



Office of the Town Manager

Frank Cassidy

STAFF REPORT

Warrenton Town Council

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Heather Sutphin, Ward 1

William Semple, Ward 2

Brett Hamby, Ward 3

James Hartman, Ward 4 Vice Mayor

Eric Gagnon, Ward 5

Paul Mooney, At Large

David McGuire, At Large

Council Meeting Date:	September 10, 2024
Agenda Title:	Speed Limit Discussion
Requested Action:	Speed Limit Discussion
Department / Agency Lead:	Frank Cassidy
Staff Lead:	Frank Cassidy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town has been working to provide consistent and predictable operations. Part of this requires consistency in information and enforcement. We continue to proactively address speeding complaints and issues Town wide through a variety of tactics. This year, we revamped the Traffic Coalition Work Group into a Task Force. This task force provides active response by implementing traffic calming measures combined with assessments to measure effectiveness. These tactics are adjusted based on results. This has been a successful approach over the last year with several positive results.

The Virginia General Assembly adopted House Bill 1071 which was effective July 1, 2024. This bill, in short, provides the Town the opportunity to set speed limits less than 25 mph on residential streets without going through studies. This provides the opportunity for the Town to set a consistent speed limit throughout our Town. The speed limit cannot be below 15 mph, nor above 25 mph, and can only be applied to residential streets within Town Limits.

The Town has already set the speed limit of 15 mph on many of our streets. This has been a piecemeal approach. This Bill allows the Town to set the speed limit on all our streets. This is consistency and predictability.

The concept of speed limits is based on two programs, the 20 is Plenty and the Vision Zero programs. These have been incorporated into many jurisdictions' approaches to traffic safety and have proven effective.

The council directed staff to review and provide information to move forward with this proposal at the August Council Work Session

BACKGROUND

The Town continues to address speeding on our streets through the Traffic Task Force. This is an action approach to implementing traffic calming with the collaboration of all Town Departments. Some of our streets are 25 mph, some are 35 mph, and some are 15 mph. With the passage of House Bill 1071, we have an opportunity to address speed limits Town-wide.

Staff from our Traffic Task Force and Public Works met and discussed this proposal. We do not find any issues with the overall program. If we were to implement this we will need to remove, replace, and update

our speed limit signs throughout the Town. This will require funding of which we do not have factored into our budget at this time. Preliminary costs for only the signs are between \$15,000.00-\$20,000.00.

We also discussed our successes with our action-oriented approach through our Traffic Task Force. This Task Force has been designed to follow the prescribed approach of the 20 is Plenty program and the Vision Zero program. As we have been taking steps Town-wide, we have been implementing these steps, and so far, and for the most part, it has been working. We also discussed the speed limits and areas of application. In recent years, we have, with Council direction, been changing speed limits within neighborhoods. These are the same neighborhoods we would target for this speed limit change. We have already applied this project to our roadways.

Therefore, given the efforts of our new approach, and the work we have already completed Town Wide, we are suggesting we take no further action with this proposal at this time.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Town Staff recommends two paths forward:

1. Implement this approach in line with the State Code and the model set by Middleburg. This will be worked into the next fiscal year and be implemented pending the required funding and finalized plan after July 1, 2025.
2. Have no changes to our approach at this time. Continue our action-oriented approach to addressing speed complaints and continue to apply common sense, reasonable, and proven efforts for traffic safety. This includes continuing to incorporate recommendations from 20 is Plenty and Vision Zero programs. Staff will provide regular updates as outlined in our yearly Council agenda schedule, and other updates as needed or directed.

Service Level/Policy Impact

None at this time.

Plan 2040-

- T-1:** Improve Multimodal Capacity and Safety the Encourages trips by Walking, Bicycling, and Transit.
- T-2:** Enhance the Traveling Experience by Creating Great Streets.
- T-3:** Promote Livability in Town by Creating Great Places Where Residents and Visitors feel Welcome and Safe.
- T-4:** Provide and Equitable and Connected Multi-Modal network.

Fiscal Impact

Approximate costs between \$15,000.000-\$20,000.00 for new signage if option #1 is selected; no cost adjustments for option #2.

Legal Impact

Drafting of required resolutions and ordinances if option #1 is selected.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Copy of Staff Report from August Council Work Session
2. 20 is Plenty
3. Vision Zero
4. Copy of House Bill 1071
5. Middleburg Council Packet