



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: James R. Helmer

SUBJECT: IMPROVEMENTS AT EDEN AVENUE AND WILLIAMS ROAD **DATE:** 01-17-07

Approved

Date

1/23/07

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 1
SNI AREA: Winchester

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the Department of Transportation to improve the Eden Avenue and Williams Road intersection with signage, median islands and marking improvements in lieu of installing a new traffic signal identified in the Adopted 2006-07 Traffic Capital Improvement Budget.

OUTCOME

The recommended action is intended to improve the vehicular and pedestrian conditions at the Eden Avenue and Williams Road intersection.

BACKGROUND

The Approved 2006-07 Traffic Capital Improvement Budget includes funding in the amount of \$2.3 million for several traffic signal projects. One of the funded projects is the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Eden Avenue and Williams Road to replace the existing 4-way stop signs.

Subsequent to the adoption of the budget, the Department of Transportation (DOT) received concerns from the Winchester Strong Neighborhood Initiative community regarding the installation of a traffic signal at this intersection. As a result of the community's concerns, DOT decided to re-evaluate the intersection and to explore whether there were alternate intersection improvements that would provide the appropriate level of traffic and pedestrian enhancements.

ANALYSIS

Current Conditions

Eden Avenue and Williams Road is controlled by stop signs on all four approaches. Williams Road is a two-lane roadway, with a two-way left turn lane that converts to marked left turn pockets at the intersection. Williams Road widens as it approaches Eden Avenue, and vehicles turning right onto Eden Avenue have the ability to do so, even with vehicles occupying both the left turn pocket and through lane.

Previous Warrant Study

DOT initially recommended installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Eden Avenue and Williams Road based upon a warrant study conducted in the spring of 2005 pursuant to Council Policy 2-2. Council Policy 2-2 sets forth the criteria for determining if a traffic signal is warranted at an intersection. Warranted intersections are prioritized based upon accident history, pedestrian activity, proximity to schools or other pedestrian generators, traffic volumes, speed, and other traffic related factors.

Based upon the warrant study conducted approximately one and a half years ago, Eden Avenue and Williams Road was ranked within the top five intersections when compared to other warranted intersections. This ranking was based on the three-year crash history (May 2002 – April 2005) that identified 15 vehicular crashes that could have possibly been corrected by the presence of a traffic signal. The majority of crashes in the past several years involved vehicles traveling east or west along Williams Road failing to stop at the intersection. Absent this crash history, the intersection would have been ranked significantly lower as it had been in years prior to 2002.

This past year, the occurrence of vehicular crashes at this intersection decreased significantly. Through late November, there have been only two vehicular crashes that could potentially have been corrected by a traffic signal. This lower incidence of crashes is more consistent with the level of crashes that have historically occurred at the intersection.

Proposed Improvements

Given that Williams Road widens and has multiple lanes approaching Eden Avenue, installing a supplementary stop sign in the center of Williams Road, for both eastbound and westbound traffic, should substantially increase the likelihood that motorists will observe the all-way stop controls present at the intersection. In turn, this should minimize the number of traffic accidents at the intersection. The stop signs would be installed on small median islands. The median islands will deter vehicles from driving too close to the stop signs.

Other improvements will include: trimming trees on all approaches, repainting of all lane markings, installing stop ahead signs where needed in advance of the intersection and relocating an existing stop sign on the westbound approach closer to the intersection. These improvements will provide the appropriate level of traffic and pedestrian enhancements. DOT would continue to monitor traffic conditions to determine if additional enhancements were needed.

DOT's primary goal is to install improvements that will enhance the safe operation of the intersection of Eden Avenue and Williams Road. DOT believes the proposed improvements accomplish this goal and will do so in a more timely and cost effective manner. The proposed improvements can be installed in 3-4 months; while the design and construction of a traffic signal could take up to 12 months. Additionally, the installation of a traffic signal at this intersection is estimated to cost at least \$350,000. The installation of additional stop signs, small median islands, lane markings and trimming of trees is estimated to cost \$15,000.

Community input

The installation of safety improvements at Eden Avenue and Williams Road was discussed at Winchester Strong Neighborhood Initiative area meetings in September and November 2006. At both of these meetings, the majority of residents expressed concerns about the installation of a traffic signal. The concerns primarily focused on how a traffic signal would change the character of the neighborhood and would potentially increase speeds and volumes on Eden Avenue, where a major traffic calming project along Eden Avenue occurred in 2002-03. Staff initially supported the traffic signal at each meeting but, given the reduction in reported crashes, staff supports a more progressive approach to enhance conditions as requested by the community. Staff will closely monitor traffic flows to ensure safe operations.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Alternative #1: Install traffic signal

Pros: Improves vehicular and pedestrian safety at intersection

Cons: Requires substantial funding and time to implement.

Reason for not recommending: The appropriate level of traffic control needed at this particular intersection can be achieved with a less costly, and timelier solution.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

- Criteria 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater. **(Required: Website Posting)**
- Criteria 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- Criteria 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

While this action does not meet the \$1 million threshold for Criteria 1, this memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the February 6, 2007 Council agenda. In addition, the installation of a traffic signal and other potential options to enhance safety at the Eden Avenue and Williams Road intersection was discussed with community residents at the September 20, 2006 and November 20, 2006 meetings of the Winchester Strong Neighborhood Initiative Area. Considerable outreach was conducted and both meetings were well attended.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT

The recommended action aligns with the Transportation and Aviation Services CSA Outcomes related to Providing a Transportation System that Enhances Community Livability and Providing Safe and Secure Transportation Systems.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

The installation of a traffic signal at this intersection is estimated to cost at least \$350,000. The installation of signs and markings is estimated to cost \$15,000. The balance of funding will remain in the 2006-07 Traffic Capital Improvement Budget ending fund balance for consideration of use in the 2007-08 Traffic Capital Improvement Budget.

BUDGET REFERENCE

Fund #	Appn. #	Appn. Name	Total Appn.	Cost of Project	2006-2007 Adopted Capital Budget Page	Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.)
429	4321	Traffic Signals	\$3,329,000	\$15,000	V-1119	10/17/06 Ord. No. 27888

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
01-17-07

Subject: Improvements at Eden Avenue and Williams Road
Page 5

CEQA

Exempt, File No. PP06-171



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Director of Transportation

For questions please contact Laura Wells, Division Manager, at 975-3725.