Council Meeting Date: July 17, 2006 Agenda Item: 7 (b)

# CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

CITY OF SHORELINE. WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE:

**Arterial Speed Limit Findings** 

**DEPARTMENT:** 

**Public Works** 

PRESENTED BY:

Paul Haines, Director of Public Works

Jesus Sanchez, Operations Manager, Public Works

Rich Meredith, City Traffic Engineer

#### PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT

The purpose of this preliminary report is to provide a review of the operation of Shoreline arterial streets in relation to their classification, posted speed limit, and traffic volume. This is in response to the new street classifications adopted by the City Council June 6, 2005, with the Transportation Master Plan.

The report identifies arterial street segments that may need to have changes in posted speeds to meet city council adopted policy, sound engineering principles, and provide consistency and predictability for motorists in Shoreline. It is presented as information to the council and public to identify those segments which will require further analysis. Further analysis will include collision history, roadway geometrics, pedestrian facilities, and schools. When that is complete, staff will provide a detailed recommendation this fall.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

No formal action is needed at this time. Council is requested to review the attached preliminary report and indicate any additional areas that may require further study.

Approved By:

City Manager

City Attorney

#### INTRODUCTION

This preliminary report is in response to the new street classifications adopted by the City Council June 6, 2005, with the Transportation Master Plan. A map of the new classifications is shown in Appendix A.

The purpose of this preliminary report is to provide a review of the operation of Shoreline arterial streets in relation to their classification, posted speed limit, and traffic volume, then compare the current operations with table 6.3 of the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) to help identify inconsistencies. The table 6.3 is shown in Appendix B.

Table 2, the Arterial Roadway Data Matrix, summarizes all the arterial and neighborhood collector roadways with their currently associated classification, and the operating speed and traffic data collected on them. Table 2 is shown in Appendix C.

A map of all the streets where posted speeds are above or below what would be consistent with adopted policies and standard engineering principles is shown in Appendix D.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In June, 2003, the City of Shoreline began the process of updating its Transportation Master Plan (TMP). The TMP looked at the existing arterial street network, and came back with two recommendations. The first recommendation was modifications to the types of roadway classifications. Second was a reclassification of a number of roadways. These recommendations were adopted by the City Council on June 6, 2005.

Table 1 is a comparison of the previous street classifications to the r	new ones
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	Table 1										
Abbreviation	Description	Previous Classification	Updated Classification								
SR	State Route	Same as Principal Arterial	deleted - included with PA								
PA	Principal Arterial		same								
MA	Minor Arterial		same								
CA	Collector Arterial		same								
RS	Residential Street		deleted - included with NC and LS								
NC	Neighborhood Collector	N/A	new - non-arterial streets that handle higher volumes, such as for commercial access								
LS	Local Street	N/A	new - all non-arterials except NC								

The range of appropriate speed limits and volumes for the different classifications is shown in Appendix B. With the new roadway classifications having been adopted, the next step is a review of the operation of the arterial streets. This review looks at the current posted speed limit, operating speeds, volumes, and suggests where a change in the posted speed limit would be appropriate to consider.

In evaluating the operating speeds, the commonly used measure is the 85% (85 percentile) speed. The 85th percentile speed is the speed at which 85% of the vehicles are traveling at or below. One reason for using this measure is that studies have found

that most drivers will travel at a speed that feels comfortable for them. Based on those findings, the normal method of setting a speed limit on a roadway is to use the 85% speed as a starting point, then consider additional factors such as land use (neighborhoods, schools, etc), roadway geometrics (hills and curves), collision records, and street classification in using engineering judgment to determine an appropriate speed limit.

With the exception of Aurora Ave N and Ballinger Way NE, the speed limits on city streets are specified by ordinance, which is passed by the City Council. Because Aurora Ave N and Ballinger Way NE are state highways, and that Aurora Ave N is also a highway of statewide significance, changes to the speed limit on each roadway must also be approved by the Secretary of Transportation for the State of Washington.

### **DISCUSSION**

The principles of transportation planning and traffic operations both recognize the importance of having a consistent look and feel to arterial routes. By clearly identifying arterial streets with yellow centerline markings, traffic control devices for all intersecting streets (stop signs, traffic signals, etc.), and consistent application of speed limits, drivers can be encouraged to stay on the arterial network instead of finding alternate routes through neighborhoods. A marked centerline is typically a characteristic of an arterial street, so marking a centerline on a non-arterial street can identify a neighborhood street as a "through" route, and invite more traffic into a neighborhood.

An example of this philosophy can be seen in neighboring cities, such as Seattle, where all the arterial streets are marked with centerlines, while the non-arterials typically have none. The speed limit on all the arterials in Seattle is 30 MPH unless otherwise posted. There are signs at every arterial entry into Seattle that remind drivers of the arterial speed limits, which negates the need to have speed limit signs posted on every street.

Currently, there is an inconsistency in the treatments of some roadways in Shoreline. There are some local streets with centerlines, stop signs on all the side streets, and speed limits of 30 mph. There are also some arterials with speed limits below 30 mph. One of the effects of having arterials streets with speeds lower than 30 MPH is that it can be just as easy, or easier, to travel through the neighborhood on local streets. This has resulted in a need for additional man-hours of police enforcement to achieve a lower operating speed, and maintain the lowered speed. In addition, having posted speed limit too low for the intended use is an underlying factor in complaints about speeding and cut-through traffic in neighborhoods.

Issues associated with speed limits that are set too low include the requirement for additional enforcement to achieve the desired driver behavior and posted speed compliance. Unfortunately, local residents who are normally obeying the law often get caught traveling too fast on 25 MPH arterials merely because they did not realize the speed limit was lower than other typical arterials. The City's traffic engineering staff has been subpoenaed into court to defend the engineering judgment associated with the posted speed on a street. In these type of cases, if found arbitrary or without adequate grounds, courts can dismiss speeding violations.

The issue of changing speed limits can be difficult. A common perception is that raising a speed limit will increase speeding and decrease safety. Studies have shown that typically, simply changing the speed limit signs alone has little effect on the operating speed of a roadway. Physical changes, such as narrower lanes, curbs and sidewalks, and parallel parking can help to reduce driver comfort at higher speeds, so drivers tend to slow down.

Speed limits, when set too low, require more hours of enforcement, increase driver delay, and can cause drivers to seek faster routes through neighborhoods. Support for setting appropriate speed limits can be found a number of engineering publications. Some of them are referenced below.

When a speed limit is to be posted, it should be within 10 km/h or 5 mph of the 85th-percentile speed of free-flowing traffic.

Source: Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), 2003 ed, FHWA

When considering a change to the speed limit of a roadway, physical improvements may be needed to help adjust driving behavior. Such improvements can include centerline removal, edge line installation, intersection reconfiguration, sidewalks, and modifying signal operation.

A prerequisite to development of any effective speed management program is establishment of realistic speed limits to match roadway design and area characteristics. The goal is to design streets that communicate the appropriate speed for the facility. The selected speed limits should be consistent with driver expectations and commensurate with the functions of the roadway. A complementary relationship must exist among desired speed, actual operating speed, and posted speed limits. If the majority of road users view speed limits as unrealistic for prevailing conditions, the posted speed will be violated unless strictly enforced.

Source: Traffic Engineering Handbook, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE)

Of the current 5700 regulatory and warning signs in Shoreline, 700 are speed limit signs. These speed limit signs are located on most roadways because it is not readily apparent to drivers what the correct speed limit on each roadway is. Setting consistent speed limits can reduce sign clutter by creating opportunities to remove redundant speed limit signs.

Posting signs at the city limits stating "Arterial Speed 30MPH unless otherwise posted" allows a jurisdiction to remove redundant signs, unless the sign is needed for some other existing condition, such as marking the end of a school zone. "Arterial Speed Limit" signs can be seen on all arterials entering Seattle, and their use is described as a standard in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

Speed Limit signs indicating the statutory speed limits shall be installed at entrances to the State and at jurisdictional boundaries of metropolitan areas.

Source: Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), 2003 ed, FHWA

Installing such signs would need to be coordinated with evaluation and removal of centerline markings on non-arterial streets.

## Methodology for evaluation of current conditions

Using the current list of arterials and neighborhood collectors adopted through the TMP, staff collected data on the average weekday traffic volumes and the 85% traffic speeds for the roadways. This data is shown in table 2 in Appendix C. Comparing the current speed and volume data to the roadway classification, staff developed a list of roadways to consider for further review of changes to the posted speed limit. These roadways are also shown in Appendix C.

#### Benefits of appropriately assigned speed limits

- Greater consistency in setting appropriate speed limits may help reduce driver confusion, and increase driver compliance.
- Statutory speed limits on roadways would be consistent with current roadway classification.
- Clearly defining arterial routes helps preserve neighborhood integrity.
- Appropriately set speed limits can free up police resources to focus their attention on problem areas.
- Drivers tend to respect and comply with speed limits when appropriately set.
- Brings more drivers into compliance with the law.

## Disadvantages of raising posted speed limits

- Negative public perception
- Perception is that raising speed limit makes cars go faster and decreases safety.
- Increased resources to help defend speeding citations, and greater chance of dismissal.
- Capital improvement projects may be needed to maintain or improve driver compliance and the level of safety on each roadway

#### **Further Evaluation Methodology Process**

- Generate a list of roadways with the 85% speeds out of compliance of the posted or classification range policy by 5 or more MPH
- Evaluate the collision history, roadway geometrics, pedestrian facilities, and land use (schools, etc)
- Compare the CIP needs vs the costs of enforcement to achieve compliance with the appropriate speed for the street classification.
- Work with police department in development of final list of roadways for suggested changes to posted speed limit.
- Recommend an action plan and ordinance changes for specific arterial links
- Target the completion of additional evaluation by December, 2006

#### **Funding Source Discussion**

When considering a change to the speed limit of a roadway, physical improvements may be needed to help adjust driving behavior. Such improvements can include centerline removal, edge line installation, intersection reconfiguration, sidewalks, curb and gutter, drainage facilities, and modifying signal operations.

#### **Conclusions**

Many of Shoreline's roadways are functioning as intended. However, there are some that can and should be changed to meet the needs of users of the transportation system, be in compliance with our roadway classification system, and still maintain the necessary level of safety. Adjusting some of the speed limits on Shoreline's arterials to make them consistent with the roadway classification can have several benefits. These include helping improve driver compliance with the posted speed, and reduce delay and cut-through traffic in some neighborhoods.

Such changes could also require some capital improvements to maintain or improve the safety for all users of the roadways. Such improvements can reduce the need for extra police enforcement, freeing up those resources to be used at other problem areas.

An implementation plan needs to be developed prior to changing the speed limit signs on a roadway. Through the development of the table 2 in Appendix C, we can see some of the areas with the worst speeding problems. The police department is using this table to target speed enforcement. However, enforcement is not likely to completely achieve a change in driver behavior in the long term.

Staff will continue to work with neighborhoods to insure understanding of the process and the effects resulting from any speed limit change recommendations.

#### Recommendation

No formal action is needed at this time. Council is requested to review the attached preliminary report and indicate any additional areas that may require further study.

# **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Arterial Map of Shoreline

Attachment B: Characteristics of Roadways chart from TMP

Attachment C: Arterial Roadway Data Matrix

Attachment D: Map of Arterial Streets recommended for further review

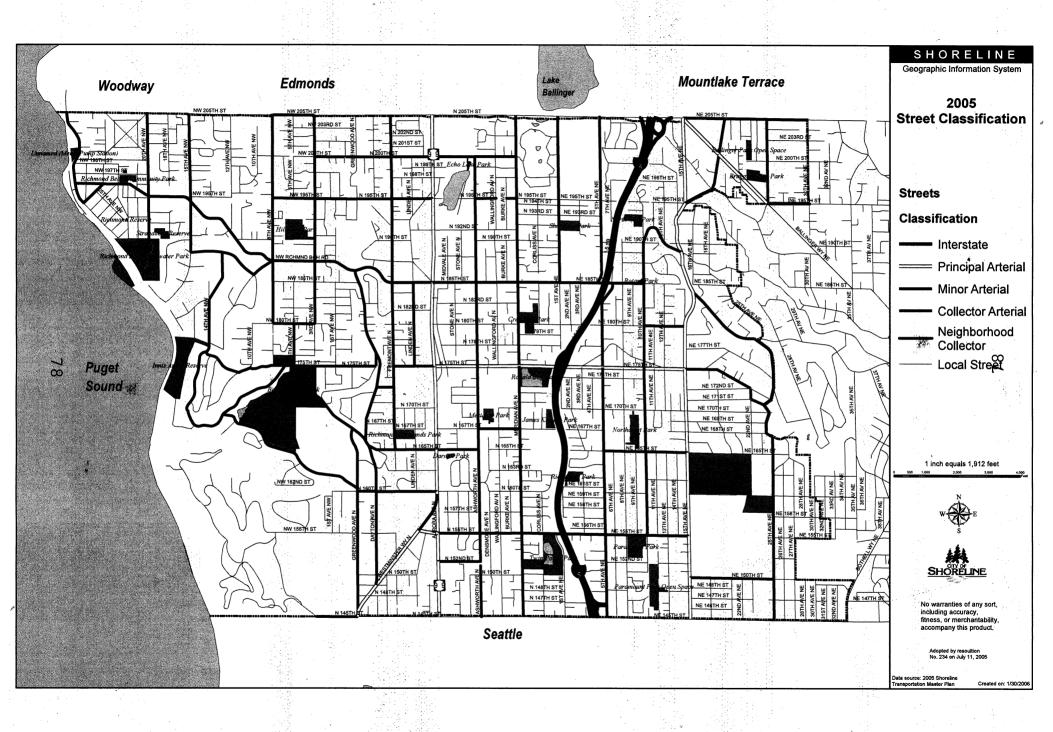


Table 6-3: General Description of Classified Streets

	11 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	Arterial	Local Street					
	Principal Arterial	Minor Arterial	Collector Arterial	Neighborhood Collector	Local Street			
Function	- To connect cities and urban centers with minimum delay - To channel traffic to Interstate system - To accommodate long and through trips	To connect activity centers within the City     To channel traffic to     Principal Arterials/Interstate     Accommodate some long trips	- To serve community centers and businesses - To channel traffic from Neighborhood Access streets to Minor or Principal Arterials - Accommodate medium length trips	- To serve residential areas - To channel traffic from local streets to Collector Arterials - Accommodate short trips such as shopping trips	- To provide local accesses - To serve residential areas			
Land Access	- Limited local access – refer to the "Access Management Plan"	- Limited local access to abutting properties	- Local access with some control	- Local access with minimum restrictions	- Local access with minimum restrictions			
Speed Limits	- 30 – 45 mph	- 30 – 40 mph	- 30- 35 mph	- 25 –30 mph	- 25 mph			
Daily Volumes (vpd)	More than 15,000 vpd	- 8,000 – 25,000 vpd	- 3,000 – 9,000 vpd	- less than 4,000 vpd	- Less than 4,000 vpd			
Number of Lanes	- Three or more lanes	- Three or more lanes	- Two or more lanes	- One or Two lanes	- One or Two lanes			
Lane striping	- Travel lanes delineated with stripes	- Travel lanes delineated with stripes	- Travel lanes delineated with stripes	- No travel lane striping	- No travel lane striping			
Median	- Landscaped medians or two-way center left turn lanes	- Landscaped medians or two-way center left turn lanes	- Landscaped medians allowed	- Medians are not needed unless provided as traffic calming devices	- Medians may be provided as traffic calming devices			
Transit	- Buses/transit stops allowed	- Buses/transit stops allowed	- Buses/transit stops allowed	- Buses/transit stops not generally allowed except for short segments	- Buses/transit stops not allowed			
Bicycle Facilities	- Bike lanes or shared lanes desired	- Bike lanes or shared lanes desired	- Bike lanes or shared lanes desired	- Shared lanes can be provided	- Bike facilities not specifically provided; may include signed bike routes			
Pedestrian Facilities*	- Sidewalks on both sides - Landscaped/amenity strips	- Sidewalks on both sides - Landscaped/amenity strips	- Sidewalks on both sides - Landscaped/amenity strips	- Sidewalks on both sides - Landscaped/amenity strips	- Safe pedestrian access through the use of sidewalks, trails, or other means.			

Source: City of Shoreline Transportation Master Plan - June, 2006

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			Posted						based on	Suggeste	ed Speed	
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10th Ave NE - NE 155th St to NE 165th St	R	S NC	30	36.1	2,500	2	6.1	30-40	25-30	Lower	NC => 25 mph (min);	New sidewalk
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10th Ave NE - NE 165th St to NE 175th St	R	S NC	30	36.3	2,500	2	6.3	30-40	25-30	Lower	NC => 25 mph (min);	New sidewalk
							25				and traffic circle being	installed
10th Ave NE - NE 175th St to NE 185th St	R	S NC	30	35.2	5,200	2	5.2	30-40	30-40			
10th Ave NE - NE 185th St to NE Perkins Wy	M	A CA	30	34.8	5,400	2	4.8	30-40	30-40			
10th Ave NW - NW Innis Arden W to NW 175th St	C/	A CA	25	33.8	650	2	8.8	30-35	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	
14th Ave NW - NW 175th St to NW Springdale Pl	C	A CA	25	33.9	1,024	2	8.9	30-35	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	
15th Ave NE - NE 145th St to NE 175th St	P/	N PA	35	38.6	17,000	3	3.6	30-40	30-35			
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15th Ave NE - NE 195th St to NE 205th St	P/	PA	35	39.4	9,000	2	4.4	30-45	30-35	11.		
15th Ave NW - NW 167th St to NW 175th St	C	A CA	25	34.6	1,130	2	9.6	30-40	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	
15th Ave NW - NW 188th St to NW Richmond Bch Rd	CA	CA	25	33.1	1,424	2	8.1	30-35	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	
15th Ave NW - NW Richmond Bch Rd to NW 205th St	R		25	31.7	1,400	2	6.7	30-35	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	- Kij
19th Ave NE - 15th Ave NE to Ballinger Way NE	M		25	33.3	6,000	2	8.3	30-35	30-40		MA => 30 mph (min)	
19th Ave NE - Ballinger Way NE to NE 205th St	M/		25	33.5	8,000	2	8.5	30-35	30-35		MA => 30 mph (min)	
1st Ave NE - NE 145th St to NE 155th St	R		30	37.4	3,200	2	7.4	30-40	30-40		l compartment	
CO1st Ave NE - NE 185th St to NE 194th St	R		25	34.2	3,600	2	9.2	30-40	30-40	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	
O1st Ave NE - NE 194th St to NE 205th St	RS		35	41.3	3,100	2	6.3	30-45	30-40		los compilication	
20th Ave NW - NW 190th St to NW 205th St	C		25	31.5	2,200	2	6.5	30-35	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	- W
22nd Ave NE - NE 171St St to NE 175th St	C		25	30.1	1,200	. 2	5.1	30-35	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	\$100 m
24th Ave NE - NE 178th St to 15th Ave NE	1		35	28.5	3,800	2	(6.5)	25-30	30-40	Lower	CA => 30 mph (min)	그렇게 그 그
25th Ave NE - NE 145th St to NE 175th St	C/		30	32.7	5,000	2	2.7	30-35	30-40	LOWE	Ort - 00 mpm (min)	33
25th Ave NE - NE 175th St to NE 178th St	C/		30	38.9	4,000	2	8.9	30-40	30-40			1 (1944) 3 (1944)
25th Ave NE - NE 178th St to NE Perkins Way	R		25	33.0	860	2	8.0	30-35	25-30			
25th Ave NE - Ballinger Way NE to NE 205th St	R		25	34.1	1,700	2	9.1	30-40	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	
3rd Ave NW - Carlyle Hal Rd NW to NW 175th St	C/		25	38.2	3,500	2	13.2	30-40	30-40		CA => 30 mph (min)	
3rd Ave NW - NW 180th St to NW Richmond Bch Rd	RS		25	30.1	1,500	2	5.1	30-35	25-30	1 taise		
3rd Ave NW - NW Richmond Bch Rd to NW 205th St	C/		35	28.4	4,200	2	(6.6)	25-30	30-40	Lower	CA => 30 mph (min)	
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6th Ave NW - NW 175th St to NW 180th St	C/		25	34.8	2,700	2	4.8	30-40	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	
8th Ave NW - NW 180th St to NW Richmond Bch Rd	C/		30	35.0	3,700	2	5.0	30-40	30-40	Naise		
8th Ave NW - NW Richmond Bch Rd to NW 205th St	M/		35	34.9	6,800	2	(0.1)	30-40	30-40	Lower	MA => 30 mph (min)	
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Ashworth Ave N - N 175th St to N 200th St	RS		30	32.3 34.4	1,300	2	2.3 4.4	30-35	25-30 25-30			
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	Meridian Ave N - I	N 145th St to N 205	5th St		MA	MA	35	37.0	12,000	2	2.0	30-40	30-35			
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	N 152nd St - Auro	ora Ave N to Ashwo	rth Ave N		RS	NC	25	27.0	2,250	2	2.0	25-30	25-30			
	N 155th St - West	minster Way N to A	urora Ave N		PA	PA	35	34.4	13,800	5	(0.6)	30-40	30-35		,	
	N 155th St - Auroi	ra Ave N to 5th Ave	NE		MA	MA	35	37.0	12,500	3	2.0	30-40	30-35			
•	N 160th St - Gree	nwood Ave N to Da	yton Ave N		CA	CA	25	28.4	5,200	2	3.4	25-30	30-35	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	<del></del>
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		h Ave NE to 25th A		100	MA	MA	35	38.5	3,700	2	3.5	30-40	30-40			100
		h Ave NE to 15th Av			RS	NC	25	34.0	2,800	2	9.0	30-35	25-30		CA => 30 mph (min)	ingtifu But in
-	<del></del>	Ave NE to 10th Ave			MA	MA	35	36.9	8,400	3	1.9	30-40	30-35	Lower	MA => 30 mph (min)	
		linger Way NE to 30			RS	MA	40	35.4	10,800	2	(4.6)	30-40	25-30			
	•	10th Ave NE to 15			MA	CA	25	32.2	4,000	2	7.2	30-35	30-40		CA => 30 mph (min)	
		15th Ave NE to 25			MA	CA	25	33.3	3,000	2	8.3	30-35	25-30		CA => 30 mph (min)	
	NW 167th St - 10t	th Ave NW to 15th	Ave NW	1	CA	CA	25	29.2	1,100	2	4.2	30-35	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	

# Arterial Roadway Data Traffic Services June 2006

Table 2-Appendix C

Traffic Services, June 2006								Market Market Market (Market Market M		1.4		
Traine Gervices, care 2000			Current					Typic	al Posted			
			Posted					Speed	based on	Suggeste	ed Speed	
	Old	New	Speed	85%		# of	Speed	85%	or Volume	Limit		
Street Segment	Class	Class	Limit	speed	Volume	lanes	Diff	speed	(AWDT)	Change	Comments	
NW 175th St - Greenwood PI N to 10th Ave NW	RS	CA	25	32.4	4,200	2	7.4	30-35	30-40	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	
NW 175th St - 10th Ave NW to 15th Ave NW	RS	NC	25	27.1	500	2	2.1	25-30	25-30	1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1		
NW 180th St - 3rd Ave NW to 6th Ave NW	RS	NC	25	29.7	450	2	4.7	30-35	25-30			
NW 180th St - 6th Ave NW to 8th Ave NW	CA	CA	25	29.2	2,100	2	4.2	30-35	25-30	10.0		
NW 188th St - Springdale Ct NW to 15th Ave NW	CA	CA	25	32.2	1,850	2	7.2	30-35	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	
NW 195th PI - 24th Ave NW to NW Richmond Beach	CA	NC	25	32.6	950	2	7.6	30-35	25-30		CA => 30 mph (min)	
NW 195th St - Fremont Ave N to 8th Ave NW	RS	NC	25	34.7	2,550	2	9.7	30-40	25-30		CA => 30 mph (min)	
NW 195th St - 15th Ave NW to 20th Ave NW	MA	MA	30	38.6	9,100	4	8.6	30-40	30-35		,	
NW 196th St - 20th Ave NW to 24th Ave NW	CA	CA	30	35.8	2,100	4	5.8	30-40	25-30			
NW 196th St - 24th Ave NW to NW Richmond Bch Rd	CA	CA	25	33.3	900	2	8.3	30-35	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	
NW 205th St - 3rd Ave NW to 8th Ave NW	RS	CA	25	25.1	2,000	2	0.1	25-30	25-30		CA => 30 mph (min)-s	speed humps
NW Innis Arden Way - Greenwood Av N to 10th Av NW	CA	CA	35	41.1	2,100	2	6.1	30-45	25-30		CA => 30 mph (min)	
NW Richmond Bch Rd - Fremont Ave N to 8th Ave NW	MA	MA	35	38.7	19,000	4	3.7	30-40	30-35	4	,	
NW Richmond Bch Rd - 8th Ave NW to 15th Ave NW	MA	MA	30	36.8	12,000	4	6.8	30-40	30-35			
Richmond Bch Dr NW - NW 195th PI to NW 196th St	CA	NC	25	27.7	500	2	2.2	25-30	25-30			
Richmond Bch Dr NW - NW 196th St to NW 205th St	CA	CA	25	31.5	525	2	6.5	30-35	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	5
Ridgefield Rd NW - Innis Arden Rd to Springdale Ct NW	RS	NC	25	31.9	925	2	6.9	30-35	25-30			
Springdale Ct NW - 14th Ave NW to NW 188th St	CA	CA	25	28.9	1,300	2	3.9	25-30	25-30	Raise	CA => 30 mph (min)	1.1
St Luke PI N - N 175th St to Dayton Ave N	RS	CA	25	27.6	2,300	2	2.6	25-30	25-30		, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	
Westminster Way N - Greenwood Ave N to N 155th St	PA	PA	35	43.2	22,000	4	8.2	30-45	30-35	- A		*
Westminster Way N - N 155th St to Aurora Ave N	PA	PA	35	44.1	6,800	2	9.1	30-45	30-40		One Way SB	

