



# City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
320 EAST MOSBY ROAD  
HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA 22801  
(540) 434-5928

STREET MAINTENANCE  
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING  
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING  
REFUSE/ RECYCLING  
CENTRAL STORES

TO: Eric D. Campbell, City Manager  
FROM: Thomas Hartman, PE, Assistant Director of Public Works  
DATE: June 26, 2018  
RE: Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program – Portland East Neighborhood

**Summary:** Consideration for enrolling the Portland East neighborhood into the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.

**Background:** The residents of the Portland East neighborhood have been in the process of fulfilling the requirements to enroll in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program since December 2017. The Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program is a partnership between the Harrisonburg Police Department (HPD) and the Public Works Department that uses a phased approach to reduce speeding and cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods. The first steps include education/encouragement toward drivers to reduce speeds, increased enforcement, and progress into engineered solutions, if the problems persist. The neighborhood has participated in the education, encouragement, and enforcements steps, but have found speeding and cut-through traffic persistent. Enrollment in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program will allow the neighborhood to advance toward exploring physical traffic calming measures (engineered solutions). A description of previous and next steps for the neighborhood are described below.

Neighborhood representative, Greg Deeds, brought the issues of high traffic volumes, stop sign running, speeding, cut-through traffic, and littering in his neighborhood to the December 2017 meeting of the Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission. To address these issues, the Police Department increased enforcement on neighborhood streets starting in April, and has used its speed display to encourage slower driving. While conducting enforcement, HPD surveyed the people they stopped for their origin and destination. They found the majority of those stopped were not residents of the neighborhood, but were cutting through to avoid Reservoir Street and Stone Spring Road to get to Port Republic Road. Approximately half of violators were associated with higher education communities (including students and professors of JMU, Bridgewater College, and Blue Ridge Community College), and the other half were local residents. Notably, this is the first traffic calming request the City has received that also involves the County, and Public Works has taken the step of engaging VDOT in the concerns. In February, the neighborhood participated in the Team Up to Slow Down campaign, to encourage neighbors and those cutting through to slow their speed.

In April, a group of 12 neighborhood residents met with HPD and Public Works staff members to discuss their specific traffic concerns. This discussion included a review of actions taken by the city to address

the concerns already received and what future course of action can be taken by the residents to pursue enrollment in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. The neighborhood submitted a request to City Council for the Public Works Department to Conduct a traffic study, which was approved by City Council in April. The results of the study concluded that the neighborhood met the criteria to enroll in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. Listed below is the minimum criteria to enroll in the program. Neighborhoods must meet at least one of the conditions in the list. Attached is a summary of the traffic study showing that multiple streets meet the volume condition, while the origin-destination survey confirmed the cut-through traffic condition.

- Streets meeting minimum volume requirements – daily traffic greater than 600 vehicles
- Streets meeting 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed requirements – 10 mph over posted speed limit
- Documented cut-through traffic

After confirming the existence of these conditions, the next step toward enrollment in the program is a petition process in which the neighborhood must obtain signatures from at least 75% of the residents in the neighborhood, stating that they agree there is a problem with speeding and cut through traffic, and a plan should be developed to address these issues. Staff and neighborhood representatives worked together to define the petition area, which included streets that met the criteria for enrollment in the program. There were 64 addresses in the petition area, and 48 signatures were obtained to meet the 75% minimum number of signatures required. With the completion of the petition process, the neighborhood has met all prerequisites for enrollment into the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. Enrollment must be approved by City Council.

Once enrolled, Public Works and HPD will develop a neighborhood traffic calming plan in partnership with the neighborhood. Neighborhood meetings will be held to discuss the options and approaches, which are intended to start with the least restrictive methods, and progress to the point at which speeding and cut-through traffic have reduced to acceptable levels. Another neighborhood meeting will be held to receive input on the plan, once it is finalized, before presenting the plan to the Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission (TSAC). The TSAC will then make a recommendation to City Council on approval of the plan.

After the plan is approved, Public Works will begin to implement it, pending available funds. Traffic studies will be conducted after each phase of improvements, to determine their effectiveness in meeting the goals of the program, and the need to implement further measures.

**Key Issues:** N/A

**Environmental Impact:** None.

**Fiscal Impact:** Development of the Traffic Calming Plan will not have any fiscal impacts. Public Works will present the plan to City Council for approval. The plan will include cost estimates for implementation.

## **The City With The Planned Future**

**Prior Actions:** City Council approved the request for a traffic study of the neighborhood in April.

**Alternatives:** Address safety concerns through spot improvements that may be recommended by the Transportation Safety and Advisory Commission. Additional traffic enforcement by HPD.

**Community Engagement:** Public Works and HPD met with neighborhood representatives in April to discuss neighborhood concerns and introduce the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. The neighborhood representatives canvassed the neighborhood to share information about the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program, and obtained 48 signatures for the petition to enroll in the program. Staff has been in close contact and coordination with designated neighborhood contact, Greg Deeds.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends enrolling the Sunset Heights neighborhood into the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.

**Attachments:**

- Traffic Study results
- Neighborhood petition to enroll in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.
- A menu of physical traffic calming measures that would be considered for the neighborhood can be found in Appendix A of the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program manual.  
[www.harrisonburgva.gov/sites/default/files/PublicWorks/files/transportation/Neighborhood%20Traffic%20Calming%20Guide%202012.pdf](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/sites/default/files/PublicWorks/files/transportation/Neighborhood%20Traffic%20Calming%20Guide%202012.pdf).

**Review:**

*The initiating Department Director will place in Legistar, in sequence of transmittal, the names of each department that must initial their review in order for this item to be placed on the City Council agenda. The completion of review only addresses the readiness of the issue for Council consideration. This does not address the recommendation for approval or denial of the issue.*

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