

6/8/2023

Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
1000 County Street  
Taunton, MA 02780

Dear MADOT,

**Introduction:**

After the August 2022 Annual Meeting of the West Falmouth Village Association (WFVA), the WFVA Board formed a Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Committee (referred to as “committee”) to solicit traffic and pedestrian concerns from West Falmouth residents. This committee, comprised of six Board Members and six non-Board members, has been charged with advocating for traffic and pedestrian safety improvements to be made by the Town of Falmouth and the State of Massachusetts, as applicable. Committee members conducted a safety survey asking respondents about their areas of concern in the Village of West Falmouth. Additionally, many personal conversations were held with residents, travelers and with businesses residing in our community, all to develop a comprehensive list of safety concerns and recommendations that we believe will improve the safety of our community.

Results of the WFVA Safety Survey reflects the input of over 200 respondents are included in this document as [Addendum I](#) and can be accessed by clicking here.

Pictures included in this document can be navigated to through links in each section and also by scrolling to the end of the document. Video hyperlinks are included in each section also but are only accessible electronically.

Since WFVA initiated the survey noted above, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation conducted a Road Safety Audit process focused on the section of Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway from Old Dock Road to Chapoquoit Road. This affected stretch of road has been removed from this report with thanks to both the State for their efforts to make Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway a safer roadway. The WFVA; however, continues to have serious concerns regarding pedestrian and traffic safety along the remaining 2.8 miles of our 3 mile long “village Main Street.” This report, as amended, focuses on these concerns.

**Background:**

West Falmouth was settled in 1673. Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway is the original dirt road which functioned as the town’s main thoroughfare from the 17<sup>th</sup> century until the state’s 1922 Master Plan led to the construction of Route 28. As a result, the new highway, Route 28, bypasses nine miles of road passing through Bourne, North and West Falmouth (today’s Route 28A, which remains classified as a State Highway). Within those nine bypassed miles are three miles which pass through historic West Falmouth Village. It is this three-mile stretch for which we are concerned.

While Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway is state owned, it is not a “highway.” The nine miles of Route 28,

which run parallel to Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway fulfill that function. Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway functions as our “Main Street.” It is a narrow two-lane road. There is no room for bike lanes. Homes and businesses line both sides of this historic roadway. Our stretch of Route 28A is populated by a confluence of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles frequently stopping to visit one of our twenty-eight small businesses. As a village “Main Street” which includes long stretches where there are no crosswalks, pedestrians cross the road wherever they wish to visit neighbors or to shop. Most of the Village’s historic walking paths substitute for sidewalks. Portions of these narrow paths are unpaved. Seasonally, typically from June through September, the traffic flow of motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians exponentially increases beyond anything anticipated when Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway was paved. The realities of modern life such as vehicles making frequent stops such as school buses, trash trucks and delivery trucks further exacerbate local travel conditions.

To provide some context, MADOT last issued *Special Speed Regulation* for Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway in 1966, fifty-seven years ago. Since then, little to no improvements have been made to Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway in West Falmouth. During this time, Falmouth’s residential population has grown from 15,942 in 1970 to 32,517 in 2022; a 104% increase. Keep in mind that the summer population swells three-fold over the residential numbers.

### **West Falmouth Village Association Summary of Safety Concerns:**

We, the West Falmouth Village Association, on behalf of the residents and businesses in West Falmouth request the Town of Falmouth and MADOT conduct a Road Safety Audit on the remaining 2.8 miles of Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway focusing on the following areas of concern which we would like to bring to your attention. This list of concerns is organized directionally traveling northbound along Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway from its intersection with Route 28 to Thomas B. Landers Road. As previously noted, the stretch of road from Old Dock Road to Chapoquoit Road has been removed from this report. Our concerns are detailed, and our recommendations are expressed after our concerns.

### **Passing Lane from Blair Lane to Hawks Way along Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway**

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A passing lane 0.1 miles in length currently exists on Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway from Blair Lane to Hawks Way. The speed required for a vehicle to complete passing another vehicle in the span of this passing lane requires the accelerating vehicle to travel at excessive speeds. [Click here for photos.](#)

To increase safety at this location we recommend:

1. Eliminating the passing lane and removing the associated signage.

### **Safety Issues at - West Falmouth Square – 410 West Falmouth Highway**

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There are three safety concerns regarding this location: vehicle parking adjacent to Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway, pedestrian safety as people walk along Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway and vehicle egress from the parking lot in the back of the shopping center.

1. In front of West Falmouth Square, which houses the West Falmouth Post Office and six other businesses, there are 12 parking spaces perpendicular to and abutting Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway. There is no MADOT signage that permits parking on Route 28A State Highway at this location. In order to back out of these spaces, vehicles back onto Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway creating dangerous situations for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. [Click here for photos.](#)  
[Click here for video.](#)

To increase safety at this location we recommend:

- a. Consulting with traffic engineers to consider the complexities regarding all the pedestrian vehicular movements at this location.
  - b. Reconfiguring the parking access and egress taking vehicular and pedestrian safety into consideration.
  - c. Painting a clearly marked pedestrian sidewalk with high visibility paint that protects pedestrians from vehicles.
2. The current parking space configuration additionally creates a hazardous situation for pedestrians walking along the western perimeter of Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway. Pedestrians need to be hypervigilant; they need be aware of vehicles turning into parking spaces, and even more concerning, they need to skirt around vehicles backing out onto the highway.

To increase safety at this location we recommend:

- a. Refer to our recommendations in #1 above in this section.
3. There is a parking lot in the rear of West Falmouth Square with a one-way flow pattern directing traffic in at the northern end of the property and out at the southern end of the property. Presently, drivers' ability to safely egress the property onto Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway obstructed by overgrown vegetation. The land on which the vegetation is overgrown is state owned.

To increase safety at this location we recommend:

- a. Removing or aggressively pruning overgrown vegetation at the intersection to allow drivers to clearly see vehicles approaching from the south.

### **Intersection of Brick Kiln Road and Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway**

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Brick Kiln Road dead ends into Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway. This is a dangerous intersection for two reasons. The blinking light is not bright. As such, it does not convey the urgency to drivers unfamiliar with the area that the road is ending. This is coupled by the fact that the view of the stop sign, old and faded, is obstructed by vegetation such that it is not completely visible until drivers are within approximately 100 feet of the road's end. [Click here for photos.](#)

To increase safety at this location we recommend:

1. Replacing the blinking light with a more modern device.
2. Replacing the current stop sign with a solar/LED powered lighted blinking stop sign.
3. Removing or aggressively pruning vegetation approaching the stop sign.
4. Repainting the stop line with high visibility paint.

### **Intersection at Chapoquoit Road and Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway**

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MADOT has evaluated this section of Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway during their Road Safety Audit conducted on April 4, 2023.

### **Crosswalk at West Falmouth Fire Station near Blacksmith Shop Road - 555 West Falmouth Highway**

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MADOT has evaluated this section of Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway during their Road Safety Audit conducted on April 4, 2023.

### **Crosswalk between West Falmouth Library and Quaker Meeting House – 575 West Falmouth Highway**

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MADOT has evaluated this section of Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway during their Road Safety Audit conducted on April 4, 2023.

### **Safety Issues at the intersection of Old Dock Road and Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway at the West Falmouth Market – 623 MA-28A**

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MADOT has evaluated this section of Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway during their Road Safety Audit conducted on April 4, 2023.

### **Intersection of Westmoreland Drive and Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway**

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Craggy Ridge is a large residential neighborhood with 92 homes on the east side of Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway between Thomas B. Landers Road and the Old Dock Road. It has two entrances with the main, most frequently used entrance/exit at Westmoreland Drive, at the neighborhood's southern end. It is this intersection with Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway at Westmoreland Drive which we would like to express our concern. Southbound vehicles have, presumably, seen the 35 MPH speed limit sign less than 0.1 miles earlier just north of the Gas Station. While they may be slowing down, there is a curve in the road there which impedes drivers' abilities to see vehicles leaving the neighborhood and pedestrians crossing Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway to the historic walking path on the western edge of the road. Northbound drivers' tendency, once they are through the commercial area around the West Falmouth Market is to accelerate, often times above the designated speed limit. Additional benefits to addressing the concerns at this locality is that this location represents the northernmost edge of the West Falmouth Village commercial area. By alerting southbound drivers to pedestrian traffic, it encourages drivers' to be going at the speed limit by the time they begin approaching the commercial area including the West Falmouth United Methodist Church and Eulinda's Ice Cream Parlor both of which commonly have small children in attendance.

To increase safety at this location we recommend:

1. Posting an intersection ahead sign on Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway in both southbound and the northbound lanes.
2. Installing a raised crosswalk painted with high visibility paint at this location.
3. Installing a pedestrian-activated ADA-compliant crossing signal.

### **Intersection of Thomas B. Landers Road and Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway**

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Thomas B. Landers Road dead ends at Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway. At this intersection, frequently, vehicles have failed to stop and have crashed into the guard rail on Route 28A/West

Falmouth Highway. The entrance to Bourne Farm is mere feet north of the intersection where Thomas B. Landers Road dead ends into Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway. During high season, weddings and/or functions are held at the farm most every weekend. [Click here for photos.](#)

The current design of the intersection pulls drivers intending to turn northbound towards the northwest as they stop at the intersection which orients their vehicles in such a way as to make it difficult for drivers to see oncoming traffic from the south.

To increase safety at this location we recommend:

1. Replacing the blinking light with a more modern device
2. Replace the current stop sign with a solar/LED powered lighted blinking stop sign
3. Repainting the stop line at Thomas B. Landers Road with high visibility paint
4. Installing an illuminated sign north of the intersection on the southbound side on Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway alerting drivers of the upcoming intersection
5. Review the design of this intersection to improve safety of vehicles turning north.

### **Historic Walking Paths on Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway throughout West Falmouth Village**

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Historic walking paths run 1.9 miles along the west side of Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway from 850 West Falmouth Highway to 328 West Falmouth Highway with interruption at the West Falmouth Square at 410 West Falmouth Highway (previously discussed). On the east side of Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway, the walking paths stretch 0.2 miles from the West Falmouth Library at 575 West Falmouth Highway to Stagecoach Road. These walking paths are in various stages of disrepair. It appears that asphalt has been placed on the surface of the historical walking paths; however, in many locations there is no asphalt. Roots and frost heaves protrude with significant deterioration in some spots. There are multiple locations where the paths are impassable due to: guard rails, fire hydrants, manhole covers, water main caps or concrete markers. To compound this, there are driveways with no crosswalk markings, overgrown hedges, and protruding mailboxes all of which demand that pedestrians keep alert as to the obstacles ahead. In many places the paths are too narrow for one pedestrian to pass safely. Any of these obstacles which forces pedestrians into the road to get to their destination increases the danger of an accident. This village is filled with people who love to walk, add to that the tourists and summer residents who flood our streets at the first sign of good weather and you'll always see many people out walking our village with the presumption that they are safe doing so.

With the most extensive part of the historic walking path system being on the west side of Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway, one further safety concern is the frequency of pedestrians crossing Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway where there are no crosswalks. [Click here for photos.](#) Addendum II, available at the WFVA website, provides a detailed review of our historical walking paths and their condition.

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### **Speed**

According to MADOT's document: *Special Speed Regulation*, traveling southbound from Thomas B. Landers Road to just south of Carlisle Road, the speed limit is 40 MPH. The speed limit then reduces to 35 MPH to Chapoquoit Road at which point it is increased again to 40 MPH until the road dead ends into Route 28 just beyond Palmer Road. That said, there is a dearth of speed limit signage along Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway.

1. Upon entering southbound onto Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway from Thomas B. Landers Road,

there is no posted signage until drivers enter the 35 MPH zone, 0.9 miles south of the entry point. This is a heavily traveled access point leaving drivers unsure as to how fast they can travel.

2. Similarly, entering Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway from Brick Kiln Road, the other most traveled access point, drivers experience confusion
  - a. Heading northbound there is no posted signage until drivers enter the 35 MPH zone at Chapoquoit Road, 0.4 miles after they enter the roadway.
  - b. Heading southbound on Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway from Brick Kiln Road drivers never see a speed limit sign.

Regarding speed limits, Massachusetts Legislation, Chapter 90, as amended, was approved by Governor Baker. There is a broad consensus among local residents and businesses that the speed limit along the entirety of Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway should be lowered from current state requirements. That said, the West Falmouth Village Association does not have a position relating to speed limit changes permitted by this legislation at this time. We plan to participate in a review of this legislation to be led by the Falmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee. After this review is completed, if we have any recommendations regarding speed limit changes throughout West Falmouth Village, we will distribute an addendum to this report.

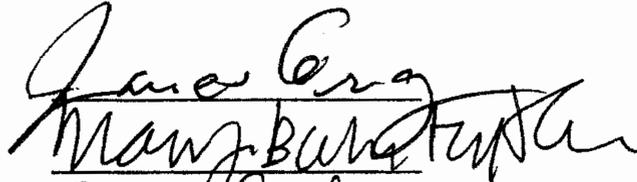
Following this document are:

1. Photos of Key Locations referenced above
2. Addendum I- Key results of a West Falmouth Village Association Member Survey on the topic of traffic and pedestrian safety

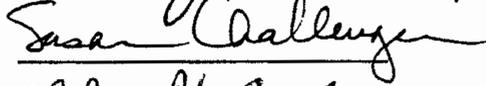
Based on our review, we believe there are many points along and beside Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway where serious safety issues require immediate action by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation: on the road, on the walking paths, at the intersections, and where crosswalks don't exist. These are safety of life concerns! We, the West Falmouth Village Association request that MADOT perform a Road Safety Audit.

Approved by the West Falmouth Village Association Board:

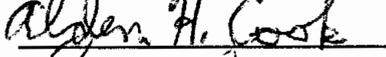
James Gray, President



Mary Bunker-Ryther



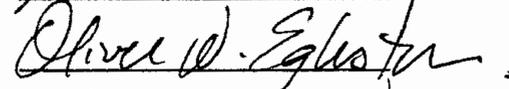
Susan Challenger



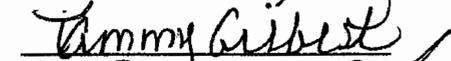
Alden Cook



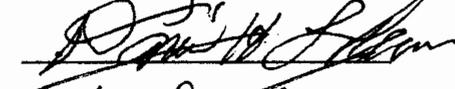
Skip Corcoran



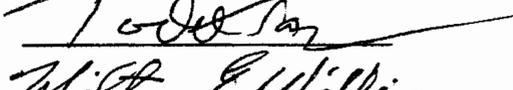
Ollie Egleston



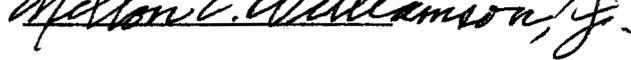
Tammy Gilbert



Dan Shearer



Todd Taylor



Milt Williamson

cc:

Falmouth Select Board

Falmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

Falmouth Traffic Advisory Committee

Senator Moran

Representative Fernandes



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Post Office Vehicle Departing-vehicle backed up and then drove along the shoulder before turning north on Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway



Post Office Sidewalk-no marking for crosswalk; the wide space between the buildings and the road is shared by pedestrians and the vehicles that are entering and exiting the parking spaces in this area.



Post Office Sidewalk south



Exiting Post Office Rear Parking

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Brick Kiln approaching Intersection



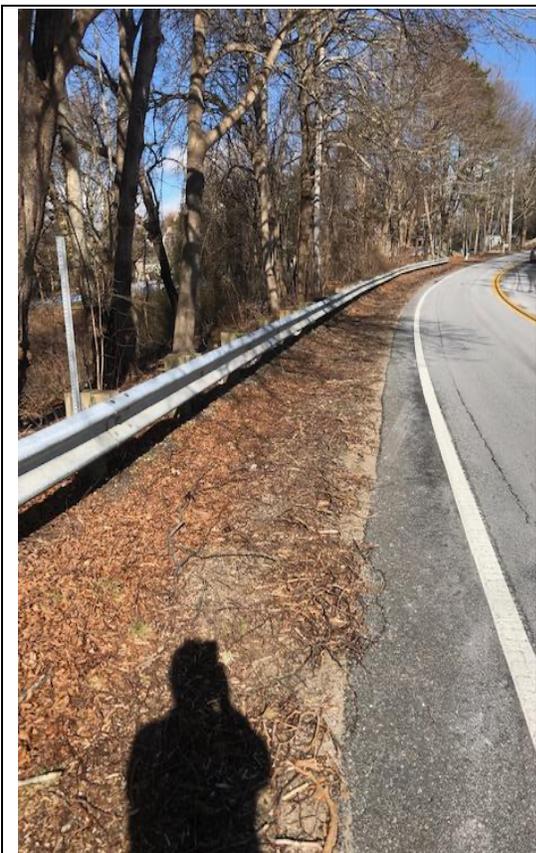
Brick Kiln at Bend in road

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MADOT Letter – June 2023 – Historic Walking Paths/Sidewalks on Route 28A/West Falmouth Highway throughout West Falmouth Village



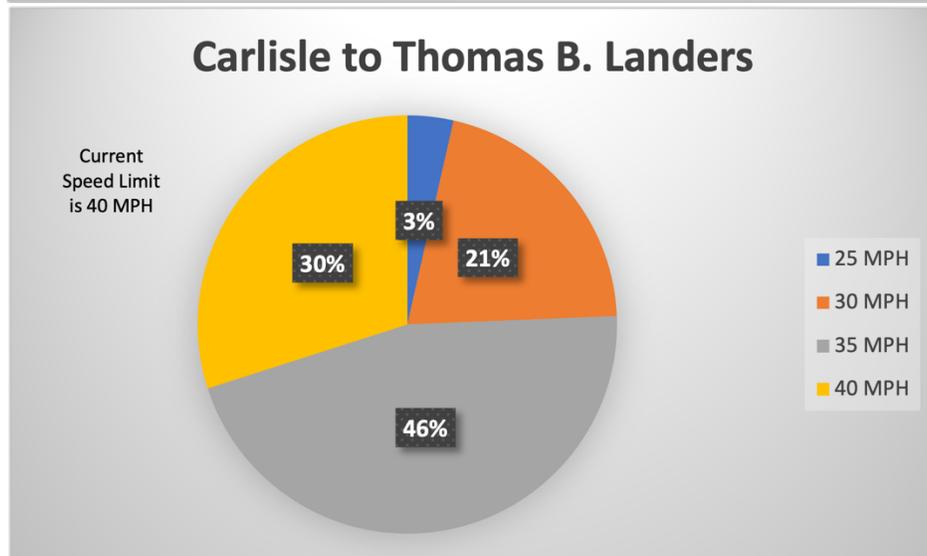
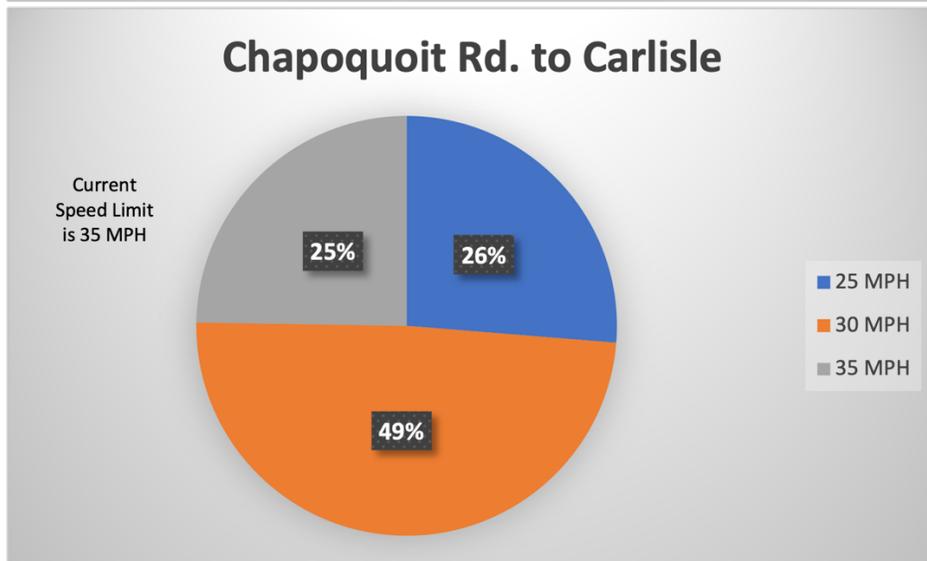
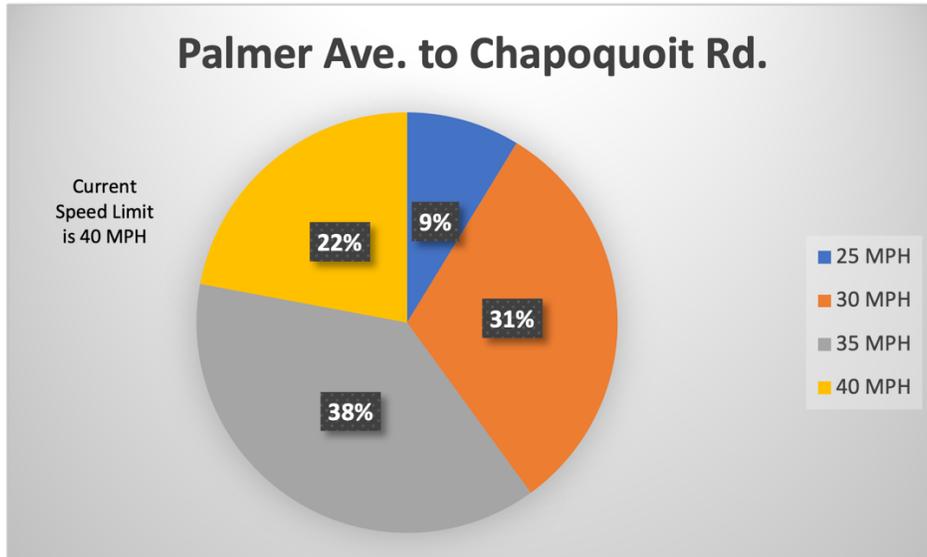
Unpaved Sidewalk near Chase Road



Narrow Sidewalk near Frazar Road with adjacent wetlands

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The **West Falmouth Village Association** conducted an online survey regarding speed and safety along Route 28A. Residents were encouraged to share their thoughts. We received 201 submissions. The below charts represent what people believe to be safe and appropriate speeds throughout three sections of Route 28A in West Falmouth.



As you can see, in the stretch of road between Palmer Avenue and Chapoquoit Road, **78%** of respondents believe the speed should be reduced. From Chapoquoit Road to Carlisle which is the most populated especially during the summer months, **75%** of respondents believe the speed should be reduced. When asked about speed from Carlisle to Thomas B. Landers, **70%** of respondents believe the speed limit should be reduced.

Residents were also given the opportunity to elaborate on their thoughts and/or concerns. Below is a sampling of the many submissions we received. In reading through the submissions, we see specific concerns/areas mentioned consistently. Those areas of particular concern are West Falmouth Square (plaza that houses the Post Office and Chapoquoit Grill) and the West Falmouth Market/Old Dock Road intersection. Many residents are especially concerned about the condition of the sidewalks or lack thereof in the Village. To give you an idea of a theme to the data collected, please consider the following....

**“Dangerous/Fast/Hazardous”** is mentioned 85 times

**“West Falmouth Market”** is mentioned 87 times

**“Old Dock Road”** is mentioned 73 times

**“Sidewalk”** is mentioned 78 times

“Drivers pulling out from the WF Market, pedestrians crossing from Old Dock Road, combine for a nightmare scenario.”

“Our son was hit by a car inside a crosswalk in front of West Falmouth Market.”

“Because of the deplorable condition of many, if not most, of the sidewalks in the library to WFM area, most of us are forced to walk along the edge of 28A. Given the speed of cars coming in both directions, this is a serious accident waiting to happen.”

“One woman has already been killed. Let’s do something smart before more tragedies.”

“Drivers often do not stop for pedestrians trying to cross 28A at the crosswalk by the fire station.”

“The road is dangerous throughout West Falmouth, especially for pedestrians and bicyclists.”

“Folks travel too fast past the library and especially the WFM. I’ve seen people not stop for kids in the crosswalks there too. Very upsetting.”

“Speed is excessive along section of 28A between Thomas Landers and Chappy Rd. Very fast.”

“Crossing anywhere near West Falmouth Market is a challenge.”

“Walking on 28A is dangerous.”

“I have had many close calls when leaving my neighborhood.”

“I have a young child and think that drivers go too fast for him to safely walk along the sidewalk. When I am waiting at the bus stop, I see drivers going as quickly as 50 mph along the stretch that goes past Carlisle Road.”

“Improved and/or additional sidewalks would enhance the safety of those walking in the area.”

“The corner of Old Dock Road and 28A is particularly hazardous with pedestrian and car traffic going in and out of West Falmouth Market.”

“Drivers fly down 28A and it’s a hazard to all residents turning onto 28A!”

“Very dangerous. Speeders on a regular basis and crosswalks are not properly marked for visibility.”

“The road is narrow and twisty in many spots. Fast driving means that there isn’t time for the driver to react if something unexpected happens.”

“We walk our dogs multiple times during the day. The speed is excessive and many drivers do not heed to us in crosswalks.”

“My neighbor’s son was hit last summer while in the crosswalk at the market.”

“Drivers in each direction are usually going too fast past Old Dock Road.”

“The crosswalk at Old Dock Road is very dangerous. I see a minimum of 25 violations each day in passing during the summer months. Also the current crossing dumps pedestrians into the parking lot entrance of my store which is very dangerous.”

“The interaction with Old Dock and 28A at the entrance to the WF Market is a mess”

“High rate of speed, especially south on rt 28A from Old Dock to Chappy Road.”

“Regularly see motorists and motor cyclists ZOOMing along 28A.”

“Drivers act as though the crosswalks in the village are optional.”

“Post Office backing onto 28A is very dangerous.”

“People drive too fast and bikers, walkers and runners are at significant risk.”

“The intersection of 28A and Old Dock Road is treacherous as cars go too fast and make the turn without waiting to be sure no pedestrians are crossing.”

“Walking on the narrow sidewalks are hazardous because of the cars whipping past on 28A.”

“Crosswalks are not well marked, and cars do not always stop.”

“The parking lot for the WF Post Office is a dangerous spot to exit from.”

“Last summer, in order to more accurately assess a car’s speed, I increased mine and found that it was going 50 mph in the 35 mph zone, which is not uncommon.”

“I fear for my life crossing the street from my house to the bike path. People drive way too fast on 28A.”

“Crosswalks and road sidelines should be more frequently painted and kept visible.”

“There are several sharp curves that create blind driveways. Cars traveling at the speed limit do not have much time to stop.”

“There needs to be lower speed limits and more well marked cross walks, especially in the areas near businesses/the library, etc.”

“The current speed limits are too high for safe sharing of the road with bikes and pedestrians.”

“Walking can be a great danger.”

“I walk on 28A all the time and watch people flying by me at crazy fast speeds.”

“My extended family is terrified to cross 28A to visit neighbors on the east side of 28A.”

“I think the parking situation at West Falmouth Square is very dangerous where cars back out of their parking spaces directly onto 28A.”

“There are many people exiting on bike or foot out of Craggy Ridge Development onto 28A and often cars are speeding.”

“The area between the library and Eulinda’s Ice Cream is extremely dangerous given the high density of vehicles, pedestrians and bikes.”

“The lack of adequate sidewalks is dangerous as cars pass by at an unreasonable speed.”

“Speeds too high from Chapoquoit Road to Carlisle Road especially in front of West Falmouth Market.”

“Entrance and exit to West Falmouth Market is often hazardous.”

“Parking lot at PO/Chappys/Liquor Store is difficult to exit due to limited space between spaces and 28A.”

“Cars speeding down 28A near Chapoquoit Gill make driving in and out of parking lot a hazard. The same is true near West Falmouth Market.”

“The sidewalks need attention.”

“It is unsafe for pedestrians to walk on Route 28A due to the absence of sidewalks.”

“The cars backing out of the Chappy Grill into the road are an accident waiting to happen.”

“Cars/trucks travel far too fast!”

“It is frightening to cross the street!”

“Someone is going to get killed on Old Dock Road and/or Chapoquoit Road!”

“It is sadly only a matter of time before another tragedy unfolds.”

“Area by West Falmouth Market – Have seen so many near misses.”

“It is very dangerous for pedestrians in front of the West Falmouth Market. Lots of little children are in this area.”

“It is very scary biking south of Chapoquoit on 28A.”

“The intersection of Chapoquoit Road and 28A has had several accidents.”

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