



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
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STREET MAINTENANCE
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
REFUSE/ RECYCLING
CENTRAL STORES

TO: Kurt Hodgen, City Manager
FROM: Thomas Hartman, PE, Assistant Director of Public Works
DATE: September 26, 2017
RE: Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program - Request for traffic study in Northeast neighborhood

Summary: Consider request from Northeast Neighborhood to conduct a traffic study to confirm the presence of speeding and cut-through traffic, so they may proceed to next steps in Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.

Background: A resident of E. Wolfe Street contacted Public Works in January, 2016, to report traffic safety concerns on E. Wolfe Street and the cross streets of Broad, Myrtle, and Sterling Streets. The City's Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program (NTCP) was decided on by staff and the resident as the best way to find solutions to the issues identified, which included speeding, cut-through traffic, and inconsistent compliance with regulatory signs (stop signs).

The NTCP is a partnership between Public Works and the Police Department that seeks to improve safety by reducing speeding and cut-through traffic in neighborhoods where these are documented problems. The program is based on a phased approach, starting with education, encouragement, and increased enforcement, and if conditions do not improve, ending with engineered improvements to the public street(s).

The NTCP manual (www.harrisonburgva.gov/neighborhood-traffic-calming-program) contains a flow chart of required steps that neighborhoods must achieve in order to enroll in the program. The Northeast neighborhood has already held neighborhood meetings, participated in the "Team Up To Slow Down" campaign, had a Police Department speed trailer located on E. Wolfe street, temporarily, and requested increased enforcement. The next step in enrolling in the NTCP is to have Public Works conduct a traffic study to confirm the presence of speeding and cut-through traffic. City Council must authorize this study, according to the program manual.

Additional steps and threshold criteria needed to enroll in the program can be found at the link above. The traffic study must document 85th percentile speeds greater than 10 mph above the posted speed limit, that cut-through traffic exists, and that minimum traffic volumes are also met. After these conditions are documented, the neighborhood would have to complete a petition to enroll in the program by obtaining the signatures of at least 75% of the residence in the established neighborhood. Once a neighborhood has successfully enrolled in the program, residents and Public Works collaborate to determine appropriate engineered solutions to speeding and cut-through traffic that may be implemented in the street right-of-ways.

Public Works hosted a neighborhood meeting on July 12, 2017 to discuss the NTCP with residents and to hear more about the traffic issues occurring in the neighborhood. Minutes from this meeting are

attached. At the meeting, staff worked with residents to identify a logical neighborhood boundary to study, based on the concerns of the neighborhood. This map is attached.

Key Issues: None.

Environmental Impact: None.

Fiscal Impact: The traffic study would require approximately 32 hours of Public Works staff time over 3 weeks.

Prior Actions: The Northeast neighborhood previously tried to enroll in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program, but was unable to achieve the required 75% of signatures to the neighborhood petition, which is required by the program manual after the Public Works Traffic Study confirms the presence of speeding and cut through traffic. The difficulty was, in part, due to the expense of the neighborhood boundary that was under study at that time.

Alternatives: Addressing some of these issues through the Transportation Safety and Advisory Commission is also a possibility, but may result in different solutions than would the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.

Community Engagement: The designated neighborhood contact has conducted community engagement on her own on several occasions, mainly focused on E. Wolfe Street. She also engaged with the broader neighborhood at the National Night Out event held on August 1, 2017.

Public Works hosted a neighborhood meeting at City Hall on July 12, 2017. Seventeen (17) residents attended.

Recommendation: Approve the request for Public Works to conduct the traffic study.

Attachments: Letter from neighborhood contact, Stefanie Warlick, requesting the traffic study, including attachments required by the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program (dates they have made requests to Harrisonburg Police Department for increased enforcement on our neighborhood streets, dates they utilized the Team Up to Slow Down Program, dates they discussed their concerns with their neighbors, and other encouragement measures used in the last 12 months). July 12th neighborhood meeting minutes, including map of neighborhood boundary. Speed trailer data.

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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