

# College Woodlands Neighborhood Association

## Report of the Munson Traffic Committee – May 25, 2020

**Background** – Since the narrowing and straightening of Munson was completed in 2017, neighbors have raised concerns about speeding traffic on Munson at annual meetings and other events. After requests for volunteers on Next Door and through the association’s listserv, the Munson Traffic Committee started meeting in September 2019. Nine people (representing Rose Circle, Munson, Ashburn, and Marsteller) volunteered to serve.

**Working with the City Traffic Engineer and City Attorney, the Munson Traffic Committee discovered the following:**

1. Munson Ave. (classified as “residential” from Lincoln to Dominik) is carrying traffic levels similar to some larger streets classified as “minor collectors” in the neighborhood.
2. Munson Ave. has a relatively high incident rate of speeding traffic violations for a residential street (221 from January 1 to November 3, 2019), particularly concerning because it is crossed routinely by children going to and from the local elementary school.
3. No traffic calming measures, other than a temporary variable speed sign in use for a week or so, can be placed on Munson Ave. because of a city ordinance established in 1999 through a city-wide petition and vote. The majority of votes in favor of the ordinance came from outside the neighborhood.
4. In 2019, the College Station City Council established procedures to gain neighborhood approval to establish traffic calming measures. The only College Station street not able to consider using traffic calming measures is Munson Ave. (because of the 1999 ordinance)
5. The only way for Munson to be treated equitably in relation to accessing the city’s traffic calming measures and implementation procedures is for the City Council to repeal the 1999 ordinance.
6. Repealing the 1999 ordinance will not implement traffic calming measure on Munson. It only allows the neighborhood to use the city’s process to begin discussions about whether traffic calming measures are needed and what types the neighborhood may be interested in. To implement any traffic calming measures would be a separate process, which includes, among other things, having meetings to discuss needs and obtaining signatures supporting specific traffic calming measures.

### **What happened on Tuesday, May 19, 2020:**

With the endorsement of city staff (Traffic Engineer and City Attorney) and the neighborhood association’s Munson Traffic Committee, the College Station City Council’s Transportation and Mobility Committee voted to send forward to City Council a recommendation to repeal the city ordinance prohibiting traffic calming on Munson Ave.

This moved faster than we anticipated. We had been trying to schedule time on their agenda since February to discuss the issue and ask about how best to proceed. The February agenda was too full, and then, everything went on hold because of the pandemic. Because of a miscommunication, the

neighborhood association learned on Friday May 15 that it would be on the May 19 agenda. We did not anticipate that there would be a vote by the Transportation and Mobility Committee at this meeting.

Three city council members serve on the City Council's Transportation and Mobility Committee: Brick, Harvell, and Mooney. Also in attendance was Councilman Nichols. Droleskey spoke on behalf of the Munson Traffic Committee because with such a short turnaround time, other members were not available. Traffic engineer Rother provided a brief presentation giving the history of the street, the ordinance, and traffic and citation counts on the street. The city attorney clarified that the only option is for city council to remove the language from the ordinance. Droleskey focused her comments on the issue of equity for the street as compared to all other city streets. Droleskey noted that there is no desire to close Munson to through traffic, and that is what essentially caused the ordinance to be passed in 1999. Parents thought the street was going to be closed, preventing easy access to College Hills Elementary School. Council members confirmed with staff that the staff supported this request to rescind the ordinance and that it was the only way for the neighborhood to access city processes for neighborhood input and discussion about whether the neighborhood even wants traffic calming measures at some point in the future. Brick and Harvell voted in favor of removal. Mooney did not vote. Nichols was ineligible to vote as he is not a member of this committee, but his comments were in favor of removal of the ordinance. Council members suggested that we ensure support for this at the city council meeting where it will be voted on.

#### **Next Steps:**

We have been told that June 25 is the earliest date that this issue will come before City Council.

We realize that this is our first update on committee activities, so we need to help the neighborhood get up to speed on our activities and the May 19 meeting result. Because of this, we will do the following:

1. Direct neighbors to contact one of the following committee members for questions or concerns about the removal of the ordinance:

Van Ngo – [vantngodoc@gmail.com](mailto:vantngodoc@gmail.com)

Nataleigh Perez – [nataleigh.perez@gmail.com](mailto:nataleigh.perez@gmail.com)

Suzanne Droleskey – [sdroleskey@gmail.com](mailto:sdroleskey@gmail.com) or 979-693-1869 (landline)

2. Create a website page to house this report so it is accessible.
3. Create general information piece that can be shared with neighbors on Next Door, through the listserv and through a paper flier. While we will do follow-ups via Next Door and the listserv, we believe it is important to reach out with a paper flier to ensure that neighbors not using these electronic platforms know about the issue. It is also a good way to encourage awareness of the association's website and listserv.

The general information piece should

- a. Briefly apprise neighbors about what is happening
- b. Direct them to the website for more details
- c. Ask for support to repeal the ordinance by writing letters or attending the city council meeting.
- d. Provide information about how to join the listserv for future updates on this topic