

January 10, 2019

Good Afternoon,

On the evening of January 9, 2019, a community meeting was held at Elizabeth Lane Elementary to discuss the recent traffic concerns brought forward by residents of the area surrounding the school. In attendance was Mayor Pro-Tem John Higdon, Town Commissioners Jeff Miller, John Urban, Barbara Dement, and Town Manager Hazen Blodgett, Town Engineer Susan Habina Woolard, and other members of the Matthews Police Department command staff. This was a follow up meeting to the first community meeting held on the evening of October 24, 2018, to address traffic, speed, and pedestrian concerns.

The concerns brought forth from the community on October 24, 2018, included the following:

1. Speed of vehicles on Elizabeth Lane at all hours of the day.
2. Crosswalk safety at Cithara Drive.
3. Lighting along Elizabeth Lane as well as lighting at Cithara Drive and Elizabeth Lane/Hwy. 51 crosswalks.
4. Difficulty navigating the road in front of Elizabeth Lane Elementary due to waiting vehicles for drop-off or pickup of students.

Last night, I presented the 46 residents in attendance with the overview of our problem solving efforts and the actions taken to resolve the issues and alleviate some of their concerns.

Decisions on the actions taken over the past couple months, as well as any future steps to take place, were and are, a joint effort between the Matthews Police Department, Matthews Public Works, Elizabeth Lane Elementary School Administration, and CMS. Our findings, actions, and future steps, are based on analytical data, as well as personal observation by many parties involved. We have collected speed data for analysis on the depth of the problem, observed pedestrian and vehicle actions, and studied lighting layouts in the neighborhood to determine what, if any, actions should be taken to address the concerns.

Problem Solving Efforts

Step 1: Below are the four (4) actionable items identified through the Scanning Process (Scanning Process – purpose is to recognize recurring issues and their respective outcomes on the community):

1. Safety of students crossing Elizabeth Lane due to vehicles not yielding right of way

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2. Ability of vehicles to safely and lawfully navigate Elizabeth Lane during pick up and drop off of students, due to road configuration.
3. Safety of students and other pedestrians due to speeding vehicles.
4. Impact of safety for pedestrians as it relates to inadequate lighting in and around crosswalks

Step 2 and step 3: During these phases of the problem solving effort our goal was to (step 2 - Analysis) identify and understand the causes and depth of problem; and (step 3- Action phase) implement solutions to correct the identified deficiencies.

1. Safety of Students crossing Elizabeth Lane due to vehicles not yielding right of way in pedestrian crosswalks

- (Analysis) Town engineering reviewed sign placement before and at area cross walks
 - Determined placement to be inadequate and in need of refreshment with new more vibrant signs.
 - Locations Included:
 - crosswalk adjacent to Elizabeth lane Elementary
 - Cithara
 - Laurel Fork
- (Analysis) Town Engineering reviewed of school zone markings and signage
 - Determined to not be placed in appropriate locations and in need of refreshing.
- (Actions)
 - Signs will be moved by Engineering and Streets to more effective locations on Elizabeth Lane
 - School zone marking signs will be moved by Engineering and Streets to affectively impact and improve visibility of the school zone
 - All of the signage along Elizabeth Lane will be refreshed

2. Ability of vehicles to safely and lawfully navigate Elizabeth Lane during pick up and drop off of students, due to road configuration.

- (Analysis)
 - Observations by police officers and Chief determined that vehicles are performing illegal U-turns on double yellow lines

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- Observations by Chief determined that vehicles are crossing over double yellow lines to pass waiting vehicles at drop and pick up times.
 - Uncontrolled Left turns into ELE from westbound vehicles during drop off and pick up
 - Engineering is reviewing road configuration and lane markings to ensure safe navigation and possible addition of turn lanes
- (Actions)
 - Illegal U-turns on Elizabeth Lane
 - Letter sent to the School with education material for parents
 - Enforcement-
 - Officers will be conducting overt and covert enforcement
 - Crossing of double yellow lines during traffic back up for pick up and drop off times
 - Placement of an officer in the area to help direct traffic.
 - Engineering review of road configuration and lane markings to ensure safe navigation.
 - Uncontrolled Left turns into ELE from W/B traffic
 - Ordering of a “No Left Turn” sign in the lane.

3. Safety of students and other pedestrians due to speeding vehicles.

- (Analysis) Speed Issues
 - Speed monitoring devices were placed at both ends of Elizabeth Lane Elementary. October 26 - November 1
 - Speeds determined to be much higher than expected.

Speed violators traveling (Westbound Only) on Elizabeth Ln.

10/26/2018 to 11/01/2018	
speed 36-45 MPH:	801Vehicles
speed 46-55 MPH:	65 Vehicles
speed 56-61 MPH:	Unknown

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- (Action) Overt and covert speed enforcement
 - Conducted seventy-seven (77) traffic enforcement directed patrols on Elizabeth Lane.
 - Officers have issued 42 written warnings for speed violations and 154 citations
 - Of the enforcement actions taken in this area, all vehicles stopped were traveling at least 10 miles per hour faster than the posted speed limit (25 MPH).

- (Assessment) follow-up review of speed data:

12/13/2018 to 12/19/2018

speed 36-45 MPH:	558 Vehicles	- 30% (243)
speed 46-55 MPH:	9 Vehicles	- 86% (-56)
speed 56-61 MPH:	2 Vehicles	- NSC (+2)

- Based on the reduction of the average speed and number of violators on Elizabeth Lane it appears the enforcement activities have had a positive impact on the reduction of speed.
 - 30% reduction in vehicles traveling at 11-20 mph over the posted speed limit is a positive movement in the direction of safety.
 - The most significant impact was in the 86% reduction of violators in the speed range of 21-30 mph over the posted speed limit.
 - Through the efforts of covert and overt enforcement by the Matthews Police Department, it appears voluntary compliance with the posted speed limit (25 mph) has increased.
 - The number of violators still traveling at least 10 mph above the posted speed limit is concerning and requires the agency to continue to monitor the area and conduct routine maintenance on the enforcement effort.
- Recommendations:
 - Enforcement is not enough to sustain long term change
 - Evaluating Speed Hump installation
 - Evaluate future lighting and markings to illuminate the speed humps

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4. Impact of safety for pedestrians as it relates to inadequate lighting in and around crosswalks

- (Analysis)
 - 51/ Elizabeth Lane
 - Reviewed and determined to be adequate
 - Tree trimming is still an option to maximize the lighting during summer months
 - Cithara
 - lighting recommendations to illuminate speed humps and crosswalks will improve lighting conditions at this location (see action Item #3 above)



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Step 4 (Assessment): Evaluate the success of the implemented responses and collect data on their outcomes.

- Enforcement will continue periodically in the area to maintain the reduction in speed results.
- Continue working with Elizabeth Lane Elementary to review stacking of vehicles during drop off and pick up.
- Upcoming discussions with Board of Commissioners and town leadership on road improvements and widening efforts during planning conference.
- Undergo a future lighting study along Elizabeth Lane.
- Evaluate and discuss the permanent assignment of a Traffic Control Officer in the area with CMS.
- Future study to evaluate unintended consequences to the road way after changes are made.

As it relates to the speed hump recommendations, the neighborhoods identified along Elizabeth Lane are required to provide a signed petition to the Transportation Planning Committee requesting the installation of speed humps. This effort will be assisted by Town Engineer Susan Habina Woolard, but the coordination and effort by residents is required to move this process forward.

As each of these problem-solving measures are implemented, I again ask for your patience and understanding during this long process. We will continue, as a group, to evaluate each measure's effectiveness and make any needed adjustment(s) along the way, as we strive to develop long-term solutions to ensure a safe community for all.

Thank you to those that were able to attend the meeting last night, and thank you again to all the Elizabeth Lane area residents and Elizabeth Lane Elementary School parents who provided much needed input on your concerns and recommendations for a solution. I want you to know that you have been heard and I assure you that we will keep moving in the right direction.



Chief Clark A. Pennington
Chief of Police

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