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The communities of Bethany Beach, Sea Colony, Middlesex Beach and South Bethany hereby request the Delaware Department of Transportation (DELDOT) to reduce the speed limit on Delaware Route 1, from the northernmost corporate limit of Bethany Beach to the southernmost corporate limit of South Bethany, from 35 MPH to 30 MPH.

The several thousand homes that comprise our communities are divided by the busiest 4-lane throughfare in southeastern Sussex County, and at least 80+% of those homes are located on the west side of that busy throughfare. Pedestrian and bicycle safety is a matter of urgent concern, because thousands of our residents and visitors walk and bike daily (at all hours of the day and after dark) across the four traffic lanes of Delaware Route 1 to and from our oceanfront beaches and businesses.

As our beaches have become increasingly popular tourist destinations, our communities have experienced significant increases in vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist traffic. We all actively work to promote and encourage walking and cycling safely on our streets, walkways and pathways. With this increased traffic, there is heightened concern on the part of our residents and visitors regarding their safety and that of their children in crossing Delaware Route 1, because of the volume and speed of vehicles traveling along this corridor.

We greatly appreciate the proactive work DELDOT has completed in just the last few years on Delaware Route 1, with the median lights and new pedestrian crosswalks, including the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs). We know DELDOT is aware of the conditions regarding crossing Route 1. The potential risk for pedestrians and cyclists when crossing a roadway over 150 feet wide, with four lanes of heavy traffic traveling in two different directions, is sometimes alarming. This risk is heightened because drivers are trying (or not trying!) to make the adjustment from traveling at 55+MPH on a 4-lane highway to reach the current 35 MPH limit in our area. Most frequently their speed is only reduced to 40 MPH. In addition, the many states from which visitors come have differing regulations regarding when drivers must yield to pedestrians. These different understandings on the part of both drivers and pedestrians contribute greatly toward the confusion and increased danger.

Studies that tell us a pedestrian has a 50% chance of survival if hit by a vehicle traveling 30 MPH and a 10% chance of survival if hit by a vehicle traveling 40 MPH are compelling and reenforce our safety concerns and the life-saving effect of reducing the current speed limit. Accordingly, for all these reasons, we urgently request that DELDOT reduce the speed limit on Route 1 in our area from 35 MPH to 30 MPH during the very busy summer season.

If necessary, the incorporated municipalities of Bethany Beach and South Bethany can provide Town Council Resolutions affirming this request and the Sea Colony and Middlesex Beach communities can provide documentation from their respective homeowners' associations endorsing lowering the speed limit as well.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Respectfully,