

## Slowing Down for a Safer Town

LAURA ASERMILY, [LASERMILY@YAHOO.COM](mailto:LASERMILY@YAHOO.COM), WASHINGTON STREET EXT

### DISCUSSION

It's good that we're alert to speeding and asking each other to slow down for a safer town. Middlebury Safe Routes teaches that walkers hit by cars at 40 mph have a 15% survival rate while those hit at 20 mph have an 85% chance of survival. This week is a good time to practice mindful driving--slowing down, making eye contact with those sharing the road, stopping fully and starting gently. We're hoping to see lots of children and their families walking and biking to school for the Way to Go! School Challenge and International Walk & Roll to School Day this Wed Oct 4.

Chief Hanley is aware of the Buttolph neighborhood speeding discussion reported on FPF and shares that monitoring by Middlebury Police shows people are stopping fully at stops and driving within the speed limit (posted at 25 mph). That's not to say there isn't speeding still on this popular by pass, since there is only so much that can be monitored. He's glad the FPF posts implore people to stop speeding, as the great majority of speeders are their neighbors. They've spent quite a bit of time in Buttolph since June watching stop signs and running laser and radar speed detection with no violations. One officer actually counted cars on Buttolph Drive while watching the stop sign at Meadow Way. In a 3-day period he counted about 90+ cars and every one stopped for the stop signs. He was parked in a spot where the drivers would not see him. Officers Christopher, Harrington, Emilio, and Fisher have all spent time parked on Woodland Drive using either laser or radar speed detection on Swanage Court at random times day and evening and have not only had very few vehicles but none were speeding, the average speed being low- 20's. They had DPW post the road for 25mph. They looked at sources of traffic on Swanage Court and it seems that most of the contributing traffic comes from 5-6 houses on Woodland Park and the 10 houses on Swanage Court. Chief Hanley observed Buttolph Drive traffic on Sept 28 bringing his grandchildren to school. Of the parade of cars on Buttolph Drive, all were moving under the speed limit and all had made full stops at the stop sign at Meadow Way.

I confess that my foot does what my mind does--races--so I appreciate reminders from others. I also appreciate road designs that help me slow down. MPD doesn't think speed bumps are effective for slowing traffic. Nor do I. A better solution is a "road diet." In a road diet, the width of a lane is decreased to reduce vehicle speeds and yield space for other use. Resulting space can be applied to pedestrian refuges, medians, sidewalks, shoulders, parking, outdoor cafes, or bike lanes. Middlebury studied traffic calming measures a few years ago, including road diets. It piloted pop-up traffic safety demos this summer on Maple St, Seymour St, and Main/Merchants intersection. A well designed road diet keeps traffic flowing and doesn't impede emergency vehicles or winter maintenance. You can mull Burlington's efforts here: [http://www.localmotion.org/become\\_a\\_road\\_diet\\_expert](http://www.localmotion.org/become_a_road_diet_expert). We'll get there! Safely! Laura Asermily

**Water St/Cross St intersection** It looks like your efforts to get kids to walk to and from school are in full swing already this year. There certainly are a lot of kids who walk most days to and from our Chipman Park/South Street neighborhood. One of our biggest challenges to getting our kids to walk more frequently, and independently, is the Water St/Cross St intersection. It is especially problematic after school. Drivers are forced to drive up and onto the crosswalk at the end of Water St due to the impeded visibility from trees to the west of the intersection. Would we talk to someone at the town about possible tree removal and/or pruning? Is there Middlebury Safe Routes budget for improving visibility there? The South Pleasant side of the road isn't a

great alternative because drivers creep out onto the crosswalk there due to impeded visibility looking toward the Cross St Bridge. We'd appreciate your help making this heavily traveled route as safe as possible. Thanks, Maria Graham Hi Maria--Thanks for your comments. Middlebury Safe Routes proposed addition of a mirror. We discussed it at Public Health and Safety and can again. Pruning trees would also be good idea. Stay posted! And thanks for walking and rolling! Laura

Thanks, as always, Laura for your advocacy in this area of safety that touches all aspects of our town life. As a commuter on bike and foot, as well as an older driver, I would like to point out other a few other areas of concern:

1. Exchange Street -- Any chance of lowering the speed limit there or painting white lines as traffic calmers while we wait for funds and interest to re-think that corridor? Heightened usage is an upward trend that needs forethought now.
2. Pulp Mill Bridge area from Seymour to Weybridge -- Another project that had been on the front burner [2012] but has fallen by the un-articulated wayside.
3. Elm Street, RE: the anticipated re-opening of the erstwhile Greg's Meat Market. That intersection, to me, cries out for a roundabout. While I wait for that pipedream to morph into reality I sincerely hope parking in front of the new store will not be allowed.

I'd feel better if the authorities would inform/update us more regularly on traffic safety. Is this something the Town and/or Selectboard can work on? Sincerely, Tricia Chatary

## Slowing Down for a Safer Town

PATTIE HAYES, [PHOTO.PATTIE@YAHOO.COM](mailto:PHOTO.PATTIE@YAHOO.COM), COURT ST

### DISCUSSION

They apparently haven't been watching our area. I can sit and watch cars barely slow down for the stop sign. Have seen numerous near accidents and kids, adults, and animal nearly get hit by speeding cars. Maybe a camera videoing the stop sign might work for proof. I have personally called after watching a car run 2 stop signs and then give me the finger when I point to the stop sign. I also yelled slow down to a car speeding on our street - as there are little ones playing (not in the street, but...) only to have it speed up running the stop sign and nearly missing the corner (no straight through on this street). Bet we could hand out tickets for both speeding and running stop signs!!

## Re: Slowing Down for a Safer Town

DOUG SHIVERS, [DOUG.SHIVERS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DOUG.SHIVERS@GMAIL.COM), VALLEY VIEW

### DISCUSSION

I live in the Buttolph neighborhood and frequently walk and run there. The idea that people are consistently making full stops at the stop signs is absurd. When I run or walk past the stop signs at Meadow Way and Brookside, I always see most cars only doing rolling stops there and many cars, as well as trucks, not stopping at all. I have been right next to the stop signs during the last few months and cars have just kept on going without stopping. This is a clear danger to walkers and runners and is especially dangerous now that children are walking to school through the neighborhood.

I agree with Doug. I always stop at the signs and watch people on the opposite side of the street just go through. This is really dangerous. Veronica Ciambra

## Teach Rules of the Road

LAURA ASERMILY, [LASERMILY@YAHOO.COM](mailto:LASERMILY@YAHOO.COM), WASHINGTON STREET EXT

#### DISCUSSION

Middlebury Safe Routes teaches that: Pedestrians should use sidewalks, walk against traffic in street, cross at crosswalks, wait for signals, use crosswalk safety flags & rapid flashing LED beacon lights to signal intent to cross (look for these at Cross/ S Pleasant St intersection by high school & Court/N Pleasant St by Middlebury Inn). These lights improve your visibility significantly. Always look first & make eye contact with motorists before crossing.

Cyclists should ride with traffic bearing as far right as practicable, yield to pedestrians, stop at stop signs, signal turns with arms, use lights/reflectors at night. dress to be seen. yellow is easiest color to see from distance and gray is hardest. at night, colors can't be seen as well which is why lights/reflectors matter. choose backpacks, footwear, etc with reflective striping or add this.

Drivers slow down for, yield to walkers & cyclists, don't text & drive, SLOW DOWN FOR SAFER TOWN! Walkers hit by cars at 40 mph have 15% survival rate while those hit at 20 mph have 85% chance of survival

## Slowing Down for a Safer Town

RICH WICKMAN, [RICH.WICKMAN@GMAIL.COM](mailto:RICH.WICKMAN@GMAIL.COM), HIGH

#### DISCUSSION

Interesting to see the efforts being made to slow down traffic in Buttolph Acres. I'd like to also mention the long term problem, which continues to get worse, on High Street. I have lived on High Street ( the last stretch between Stewart Lane and Route 7 since 2000. The number of walkers/dog walkers/runners etc using the section of the street to reach Chipman Hill has grown every year. So have the number of speeders using this street as well to avoid the traffic light at North Pleasant Street and Stewart Lane. The speeding is worse between 630 and 8 AM, and between 430 and 6 in the PM. I often give the "slow down" wave to folks, and in return, get the middle finger salute.

Radar enforcement once a week during peak times would slow folds down, making it safer for all of us, and easily pay the officer's salary.

If you use this road, the speed limit is 25 MPH. Please do not exceed this!!!

## Stop Signs

JUDY WIGER-GROHS, [JAWIGER@GMAIL.COM](mailto:JAWIGER@GMAIL.COM), FOREST RIDGE RD

#### DISCUSSION

I live and walk (with my pups) in E. Middlebury. Particularly along Schoolhouse Hill Rd. and Forest Ridge Dr. There have been numerous times individuals fly by us at considerably more than the posted speed limit. And the STOP signs are consider by many "stoptional". Even the signs entering Rt. 125 (E. Main St.) are seen by too many as "stoptional". I'm wondering if it will take a tragic accident before local residents and local law enforcement decide to do something.

## Buttolph Acres

MIKE GREENWOOD, [MIKE802VT@COMCAST.NET](mailto:MIKE802VT@COMCAST.NET), TWIN CIRCLES

#### DISCUSSION

Thank you Chief Hanley and members of Middlebury Police Department for your timely and thorough response to the concerns of some of my neighbors - drivers not obeying posted speed

limits and others not coming to a full stop at stop signs. And thank you, Laura, for your posting outlining in much detail what was done and the results found. It is greatly appreciated.

## Bike and Vehicle Safety

GREG LAPWORTH, [BOLTHOLE414@COMCAST.NET](mailto:BOLTHOLE414@COMCAST.NET), WASHINGTON STREET

### DISCUSSION

How about getting bicycles off the sideWALKS! The town recently removed the painted "walk bicycles on walk" notices in certain areas of town, i.e. Washington st. And vicinity. At whose request? Try dodging bikes while walking dogs.

If you would like to witness speeding, running of stop signs, squealing of tires and motorcycles with exhaust systems exceeding 80bd. At 100 ft. (State law; how do they pass inspections?)visit the four way intersection of Washington st, Seminary st. And the street extensions. Makes High street and Buttolph seem like the Path over Chipman Hill.

Where is the enforcement and politicians support?

## Speeding in Buttolph Acres

CHRIS OWENS, [TRAILRUNNEROK@GMAIL.COM](mailto:TRAILRUNNEROK@GMAIL.COM), WOODLAND PARK

### DISCUSSION

I appreciate the conversation regarding the speeding in the neighborhood. I am stay at home dad and we spend a lot of time outside. I would say most of the speeding is being done by a handful of repeat offenders. Several of them live at the Twin Circles condominiums. I cannot comment on the stopping at intersections as there is not one visible from our house.

Someone posted about the police chief and what he or his officers have seen. I can say that they are not patrolling Buttolph Acres. I would say we average 5-6 hours a day outside and I have seen three police vehicles pass our house since May. I know they might have passed other times, but they come through very infrequently.

We have two toddlers and it's just ridiculous that people can't drive the speed limit through the neighborhood. I know of at least seven other families with children. Many of them walk or ride to school.

## Rules of the Road and Pedestrian Safety

JANE BURTON, [JBURTON@MIDDLEBURY.EDU](mailto:JBURTON@MIDDLEBURY.EDU), WEYBRIDGE RD

### DISCUSSION

This seems to be a problem everywhere. I am on Weybridge Rd./Rt 23 as one enters the Middlebury town line. Vehicles go flying by my house during both morning and afternoon commute. The road is posted at 35 mph in this area, with many blind driveways, the intersection w/Pulp Mill Bridge Rd (where few fully stop) many runners, bikers, roller skiers and sports teams running and ACTR busses exiting a parking lot. Students with ear buds in or texting never stop to look before walking off the curb at the entrance to Weybridge St. Pedestrian safety is a shared responsibility, not all put on drivers. People stopped for traffic lights should be paying attention to traffic, not texting. I think police presence would be very helpful in a rotation around the trouble spots in town.

## Re: Speeding in Buttolph Acres

TERRY EAGAN, [TEAGANVT@GMAIL.COM](mailto:TEAGANVT@GMAIL.COM), SWANAGE COURT

### DISCUSSION

The best solution isn't increased police presence in my opinion but the installation of speed tables. If you agree please let the Town know.

## Re: Speeding in Buttolph Acres

SCOTT MORRISON, [JSCOTTMORRISON77@GMAIL.COM](mailto:JSCOTTMORRISON77@GMAIL.COM), BENEDICT LANE

### DISCUSSION

Costs. Both speed humps and speed tables cost on average approximately \$2,500 each, with low estimates of about \$1,000 and high estimates of \$6,900 (Bushell, Poole, Zegeer, Rodriguez, 2013).

## Re: Speeding in Buttolph Acres

FLANZY CHODKOWSKI, [BOOKS@MONROESTREETBOOKS.COM](mailto:BOOKS@MONROESTREETBOOKS.COM), MONROE ST

### DISCUSSION

How about starting with a few of those radar devices that tell you how fast you're going? Maybe with the actual speed limit posted near. Sometimes people are just not thinking. They need a reminder. And I assume that would be less expensive than construction work. We can see if it works. There's only so much money and so many things it could be spent on already on the list.

## Speeding in Buttolph Acres

GEORGE ELY, [GRMTNELY@MYFAIRPOINT.NET](mailto:GRMTNELY@MYFAIRPOINT.NET), SCHOOL HOUSE HILL ROAD

### DISCUSSION

Installing speed bumps instead of police presence also penalizes drivers who obey the speed limit. The problem as I see it is that the "movers and shakers" in town want it to grow seemingly indiscriminately and they don't care about overtaxing the infrastructure or the natural world. There enough people here now (arguably too many), and one of the ways this is manifested is overcrowded roads which result in impatient drivers. As long as we continue to subscribe to the notion that all growth is good, the problem will continue and most likely get worse. Perhaps we could take a lesson from nature and stop growing interminably and instead recognize the point at which growth becomes a problem.