Subject: Petitions from the Public and Council Members.

Staff: Sabrina M. Oliver, Director and Town Clerk
Amy T. Harvey, Deputy Town Clerk

Department: Communications and Public Affairs

Overview: The Council hears petitions, either written or oral, at the beginning of each regular meeting. Under the Council’s normal procedures, requests will be treated as a petition for action by the Council. Except in the case of urgency, petitions normally are not acted upon at the time they are presented. After hearing a petition, they are referred to the Mayor and Town Manager for delegation to the appropriate person(s). See the Status of Petitions to Council webpage to track the petition.

Recommendation
That the Council consider the following petition(s):
   a. Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board Regarding a Request to Normalize Weaver Dairy Extension to the Town-Wide Speed Limit.

Attachments:
   • Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board Petition

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To: Chapel Hill Town Council  
From: Transportation & Connectivity Advisory Board  
Subject: Petition to Normalize Weaver Dairy Extension to Town-Wide Speed Limit  
Date: March 8, 2016

Council Members:

The Transportation & Connectivity Advisory Board asks Town Council to normalize the speed limit governing the Weaver Dairy Extension (currently 25 MPH between Martin Luther King Blvd. and Homestead Rd.) to the town-wide standard limit of 35 MPH.

We believe this action is in the Town’s best interests for the following reasons:

1. **The Weaver Dairy Extension does not meet criteria to justify a lower speed limit:** it is not a residential street as there are no homes directly facing the road; the Traffic Engineering Division has assessed it can safely handle speeds of 35 MPH, and there are features necessary to ensure pedestrian and cyclist safety, namely a sidewalk on the east side of the road for its full length, cross walks and marked bicycle lanes.

2. **The Weaver Dairy Extension is a critical artery to efficiently handle growing traffic volume along Homestead Road.** There has been significant growth in this area, with several new and planned residential developments, as well as the Orange County expansion on Homestead Road. Traffic volumes are rising, and this does not include consideration of Carolina North and its future impact on congestion. The lower speed limit for the Weaver Dairy Extension reduces efficiency in handling the flow of traffic to MLK Blvd. and promises to increase congestion at the intersection of Homestead Rd. and MLK as higher percentages of motorists avoid the slower road.

3. **Finally, the compressed speed limit encourages frequent instances of unsafe driving practices,** such as tailgating, illegal passing and random, sudden stopping or decelerating, which in turn raises the potential for more traffic accidents leading to property damage and perhaps injuries. It also raises the potential for more serious “road rage” incidents triggered by the unsafe driving practices. Some of us have personally witnessed these unsafe practices in traveling the road.

Again, the Traffic Engineering Division assessed the Weaver Dairy Extension in the past and found the town wide speed limit would not be unsafe, and the design and purpose of this road does not justify a lower limit. With continued growth in this part of town, it is essential we create conditions for efficient handling of higher traffic volumes. The current speed limit governing the Weaver Dairy Extension is a significant barrier to this goal. In the absence of real safety issues, this barrier should be removed as soon as possible.

We therefore urge Town Council to take immediate action and normalize the speed limit on the Weaver Dairy Extension to the town-wide standard of 35 MPH. In addition, to strengthen the safety for cyclists along with this change, the Board recommends that the Town accommodate buffered bike lanes along the road.

Thanks for your attention and consideration.

Transportation & Connectivity Advisory Board  
Town of Chapel Hill