

November 19, 2015

**THE SCARSDALE FORUM, INC.**

**Report of the Municipal Services Committee**

**On**

**Traffic Assessment, Safety and Improvement in the Village of Scarsdale**

The Municipal Services Committee (the “Committee”) proposes the following resolution for Adoption by The Forum:

RESOLVED, that the Report of the Committee recommending that the Village of Scarsdale should (1) promote pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist traffic safety in the Village Center by lowering the maximum allowable speed limit from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour on designated Village Center roads, (2) provide additional signals and/or signage and develop strategies in order to maximize pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist safety in the Village Center, and (3) promulgate regulations, institute a public education campaign and enlist the cooperation of the public consistent with these recommendations, be approved.

**Summary**

Members of the Scarsdale community have legitimate concerns over safety on Village Center roads. In preparing this Report the members of the Committee noted that many of these concerns are recurring and have been the subject of previous consultants’ reports, but have not been fully addressed. The purpose of this Report is to identify and assess current traffic conditions on Village Center streets in the interests of enhancing safety for pedestrians, motorists and bicyclists, and in order to promote traffic efficiency. The focus of the Report is on traffic improvements that should be implemented at strategic business district intersections and adjacent roads where potentially hazardous conditions, inadequate or unclear signals and/or signage, and risky or careless pedestrian, cyclist and motorist behaviors have been observed. These concerns should be addressed and could be mitigated through a combination of lowering the maximum allowable speed limit, adjusting or providing additional signage and signals, and implementing complementary active traffic management techniques, among other practical recommendations made in this Report.<sup>1</sup> An enforcement approach, especially during high traffic volume periods, together with a public education program such as a “Safety Day,” and articles or

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<sup>1</sup> The Traffic Safety page on the Village website affords residents the opportunity to propose changes to traffic regulations. See <http://www.scarsdale.com/Home/Departments/VillageManager/TrafficSafety.aspx> . This Report contains a set of speed and traffic calming recommendations based on the observations of Committee members and residents of Scarsdale who have communicated their own observations to members of the Committee. The Report does not contain data derived from traffic enforcement reports other than several recent accident incidents as reported in the Scarsdale Inquirer.

editorials in the Scarsdale Inquirer and other local news outlets,<sup>2</sup> might be necessary to instill civic awareness that risky behaviors by overzealous or inattentive drivers, and careless pedestrians and cyclists, are causing traffic and safety problems in the Village Center.

### Preliminary Statement

The Village of Scarsdale has accomplished much over many decades to address and promote traffic safety in the Village Center, including commissioning professional engineering studies in 1995 and again in 2005.<sup>3</sup> More recently, the 2010 Update of the Village Center Component of the Village of Scarsdale Comprehensive Plan (the “Plan”) highlighted the longstanding concerns expressed by survey stakeholders, including residents and merchants, about traffic and pedestrian safety in the Village Center:<sup>4</sup>

**“Calls for reduced traffic congestion, increased walk-ability, and parking have been constants throughout the development of this plan (and indeed have been abiding concerns for decades). As a business district, the Village Center is a magnet for both pedestrians (shoppers, train commuters, etc.) and automobiles, particularly during the morning and evening rush hours, when both pedestrians and vehicles are present in great volumes and close proximity. . . .**

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**Pedestrian safety and traffic incidents are a concern, particularly during prime lunch and shopping hours when there is less commuter traffic, more “non-destination” traffic, and drivers are focused on a search for parking spaces. Thus pedestrian safety and traffic are major concerns throughout the Village Center. This is especially true near the Popham Road Bridge and the East Parkway / Scarsdale Avenue intersection. The Crane Road exit off of the Bronx River Parkway empties onto East Parkway, and Popham Road, being one of the few east-west through roads in lower Westchester, brings a large amount of through or “non-destination” traffic through the Village. Pedestrian-vehicle accidents occur in this area which may be due to unconventional crossing configurations, and the general volume of traffic.**

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<sup>2</sup> The Scarsdale Inquirer reports weekly on traffic related accidents including pedestrian and cyclist incidents, but an occasional summary or report highlighting persistent trouble spots could have a positive impact.

<sup>3</sup> R. Hintersteiner, “Traffic Study, Popham Road at Chase Road and Overhill Road” (December 1995); and TRC Raymond Keyes Associates, “Technical Memorandum, Popham Road/Village Center Pedestrian Safety Analysis” (July 2005) (the “Keyes Safety Analysis”). Both reports are available from the Committee, courtesy of the Village Manager.

<sup>4</sup> Additional reports covering areas outside the Village Center which have been commissioned by the Village include Creighton Manning Consulting, “Heathcote 5 Corners Feasibility Study” (March 2011) (study on feasibility of placing a roundabout at Heathcote 5 Corners intersection), at <http://www.scarsdaleforum.com/reportsHome.php?parent=40>; and Adler Consulting, “Route 125 (Weaver Street) Traffic Assessment & Improvement Analysis” (May 2003), at <https://www.scarsdale.com/Portals/0/2003weaver.pdf>.

**A combination of strategies is called for.** First, new development should not contribute substantially to rush hour traffic flows. Congestion at these times already impairs the convenience of moving to and throughout the Village Center. . . .

**The second strategy is to slow traffic speeds.** This can be accomplished by a number of traffic calming devices and streetscape techniques, along the lines of what the Village has already employed. Better defined walkways and signage, speed humps, and other traffic calming measures should be incorporated into the site design of any new development. The feasibility of additional traffic calming measures, including stationing a police officer and patrol car at other dangerous intersections (such as at Popham Road and East Parkway or Popham Road and Chase Road) should be investigated.

**Reducing traffic flows and speeds would certainly increase walk-ability and pedestrian safety, and these strategies can be supplemented by enhancing the streetscape.** While most of the Village Center is pedestrian friendly and visually appealing, some areas are less attractive to walkers. This includes the western Popham Road, where pedestrians are not buffered from the roadway by trees or plantings, and where there are few benches or places to rest. The pleasant and safe character that exists at the core of the Village Center should be extended outward to these areas. Street trees and landscaping recently completed on East Parkway and planned for lower Popham Road (along with the bridge replacement), will make the roads seem less like highways and more like village streets, naturally slowing traffic speeds.”<sup>5</sup>

Since the publication of the Plan almost 5 years ago and the completion of the Popham Road Bridge Project, observation suggests that progress has been made. But additional measures could do more to address persistent traffic and safety related issues in the Village Center.

Scarsdale’s generous 30 mph maximum allowable speed limit, which is amply posted along the major Village Center roads and when entering the Village, is the same as it was in 1995, 2005 and 2010<sup>6</sup> despite the observable increase during that period in motorist and pedestrian traffic and conflicts in the heart of the business district.

It is easy to recognize that there are too many motorists driving on main Village Center roads, side streets and central business district streets at speeds well in excess of the posted limit. Impatient motorists illegally cross solid double yellow lines in an effort to speed past compliant motorists, as observed on separate occasions by a Committee member recently on both Church Lane and Crane Road near the Village Center. Speeding motorists run red lights and fail to come to a complete stop at stop signs and stop lines in the Village Center.

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<sup>5</sup> Plan at 22-23, at <http://www.scarsdale.com/Portals/0/Planning/VCCOMPPLAN%20AUG%2010%20Final%20small.pdf>. The Plan did not contain any specific recommendation to legislate lower maximum allowable speed limits.

<sup>6</sup> Village Code §290-6; 290-53.

Notably, the Village has installed traffic calming at various locations, such as the pedestrian crossing signage on the other side of town at the eastbound lane of Heathcote Road at Sherbrooke Road. To assist pedestrians on busy Fenimore Road there is a new mid-road “State Law STOP for Pedestrians within Crosswalk” sign on a portable base at the Brewster Road intersection.<sup>7</sup> Additional traffic slowing methods like these, a lowered speed limit, clearer signage, and additional median bump outs where feasible, such as exists at the intersection of East Parkway and Popham Road, are needed to make Village Center streets not only safer for pedestrians, motorists and cyclists but more user friendly and consistent with Scarsdale’s positive community values.<sup>8</sup>

As Scarsdale’s roads become increasingly congested vehicular corridors, the safety of all pedestrians, cyclists and motorists in our predominantly residential neighborhoods should be re-examined. Traffic hazards in the Village Center represent a microcosm of conditions that exist to varying degrees in all other neighborhoods. Numerous public and private schools, early childhood education facilities and houses of worship serve to compound safety concerns for everyone on the roads, including concerns for the welfare of vulnerable children, students, the handicapped and the elderly. The simple act of walking in the Village Center is fraught with challenges including those posed by the absence of sidewalks on major pedestrian access routes to the train station, the absence of crosswalks or clearly marked crosswalks and pedestrian identification signage,<sup>9</sup> inadequate or unclear signals and signage, and motorists who deliberately disregard traffic regulations and the right of way that should be afforded to pedestrians and cyclists. There are no dedicated bicycle safety lanes in the Village. Courtesy even among motorists is often lacking. The pervasive culture of motorists violating the laws against the hand-held use of cell phones while driving is evident in Scarsdale. Even pedestrians using cell phones while walking on the sidewalks or crossing the streets pose a hazard to themselves and others. Residents are not only voicing their concerns, but are seeking solutions to minimize the hazards on our Village Center Roads.

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<sup>7</sup> This crosswalk may be intended to calm speeding traffic at this point on Fenimore due to its proximity to the Fox Meadow Elementary School, although the speed limit does not appear to have been lowered. As one Committee member who lives in the adjacent neighborhood has noted, despite the signage motorists do not appear to be slowing down on the approach to the crosswalk nor stopping when it is obvious that pedestrians intend to cross.

<sup>8</sup> For information on pedestrian and bicycle safety initiatives and policy, see “Safer People, Safer Streets: Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Initiative,” at <https://www.transportation.gov/policy-initiatives/ped-bike-safety/safer-people-safer-streets-pedestrian-and-bicycle-safety>; and [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/guidance/policy\\_accom.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/policy_accom.cfm). For Town of Mamaroneck “Complete Streets Policy Resolution,” see [http://www.townofmamaroneck.org/sites/mamaroneckny/files/file/file/complete\\_streets\\_resolution.pdf](http://www.townofmamaroneck.org/sites/mamaroneckny/files/file/file/complete_streets_resolution.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Some, but not all, faded crosswalk pavement markings in the Village Center got a fresh coat of paint in May 2015. “When there is no traffic control signal, drivers must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians, particularly if a pedestrian is in a crosswalk on the same side of the road, or there is potential danger to the pedestrian [Section 1151, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law]. In addition, every driver approaching an intersection or crosswalk must yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian accompanied by a guide dog or a cane [Section 1153-c, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law].” FAQ 3, at <http://www.scarsdale.com/Home/Departments/VillageManager/TrafficSafety.aspx>. The Committee recommends periodic repainting of all crosswalk, stop line and other pavement markings using updated reflective materials and technologies to ensure adequate visibility, information and guidance to Village Center road users.

The New York State Department of Transportation has adopted the following Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) definition of traffic calming, which is relevant to the Committee's recommendations in this Report:

“Traffic calming is the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior, and improve conditions for nonmotorized street users. . . . [in order to] 1) reduce negative effects of motor vehicle use means changing the design and the role of the street to reduce the negative social and environmental effects of motor vehicles on individuals (e.g., speed, intrusion, etc.), and on society in general (e.g., pollution, urban sprawl, etc.); 2) altering driver behavior addresses the self enforcement aspect of traffic calming; the lowering of speeds, the reduction of aggressive driving, and the increase in respect for nonmotorized street users; 3) improve conditions for nonmotorized street users means to promote walking and cycling, increase safety, create a feeling of safety, and improve aesthetics, etc.”<sup>10</sup>

The following measures recommended by the Committee should be considered by the Village in order to meet the challenges posed by unacceptable motorist, cyclist and pedestrian behaviors, and to ensure that Scarsdale's Village Center streets and neighborhoods are as safe as possible, consistent with the goals of the updated comprehensive Plan as well as recommendations made in prior traffic studies.

### **The Maximum Allowable Speed Limit Should Be Lowered**

Motorists driving through the Village Center are often observed exceeding the speed limit. Equally obvious is the failure of many motorists to yield to pedestrians, even those attempting to negotiate the numerous crosswalks in the business district. Stop signs<sup>11</sup> and strategically placed crosswalk signs do not always discourage this behavior. Speeding is routine in both directions on the heavily traveled east-west corridors of Popham Road and Crane Road, between the Post Road (Route 22) and the Village Center, the Metro North station and the Bronx River Parkway (the “BRP”). The absence of signals or signage on long stretches of these roads might contribute to the tendency of many vehicles to pick up speed. Speeding is not confined to these roadways and constitutes a problem on other major thoroughfares, including the Post Road, Heathcote Road and Mamaroneck Road.

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<sup>10</sup> NYS DOT Highway Design Manual, Chapter 25, Traffic Calming Definition, §25.2.3 (1998), at [https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/engineering/design/dqab/hdm/hdm-repository/chapt\\_25.pdf](https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/engineering/design/dqab/hdm/hdm-repository/chapt_25.pdf). (The definition was adopted by New York State “due to the desirability of having a consistent definition and because it is sufficiently broad to allow for the concept that the needs of the motorist and nonmotorist must be balanced, appropriate to the intended function of a given facility or area.” *Id.* For statistics on the hazards of speeding on neighborhood streets and related policy recommendations, see “Keep Kids Alive Drive 25,” at <http://www.keepkidsalivedrive25.org/makeadifference/>.

<sup>11</sup> “In accordance with the New York State Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the proper use of stop signs are [sic] as safety measures to determine the right of way at intersections experiencing sufficient traffic and vehicular accidents and where poor visibility, unusual geometry or unexpected traffic conflicts exist. When stop signs are installed to slow down speeders, drivers tend to actually increase their speed between signs to compensate for the time lost by stopping. Some drivers tend to accelerate rapidly after a stop, possibly creating an unsafe situation. Studies have shown that most drivers reach their top speed within 100 feet of a stop sign.” FAQ 1, at <http://www.scarsdale.com/Home/Departments/VillageManager/TrafficSafety.aspx>.

Narrow residential side streets, some heavily used by motorists to enter or exit the Village Center and/or avoid Popham Road traffic signals, are also traversed at excessive speed, such as Woodland Place, Autenrieth Road, Church Lane and School Lane. Vehicles traveling at or above the posted limit create a number of obvious safety issues for everyone in the Village Center and elsewhere, but especially in areas close to the railroad station where pedestrian foot traffic and vehicular traffic is heaviest, and sidewalks are sometimes intermittent or nonexistent. While many neighboring municipalities have lowered their maximum speed limits on certain designated major thoroughfares and business center streets, Scarsdale continues to maintain a 30 mph default speed on all but school zone streets, where the limit is 15 mph during school day designated hours.

Most of the Village Center streets are officially designated “Through Highways” for which there is a requirement that “all vehicles approaching said streets and parts of streets shall come to a complete stop before entering thereon.”<sup>12</sup> Observation tells us that complete stops at stop signs and stop lines as required under this provision and by common sense are atypical.

Excessive speed and/or the failure of motorists to yield also contributes to the difficulty other motorists experience when backing out of perpendicular, head in metered parking spaces in the business district, or when just passing through. For instance, as reported in the Scarsdale Inquirer’s September 4, 2015 police report (page 3): “When a White Plains man was driving along East Parkway Aug. 30 a Popham Road woman backed out of a parking space and hit his car.” Another recent example of this alarming phenomenon was illustrated in the Scarsdale Inquirer’s October 16, 2015 police report (page 5): “Cars belonging to a Madison Road man and a Manhattan man collided as the men backed out of parking spots on East Parkway Oct. 9. No injuries were reported.” A similar accident was reported the next week in the October 23, 2015 police report (page 5): “An Eastchester man and a Waverly Road man were both backing out of parking spaces on East Parkway on Oct. 16 when they rear-ended each other.” Due to the many SUVs, vans and other large vehicles that typically park in the diagonal parking spots, it is often difficult for motorists backing up from their parking spots to see traffic coming through until they actually back into the roadway – and then it may be too late to avoid a collision.

Vehicles leaving the business district northbound on East Parkway on the approach to the BRP entrance ramp accelerate excessively even before reaching the East Parkway-Crane Road intersection. As a result of the lengthy time needed to complete the Crane Road Bridge Project, traffic separator curbs with uprights were removed but only recently reinstalled (during July 2015) in order to separate northbound parkway-entrance lane vehicles from vehicles in the dedicated right lane turning right onto Crane. Yet it is still difficult for westbound motorists stopped at the intersection of Crane and East Parkway to judge whether northbound vehicles that are speeding when leaving the Village on East Parkway are heading onto the BRP or turning right onto Crane. Motorists turning left from westbound Crane onto southbound East Parkway do not have the benefit of adequate sight distance to judge

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<sup>12</sup> Village Code §290-59, at <http://ecode360.com/6439664#6439664>.

whether it is safe to make the turn, especially when oncoming motorists fail to signal their intention to turn right onto Crane rather than heading north onto the BRP.

Nearby, there is a need for improved separation of the shared two-way southbound BRP-Crane exit and the northbound Crane-BRP entrance lane. Exit lane motorists have been observed not only drifting across the lanes but also traveling the wrong way in the wrong lane into oncoming northbound traffic entering the parkway. Excessive speed, by both southbound BRP off-ramp motorists negotiating the hairpin left-turn onto East Parkway before turning right onto Crane Road, and motorists simply heading northbound on East Parkway in order to make the right-turn onto Crane, present a hazard to pedestrians negotiating the north-south Crane-East Parkway crosswalk. Besides lower speeds, illuminated stop, yield or other traffic calming signals, in addition to physical attenuators such as speed bumps or rumble strips, could provide needed safety enhancements to resolve the conflicts posed at this intersection, which is reviewed in more detail below.

### **Other Municipalities Discourage Speeding by Lowering the Speed Limit**

Several nearby municipalities have lowered maximum allowable speed limits to less than 30 mph on many roads including major thoroughfares, and in village centers. The maximum allowable speed limit is 25 mph on the entire length of Old Army Road within the Town of Greenburgh. See Town of Greenburgh NY Code, §460-51, at <http://ecode360.com/6819620#6819620>. As a reminder to motorists as they approach a major intersection, there is also a digital speed calming meter installed on the west side of Old Army Road between Seely Place and Ardsley Road. One of the most recent speed limit reductions on a major thoroughfare in a nearby village center was implemented on East Hartsdale Avenue:

“The Greenburgh Town Board approved a new law at [its] last Town Board meeting REDUCING the speed limit of motorists driving on East Hartsdale Ave to 25 miles per hour. The goal: to help ensure the safety of motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. This proposal was requested by residents of the community and the need for the reduced speed was confirmed from data obtained from the police department reports. East Hartsdale Ave is the most densely populated area in town - with many residents, commuters, patrons and merchants driving and walking along the street creating a risk of vehicular/pedestrian conflict. The entire length of E Hartsdale Ave will have the reduced speed limit--most other streets in town have a 30 mph speed restriction.”<sup>13</sup>

In Irvington, 25 mph appears to be the maximum allowable speed limit in the business district. See Irvington Village Code, §213-30A, at <http://ecode360.com/11800369>. The maximum speed of 25

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<sup>13</sup> Town of Greenburgh Supervisor's Office News Release, “Speed limit reduced to 25 miles per hour on East Hartsdale Avenue” (August 23, 2015), at <http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=38457&TID=10&jump2=0&DID=432>. To drive home the point, a mobile digital sign was positioned temporarily on East Hartsdale Avenue (westbound) at Rockledge Road, warning that 218 tickets had been issued at that intersection. The digital sign was intended to be rotated to other trouble spots with site-specific messaging.

mph is also the rule on certain streets in the Larchmont business district, including Palmer Avenue. See Larchmont Village Code, §273-41 (under §273-5), at <http://ecode360.com/7081452#7081452>.<sup>14</sup>

It was widely publicized that before the end of 2014 New York City had lowered the speed limit on city streets to 25 mph and to 20 mph in Central Park. In some of the busiest locations in the park the maximum speed limit was reduced to 10 mph. Anecdotally, lower speed limits are encountered in business and village center districts throughout New York State, not just in school zones. We recommend that Scarsdale should not only lower the speed limit throughout the Village Center as permitted by New York State law, but should also establish “slow zones” and traffic calming methods where appropriate to discourage speeding.<sup>15</sup>

### **Mitigating Pedestrian-Cyclist-Vehicle Conflicts**

Just like motorists, pedestrians and cyclists also bear a responsibility for obeying the “rules of the road.”<sup>16</sup> Jaywalking is routine even on the busiest corridors. Perpendicular parking in most of the Village Center presents a challenge for motorists attempting to back their vehicles out of head-in parking spots when they simultaneously have to avoid jaywalking pedestrians who enter streets between vehicles, cross outside of the limits of crosswalks or walk directly behind vehicles. Some cyclists appear not to observe signals and signage. Part of any public education campaign should enlist the cooperation of pedestrians and cyclists to comply with the regulations, signals and signage applicable to them.

While consideration might be given to the enforcement of jaywalking regulations, a balance should be struck in light of locations in the business district where pedestrians are forced to walk in the streets without the aid of crosswalks or without prominent crosswalk identifying signage. The Committee also recommends the addition of crosswalks or at least signage wherever these are required. Flashing LED and even solar “SLOW,” “YIELD,” and/or “STOP” pedestrian crossing signs are other available options that should be deployed to ensure safer conditions.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For comparison, a number of major streets in the Town of Greenwich, Connecticut have maximum allowable speed limits of 25 mph. See Greenwich Municipal Code at [https://www.municode.com/library/ct/greenwich/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=CH14.VETR\\_ART5SC\\_SCHEDULE\\_XIXSPLI](https://www.municode.com/library/ct/greenwich/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CH14.VETR_ART5SC_SCHEDULE_XIXSPLI).

<sup>15</sup> See New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law, Title VIII, Article 39, Section 1643. Speed limits on highways in cities and villages: “The legislative body of any city or village with respect to highways . . . may by local law, ordinance, order, rule or regulation establish maximum speed limits at which vehicles may proceed within such city or village. . . . No such speed limit applicable on or along designated highways within such city or village shall be established at less than twenty-five miles per hour, except that school speed limits may be established at not less than fifteen miles per hour, . . . .”

<sup>16</sup> See <http://www.scarsdale.com/Home/Departments/VillageManager/TrafficSafety.aspx>.

<sup>17</sup> Here is one online product description: “Our Illuminated Flashing Slow Pedestrian Crossing Sign conforms to the specifications of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) set forth in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Using our innovative LED technology, the system employs a set of synchronized high-intensity LEDs. They [are used] to extend the range of visibility of the sign during the day or night in all weather conditions. Furthermore, the LEDs are



An education campaign targeting accident avoidance that includes a periodic Village Center event such as a “safety day,” a graduated enforcement program, and an announced or unannounced “enforcement day,” might raise public awareness about the rules, public safety expectations and how to avoid conflicts on the roads. Among many other practical recommendations in the 2005 Keyes Safety Analysis, such as increasing and/or synchronizing the timing of the pedestrian cross phase at most Village Center intersections, the report supports an educational campaign as a way to improve safety:

“The village should consider the provision of an Education Campaign through various media outlets and dissemination of literature, as significant numbers of pedestrians were observed jaywalking or not following the pedestrian signals. Some pedestrians did not seem to understand the pedestrian countdown signals. Also, the Educational Campaign could help alert motorists to improve their awareness of the situation in the Village Center and their responsibility to drive safely and lawfully.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Potential Solutions to Crosswalk Conflicts**

In an online letter to the editor responding to the article on motorist/pedestrian conflicts entitled “Where Feet and Wheels Meet” (The New York Times at D15, January 5, 2015), a reader suggested adjusting the timing on traffic signals to make crosswalks safer for pedestrians:

“At some intersections at busy times of the day, it is very difficult for drivers to make a right-hand or left-hand turn due to an almost continuous stream of pedestrians filling the crosswalk throughout the entire part of the signal cycle giving them the possibility of turning. Traffic lights should be modified so that there are separate and distinct periods of time when pedestrians are allowed to cross and when drivers are permitted to turn. Turning during the walk period should be forbidden, as should pedestrian crossing during the turning period. The two activities are basically incompatible from a safety perspective.”<sup>19</sup>

There are numerous signaled intersection crosswalks throughout the Village Center where this solution would help to create orderly movement.

Other options, such as pedestrian activated traffic lights operated by pressing pole buttons, can be observed at the corner of Walworth/Fox Meadow and Fenimore Roads (and nearby major arteries such as the “four-corners” intersection of Central Avenue and Hartsdale Avenue in Hartsdale). Innovative crosswalk lighting technology is another available mechanism used to heighten motorist awareness of the presence of pedestrians within crosswalks. Movement activated flashing crosswalk lights that alert motorists to pedestrians who have entered crosswalks, or flashing LED crosswalk

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flashed, which increases driver awareness of the sign.” See <http://www.ustrafficsystems.com/product/flashing-slow-pedestrian-crossing-sign/>.

<sup>18</sup> Keyes Safety Analysis at 30.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/13/science/your-letters-cancers-luck-earth-like-planets-and-protecting-pedestrians.html>.

warning signs are solutions that also have the potential to increase safety and make Scarsdale a more pedestrian friendly Village.

### **Business District Traffic Gridlock and Pedestrian Safety**

In general Village Center signaled intersections do not consistently process vehicles efficiently at peak traffic hours, nor do they always provide safe crossing opportunities for pedestrians.<sup>20</sup> Popham Road traffic, combined with the influx of vehicles from its adjacent feeder streets, creates gridlock on a regular basis where this major thoroughfare intersects at Scarsdale Avenue and East Parkway, Chase Road, Overhill Road, Garth Road and Depot Place. As the following scenarios illustrate, strategic turn-on-green-only signals, cycling with no-turn-on-red signals and in-pavement sensors activated during high volume periods, might encourage motorists that they will have a chance to get through the signaled intersections during a green cycle. Better coordination of signal phases with a lowered speed limit of 25 mph might process traffic more efficiently and potentially encourage motorists not to accelerate excessively in order to avoid stopping at stop signs and crosswalks, or to attempt to run red lights. The Committee recognizes that there are times when vehicles should not be idling for too long while waiting for green arrow signals. But there is a need for practical solutions to help make it more likely that motorists will not have to compete with each other, pedestrians and cyclists, and will not contribute to the gridlock that obstructs the intersections and grinds traffic to a standstill on a daily basis.

### **Popham Road-East Parkway-Scarsdale Avenue Congestion – Blocking the Box**

During east-west green signal cycles on Popham Road there is a timed left-turn-only signal for eastbound Popham Road vehicles in the dedicated lane for motorists turning left onto East Parkway. When the green signal arrow times out, left-turning traffic is often left stranded, blocking the intersection.<sup>21</sup> Simultaneously, westbound Popham Road motorists may make right-turns onto East Parkway from a dedicated right-turn-only lane. At peak hours, the convergence onto East Parkway of both of these eastbound and westbound Popham Road approaches creates simultaneous gridlock, both for Popham Road through-traffic and motorists attempting to enter East Parkway. Vehicles backing out of East Parkway parking spots at peak midday and PM hours appear to contribute to this persistent gridlock.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Many of the same problems observed in the preparation of this Report involving motorist and pedestrian behavior at major intersections were detailed in the Keyes Safety Analysis over 10 years ago and appear to have become exacerbated by the increase over time in vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the Village Center. See also Scarsdale Traffic Accident Incident Reports Analysis - 2007, at Scarsdale Forum Reports, <http://www.scarsdaleforum.com/reportsHome.php?parent=12> .

<sup>21</sup> Westbound left-turn only signaling for Popham Road motorists turning left onto Scarsdale Avenue would process traffic more efficiently if it were not for the fact that the signaling appears to be periodically inactivated on weekdays or at certain times of the day.

<sup>22</sup> While head-in parking was implemented on most Village Center streets to create more parking spaces, there seems to be a lack of public awareness of related safety issues, which could be addressed by an education campaign.

Astonishingly, the all too brief, timed left-turn-only green signal arrow for westbound Popham Road vehicles turning from the dedicated left-turn Popham lane onto Scarsdale Avenue has been observed to be nonfunctioning on weekdays, or at certain times on weekdays, but operational on weekends. A dangerous road condition arises from an almost complete lack of sight distance visibility beyond the intersection which prevents left turning motorists from seeing, much less anticipating two oncoming lanes of approaching eastbound Popham Road traffic. For this reason alone the Committee recommends that the left turn arrow is an absolute requirement that should be activated at all times and days of the week to prevent serious conflicts at this intersection.<sup>23</sup> The timing of the signal should be adjusted to permit more than 1-2 vehicles to make the left turn, which seems to be the current limitation.

Gridlock is also created at the Popham Road-East Parkway intersection when westbound Popham through traffic converges with motorists stuck in the intersection attempting to make right-turns onto Popham from (southbound) East Parkway. Frequently at peak hours none of this traffic is able to proceed because of the queued and backed up volume of westbound vehicles stopped in the through lane by a red signal at the intersection of Popham Road and Depot Place, and in the dedicated left-turn lane on Popham Road waiting for a green signal in order to turn left onto Garth Road. As improbable as it seems, at times the backup impedes westbound Popham Road traffic as far away east and sometimes beyond the intersection of Popham at Chase Road, or even Popham at Autenrieth Road.

The sheer volume of traffic at peak times at these key intersections exceeds the capacity of the current signaling and phasing to preclude the formation of gridlock. Implementing left-turn and right-turn-on-green-only signals, and no-left-turn and no-right-turn-on-red signals from all directions might be the most efficient solutions. The addition of an appropriately phased left-turn green signal arrow might also allow time for northbound Scarsdale Avenue traffic to turn left onto westbound Popham Road and also to clear the intersection.

Aside from adding “Don’t Block the Box” signage to an expanded overhead signal array, consideration should be given to the assignment of a traffic control officer at these intersections during peak hours, as is already in place at the train station.

### **Failure to Yield to Pedestrians on Popham Road Westbound at Chase Road**

Westbound motorists on Popham Road approaching the first set of Village Center traffic signals often either fail to yield to pedestrians crossing Popham within the crosswalk at the Popham-Chase Road intersection, and/or fail to stop at the “Stop Here on Red” warning sign, marked pavement crosswalks and stop lines. Westbound Popham motorists in the dedicated right turn-only lane approaching the red signal and the prominent “No Turn on Red/Stop Here on Red” signage at the corner of Popham and Chase usually roll past the crosswalk before coming to a full stop, or even block the crosswalk. Motorists turning right legally (with a green signal) onto Chase Road, from the same dedicated right turn lane of westbound Popham Road, were also observed speeding excessively around that corner without

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<sup>23</sup> Likewise, wherever there are “Delayed Green” signals in one direction only, such as at the westbound Popham-Chase Road intersection, overhead signage should so indicate the delay to waiting motorists.

heeding pedestrians in the nearby crosswalks that intersect Chase Road at Boniface Circle, Spencer Place, Christie Place and Woodland Place.

“Turning Vehicles Yield to Pedestrians,” “Slow,” or “Caution Slow Down” pedestrian crossing signage at the Popham-Chase intersection, along the entire length of Chase and elsewhere would provide needed safety and traffic calming measures. More distance between the painted pavement “Stop” lines and crosswalks should also be considered throughout the Village Center.

A westbound motorist who had already entered the dedicated right turn lane on Popham Road, but apparently decided not to proceed onto Chase Road, was observed veering sharply left, suddenly and without warning or signaling, directly into the Popham Road crosswalk. The motorist accomplished this maneuver by driving through the stationary traffic curb (with uprights) and against oncoming westbound traffic in order to continue to proceed west on Popham. Motorists have also been observed making a right turn from westbound Popham onto Chase after driving beyond the stationary traffic curb barrier, thereby creating the potential for a collision with oncoming traffic on Chase.

One of several contributory factors to motorist confusion at this intersection is that there is no proximate signage signaling to motorists that the dedicated westbound Popham Road lane that feeds onto Chase Road is right-turn-only. The nearest warning is the faded right-turn arrow painted on the pavement, and a distant sign on the north side of Popham much farther to the east beyond the Autenrieth Road intersection. An additional right-turn-only sign should be repositioned closer to the actual dedicated right-turn lane on westbound Popham leading into Chase, where there is the possibility of affixing them on two existing “No Parking” poles near the Chase turnoff (and the adjacent apartment building half-circle driveway).

A similar problem exists along the length of the dedicated right-turn-only lane on eastbound Popham Road between Garth Road and Scarsdale Avenue. The absence of sidewalk signs and barely visible, faded right-turn-only pavement paint promotes sudden lane changes, as when eastbound motorists approaching Scarsdale Avenue are often encountered swerving left into the eastbound (middle) through-traffic lane on Popham. Dedicated turn-lane signage such as at the northeast corner of Post and Heathcote Roads is the obvious solution to this problem.

As for the mid-road pedestrian crosswalk signage affixed to the uprights on the traffic curb at the Popham-Chase road intersection, the one-sided panels should be replaced with double-faced signage to ensure that motorists driving from both directions are warned to anticipate the presence of, and are expected to yield to, pedestrians who enter crosswalks on both Popham and Chase. The same signage should be installed at strategic crosswalks and at reasonable intervals along the length of heavily traveled Village Center streets, including crosswalks at both ends of the Popham Road Bridge median.

### **Failure to Yield to Pedestrians on Popham Road Eastbound at Chase Road**

It is alarming to observe motorists approaching the major Popham-Chase crosswalk at excessive speed while turning left from southbound Chase onto Popham eastbound. This was the location of a

midday vehicular pedestrian fatality which was noted in the 2005 Keyes Safety Analysis. Similarly, vehicles can be seen turning right at excessive speed onto Popham from Scarsdale Avenue, where heightened caution by motorists is also required before they encounter pedestrians in the crosswalk immediately around that corner on Popham, within yards of the intersection (see additional recommendations below).

There is literally no north-facing signage or signal, on any overhead or street wire or pole, that is clearly visible to south-facing Chase motorists warning that they might encounter a pedestrian in the Popham Road crosswalk, whether motorists are waiting at a red signal before or while initiating the left turn from Chase onto Popham (eastbound). Only one, predominantly west-facing pedestrian identifying sign is affixed to the lamp post north of the Overhill Road intersection at Popham, just a few yards from the problematic crosswalk. On a recent, late-afternoon weekday, a southbound motorist turning left from Chase onto Popham nearly collided into an elderly man walking in the southerly end of the Popham crosswalk. The pedestrian had the right of way within the signal crossing phase. There was no glare from the sun, which was already in the western sky and not shining in the direction of the motorist's windshield. Some of the innovative crosswalk technologies mentioned above might help to curb aggressive or careless motorist behavior in the vicinity of crosswalks, and prevent such near misses in the future.

Double faced signage visible from all directions, flashing lights and other traffic calming should be implemented as soon as possible to prevent the dangerous conflict at the Chase-Popham intersection. The same recommendation applies to the urgent need for traffic calming for motorists turning right from Scarsdale Avenue onto Popham Road. As was recommended in the Keyes Safety Analysis, which analyzed "traffic signal phasing alternatives," the Village should explore anew how to reduce the hazards at all of these major intersections through some combination of signal timing and exclusive pedestrian phases.<sup>24</sup> Besides more visible signage, physical traffic calming restrictions and a lower speed limit are demonstrably needed to increase safety at all points along Popham Road and indeed in the rest of the Village Center.

### **Right-Turns onto Popham Road Eastbound from Scarsdale Avenue Still Problematic**

Nearly all of the major intersections in the Village Center have signage prohibiting a right-turn-on-red (including at Overhill Road, although not at Depot Place at the Metro North station). Even the signaled intersection on Woodland Place at Crane Road posts a no-turn-on-red prohibition, a necessity at this location where there is a visual line of sight impediment from shrubbery (at the southwest corner).

Motorist confusion over unclear signage and/or problematic visibility contributes to noncompliance. Before completion of the Popham Road Bridge Project, both overhead and curbside signage at the Popham-Scarsdale Avenue intersection prohibited a right-turn on-red onto Popham by motorists in the dedicated northbound right lane of Scarsdale Avenue. By the time of completion of the

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<sup>24</sup> Keyes Safety Analysis at 1-3.

project the signage had been removed. Eventually a curbside sign prohibiting any right-turns-on-red was installed closest to the corner. The replaced signage joins a “Stop Here on Red” sign a few feet away and yet a third, separate “yield to pedestrian” sign installed farthest from the corner. “No Turn on Red” signs are now only affixed to street poles, where visually they are more easily missed by motorists than when they were affixed to overhead traffic signals.

A right-turn-on-red at this corner should have been continuously prohibited because of the blocked line of sight which impedes the ability of motorists who are stopped at a red signal in the dedicated right lane of Scarsdale Avenue from observing oncoming eastbound Popham Road traffic. Right turning motorists accelerating aggressively on a green signal still pose a threat to pedestrians in the Popham crosswalk. Another potentially hazardous condition still arises when (southbound) East Parkway motorists turning left onto (eastbound) Popham fail to yield to (northbound) Scarsdale Avenue traffic, which has the right of way to proceed either north onto East Parkway or to make right turns eastbound onto Popham.

The most significant pedestrian safety issue at this intersection as mentioned above is the conflict that pedestrians encounter in the easterly Popham Road crosswalk from left turning East Parkway motorists and right turning Scarsdale Avenue motorists. Turn-on-green-only signals would not just help avoid vehicular conflicts but would also protect pedestrians in the crosswalks on Popham Road from impatient or careless drivers. Additional pedestrian safety enhancements at this intersection might be achieved by coordinating turn signals and crossing phases, especially during peak traffic hours.

#### **East Parkway-Popham Road Intersection: Motorist Disregard of “No Turn on Red” onto Popham Road Westbound**

The “No Turn on Red” sign along the dedicated right lane at the south-west corner of East Parkway where it joins Popham Road is often ignored or missed by drivers. The signage may not be easily visible at street level from the southbound right lane of East Parkway, either because (a) the no-turn sign is located to the right of the sidewalk above the Metro North retaining wall, and/or (b) the sign is visibly obscured atop the retaining wall by nearby BRP signage, impairing the ability of motorists to see the sign at a distance from the intersection of only 2-3 car-lengths. When the Popham traffic signal at that corner is red, motorists in the dedicated right-turn lane on East Parkway at times coast but do not always stop completely before making an illegal right-turn into through traffic on westbound Popham. Consideration should be given to moving the “No Turn on Red” sign to a more visible location, perhaps closer to eye level on the same pole beneath the BRP sign. For optimal visibility, “No Turn on Red” signs should be restored, if feasible and allowable, to the overhead signal arrays.

#### **Popham Road Feeders at Garth Road and Depot Place**

Pedestrians also face difficulty crossing the wide intersection across Popham Road between the Popham median and the north-easterly corner of Garth Road. Northbound motorists on Garth turning right onto Popham do not always yield to pedestrians in the Popham crosswalk. Pedestrians crossing

Popham must also beware of left-turning vehicles exiting Depot Place onto eastbound Popham. Any of the traffic calming and pedestrian identifying signage mentioned above would be helpful.

Another source of gridlock, especially at peak traffic hours, occurs at this intersection when left-turning vehicles from Depot Place onto eastbound Popham converge with right-turning vehicles from Garth Road onto eastbound Popham. The resulting queuing and traffic backups beginning at the Popham-Garth-Depot intersection often extend up to and including the Popham-East Parkway-Scarsdale Avenue intersection. Turn-on-green-only phased with no-turn-on-red signals might help to alleviate this problem.

Motorists exiting the ground level garage at One Popham Road onto Depot Place consistently ignore the sign prohibiting a left turn and also pose a hazard to pedestrians on the sidewalk adjacent to the garage. Whether or not the Village has jurisdiction over this signage, left-turning vehicles exiting the garage create a traffic and public safety hazard at the westerly side of the train station that should be addressed.

### **Popham Road Bridge and Median**

Unlike the pedestrian bump-out at the end of the traffic median at the corner of East Parkway and Popham Road, there are no curbed pedestrian bump-outs on either end of the Popham Road Bridge median. The median was designed as a raised planting bed that does not provide any platform for pedestrians to seek refuge between the traffic lanes. The result is that pedestrians can be observed crossing Popham Road after the signals have changed in favor of motorists, leaving people on foot with no option to seek safety other than crossing against oncoming traffic or being stuck in the middle of the street in a very small space at the narrow endpoints of the median. Consequently, jaywalking commuters rushing to or leaving the station at peak hours routinely block the free flow of oncoming vehicular traffic from multiple directions.<sup>25</sup> Until an engineering/design solution is devised, the Village should assign a traffic control officer at peak periods and initiate a public education campaign to discourage jaywalking.

### **Chase Road-Christie Place-Woodland Place 3-Way Stop Intersection**

The Chase-Christie-Woodland 3-way stop intersection is a troublesome location. Southbound vehicles on Chase Road approaching from Crane Road frequently do not stop at all at the Christie Place stop sign. The “rolling” or “coasting” stop appears to be the rule at all three corners. It often appears that motorists need guidance on the proper way to yield to each other except when commuter bus and delivery truck traffic rolls through the stop signs. The practice of motorists feigning stops is not conducive to safety or orderly, efficient traffic movement and should be discouraged as much as possible. Available traffic calming technologies should be employed to encourage better motorist compliance.

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<sup>25</sup> A possible solution would be to shorten both endpoints of the median and construct a narrow curbed platform, but because of the narrow road geometry that option might not be feasible.

## Chase Road

Pedestrians attempting to even enter crosswalks all along Chase Road must wait for speeding traffic to abate, despite numerous stationary and other crosswalk yield signs, and are required to yield to motorists at corners where there are no crosswalks.<sup>26</sup> Chase Park, the Post Office, a bank and a realtor, in addition to pedestrian-generators on Boniface Circle, Spencer Place, Christie Place and Woodland Place, all add to the volume of people attempting to cross Chase Road. The inclination for motorists to speed on this busy street may be exacerbated by the long wait time to turn at the Popham Road intersection. The Popham-Chase traffic signal can be seen from Christie Place, and when the light is green, motorists tend to far exceed the speed limit to catch the light. More frequent cycling of the Popham-Chase signals, with shorter wait times at the red light, might be useful in checking this phenomenon and assisting pedestrian crossings. Motorists also hurry along Chase on their way to the train station or to adjacent streets leading out of the Village Center, more evidence of the need for traffic calming coupled with a lower speed limit.<sup>27</sup>

## Christie Place

Unlike most other business district streets, on the long east-west Christie Place corridor between Chase Road and East Parkway there is no mid-block crosswalk or any other traffic calming or pedestrian crossing installation. These should be required based on the multitude of pedestrian-generators on Christie, including an indoor garage, a supermarket with its parking lot and loading dock, restaurants, multiple shops and a multistory residential apartment complex.

While Christie Place is a narrow, two-lane mixed residential and commercial road, it is also a scheduled route for Westchester County commuter buses approaching the train station, where large delivery trucks, Post Office vehicles and waste removal vehicles routinely travel or park. Traffic gridlock is compounded when vehicles enter and/or exit the supermarket and indoor parking driveways simultaneously from opposite sides of the road, make illegal U-turns or double park.

The line of sight for motorists and pedestrians alike is often compromised on Christie Place by sizeable trucks in, or double parked at, the supermarket loading zone. Motorists often block the street entirely as they queue on the street waiting for parking spots to open up in the limited supermarket parking lot. At least one crosswalk with pedestrian identifying signage placed mid-block on Christie Place might be a reasonable solution to promote safety. Alleviating gridlock might depend on enforcement measures.

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<sup>26</sup> “If there isn't a crosswalk, sign or signal at mid-block locations, a pedestrian must yield the right-of-way to all vehicles on the roadway [Section 1152, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law].” FAQ 4, at <http://www.scarsdale.com/Home/Departments/VillageManager/TrafficSafety.aspx>.

<sup>27</sup> Motorists should be made aware as part of any traffic enforcement campaign that there are consequences for unsafe driving. Speed violations and red light or other signal, yield or stop sign violations issued by a police officer could carry points, a fine or potential first or subsequent offense surcharges.



## Woodland Place

Pedestrians using the crosswalk at the westerly corner of Woodland Place to cross Crane Road at least have the benefit of a traffic signal to regulate motorist behavior at this busy intersection. Woodland is traversed continuously not only by vehicles exiting the business district, but also by motorists speeding from both directions on Crane making turns onto Woodland. Motorists making right turns from Woodland onto Crane often disregard the “No Turn on Red” signpost and drive through the red signal. Some motorists even appear to be unaware that Woodland, which is one-way northbound only part of its length, becomes a two-way road where it merges with the Oakwood Place traffic island. It is thus not uncommon for motorists to (a) enter Woodland from Crane going southbound against oncoming, one-way traffic, or (b) passing around vehicles stopped in the northbound right lane of Woodland at a red traffic signal in order to make an illegal right-turn-on-red, thereby blocking or risking conflict with Crane Road motorists turning onto Woodland. An additional sign clearly indicating that this short stretch of Woodland Place is two-way, and freshly painted pavement lane markings might mitigate this dangerous behavior.

### Pedestrian Safety on Woodland Place “Sidewalk”

The uneven, paved-over raised walkway that passes for a sidewalk on the western side of the one-way parking stretch of Woodland Place is unsafe for pedestrian use and an eyesore that should be replaced entirely, not patched up as has been done for decades.<sup>28</sup> It is perplexing that the Woodland sidewalk has been left in disrepair for such an unreasonably lengthy period of time, while new sidewalk curbing and flat surfacing has appeared on Drake Road (between Madison Road and Woods Lane), and extensive repairs are currently underway on the newer sidewalks in areas of the Village Center proper. This narrow footpath covers an antiquated red brick surface which is visible in places where several layers of pavement have been worn away. The pavement itself has been re-applied or patched many times over the years as a remedy for winter plow damage, which occurs repeatedly in part because there are no curbstones to protect the walkway from encroachment by plows.

Woodland is another heavily traveled byway used by motorists to exit or circumvent the Village Center on their way to Crane Road, or Church Lane and Popham Road via Autenrieth Road. The one-way east side of Woodland is metered for perpendicular parking, while the west side is metered for parallel parking. Aside from the dangerously irregular surface of the “sidewalk,” the lack of adequate street lighting makes this off-road walkway hazardous for pedestrians at all hours. Many pedestrians on Woodland often choose to walk in the street instead, a risky proposition for commuters and others walking to the station in the early morning or returning home at dusk or later as motorists speed out of

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<sup>28</sup> “The driver of a vehicle, when entering or exiting from an alleyway, building, private road or driveway must yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian on a sidewalk [Section 1151-a, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law]. Pedestrians are required to use sidewalks where they are provided **and safe to use**. When sidewalks are not provided, a pedestrian is required to walk on the left side of the roadway facing traffic [Section 1156-b, NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law].” FAQ 5, at <http://www.scarsdale.com/Home/Departments/VillageManager/TrafficSafety.aspx> (emphasis added).

the business district. Of all the Village Center streets deserving of proper curbstones and sidewalks, Woodland Place is a long overdue candidate.<sup>29</sup>

### **East Parkway Medians, Crosswalks and Stop Lines**

The new northbound BRP Crane Road exit deceleration lane leading to the off-ramp appears to be too short to accommodate more than 2-3 bumper-to-bumper passenger vehicles. Meanwhile, the off-ramp appears to be configured at least as short, steep and curved as before, leaving little room for adequate deceleration and ending precipitously at the edge of the southbound lane of East Parkway. There is no stop line or stop sign at the terminus of the off-ramp where it abruptly meets East Parkway, since these would likely cause backups in the short parkway exit deceleration lane, and related problems for BRP through traffic. While off-ramp motorists have the right of way, they may have to apply their brakes quickly to avoid running into southbound East Parkway motorists who must be fully compliant with the need to brake to a full, not rolling, stop to avoid conflict at the stop sign aligned perilously close to the parkway off-ramp geometry. The volume of motorists feeding into the southbound East Parkway lane, including motorists exiting the southbound BRP, exiting Crane Road or U-turning from northbound-to-southbound or southbound to northbound East Parkway, add to the confusion and the elevated potential for conflict.

To illustrate the problem, not long after the northbound BRP off-ramp was opened to traffic at the conclusion of the construction project (in early September) a collision occurred at this East Parkway location: “A Mahopac man traveling south on East Parkway tried to turn left onto Crane Road Oct. 20, when he hit the car of a Bronx man who had just come off the Bronx River Parkway. The Mahopac man told police he had not seen the car when he proceeded from the stop sign.” (As described in the Scarsdale Inquirer's October 30, 2015 edition, page 5.) Considering that the U-turn lane from southbound to northbound East Parkway (on the way to Crane) is only a few yards from where the BRP off-ramp meets the stop sign for southbound East Parkway traffic, it is easy to appreciate the likelihood of such an incident.

The off-ramp motorists and southbound East Parkway motorists must be mindful of each other in order to avoid such conflicts and to maintain safe distances. Planners recognized these potential conflicts and installed several Crane Road exit ramp signs combined on the same pole with 5 mph warning signs along the right lane of the northbound BRP on the approach to the deceleration lane. The existing signage is demonstrably inadequate. Additional caution warning signage on or near the last existing parkway exit sign is needed to alert off-ramp motorists of the cross traffic on East Parkway in order to prevent collisions and afford motorists from both directions ample and reasonable stopping distances. In addition to a flashing yellow caution light, or even a flashing red stop light to slow traffic and encourage full stops at the stop sign, a yield sign and a painted pavement stop line positioned

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<sup>29</sup> LED lighting, warm spectra and low wattage with directional shades, should be considered for Woodland Place as part of the current Village pilot program in view of the heavy vehicle and pedestrian street traffic. Appropriate LED lighting also should be installed to increase safety and visibility throughout the Village Center.

farther north on East Parkway should be added to motorist guidance in the southbound East Parkway lane. These measures would more clearly indicate that northbound off-ramp BRP traffic has the right of way.

Somehow a sufficient number of strategically placed crosswalks were left on the drawing board during the redesign of the two-sided, heavily planted parking medians on the segment of East Parkway north of Christie Place. Commuters in particular are directly affected by the scarcity of crosswalks on East Parkway in the immediate train station area. Pedestrians including patrons and merchants leaving their parked vehicles have to cross the north and/or southbound lanes of East Parkway without the safety of additional marked crosswalks, extended median bump-outs for standing between the lanes and pedestrian identifying signage. Only one bump out was configured at the southerly end of East Parkway at Popham Road. Otherwise there are few other safe places for pedestrians to stand between lanes along the entire length of East Parkway.

Conflicts also arise between motorists turning left from the southbound East Parkway lane onto Christie Place (who must comply with a “Yield” sign), and northbound or right-turning motorists at this East Parkway intersection who are supposed to have the right of way. To address the problems on East Parkway, priority should be given to the addition of crosswalks and related pedestrian and motorist safety installations along the entire length of East Parkway.<sup>30</sup> Physical speed attenuators and/or other traffic calming signals and signage should also be considered for key locations in both lanes of East Parkway.

### **Gridlock at the Metro North Train Station**

Chaos reigns at the train station especially during the evening rush, when commuters returning to Scarsdale are met by motorists queuing up at the curb on the East Parkway side of the station, buses blocking East Parkway through traffic because the bus stop has been appropriated by idling vehicles, and anyone in the vicinity, whether on foot or driving, trying to contend with the gridlock. A similar situation exists on Spencer Place where through traffic and motorists backing out of parking spaces are often completely blocked at peak evening hours by double parked motorists waiting to pick up passengers. Aside from a parked police vehicle blocking turns into the station area at the intersection of East Parkway at Spencer Place, no such restriction exists at the intersection of East Parkway at Christie Place. The resulting traffic backups and queuing extend to westbound Christie Place, northbound East Parkway beginning at Popham Road and through traffic entering the station area from both BRP exit ramps and Crane Road. There is no other regular enforcement presence to mitigate the gridlock. It is unclear what reasonable measures could be taken to resolve the gridlock, short of closing off the entrance to southbound East Parkway at Christie Place, which might then create additional backups and

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<sup>30</sup> The planting of maple trees on the medians presents another obstacle for motorists who have to negotiate low branches when leaving or approaching their vehicles or while feeding the meters. Strategic pruning might eventually be necessary, guided by a certified arborist to avoid harming or unnecessarily defacing the trees. For suggested best practices on greening roadways and medians, see [http://www.nyc.gov/html/ia/gprb/downloads/pdf/NYC\\_Environment\\_GreenStreets.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/ia/gprb/downloads/pdf/NYC_Environment_GreenStreets.pdf).

double parking on the adjacent feeder streets. The Committee recommends that the unacceptable traffic situation at the station should be examined and solutions should be implemented.

### **Safety on Crane Road**

Judging by the excessive speeding that takes place on Crane Road, it is a challenge for pedestrians crossing this major east-west road. Due to property line geometry, sidewalks are intermittent along both the north and south sides of the roadway. There is no sidewalk on either side of the street from the Trinity Lutheran Church's curbside stone wall to Chase Road. Along the entire length of Crane between the Post Road and East Parkway there is only one traffic signal and two poorly marked pedestrian crosswalks. Pedestrians including many commuters are often observed walking in the roadway instead of on an existing sidewalk on the opposite side of the street. Crane intersects a dense residential area of single family homes, two churches with early childhood education operations, Village Hall and the Chateaux apartment complex, all just a few blocks from the train station. Motorists speeding in both directions present a particular hazard for vulnerable pedestrians. Motorists who are speeding in order to run the red light from both directions on Crane at Woodland Place is a common occurrence and warrants a closer look by enforcement.<sup>31</sup>

Besides the crosswalk at the Woodland Place traffic signal, the only other crosswalk lies approximately at the mid-point on Crane Road, connecting the north side of the street with the St. James the Less Church parking lot entrance. This crosswalk is narrow and easily missed or disregarded by motorists. It also lies at a high point on Crane Road, which makes it virtually invisible to approaching vehicles from both directions. The inadequacy of this crosswalk is obvious when compared with the much wider, zebra striped crosswalk servicing the Congregational Church on nearby Heathcote Road (with its two strategically placed, portable pedestrian identifying signs in the middle of the road in front of the Church building and at the active Church parking lot driveway across the street).<sup>32</sup> Installing a second traffic signal or at least a mid-roadway pedestrian identifying sign on Crane Road in the vicinity of the St. James the Less entrance driveway might help to slow and calm traffic.

Eastbound motorists do not slow down, much less stop for pedestrians waiting to cross Crane at this crosswalk, nor do they seem to take note of the two bright yellow pedestrian signs flanking the St. James the Less driveway on the south side of the road. The 30 mph sign posted midway between these signs seems counterproductive when the objective is to emphasize the need for motorists to slow down to accommodate pedestrians. As elsewhere in the Village Center, motorists on Crane Road appear to be

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<sup>31</sup> The Village should take note of the significant sight distance impediments at this intersection. In the event of power outages or otherwise inoperable traffic signals on Crane Road at Woodland Place, it is imperative that portable 3-way stop and yield signage should be in place to calm Crane traffic in order to enable Woodland motorists to enter Crane safely.

<sup>32</sup> Reasonable traffic calming measures including 25 mph speeds should be implemented in the interests of safety on additional designated streets where many pedestrians are known to cross, such as next to or near houses of worship and private schools, similar to those provided at the crosswalk on northbound Heathcote Road, a major road on the approach to the intersection with Sherbrooke Road, where a lowered speed limit and separate pedestrian identifying signs are deployed to calm speeding traffic (in proximity to the High School on the Post Road).

oblivious to pedestrians waiting to cross, and disregard the signage which typically includes a separate sign on the same pole indicating the proximity of a crosswalk with either an arrow or the word “Ahead.” Following the examples on Heathcote Road at the Congregational Church crossing, and Fenimore Road at Brewster Road, Crane Road crosswalks need to be augmented with portable signage on the road itself and a 25 mph speed limit.

Conflict also looms at the westerly end of Crane at Fox Meadow Road. As reported in the Scarsdale Inquirer September 4, 2015 police report: “A Mount Vernon man who was driving on Crane Road on the afternoon of Aug. 28 collided with a Fox Meadow Road man who was turning left onto Crane Road from Fox Meadow.” Motorists making both left and right turns from Fox Meadow Road onto Crane have to contend with limited sight distances that impede the visibility of oncoming vehicles, not to mention speeding vehicles approaching from both lanes on Crane. This is another location where a lower speed limit and traffic calming methods are required.<sup>33</sup>

### **Gridlock Exiting and Entering Autenrieth Road to and from Popham Road**

The Committee recommends a reassessment and realignment of the street parking configuration at the southwest corner of Autenrieth Road, a two-way street at the Popham Road intersection adjacent to the Community Baptist Church. Autenrieth is a residential street where parking is permitted only on the west side. The narrow road geometry at this corner of Autenrieth is a source of gridlock for both right-turning and left-turning vehicles entering from and exiting onto Popham Road. The overly generous parking space allowance is too close to the intersection and contributes to the impediment to turning vehicles on both roads.

Current signage on Autenrieth near the Popham intersection allows for parking at least three vehicles beyond the end of an existing handicap parking space along the Church curbside. Parking extends almost to the corner, just short of the Popham sidewalk, which contributes to the gridlock. There is a “No Standing Here to Corner” sign approximately one car length from the intersection which is regularly violated when vehicles are parked beyond the sign, further blocking access. Southbound motorists exiting Autenrieth alongside a full row of parked vehicles near this corner create a double row that (a) leaves only one passing lane open, (b) impedes the entry of left and right-turning vehicles from Popham onto Autenrieth Road, and (c) contributes to gridlock in both directions on Popham.<sup>34</sup>

The Committee recommends that a greater distance should be set aside for both “no standing” and “no parking” at this location. The last permissible parking space on Autenrieth should be the current handicap parking space. A “No Parking Beyond This Point” sign should be moved to the handicap position to accommodate both westbound and eastbound Popham traffic turning onto

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<sup>33</sup> A Committee member suggested the use of convex mirrors to optimize the field of vision at this dangerous intersection.

<sup>34</sup> Pursuant to Code §290-63 Schedule XII: Parking Prohibited at All Times, at <http://ecode360.com/6439679>, “In accordance with the provisions of §290-17, no person shall park a vehicle at any time upon any of the following described streets or parts of streets: Autenreith Road, West [side], From Popham Road northerly for 40 feet.” The ample parking allowance at the southerly end of Autenrieth appears to conflict with the 40-foot restriction in the code.

Autenrieth. To alleviate yet another problem here, a “Do Not Block Side Street” sign should be installed on southbound Popham to give Autenrieth motorists assistance turning left onto Popham, and northbound Popham motorists access turning left onto Autenrieth.

Removing the parking spaces too close to the intersection, which has the tendency to inhibit motorist line of sight, would also make it safer for pedestrians crossing Autenrieth at Popham. As of the date of this Report there were no painted pavement crosswalk or stop line markings at this corner, which may have been paved over during recent road excavations and repairs on Autenrieth. This is another location where safe pedestrian access to and from the Village Center and train station requires ongoing maintenance of visible road markings.

### **Providing Traffic Control During Village Center Recreational and Cultural Events**

A longstanding dilemma for pedestrians in the Village Center arises during the Westchester Band concerts at Chase Park from the end of June through the beginning of August. The number of performers and size of the audiences are substantial. On concert night crowds of over 100 people including band members, adults of all ages and children fill the surrounding streets. Motorists circle Village Center streets searching for elusive parking spaces. Through traffic however continues to speed along on Chase Road, Christie Place and Spencer Place, undeterred by the throng as concert goes, a good number of them elderly, attempt to cross the streets. Night falls by intermission, exacerbating the hazards to pedestrians.

Street closure protocols were established on Chase Road during the 2015 concerts and the “Party in the Park” events, similar to those that have been implemented for some of the other Village Center events during which street closures have become routine. Numerous examples are the traffic control setup for the annual summer Bike & Blade street event for young children, the Concours auto show, the crafts show, the Halloween parade and various holiday festivals when a portion of streets and intersections are temporarily closed off completely. On concert nights Chase Road was closed off to traffic on the short section between the northeast corner of Spencer Place and the southeast corner of Christie Place. Concert goes as of the second performance date took to assembling on this small section of Chase Road with their folding chairs. Yet on the first two concert nights Post Office vehicles were parked either directly in front of the building or on the opposite side of the street adjacent to Chase Park. Any vehicles parked on this section of Chase Road effectively block the line of sight of concert goers who use the Post Office steps and sidewalk benches as extra seating during the event.

In order to enhance all Village Center events and contribute further to public health and safety, the Committee recommends that appropriate street signage should be posted on Chase Road early in the day to notify motorists of the time of closure and to ensure that all vehicles will be prohibited from parking on the closed section of the street for a reasonable period of time in advance of the event.

## **Violations of the U-Turn Prohibition Throughout the Business District**

Motorists have been observed negotiating illegal U-turns in the Village Center despite the fact that U-turns are explicitly prohibited on major streets such as Chase Road from Crane Road to Popham Road and on Christie Place from Chase Road to East Parkway.<sup>35</sup> Motorists who make U-turns in the Village Center impede the right-of-way of both pedestrians and other vehicles and create a dangerous road condition. Yet the only signage prohibiting U-turns appears at the East Parkway-Popham intersection. Additional signage should be installed in order to discourage U-turn violations, particularly on busy Chase Road with its numerous crosswalks, and on Christie Place where pedestrians currently have no intermediate crosswalk for safe passage and motorists persist in making U-turns at all hours of the day and night.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Committee and many other residents recognize that in order to make the Village Center a safer place there needs to be a change in the mindset, expectations, habits and sense of responsibility of motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists who travel to, from and through the Village Center. The implementation of recommendations made in this Report, such as modifications to speed limits, signals and signage, and traffic calming technologies, a public education campaign and heightened enforcement, are required to encourage safe and lawful behavior and adherence to the rules on the roads. Prevention and reduction of injuries and collisions would also permit traffic enforcement officers to shift their efforts in other vital directions.

The Committee therefore recommends that the Village should (1) promote pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist traffic safety in the Village Center by lowering the maximum allowable speed limit from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour on designated Village Center roads, (2) provide additional signals and/or signage and develop strategies in order to maximize pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist safety in the Village Center, and (3) promulgate regulations, institute a public education campaign and enlist the cooperation of the public consistent with these recommendations, be approved.

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<sup>35</sup> Code §290-56, at <http://ecode360.com/6439664#6439664>.

Respectfully submitted by the following members of the Municipal Services Committee who reported on observations of conditions on Village Center roads, and/or contributed notes and comments in the preparation of this Report:

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