

Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program  
Portland East Neighborhood Representatives Meeting  
August 8, 2018

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Erin Yancey, Public Works Dept	Greg Deeds, resident
Tom Hartman, Public Works Dept	Lila King, resident
Dastan Khaleel, Public Works Dept	Ron King, resident
Elizabeth Todd, Public Works Dept	Russell Eagle, resident
Cpl. Wayne Westfall, Harrisonburg Police Dept	

**I. Welcome & Introductions**

The meeting began with introductions of everyone that attended.

**II. Review process to date & next steps**

Erin Yancey, Public Works Planning Manager, started off by reviewing the process to date that the neighborhood has gone through including participation in the team up to slow down program, increased police enforcement in the neighborhood, completing a traffic study, completing the petition process, being accepted into the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program (NTCP) by City Council, and hosting neighborhood meetings.

The next steps are for Public Works Department (PWD) to develop a traffic calming plan in partnership with neighborhood representatives (on the agenda for this evening) for neighborhood review and refining. The PWD will then present the plan to the Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission (TSAC), who will make a recommendation to City Council to endorse the plan. Once City Council endorses the plan implementation will begin.

**III. Traffic calming plan goals & expectations**

Erin Yancey, Cpl. Wayne Westfall, and Tom Hartman explained that the goal of the traffic calming plan is to slow travel time through the neighborhood enough that Waze, Google Maps, and ridesharing algorithms pick up the delay and route drivers to main roads as faster alternatives. The other goal of the plan is to increase compliance with traffic control devices in the neighborhood. The plan will help the Harrisonburg Police Department in enforcement, as there will be additional traffic control devices that are intended to slow traffic, and can generate additional violations/citations. For example, where stop bars and double yellow lines are painted at intersections, if drivers cross over a double yellow line in the process of shortcircuiting the turn, after failing to stop at the stop sign, then they may receive two citations/fine. One for running the stop sign, and one for driving on the wrong side of the road. Traffic calming practices often increase compliance with traffic controls by making it less easy or comfortable to violate them.

Ms. Yancey explained that the traffic calming plan will establish phases for traffic calming strategies, as the goal is to implement only as many strategies as are necessary to reduce cut through traffic to

acceptable levels. After each phase of implementation, there will be a waiting period of two to three months, so that traffic patterns can readjust, after which Public Works will conduct a new traffic study to determine the effectiveness of the new practices. The waiting period will be adjusted based on the JMU semester schedule. Studies will not be performed while students are away, nor within the first couple of weeks of any semester, or exam time, as traffic patterns are not the norm during these periods.

Ms. Yancey also briefly discussed that the traffic calming plan will be in the development and approval process until approximately November, and that many of the traffic calming practice cannot be constructed or otherwise implemented during the winter because of temperatures. Realistically, it will likely be Spring before the first phase of implementation can occur.

#### **IV. Traffic study results + additional data/information**

Dastan Khaleel, Traffic Engineer, presented the traffic study to the neighborhood. Mr. Khaleel explained the traffic study was used to determine the eligibility of the neighborhood for the traffic calming program, and was used to determine key finding that will direct the traffic calming approach taken.

For there to be considered a speeding problem, the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile (the majority) speed must be 10 mph over the speed limit and there was one location where it was close, but the data indicated that the neighborhood did not have a significant speeding problem. The Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) was much greater and almost double in all 5 study locations than the NTCP's minimum eligibility requirement of 600 vehicles/day, although it was found that between the 65 single family homes on the City side of the jurisdictional boundary, plus the 450 dwelling units of various types on the County side of the boundary, the expected trip generation for the neighborhood was not necessarily out of line with expectations. However, the County side of Fieldale is a collector street with few homes fronting on Fieldale, where as in the City, all homes along the route front onto the route, as is typical of a local street. Therefore, the traffic impact is felt much more by the City residents. The ADT is about equally split in direction of travel (~50% coming from Reservoir Street and 50% coming from Port Republic Road).

Origin-Destination data collected from enforcement reports showed that 40% of the drivers running stop signs were residents of the neighborhood or neighborhoods that feed into Fieldale Place (both city and county). It was also determined that 38.5% of stop sign violators were people leaving from the Retreat. Stop sign runners were roughly equally split between JMU students and other members of the community. Reasons given for cutting through varied wildly. Traffic was distributed roughly equally by direction of travel.

Google Maps was used to time the different routes using the neighborhood road vs. using the main roads and the travel time difference between the two route options, when originating from a point of origin on Reservoir St. For destinations on Port Republic Road between Portland Dr. and Stone Spring Road, Google routes drivers to use the main roads. For destination north/westbound on Port Republic Road (campus, I-81, etc), Google routes through the neighborhood. Google shows that alternative routes can have the same or very similar travel times, but the Portland East cut through route is shorter in distance.

Mr. Khaleel presented the directional distribution for the AM peak on Tuesday (described below):

- It was found that 60% of the traffic entered the neighborhood from Reservoir St heading westbound and 40% were exiting the neighborhood onto Reservoir
- At the other end of the neighborhood, 70% were exiting onto Port Republic Rd and 30% were entering from Port Republic
- This indicates that 10% of the traffic was originated from within the neighborhood, in both eastbound and westbound directions

Significantly, ~60% of west/northbound traffic (toward Port Republic Rd/I-81) during the AM peak hour is considered cut-through traffic, vs. 30% in the opposite direction, toward Reservoir St. All of the existing traffic controls are for this direction of travel, while traffic going toward Reservoir St. proceeds in a free flow state (no traffic controls). This indicates that more effective controls in the west/northbound direction are needed to slow and ultimately divert the cut-through traffic. The PM peak hour analysis was less clear, as fewer trips are home-work based than in the AM, so many more origins and destinations are at play, and the trip distribution was more comparatively equal in both directions.

The traffic study results were concluded by looking at the crash data which showed only one crash in the last six years, a head on collision that resulted in property damage only. One crash in six years is considered low, however, it was noted the crash data does not include cars striking animals and other minor crashes, nor does it indicate near misses.

#### **V. Review of traffic calming practices**

Erin Yancey went through a PowerPoint “Traffic Calming Glossary” that depicts various traffic calming measures. Many of these are also found in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Manual found at the City’s website: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/neighborhood-traffic-calming-program>.

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| • Curb extensions  | • Speed humps                                  |
| • Right-in, right out channelization island                  | • Increased police enforcement                 |
| • Chicanes   | • J-turn intersection treatment                |
| • Traffic circle   | • Intersection traffic island                  |
| • Signage discouraging cut-through traffic (not enforceable) | • Stop bar & double yellow lines at stop signs |
| • Raised intersection  |  |

Cpl. Wayne Westfall noted during the police enforcement slide that he will ask the court to help charge higher fines for traffic violations in the neighborhood, as the court has that ability.

#### **VI. General Discussion**

The group discussed several items before moving into a discussion on the location of specific traffic calming measures. Ms. Yancey explained that the Public Works Dept has communicated with VDOT and the County planning office, so they are aware of the situation and the activities we will be completing. They are open to discussing traffic calming measures that may be needed on the county side of the neighborhood. They asked to be kept informed through meeting minutes, and offline discussions will occur between city, county, and VDOT staff, as needed.

Cpl. Wayne Westfall will research whether the state code allows local governments to increase fees for running stop signs, in addition to increasing fines for speeding. He will also contact the Retreat and ask them to email the residents to tell them to stop using the neighborhood as a cut through, and that police will have a presence in the neighborhood.

A resident asked about no cut through traffic signs. Ms. Yancey replied those kinds of signs are a possibility, but they are unenforceable from a legal point of view. From the perspective that traffic calming also includes education and encouragement, the signs may be appropriate. This specific type of sign does not exist anywhere else in the city, so Public Works will need to determine specific language for the sign.

Residents suggested that the best way to end the problems would be to put in a cul de sac at the county line, and Cpl. Westfall responded that this would be the absolute last strategy to be considered, as the safety benefits to the city and county neighborhood outweigh the nuisance factor of cut-through traffic once it is reduced. Even if traffic calming efforts fail, there is no guarantee that a cul de sac would become an acceptable solution.

A resident asked if it would be possible to set up cameras for when the students come back for data collection to understand how bad the problem is. It was added that it is a major concern because people will sometimes go through the stop signs at 15 to 20 mph. Cpl. Westfall agreed it would be a good idea to implement the cameras, noting they could also be used to determine the times of day it would be best for the police to continue enforcement in the neighborhood, but noted they could not give out tickets based on video recordings, from a legal perspective.

## **VII. Traffic Calming Plan discussion**

The group moved into a discussion about potential locations of specific traffic calming measures, and phases of implementation. Public Works staff shared a map of the city portion of the neighborhood and presented an option for discussion. Included were the following:

- Phase 1 – Stop bars and double yellow striping at the intersections (this can be implemented before the full traffic calming plan is adopted)
- Phase 2 – Speed hump at the county line (city side of line)
- Phase 3 – Intersection treatment at Portland Dr/Springfield Dr (traffic circle or traffic islands)
- Phase 4 – Consider a treatment at the intersection of Fieldale Pl and Secrist Ln, in the County. Requiring cooperation from the County and VDOT

Ms. Yancey asked for the neighborhood's thoughts about the recommendations shown on the map. Responses and discussions include the following:

- A resident asked about putting in the traffic islands at the intersections because he had noticed people cutting the corner when turning onto the street at the stop signs and it would help to keep people in their lanes. The group discussed adding temporary delineators or temporary traffic islands as a Phase II option, if Phase I does not prove effective.
- Residents suggested that traffic islands may be preferable to a traffic circle at the Portland Dr/Springfield Dr intersection because drivers may end up in the drainage ditches adjacent to the road, if they maneuver through a traffic circle too quickly. A temporary traffic circle can also be tested at the intersection to determine if this would be a problem.

- Consider a speed hump on the county side.
- Residents asked staff to consider adding in a center line around the curve on Springfield Dr and on Fieldale Pl near Reservoir St, to try to emphasize to people to stay on their side of the road.

#### **VIII. Next steps & Suggested Schedule**

Ms. Yancey explained that the next steps would be for Public Works to write up meeting minutes of tonight's meeting, and to send them to Greg Deeds, along with a link to the webpage that has been set up for the Portland East neighborhood. Meeting materials will also be posted there, as well as other information that the community can view to follow along with the planning process. Ms. Yancey explained that the more the broader neighborhood can be engaged with the progress we're making toward adopting and implementing the plan, the better, as the more informed the neighborhood is, the easier the plan adoption process will be. The goal is that no one is surprised to learn about the traffic calming initiative at the end of the planning process or during implementation.

Ms. Yancey presented a suggested schedule to the group to get the plan ready for adoption and move into implementation. The schedule includes:

- Draft traffic calming plan sent to the neighborhood – mid-September
- A neighborhood open house meeting to review the plan with the broader neighborhood – late September/early October
- Present the plan to the Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission – mid-October
- Present the plan to City Council for approval – November

#### **IX. Adjourn**