (Above) View west, exiting high school driveway onto Route 117. Sightline is inadequate for speed of oncoming traffic (45 mph).
(Left) View west, exiting from Green Road; Sightline is improved.

2. Mechanic Street / Sawyer School Zone

The Mechanic Street intersection is narrow and congested. Drivers routinely make turns into Mechanic Street without slowing down and travel on Mechanic street too fast. The speed of drivers on Main Street make exiting Mechanic Street a challenge. The school zone is not well marked, particularly for west-bound drivers.

Aggressive measures to slow traffic on Mechanic Street are required since these drivers are predominately parents, teachers, or school staff—exactly the citizens one would expect to be most cautious, but numerous incidents have proven many are not. This is a high priority area.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- G** Increase signage on Main Street warning drivers of existence of school zone or school ahead.
 - Move the flashing 20 mph light for westbound traffic to be more visible—further east and perhaps on the opposite side of the street—giving drivers earlier warning to reduce their speed. Currently the sign is only 27 feet before Mechanic Street and is obscured by the curve in the road. **See Exhibits 9–10**
 - Add modern lime-green warning signs of approaching school zone/pedestrian crossing. **See Exhibits 11–13**
 - Restore the (reminder) 30 mph limit sign for westbound traffic that used to be in town center — only other one is before the Salt Box. The sign was removed in the spring of 2002.
 - Maintain/update timing of flashing light. Currently it is not operational at 2:00 p.m. when the preschool dismisses.

- H** Implement aggressive speed control devices to slow Mechanic Street traffic.
 - Add speed bumps, speed tables, rumble strips, and /or textured concrete. We have been told speed bumps cannot be installed on a public way. Again, other towns have determined that their needs outweighed this technicality: See Lexington Street in Weston near the Cambridge School (a very heavily-traveled shortcut for commuters between Route 117 and Winter St/Waltham); also Fox Hill Rd near the Fox Hill School in Burlington; or Lincoln Road in Lincoln. Mechanic Street traffic is 100% school-related, so bumps earlier in the road would not be a major inconvenience. **See Exhibit 14–16**
 - Investigate whether we could change status of Mechanic Street to be 100% driveway if that helps with adding speed bumps or redesigning traffic flow.
 - Involve the school. We suggest the school begin a campaign to ask parents and staff to slow down. They need to raise awareness that children and local residents who walk dogs, jog, or attend athletic events in this area are put at risk by inappropriate speeds on Mechanic Street and the Sawyer driveway.
 - Explore long-range solutions which include making “driveway” one-way, not straight, with possible exit on east side of Pond Park or Berlin Road.

- J** Employ a crossing guard at school arrival and dismissal times. Neighboring towns such as Harvard, Hudson, Maynard, Groton use many crossing guards.

G Increase signage warning drivers of existence of school zone near Mechanic Street.

EXHIBIT 9 Existing signage westbound on Main Street, approaching Mechanic Street. Curve limits visibility.



EXHIBIT 10
Views west on Main Street. The flashing school zone light is too close to Mechanic Street. (27 feet)



G Update/enlarge signage for more visibility.



EXHIBIT 11 In Lancaster, westbound Route 117. School zone, school crossing combo sign.



EXHIBIT 12 Groton, Route 119 eastbound near middle school.



EXHIBIT 13 Clinton Route 110.

H Implement aggressive speed control devices to slow Mechanic Street traffic.



EXHIBIT 14 Speed bumps on Lexington Road, Weston, off Route 117. There are 5 speed bumps within a mile on this busy commuter shortcut. These wider bumps are well designed and extend to edge of roadway.



EXHIBIT 15 Speed bumps on Fox Hill Road in Burlington, a residential street leading to a school. There are 7 bumps within a 1.25 miles. These bumps are not as effective as Weston's because they do not extend to the edge of road. Drivers can swerve so that only their left tires hit the bump.



EXHIBIT 16 Speed "table" on Lincoln Road, Lincoln. Speed tables are wider than bumps and are more noticeable than speed bumps, especially for SUVs. This one has a crosswalk on it and is marked for 15 mph within a 20 mph zone.

3. Manor/Harvard/Wattaquodock Traffic Triangle

The Manor/Harvard Road intersection is a high priority safety concern both because of its awkward angle and congestion and because of its relationship to the Wattaquodock Hill Road intersection. The difficulty of emerging from the two side streets into heavy commuting traffic has resulted in numerous accidents. It is currently in the “illegally” posted 30 mph zone.

The Wattaquodock Hill Road intersection is congested, and narrow. Drivers turning left into Wattaquodock frequently cut the corner or rush their turn to beat oncoming traffic— behavior that imperils pedestrians and the waiting right-turning traffic. Trucks must cut the corner to complete a turn in the narrow space. Wattaquodock Hill Road is a major feeder of commuter traffic from Clinton and points south and west.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- K** Install a traffic light at Manor/Harvard Road, possibly with separate left turn bay.
 - This would create breaks in the traffic during heavy commuting hours for Wattaquodock and Mechanic Street, and alleviate frustrated-driver behavior.
 - This could replace left turns onto Wattaquodock Hill Road (see [M]).
- L** Add a pedestrian-activated light to cross Wattaquodock/Main.
 - We need a device so that even a child walking to the library can control the traffic. This would be a minor inconvenience to drivers and a major assistance to pedestrians.
- M** Consider redirecting traffic flow in this triangle. Explore/evaluate the effect of flow change on neighbors and businesses in the area.
 - No left turns from Wattaquodock to Main and from Main to Wattaquodock.
 - Investigate a truck restriction on Wattaquodock (excluding fire department needs). This would force trucks coming to and from Clinton to use Route 110.

NOTE:

This is an area requiring professional study and more resources. Many of our thoughts and suggestions would affect other areas of concern and we are reluctant to suggest solutions if it means creating a new problem or moving the problem to a different place. Previous studies of this area focus solely on traffic flow. Some imply that flow cannot be improved, but none view flow in conjunction with pedestrian or safety issues, which is our focus.

Town Center Demarcation

Bolton is small and uncommercial which is part of its charm, but those are factors that encourage traffic to zip through town without regard to the residential and community buildings in the center. The visual clues to drivers to respect the center should be enhanced so that it is natural to go a little slower and be alert to pedestrian crosswalks and turning cars. This growing town should monitor quality of life issues in the town center as it seeks to expand services. Senior housing, library expansion, changed usage of public buildings (police, fire, town hall, Emerson and Sawyer Schools), and dense comprehensive permit developments are some of the future projects that will greatly impact this area.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

N Increase visibility of crosswalks.

See Exhibit 17

- Add permanent signs marking crosswalks (We are told the low markers will be removed in winter).
- Add white stripes to the painted color region, or paint a more contrasting color to pavement. Set up a regular repainting schedule.
- Position the movable yield markers on the center line of Main Street where they are more effective. They slow traffic and help drivers stay within lanes. Have crossing guard reposition markers after buses depart or position markers slightly outside of crosswalk to accommodate wide turns. Markers on side (nar row) streets can remain at the side.

P Increase number of crosswalks.



EXHIBIT 17

(above) Crosswalks are most visible with contrasting striped pattern, brighter colors, low marker positioned on center line, and permanent sign at side. This one in Groton on Route 119 is part of a “series” of eleven crosswalks within [1.5 mile] center.

(right) Littleton has many well marked crosswalks with two kinds of low markers. Note the center marker is positioned slightly off the crosswalk to accommodate wide turns.



— Add crosswalks to act as warnings to drivers that they are in a town center (also to give pedestrians more places to cross). The objective is to make drivers slow down at least by the second or third crosswalk. Groton and Littleton make good use of crosswalk “series.” Specific locations to consider for additional crosswalks:

- West of the library, where south side sidewalk ends and north side continues.
- At the Catholic Church (see sidewalk discussion below)
- A pair near Town Hall (A pair is recommended because of the curves. Crossing from the outside of a curve has increased visibility. Conversely, inside of a curve has decreased visibility. Pedestrians would in effect use them as one way crosswalks if not too far apart.)
- At Salt Box or near the future senior housing site. (Senior housing residents will need access to Town Hall, library, and churches)
- Near Pan cemetery (for bikers and truckers that stop on north side of road and cross to Country Cupboard)

Q Extend and maintain sidewalks.

See Exhibit 18

- Extend sidewalks on the south side of Main Street to the Catholic Church at west end of town and to senior housing/Flatley field on east side of town.
- Clear brush from impassable areas, maintain sidewalks so they are easily and safely walkable. Currently they are uneven and cause frequent tripping, or foliage makes you step out into road. Young bikers currently use sidewalks.
- Add sidewalk to east side of Wattaquadock from Memorial field to Main street. If library is expanded, we need alternative way for children to walk from school to library.

R Add an informative/decorative sign to mark town center.

- Recommended sites:
Near Catholic Church and East of Salt Box.
“Entering Bolton, a National Historic District” or “Founded 1738” etc.

See Exhibit 19

Q Maintain sidewalks.



EXHIBIT 18 Sidewalk west of Federated Church driveway is impassable due to brush, sand, and uneven pavement.

R Add an informative/decorative sign to mark town center.



EXHIBIT 19 Town signs in Sudbury, Shirley, Maynard



Other Problems

Because of the volume of issues and the short timeframe we had to accomplish our tasks, we focused on the high priority items discussed above. However, the following list of problems represent issues to be studied in the future.

- **Problem:** Route 495 northbound ramp:
 - (1) Many minor accidents involve cars merging west onto Main Street traffic.
Solution: Perhaps a stop sign or stop light would be better than a yield sign.
 - (2) Exiting onto Main Street gets backed up onto I-495.
Solution: We think this has been improved since the Sugar Road light has been installed.
- **Problem:** Sampson Road (northbound): Emerging traffic is not easily seen by eastbound Main Street traffic.
Solution: Reinstall “no left turn” sign at Sampson Rd. west onto Main Street.
- **Problem:** Route 85/Main St: Position of stop sign encourages waiting traffic to stick out into Main Street traffic too far.
Suggestion: Adjust position of sign.
- **Problem:** Solar glare during AM commuter hours, possible cause of recent pedestrian incident.
Solution: Put up “Watch for solar glare” sign (see Route 2 eastbound before Harvard exit). Reduce speed in town center near current crosswalks to 25 mph.
- **Problem:** Proximity of Smith’s gas pumps to road.
Solution: Lower speed in town center to 25 mph from Mechanic Street to Library.
- **Problem:** Drivers drive off road to avoid left-turning cars going into Salt Box.
Solution: Move 30 mph sign further east so traffic can handle stops. Add curb.
- **Problem:** Seasonal pedestrian and parking near Bolton Spring Farm.
Solution: Add a crosswalk and crosswalk signs. The farmstand could buy one of the low center markers to use during agreed upon hours.
- **Problem:** Emerging traffic onto Main Street by many outlets at Bolton Orchard lot.
Solution: Reduce number of access points.
- **Problem:** Passing area between Wilder and Sampson roads is too short and too narrow to accommodate passing at speeds over 40 mph.
- **Problem:** Overweight trucks. The heavier the truck, the more distance required to stop.
Solution: Reinstate unannounced weight inspections.
- **Problem:** Too many trucks? If we can document that we have more than 5% truck traffic, we could pursue this topic to eliminate the trucks that use Rte 190 to Rte 495 South as a shortcut. Local trucks would not be affected. A recent (2000) traffic count implied we could be close to this number.
Solution: Future study. (Route 4 in Chelmsford has one.)
- **Concern:** Still River Bridge weight inspection schedule.
- **Problem:** Gravel trucks stopped on Main Street west of high school waiting to turn left.
Solution: Restrict access to gravel pit to only Route 110 driveway.
- **Problem:** Bicyclists heavy usage of scenic Route 117 should be better accommodated.
Solution: Long-term goal of installing bike and pedestrian path similar to Lincoln on Route 117 or to Bolton Road in Harvard. Explore further as appropriate to Crystal Springs development outcome.
- **Problem:** Deer in road near Great Brook Farm to Stow line.
Solution: Post “Watch for deer” sign.

Conclusion

Bolton is located on a major commuting route between Interstates 190 and 495. In 1989, more than 2700 vehicles per hour, at peak, entered the 495 southbound intersection. At the town lines, approximately 1,000 approached from Lancaster to the west and over 400 approached from Stow to the east. This volume has most likely increased dramatically since 1989.

Traffic volume, coupled with a typical speed of over 40 mph, has made any crossing of Route 117 a risky and dangerous event. Pedestrians need to be acutely aware of the traffic when crossing the road. The volume needs to be dealt with more effectively so that pedestrians can cross the street in safety. Looking ahead, this volume will only increase. We should design and take back our streets so that Route 117 does not become a “wall” that pedestrians cannot travel past.

Route 117 passes through both Lancaster and Bolton, handling the very same commuters through both towns. In Lancaster the speed is held at 30 or 35 mph for all but the nine-tenths of a mile closest to Bolton. Why has the state treated our portion of the road so differently, insisting on 45 mph throughout most of our town? Is it because we have not raised the topic often enough? We think it is an excellent and necessary step to employ consultants to advocate for our town; consultants who will balance safety and quality of life issues against the issues related to traffic flow, the dominant concern of MassHighway.

We believe that the increasing volume of traffic has not been adequately matched with a corresponding increase in safety measures for pedestrians such as signs, sidewalks, and crosswalks. There have been no significant enhancements to pedestrian safety in many years. It took a pedestrian accident and a group of concerned citizens to raise the issue of existing safety deficiencies. As a town we must protect our children. There is nothing more important that we can do.

Respectfully submitted:

Co Chairs:

Cia Ochsenbein	702 Main Street
Suraj Iyer	306 Wattaquaddock Hill

Task Group:

Barbara Bing	704 Main Street
Stephen Bonina	631 Main Street
Jeff Boudreau	917 Main Street
Alice Coggeshall	714 Main Street
Donald Cole	442 Main Street
Jim Ernst	Main Street
Pat and David Ferrante	694 Main Street
Deborah Kellett	714 Main Street
Sandy McDonald	968 Main Street
Beverly Mentzer	220 Main Street
Dominique Sexton	655 Main Street
Jane Sheppard	631 Main Street
Sgt. Andrew Bagdonas	Green Rd

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- A** Remedy the illegal signs issue at Manor/Harvard Road intersection.
- B** Create and appoint a more permanent advisory committee to monitor safety and traffic issues and communicate with other town committees to help us achieve a higher level of attention.
- C** Increase police enforcement of existing speeds and behavior around schools.
- D** Increase signage warning drivers of existence of high school or pursue official school zone status.
- E** Seek better control and speed of traffic in high school area.
- F** Other recommendations in high school area.
- G** Increase signage on Main Street warning drivers of existence of school zone near Sawyer/Emerson Schools.
- H** Implement aggressive speed control devices to slow Mechanic Street traffic.
- J** Employ a crossing guard at Mechanic Street at School arrival and dismissal times.
- K** Install a traffic light at Manor/Harvard Road, possibly with separate left turn bay.
- L** Add a pedestrian-activated light to cross Wattaquodock/Main.
- M** Consider redirecting traffic flow in Manor/Harvard/Wattaquodock Hill Road triangle.
- N** Increase visibility of crosswalks.
- P** Increase number of crosswalks.
- Q** Extend and maintain sidewalks.
- R** Add informative/decorative signs to mark town center.