

Autumn Hall Street Turnover and Traffic Calming Background and Q&A

Background:

In 2020, the Developer of Autumn Hall (Autumn Hall Inc. (AHI)), began the process of turning over the public streets and sidewalks within Autumn Hall to the City of Wilmington (COW) for public maintenance. In the fall of 2020, the COW supplied AHI with a list of changes/improvements that the COW required prior to accepting responsibility for the streets/sidewalks. Over the past several years AHI has been addressing the areas identified by the COW. The removal of the speed bumps on Dungannon and the stop signs at the Orton Point/Old Garden intersection and two of those on Dungannon/Orton Point intersection was required by the COW. Those stop signs and speed bumps were originally put in place at the request of the HOA as a temporary measure to help address resident concerns about traffic speed on those streets.

In an effort to better understand traffic volume and speed on Dungannon and Orton Point a traffic study was conducted from Wednesday, November 29 to Saturday, December 2, 2023. Following is a summary statement from the consulting firm (Kimley-Horn) that conducted the study: "Based on the collected data 85% of drivers are driving at 25 mph or less. The 85th percentile speed is defined as, "the speed at or below which 85 percent of all vehicles are observed to travel under free-flowing conditions past a monitored point." Traffic engineers use the 85th percentile speed as a standard to set the speed limit at a safe speed, minimizing crashes and promoting uniform traffic flow along a corridor. There are other factors that go into this as well, but this would be the threshold speed for which NCDOT and many municipalities would use to evaluate the need for counter measures to control speed. Since the locations we captured are all at or below the 25 mph posted speed limit, we do not see a speeding problem."

The parties involved in conducting the traffic study acknowledge the following factors:

- The signs and speed bumps were removed the day before the data collection began. Residents noted that some drivers may have continued to stop in places where there were no longer stop signs.
- Collecting the data over a four-day period only once. This represented conditions at that time and if the community wanted to collect more data during other time periods during the year, doing so would obviously create a larger data set; which may or may not differentiate from the original data set, due to the factors outlined above, seasonality, and driver behavior over time, etc. However, that is not to say that a material change in the data collected is necessarily anticipated.
- In conversations with the city, they have not characterized the conditions at Autumn Hall relative to speeding, as atypical or in excess of what other residential communities in the city experience.

Given the above background information and in response to comments and concerns expressed by numerous AH residents, the AH board has been working with AHI to explore alternative means to help slow/calm traffic speeds on Dungannon and Orton Point, should such measures

be desired by the community and approved by the COW (which is anticipated provided the community funded the improvements and the improvements did not conflict with acceptable COW traffic calming standards).

Commonly Asked Questions and Answers (Answers provided by AHI):

- Why are the streets and sidewalks being turned over to the City of Wilmington?
 - All Rights of Way (ROW) in Autumn Hall, which include the streets and sidewalks were dedicated as public. The process to turn over these ROWs to the City for public maintenance is the final step when construction within a subdivision reaches completion.
- Can AH choose not to turn the streets and sidewalks over to the COW and thereby have better control over traffic in AH? What are the implications of pursuing this?
 - Yes. Autumn Hall could elect to not turn over the streets for public maintenance. They would remain public ROW's allowing the public the right to travel upon the roads and sidewalks. The only resulting implication would be maintenance responsibility would then vest with the Autumn Hall Master and Community Association which would afford these entities some control over the streets (provided that the public is not prohibited from traveling over the Public ROW's)
- Why were the stop signs on Orton Point and Dungannon removed?
 - These stop signs were not part of the originally approved plans for AH. They were installed at the same time as the speed bumps, as a temporary measure, with the understanding that they would be removed prior to the streets being turned over for public maintenance. When traffic data was collected, Autumn Hall made a request to the City that several of the three-way stops be allowed to remain (by way of example Dungannon and Orton Point & Orton Point and Old Garden). The traffic volumes were not found to meet the threshold for a three-way stop intersection per City policy and thus the three-way stops were not allowed to remain (one leg of each three-way intersection will still have a stop sign).
- Can we get the stop signs reinstalled before the city takes over the streets?
 - Not at this time. If at such time that traffic volumes ever reach the threshold for a three-way stop, a request could be made to the City that additional signs be added.
- Why won't the city allow the stop signs (that were removed) on Dungannon and Orton Point?
 - As outlined above, the traffic volumes did not warrant additional stop signs being allowed, per the COW policy which defines stop sign warrants based on traffic volumes.
- Will any other signage be removed as part of the street turnover?
 - The "Children at Play" signs on Dungannon will be removed, as directed by the COW. *A request to leave them in place was made but declined by the COW.

- Why were the speed bumps on Dungannon removed?
 - The COW does not allow speed bumps (though some legacy speed bumps in older areas of Wilmington exist). The City's preference is for other means of traffic calming i.e. lane deflection, medians, etc.
- What will be done to help to slow down the traffic on Dungannon and Orton Point moving forward?
 - This is at the discretion of the community residents, provided that any measures proposed are amenable to the COW (which we anticipate they will be provided they meet COW standards)
- Could we get a 20 mph speed limit (and signs) on Dungannon and Orton Point?
 - This question has not been explored as of yet. The current speed limits reflect what was approved by the COW on the Autumn Hall plans.
- Was the data gathered in the traffic study really valid since the stop signs and speed bumps were only removed the day before the study began and some drivers still stopped where there used to be stop signs?
 - Yes, the data gathered was accurate and reflects conditions at Autumn Hall as of the date of the study, subject to some variation based on driver behavior and timing. It is not anticipated that material changes to the data set as a whole would be recognized which might change the overall findings, though some differentiation could be seen. The only way to verify this hypothesis would be to perform a second study.
- Would it be possible to restrict large delivery trucks (semis) from using Orton Point?
 - This is likely not practical and if a restriction was put in place, it would be very difficult to enforce. It is doubtful that the COW would approve such a request.