

Submitted after meeting

TO: City Council of the Village of Douglas

FROM: Cynthia McKean

1000 Mason Street, Saugatuck, MI

RE: Cycling along the bayou on ~~Riverside Drive~~

Waters Street

DATE: January 17, 2023 TIME: 07:00 PM

We live in an ideal area for cycling and I have been an avid cyclist in the tri-community region for about 30 years. There are miles and miles of well groomed and paved country roads all around us. All we have to do is get up in the morning, or any other time of day, walk out the front door, get on our bicycles and go. Given the burgeoning popularity of cycling in this country, many visitors are finding our place to be ideal for the sport. We are getting a reputation for this.

As we embrace this up and coming recreational activity, it is imperative that we take the responsibility of providing safe and friendly passage for all of the people who are participating. We want them to love it here and to come back. Any serious accident is devastating, especially if, by design, it was created and/or is supported by local government.

Often I skirt downtown Douglas and ride along Riverside Drive by the bayou. The change on Riverside Drive over the years is devastating. The number of cars on the road has increased dramatically and they are driving MUCH faster (over the speed limit). Huge semi-trucks are beginning to take the "shortcut" down this road.

If one is riding away from Douglas, the last couple of blocks are suddenly a short but very steep hill with a sharp left turn at the top that you can't see until you get there. The road is narrow and there are almost no shoulders for cyclists to escape to. It is not uncommon for novices to get off their bicycles and walk them to the top, which might actually be safer than those who struggle along wobbling back and forth until they reach the summit.

The turn at the top is 90 degrees. It is common for cars to cross over onto the oncoming lane and probably impossible for semis to stay out of the oncoming lane as they all make the turn and speed down the hill toward Douglas.

The consequences of a semi turning down the hill as a cyclist or peloton of cyclists are struggling to get up the hill is chilling. Some might suggest you are creating "The Perfect Storm". Others might just say it is "a disaster waiting to happen".

Solution:

Semis and all other heavy equipment should be banned from traveling on Riverside Drive.

The current speed limit must be enforced.

Pam Alderink

From: Chuck Arida <chuckarida@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 1:54 PM
To: Pam Alderink
Cc: Tracey Shafroth
Subject: Ongoing concerns regarding condition / traffic on Water Street
Attachments: 254 and 244 Water Street Letter 011723.docx

Hello Douglas City Council and thank you.

With quite a few new members of the Council, Chris and I would like to introduce ourselves – we own two properties on Water Street, most notably, the house / driveway on the very apex of the hairpin curve.

We'd also like to reiterate the concerns that many of our neighbors have voiced over the past few years:

- Water Street is often in disrepair, with several ongoing / repeat condition issues
- Traffic on Water Street both under-reported and overly permissive

After seven years as a resident / homeowner at the apex of the hairpin on Water street, I can say with confidence:

- Dozens of heavy trucks (often multiple Consumers Power or landscaping trucks in a cluster) use Water Street to cut through to Blue Star every day.
- The combination of narrow road, hill, and hairpin turn causes pandemonium and fear among runners, bikers, kayak and boat trailers, RVs, motorcycles, and assorted drivers from near and far.
- At the curve, some drivers screech to a halt or slow down, while others speed up. Many underestimate the curve; it's actually more of a 78 degree curve than a 90 degree one (our brilliant neighbor Brian Alexander will share the study and his insights). Drivers frequently cross lanes or swing wide into the shoulder. As you already know, several telephone poles have been replaced after multiple collisions.

Chris and I are in full support of the following recommendations:

Reduce the speed limit:

- Lower the speed limit from 25mph (current) to 15 or 20mph on the entire road.
- Carry out a sustained public education effort that will inform traffic of the new speed limit.
- Enforce the new speed limit during the times of day cited in the traffic study when excessive speed is most significant.

Restrict thru traffic for all trucks: Prohibit big trucks from using the road. Hammer out an ordinance that will dictate the kinds of small trucks that are permitted on the road.

Improve navigation / signage: Rethink signage to make it clear and less confusing.

We invite you to spend an hour on my front porch - rain or shine, summer or winter - to witness constant dangerous conditions and frequent near-misses. In fact, we woke up on Christmas morning a couple years ago to police and two very upset families on our driveway after they collided on the curve under relatively mild weather conditions.

Having lived on the Water Street for nearly 10 years, we know the issues quite well at this point and welcome your partnership and leadership. Please let's tackle the achievable, actionable recommendations from concerned citizens of Douglas and residents of Water Street.

Thank you –

Chuck Arida and Christopher Lehmann

C: 614.330.9392

E: chuckarida@gmail.com

Pam Alderink

From: Charles Huzenis <chuzenis@jameson.com>
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2023 2:51 PM
To: Pam Alderink
Subject: Fwd: Traffic on Water Street Douglas Michigan

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Charles Huzenis <chuzenis@jameson.com>
Date: January 13, 2023 at 12:38:14 PM GMT-7
To: clerk@doglasmi.gov
Subject: Traffic on Water Street Douglas Michigan

To City Council:

I'm writing this letter because of my concern about the traffic conditions along Water Street. I've been an owner of 294 Water Street since 1982. For many of those years Water Street has been a lightly used thorough fare. In recent years it's become highly trafficked with commercial vehicles and also cars attending events taking shortcuts to other main arterial streets. It's now become dangerous to walk into downtown Douglas because of the amount of traffic and the speed of the vehicles, wondering if you will risk your life. I really am nervous for all the bicyclists that are having to compete for space on the road. It would be very distressing if someone was injured or worse because of lack of attention by the City. I'm hopeful that the city council will begin to address these issues because it's certainly changing the culture of this unique community, thanks for your consideration, Charles Huzenis.

Sent from my iPad

Pam Aalderink

From: RALPH HAMILTON <rhamilto9@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 2:47 PM
To: Pam Aalderink
Subject: City Council—1/17/23—Water Street Discussion

>> To the City Council-

>>

>> I live at 344 Water Street and I am writing to share my serious concerns about the increasingly dangerous conditions on Water Street. Because I'm an active gardener and walk my dog along the street, I have witnessed first-hand an increase in truck traffic (including 4 and 6 wheel pickups, light trucks, panel vans, box trucks, and flatbeds, some of which pull trailers). I have also experienced an increase in the speed at which they travel.

>>

>> The worst incident was an 8-wheel flat bed towing a 6-wheel trailer that entered off Wiley Road about 7:30pm. The truck was powerfully accelerating until he almost reached the dogleg where he jammed on the brakes which screeched loud as twenty cats thrown into a meat grinder. I thought he was going straight into the the Red Barn house. The idiot then began accelerating rapidly again, so much so that 20 seconds later he was jamming his breaks on as he came into the curve.

>>

>> The problem is not only larger trucks, however. For instance, there's an old white ford pickup that regularly gets up to 50-plus miles an hour as he heads toward Wiley.

>>

>> I have also seen pedestrians walking up Water street, hugging close to the bank at the curve, who were almost hit by a car or truck taking the curve too tightly in the opposite direction.

>>

>> My son is grown now, but were he still in short pants, I wouldn't let him walk or bike alone on Water Street.

>>

>> What makes Douglas a great place to live is the small town atmosphere and the serenity and safety that goes with that. Surely banning commuter/cut-thru truck traffic, much clearer signage, and strongly enforcing speed limits is not too much to expect.

>>

>> Thank you for your consideration.

>>

>> Ralph Hamilton
>> 344 Water Street
>>

Sent from my iPhone

TO: City of the Village of Douglas Council Members

DATE: January 12, 2023

FROM: Freya Secrest and Jeremy Berg

390 Water Street

RE: Traffic on Water Street

Dear Council Members,

As residents of 390 Water Street now since 2020, we are writing to share our safety concerns about the Water Street roadway between Center Street and Wiley Road.

This section of Water Street is used as a convenient shortcut through town by trucks, boat trailers and cars, often to avoid the traffic on other roads. As a pass-through route where traffic is often speeding along intent on reaching other destinations, there is little attention to resident and village safety.

When we were first shown the house before our purchase, our realtor mentioned that Water Street was often used to avoid Wiley Road speed limits for those heading north across town or south on their way to Fennville or the new housing developments to the East. This did not discourage our purchase, but time and observation have highlighted the dangers of Water Street's poorly regulated speed and road conditions.

Water Street also serves as a main bike route during the warmer months which can create further crowding of the roadway at peak times such as morning and afternoon commute times. As a small, personal example, our visiting family have asked us to stop walking with our grandchildren to the park in town because their mothers have told us how unsafe they feel on the short walk down the hill and across the bridge. The speed of traffic, lack of bike and pedestrian paths and unsafe road conditions discourage their interest in Douglas as a community. As a recreational destination in a tourist centered area, we believe it would serve the city of Douglas and its businesses to support and maintain safer conditions on its roads for guest and resident safety.

Our perceived safety concerns center around:

1. **Signage:** Water Street is a narrow roadway with poor shoulder conditions. It has two hairpin turns and a hill that lead to poor visibility conditions. Warning signage is inadequate to truly highlight hazardous conditions. *Please consider more clear and adequate signage.*
2. **Slower speed limits:** Traffic is often travelling at unsafe speeds for the road conditions. This makes navigating the 2 hairpin curves and narrow road dangerous for cars, bikes and certainly anyone walking. Posted and monitored speed limits may also help to limit pass-through traffic intent on avoiding responsible traffic speeds. *Please consider setting a slower speed and monitoring it to match the more hazardous conditions of this roadway.*
3. **Large Vehicle Traffic:** The unregulated large truck access has a destructive impact on a narrow roadway that has little protective shoulder interface. Trucks and boat traffic with heavier

weights and a wider wheel base serve to break down the road bed edges more quickly. As residents who do walk to pick up mail at the post office, we notice the ruts and cracked roadway at the hairpin turn corner properties where vehicles have gone off the road. *Please consider setting limits to prevent and discourage pass through truck and large vehicle traffic.*

4. **Poor Road Bed and Shoulder Conditions:** Traffic and undirected water runoff has destroyed last year's stop gap effort to shore up the gravel shoulder on the hillside. Something more permanent needs to be considered and implemented to protect the road after speed and traffic is regulated. *Please consider investing in adequate updates to the roadway for the safe and ongoing use of bike and residential traffic.*

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. Your help in making our neighborhood safe for residents and visitors alike is needed!

Got it to work!

From : Tracey Shafroth <traceyshafroth@me.com>

Tue, Jan 17, 2023 02:52 PM

Subject : Got it to work!

To : info@sdlibrary.org

John Rice
294 Water Street
Douglas, Michigan January 10, 2023

To:
Planning Commission of the Village of Douglas
As the homeowner of 294 Water Street, Douglas, I am writing to document my safety concerns regarding the dangerous traffic and road conditions at the treacherous road curve on Water Street. I have previously raised safety concerns when the Planning Commission was considering a proposal by Redstone Land Development, LLC to add a road entrance off of Water Street. As a result of my, other Water Street residents, and the Douglas community at large, the proposal for a second road entrance was rejected due to valid safety issues. During the COVID years, Douglas traffic, construction, and tourism declined along Water Street. But currently, traffic volume has increased significantly—with more cars filled with both residents and tourists, more long, heavy construction vehicles, more buses, more wide delivery vans such as Amazon and UPS, and depending on the season, more local and tourist pedestrian and cycling traffic. All these conditions escalate the dangerous nature of the Water Street curve.

CONCERNS:

*Please note that I included some of these concerns in previous correspondence.
The Water Street road curve has already been assigned as dangerous as denoted by the vehicle crash sign to warn drivers. It is a sharp, blind, narrow curve. This curve is challenging in good weather, but it is perilous during rain, snow or ice storms. Very low speed limit signs are posted in either direction to minimize potential accidents. Police vehicles are regularly positioned by the curve to reinforce the speed limits and control the danger for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists. Individual and groups of walkers, hikers, runners, roller bladers, and cyclists use Water Street as a route to leave Blue Star Highway and see more of the Douglas community. Visitors are especially at risk

because they are unfamiliar with this roadway. With the increased volume of auto, truck, pedestrian, and cycling traffic around the curve, safety issues have reemerged and need to be addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the crash sign that already exists, place a dangerous curve sign with red reflectors or solar light to emphasize the danger. and the need to take appropriate precautions.

Additional low speed limit signs in both directions well in advance of the curve to allow drives and pedestrians to adjust to the blind curve.

Adding signage to restrict heavy truck and construction vehicles to other safer, alternate routes. New signage would be necessary to support this restriction.

In conclusion, I hope the Planning Commission will seriously discuss my safety concerns for the Water Street road curve and consider my recommendations or those suggestions of others in the community to make that stretch of Water street safer.

Sincerely,

John Rice
294 Water Street Douglas

Sent from my iPad

From: roy roy.schneider60@gmail.com
Subject: Water street
Date: January 14, 2023 at 4:24 PM
To: Douglas city council

RS

RECEIVED
JAN 23 2023

By. _____

January 14, 2023

Douglas City Council
Po Box 757
86 W. Center street
Douglas MI 49406-0757

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing as a concerned owner of 90 Water street in Douglas. We have lived here since 2004 and witnessed an alarming increase in Traffic and Speed on Water street, we even have large trucks going up and down the the street these days.

Water street was not build to handle heavy traffic, extra speed and large trucks , as part of the road in front of our house is caving in, they keep patching and patching but to no help, it keeps on caving in.

For the Safety of the Residence and to preserve the road something has to be done.

Eliminate large trucks , and possibly put speed bumps so people can't keep driving through from Wiley road and Center street way above speed limit.

This is truly a safety concern for people and the road.

Thank you for your consideration,

Roy Schneider
90 Water street
Douglas MI 49406

From: roy toj schmidt80@gmail.com
Subject: Water Street
Date: January 14, 2023 at 4:54 PM
To: Douglas City Council

January 14, 2023
Douglas City Council
P.O. Box 757
80 W. Center Street
Douglas, MI 49408-0757

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing as a concerned owner of 80 Water Street in Douglas. We have lived here since 2004 and witnessed an alarming increase in Traffic and Speed on Water Street. We even have large trucks going up and down the street these days.

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roy toj schmidt
80 Water Street
Douglas, MI 49408

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FROM: Cynthia McKean

1000 Mason Street, Saugatuck, MI

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