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MEMORANDUM

TO: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager EMD

FROM: Diane N. Tradd, Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

DATE: February 4, 2020

SUBJECT: MOTION OF 11/14/19 BY COUNCILOR ELLIOTT
REQUEST CITY MANAGER HAVE TRANSPORTATION ENGINEER EVALUATE TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT ON WEST MEADOW ROAD

The transportation staff is aware of the concerns of residents regarding driver speed and driver behavior along West Meadow Road. Traffic calming measures could be effective at reducing the speed of traffic and increasing safety for residents and students crossing at the Wang School and Pawtucketville Elementary School. Reducing speeding traffic improves public safety in the City.

There is a potential for a change or shift in traffic on the streets in Pawtucketville due to the new Market Basket development at 677-705 Pawtucket Boulevard, which is less than 1 mile from the intersection of Varnum Avenue and West Meadow Road. Traffic counts were taken at the following locations in 2017, to provide a baseline of traffic for the project impacts:

- Varnum and West Meadow Road
- Old Ferry Road/Site Driveway
- Rourke Bridge/Pawtucket Boulevard
- Wood/Princeton Street
- Varnum Avenue/Old Ferry Road
- Old Ferry/Pawtucket Boulevard
- Rourke Bridge/Middlesex Street
- Various Points along Pawtucket Boulevard

As part of the mitigation for additional trips generated by the Market Basket, the City is constructing a roundabout at the intersection of Old Ferry Road and Varnum Avenue, which is wholly funded by the project. Market Basket/Demoulas has committed to funding a $30,000 traffic calming study, which will be run by the City, along Varnum Avenue and adjacent side streets. In addition, they have committed to a robust traffic monitoring plan which will perform traffic counts at the above locations from 6 months to 5 years post-project, to confirm their design engineer's projections for Level of Service (LOS) and additional trips on the adjacent streets. The monitoring program allows the City to request additional traffic mitigation measures from Market Basket if the actual traffic doesn't conform substantially to the projected traffic.

Additionally, a major component of the traffic in Pawtucketville is related to the Rourke Bridge. MassDOT's preliminary design effort to determine the proposed alignment and cross-section for the Rourke Bridge is underway. The traffic consultant for the project has met with the City and is in the process of developing their traffic modeling for this section of the City, including volumes of traffic coming from Dracut, Tyngsboro and New Hampshire to cross the bridge. They will provide reports to MassDOT and to the City that will include traffic volumes, AADT and importantly, origin and destination paths. That data will be invaluable in helping the City update our traffic counts, turning movements and data regarding commuter traffic on our City streets in Pawtucketville.

The transportation staff is concerned that performing a traffic calming study prior to the completion of the Market Basket will result in recommendations that may not be appropriate post-project. Once the Market Basket is completed and has been in operation for 6 months, the traffic monitoring plan will provide detailed data that can be used to make better-informed decisions about what measures will be appropriate along the impacted streets. For instance, some traffic calming measures can only be implemented with traffic counts below 3,500 vehicles per day (VPD).

The transportation staff recommends performing a comprehensive traffic calming study along Varnum Avenue, West Meadow Road and side streets adjacent to the Market Basket, after the opening of the Market Basket in the summer 2020 and the initial 6 month monitoring report is received. Doing so will give the City ample data to analyze traffic patterns, volumes and make a recommendations for appropriate mitigation measures.

NV/ns

cc: Natasha Vance, Transportation Engineer
Alan Heredia, Assistant Transportation Engineer