



MEMORANDUM

January 6, 2011

TO: Board of Mayor and Aldermen

FROM: Eric S. Stuckey, City Administrator
Eric J. Gardner, P.E., Director of Engineering
Carl Baughman, Traffic/Transportation Engineer
Joe York, Street Department Director

SUBJECT: Discussion of Appropriate Speed Limit on Westhaven Boulevard

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BOMA) with information to consider a request received by Alderman Margaret Martin from the Westhaven HOA and forwarded to the Engineering Department for a Speed Limit reduction on Westhaven Boulevard in the residential portion.

Background

Westhaven Boulevard is a public street that serves as a minor collector within the Westhaven community. The residential portion extends south from the business district (40 feet curb-to-curb roadway) by splitting into a median-divided street (two 22 feet curb-to-curb roadways), that passes through a roundabout at Townsend Boulevard, where it exits as a conventional two-way street (40 feet curb-to-curb). Throughout its length parking is allowed on both sides of the street, although the one-way roadways have curb extensions that diminish parking on the median side. Curvature and grades on the street are low, except through the roundabout where the top traveling speed is about 20 mph. A Speed Limit 30 sign is posted southbound exiting the business district, and northbound exiting the roundabout. Additional Speed Limit 30 signs to the south of the roundabout are shown on the plans but were not in place when Carl Baughman went to collect speed data in October 2010. (This street is under performance bond with a review scheduled for May 2011.) He placed road tubes on the two one-way roadways, at 1170 and 1171 Westhaven Boulevard. That data indicates substantial compliance with the designated speed limit; the 85th percentile speed values are in the 25-29 miles per hour range, and the median speeds (most typical) are around 21-25 mph, with average speeds (50th percentile) even lower. The data was obtained on October 18-19, 2010 on a Monday and Tuesday in which school happened to be out of session, in order to act quickly on the request. Mr. Baughman's response to Alderman Martin was that the data indicated a weak case for adjusting the speed limit. In December a follow-up request was received from the Westhaven HOA. Therefore, Alderman Martin and Carl Baughman agreed to bring this matter before the Capital Investments Committee.

Options

Option 1 – Install the remaining Speed Limit 30 signs in the residential portion of Westhaven Boulevard, to be done by the Southern Land Company. It should be noted that collector streets are typically signed as 30 miles per hour or higher regardless of the adjacent land use. The planning for



Westhaven has distinguished wider collector streets as having higher speed limits than the narrower local streets.

Option 2 – No action; allow the development of Westhaven to proceed at its natural pace, so that the planned Speed Limit 30 signs would be installed as the undeveloped portions of the street build out and move toward City acceptance.

Option 3 – Approve an Ordinance to install Speed Limit 25 signs along Westhaven Boulevard. As median and 85th percentile speeds are already in this general range, the change in speed posting is likely to effect little change in the traveling speed, therefore making this effort of little or no value. In other words, the speed data indicates that the degree of excess does not rise to the level of this option.

Option 4 – Encourage the Westhaven HOA to organize a Neighborhood Speed Awareness campaign. As most motorists on the street are residents of the community, enlisting their participation will generate the desired benefits throughout the development. Southern Land Company and their construction companies should also be encouraged to participate. Specific measures of the campaign might be promotions and bumper stickers (neighborhood pace car).

Financial Impact

The Westhaven development would bear the cost to revise the signs in those portions of Westhaven Boulevard not already accepted by the City, which includes the residential portion.

Recommendation

Staff recommends Option 1. It would bring specific speed posting consistency throughout the length of the street whether the roadside land is developed or not. If the Westhaven HOA would adopt Option 4, that would give the community a sense of ownership on the speed issue.

Attachment

Mary Ann Buentello

From: Carl Baughman
Sent: Tuesday, December 28, 2010 11:09 AM
To: Eric Stuckey; David Parker; Eric Gardner; Joe York; Vernon Gerth
Subject: Westhaven Blvd. Speed Limit
Attachments: 1170 Westhaven Blvd Spd 10_18_10.xls; 1171 Westhaven Blvd Spd 10_19_10.xls

CIC Agenda Reviewers:

Back in October Alderman Margaret Martin asked me to collect speed data on Westhaven Blvd. between the town center and the circle at Townsend Blvd. She had received a request from Amy Law of the Westhaven HOA and now a follow-up to consider lowering the posted Speed Limit 30 along the residential portion. The attached data indicates that a great majority of motorists are complying with the 30 mph posted speed, but she claims the residents would rather not "look like they can go that fast". I explained to her back then that the 85th percentile values of 25-29 mph (see attachments) present a weak case for lowering the speed limit, but with her follow-up am offering to present the matter for your consideration possibly for the January agenda. They will accept any reduction possible, even if 25 mph, and they understand that the street classification is a minor collector. If you need any additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Carl Baughman
Traffic/Transportation Engineer
109 3rd Avenue South
P. O. Box 305
Franklin, TN 37065-0305
(615)791-3218
(615)791-3293 fax

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