



TOWN OF WARRENTON

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TO: Mayor and Town Council Members

FROM: Denise Harris, Planning Manager

DATE: November 9, 2021

SUBJECT: Waterloo Street Update

HISTORY

After years of complaints from Town residents about the safety of Waterloo Street, the 2017 Walkability Audit called for several items to help address speeding and safety. Short-term recommendations included bumps outs, adding chicanes, moving the parking to the south side of the street to Garrett Street, and installing a Rapid Flashing Beason or Hawk Signal at one of the two crossings by the Middle School.

Staff held a community meeting on the 3 concept designs developed by the Town's transportation consultant of the intersection at Chestnut. These concepts were also presented on August 8, 2019, and September 9, 2019, to the Transportation Safety Committee and the full Town Council meetings. The preferred concept included adding chicanes. Staff was directed to apply to VDOT for a Revenue Sharing grant and the intersection was included in the Town's CIP.

The Town was not successful in receiving a VDOT grant to help offset the costs. As such, the Town leveraged the summer of 2020 Waterloo resurfacing project to:

- Build the bump-out at Chestnut Street
- Paint the chicanes
- Install high visibility crosswalks
- Move the parking to the south side of the road creating the recommended buffer with the sidewalk.

NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

Extensive outreach was conducted in the neighborhood throughout the process, including:

- 2017 Walkability Audit
- August 29, 2019 Community Meeting
- April and May, 2020 certified mailings of information on restriping plan
- April, 2020 staff going door to door with restriping plan information multiple times
- April Press Release and Spring 2020 Town Crier Article
- April – July, 2020 On-site individual meetings with property owners, and
- November 7, 2020 Community Meeting
- Ongoing – Repeated emails to the neighborhood providing updates on activities.

in November of 2020, the neighborhood had a split reaction to the changes. Some praised the increased walkability, while others wanted the on-street parking restored in front of their homes.

COUNCIL DIRECTION

After the November 2020 Community Meeting, staff presented to Town Council an update on the comments of the 32 participants. Residents raised the continued topics of speed and safety, enforcement, driveway curb cuts, on-street parking, sidewalk buffers, bump-outs, high visibility crosswalks, radar speed signs, and speed tables. Council was given a memo with a set of options and associated costs for potential next steps. Since the installation of the bump-out at Chestnut Street and the repaving of Waterloo Street, Council directed staff to undertake an “incremental” approach to solving the speeding issues.

The steps implemented in the first half of 2021 included:

- Installing additional speed limit signage
- Increased enforcement
- Lowering the speed limit to 15 mph in the school zone during appropriate hours
- Install pilot vertical treatments to determine if these modified driver behaviors

SPEED DATA RESULTS

Town staff collected speed data on Waterloo Street dating back to 2017 (Summary Reports attached). While older data were collected at different locations than newer data due to differing objectives at the time, the information is valuable as one data point for consideration.

May 2017 – Monitored between Chestnut and Smith Streets

Conducted to determine speeds related to Chestnut to Old Town (MPH: 29.92 WB/32.15 EB 85th percentile; 26 WB/28 EB average speed)

August 2020 – Monitored between Oak Street and Warrenton Blvd

Conducted to determine impact of restriping and chicanes (MPH: 34.62 WB/33.05 EB 85th percentile; 30 WB/28 EB average speed)

March 2021 - Monitored between Oak Street and Warrenton Blvd

Conducted to determine impacts of new speed limit signage and enforcement (MPH: 33.94 WB/33.8 EB 85th percentile; 29 WB/29 EB average speed)

July 2021 - Monitored between Oak Street and Warrenton Blvd

Conducted to determine impacts of pilot delineators (MPH: 31.36 WB/30.7 EB 85th percentile; 27 WB/27 EB average speed)

Overall, the reports find that vehicles are consistently traveling above the 25 mph speed limit. To date, the one adjustment that appears to have an impact on driver behavior is the pilot delineators, which lowers the speed by approximately 10% from pre-installation. Specifically, the data finds the 85th percentile is reduced from approximately 34 mph March 2021 reading to 31 mph July 2021 reading. The 85th percentile is defined as the speed at or below which 85 percent of all vehicles are observed to travel under free-flowing conditions.

The one consideration not captured in the speed reports is walkability. Best practices follow the “Five C’s” of connected, convenient, comfortable, convivial, and conspicuous. Pedestrians will not walk in areas where they feel unsafe or uncomfortable. During the November 2020 community meeting, several residents indicated they felt safer with the parking buffer against the sidewalk. There was one set of residents that reported not feeling safe in a specific location where a chicane adjusted before the intersection at Chestnut Street.

BUDGET

Due to COVID cost reductions, this fiscal year’s budget is restricted to projects currently under construction. Therefore, Waterloo is not funded in this fiscal year. The approved FY22-27 CIP includes monies for engineering and design for FY23 with construction monies in FY24 for a total of \$320,000. This is based on estimated costs for permanent installation of speed mitigation provided by the Town’s transportation consultants. Final

costs are not known until the final design and bid. The final design would take into consideration stormwater, complexities related to topography and driveways, the fact this road is a designated snow emergency route, and walkability. However, this is scheduled a couple of years out if Council passes the funding request in the next CIP.

NEXT STEPS

At this time, staff has implemented the lower-cost options on Waterloo Street. The next steps are permanent improvements outlined in the Complete Streets Report that designate Waterloo Street as a Signature Street. Signature street treatments envision vertical curb treatments along chicanes, bump-outs, stormwater treatments, and an island gateway signage.

The ongoing goals of the Town Council, the recently adopted Plan Warrenton 2040, and the community prioritize walkability. There are a few residents located between Oak Street and Warrenton Blvd that continue to request on-street parking returned for guests and delivery trucks. Some residents continue to request speed radar signage be installed. Please note Public Works will need to remove the temporary delineators when winter weather sets in for plows. Staff seeks guidance on how the Council would like to proceed. The options include:

- 1) Stay the course. This may be sped up by allocating the estimated \$70,000 in the CIP FY23 towards engineering the permanent vertical curbs on the chicane, bump-outs, stormwater, and gateway signage solutions to this fiscal year that will enable staff to seek grant funding for the long-term funding solutions. Staff can pursue VDOT grants to mitigate the implementation costs; however, VDOT grant funding is generally 5-6 years out of any given cycle.
- 2) Keep the delineators as temporary, seasonal treatments until a future date when the project may be funded. (No cost)
- 3) Restripe the crest of the hill back to return on-street parking (approximately \$8,000-10,000). This option appeases some of the residents who desire on-street parking but does not address walkability, speed, and safety concerns.
- 4) Install Radar Speed Signs (approximately \$16,000, \$8,000 each, in two locations). This is an ongoing request of the residents. The effectiveness of speed radar signs in traffic calming is not as successful as modifying the actual roadway design.