

In September 2013, the Traffic Safety Committee received a request from the Board of Selectmen to review three issues: (a) reversing the direction of Phillips Way, (b) posting Prospect Street as “No Through Trucking”, and (c) reducing the speed limit of Prospect Street to 25 mph.

Traffic Safety Committee Recommendation on Reversing the Direction of Phillips Way

A request was received by the Board of Selectman from the Ledgewood Board of Directors to reverse the one-way direction of Phillips Way, allowing traffic to flow one-way out of Ledgewood onto Prospect Street.

The Selectmen forwarded this issue to the Traffic Safety Committee for their review and recommendation. This is the fourth time a request has been made to the Traffic Safety Committee to reverse the direction of Phillips Way or to make it a two-way street. As part of the latest review, the committee held a public hearing to gather facts and input from those residents who will be directly affected if this change were to be implemented. Dozens of residents from Ledgewood came to support the change and dozens of Prospect Street residents came to oppose the proposed change.

Ledgewood and Prospect Street neighbors agree that the Tonella Road/Nashua Street intersection needs improvement. The Nashua Street/Tonella Road intersection has been recognized as the second-most problematic intersection in the downtown area. The South Street/Prospect Street intersection has been recognized as the third-most problematic intersection in the downtown area. Reversing the direction of Phillips Way does not solve the problem. It only shifts the problem to another intersection, one which has an unusual intersection figuration and because of this uniqueness could exacerbate the danger factor at the South Street/Prospect Street intersection. In addition, Prospect Street has a very steep grade on a sharp and blind curve. Travel lanes are narrow and substandard. There is also the blind intersection with Webster Street, where two steep grades intersect. Further the intersection with South Street (Route 13) is poorly delineated and prone to confusion.

There remains an issue at the Nashua Street/Tonella Road intersection for which some safety precautions can be taken, but for which a final solution would be expensive, and not immediate. An east-bound turning lane has been created on Tonella Road, a recommendation of the 1999/2000 study by Pernaw & Company. This study, done as part of the Ledgewood development process, indicated that this intersection would be problematic whether or not Ledgewood was built. A subsequent traffic study, done by CLD Consulting Engineers in 2009 as part of a traffic study for the Milford Downtown Area indicated that the traffic volumes at the Nashua Street/Tonella Road intersection were evaluated to determine if traffic signals were warranted based on the criteria in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Traffic volumes must meet certain volume criteria over eight hours on both the major street and side street to meet the warrant. In this case, the hourly traffic volumes on Tonella Road are not high enough during even one hour, and, therefore, signals are not warranted. Any improvements, turning lanes etc. would require purchasing property and homes, making improvements very expensive

Prospect Street may potentially be used as an outlet for new development at the end of Prospect Street, however, this is still in the conception phase. The committee recommends that the Board of Selectmen do a traffic study for Prospect Street as part of the approval process for this new development if it is anticipated that Prospect Street traffic volume will increase.

For the aforementioned reasons, the Traffic Safety Committee recommends against changing the direction of traffic flow on Phillips Way and recommends that the Board focus their efforts on the Nashua Street and Tonella Road intersection.

The Traffic Safety Committee also recommends that the Board of Selectmen do a traffic study for Nashua Street/Tonella Road and Prospect Street/South Street if the direction is changed on Phillips Way.

Traffic Safety Committee Recommendation on Posting Prospect Street as “No Through Trucking”

The intent of this request was to curtail the use of Prospect Street by delivery trucks as a shortcut to Ledgewood. The committee discussed posting “No Trucks” signs at Phillips Way versus posting “No Through Trucking” signs at the beginning of Prospect Street. Chief Viola clarified that posting a “No Trucks” sign at Phillips Way would prohibit all trucks from using Phillips Way, while posting a “No Through Trucking” sign at the beginning of Prospect Street would only apply to those trucks that did not stop on Prospect Street. For example, “No Through Trucking” would not apply to a FedEx truck with a delivery on Prospect Street, and a subsequent delivery at Ledgewood. A FedEx truck with no delivery on Prospect Street using Phillips Way as an access to Ledgewood would be in violation.

While enforcement of the law is the ultimate issue, the committee felt that posting a “No Through Trucking” sign at the beginning of Prospect Street would go far in resolving this issue, and therefore recommends that the Board of Selectmen approve the posting of a “No Through Trucking” sign at the beginning of Prospect Street.

Traffic Safety Committee Recommendation on Reducing the Speed Limit of Prospect Street to 25 mph

A request was received to lower the speed limit of Prospect Street to 25 mph. The speed throughout Milford is 30 mph unless otherwise posted. Notification signs to this regard are posted at entrances to Milford. The issue of speed on Prospect Street has come before the Traffic Safety Committee before and the committee previously determined that it was an issue of enforcement, requesting the Police Department to periodically patrol that area. Chief Viola stated that when directed patrols of the area were done in 2012 covering a total of 7 hours, they encountered 71 cars. 39 traveled at a speed of less than 25 mph, 27 that were traveling between 25 -30 mph, and three that were traveling a little over 30. Two people violated the one-way direction on Phillips Way. There are numerous streets in Milford similar in characteristic to Prospect Street, but with more volume than Prospect Street, that have 30 mph speed limits. There is nothing unique about Prospect Street that would merit the speed limit being lowered to a speed less than those other streets. Based on the data from the Milford Police Department, and for consistency purposes, the committee recommends that the current speed limit of 30 mph on Prospect Street be retained.