



Mayor Teresa Ann Isaac

## LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Division of Internal Audit

### **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

DATE November 18, 2005

TO: Teresa Ann Isaac, Mayor

CC: Milton Dohoney, CAO  
Jay Whitehead, Commissioner of Public Works  
Ron Herrington, Director of Traffic Engineering  
DeWitt Hisle, Audit Board Chairman  
Dr. David Stevens, Council Budget & Finance Committee Chairman  
Bill Farmer, Urban County Council member

FROM: Bruce Sahli, Director of Internal Audit

RE: Traffic Engineering Calming Device Decision Process Audit

#### **Background**

The Division of Traffic Engineering is responsible for traffic engineering studies and the design, installation, operation and maintenance of all traffic control signals and devices. Traffic Engineering receives requests for traffic control devices from a variety of sources, including members of the Lexington Fayette Urban County Government administration, Council members, neighborhood associations, and individual citizens. Traffic control devices include traffic signals, stop signs, directional signs, speed humps, speed bumps, roadway markings, etc.

Requests for traffic control devices are evaluated against traffic measurement criteria contained in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD), which has been adopted by the U. S. Department of Transportation as the national standard for all traffic control devices installed on any street, highway, or bikeway open to public travel.

In February 2005 a special request submitted by Council member Bill Farmer for a process audit in the Division of Traffic Engineering was approved by the Audit Board. It was requested that an audit of that Division's processes for providing analysis and recommendations regarding traffic calming devices (speed bumps, stop signs, speed limit signs, etc.) be conducted to determine if opportunities existed to improve project response times. Our audit focused on that segment of the Division responsible for

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traffic calming devices as requested. A limited review was also performed of the processes regarding other traffic control devices (e.g., traffic signals, flashing beacons, etc.).

### **Scope and Objectives**

The general control objectives of the audit were to determine that:

- Methods for analyzing and evaluating traffic calming requests are consistent with current industry practices
- Traffic calming requests are consistently logged when received
- Traffic calming requests are evaluated in a timely manner by qualified personnel
- Review and resolution of traffic calming requests is effectively documented and monitored by management

### **Statement of Auditing Standards**

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to afford a reasonable basis for our judgments and conclusions regarding the organization, program, activity or function under audit. An audit also includes assessments of applicable internal controls and compliance with requirements of laws and regulations when necessary to satisfy the audit objectives. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

### **Audit Opinion**

In our opinion, the controls and procedures provided reasonable assurance that the general control objectives were being met. Opportunities to enhance controls are included in the Summary of Audit Findings.

## **SUMMARY OF AUDIT FINDINGS**

### **Project Documentation & Monitoring**

As part of the audit, we examined a sample of 40 traffic calming requests received by Traffic Engineering during calendar 2004 and 2005 through August 23, 2005 for evidence of proper review and resolution, 34 of which were assigned to the Signs, Roadway Markings, and Traffic Calming Program. In seven instances we found no documentation to indicate any review or resolution process had occurred, while in two instances projects that were completed had no documentation to support the conclusion. It was also noted that in eight instances three to sixteen months expired from the time of the initial request until final resolution. In addition, during interviews with various Traffic Engineering

personnel regarding the overall decision process we were informed that some requests were handled via phone calls, e-mails, etc. with very little documentation to indicate their review or resolution.

A substantial portion of Traffic Engineering's duties are directly related to responding to internal and external customer requests for traffic analyses and studies. In order to properly serve those customers and be able to provide useful and timely status reports, there should be a uniform practice for documenting, evaluating, and monitoring the status of those requests.

It is recommended that all requests for traffic calming devices be entered into a central database designed to account for and monitor such projects on an ongoing basis, thereby providing management an analysis tool that will allow them to quickly evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of division personnel in processing requests. Authorization to add, delete, or edit information contained in the database should be limited to senior management and project managers or their assistants. The central database should contain sufficient current information regarding projects so as to assist employees in avoiding duplication of effort and in responding to project update requests in a timely manner. If possible, the central database should also interface with the work order database maintained in the Division's Signs & Markings shop on Old Frankfort Pike in order to track the status of work orders issued for the installation of traffic calming devices. Traffic Engineering's senior management should regularly monitor the status of active projects listed on the database, with project response times evaluated against Performance Criteria/Standards specified in the Traffic Engineering Managers' Position Objectives. Any significant delays in such responses should have proper justification.

Division of Traffic Engineering Management Response: The division has reviewed the above summary and modified its existing "Worklog" database to provide enhanced project documentation and monitoring. It has also updated all projects for calendar year 2005 to reflect these changes. One section of the division has completed over 80% of its assigned projects in less than 4 weeks. The recent filling of several long-standing vacant positions has already reduced the lag time of tracking and completing projects. Annual performance criteria will provide the benchmark for project completion. The 6-12 month goal is to interface the "Worklog" used by the division's Administrative staff with the work order system that is used by its Operations staff.