

TOWN OF BELMONT

TRAFFIC AND PARKING SIGNAGE POLICY

As approved by the Board of Selectmen, June 9, 2008

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

It is the intention of the Board of Selectmen to establish a uniform policy for the Town of Belmont governing the erection and design of traffic and parking signs. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that signage in the Town meets the following criteria:

- Effectively addresses a compelling public safety or parking control need
- Conforms to recognized design and installation standards to the greatest extent possible
- Is located so as to minimize the number of signs needed
- Results from a public process that includes input from residents but is not subject to political pressure
- Does not significantly detract from the overall appearance of the Town.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

“Highway Division” – The Highway Division of the Department of Public Works of the Town of Belmont.

“Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices” – The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, 2003 Edition including Revision 1 dated November 2004, or most recent revision, as published by the United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.

“Parking sign” – Any and all permanently emplaced signs used to regulate, permit, restrict, or control parking, placed on, over, or adjacent to a street, highway, pedestrian facility, bikeway, or parking lot by the authority of the Town of Belmont.

“Selectmen” – The Board of Selectmen of the Town of Belmont.

“Town” – The Town of Belmont.

“Traffic Division” – The Traffic Division of the Belmont Police Department.

“Traffic sign” – Any and all permanently emplaced signs used to regulate, warn, or guide traffic, placed on, over, or adjacent to a street, highway, pedestrian facility, bikeway, or parking lot by the authority of the Town of Belmont.

SECTION 3. TRAFFIC SIGNS

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of traffic signs is to promote highway safety and efficiency by providing for the orderly movement of all road users on the streets and public ways of the Town. Traffic signs notify road users of regulations and provide warning and guidance needed for the reasonably safe, uniform, and efficient operation of all elements of the traffic stream.

Specifically, an effective traffic sign should meet the following criteria:

- Fulfills a compelling need
- Commands the attention and respect of roadway users
- Conveys a clear and simple meaning
- Gives adequate time for proper response

It is the intention of the Selectmen that the Town's traffic signs, taken together, should provide the reasonable and prudent road user with the information necessary to reasonably, safely, and lawfully use the streets, highways, pedestrian facilities, bikeways, and parking lots of the Town.

3.2 Jurisdiction

The Selectmen shall have final authority regarding the erection, content, location, and removal of all traffic signs in the Town with the following exceptions:

- where authority lies with a state or federal governmental agency such as the Massachusetts Highway Department, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, or the Federal Railway Administration
- The Selectmen shall not authorize any traffic signs which violate any of the provisions of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

3.3 Placement

Traffic signs shall be placed so as to best meet the goals and criteria listed in Section 3.1. Sign placement shall be as uniform as possible.

Any Town resident or Town official may suggest the placement of a new sign. Suggestions should be made to the Traffic Division, or to the Traffic Advisory Committee. Suggestions will then be evaluated either by the Traffic Advisory Committee or by the Traffic Division together with the Town Engineer. Where appropriate, an engineering study may be commissioned as part of the evaluation. A public hearing may be held at the option of the evaluating body or at the direction of the Selectmen. The evaluating body will then make a recommendation to the Selectmen, who will make the

final decision at a meeting in open session. The Selectmen's office will notify the Highway Department in writing to place the new signage.

3.4 Design and Content

The design and content of traffic signs shall be in conformance with the standards and guidance outlined in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Traffic sign design will be as uniform as possible in order to avoid confusion. Where possible, designs that are difficult or costly to purchase and maintain shall be avoided. The following specific regulations also apply:

- Traffic signs shall not bear any advertising message or any other message that is not related to traffic control. This restriction does not apply to tourist-oriented directional signage.

3.5 Removal

The Selectmen shall have the power to authorize the removal of traffic signs that are deemed by the Traffic Division to be unnecessary. Upon written authorization from the Selectmen's Office, the Highway Division shall remove the indicated traffic sign(s) at their earliest convenience.

Any traffic signs unauthorized by the Town, or traffic signs erected by private individuals or groups, are considered to constitute a safety hazard and are subject to immediate removal by the Highway Division without the need for approval by the Selectmen's Office.

3.6 Types of Signs

The specific regulations listed in Section 3.6 shall apply to the following types of signs:

3.6.1 STOP Signs

All STOP signs shall be placed only in accordance with the standards and guidance outlined in Sections 2B.05, 2B.06, and 2B.07 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. STOP signs shall not be erected for the purpose of speed control.

3.6.2 Yield Signs

All Yield signs shall be placed only in accordance with the standards and guidance outlined in Sections 2B.08, 2B.09, and 2B.10 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

3.6.3 Speed Limit Signs

All Speed Limit signs shall be placed only in accordance with the standards and guidance outlined in Sections 2B.13-2B.16 and 2B.18 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices; however, the Selectmen may always decline to place a new Speed Limit sign unless specifically required to do so by state or federal officials.

3.6.4 Turn Prohibition Signs

All Turn Prohibition Signs shall be placed only in accordance with the standards and guidance outlined in Section 2B.19 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

3.6.5 Warning Signs

Warning signs shall only be placed upon the recommendation of an engineering study or the Town Engineer. The use of warning signs shall be kept to a minimum. Design and placement of warning signs shall be in accordance with the standards and guidance outlined in Section 2C of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Specifically, it shall be the policy of the Town not to place “Reduce Speed Children” or “Slow Children” signs as these have been found to be ineffective and confusing.

SECTION 4. PARKING SIGNS

4.1 Purpose

The purpose of parking signs is to clearly indicate parking regulations designed to maximize parking opportunities on the streets and public ways of the Town while maintaining public safety and efficient access for vehicles and pedestrians.

Specifically, an effective parking sign should meet the following criteria:

- Fulfills a compelling need
- Is clearly visible to drivers and bicyclists
- Conveys a clear and simple meaning

The Town shall not, as a general rule, erect parking signs that merely restate aspects of state law that are generally in effect.

It is the intention of the Selectmen that the Town’s parking signs should provide the reasonable and prudent driver or bicyclist with the information necessary to reasonably, safely, and lawfully park on the streets and public ways and in the parking lots of the Town.

4.2 Jurisdiction

The Selectmen shall have final authority regarding the erection, content, location, and removal of all parking signs in the Town

4.3 Placement

Parking signs shall be placed in conformance with the standards and guidance outlined in Sections 2B.40 and 2B.41 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Sign placement shall be as uniform as possible. Only the minimum amount of signs necessary to clearly and effectively serve the desired purpose shall be placed.

Suggestions regarding parking signs should be made to the Traffic Division. Suggestions will then be evaluated by the Town Administrator's office or whomever the Selectmen shall designate. A public hearing may be held at the option of the evaluating body or at the direction of the Selectmen. The evaluating body will then make a recommendation to the Selectmen, who will make the final decision at a meeting in open session. Reasonable effort will be made to notify residents and businesses likely to be affected by any parking signage change in advance of any public hearing or Selectmen's meeting addressing said change.

Exception: A handicapped parking sign that is recommended by the Traffic Division may be placed upon written approval from the Selectmen's Office without formal or public deliberation.

The Selectmen's office will notify the Highway Department in writing to place the new signage.

4.4 Design and Content

The design and content of parking signs shall be in conformance with the standards and guidance outlined in Sections 2B.40 and 2B.42 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Traffic sign design will be as uniform as possible in order to avoid confusion. Where possible, designs that are difficult or costly to purchase and maintain shall be avoided.

4.5 Removal

The Selectmen shall have the power to authorize the removal of parking signs that are deemed by the Traffic Division to be unnecessary. Such decision shall be made at a meeting of the Selectmen in open session. Reasonable effort will be made to notify residents and businesses likely to be affected by any removal in advance of such a meeting.

Exception: A handicapped parking sign that is deemed by the Traffic Division to be unnecessary may be removed upon written approval from the Selectmen's Office without formal or public deliberation.

Upon written authorization from the Selectmen's Office, the Highway Division shall remove the indicated parking sign(s) at their earliest convenience.

Any unauthorized parking signs, or parking signs erected by private individuals or groups, are considered to constitute a safety hazard and are subject to immediate removal by the Highway Division without the need for approval by the Selectmen's Office.

SECTION 5. ENFORCEMENT

The Belmont Police Department shall have the power to enforce regulations indicated on all traffic and parking signs. Any parking fines imposed shall be collected by the Parking Clerk.

SECTION 6. REVISIONS

This policy may be revised by majority vote of the Selectmen.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by majority vote of the Selectmen.