



The City of Othello

500 East Main, Othello, WA

Telephone (509) 488-5686
Fax (509) 488-0102

Police Department

Phil Schenck, Chief of Police
Telephone (509) 488-3314
Fax (509) 488-2385

MEMORANDUM:

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Chief Schenck

REFERENCE: Street Safety Top 5

1. Speeding
2. Failure to yield
3. Configuration of streets/lack of use of collectors and arterials
4. Accident distribution
5. Pedestrian accidents

1. Speeding:

Speeding should be considered and handled differently based on location. With appropriately constructed streets in residential areas, high speed traffic will be pushed onto collectors and arterials. This is one of the reasons that Main St and Broadway have increased speed limits. Residential streets should be inconvenient to travel quickly across town (more on 3 below). This will help reduce residential speeding. Officers focus their enforcement activities on the most busy roadways as well as identified problem areas.

OPD stopped over 2,200 vehicles in 2020. Our 7 year average is 2,323 vehicle stops per year. We average 308 criminal traffic violations resulting in a mandatory court appearance and 504 traffic infraction violations for the same time period. In 2020 OPD responded to 197 traffic accidents. Our 7 year average is 228 accidents per year. There is no obvious correlation over the past 7 years between traffic accidents and citations. (see attachment 1)

Recommendations:

- New streets be constructed less than 36 ft wide. Narrower will create a better sense of neighborhood and reduce crime.
- 25 MPH should not be an expectation nor a goal within any neighborhood.
- Additional traffic calming efforts should be implemented. Such as raised crosswalks near parks and schools (attachment 2), Speed radar signs at city entrances, parks, schools (attachment 3). Traffic candles (attachment 5).
- 4th Ave, is a perfect example of a street with needed calming tools.

2. Failure to yield

Failure to yield at a traffic signal or sign is difficult to enforce. One of our recommendations is that stop sign use be consistent throughout town. While they are not recommended as a speed control device, my experience is

that they help identify “right of way” and the “at fault” driver in collisions. Inconsistency causes confusion. Additionally, see accident distribution below.

Recommendation:

- Reduce street width. Narrow streets have slower traffic and do not need as many stop signs due to shorter stopping distance.
- Place stop signs consistently and predictably while supporting collector streets.
- Inconvenience cut through drivers in an effort to push them to collector streets and arterials.

3. Configuration of streets/lack of use of collectors and arterials

Community members cut through neighborhoods when it is more convenient or saves time. Unfortunately, this increases accidents and increases crime. This is especially a problem when residential roads allow speeds similar to collector streets and arterials.

Recommendation:

- Residential streets should be slow and “uncomfortable” to drive.
- Collectors and arterials should have sidewalks and faster speed limits.
- Arterials and collectors should be designed for the future, but can be marked and configured for the traffic we have now. This can be modified later as increased traffic flow is needed.
 - Add choke points
 - Center islands (attachment 4)
 - Reduce number of lanes (attachment 10) This example is from Bellingham where a 4 lane road separated by an island was reduced to 2 lanes. The same amount of traffic travels this busy street.

4. Accident distribution

Accidents are occurring predominantly at conflict points. These conflict points are generally at intersections but are also occurring where residents are backing into the roadway and are struck by speeding pass through traffic. Gemstone is the best example. It is a residential street being used by cut through traffic instead of Scootney.

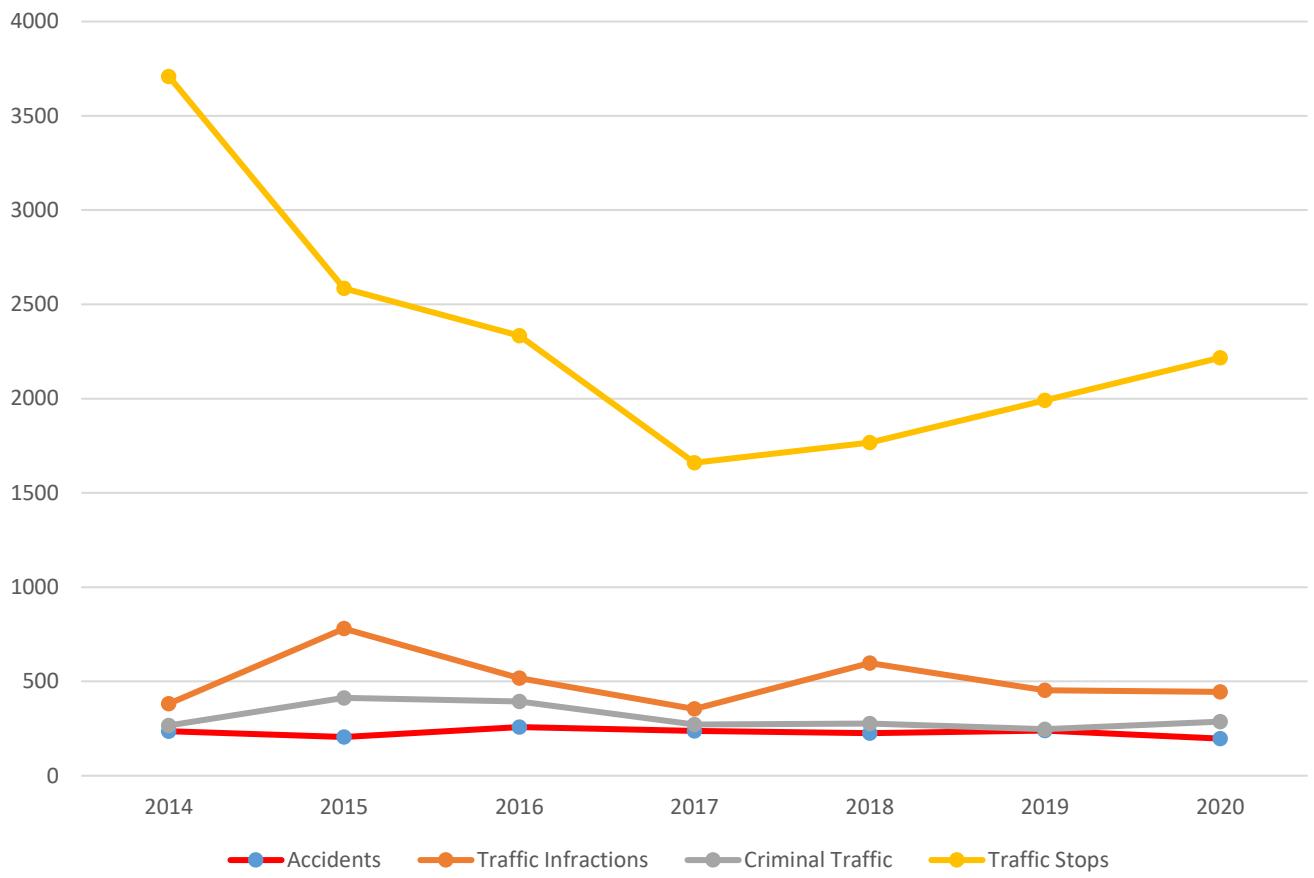
- Narrow residential streets. Slower speeds qual less reportable accidents and less injury accidents.
- Reduce the conflict points. Our current blocks are 4-5 houses long (attachment 6) with wide streets. Quincy has much less residential accidents. Their blocks are 8-10 houses long (attachment 7) with narrower streets. Less intersections and lower speed equals less accidents.
- Consistently control intersections, supporting collector streets
- Add raised crosswalks supporting school routes along Gemstone (attachment 9).

5. Pedestrian accidents

Pedestrian accidents are generally in school zones, near parks, or on identified crosswalks on higher speed arterials and collectors. These areas are being identified and pedestrian safety devices implemented.

- Install radar speed signs at schools and parks, as well as accident concentrations.
- Additionally, we can draw attention to identified crosswalks by implementing raised crosswalks at each school and our parks.
- Install additional bulb outs, Hawk system along 14th near Wahitus, traffic candles in the short term.
- Pedestrian safety islands as well as raised crosswalks in additionally identified risk areas.

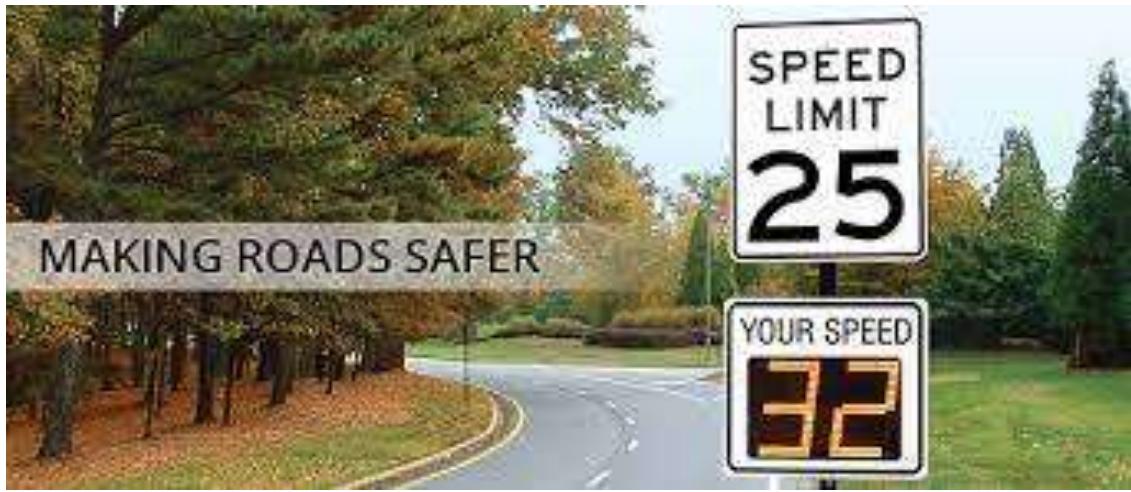
Enforcement vs Accidents



Attachment 1..



Attachment 2



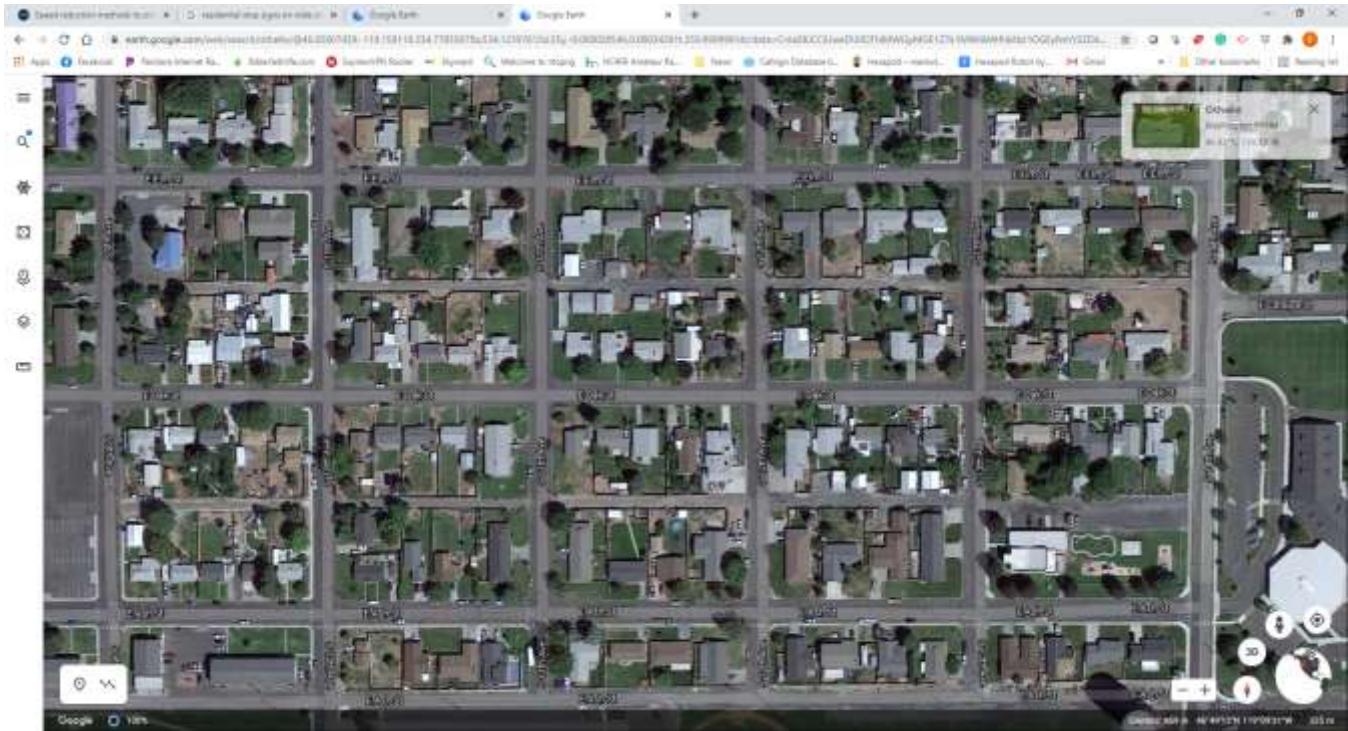
Attachment 3



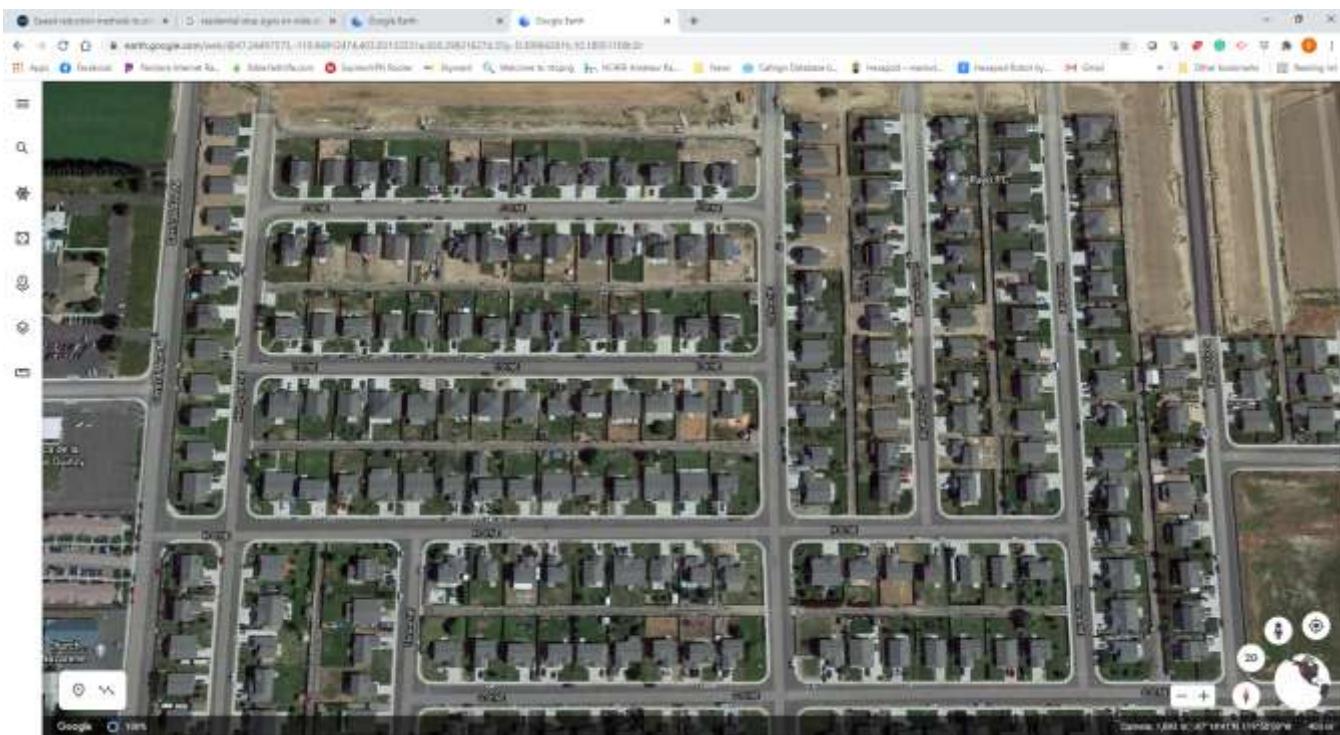
Attachment 4



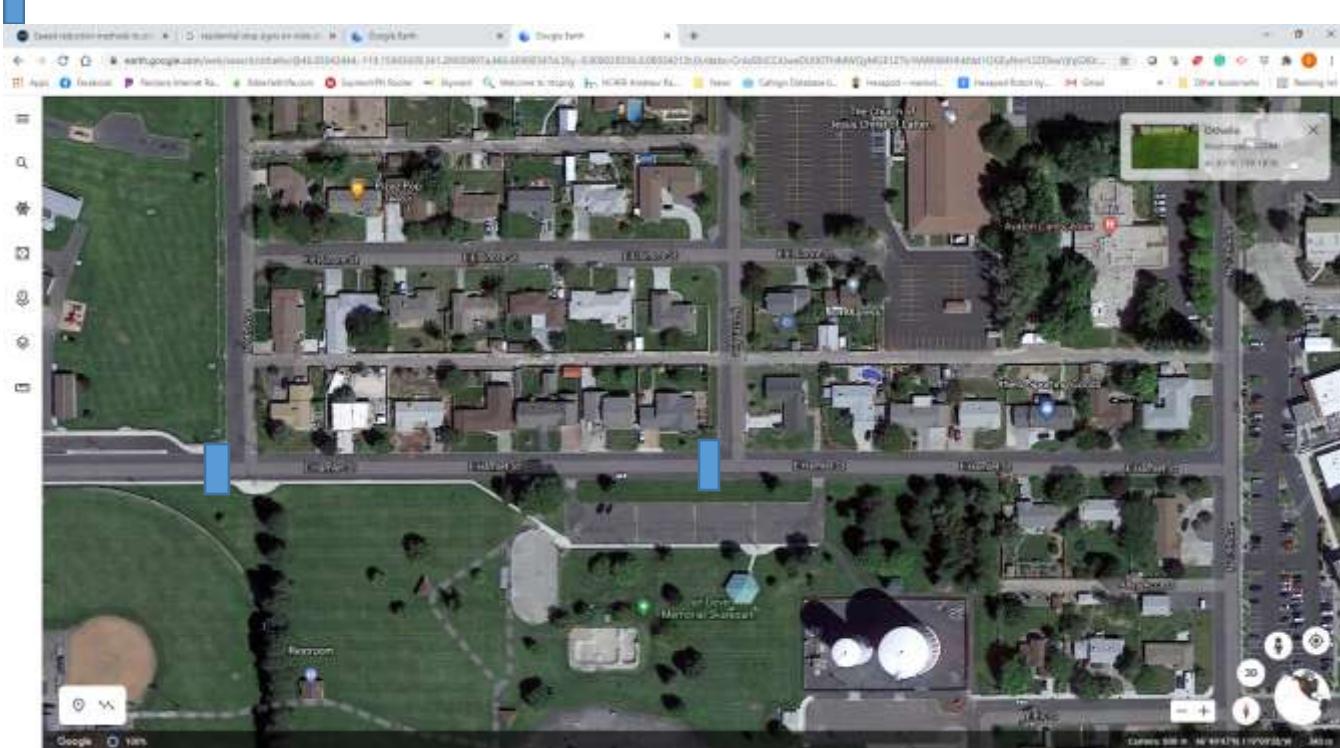
Attachment 5



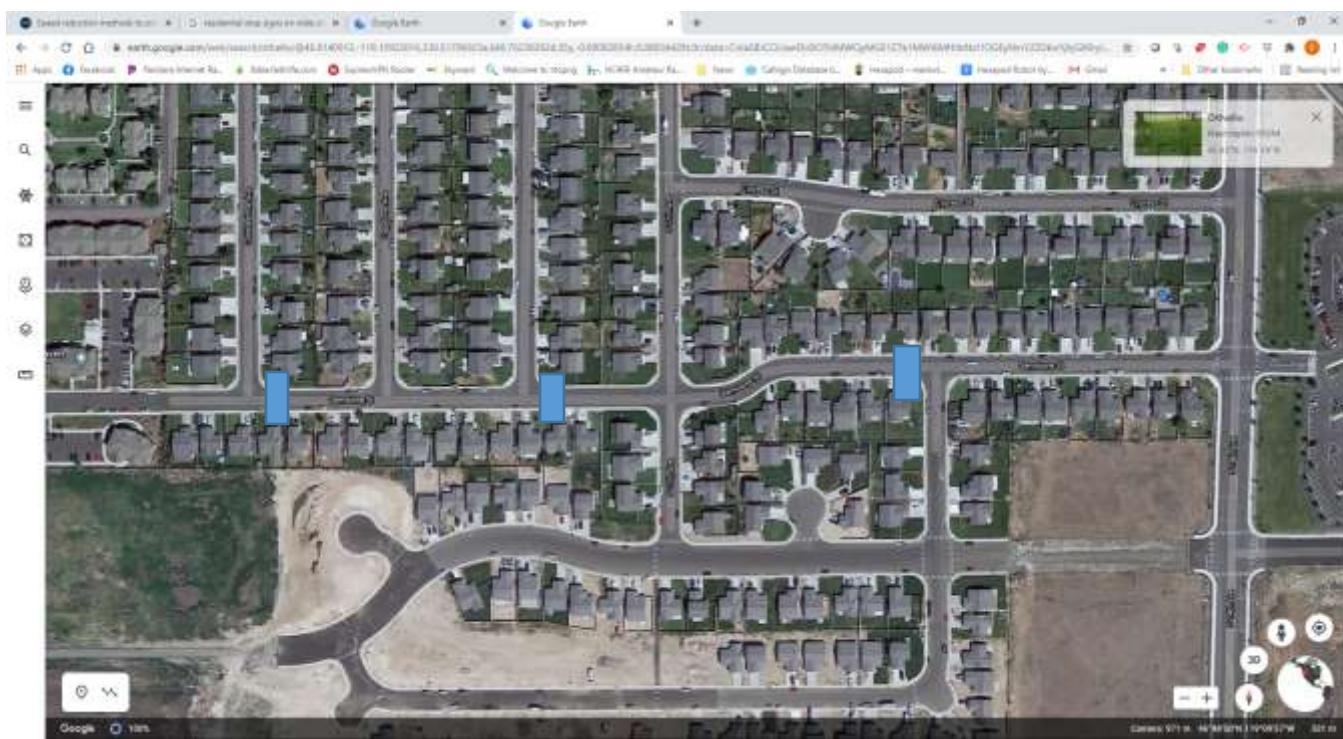
Attachment 6



Attachment 7



Attachment 8



Attachment 9



Attachment 10