Environmental Quality & Public Works (EQPW) Committee

August 18, 2026

Summary and Motions

Chair Dave Sevigny called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Committee Members James Brown, Tyler Morton, Tom Eblen, Emma Curtis, Liz Sheehan, Lisa Higgins-Hord, Joseph Hale, Amy Beasley, and Hil Boone were in attendance as voting members. Vice Mayor Dan Wu, Council Members Shayla Lynch, Whitney Baxter, and Jennifer Reynolds were present as non-voting members.

I. APPROVAL OF JUNE 16, 2026 COMMITTEE SUMMARY

Motion by Curtis to approve the June 16, 2026 Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee Summary. Seconded by Morton. Motion passed unanimously.

II. Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP)

The Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP), established in 2000 and managed by Traffic Engineering, is designed to improve safety and neighborhood livability on local and residential streets through data-driven traffic-calming measures and resident participation. Measures implemented through the program include speed humps and tables, radar speed feedback signs, pavement markings, signage, and other interventions. As of July 2026, the program had installed 190 speed humps/tables and 110 radar feedback signs, while Traffic Engineering receives more than 300 traffic-calming requests annually.

The 2026 program review included input from Traffic Engineering staff, Council Members, and residents who had experience with both successful and unsuccessful NTMP requests. The review found that the program largely meets its goals, particularly through its data-driven traffic studies and community petition and ballot processes. However, the review identified several opportunities for improvement, including addressing the gap between neighborhood-scale NTMP projects and major engineering capital projects, improving public tracking of requests, expanding public education, and simplifying the petition and ballot process.

Going forward, staff proposes maintaining the NTMP's focus on local residential streets while streamlining the process and improving renter participation. Potential improvements include a dedicated NTMP portal, project tracking, updated ballot procedures, shorter timelines, abbreviated traffic studies, review of traffic-calming thresholds, and a program manager to coordinate projects. The presentation also proposes exploring a Quick Build Program to complement the NTMP and other Traffic Engineering activities, along with greater public education and engagement through neighborhood champions.

III. TRAFFIC CALMING: QUICK BUILDS

Lexington is developing a Quick Build Program to address the “missing middle” between routine traffic operations and neighborhood traffic calming projects, such as those handled through the NTMP, and larger permanent capital projects. Quick Builds use interim, adaptable, and comparatively lower-cost materials to respond more quickly to safety, access, and mobility needs while allowing projects to be tested, evaluated, modified, retained, or eventually converted into permanent improvements.

Lexington has already used quick-build approaches on projects such as High Street, Bryan Avenue, Harrodsburg Road, Short Street, and Shropshire Avenue. The High Street pilot demonstrated the potential benefits: average vehicle speeds declined from 31 mph to 26 mph, no crashes occurred during the pilot compared with six during the prior comparison period, and 72% of respondents reported feeling safer. The project was retained as an interim improvement for continued refinement and monitoring.

Moving forward, LFUCG plans to develop a more consistent program structure with clear project criteria, defined staff responsibilities, cross-departmental coordination, community partnerships, evaluation measures, communications, and maintenance planning. Safe Routes to School, the MLK Corridor, and KYTC/High Injury Network projects will serve as test cases for the emerging framework. Staff will use lessons from these projects to refine the program and return with a more defined structure, including project criteria, organizational roles, delivery processes, and future resource needs.

IV. TRAFFIC ENGINEERING MANUAL

The Division of Traffic Engineering has developed a new Traffic Engineering Manual to provide consistent standards and guidance for LFUCG staff, engineers, developers, and contractors. Developed in coordination with existing LFUCG ordinances, subdivision regulations, the Complete Streets Manual, Division of Engineering manuals, and KYTC standards, the manual is intended to improve consistency and help facilitate quicker review and acceptance of development and construction plans.

The manual was developed with input from Planning, Engineering, the Lexington Homebuilders Association, developers, engineers, contractors, development attorneys, and utility companies. It establishes guidance for pavement markings, signage, temporary traffic control, bicycle facilities, ADA accessibility, street lighting, site access and design, and Traffic Engineering standard drawings. The examples on pages 5–9 illustrate how the standards can address issues such as inadequate ADA parking, non-conforming signage, parking lot circulation, and private-street design.

The manual will be applied through Planning Commission development plans and the building-permit process, including new construction, remodels, and paving permits. Ultimately, it is intended to give developers, property owners, designers, and engineers clearer and more predictable Traffic Engineering expectations for commercial and industrial projects within LFUCG.

Motion by Sevigny to approve the proposed Traffic Engineering Manual as outlined in today's committee packet. Seconded by Curtis. Motion passed without dissent.

V. URBAN FORESTRY/STREET TREES UPDATE

The Urban & Community Forestry program provided an update on Lexington's tree planting, pruning, hazard tree removal, ordinance revisions, and downtown tree replacement efforts. The Private Property Tree Planting Program received $150,000 in funding and attracted significant demand, with applications closing just 72 hours after opening and 249 participants in FY26. The Street Tree Courtesy Pruning Program has pruned 43,951 street trees since FY2016, with approximately $627,000 invested over that period.

The Hazard Street Tree Cost-Share Program served 70 homeowners in FY26 and removed and replaced 91 hazardous street trees, with participation from all 12 Council districts for the second consecutive year. The program expended approximately $150,741, and 25.2% of program funding supported qualifying low- to moderate-income residents receiving 100% grants.

Staff also proposed revisions to Chapter 17B to clarify tree planting easements and removal/replacement requirements, expand the Tree Board's ability to support urban forestry incentives, and strengthen the Urban Forester's authority regarding tree topping. Updates to the Hazard Street Tree Program guidelines would further clarify eligibility, inspections, approved vendors, reimbursement documentation, and the application process.

Finally, staff presented a three-year Main Street tree replacement plan. Of 74 downtown planting locations, 36 trees are recommended for planting or replacement. The proposed schedule would plant 18 currently empty locations in winter 2026–27, followed by replacement of nine dead or dying trees in each of the following two winters.

Motion by Sevigny to approve the proposed amendments to Chapter 17B in the Code of Ordinances, related to street tree replacement and maintenance as outlined in today's packet. Seconded by Curtis. Motion passed without dissent.

Motion by Sevigny to approve the proposed revisions to guidelines for Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program as outlined in today's packet. Seconded by Curtis. Motion passed without dissent.

I. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

There was no discussion on this item.

The meeting adjourned at 2:29 pm.