

Legislation Text

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TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA ITEM**ACTION REQUESTED:**

Provide direction on conducting a Neighborhood Traffic Study for the residential area located north and west of the Central Business District

DEPARTMENT: Transportation, Engineering and Development

SUBMITTED BY: Jennifer Loudon, Deputy Director of TED

BACKGROUND:

During the Public Forum portion of the November 7, 2018 City Council meeting, six residents spoke about their concerns pertaining to traffic in the residential neighborhood located north and west of the Central Business District (downtown). The residents are requesting neighborhood-wide traffic calming. City Council reached consensus that the matter should be reviewed by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB); and, provided TAB concurs, authorized allocation of funding for a consultant to complete a study of the area.

DISCUSSION:

The City of Naperville receives numerous resident requests to investigate neighborhood traffic concerns (speeding, cut-through traffic, pedestrian safety, traffic control, parking and school access) each year. These requests are currently investigated and addressed on an individual basis. This process addresses the concerns of the specific resident who submitted the request, but it does not address other traffic conditions that may also be present within the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Traffic Study Program

In 2012 the City initiated a Neighborhood Traffic Study Program that would evaluate residential traffic conditions on a neighborhood level, rather than on an individual complaint basis. With the City being near build-out and traffic movements becoming more stable, a neighborhood-wide approach would be more appropriate in that it would allow evaluation of neighborhood traffic concerns to be addressed in a programmatic and comprehensive manner.

The scope of a Neighborhood Traffic Study involves conducting a study of the existing traffic conditions within a neighborhood area and developing recommendations to create a consistent striping, traffic control, signing and traffic calming plan. Each study area would be evaluated with respect to overall vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle movements within the neighborhood. Once the recommendations have been implemented, a baseline condition would be identified for the subject study area. Future traffic requests from the neighborhood would not be evaluated by staff unless traffic conditions have altered from the baseline condition. Examples of situations which may cause neighborhood traffic conditions to change include major modifications to the nearby roadway network or completion of a large development in close proximity to the neighborhood.

Using the City's Master Thoroughfare Plan map, thirty-three neighborhood study areas, or zones, were identified for review (see attached). The study areas were developed using the arterial roadways as the boundaries since the roadway geometry, traffic volumes and speeds of arterials create barriers for vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian movements and generally define the limits of neighborhood traffic. When identifying the study areas, neighborhoods surrounding the Central Business District, Naperville Metra Station and North Central College were not included due to the potential for changing land use and traffic characteristics in these areas, as well as previously completed planning studies (Downtown 2030 Plan, 5th Avenue Study and NCC Master Land Use Plan).

A pilot Neighborhood Traffic Study was completed for the study area identified as Zone 11. Zone 11 is bounded by Edward Hospital on the north, Washington Street on the east, 75th Street on the south and West Street/Rickert Drive on the west and includes the subdivisions of Hobson West, West Highlands, Olympic Terrace, and Maplebrook. City staff worked with a consultant to complete the study, which included extensive public involvement, data collection and analysis, in-field observations and concluded with review by TAB and the City Council. The study took approximately eight months to complete. Additional studies have not been completed since the pilot due to the cost of the consulting services and staff resources required.

Westside Neighborhood Traffic Study

In communications submitted to City staff, the residents in the residential neighborhood located north and west of the Central Business district have numerous traffic concerns and are requesting neighborhood-wide traffic calming as a solution. Concerns include Naper Elementary School drop-off and pick-up, reckless driving, in the form of lack of compliance with traffic control devices, volume and speed of vehicles on neighborhood streets, confusing signage at intersections, crosswalk visibility and construction vehicles within the neighborhood parking too close to intersections and impeding visibility. The area identified is bounded by Spring Avenue to the north, Jackson Avenue to the south, Washington Street to the east and Douglas Avenue to the west, which is consistent with the boundaries of the Westside Home Owners Association (WHOA).

In recent years staff has reviewed Naper Elementary School's traffic plans with the school and District 203 multiple times and conducted other small studies in the area in response to concerns submitted by residents. However, in order to evaluate the numerous concerns raised by the residents during the City Council meeting, staff proposes conducting a Neighborhood Traffic Study to allow for a comprehensive evaluation of all concerns and to develop a neighborhood wide traffic plan, as warranted by the data and observations that will be collected. The scope of the study will be similar to the Zone 11 study. Should TAB concur, staff will begin the consultant selection process immediately so that necessary data collection can be completed in the spring.