

PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday November 13, 2007

ATTENDEES:

Bill Pritchard, Chair
John Barnes
Larry Lannom
Monique Shimm

Joseph Cutro, Traffic Engineer

Absent:

Blaney Harper, Arthur Schatzkin, Costis Toregas
Lance Hoffman, Town Council Liaison

The meeting was called to order at 7:35pm.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the July 30 2007 meeting were approved.

Monique Shimm was introduced as a new member of the Committee.

Town speed limits:

Mr. Cutro provided background on the setting of speed limits, the results of his analysis of all Town streets and his specific recommendations.

Background: Under Section 21-801.1 of the Maryland Vehicle law, the statutory speed limit for undivided streets in a residential district is 30 mph. Section 21-803 provides that local authorities may decrease the speed limit in an urban district such as the Town on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation. The investigation is a quantitative study of physical and traffic flow patterns. Posted speed limits should be set at or near the design speed of the street which is the maximum speed at which the motorist has adequate sight distance to respond to potential conflicts. This is based on street geometry, pavement and ambient conditions, on-street parking and parking density, one-way vs. two-way. Details of the analysis were provided and reviewed.

Conclusions: A speed limit of 25 mph is proper and appropriate for most of the Town's streets. Six street segments and 1 alley, definitely qualify for limits of lower than 25 mph. Another 12 segments are "marginal"—a 20 mph limit might be justifiable, usually on the basis of observed higher parking density.

Policy options for the streets other than the six street segments and alley cited above:

- Mixed 20 and 25 Speed Limits. Presents credibility issues and possible manipulation of street features to effect a desired result.
- All 20 mph. Cannot be defended under Maryland law as written.

- All 25 mph. Would deny a lower speed limit to a few streets that might be marginally “deserving”.

Recommendations:

Adopt a town wide speed limit of 25 mph for all streets, with 6 streets and 1 alley excepted and eligible for lower limits (5 streets @ 20 mph, 1 @ 15 mph, alley @ 10 mph) on the basis of unusual geometric conditions. Do not specifically post these streets unless requested by local residents.

“Cordon off” the Town from the higher speed limits of surrounding arterial streets with approximately 12 new SL signs to be posted on entry points into the community. Consider further signing along internal cordon lines, but beware of over signing.

In conjunction with the item above, remove competing signs indicating restricted access to Wisconsin Avenue. These signs (mostly near Connecticut Avenue) have probably outlived their usefulness as an informational tool and are no longer needed to restrain non-local traffic flow. Removing them will reduce sign clutter and improve the effectiveness of the new speed limit signs

The SPEED LIMIT 15 signs in the 4300 block of Leland are inappropriate and should be removed, but they can be replaced with 15 mph warning signs tied to the speed humps in that block.

The PSC approved the following recommendations to the Town Council:

- 1. Establish a Town-wide speed limit of 25 mph with the following streets/alley at a lower speed limit as follows:**
 - a. The speed limit on the following street segments should be 20 mph:**
 - i. Stanford Street between Oakridge and East**
 - ii. Curtis Road between Leland and Oakridge**
 - iii. Lynn Drive between Oakridge Lane and Maple**
 - iv. Oakridge Lane between Lynn and Leland**
 - v. Oak Lane between Leland and Meadow**
 - b. The speed limit on Pine Place between Ridgewood and Maple should be 15 mph**
 - c. The speed limit on Ridgewood Alley between Ridgewood and Oak should be 10 mph**

The Town may decide whether to post these six streets and one alley with the lower speed limit.

- 2. Post all entrance streets into the Town with 25 mph Speed Limit signs. The Town may consider posting additional signs within the Town, e.g., where streets cross an east-west line that lies roughly midway between East-West Highway and Bradley Lane and a north-south line that lies roughly midway between Wisconsin Avenue and Connecticut Avenue.**

- 3. The 15 mph Speed Limit signs at the ends of the 4200 block of Leland Street should be removed and replaced with a warning sign advising speed bumps below which is a 15 mph advisory plaque..**

Discussion of removal of the signs stating restricted access to Wisconsin Ave was tabled.

There was additional discussion of the curve at the south end of East Avenue at the intersection with Leland Street. At Mr. Cutro's recommendation, the PSC approved the following recommendation to the Town Council:

The entrances to the curve in East Avenue should be marked with warning signs indicating a right angle turn each with a 10 mph advisory sign below.

There was a brief discussion of the speed hump criteria, but a more full discussion will occur at the December meeting.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, December 4, 2007, 7:30-9:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00.