



North Reading Police Department



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Chief of Police

Traffic Mitigation Action Plan

07/12/10

OVERVIEW

The North Reading Police Traffic Division researched and reviewed traffic accidents, vehicular speed complaints and citizen noise complaint data for the greater contiguous New and Chestnut St area. Citizen complaints received by the NRPD regarding traffic and noise related to vehicular traffic is 6 complaints on file since 9/07. We have also reviewed the citizen's petition dated 1/2010 submitted to the Town administrator's office.

In the aforementioned citizen petition the main concerns noted is the continued use of the roadway by heavy commercial vehicles that cause excessive noise in the neighborhood, create a safety issue due to increased speeds above the posted and legal limits, and the related safety concerns of this area being close in proximity to numerous recreational areas.

The Team also reviewed the motor vehicle crash (MVC) reports for the intersections related to this area. There was a total of 61 MVC in the analyzed area since 9/07. Of the nine intersections/areas analyzed Chestnut and Haverhill St. intersection does show a higher MVC count than any other studied. In our opinion this is due to roadway and intersection design. It should also be noted that no commercial vehicles greater than 1 ton were involved in any reported accidents throughout the analyzed area

Historical Operational Period: October 2008 to August 2009

The Chief met with State Representative Brad Jones on Friday October 03, 2008 at the NRPD. Representative Jones discussed the receipt of a petition from residents from Cedar Street, Haverhill Street, and Chestnut Street about ongoing truck problems. Past NRPD and DPW initiatives were discussed as was possible future actions.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The traffic problems were identified as commercial vehicles traveling in those areas unloaded inbound and loaded going outbound. The unloaded trucks were observed as bouncing over road surface obstacles such as manhole covers, potholes, and under ground utility covers. This created a metal to metal noise that inferred the truck was traveling very fast. The petition identified the following local businesses as being alleged violators U.S. Postal Distribution Center, Heffrons trucking and Benevento's trucking to include their customers and sub-contractors involving multiple businesses.

The traffic division conducted selective enforcement in the effected area which resulted in only observing a few trucks speeding; but the covering officers did recognize the noise caused by the trucks in general operation and also the noise caused by applying their Jake-braking systems throughout the areas listed above.

In addition, the Traffic Division worked together with Department of Public Works (DPW) to add new signage to the effected area. The cooperative study completed by the Department and the DPW resulted in the installation of new curbing and crosswalks.

The directed patrol efforts by traffic unit officers confirmed the reports of the officers assigned to selective enforcement. There was an effort to work with the Mass Highway to restrict trucks from using New street. This effort was denied by the State.

ACTION PLAN

- **Plan Diversity:** This plan will implemented in areas throughout North Reading that are experiencing similar concerns regarding heavy commercial trucking.
- **Massachusetts State Police and NRPD Enforcement Collaboration.** The Traffic Team Commanding Officer will establish an enforcement program and time table with his counterpart with the MSP Truck Enforcement Team.
- **Selective uniformed traffic patrols-** Regularly scheduled duty personnel will monitor and enforce speed and traffic related issues in the greater New St. area. Although selective enforcement assignment is limited to officer availability and is the most cost effective measure.
- **Directed dedicated patrols-** Traffic Division officers will be assigned to dedicated patrol, as determined by the Traffic Division Commander. Their duties will be similar to those above and or will be working in partnership with the MSP Truck Team. These directed patrols would be overtime assignments; however it would be the most effective enforcement action.
- **Research –** The Safety Officer in conjunction with the Town Engineer will research the roadways, intersections and engine jake-brake restrictions to determine the applicability of restrictions for commercial vehicles over 2.5 tons. They will also determine if there is a need to increase and – or upgrade traffic control signage in the **greater** effected area.

- **Operator education-** Determine through selective and directed patrols the heavy commercial users traveling through the affected areas and the types of violations observed. A team representative will meet with representatives of the commercial business who most frequently travel this area to seek voluntary route changes and traffic control compliance. The team will consider the placement of signs at businesses located in North Reading that reinforce these safety and enforcement concepts.
- **Resident education/ feedback-** The team will meet with the affected residents to discuss the NRPD plan and communicate all findings and result from enforcements actions and research conducted. The team will seek feedback as to the success or short comings of this action plan and review and revise the plan as needed.
- **Officer Training and Equipment-** Train traffic team members in commercial vehicle law enforcement through specialized training. Once trained in this area traffic team members can more effectively enforce commercial vehicle equipment violations and overweight compliance laws. To effectively enforce commercial truck laws without the dependence on external resources the NRPD needs to purchase related commercial vehicle enforcement equipment such as scales, meters, gages and etc. The Department has been in contact with the Massachusetts State Police to arrange for seats at their next scheduled commercial truck training program.

POLICE TRAFFIC FUNCTION

Traffic Law Enforcement is one of the primary responsibilities of the NRPD and has as its basic *objectives*:

- Identifying and removing from the roadway drivers whose behavior indicates that they are an immediate threat or danger to the public.
- Improving driving behavior that differs from the accepted or legal requirements through direct enforcement contact and driver observation of police enforcement activities.
- Developing and encouraging voluntary compliance with traffic laws and ordinances through a continuing enforcement program.

TRAFFIC TEAM ENFORCEMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the North Reading Police Department traffic enforcement program is the reduction of fatalities, personal injuries, and property damage as a result of traffic accidents. To this end, the the department will collect and analyze traffic accident data in order to direct selective enforcement efforts to those areas or conditions to traffic accidents.

The reduction of the number and severity of traffic accidents will be the sole motivation of the department's traffic enforcement efforts. The generation of revenue or imposition of quota systems will not be a determining factor.

The goal of each shift or unit involved in the departments selective enforcement effort will be a reduction in the number of severity of traffic accidents in areas targeted.

TRAFFIC TEAM ENFORCEMENT ALTERNATIVES

Officers are to use individual discretion, based on professional judgement, as to which form of enforcement action will be taken. Action will be appropriate for each violation of the law. This will be accomplished in a fair, impartial, courteous and businesslike manner with one of the following options.

WRITTEN WARNING: a written warning is a proper alternative in response to a minor traffic violation, but not to the extent that court or other judicial action is warranted.

WRITTEN CITATION: traffic citations fines will be issued to violators who jeopardize the safe and efficient flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

PHYSICAL ARREST: the physical arrest of a driver is the most extreme action that may be taken for a traffic offense. During times when workloads and manpower are limited complaint applications will be the preferred method or alternative.

Conclusion

The problems facing the above affected residents are not unique to this area or community. Heavy commercial traffic is observed throughout the community on all of the Town's roadways leading to major highways and into or out of other communities. With increased enforcement and specialized training and equipment the NRPD response should help mitigate the issue and concerns of the greater New St. area.

North Reading Police Department
Traffic Division

