

January 28, 2016

Chairman Johnson and Traffic and Parking Board members,

Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane are unsafe due to excessive vehicle speeds. We ask that you recommend that the City Manager approve 25 mph speed limits on these streets and take additional actions, as necessary to achieve speeds near 25 mph. Information in support of Docket Item #6 for the February 1, 2016 Traffic and Parking Board meeting is attached.

Residents are concerned about the risk of serious injury walking along or across these streets, entering and exiting their driveways, or attempting to get out of their neighborhoods via one of the more than a dozen un-signalized intersections. Residents are also concerned for the safety of our youth who use these streets going to and from one of six schools in the area, including four high schools. All of these concerns have a common thread: vehicle speeds are well in excess of 25 mph, a commonly-accepted speed in Alexandria's residential areas.

The requested actions are strongly supported by the community:

- Seminary Hill Association (SHA) members voted 55 to 8 to support 25 mph speed limits, with \$200 fines, education and enforcement on Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane at their annual meeting in November.
- 267 Alexandria residents signed a petition requesting 25 mph speed limits, with \$200 fines, education and enforcement. These residents include 119 people from 86 of 103 (83.5%) households/properties on Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane.
- A plurality of respondents supported 25 mph speed limits, with \$200 fines, education and enforcement on Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane in a "W. Taylor Run traffic congestion" survey, in advance of any City education and outreach about the extent of safety concerns from excessive speeds on Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane.

We ask that you recommend that the City Manager approve 25 mph speed limits as the City staff has proposed, with one modification and one follow-on action.

- Please recommend modifying the proposed extent of 25 mph speed limits on Seminary Road to include the section between N. Pickett Street and Kenmore Avenue. This section of Seminary Road is heavily used by people who walk, to /from Francis C. Hammond Middle School and the bus stop at Kenmore Avenue and Seminary Road.
- We ask that you recommend that City staff monitor the effectiveness of proposed measures (25 mph speed limits, education and enforcement), and take additional actions, such as \$200 fines and/or engineering solutions, as necessary to achieve safe speeds on Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane.

Sincerely,



Jim Durham

For the Make Our Streets Safe (MOSS) core group:

Fran Terrell, 1005 N. Quaker Lane
Chris Tampio, 815 N. Quaker Lane
Amy Ryan, 1123 Francis Hammond Pkwy
Kerry Adams, 509 N. Quaker Lane

Jim Durham, 622 Fort Williams Pkwy
Christine Michaelis, 3976 Seminary Road
Kevin Durkin, 3908 Seminary Road
Carolyn Griglione, 1416 N. Ivanhoe Street

cc:

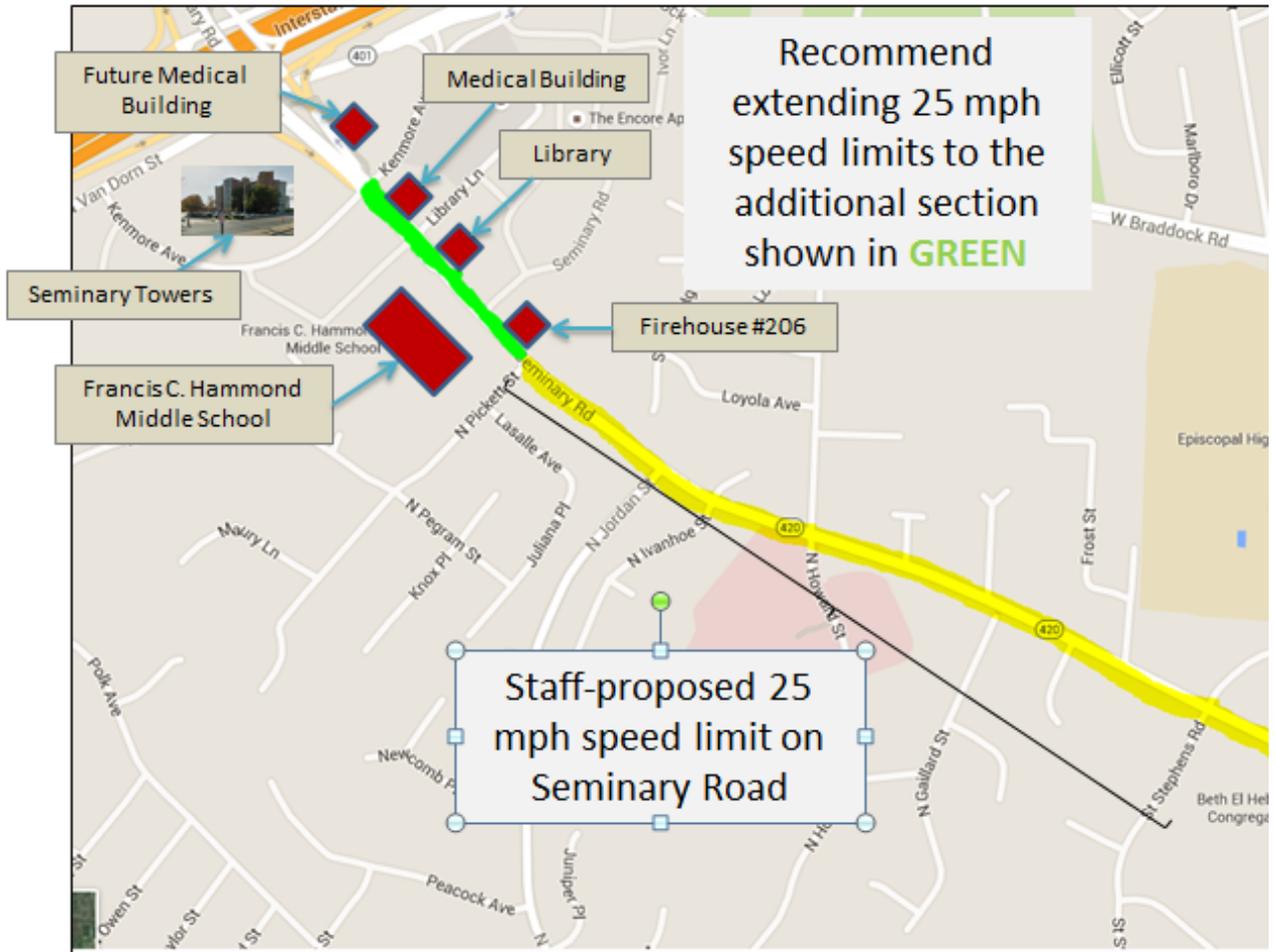
- (1) Mr. Mark Jinks, City Manager
- (2) Ms. Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager
- (3) Mr. Yon Lambert, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES)

Attachments:

- (1) Map of community-proposed extension of 25 mph speed limits on Seminary Road from N. Pickett St. to Kenmore Ave. on Seminary Road.
- (2) Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- (3) Seminary Hill Association, Inc. (SHA) letter of November 12, 2016
- (4) Letter to Mr. Yon Lambert, with a petition from 267 residents for 25 mph speed limits, with \$200 fines, education and enforcement on Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane.

Attachment (1) to Make Our Streets Safe (MOSS) core group letter of January 28, 2016

Recommend modifying proposed 25 mph speed limits on Seminary Road to include the section between N. Pickett Street and Kenmore Avenue.



Map with Seminary Road between N. Pickett St. and Kenmore Ave. shown in GREEN

This section of Seminary Road is heavily used by people who walk including students at Francis C. Hammond Middle School, residents at Seminary Towers, and people using the bus stop at Kenmore Avenue and Seminary Road, including many people coming and going from the Medical Building at 4660 Kenmore Avenue.

Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What are the safety concerns on Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane?**
 - a. Excessive speeds – 85th percentile speeds are about 43 mph on both Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane – too fast for neighborhood streets
 - i. Speeds of 25 mph significantly reduce the risk of crashes and the risk serious injury to pedestrians if a crash occurs, compared to higher speeds¹
 - ii. 25 mph is the commonly-used speed limit for neighborhood streets in Alexandria.
 - b. Walking safety
 - i. People are afraid to walk on sidewalks next to high speed traffic
 - ii. Crossing four lanes of traffic e.g. to/from schools and bus stops is hazardous
 - iii. Parents will not allow their children to walk or bike to school
 - c. A high rate of crashes – more than 60 reported crashes over a 5 year period on each street
 - i. Residents have noted additional speeding-related crashes, such as “curb jumping” not included in police reports.
 - d. Entry /exit risks - People are afraid to enter/exit side streets (including 17 intersections without traffic signals), and driveways (about 50 driveways on each street)
 - i. More than 325 households are directly impacted by the excessive speeds, including 225 homes on cul-de-sacs where the only access is via an un-signalized intersection on either Seminary Road or N. Quaker Lane.
2. **What are your goals?** To make Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane safe for all, safe for people to cross and walk along these streets, to bike on these streets, and to drive.
3. **Won't 25 mph speed limits make congestion worse?** Seminary Road and N. Quaker Lane both experience back-ups during rush hours, caused by throughput limitations at intersections and other chokepoints, such as the ramp to Telegraph Road from Duke Street. The extent of these back-ups will not be impacted by 25 mph speed limits between intersections.
4. **Are you concerned about traffic volume?** Yes, but we have prioritized safety as our primary focus. Efforts aimed at volume reduction on just one or two streets would have a negative impact on other streets and neighborhoods, a consequence the group wants to avoid.

¹ The risk of severe injury to a pedestrian struck by a vehicle increases from 25% at 23 mph to 50% at 31 mph, and increases to 75% at 39 mph. AAA - Foundation for Traffic Safety, “Impact Speed and a Pedestrian’s Risk of Severe Injury or Death”, by Tefft, Brian C., Senior Research Associate, 2011¹.

5. **Won't lowering speeds just create more traffic and lengthen the time we are in traffic?**
- a. Lowering speeds increases safety for all, both by lowering risk of a crash and by reducing severity of a crash if one occurs.
 - i. It will also be a safer for people who walk to cross and walk along these streets.
 - ii. It will be safer for people who drive to get in and out of driveways and to access Seminary Road and Quaker Lane at un-signalized intersections.
 - b. Travel time impacts are minimal compared to the safety benefits accrued.
 - i. Driving 25 mph vs. 35 mph would lengthen travel times by less than a minute, i.e. by 54 seconds on N. Quaker Lane (from Duke Street to King Street), and by 58 seconds on Seminary Road (from Kenmore Avenue to N. Quaker Lane).
 - ii. These increases are small compared to several minutes of delays caused by other factors such as rush hour traffic volumes.
6. **Won't lowering speed limits divert traffic to other neighborhoods?**
- a. During non-rush hours, distance determines the preferred routes, since the travel time impacts of 25 mph are extremely small over the short distances involved.
 - b. During rush hours, traffic volume determines preferred routes. See attached illustrations.
7. **Are there examples where lowering speed limits has been demonstrated to lower vehicle speeds or reduce crash rates?** Here are conclusions from Federal research on these questions:
- a. Lowering speed limits *alone* has little impact on speeds. Lowering speed limits reduces speeds only when accompanied by other measures, such as engineering changes and/ or education and enforcement.²
 - b. Lower speed limits can reduce the number and severity of crashes, but only if speeds are reduced. "Crash-incidence or crash severity, or both measures, generally decline whenever speed limits have been reduced."³

² Parker (1997) Effects of Raising and Lowering Speed Limits, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Report, [FHWA-RD-97-084, January 1997](#)

³ Synthesis of Safety Research Related to Speed and Speed Management, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Report, [FHWA-RD-98-154, July 1998](#)