

April 13, 2015

**Via E-mail and U.S. Mail**

Mayor Lovely A. Warren  
City Hall, Room 307A  
30 Church Street  
Rochester, New York 14614

Dear Mayor Warren:

Respectfully enclosed is a petition, signed by over 100 affected residents, businesses, and organizations, urgently requesting that action be taken to remediate the severe and highly dangerous illegal speeding problem that exists on Mt. Hope Avenue north of the College Town development.

This corridor is frequented by pedestrians and bicyclists and is home to a diverse population that includes not just apartment dwellers and homeowners, but also assisted living and nursing home residents, university students and employees, persons striving to recover from substance abuse, small businesses, and community service organizations. All are put at risk of serious harm by the excessive and unrestrained illegal speeding that occurs along this corridor on a daily and nightly basis. We know and appreciate that you have made public safety a signature priority of your administration. We are by this petition earnestly imploring you, Police Chief Ciminelli, the City Council, and our other responsible public officials to protect our safety and lives by taking concrete steps to address this chronic and worsening problem.

In addition to saving lives, such steps are essential to prevent erosion of recent unprecedented improvements in this area. The affected corridor is now book-ended by two important new developments: College Town at the southern end, and Eric Harbor/The Hamilton at the northern end. After all of the time, talent, effort, and resources devoted to these major improvements, by the City and many others, it would be a substantial step backward – and a serious threat to the transformational potential of the improvements – to allow the corridor in between to become unsafe, unlivable, and blighted due to uncontrolled vehicular mayhem.

Details concerning the severity of the speeding problem and its effects, as well as specific proposed action items, are set forth in the petition. A current list of the petition's signers is enclosed along with the petition. Copies of the original signatures are being submitted to Commissioner Norman H. Jones, with the originals maintained by the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael F. Orman  
On Behalf of the Petition's Signers

cc:  
(with enclosures)

Police Chief Michael L. Ciminelli

City Council Members City Council Members Loretta C. Scott (President),  
Carolee A. Conklin, Matt Haag, Dana K. Miller, Jacklyn Ortiz, Adam McFadden,  
Carla M. Palumbo, Elaine M. Spaul, and Michael A. Patterson

Baye M. Muhammad, Commissioner, Dept. of Neighborhood and Business  
Development

Kathleen Washington, Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Neighborhood and  
Business Development

Norman H. Jones, Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Services

Erik Frisch, Transportation Specialist, City of Rochester

Terrence J. Rice, Director, Monroe County Dept. of Transportation

Nancy Johns-Price, SE Quadrant Neighborhood Service Center

David Hawkes, SW Quadrant Neighborhood Service Center

**A PETITION RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED TO:**

Mayor Lovely A. Warren

Police Chief Michael L. Ciminelli

City Council Members Loretta C. Scott (President), Carolee A. Conklin, Matt Haag, Dana K. Miller, Jacklyn Ortiz, Adam McFadden, Carla M. Palumbo, Elaine M. Spaul, and Michael A. Patterson

Kathleen Washington, Dept. of Neighborhood and Business Development

Nancy Johns-Price, SE Quadrant Neighborhood Service Center

Erik Frisch, Transportation Specialist, City of Rochester

**The Problem – Chronic Illegal Speeding on Mt. Hope Avenue**

This petition relates to the segment of Mt. Hope Ave. north of the College Town development (*i.e.*, north of the intersection of Mt. Hope Ave. and Elmwood Ave.). The speed limit on Mt. Hope Ave. is 30 m.p.h., but on this stretch it is not uncommon for motorists to travel at 40-50 m.p.h. or more. This chronic, unrestrained illegal speeding poses serious threats to life, limb, and property.

This segment of Mt. Hope Ave. includes a substantial incline beginning at the intersection of Mt. Hope Ave. and Highland Ave., with an extended curve at the bottom on the incline. The curve occurs in the vicinity of the intersection of Mt. Hope Ave. and Linden Street, a densely residential area. Vehicles (which are often already speeding when they enter the incline) tend to accelerate on the incline and can lose control at the curve.

Along this segment of Mt. Hope Ave. are several private residences, a number of properties owned by the University of Rochester (used as residences for university officials and

for university functions and events), some small businesses, and two care-related facilities, East House and the main campus of Episcopal Senior Life Communities. Residents of the care-related facilities, U of R students, small business patrons, visitors to Mt. Hope Cemetery, dog walkers, and South Wedge residents are among the many who regularly use the sidewalks along the street. All are endangered by the lawless driving that occurs day in and day out.

Indeed, numerous accidents have occurred along this stretch in recent times. For example, a vehicle struck an employee of the Episcopal Home (505 Mt. Hope Ave.) who was attempting to cross the street. Another vehicle plowed into three school buses near the intersection of Mt. Hope Ave. and Linden Street, resulting in eleven school children being transported to the hospital. Another vehicle crashed into a tree not far from the front door of 560 Mt. Hope Ave. (a private residence) with such force that the vehicle split in two, with the two halves landing about 25 feet apart. Another vehicle toppled the street light in front of 554 Mt. Hope Ave. (another private residence), with the pole crashing across the sidewalk and narrowly missing the house. Another vehicle careened across the sidewalk and mowed down a large segment of the iron fence in front of 692 Mt. Hope (residence of the U of R Provost). Numerous multi-vehicle accidents have occurred where Mt. Hope intersects with Linden and Cypress Streets. Exiting Linden Street at Mt. Hope Ave. (where there is no traffic light) is difficult and perilous for residents, as vehicles tend to round the curve at the bottom of the incline at excessive speed.

The danger extends not only to residents. Many visitors to Mt. Hope Cemetery cross Mt. Hope Ave. on foot at Robinson Drive (where there is also no traffic light). Motorists often ignore the pedestrian crossing sign there (a seasonal mid-street sign has been knocked over repeatedly) and swerve at high speed around pedestrians who are trying to cross – at times

cursing or obscenely gesturing at them. This corridor is also frequented by bicyclists, who are likewise put at serious risk by the out-of-control vehicular speeding.

Regular, consistent police enforcement of the longstanding 30 m.p.h. speed limit has not occurred on this segment of Mt. Hope Ave. At the urging of the South Wedge Planning Committee, the City police performed an enforcement detail for a limited number of days in November 2014, resulting in over 150 speeding tickets being issued. That so many tickets were handed out along this one segment of Mt. Hope Ave. over the space of just a few days underscores the severity of the problem. It is an unfortunate fact that the absence of regular, ongoing enforcement has encouraged blatant disrespect for the law and a no-holds-barred, freeway mentality among motorists.

This segment of Mt. Hope Ave. is one of the most historically rich City gateways in our region, beautiful in every season. It winds by Mt. Hope Cemetery, Warner Castle, Highland Park, and the grounds of the former Ellwanger Barry horticultural complex. It passes through the Mt. Hope/Highland Preservation District, one of the first such districts established in Rochester, embracing several historic residences that have been faithfully maintained by their owners at significant expense. The unrestrained illegal speeding threatens not only life and limb, but also the character and preservation of this important asset to the City of Rochester. Preservation depends in large part on continued dedication of residents, and the increasing mayhem along the street (not to mention the daily difficulty and danger faced by residents in simply entering and exiting their own driveways) poses a severe strain on that dedication. To prevent long term decline and/or abandonment of these properties and general blighting of this unique City gateway, it is essential that steps be taken to stop the chronic, illegal speeding.

### **Proposed Action Items**

1. Implement regular, consistent police enforcement of the speed limit (indispensable).
2. Install traffic light at Robinson Drive, Menlo Place, McLean Street, and/or Linden Street (either a full red/green/yellow light or a flashing yellow caution light).
3. Reduce speed limit to 25 m.p.h.
4. Install permanent mid-street "Pedestrian Crossing" signs at Robinson Drive, Menlo Place, McLean Street, and/or Linden Street.
5. Move radar speed monitor from crest of hill to mid-hill and re-calibrate speed monitor (currently it under-reports actual speed).
6. Institute red light camera enforcement at existing traffic light at Mt. Hope Ave. and Cypress Streets (drivers will proceed with more caution once they learn that a red light camera has been installed).
7. Add more lamp post banners or other signage to slow down drivers as they encounter and read them.
8. Institute camera speed enforcement.

**RESIDENT:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**INSTITUTION, ORGANIZATION, OR BUSINESS:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**By (include title):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_