Wauwatosa, WI

Signature Report

Resolution-Council: R-25-89

7725 W. North Avenue
Wauwatosa, WI 53213

File Number: 25-0960 **Enactment Number: R-25-89**

Resolution approving the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program Guidelines

WHEREAS, the City has a neighborhood traffic management program in place since March 2016 and has resulted in a pilot project on Kavanaugh Place and minor sign and speed limit changes;

WHEREAS, the program has resulted in zero resident-funded traffic calming installations as the existing program envisioned;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Common Council of the City of Wauwatosa that the new Neighborhood Traffic Management Program Guidelines be adopted as more thoroughly described at the March 11, 2025 Transportation Affairs Committee meeting.

By: Transportation Affairs Committee

Adopted _____ **Date** 6-24-25
City Clerk Steven Braatz

Approved Dennis R. McBride **Date** 6/25/25
Mayor Dennis McBride

City of Wauwatosa
Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program

June 24, 2025

Department of Public Works

Engineering Division

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Section I. Introduction

A. What is the Problem We Are Trying to Solve?

All people are entitled to safe travel, and death and serious injury are unacceptable. Excessive vehicle speeds can create unsafe conditions for all street occupants, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and other vulnerable road users. High vehicle speeds can lead to collisions, noise pollution, and an overall decreased sense of safety and livability.

B. Why Traffic Calming?

A 2024 community survey was performed by the ETC Institute for the City of Wauwatosa. Respondents identified reckless driving/traffic enforcement as a top public safety priority. When asked what would encourage them to not use their car for trips of one mile or less, respondents to the survey identified traffic calming to slow speeds and/or shorten crossing distances as their top solution. These responses show that users of Wauwatosa streets want safer traveling environments.

The layout of streets and intersections directly influences the behavior of drivers as well as vulnerable road users like pedestrians, bicyclists, and others. The safety of all users can be increased by designing streets and intersections that encourage safer speeds, minimize the opportunity for human mistakes, and encourage safe travel behaviors. Designs that intentionally slow traffic are called traffic calming.

C. Why Not Just Enforce Traffic Laws?

Traffic laws are enforced in Wauwatosa. However, it is impractical to have an officer present at every intersection and on every street to run traffic enforcement at all times. Streets and intersections are present at all times – 24/7/365 – to influence behavior and impact the safety of all users.

D. Tell Me More!

Turn to the next page for an at-a-glance understanding of Wauwatosa's neighborhood traffic calming process, qualifications to participate, and how to make a request!

The U.S. Department of Transportation Safe System Approach

(https://www.transportation.gov/safe-system-approach)

Section II. Program At-A-Glance

Step 1: Understand the Program

The neighborhood traffic calming program is intended for residential local and collector streets and intersections (see map in Appendix A). Dead-end streets or streets less than 500' in length are not eligible. Anyone may submit a traffic calming application. The applicant will need to provide their contact information with the completed application and agree to serve as the point of contact.

Step 2: Applicant Completes Traffic Calming Request

Complete a traffic calming request by using the QR code to the right, which leads to https://www.wauwatosa.net/government/departments/public-works/engineering/traffic-parking/traffic-calming-application. Need assistance or have questions? Contact the Engineering Division at (414) 479-8927 or via email at tengineering@wauwatosa.net.

Step 3: Engineering Verifies if Application Qualifies

The Engineering Division will review traffic calming applications and determine if the request meets the minimum qualifications for participation in the program. Engineering will contact applicants to inform them if their request meets minimum qualifications and, if not, will summarize why it does not.

Step 4: Engineering Collects Data

If an application qualifies for the neighborhood traffic calming program under Step 3, Engineering will collect traffic volume, speed, and/or crash data. The data will be compared against program thresholds as outlined in Section IV of these guidelines. If no volume, speed, or crash data thresholds are met, the application will be dropped from consideration for traffic calming and the applicant will be notified.

Step 5: Engineering Ranks Qualifying Applications

Applications meeting minimum thresholds in Step 4 will be ranked based on various factors as outlined in Section IV. These factors include measured traffic speeds, traffic volumes, and crash experience. Additional factors considered in the ranking include, but are not limited to, official Safe Routes to School (SRTS), official greenway routes, pedestrian accommodations, and proximity to schools or parks.

Step 6: Engineering Prepares Preliminary Concepts

Preliminary concepts will be prepared at least once a year for the top-ranking applications from Step 5. The concepts will be prepared to understand the feasibility and approximate cost of construction, or to determine if additional study is required.

Step 7: Engineering Implements Projects

The Engineering Division will program projects for construction in the current and/or subsequent years dependent on the traffic calming solution, available funding, and level of interagency and public interaction deemed necessary.

Important Note

The City reserves its right to advance, remove, or otherwise hold a project from consideration in the neighborhood traffic calming program. For example, Engineering may advance a traffic calming project if there is a nearby construction project and a cost savings may be realized, remove a project if a solution exists outside of the traffic calming program, and may hold a project if interagency (border street) or additional design coordination is required.

Section III. Potential Traffic Calming Solutions

A. What Is Traffic Calming?

The layout of streets and intersections directly influences the behavior of drivers as well as vulnerable road users like pedestrians, bicyclists, and others. The safety of all users can be increased by designing streets and intersections that encourage safer speeds, minimize the opportunity for human mistakes, and encourage safe travel behaviors. Designs that intentionally slow traffic are called traffic calming.

B. Example Traffic Calming Solutions

The following is an example list of common traffic calming measures that the Engineering Division may consider under the neighborhood traffic calming program. This is not an exhaustive list. The Engineering Division may consider alternative solutions to best fit the context of a qualifying location, including the use of the street as a frequent emergency services route. Credit to the City of Milwaukee for their permission in sharing traffic calming descriptions and photos.

Speed Hump

Unlike speed bumps, which are jarring and require motorists to travel at speeds 5 mph or less, speed humps are rounded, raised areas constructed across a street. Speed humps slow drivers to 10 to 15 mph over the hump.

When might speed humps be considered?

- When average daily traffic volumes are 3,000 vehicles per day or less
- When speeding occurs in the middle of a block
- When there are midblock locations without closely spaced stop controls (stop signs or traffic signal) at either end of the block

Speed humps will not be used on primary emergency vehicle response routes.

Speed Table

Speed tables are similar to speed humps but typically have a flat top. They slow traveling speeds to 20 to 25 mph. They more readily accommodate emergency service vehicles when compared to speed humps.

When might speed tables be considered?

- When average daily traffic volumes are 3,000 to 12,500 vehicles per day
- When the posted speed limit is 25 to 35 mph
- Midblock locations or crosswalks

Speed tables will not be used on primary emergency vehicle response routes without the expressed support of the Wauwatosa Fire Department.

Traffic Circle

A traffic circle is a raised, circular island in the middle of an intersection. Traffic circles slow driving speeds at intersections and are an ideal treatment for intersections without all-way stop signs or traffic signals. Note that traffic circles are not roundabouts, which are much larger and located on major streets.

When might traffic circles be considered?

- When speeding occurs through intersections
- When average daily traffic volumes are low, preferably 3,000 vehicles per day or less

Curb Extension/Neck-Down

Curb extensions, also called bump-outs, extend the curb into the street at intersections. They encourage slower speeds, reduce illegal right-hand passing, and minimize crossing distances for users crossing the street. They also open lines-of-sight at intersections so that users can better see each other.

Similar to a curb extension is the neck-down. A neck-down behaves much like at a curb extension, but at a midblock location. The width of traveled way in the choker may or may not be designed in a manner that requires motorists to take turns to pass through.

When might curb extensions or chokers be considered?

- When speeding occurs on a wide street
- When high-speed turns occur at an intersection
- When people have difficulty crossing a street.
- Where sight lines are otherwise poor.

Chicane

Chicanes use a mix of curb extensions and/or center islands in a manner that laterally shifts the driving lanes. The shifting driving lanes force motorists to slow their speed to successfully navigate the street. Chicanes may require removal of parking to achieve the desired speed reduction.

When might chicanes be considered?

- When speeding occurs on a wide street
- When located near the entrance to a neighborhood from a higher-speed street to "set the tone" for drivers that they are no longer on a higher-speed street

Refuge Island/Median

A refuge island/median, is an area placed between opposing traffic lanes at a midblock location or on an intersection approach. The refuge island/median provides space for people so that they may cross one direction of travel, wait half-way across, and then cross the second direction of travel.

When might refuge islands/median be considered?

- When people have difficulty crossing a street
- When high speeds occur on higher volume streets
- When high-speed turns occur at an intersection
- When additional sign placement in the center of the street may aid in reducing angle crashes or crashes with vulnerable road users.
- When located near the entrance to a neighborhood from a higher-speed street to "set the tone" for drivers that they are no longer on a higher-speed street

C. Inappropriate Traffic Calming Solutions

A common request by residents to reduce speeding and cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods is the installation of STOP or CHILDREN AT PLAY signs on neighborhood streets.

Stop Signs

The USDOT Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) states that stop signs shall not be used as a speed control device and should only be installed where an engineering study shows it is warranted. A stop sign is a valuable and effective traffic control device when used under appropriate conditions.

- Crashes can increase at intersections where stop signs are installed but are not warranted.
- Speeds can increase between stop signs by 3 to 5 mph, particularly when used inappropriately.
- Compliance at unwarranted stop sign locations is poor, resulting in a false sense of security to street users. This false sense of security can lead to crashes.
- The proliferation of stop signs at unwarranted locations creates a lack of respect for warranted locations.

A request for stop sign control through the neighborhood traffic calming program will be disqualified. Applicants will be directed to submit a separate request for stop sign control.

Children at Play Signs

Signs are used to guide and direct street users. Unnecessary signs can confuse, distract, and irritate users. CHILDREN AT PLAY signs have no effect on behavior and their use is discouraged by the MUTCD. The sign is unclear and unnecessary. Additionally:

- When no children are seen, users might assume on future trips that the sign is meaningless.
- It gives children and parents/guardians a false sense of security.
- It may give the impression to children that playing in the street is okay.

It should always be assumed in an urban environment like Wauwatosa that children are at play. CHILDREN AT PLAY signs, and similar ineffective warning signs, will not be installed.

Section IV. Qualifying Projects, Data Collection, & Priority Ranking Process

A. Qualifying Projects

Anyone may complete a traffic calming request by using the QR code to the right, which leads to https://www.wauwatosa.net/government/departments/public-works/engineering/traffic-parking/traffic-calming-application. Need assistance or have questions? Contact the Engineering Division at (414) 479-8927 or via email at tengineering@wauwatosa.net.

After a traffic calming application is submitted, the Engineering Division will review it and determine if the application meets the minimum qualifications for participation in the program. The following are minimum qualifications for participation in the traffic calming program.

- Residential local or collector street or intersection. See Appendix A for a diagram of local and collector streets.
- Street segment is greater than or equal to 500' in length and not on a dead-end.
- Applicant provides contact information with traffic calming application and agrees to serve as the point of contact.

In addition to the above, applications may be disqualified by the Engineering Division on a case-by-case basis using engineering judgement. For example, existing curves on a street may already serve to slow speeds, and steep grades may be incompatible with traffic calming devices.

The Engineering Division may also disqualify a neighborhood traffic calming application for other practical reasons. For example, Engineering may remove a project if a solution exists outside of the traffic calming program, or it may address the concern within the application by use of another project or program.

Engineering will contact applicants to inform them if their request meets minimum qualifications and, if not, will summarize why it does not.

B. Data Collection

If an application qualifies for the neighborhood traffic calming program as outlined above, the Engineering Division will collect traffic volume, speed, and/or crash data. This data will be compared against program thresholds as outlined below. At least one threshold must be met for further program consideration.

- 85th Percentile Speed Threshold
  - The 85th percentile speed is the speed at which 85% of all motorists travel at or below.
  - If the measured 85th percentile speed is 6 mph or greater than the posted or statutory speed limit, the 85th percentile speed threshold is met.

- Excessive Speed Threshold
  - Excessive speeds are those that are 10 mph or more than the posted or statutory or speed limit.

  - If 10% or more of the measured motorists travel at 10 mph or greater than the posted or statutory speed limit, the excessive speed threshold is met.

- Crash Experience Threshold
  - At least one crash has occurred in the previous three consecutive years (January through December) that are susceptible to correction by a traffic calming measure.

If the posted or statutory speed limit is less than 25 mph, a 25-mph baseline speed limit may be used when evaluating data against the speed thresholds outlined. This baseline speed limit recognizes that priority should be given to reducing higher speeds on any road, and it avoids bias when ranking one project against another. For example, a motorist traveling at 31mph on a 25mph posted street carries 42% more energy into a crash than a motorist traveling at 26 mph on a 20-mph posted street.

If no volume, speed, or crash data thresholds are met, the application will be dropped from consideration for the neighborhood traffic calming program for at least one year. The applicant will be informed if thresholds are not met. After one year, another application may be made for reconsideration in the program.

C. Priority Ranking Process

All applications meeting minimum data thresholds will be ranked based on a number of factors. The following is an outline of the factors and points considered in the priority ranking process.

- *85th Percentile Speed* – 3 points for every 1 mph over "posted speed limit + 5 mph"

- *Excessive Speeding* – 3 points for every 1% equal to or over 10% excessive speeding

- *Crashes*
  - 25 points for each fatality crash ("K-type"), serious injury crash ("A-type"), and pedestrian/bicycle/scooter crash (regardless of severity)
  - 5 points for each minor injury ("B-type") and possible injury ("C-type") motor vehicle crash.
  - 2 points for each property damage-only ("O-type") motor vehicle crash.

- *Estimated Daily Traffic Volume* – 1 point for every 100 vehicles per day (rounded to nearest 100)

- *Officially-Recognized Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Route* – 5 points if on an SRTS

- *Continuous Pedestrian Accommodation* – 5 points if no continuous pedestrian accommodation (e.g., a sidewalk or path).

- *Officially-Recognized Greenway Route* – 5 points if on a greenway route

- *Within 500 feet of School and/or Active Park* – 5 points, as measured along streets for project terminus to nearest school or park property line

- *Time on Priority Ranking List* – 5 points for any application on the priority ranking list for more than two previous calendar years.

- *Engineering Discretion* – Engineering may award up to 10 points to an application at its discretion. An example of why such discretion may be used includes realizing a cost savings if the given application is combined with another nearby traffic calming project, sidewalk repair project, pavement repair project, etc.

The following are example rankings of hypothetical situations to aid the reader in understanding this process.

Example 1

Street A is a residential local street at least 500-feet long with a posted speed limit of 25mph. The measured 85th percentile speed is 32 mph and 3% of measured speeds are excessive. A bicyclist was struck on the street with no injuries. The street carries 670 vehicles per day, is not on an SRTS route, and has no crossing guard. The street has continuous sidewalks, is an officially-recognized greenway, and is within 500-feet of a school and within 500-feet of a park. The street has been on the priority ranking for one year.

In this case, the street would be awarded the following points:

- *85th Percentile Speed* – 6 points (32 mph minus 30 mph)
- *Excessive Speeding* – 0 points (3% < 10% threshold)
- *Crashes: 25 points (bicycle crash)*
- *Estimated Daily Traffic Volume* – 7 points (670 rounded to nearest 100)
- *Officially-Recognized Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Route* – 0 points (not on an SRTS)
- *Continuous Pedestrian Accommodation* – 0 points (continuous sidewalks exist)
- *Officially-Recognized Greenway Route* – 5 points (on a greenway route)
- *Within 500-feet of School and/or Park* – 5 points (is within 500-feet of school or park).
- *Time on Priority Ranking List* – 0 points (on list for one year)

TOTAL POINTS: 48

Example 2

Street B is a residential collector street at least 500-feet long with a posted speed limit of 25mph. The measured 85th percentile speed is 33 mph and 11.2% of measured speeds are excessive. A minor injury crash and one property damage-only crash occurred. The street carries 1,130 vehicles per day and is on an SRTS route. The street has continuous sidewalk on one side of the street, is an officially-recognized greenway, and is not within 500-feet of a school or a park. The street is now on the priority ranking list for its third year. Another traffic calming project is occurring nearby.

In this case, the street would be awarded the following points:

- *85th Percentile Speed* – 9 points (33 mph minus 30 mph)
- *Excessive Speeding* – 6 points (11.2% < 10% threshold)
- *Crashes: 7 points (5 points for minor injury, 2 points for property damage-only crash)*
- *Estimated Daily Traffic Volume* – 11 points (1,130 rounded to nearest 100)
- *Officially-Recognized Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Route* – 5 points (not on an SRTS)
- *Continuous Pedestrian Accommodation* – 0 points (a continuous sidewalk exists)

- *Officially-Recognized Greenway Route* – 5 points (on a greenway route)
- *Within 500 feet of School and/or Park* – 0 points (is not within 500-feet of school or park).
- *Time on Priority Ranking List* – 5 points (on list for its third year)

TOTAL POINTS: 48

Comparing Street A from Example 1 and Street B from Example 2, they have the same total points for priority ranking. Because Street B from Example 2 has a nearby traffic calming project and a cost savings may be realized, the Engineering Division may award up to 10 additional points to Street B.

Section V. Program Administration

A. First-In/First-Out Considerations

The neighborhood traffic calming program is administered by the Engineering Division. Applications will be reviewed, and data collection will occur, on a first-in/first-out basis.

B. Project Development & Priority

After February 1st of each year, Engineering will tabulate the rankings for all qualifying applications with data collected within the previous three calendar years (January through December). Qualifying applications within the current year that have completed the data collection step may be added to the rankings. If an application is older than the previous three years, it will become ineligible for the traffic calming program and removed from the rankings. Another application may be made for reconsideration in the program if a previous application is removed from the rankings.

On or around May 1st of each year, Engineering will prepare rough concepts and cost estimates for top ranking applications based on the current and anticipated funding allocation to the neighborhood traffic calming program. The applications will become projects split into two categories:

- *Quick-build projects*. These projects often require little design effort and can be completed within the current year of the program.
- *Long-term projects*. These projects often require additional data collection, coordination with additional jurisdictions (e.g., border streets), and/or involve more complex design/bid processes that can be completed in the following years.

C. Public Notification

A project priority list will be shared with the Transportation Affairs Committee each year, ideally at its May meeting. Additionally, notification will be given to abutting property owners of upcoming projects. Updates may be provided on the City's construction updates webpage.

D. Funding

The merits of a traffic calming application are not measured by an applicant's or a neighborhood's ability to pay. Rather, the merits of an application are based solely on the safety-related evidence gathered through the neighborhood traffic calming program guidelines.

The neighborhood traffic calming program is a 100% City-funded effort. The primary funding source for the program is an allocation from the City's vehicle registration fee. The number of traffic calming measures implemented in the program is dependent on the program's allocation.

E. Appeals

Any applicant wishing to appeal a decision of the Engineering Division shall do so through the Board of Public Works, per Wauwatosa Municipal Code 2.54.030, by filing a written appeal to the City Clerk within 30 days of notification of the decision.

F. Contact

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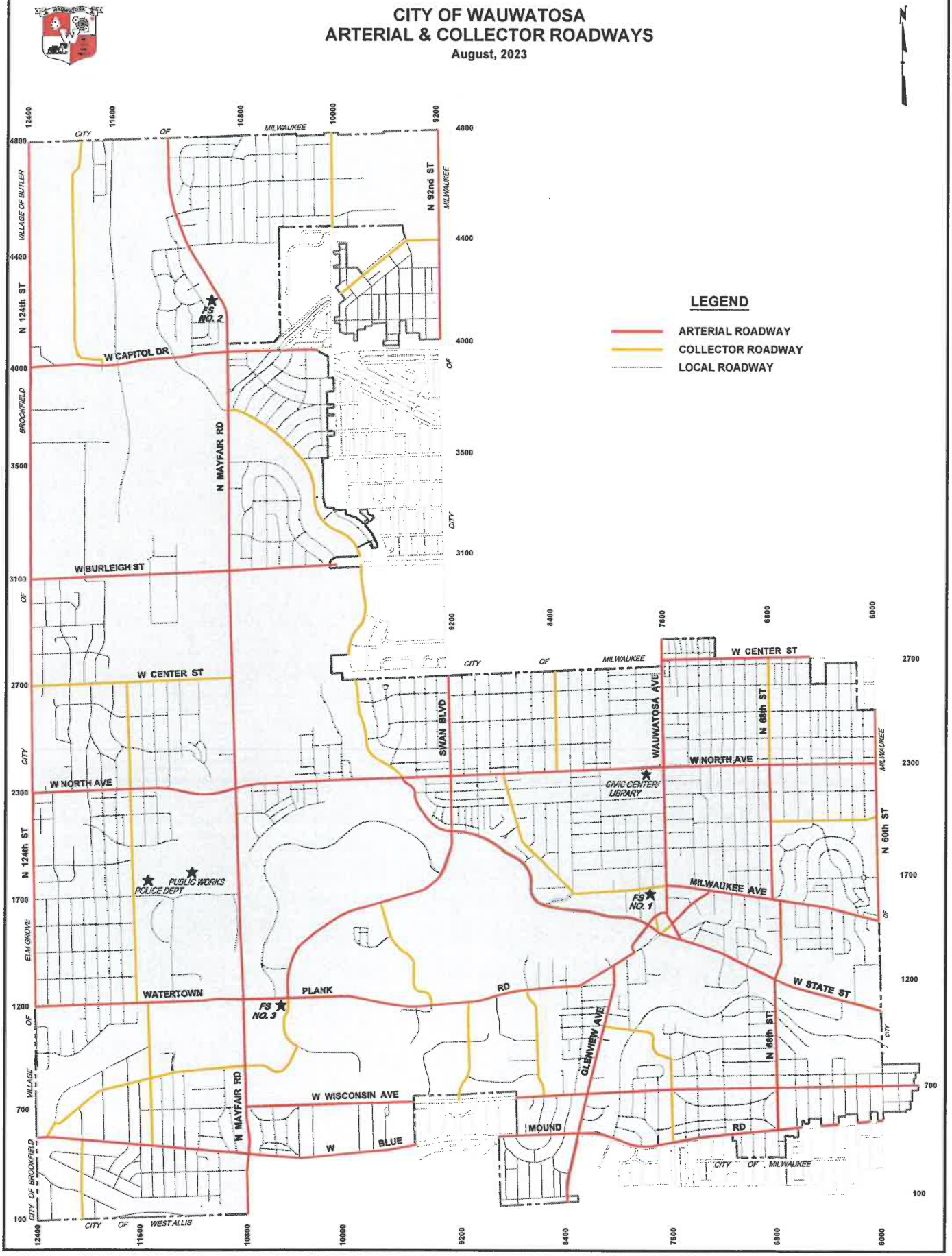
questions? Contact the Engineering Division at (414) 479-8927 or via email at tengineering@wauwatosa.net.

CITY OF WAUWATOSA
ARTERIAL & COLLECTOR ROADWAYS
August, 2023



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