



CITY OF HARRISONBURG
**PUBLIC
WORKS**

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TO: Eric D. Campbell, City Manager
FROM: Thomas Hartman, PE, Director of Public Works
DATE: January 28, 2020
RE: Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program – Northeast Neighborhood

Summary: Consideration for enrolling the Northeast neighborhood into the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.

Background: The residents of the Northeast neighborhood have been in the process of fulfilling the requirements to enroll in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program since 2016. The Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program (NTCP) 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 enforcement 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.

The process that began in 2016 built off a previous effort, that began in 2008, by the neighborhood to enroll in the NTCP. Residents from the Northeast neighborhood expressed concerns to Public Works and HPD about drivers traveling too fast on neighborhood streets and not stopping at stop signs, leading to crashes and concerns regarding safety for pedestrians and neighborhood children. Additionally, there was some concern about vehicles using streets such as E. Wolfe Street and E. Gay Street as a cut-through route to avoid E. Market Street. To address these issues, the Police Department increased enforcement on neighborhood streets in 2016 and has used its speed display to encourage slower driving. The neighborhood participated in the Team Up to Slow Down campaign to encourage neighbors and those cutting through to slow their speed. Team Up to Slow Down signs were placed in 12 yards of residences on E. Gay Street in 2014 and yards on E. Wolfe, Broad and Myrtle in 2016.

In July 2017, a group of 17 neighborhood residents representing various streets 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 September 2017. The study area included streets on which there were significant concerns, and surrounding streets, to get the baseline traffic conditions. The results of the study were presented to the neighborhood in February 2018 and 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 one or more of these conditions.

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

After confirming these conditions exist with the traffic study, 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 that 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. In response to challenges associated with reaching apartments buildings, Public Works staff mailed information about the petition effort, including contact information for the neighborhood point-of-contact for the traffic calming petition, to multiple units. Additionally, Public Works staff confirmed that Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA) supports the traffic calming effort and mailed information to the residents of Franklin Heights apartments who had not already signed the petition. There were 439 occupied housing units identified in the neighborhood. Neighborhood representatives documented 52 units that were visited 3 times with no response, so these units were not counted toward the number of signatures required. An additional 52 units were mailed information about traffic calming and the petition effort and were then not counted toward the number of required signatures. Attached is a document with the neighborhood petition, signatures collected and staff verification that the neighborhood representatives obtained 258 signatures to meet the required 75% of the neighborhood. With the completion of the petition process, the neighborhood has met all prerequisites for enrollment into the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.

Once enrolled, Public Works and HPD will develop a neighborhood traffic calming plan in partnership with the neighborhood. The plan will include phases that start with the least restrictive methods, and progress to the point at which speeding, and cut-through traffic have reduced to acceptable levels (below minimum thresholds to enroll in the program). Neighborhood meetings will be held to discuss the approaches and practices that can be included in the plan. Efforts will be made to ensure that input is gathered from residents throughout the Northeast Neighborhood. In particular, staff will work with the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA) to ensure that residents of Franklin Heights apartments are aware of and encouraged to participate in creation of the plan. 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 plan will not have any fiscal impacts. Public Works will present the plan to City Council for adoption. The plan will include cost estimates for implementation.

Prior Actions: City Council approved the request for a traffic study of the neighborhood in September 2017.

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 July 2017 to discuss neighborhood concerns and introduce the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program, and again in February 2018 to discuss the traffic study and next steps for enrolling in the program. The neighborhood representatives canvassed the neighborhood to share information about the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program and obtained 258 signatures for the petition to enroll in the program.

Recommendation: Staff recommends enrolling the Northeast neighborhood into the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.

Attachments:

- Neighborhood petition to enroll in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program, with staff verification
- Traffic Study results presentation
- 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.

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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