



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of April 20, 2024

DATE: April 10, 2024

SUBJECT: Ordinance to amend, reenact and recodify Chapter 14.2 (Motor Vehicles and Traffic), Section 14.2-12(a) of the Code of Arlington County, Virginia concerning maximum and minimum speed limits by decreasing the speed limit on the following corridors:

1. Military Road from Nelly Custis Drive to Langston Boulevard
2. North Carlin Springs Road from North Glebe Road to North George Mason Drive
3. North George Mason Drive from North Carlin Springs Road to Arlington Boulevard
4. Fairfax Drive from North Kirkwood Road to I-66 ramps
5. 10th Street North from Washington Boulevard to Kirkwood Drive

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt an ordinance to amend, reenact and recodify Chapter 14.2 (Motor Vehicles and Traffic) Section 14.2-12(a) of the Code of Arlington County, Virginia concerning maximum and minimum speed limits by decreasing the speed limit on the above-mentioned corridors.

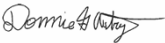
ISSUES: This is a request for County Board approval of the proposed speed limit decreases on segments of Military Road, North Carlin Springs Road, North George Mason Drive, Fairfax Drive, and 10th Street North. There are no outstanding issues.

SUMMARY: The State Code authorizes local governing bodies to enact and enforce ordinances to increase or decrease the speed limits within its boundaries, provided such increase or decrease is based upon a traffic engineering investigation. The Department of Environmental Services, Division of Transportation has conducted a study on each of the above-mentioned corridors.

The results of the studies recommend that the speed limit be decreased from 30 miles per hour (mph) to 25 mph on the studied segments of Military Road, North Carlin Springs Road, North George Mason Drive, Fairfax Drive, and 10th Street North.

BACKGROUND: Speed limits are determined by ordinance based upon a traffic engineering investigation, in accordance with Section 46.2-1300 A.1 of the Code of Virginia and Section 14.2-12 of the County Code. As part of the Streets Element of the Master Transportation Plan, a policy was established to design streets to generally favor lower vehicle speeds without impeding

County Manager: MJS / Mic

County Attorney: MNC 

Staff: Andrea Wilkinson, DES/DOT/TEO

or diverting existing vehicle volumes. The policy objective encourages slowing traffic to safer speeds with respect to the surrounding land uses. One of the implementation actions for the policy is the adoption of lower speed limits for arterial streets on which there are high volumes of pedestrian crossings and higher density land development.

The Arlington County Vision Zero policy supports the reduction of drivers' speed. The Vision Zero Action Plan notes that speeding contributes to about a quarter of both fatal and serious crashes. Action item B5 (Speed Management) calls for a review of posted speeds on roadways within the County with speed limits of 30 mph and above.

The following 30 mph corridors were reviewed under these policies:

1. Military Road from North Glebe Road to Langston Boulevard
2. Nelly Custis Drive from Lorcom Lane to Military Road
3. North Carlin Springs Road from North Glebe Road to Arlington Boulevard
4. South Carlin Springs Road from Arlington Boulevard to Columbia Pike
5. Williamsburg Boulevard from North Glebe Road to 29th Street North (County line)
6. North Roosevelt Street from 17th Street North to Falls Church City line
7. North Sycamore Street from Williamsburg Boulevard to 17th Street North
8. North George Mason Drive from Yorktown Boulevard to Arlington Boulevard
9. South George Mason Drive from Arlington Boulevard to Fairfax County line
10. North Westmoreland Street from Arlington County line to Fairfax Drive
11. Fairfax Drive from North Kirkwood Road to I-66 ramps
12. 10th Street North from Arlington Boulevard to Washington Boulevard

DISCUSSION: The Department of Environmental Services (DES), Division of Transportation has conducted engineering studies on the listed corridors. These studies compiled data on speed statistics, collisions, traffic volumes, current and anticipated pedestrian and bicyclist activity, adjacent land uses and development patterns, future projects, and roadway characteristics. The data were evaluated to determine if the existing speed limits are appropriate, or if a modification to the speed limit is recommended to improve safety. These engineering studies formed the basis of staff's recommendation to amend the code to lower the speed limits along several of the corridors.

Several of the studied corridors are not recommended for a speed limit reduction at this time. Those that are recommended for a reduction include locations where a combination of factors support a reduction, such as where an elevated crash rate is shown, there is a nearby generator that results in a greater number of vulnerable users such as pedestrians and bicyclists along the segment, or where the geometry and/or character of the roadway encourages a reduced driving speed.

Military Road from Nelly Custis Drive to Langston Boulevard is classified as a minor arterial roadway. There are low density residential homes along much of the segment, with houses of worship and a public library also within the segment, as well as a commercial zone at the Langston Boulevard end. A segment of Military Road passes through the designated school zone for Dorothy Hamm Middle School, which has a lowered speed limit during school start and end

times when school is in session. Relatively high pedestrian crossings were noted at the uncontrolled marked crossing within the school zone. Additionally, the crash rate in this segment was higher than other studied segments of Military Road, with 14 crashes in the six-year analysis period. Bicycle use is accommodated by incorporating markings for bike lanes and sharrows into the roadway design and usage. A lowered speed limit of 25 mph is recommended to improve multimodal safety along this section of Military Road.

North Carlin Springs Road from North Glebe Road to North George Mason Drive is classified as a minor arterial roadway with residential homes, mixed use businesses, and a senior living community abutting the segment. Data shows that the corridor experiences a relatively high number of daily pedestrian and bike crossings at uncontrolled intersections. The corridor also has a relatively high crash rate, including three crashes involving pedestrians in the six-year collision history review. The segment has one travel lane in each direction as well as on-street parking and marked bike lanes. Staff recommends reducing the speed in this section of North Carlin Springs Road to 25 mph to increase safety for multimodal users of the roadway.

North George Mason Drive from North Carlin Springs Road to Arlington Boulevard is classified as a principal arterial roadway and carries approximately 22,000 vehicles per day. A portion of the segment passes through the designated school zone for Barrett Elementary School. Narrowed travel lanes and parking on both sides of the street in much of the segment encourages lower driving speeds than on other studied segments of George Mason Drive. Medium density multi-family housing abuts most of the segment, with the elementary school and community center completing the road-adjacent uses. These uses result in a comparatively high number of pedestrian and bicycle crossings at the uncontrolled marked crosswalks within this segment. In consideration of these factors, staff recommends the reduction of the speed limit in this section of North George Mason Drive to 25 mph.

Fairfax Drive from North Kirkwood Road to the I-66 ramps is classified as a minor arterial roadway between North Kirkwood Road and North Glebe Road and as a principal arterial roadway between North Glebe Road and the I-66 ramps. Collected data shows that the median driving speeds along this busy metro corridor, are below the posted 30 mph speed limit. Given the high-density residential and mixed-use development zoning, along with the medium and high-density office uses, the pedestrian and bicycle activity along this corridor is also high. The crash rate is shown to be elevated, with 18 of the overall 162 crashes in the six-year analysis period involving pedestrians, and six crashes resulting in severe injuries. To fulfill the Vision Zero objective of eliminating fatal and severe crash trends and to improve overall safety for all users, staff recommends reducing the speed limit to 25 mph along this active corridor of Fairfax Drive.

The roadway segment of 10th Street North from Washington Boulevard to Kirkwood Drive is classified as a minor arterial roadway with medium density mixed use zoning and commercial uses abutting the segment. Higher multimodal uses were documented on 10th Street North as this section borders the Clarendon Metro area. This is also shown in the relatively high volumes of pedestrian and bicycle crossings that data collection efforts documented along the segment. Although not currently on the High Injury Network, this segment experiences comparatively higher crash rates than the other studied arterials, with nine pedestrian-involved crashes and three

severe injury crashes documented in the six-year collision history review. For these reasons, it is recommended to lower the posted speed limit from the existing 30 mph limit to 25 mph.

Following an appropriate Board approval, new speed limit signs will be placed in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Level of Engagement: Communicate

Outreach Methods: Public notice has been provided in accordance with the Code of Virginia 15.2-2204 and published in the Washington Times newspaper. Additionally, direct notification was sent to the civic associations that include or border the roadway segments that have proposed speed limit reductions including the Donaldson Run Civic Association, the Woodmont Civic Association, the Cherrydale Citizens Association, the Bluemont Civic Association, the Buckingham Community Civic Association, the Arlington Forest Citizens Association, the Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association, the Clarendon-Courthouse Civic Association, the Lyon Park Citizens Association, and the Ashton Heights Civic Association to inform them of the proposed speed limit reduction in their respective neighborhoods. Notification was also posted on DES social media outlets as well as distributed to Arlington Public Schools, property managers, and organizations along the affected corridors.

Community Feedback: The speed limit studies were conducted in alignment with the County's Master Transportation Plan and Vision Zero Action Plan. Community feedback generally supported the proposed decreases in speed limits and requested additional speed management measures and enforcement where speeding issues exist. Although the majority of comments supported the speed limit decreases, two received comments were in opposition of any new or existing speed management measures.

FISCAL IMPACT: The cost of purchasing and installing speed limit signs to reflect these changes will be an average of approximately \$700 per corridor, for a total of \$3,500. These funds are available in the Fiscal Year 2024 Department of Environmental Services' Transportation Engineering and Operations operating budget.

Attachment 1

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND, REENACT, AND RECODIFY CHAPTER 14.2 (MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC), SECTION 14.2-12(A) OF THE CODE OF ARLINGTON COUNTY, Virginia CONCERNING MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM SPEED LIMITS BY DECREASING THE SPEED LIMIT ON THE FOLLOWING CORRIDORS:

1. Military Road from Nelly Custis Drive to Langston Boulevard
2. North Carlin Springs Road from North Glebe Road to North George Mason Drive
3. North George Mason Drive from North Carlin Springs Road to Arlington Boulevard
4. Fairfax Drive from North Kirkwood Road to I-66 ramps
5. 10th Street North from Washington Boulevard to Kirkwood Drive

- I. BE IT ORDAINED Chapter 14.2, Section 14.2-12(A) of the Code of Arlington County, Virginia is hereby amended, reenacted, and recodified to read, in pertinent part, as follows:**

Chapter 14.2 Motor Vehicles and Traffic

§ 14.2-12. Maximum and Minimum Speed Limits.

- A. No person shall drive any vehicle upon a highway in this County at a speed in excess of twenty-five (25) miles per hour except upon the following highways or portions thereof on which the speed limits shall be as follows:

Thirty (30) miles per hour upon:

North 10th Street between Arlington Boulevard and North Washington Boulevard.

~~Fairfax Drive between North Monroe Street and North Glebe Road.~~

George Washington Parkway, marked portions either side of Key Bridge.

Nellie Custis Drive from Lorcom Lane to Military Road.

South Arlington Mill Drive from Shirlington Road to Walter Reed Drive.

~~North Carlin Springs Road from North Glebe Road to Arlington Boulevard.~~

North Carlin Springs Road from North George Mason Drive to Arlington Boulevard.

South Carlin Springs Road from Arlington Boulevard to Columbia Pike.

Quaker Lane from Shirley Highway to King Street.

Walter Reed Drive from Columbia Pike to King Street.

North Westmoreland Street from Arlington County line to Fairfax Drive.

Chain Bridge Road from North Glebe Road to Fairfax County Line.

Washington Boulevard from Kirkwood Road to Lee Highway.

Williamsburg Boulevard from North Glebe Road to North 29th Street.

Old Dominion Drive from Lorcom Lane to North Abingdon Street.

~~Military Road from North Glebe Road to Lee Highway.~~

Military Road from North Glebe Road to Nelly Custis Drive.

South George Mason Drive from Arlington Boulevard to Fairfax County line.

South Four Mile Run Drive (West Roadway) from Columbia Pike to South Walter Reed Drive.

Washington Boulevard from North Pershing Drive to North 10th Street.

Columbia Pike from South Oak Street to South Dinwiddie Street.

Wilson Boulevard from North Glebe Road to Fairfax County Line.

South Four Mile Run Drive from South Walter Reed Drive to Shirlington Road.

~~North George Mason Drive from Yorktown Boulevard to Arlington Boulevard.~~

North George Mason Drive from Yorktown Boulevard to North Carlin Springs Road.

North Roosevelt Street from North 17th Street to Falls Church City line.

North Sycamore Street from Williamsburg Boulevard to 17th Street North.

Fairfax Drive from Little Falls Road to Washington Boulevard.

Fort Myer Drive from Key Bridge to westbound Lee Highway.

North Glebe Road from Arlington Boulevard to Lee Highway.

South Glebe Road from Walter Reed Drive to Arlington Boulevard.

Lee Highway from the Federal line at the approach to Key Bridge at Rosslyn to North Nash Street.

Lee Highway from North Quincy Street to Falls Church City Line.

North Lynn Street from westbound Lee Highway to Key Bridge.

Washington Boulevard from Lee Highway to North Westmoreland Street.

II. The remaining subsections of 14.2-12(A) not hereby amended shall remain as previously enacted.