

DPW – Street/Solid Waste Division

To: Alderperson Davis and Public Safety & Welfare Committee Members

From: Stacy Winkelman

Date: April 30, 2025

Subject: Agenda Item

Background

A request was received from Steven Blaser of 1325 Sunset Avenue requesting Children at Play signs be installed on Sunset Avenue toward the east end by the Octagon House. Mr. Blaser is concerned with the speed of drivers where there are many children on skateboards, bikes, wagons and roller skates in the area.

Budget Goal

Any new or replacement signs are expensed out of the Street Division Signs and Markings – Supplies & Expense Account #01-54-41-18.

Financial Impact

Per DPW recommendation: stop signs are \$39.60/ea and posts are \$41.90/ea (\$163.00 in materials for two stop signs at now uncontrolled intersections)

Recommendation

It is DPW's recommendation not to install any children at play signs, based on current MUTCD and City Standards as well as City Ordinance Chapter 550-135. Crash reports show that the only incident is a property damage incident. If the Committee advises, our division could erect stop signs at two of the uncontrolled T-Intersections in this area: on Harvey Avenue at Sunset Avenue, and on Charles Street at Thomas Avenue.

2025 Operational Goals

The purpose of our operational goals is to identify, prior to the budgeting process, what work the city intends to achieve in 2025. The goals should align with our mission. Not only will the operational goals inform budget prioritization, but they will also guide the creation of the 2025 Department Work Plans.

Present a budget that (in no particular order):

1. Invests in the strategic planning and maintenance of our city buildings
2. Proactively maintains and improves our parks and infrastructure to ensure safety, quality, and equity
3. Supports employee retention and growth, while also evaluating operations and the associated staffing
4. Fosters community growth by assessing opportunities, stakeholder input, environmental needs, and modern code and policy priorities
5. Maintains a safe and healthy community, with an eye toward future needs and trends

From: Steven Blaser <trailblaser77@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, March 28, 2025 12:01 PM

To: Dana Davis <DDavis@watertownwi.gov>

Subject: Safety signage for Richard's Hill, Octagon House area

Good morning,

My Name is Steven Blaser and I live at [1325 Sunset Ave, Watertown, WI 53094](#), I have been a home owner at this property since 2008, I have noticed a big change in the population of Children in the 6 block area and see a need for signs posting Children at play warning Driver's to slow down, I have purchased signs to post the warnings, but can't seem to find anyone at work that can help me with this problem, Please help me with this issue before we have a accident, My cell phone number is 920 285 9634

Thank you for your time
Steven Blaser

On Fri, Mar 28, 2025, 4:55 PM Dana Davis <DDavis@watertownwi.gov> wrote:
Hi Mr. Blaser -

Thank you for reaching out and thank you for your obvious care and concern for the safety of the children in your neighborhood.

Before a new city street sign can be erected, the Public Safety & Welfare Committee must pass a motion to install the new sign. If the motion is approved by the PS&W Committee, the Streets Dept. erects the sign.

"Children at Play" signs have come before the committee in the past for discussion. Watertown puts up a Playground sign (yellow sign with children on see-saw) near playgrounds and also uses School Zone signs. But, Watertown no longer installs "Children at Play" types of signs. If memory serves me, WI municipalities are only permitted to install signs that conform with federal standards in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Devices (MUTD). Beginning in the early 2000s, the MUTD changed and no longer includes these types of Children at Play signs in the MUTD manual.

The first time I learned this information, I was curious and did some additional research. From what I read, the federal standards changed because the research showed that the signs do not actually impact vehicle speeds. There was concern that the sign gave parents a false sense of security and the DOT has found that signs are most effective when they are used to warn about consistent conditions, not occasional conditions.

I'm copying Stacy Winkelman on this email. She is the Streets Division Operations Manager. She may be able to provide some additional information, clarification and correct any misstatements that I may have made.

Stacy - When you have an opportunity, would you please verify that Playground signs are erected on streets near Washington Park?

Mr. Blaser - Although installing Children at Play signs may not be a possibility, would you still like this matter to come before a Public Safety & Welfare Committee meeting in the future?

Dana Davis
District 1 Alderperson
Chair, Public Safety & Welfare Committee

From: Steven Blaser <trailblaser77@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2025 8:07 PM
To: Dana Davis <DDavis@watertownwi.gov>
Cc: Stacy Winkelman <SWinkelman@watertownwi.gov>
Subject: Re: Safety signage for Richard's Hill, Octagon House area

Yes I would like this matter to come before a public Safety & Welfare Committee meeting, and please advise me as to what I can do privately to temporally make people aware of the occasional traffic of electronic skateboards and Children on bikes , wagons , roller skates.

On Mon, Mar 31, 2025, 6:27 PM Dana Davis <DDavis@watertownwi.gov> wrote:
Hi Steven -

I'm attaching pictures of the Playground signs that currently exist at the following locations:

- Sunset and Richards
- S. Twelfth St. Southbound
- Richards Ave - Southbound
- Richards Ave - Northbound

If it is your desire to bring this matter before the Public Safety & Welfare committee, we can certainly do that. We can put it on the May agenda, if you wish. The committee typically meets the first Wednesday of every month at 5 p.m. in the basement of City Hall.

Would you please reply to this email to confirm that you would like this matter to be added to the May agenda? In addition, would you please write in your email some details/specifics as to the issues you are concerned about on Sunset Ave. The more details the committee has, the better.

Please send any questions my way. I'm here to help.

Dana Davis

From: Steven Blaser <trailblaser77@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2025 7:29 PM
To: Dana Davis <DDavis@watertownwi.gov>
Cc: Stacy Winkelman <SWinkelman@watertownwi.gov>
Subject: Re: Safety signage for Richard's Hill, Octagon House area

On Mon, Mar 31, 2025, 7:24 PM Steven Blaser <trailblaser77@gmail.com> wrote:

On Mon, Mar 31, 2025, 7:20 PM Steven Blaser <trailblaser77@gmail.com> wrote:

Yes I would like to have the meeting address the issue, the area in your pictures is by the park ,The area I'm referring to is on Sunset towards the Octagon House, Harvey Street is an uncontrolled intersection and so are all the Alley entrances and exits ,Children in the neighborhood ride scooters down the hill from Charles Street (in front of the Octagon house) on Sunset Avenue towards Harvey Street or down the Alley towards Thomas Street, This is the area where signs would be beneficial.

On Tue, Apr 1, 2025, 1:32 PM Dana Davis <DDavis@watertownwi.gov> wrote:
Steven -

We will work to get this on the May agenda.

Thanks.

Dana Davis

On Wed, Apr 2, 2025, 8:13 AM Steven Blaser <trailblaser77@gmail.com> wrote:

Thank you for your response.

Please let me know when the safety meeting is in May so I can be there

Thank you
Steven G Blaser

§ 550-135 Sign prohibitions and limitations.

The regulations contained in this subsection apply to signs in all zoning districts.

A.

Sign prohibitions.

(1)

No sign shall be erected at any location where it may, by reasons of its position, shape, color or design, interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal or device, nor shall such sign make use of words such as "stop," "look," "danger," or any other word, phrase, symbol or character in such a manner as to interfere with, mislead, or confuse users of streets or highways.

(2)

No fluttering, undulating, swinging, rotating, or otherwise moving signs such as windsocks, motorized signs, pennants, and streamers shall be permitted. This shall not apply to temporary board and banner signs as defined in § **550-131B(1)** or street banners as defined in § **550-131.4**.

(3)

No signs shall project above the building parapet or eave.

(4)

No flashing, scrolling, or animated signs shall be permitted.

(5)

No signs shall be mounted to an unlicensed trailer or other unlicensed vehicle.

(6)

No beacons or search beacons shall be permitted.

(7)

No billboards or off-premise advertising shall be permitted.

(8)

No abandoned signs shall be permitted. See § **550-131E(1)**.

(9)

No sign, temporary or permanent, shall be displayed on private property without the owner's permission.

B.

Sign limitations.

(1)

No sign shall be erected, relocated, or maintained so as to prevent free ingress to or egress from any door, window, or fire escape, and no sign shall be attached to a standpipe or fire escape.

(2)

No sign shall be placed in a manner that would impede vehicular or pedestrian safety or impede access or visibility. Signs shall meet the visibility requirements of § **550-106**.

(3)

No signs shall be erected, installed, or placed on a parcel that is owned by the City of Watertown.

(4)

No private sign shall be attached to or painted on any natural feature (e.g. tree or rock), fence, fire hydrant, public utility pole, public light pole, or traffic regulatory structure.

(5)

Except for permitted awning, canopy, marquee, blade, and suspended signs, or unless otherwise allowed by this chapter, no sign shall be permitted within or extend into a public right-of-way.

(a)

Sandwich board signs under § **550-131B(2)(a)** shall also be exempt.

(6)

No person shall: paste, tape, staple, or otherwise fasten any paper or other material to, nor paint, stencil, or otherwise write or color any object, vegetation, or pavement located within any street right-of-way; nor shall any of such object, vegetation, or pavement be defaced in any manner. The only exception to these restrictions is that painting may be allowed on public infrastructure (e.g. curbs, fire hydrants, sidewalk, electrical panels/boxes) when approved by the Common Council upon receiving a favorable recommendation from the Public Works Commission, after review of a written request.

(7)

No sign shall violate Chapter **532** of the City of Watertown Municipal Code.



