

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Damion Pregitzer, Traffic Engineer, Public Works Department

Date: December 12, 2023

Subject: Referral of email from J. Withers from November 14, 2023

Jeremy Withers' request (attached with referral) is for a speed limit reduction on 6th Street between Grand Ave and Duff Ave from 25 MPH to 20 MPH. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is currently developing updated speed limit setting guidelines for states and municipalities. This initiative is based on the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 966. This updated guidance is expected to be released in early 2024. Staff plans to utilize the revised procedures in a city-wide review of speed limits, including the areas surrounding Schainker Plaza (the area mentioned in the request). Staff will initiate this review; no Council direction is needed to do so.

The evaluation approach set forth in NCHRP 966 advocates for a nuanced and context-sensitive method to setting speed limits. This will move beyond the traditional method of setting the speed limit according to 85th percentile of travel speeds along a particular corridor. This new approach will allow for a more comprehensive evaluation of road conditions, user safety, and empirical data, which is particularly pertinent for urban areas with diverse modes of transportation. This method notably prioritizes the safety of vulnerable road users, including cyclists and pedestrians.

Concurrently, our ongoing development of a Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan (WalkBikeRoll) is in alignment with these efforts. This master plan is focused on enhancing infrastructure safety and efficiency for all road users, with specific attention to the needs of cyclists and pedestrians. The 6th Street area, including considering the Schainker Plaza development, is a significant component of this city-wide strategy.

**Staff will continue to monitor safety around the plaza construction and anticipates implementing the new speed limit strategies and other safety measures on 6th Street following the release of the FHWA's updated guidelines, expected in early 2024. Staff will then get further direction from City Council, as needed. Therefore, it is recommended that no action be taken at this time to change the speed limits along 6th Street.**