



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – February 15, 2017 Agenda Item 7

Work Session

Discussion of Policy and Standards for Curb Painting on City Streets

Recommended Council Action

Receive information.

Context with Key Issues

On June 3, 2013, an Ad Hoc Residents' Committee presented a report to Council regarding concerns about the residential streetscape and the impact of various City projects on the appearance and function of the streetscape (see link in Attachments section). They recommended the City adopt a streetscape policy to ensure protection of the City's unique aesthetic. Among the outcomes of the Ad Hoc Residents' Committee report included the City Council appointing a Residential Streetscape Task Force on November 13, 2013, and the City Manager directing the Public Works Department to stop the practice of painting curbs in the City unless deemed necessary for public safety.

The Streetscape Task Force presented a report to the Council in March, 2015 (see link in attachments section). The report was accepted by Council via Resolution 2015-30 on May 21, 2015. The report concluded that that the painting of curbs was unsightly and potentially created confusion when the marked area was not consistent with existing street parking restrictions. Additionally they stated that there was also the unintended consequence of creating the appearance of legal parking areas where paint was not visible. The report stated "the use of 'hazard' colors in any form (signs or pavement markings) should be carefully restricted to situations that are truly hazardous and not proliferate as a passive parking enforcement measure." The report advised the City to discontinue the practice of curb painting and undertake a program of parking code awareness and more stringent enforcement, and use signage to mark critical safety zones.

Prior to the directive of the City Manager, the Public Works Department provided curb painting in several situations. Primarily, curb painting was done when reports were received from the Police Department or residents regarding repeated illegal parking too close to intersections or stop signs. Additionally, curbs were routinely painted to mark restricted parking areas in front of fire hydrants and bus stop locations. Additionally, upon a resident's request, the Department would paint the curb on either side of a driveway apron for those reporting problems with cars parking too close to the apron restricting their ability to enter and exit their driveway.

Since the directive to cease curb painting, the Department has increased installation of signs to denote parking restricted areas near intersections and stop signs. Curb painting has continued in front of fire hydrants and along school zones when repeated parking violations were observed. When residents have requested painting of curbs on either side of their driveway, they have been directed to notify the Police Department if a car parks too close.

The Department does not have an opinion on whether to re-establish the curb paint practice. It should be noted that curb painting and maintenance of curb painting will remain an issue. When painting of curbs is done in response to resident calls, there can be a varied impact by

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neighborhood. That is, neighborhoods of a larger number of people of color may have fewer requests for curb painting than other neighborhoods.

Painted curbs deteriorate by being brushed by car tires, as well as due to fluctuating temperature, rain, salt and snow. In order to maintain a consistent painted surface, curb painting would need to take place almost monthly in some areas. Additionally, if curb painting were to be undertaken again city-wide, the old paint should be stripped, rather than painting over old paint, in order to improve adherence and consistent color. This level of paint maintenance would require the hiring of additional staff or contracting with a firm to do this work, given current Departmental responsibilities. If done by contract, it would likely be done on a seasonal schedule 2 or 3 times per year, rather than as requests are received.

Council Priority

Engaged Responsive and Service Oriented Government

Environmental Impact of Action

Minimal environmental impact, assuming painting follows manufacturer's recommendation and cleanup is appropriate. Alternatives, which include sign installation will likely have a greater carbon foot print due to the use of metal posts and signs.

Fiscal Impact of Action

Staff time or contractor expense required for curb painting or sign installation and maintenance

Attachments and Links

Final Report of the Residential Street Task Force: [Takoma Park's Residential Streetscapes: Safeguarding our Distinctive Character](#)