

Request for Additional Area Identification to Bill S.184

Designated Villages - (Pilot Areas: Plainfield and Marshfield Villages)

My name is Kristine Schilling-Bioteau and I purchased a historic home in the Village of Plainfield in November. Although the Village speed limit is 30 mph, excessive speeding is occurring day and night, by all types of vehicles. The Designated Villages of Plainfield and Marshfield are particularly impacted due to the volume and types of traffic because VT Route 2 is the spine that flows through their centers. My concern extends beyond the obvious concern for the safety of pedestrians and resident's vehicles, into the protection of historic architecture and the erosion of land due to excessive vibration.

Upon discussing my concerns with the government of Plainfield Village, it was explained to me that there is limited funding for the State Police and County Sheriff as well as warning equipment as a deterrent. In addition, I received explanation that Vermont has long resisted my proposed idea of ticketing by mail due to inability to obtain facial photos of drivers. I further researched and found that the Senate was in fact at the end stage of their review of a similar proposal S.184 and understand it is currently in Transportation review.

I have read the full content of S.184 and seek to expedite the timeline for implementation, as well as expanding the specific language of areas for implementation. Although the current language appears to focus on construction areas, it does also include "...locations with an increased incidence of crashes or speeding...", Paragraph referenced below.

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to authorize automated law enforcement in work zones; at locations with an increased incidence of crashes or speeding, or both; and at intersections with traffic control signals through the use of automated traffic law enforcement (ATLE) systems that utilize radar and cameras and, in some instances, automated license plate recognition (ALPR) systems for the enforcement of monetary civil penalty only speeding violations and red-light violations against the registered owner of the violating motor vehicle.

I have communicated multiple times with Captain Bret Meyer who reacted by conducting multiple periods of monitoring in Plainfield and confirmed excessive speeding which led to him performing multiple traffic stops during his monitoring periods. He suggested the use of speed monitoring signs and road tapes to record data. However, the conversation with the Village government seemed to come to a halt because there is apparently only a single such sign that is shared, and no budget for anything additional.

The detailed arguments I present are as follows:

- **Public Safety for Pedestrian and Vehicle -**
Reducing speeds will improve the quality of life for residents and encourage tourism to historic villages. Given what I have witnessed in my limited time, especially at the crosswalk to Plainfield Opera House, Cutler Library and turn to the lower village shops and adjacent park, I am afraid without immediate intervention a tragedy is imminent.

- **Preserving Historic Architecture –**
Due to the advanced age of structures and proximity of homes to the road it is imperative that speeds be reduced. The vast cost to homeowners to obtain engineering and perform extensive repairs to foundations, structures and sites is an unfair financial burden currently and will be ongoing in escalation due to the continual rise in truck traffic for deliveries, etc if not addressed. These Designated Village Zones are the jewels of Vermont and should not be allowed to erode away.

- **Reduction in Current Speed Limits –**
Plainfield is currently marked as 30 mph and Marshfield is currently marked as 35 mph. In my opinion both should be reduced to 25 mph for the brief lengths of the Designated Village Zones. Neither of the current speed limits are being enforced with any regularity and are therefore merely unregulated suggestions.

- **Sheriff, Local Police and First Responder Safety –**
Due to the excessive rate of speed, narrow road surface, and no adequate shoulders even if there were unlimited funding for staff to be hired and hours in their schedules for proper enforcement, I do not believe stops can be implemented without creating additional hazard. Conducting a traffic stop in these areas creates great risk to the safety of the officers, the stopped vehicle and the vehicles attempting to continue past which can only be completed by crossing into the oncoming lane. Implementing an ATLE by use of ALPR system seems to be the only safe way to make significant change.

- **Vermont resistance to use of ATLE and ALPR systems due to lack of facial recognition –**
 - 1) **Commercial Vehicles** – when a violation/fine is received the employer is well aware of which employee had possession of their vehicle at the date and time of the offense. I believe the impact of the fine will cause them to encourage employees to improve their behaviors, and if violations persist, the violation details will provide precise information that will assist the employer in documentation that may lead to appropriate action toward the employee.

2) Personal Vehicles – Both residents and visitors are responsible for the use of their vehicles. Driving is a privilege and although owners may offer use of their vehicle to someone, if the person utilizing their vehicle is committing an offense the violation will make them aware. I believe during early implementation, if an owner disputes and provides such claim it would be reasonable to forgive a fee in favor of a warning if the owner appears with said driver. This experience may deter future offenses and also ensures the owner is aware of the behavior should they continue to share the vehicle and incur additional fines and liability.

- **Money –**

These types of Automated ATLE/ALPR systems are available at little cost and will very quickly pay for itself. I formally request that a pilot program be executed in Plainfield and Marshfield Villages to exhibit. Although applying financial burden to anyone is not the goal, I do not believe there is another effective way to change these behaviors. I anticipate the data and amounts collected will astonish all involved, but would anticipate the amounts would decrease quickly over time which will serve as proof of efficacy. The funds collected can be utilized to further fund historic preservation efforts and improve sidewalks, crossings and other Village maintenance equipment.

- **Failure to Implement –**

This type of technology is not new and has been utilized widely and effectively throughout the country. All parties I have communicated with seem acutely aware of the problem and to my knowledge no other solution is being explored or developed. To allow these behaviors to persist when a solution that addresses all of the issues as stated above is not acceptable. Thus, not implementing would be negligent.

I appreciate all of your time and consideration. Please let me know if there is anything more I can contribute toward this effort. Thank you!

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