



MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Finance Committee

From: Rich Olson, City Manager
Paul Fredette, Public Utilities Director

Date: August 3, 2016

Re: Consideration – Cost to Post Speed Limit Signs on City Streets

BACKGROUND:

City residents are increasingly concerned about the safety of the City and with particular attention to the speed of vehicular traffic on City Streets. Currently, the City's Code of Ordinances establishes a 25 MPH speed limit for a few streets; while other streets have been posted over the years with 25 MPH speed limit signs with no authorizing City Ordinance. Streets within the City for which the speed limit is not specifically governed by a City Ordinance are regulated by the State (with a concurring local ordinance) and have a default speed limit of 35 MPH. The streets within the City that are posted for a 25 MPH speed limit without benefit of a specific City Ordinance are in conflict with State regulations. Current speed limits on City Streets in Elizabeth City seem to be intertwined into an illogical pattern that drivers have a difficult time intuitively knowing what the speed limits are. Further, the streets posted for a 25 MPH speed limit, without being ordained by the Council, are likely unenforceable.

ANALYSIS:

Based on recent City Council discussions, it appears the Councilmembers would like to have enforceable, posted 25 MPH speed limits on all the City Streets. Making the speed limit for all City Streets 25 MPH will address the overriding concern for safe vehicle operations in the City. It will also eliminate confusion that may exist because of an intertwined and illogical pattern of speed limits in the City.

In order to establish 25 MPH speed limits for all City streets, the City Council must adopt an ordinance, which names each City street specifically. Further, the entrance to all City streets from State roads must have a sign posted announcing the 25 MPH speed limit.

Staff has reviewed a map of all streets in the City. The map shows the location of all 25 MPH signs in the City with blue dots. The red dots show the recommended location for additional 25 MPH signs to be erected. Generally new 25 MPH signs are recommended at the beginning of all City Streets that start at an intersection with a State road. There are approximately 130 locations in the City where new 25 MPH signs are being recommended. The cost of each speed limit sign is \$50, which includes the sign, a sign post and concrete to stabilize the base of the sign post. There are also approximately seven 35 MPH and four 20 MPH signs on City Streets that should be replaced with 25 MPH signs. The total cost of new speed limit signs will be about \$7,000.

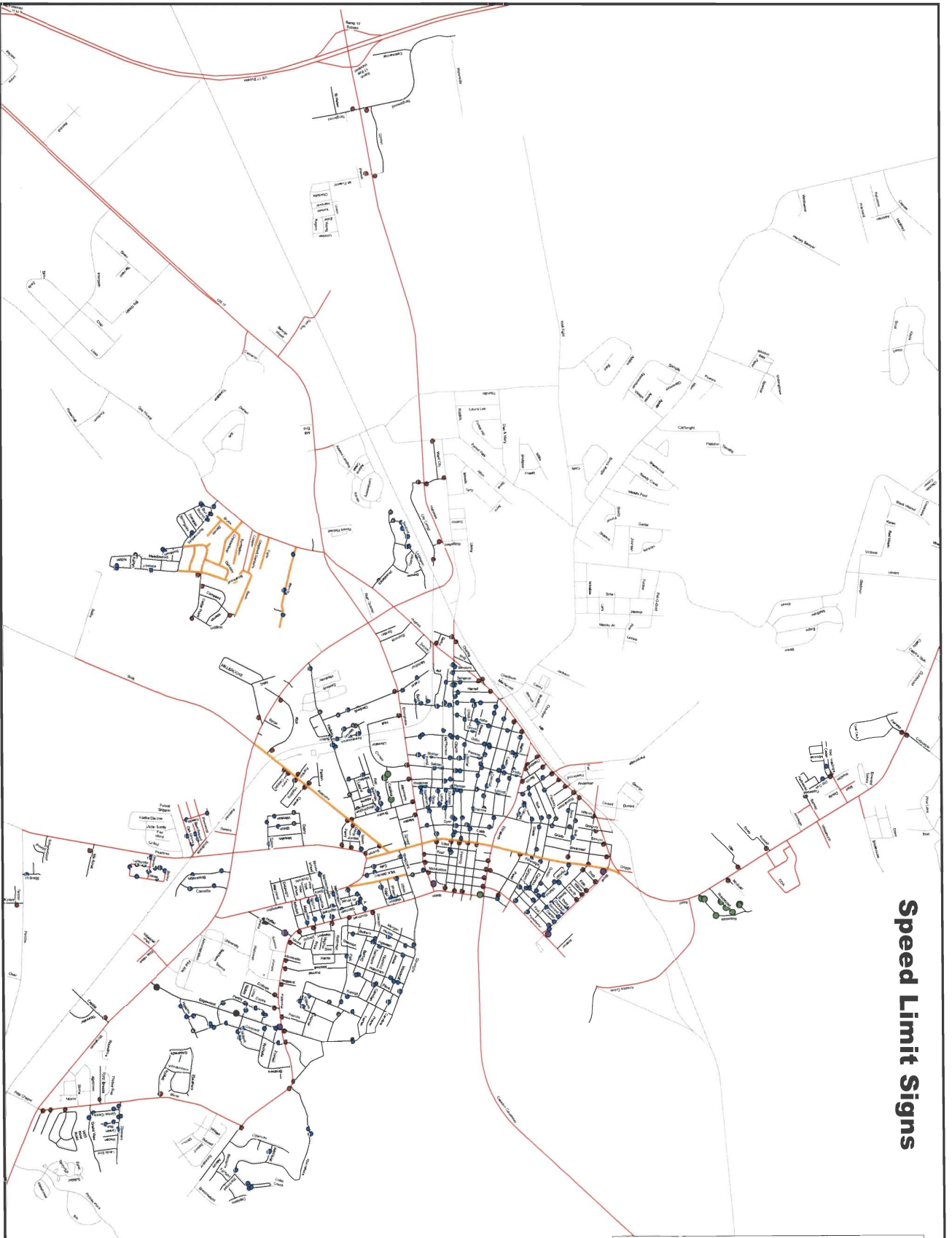
There has also been discussion about the possibility of seeking a local Bill establishing a City-wide speed limit during the 2017 long session of the General Assembly. Staff is seeking direction regarding the approach that members of the Council wish to take.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

By motion, recommend that the City Council direct staff to either call for a public hearing to consider adopting an ordinance establishing a 25 MPH speed limit on all City streets or pursue introduction of a local Bill by the General Assembly in the 2017 session establishing the speed limit on all City of Elizabeth City controlled roads at 25 MPH.

RCO/vdw

Speed Limit Signs



Legend

- New 25 mph
- 25mph signs
- 20mph signs
- 35mph signs

Centerlines

- County
- City
- NC DOT
- DOT-existing 25mph