

COUNCIL LETTER
City of Knoxville
May 20, 2019

Agenda Item: Discuss possible modifications to intersection of Roche & Robinson

Background: One of the most complained about intersections in the City of Knoxville is where South Roche Street meets West Robinson Street. In 2018 the City received funding for a Traffic Engineering Assistance Program (TEAP) grant to look at this intersection among others. The study looked at intersection design, traffic volume, existing traffic control devices, sight lines, and traffic accident history.

The TEAP study resulted in a series of four recommendations being presented to the City.

- 1) Update traffic signage (size, reflectivity, etc.);
- 2) Add pavement stop lines;
- 3) Remove parking spaces on the east side of the intersection (3 on south side & 4 on the north); and
- 4) Add stop signs making the intersection a 4-way stop.

The first two recommendations are easy to accomplish but probably would have minimal impact on the safety of the intersection. The latter two recommendations will have the most impact and also are the most controversial.

The parking stalls identified by the study are most often used by patrons of Habitat for Humanity and Grand Headlines. Loss of the parking would displace those customers. On the south side the rest of the parking spaces are often occupied by residents of an apartment building making availability limited. On the north side there is usually available spaces.

Adding stop signs on Robinson Street would also be a major adjustment. Traffic has flowed freely in east and west directions through the intersection for decades. Stop signs in those directions would require people to relearn traffic patterns. The initial negative impact of the stop signs could be minimized by public education, adding warning flags to the signs, posting signs ahead of the intersection warning “STOP AHEAD,” or adding flashing red lights on the stop sign similar to what was done at Attica Road.

It could be argued that doing one of the latter two recommendations negates the need to do the other. Eliminating the parking spaces makes it less necessary for vehicles to creep into the intersection to see if any traffic is approaching and if every vehicle approaching the intersection must stop the need to see approaching vehicles from a greater distance is minimal. If desired the City could implement one of these recommendations and evaluate the results to see if the second should be implemented.

Policy Question: Should the City modify the Roche & Robinson intersection?

Budget Impact: \$2500 - \$8000

Recommendation: The Police Chief recommends modifying the intersection.

Supporting Document: photos of sight lines, traffic counts
Map of intersection
Copy of TEAP study is available upon
request