ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of July 11, 2009

DATE: June 16, 2009

SUBJECT: Approval of a Neighborhood Traffic Calming Project on 4th Road North between North Montague Street and North Manchester Street

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a Neighborhood Traffic-Calming Project, as recommended by the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Committee (NTCC) on 4th Road North between North Montague Street and North Manchester Street in the Boulevard Manor neighborhood.

ISSUES: Under the applicable Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program Process, Criteria and Measures, County Board approval is required to allocate and expend funds for Neighborhood Traffic Calming projects. There are no issues with the recommended project on 4th Road North.

SUMMARY: The Neighborhood Traffic Calming Committee ("NTCC") has recommended that the County Board approve and fund a traffic-calming project on 4th Road North between North Montague Street and North Manchester Street at an estimated cost of $70,000. Staff also recommends approval of the project. The NTCC did not recommend approval of a second project on North Kensington Street because it did not meet the applicable minimum required resident support criterion (70% of households in the affected area as adopted by the Board in September 2008). The recommendations of the NTCC are shown in Attachment 1.

BACKGROUND: The NTCC is charged with making recommendations to the County Board on traffic-calming projects which meet the applicable adopted criteria, have gone through a community plan-development process and received substantial community support for implementation.

The NTC Program, initially adopted by the County Board in March 2000 and revised in September 2008, is a "problem-severity based" program for which resources are directed to the neighborhood streets which have the most severe vehicular traffic problems in terms of speed, volume and other factors such as reported accidents, and are in close proximity to public and private facilities such as parks, schools and community centers. The NTC Program Process, Criteria and Measures were updated by the County Board on September 13, 2008.

County Manager: RC MAA

County Attorney: SAM

Staff: Ron C. Hicks, Department of Environmental Services, Development Services

51.

A speeding problem is defined as when the recorded 85th -percentile speed is five miles per hour (mph) or greater than the posted speed limit. For a street with a posted speed limit of 25 mph, a speeding problem is considered to exist when the 85th-percentile speed is 30 mph, or greater.

When requests for traffic-calming assistance are received by staff, traffic data are collected and evaluated, and staff assigns a priority-ranking score to the streets with confirmed problems. The NTCC reviews the list of traffic-calming requests, selects several streets with the highest priority-ranking scores and works with the residents to develop solutions to the identified problems. There are currently 78 streets which qualify for traffic calming and are awaiting assistance.

During the past year, construction of four previously-approved NTC Projects have either been completed or are nearing completion.

DISCUSSION: In September 2007, two project streets were selected by the NTCC to resolve speeding problems based upon the problem-severity ranking that had been developed to assess the severity of neighborhood traffic problems. NTCC members and a staff person were assigned to work with residents of each street to clarify the problems, consider possible solutions and achieve consensus within the affected area on solutions to the problems.

The projects selected to resolve speeding problem were:

- **4th Road North between North Montague and North Manchester Street:** in the Boulevard Manor neighborhood and civic association.

- **North Kensington Street between Williamsburg Boulevard and Yorktown Boulevard**: in the Rock Spring neighborhood and civic association and also the Williamsburg neighborhood and civic association.

Projects Description:

a. 4th Road North between North Montague Street and North Manchester Street.
Residents living on and near 4th Road North between North Montague and North Manchester Street in the Boulevard Manor Civic Association have identified speeding and pedestrian safety as traffic concerns and requested traffic calming assistance from County staff. Such concerns were documented in the neighborhood's recent Neighborhood Conservation Plan. The traffic volume on 4th Road North between North Montague and North Manchester Street is 1,238 vehicles per day with an 85th percentile speed of 34 mph. The average speed was measured at 29 mph. The number of vehicles speeding on 4th Road North was 545 or 44% of the total daily count. Based on the petition process completed in early September 2008, 100 percent of the households in the affected area have signed "yes" on the petition in favor of NTC measures on the street. A letter of support from the Boulevard Manor Civic Association Board was provided to County staff in mid-September 2008 and is Attachment 2.

The Plan consists of the following components as shown on Figure 1.

- Textured Gateway and at-grade colored crosswalk on 4th Road North at North Montague Street
- Mid-block chokers around 5908 4th Road North
- Crosswalk on north side of North Montague Street with ramps
- Parking lines on the north and south side of 4th Road North from North Montague Street to North Manchester Street
- Nubs on north and south side of 4th Road North that also extend into North Manchester Street
- Textured Gateway and cross-walk on 4th Road North at North Manchester Street
- Crosswalk on south side of North Manchester Street at 4th Road North with ramps

Staff has estimated the cost to construct this project to be $70,000. The project would be scheduled for construction early Spring 2010.

North Kensington Street between Williamsburg Boulevard and Yorktown Boulevard:
The North Kensington Street project was developed under the program guidelines of the NTC program revisions of September 13, 2008. The North Kensington Street NTC project did not achieve the minimum 70% resident support in the affected area, and was not recommended for funding by the NTCC and is not before the Board for consideration. The project was supported by 65% of the total households in the affected area. There was a significant difference in support between households with frontage on North Kensington Street and those that front on the connected side streets (see Attachment 1 for details).

Based on the planning processes carried out for the two projects, the NTCC and staff recommends approval of the 4th Road North project.

FISCAL IMPACT: Funding in the amount of $70,000 is available for the one recommended project in the Neighborhood Traffic Calming (NTC) Program PAYGO budget. (Fund 313 Cost Center 43512 Project NTC). Approximately $350,000 remains for additional NTC projects.

Attachment 1

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Neighborhood Traffic Calming Committee
Kevin M. Sweeney, Chair
Willis C. Braswell, Jr.
Mileva M. Hartman
Ed Hilz
Dwight Hlustick
William "Chips" Johnson
Tracie G. Morris
Thomas Petty
Wayne J. Tannahill

June 17, 2009

Barbara Favola, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd. Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Neighborhood Traffic Calming Project Recommendations and Program Report, Spring Funding Cycle, 2009

Dear Chair Favola:

On behalf of the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Committee (NTCC), I submit the following report the County Board to: (1) recommend the approval and funding of a new traffic calming project, (2) provide information regarding a project that failed to meet the approval requirements, and (3) discuss the current funding status of the Neighborhood Traffic Calming (NTC) Program.

Fourth Road North. At a special funding session on March 23, 2009, the NTCC voted unanimously to recommend that the County Board approve and fund the following NTC Plan:

> Fourth Road North, from North Montague Street to North Manchester Street (Boulevard Manor Neighborhood). The measures to be funded are projected to cost approximately $70,000.00.

The Fourth Road North NTC Plan was developed in accordance with the NTC Program's procedures. Following a request from a resident, NTC Staff measured and evaluated vehicle speeds, traffic volume and the other objective criteria set forth in the Program Manual. This evaluation showed that Fourth Road North had a significant speeding problem as defined by the Program. Indeed, Fourth Road North had one of the highest speeding problem scores of the approximately 80 neighborhood streets that have verified speeding problems and are awaiting action under the NTC Program.

The recommended plan was the result of collaboration between affected residents, County NTC Staff and NTCC members, as provided for under the NTC Program procedures. The households within the affected area unanimously supported this Plan.

Studies of many previous County NTC projects have indicated substantial reductions in the 85th percentile speed, the benchmark measure of a speeding problem. The traffic calming measures recommended for Fourth Road North should have similar results. An after-study will be performed on this street, further enlarging the County's information database.

The NTC Program's current funding level is adequate to fully fund the Fourth Road North project.

N. Kensington Street. A separate NTC Plan developed for North Kensington Street between Yorktown and Williamsburg Boulevards in the Rock Springs Neighborhood did not meet the support requirements of the NTC Program. Therefore, the NTCC is not submitting that Plan for approval and funding. I am including a discussion of this project in this report because (1) it was the first Plan developed under the revised NTC Program adopted by the Board on September 13, 2008, and (2) the residents may appeal or comment to the Board regarding the Plan specifically and the Program generally.

The N. Kensington project was initiated in October 2008. As noted above, this was the first project under the new NTC procedures; the Fourth Road North Plan had been completed by the time the revisions to the Program were adopted.

Several working group meetings of residents, Staff, and NTCC members produced an NTC Plan that included several curb extensions and speed humps. In accordance with the new voting procedures, NTC Staff mailed information packages regarding the Plan to households on North Kensington in the project area and connected side streets. These mailings included postage-prepaid, return-addressed postcards allowing households to vote on the Plan by mail. (Previously, the Program used door-to-door petitioning.) NTC Staff also held an open house in a nearby school to provide additional information.

The postcard vote fell well short of the 70% support level required by the revised NTC procedures for a plan including speed humps. (The previous required support level had been 60%.)

Following this vote, several neighborhood residents expressed concern to the NTC Staff and the NTCC that the vote did not accurately reflect the level of neighborhood support for the Plan. These residents provided information to the NTCC that appeared to indicate misunderstandings regarding the NTC procedure and the voting process. Because this was the first project to employ these new procedures, and in view of the evidence presented by the residents, the NTCC directed that a second vote be held on the Plan, following informal consultation with the Board. A new open house was held on April 21, 2009. The vote was taken over the ensuing month, with a deadline of May 19, 2009. As with the previous vote, the second vote was conducted by postcard.

The second vote indicated a significantly higher level of support for the Plan than the first vote, but still short of the required 70% level. Out of 53 occupied households within the area of impact (of a total of 55 households), the vote was 35 in favor and 18 opposed. The 18 "no" votes include four that did not respond at all, in accordance with the NTC Program's process rules. Thus, the Plan was supported by approximately 66.0% (35 of 53) households.[1] Consequently, the NTCC is not recommending the N. Kensington Street Project for approval and funding.

Program Funding. If the Board approves funding of the Fourth Road North Plan, the NTC Program will have approximately $350,000 of unallocated funding. Based on historical experience, these funds should be adequate for perhaps three additional NTC projects. As the Board is aware, the FY 2010 Budget provides no capital funds for the NTC Program for this coming fiscal year beginning July 1, 2009.

Reductions to the budgeted capital and staffing over the past several fiscal years, combined with the elimination of capital funding in the current year, have severely limited the ability of NTC Program to address most of the many streets with verified speeding problems that remain in the Program queue.

Finally, I note that for what I believe is the first time since the inception of the NTC Program a decade ago, the FY 2010 Pay-Go General Capital Projects Fund document does not describe and discuss the NTC Program. Indeed, the document does not even mention the NTC Program. I had requested, during the advisory group work session and in written comments submitted on behalf of the NTCC, that the FY 2010 Budget document discuss the status of the NTC Program. The omission of such a discussion may create uncertainty regarding the Program's future.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely

Kevin M. Sweeney

Kevin M. Sweeney, Chair
Neighborhood Traffic Calming Committee

cc: Jay Fisette, Vice Chairman
Mary Hynes, Member
Christopher Zimmerman, Member
J. Walter Tejada, Member
Members, NTCC

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[1] Of those households that affirmatively voted, 71.4% (35 of 49) supported the Plan. Of the households with property that fronts directly on N. Kensington Street, 76.9% (20 of 26) supported the Plan. Of the households on the connected side-streets, 55.5% (15 of 27) supported the Plan.

Attachment 2

Mr. Jeff Sikes, Chief
Traffic Calming Team
Arlington County Department of Environmental Services
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 900
Arlington, VA. 22201

Dear Mr. Sikes

Thank you for your group's selection of 4th Road North from North Montague Street to North Manchester Street with our 3rd traffic calming project located in Boulevard Manor Civic Association (BMCA). During the last few months under the general guidance of Mr. Ron Hicks, our impacted neighbors of 4th Road N project have participated in a 4-meeting process to arrive at a project consensus of traffic calming elements. All elements are based on the applicable Neighborhood Traffic Calming Manual and recommendations of the Arlington County's street design team. Based on the petition process completed in early September, 100 percent of the impacted residents have signed yes. The petition documents have already been provided to your staff by Mr. Paul Svercl, Vice President of BMCA, as of mid-September, 2008.

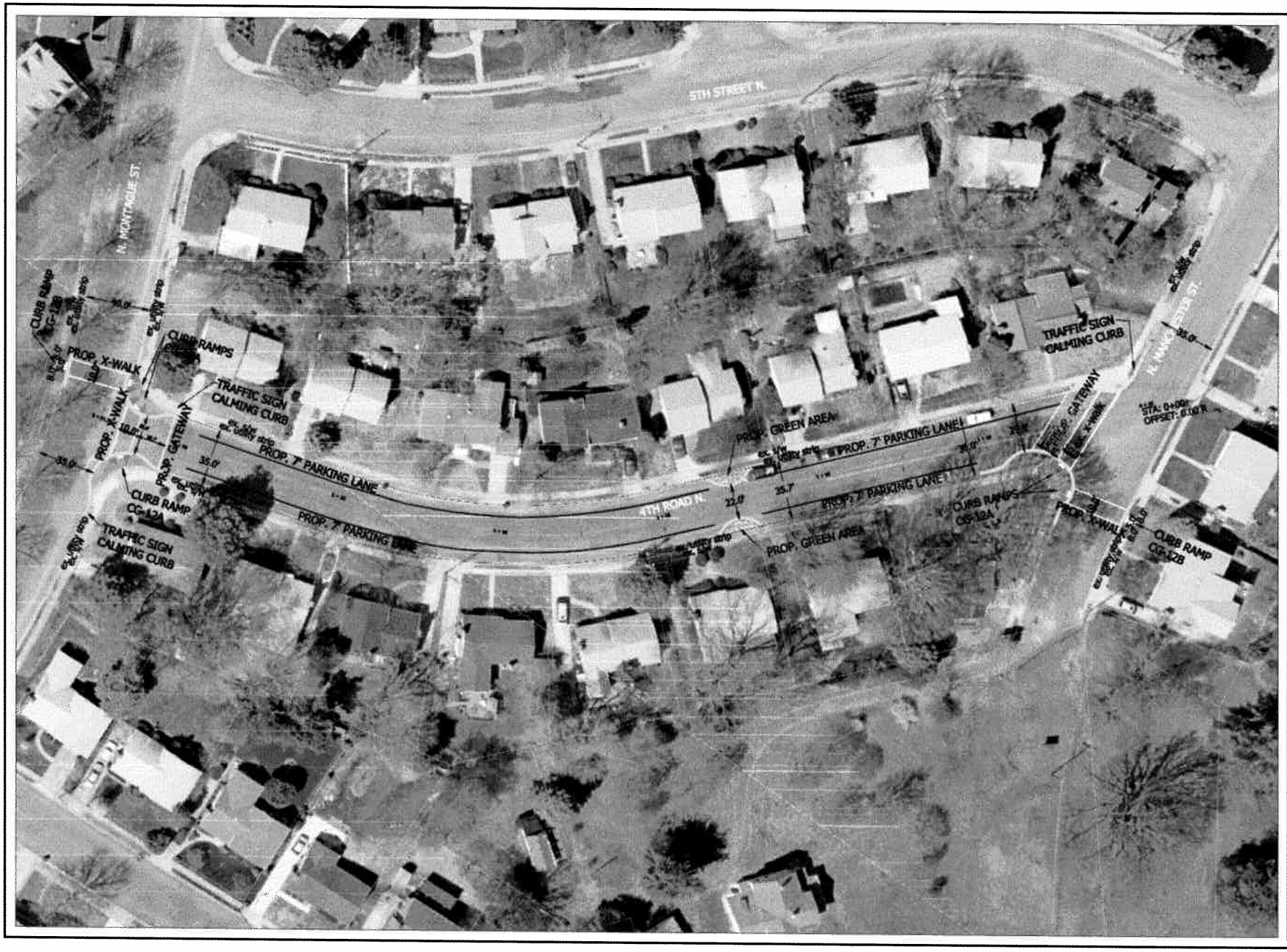
We are happy to report that the Boulevard Manor Civic Association Board has reviewed the 4th Road N proposal and fully support application of all elements as proposed for the 4th Road N project.

If there are additional things that BMCA must do, then please advise.

Sincerely,

Chuck Norton
President
Boulevard Manor Civic Association

Figure 1



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DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Engineering & Capital Projects Division
Engineering Bureau
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 813
Arlington, VA 22201
Phone: 703.228.3628
Fax: 703.228.3666

Seal

Approvals	Date
DESIGN TEAM SUPERVISOR	
ENGINEERING BUREAU CHIEF	
WATER, SEWER STREETS BUREAU CHIEF	
TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR	

Revisions	Date

Project Name and Location

4th Road N.

Proposed Plan - Option #1
4th Road N.
N. Manchester St to N. Montague St.

Designed: JR
Drawn: JR
Checked: JJ
Miss Utility Transmittal #:

Filename: 4th Rd N-Presentation.dwg
Path: C:\Users\TCOX\4th Rd N-N Manchester St N Montague St
Plotted: June 15, 2009
Plotted by: Jrojas

Scale: Hor: 1" = 25'

Sheet
1 of 1