



RYE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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To: Rye Select Board

From Chief Kevin Walsh

Date: April 19, 2021

Re: Rye Town Center Transportation Safety in Town Committee letter dated April 16, 2021

A consistent request from Rye residents is the lowering of speed limits on many Rye roads. It is the belief of many that if a posted speed limit is 20 MPH, drivers will drive 5-10 MPH above the posted speed limit, which would make for safer roads in Rye.

Research does not necessarily support the theory of lowering speed limits to gain motor vehicle speed obedience. To help with solution I felt the town should have specific traffic data to support the decision. Traffic engineers use the 85th percentile speed when determining a speed limit for a road. The 85th percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85 percent of all vehicles are observed to travel under free-flowing conditions past a monitored point. To accomplish this, I requested the approval to purchase a traffic counter device used by traffic engineers to confirm what speed limit a road should be at, give a report back to Rye officers, Select Board, town residents, and neighborhoods of vehicle behavior.

The Select Board had asked the police department to come up with a plan on how to improve driving behavior and report back to the Select Board and neighborhoods. The police department has started a **Driving Compliance Plan**. The plan consists of **Enforcement**, motor vehicle stops, tickets or warning, **Engineering**, speed zones are established to indicate the maximum reasonable and safe speed limit under favorable conditions for a section of roadway, **Education**, research to identify and clearly understand how, when, and where to reach and target high-risk drivers, capitalize on specific enforcement activities.

Some areas in Rye the police department have been working with neighbors. South Road, Central Road, Dow Lane, Perkins Road, Washington Road, Wallis Road, and Brackett Road.

The Select Board and the police department had been requested to install Wallis Road and Brackett Road a 4 way stop sign intersection due to 4 motor vehicle crashes reported in one year. Rye Highway Director Dennis McCarthy and I met with neighbors and reviewed statistic data, accident reports and information from the traffic counter. We referred to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), prepared by the American Association of State Highway to review the request for the 4 way stop sign intersection.

Section 2B-05 Stop Sign Applications, "stop signs should not be used for speed control. A stop sign should not be installed on a major street unless justified by a traffic engineer study."

The (MUTCD) section 4C.01 studies and factors for justifying traffic control signals. There are 8 factors an engineering study will analysis.

1. Eight-hour vehicular volume
2. Four-hour vehicular volume
3. Peak Hour
4. Pedestrian volume
5. School Crossing
6. Coordinating Signal System
7. Crash Experience
8. Roadway Network

The standard for the need for a traffic control signal shall be considered if an engineering study finds that all of the following criteria are met;

- a. Adequate trial of alternatives with satisfactory observance and enforcement has failed to reduce the crash frequency; and
- b. Five or more reported crashes, of types susceptible to correction by a traffic control signals, have occurred within 12-month period, each crash involving personal injury or property damage apparently exceeding the applicable requirements for a reportable crash; and
- c. Of the standard is data collected to be compared to an Eight-Hour Vehicular Volume table.

Pages to the (MUTCD) that apply to studies and factors for justifying a traffic control study, Page 4C-1, Page 4C-5, Pages 4C-12 and 4C13.

To give some follow up about the Wallis Road Brackett Road Driving Compliance Plan the following was done. Chief Walsh, police officers and Rye Highway Department reviewed 4 traffic accident reports that were reported within 12 months of each other. The common contributing factor, failure to yield to vehicles traveling on Wallis Road.

To start engineering and education part of the plan, the stops signs on both sides of Brackett Road and Wallis road were readjusted to improve sight line view. The traffic counter reported the average speed is 34 MPH in a posted 30 MPH zone. Rye Highway added stop sign warning signs on both sides of Brackett Road to improve driver awareness of a stop sign intersection is approaching. As of 11/15/19 the signs were installed. The follow up was the over grown vegetation trimming and/or removal by a private home owner. That has since been done. No accidents have been reported.

The following is data collected for Washington Road traffic accident reported over 19 years.

Washington Road Intersection	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Tota
Washington @ Lang Road	0	0	2	3	0	0	3	0	1	1	10
Washington @ Wallis Road	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Washington @ Central Road	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Washington @ Olde Parish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pedestrian bicyclists accidents	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	0	1	4	3	0	0	3	0	2	1	16

Washington Road Intersection	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	Tota
Washington @ Lang Road	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	3	1	0	10
Washington @ Wallis Road	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Washington @ Central Road	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	4
Washington @ Olde Parish	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pedestrian bicyclists accidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	2	4	1	1	1	1	0	5	1	2	19

The charts above list out information for 19 years of traffic accident data. Specifically listed are the intersections along Washington Road in the center of town. A specific category for bicyclists and pedestrian is on the chart.

02-67-AC pedestrian accident at Washington Road at Lang Road. Pedestrian at about 8:15 AM on July 24, 2002 waited on Washington Road near Lang Road. As a vehicle drove on Lang Road, stopped at stop sign then proceeded towards Washington Road. The pedestrian assumed the driver saw her and started walking into the cross walk. The pedestrian was struck by the right front fender of the vehicle on her knee. She sustained superficial abrasion to her left knee. No ambulance, refused transport and walked away. The operator stated that he had driven to the stop sign and stopped. He looked both ways before proceeding but did not see the pedestrian. Report taken.

At the time of this report Lang Road had one travel lane to stop sign, large break down lane. Stop sign and cross walk was on Lang Road further away from Washington Road/Lang Road intersection.

On or about September 25, 2013 I made a request to change Lang Road and Washington Road intersection due to pedestrians not walking in cross walk because cross walk was located further away from Washington Road/Lang Road intersection, the location a pedestrian actually walks. The issue of sight line, pedestrians would not walk in cross walk due to it being set further away. The pedestrian would have to walk left and to walk in cross walk instead of just walking straight. Vehicles coming to stop sign intersection would have to edge way closer to Washington Road before seeing both ways on Washington Road. It was requested to move the stop sign and the cross walk closer to Washington Road/Lang Road intersection. This improved where pedestrians walk and moved stop line closer to Washington Road providing drivers improved visibility on Washington Road.

Speed was not a contributing factor to this accident.

17-1-AC bicycle accident at Washington Road at Lang Road. Vehicle drove on lang Road and stopped at stop sign located at Lang Road and Washington Road. The driver proceeded onto Washington Road turning right onto Washington Road. The driver did not see the bicyclist who was riding west on Washington Road. The vehicles front license plate bracket hit the bicycle causing the bicyclist and bicycle to go to ground. The bicyclists were transported non-life-threatening injuries. Driver of the vehicle stated she did not see the bicyclist riding a bike. The driver was cited for failure to yield.

Speed was not a contributing factor to this accident.

Over 19 years these are the only pedestrian and bicycle accidents reports on file with Rye Police.

The other accidents at the intersections, approximately 16 have failure to yield as contributing factors, approximately 6 accident reports state the driver was distracted, approximately 3 reports state the contributing factor were poor road conditions, approximately 4 reports state improper turn are contributing factor, one report states speed and improper turn are contributing factor cause of crash.

Several read end accident reports, vehicles stopped on Washington Road taking waiting to turn left on Lang Road, vehicle from behind rear ends stopped vehicle. Vehicle stopped at stop sign intersection and vehicle rear ends stopped vehicle.

Approximately 8 times the Rye ambulance was dispatched to the accidents however over half refused transport due to minor injuries.

Several other accidents reported to Rye police over the 19 years include vehicle vs deer, vehicles backing into parked vehicles.

Only one (1) accident report states speed is a contributing factor.

From October 12, to 10, 2019 the traffic counter was placed at 500 Washington Road, TD Bank area. The average speed was reported at 32 MPH, the 85th percentile speed was reported at 36 MPH. The days of week report suggests for officers to be enforcing speeds are

Monday and Thursday 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Tuesday 5:00 AM to 9:00 AM

Wednesday 7:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Friday 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Saturday 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Sunday 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

The operations Sergeant has been scheduling directed patrols during these times. There is more work to be done on the Washington Road Driver Compliance Plan.

Currently, we have collected data from the digital speed sign to compare to the statistics from October 2019. Also, the traffic counter is currently in the center of town closest to Central Road. This was a complaint the Rye Town Center Transportation Safety in Town Committee had talked about at a recent committee meeting.

The 3 requests made by the Rye Center of Town Committee

1. Lower speed limit, is not support by statistics. I recommend in TAP Program manager be tasked to ensure a traffic engineer study be done to review the speed limit of 30 MPH and is there data to support lowering the speed limit. The information Rye police have been collecting from the traffic counter does not support lowering the speed limit. The review of accident statistics does not support lower the speed limit. The information comparing to the (MUTCD) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
2. A review of the Lang Road and Washington Road intersection based on the complaint vehicles are rolling through stop sign intersection will be done ASAP. The intersection was last reviewed in 2013. The 3 way stop sign intersection is not supported by the accident statistics. I recommend in TAP Program manager be tasked to ensure a traffic engineer study be done to review the Lang Road / Washington road intersection to review stop sign placement, cross walk placement, signage for intersection ahead and cross walk ahead. The review of accident statistics does not support lower the speed limit. The information comparing to the (MUTCD) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
3. I recommend in TAP Program manager be tasked to ensure a traffic engineer study be done to review the travel lane width of Washington Road.
4. Any and all road improvements should be recommended by a traffic engineer. There will be yearly and concurrent maintenance costs to signage, road markings and other suggestions by the Transportation safety in town center committee. To explain to future budgets, it maybe necessary to refer to the traffic engineer study to support the continued maintenance.

The accident statistics does not show the accident reports stating speed as a contributing factor in any of the intersection accidents except 1 in 19 years. Majority are driver inattention, failure to yield at stop signs, distracted driving, some weather related and drivers not slowing for the conditions of roads. Unfortunately, this is a common factor in all Rye vehicle accidents.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thanks, Chief Kevin Walsh

Cc: Town Administrator Becky Bergeron
Rye Highway Director Dennis McCarthy
Chair of the Rye Town Center Transportation Safety in Town Committee