



To: Chairperson and Transportation and Safety Committee
From: Frank Kalisik, Civil Engineer II
Through: Carl S. Goldsmith, Director of Public Works *CJ*
Date: June 5, 2013
Subject: Maple Street Traffic Speed

Regarding a request to address high vehicle speeds on Maple Street, PW was able to deploy traffic analyzers the week of March 25, 2013. Based upon the data and our investigation:

Investigation Results:

1. Typical (85th percentile) vehicular speeds on Maple Street between Grace Street and Westmore-Meyers Road has been between 34 and 38 mph. This information was obtained from similar data collection methods in 1999, 2001, and 2004. The posted speed limit on Maple Street at the time of these events was the state statute of 30 mph.
2. In 2004, Village Engineers extensively investigated the traffic activity and driving behavior on Maple Street and presented their findings to the Transportation and Safety Committee with a recommendation to maintain the posted speed limit of 30 mph. Contrary to the traffic data and analysis, the Transportation and Safety Committee recommended a reduction in the Maple Street speed limit to 25 mph from Vance Street to Addison Street. Subsequently, in an effort to reduce traffic speeds on Maple Street, the Village Board approved the recommended reduction to 25 mph.
3. Traffic data gathered last week clearly demonstrated the majority of drivers (85th percentile) are still travelling between 35-38 mph, regardless of the posted speed limit reduction of 2004. This information clearly supports the traffic industry's conclusion that simply lowering a traffic speed limit does not modify driver behavior.
4. Accident data on Maple Street between Grace and Westmore-Meyers for the past three (3) years was obtained, revealing fifteen (15) accident occurrences, but none were attributed to vehicle speed.
5. Traffic data collected last week clearly demonstrated excessive vehicle speeds (over 40 mph) coincide with the morning and evening rush hours.

Corrective Action Options

1. Enforcement is the most immediate and cost effective option in attempts to reduce vehicle speeds on Maple Street. The traffic information was submitted to the Lombard Police Department, requesting their assistance and utilization of their resources when available. This option, however, is typically short lived and is only effective as long as a police presence exists.
2. Education of the motoring public would be the second option, such as placement of warning signs on intersection approaches or possibly a permanent vehicle radar system. These options, however, would become less effective over time as drivers would become desensitized to their intent and return to their normal driving habits. It is not likely this option would be beneficial in the long run, but may have an intermediate lasting effect beyond direct enforcement efforts.
3. Engineering would be the final and most expensive option, such as implementation of some type of traffic calming measure. However, the Village Board has established a policy to not implement speed tables or speed bumps, nor permit parking on Maple Street, a traffic calming example that could give motorists a reason to slow down because a roadway narrowing affect is perceived.

Recommendation

In essence, Maple Street is a collector road through the Village of Lombard. The road is wide from one end of the Village to the other. It is designed and perceived by motorists as a road that is comfortable to travel at 38 mph, and according to the data, a safe rate of speed. This is a classic case in Traffic Engineering, where a desire to permanently reduce the vehicle 85th percentile speeds will not be achieved until the roadway itself gives the motorists a reason to slow down or constant and deliberate enforcement is maintained at all times. Since the latter is not realistic, modification of the roadway itself would be required.

In order to effectuate a reduction in vehicle speeds, staff would recommend the Village investigate available traffic calming measures. If the committee is desirous of traffic calming measures, staff will prepare a recommendation for future consideration.

CC: Laura Fitzpatrick, Dist. 5