

TOWN OF WELLESLEY
WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS 02481

Wellesley Traffic Committee
Chair Lieutenant Scott Showstead
Executive Director, Meghan Jop
Public Works Director, Dave Cohen
Assistant Executive Director, Corey Testa
Town Engineer, Dave Hickey



August 13, 2024

Dear Resident,

The Town has conducted a review of the intersection at Grove St. and Benvenue St. and provides an overview of Traffic Committee's recommendations and next steps below. Traffic engineering decisions are made based on data and established standards. It is important that the Town judge traffic decisions professionally, impartially, and with regard for liability.

Summary of Poll Results

When there are a lot of people interested in giving input, we sometimes use a poll to collect that input because it can be hard to gauge the differing opinions in large groups, some people are comfortable being very vocal in community meetings, and some are not vocal but are willing to give feedback outside of an open group setting. Opinions captured in the polls provide one element of input which can help determine what possible remedies should be further reviewed. Polls provide information to be considered as part of the process, they do not determine outcomes or supersede data analysis and engineering standards.

In this particular case, the implementation of an all-way stop and the addition of speed feedback signs were acceptable by the majority of poll takers. The addition of a red and yellow flashing light above the intersection was not acceptable to the majority of poll takers. We took that input from the poll and determined that we would not continue to explore the option of a red and yellow flashing light. The other options remained open for further data collection and review.

Mobile Speed Feedback Trailers

Between the end of April and the beginning of August the Police Department placed two of our mobile speed feedback trailers on Grove St, north and south of Benvenue St. We had to move them for a few short periods of time due to other events, but they were there for the better part of three months. We collected data on the speed vehicles were travelling and their effectiveness in lowering speed approaching the intersection.

The 85% speeds recorded by the trailers was 32/33 mph vs the previous study before the trailers were deployed that recorded an 85% speed of 33/35 mph. The trailers indicated more than 50% of vehicles did slow in response, however, the overall speed change at the 85% mark was only 2 mph. Vehicles travelling over the 85% speeds were less responsive to the speed trailers than those travelling less than the 85% already. Overall, the speed feedback trailers had an effect on driver's

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speed, but not in a significant manner and less so with drivers that were already in excess of the norm.

Additional Measures

During this same period of time, we added a crosswalk delineator to the center of the road, prior to the crosswalk on the North side of Grove St. We worked with the resident on the corner and trimmed back vegetation that was impeding the view South from Benvenue St to Grove St. The Police Department conducted traffic enforcement posts at the intersection 40 times, and another 18 times just down the road by Cottage St. Additional time was spent observing the intersection on numerous occasions.

Traffic Committee Recommendations

At our August Traffic Committee meeting we reviewed the modifications we have made, the data from the speed feedback trailers and the crash data from the last ten years and decided that a combination of more shrub trimming, and the addition of the delineators seemed to have a positive results, and that the Town should continue to evaluate the intersection.

Since the cluster of four crashes in January there have been no additional crashes in 2024. Over the past ten years the annual crash rate has been between zero and four, with more than half of those years having two or less. The anomaly is 2023 which had 9 crashes (two of which were purely related to snow).

There are traffic warrants, conditions that an intersection must meet to justify a traffic control device, that govern the addition of an all-way stop. This intersection meets one of the warrants, but only for one year out of the last ten years. The Grove St at Benvenue St intersection does not meet any of the other warrants. The Traffic Committee, in consultation with our on-call professional traffic engineers, does not believe that this justifies the installation of an all-way stop. One metric that occurred one out of ten times, does not outweigh the other metrics that contradict the installation of an all-way stop.

Next Steps

The near-term plan for the Town is to install two new crosswalk delineators on Grove St, one on either side of Benvenue. These delineators will be mounted into the pavement, so they cannot be easily moved. They will be placed at a distance from the intersection which should eliminate them being struck by larger landscape vehicles with trailers. Designs to account for those turn radius are being worked on now. Our assessment is that the delineators will increase awareness of the intersection, increase awareness of the crosswalks and aid with speed compliance and safety.

We will continue to work with the abutters to keep vegetation trimmed back in a manner that allows for safe sightlines. The Police Department will continue to conduct regular traffic enforcement and observation of the intersection. We do not believe that any other modifications to the intersection are supported by the data and traffic engineering standards at this time.

Sincerely,

Wellesley Traffic Committee