



MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 10, 2013

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: T. N. Treschuk, Chief of Police
Craig Simoneau, Director of Public Works

VIA: Barbara B. Matthews

SUBJECT: Action Report FA-2013-3
Speed Camera on Maryland Avenue

This memorandum is in response to a request to place a speed camera on Maryland Avenue to address residents' concerns about speeding and pedestrian safety in that area between Great Falls Rd and Fleet Street. Staff has reviewed the request and determined that State law and the topography of the area eliminate speed cameras as a tool to reduce speeds in this area.

State law specifies that speed cameras can only be deployed on residential roadways and school zones with speed limits that do not exceed 35 miles per hour. Maryland Ave is classified as an arterial roadway between Great Falls Rd and South Washington Street. It is classified as a business district roadway between South Washington Street and Fleet Street. These two classifications do not meet the state definition of a residential roadway.

Staff reviewed the Maryland State Highway Administration Guidelines for Automated Speed Enforcement Systems in School Zones - dated January 2011. Although Maryland Annotated Code allows school zones to be established within a 1/2 mile radius of a school (this 1/2 mile circle is considered a "school area") the Guidelines recommend that a school zone should not exceed 500 feet approaching or beyond the school or the school activity. The Guidelines specifically states that "a school zone is to be established along each section of road where a pre-secondary school directly fronts (that is, school children enter the school from) the road."

It is true that these guidelines do not prohibit the City from establishing a school zone along that stretch of the road (Falls Road or Maryland Avenue). However, if the purpose of establishing a school zone is to install a speed camera, it is important to follow the guidelines for Automated Speed Enforcement Systems in School Zones and not to designate any portion of Maryland Avenue as a school zone since it is not adjacent to any portion of the school property. Falls

Road, although adjacent to the school property, is owned by SHA and it will unlikely be approved for such designation since students do not walk along Falls Road.

The topography of Maryland Avenue, due to the vertical curvature (uphill and downhill) of the road would also present challenges for the accurate operation of a speed camera.

The City has taken steps to address speeding on Maryland Ave. The City's Traffic and Transportation Division added a speed indicator sign for westbound traffic on Maryland Avenue this past summer. Its location was very carefully determined to capture those drivers who just came off I-270 before heading into the residential neighborhood. It is also at the bottom of the downhill slope so that drivers would see it from an adequate distance and recognize their relatively fast speed (since they are going downhill). Finally, it is located in an area not blocked by tree branches so that the solar panel would be exposed to the sunlight necessary for its operation.

With this new speed indicator sign on Maryland Avenue, this road currently has two signs, out of a total of eight signs installed in Rockville. The first sign on Maryland Avenue was installed around 2005 near its intersection with S. Washington Avenue, and has proved to be effective in reducing speed on this section of the road.

The Rockville City Police monitors Maryland Avenue as much as practical and possible. We have been keeping statistics on these efforts. Since 1994, Rockville City police have issued 7,588 tickets on Maryland Avenue, and 6,847 warnings. In calendar year 2013 to date we have issued 157 tickets and 291 warnings. In addition, over the past three years, we have also conducted specific traffic enforcement details based upon citizen concerns as follows:

2011

4 Traffic Details/Details

92 Traffic Stops

10 Traffic Offenses/Traffic problems

Traffic Details/Details were at the following locations:

MONUMENT PARK RP @ 550 MARYLAND AVE, ROCKVILLE

150 MARYLAND AVE/100 FLEET ST, ROCKVILLE

200 MARYLAND AVE/104 W ARGYLE ST, ROCKVILLE

500 BLOCK MARYLAND AVE, ROCKVILLE

2012

0 Traffic Details/Details

57 Traffic Stops

17 Traffic Offenses/Traffic Problems

2013

2 Traffic Details/Details

39 Traffic Stops

8 Traffic Offenses/Traffic Problems

Traffic Details/Details were at the following locations:

200 MARYLAND AVE AT 104 W ARGYLE ST, ROCKVILLE

MARYLAND AVE @ FLEET ST, ROCKVILLE