



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 – Sunset Heights Neighborhood

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

Background: The residents of the Sunset Heights neighborhood have been in the process of fulfilling the requirements to enroll in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program since March 2015. The Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program is a partnership between the Harrisonburg Police Department 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.

Residents from the Sunset Heights neighborhood came to Public Works in 2015 to express concerns about drivers traveling too fast on neighborhood streets, illegally passing vehicles driving the speed limit and stopped school buses, and using streets such as South Dogwood Drive and Chestnut Drive as a cut-through route to avoid South High Street. To address these issues, the Police Department increased enforcement on neighborhood streets in March 2015, and has used its speed display to encourage slower driving. In May 2015, the neighborhood participated in the Team Up to Slow Down campaign, to encourage neighbors and those cutting through to slow their speed. Participation in this program was very good, with all 23 yard signs being installed at residences on various streets.

In June 2015, a group of 12 neighborhood residents representing various streets met with Police 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 July 2015. 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 shared with the neighborhood in December 2015, 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 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 247 addresses in the petition area, and 186 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 (below minimum thresholds to enroll in the program). 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 July 2015.

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

The City With The Planned Future

Community Engagement: Public Works and HPD met with neighborhood representatives in June 2015 to discuss neighborhood concerns and introduce the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program, and again in February 2016 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 186 signatures for the petition to enroll in the program.

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.

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.

###