PETITION

To: Mr. Chris Tomich, Staff Liaison and the Northbrook Safety Commission

Re: Longvalley Drive

Date of Meeting: August 1, 2007

Date submitted: July 17, 2007

Submitted by:

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**Introduction:**

This Proposal is brought by residents of Longvalley Drive in the Arrowhead Subdivision. (Copies of signed petitions are attached as Exhibit A). The residents are concerned with the high motor vehicle traffic volume on Longvalley Drive. Longvalley Drive is an access street for the Northbrook West subdivision located to the west of Longvalley. Longvalley is the only northbound means of ingress and egress to and from Northbrook West, and as such, handles much of the northbound traffic from Northbrook West. The volume of traffic is excessive, causes a safety hazard to pedestrians and has interfered with the owners’ use and enjoyment of their property abutting Longvalley Drive.

Copies of the Village Maps of the area are attached as Exhibit B. Photographs of the relevant streets are attached as Exhibit C and E.

**Description of Area:**

Longvalley Drive is a U-shaped street that connects to an east/west street, Robincrest Drive. At the mid-point of Longvalley there is a T- intersection with Meadow Street, a road that leads to the Northbrook West subdivision. Longvalley is 27 feet wide, improved with curbs and sidewalks. The neighborhood speed limit for Northbrook West is 20mph. The neighborhood speed limit for Longvalley is 25mph. Longvalley has a population of 35 children under the age of 14, the vast majority who are under 8 years of age.

There are 49 houses on Longvalley Drive and 20 houses on Robincrest Drive. In contrast, there are 212 houses located in Northbrook West. There are two southbound points of ingress/egress for Northbrook West, namely, Highland Avenue and Central Avenue. Both of these streets intersect with Techny Road. The only other way to enter and exit Northbrook West is via Longvalley at its intersection with Meadow. Traffic can pass either to the south to Robincrest or to the north, on Longvalley. The overwhelming majority of the traffic passing through the intersection of Longvalley and Meadow continues on north via Longvalley to access Landwehr Road.

According to Village of Northbrook demographics, 17% of Northbrook households own 3 or more cars. Fifty-four percent of households own at least two cars. (See Exhibit D) An extrapolation of these statistics indicates (conservatively) that the residents of Northbrook West subdivision would have approximately 398 cars. If
each car makes one northbound round trip using Longvalley, approximately 796 cars would pass along Longvalley each day.

Because of its U-shape, Longvalley has a long sweeping curve, which has been a place of hazard for drivers and pedestrians. Motorists who enter Longvalley from Landwehr or Meadow pick up speed through the curve, (consciously or not) and have no traffic stops or reasons to slow down. There is a slight rise in the topography, making this sweeping curve even more dangerous.

One human fatality has occurred on this curve. The fatality involved a car striking a tree, killing the driver. A family pet was also run over while on a leash. This curve poses a danger to all persons using the sidewalks and driveways because of the volume of traffic using Longvalley. Speeders and distracted drivers have just increased the danger.

Proposals for Change:

Longvalley Drive can be made safer in several ways:

Relieve traffic on Longvalley by opening another northbound entrance to Northbrook West at Prairie Avenue.

Prairie Avenue is a north/south street in Northbrook West that was never connected to Prairie Avenue in the Prestwick/River Falls subdivision (Area 131 on Village map, Exhibit B) Prairie Avenue has a rather large empty easement which would appear to provide ample room to connect Prairie Avenue. See Exhibit C).

A connection would allow traffic to access both Landwehr and Walters by using a combination of streets, namely, Prestwick, River Falls, Hemlock Knoll Terrace and Arbor. Opening up Prairie Avenue would spread out traffic volume so all northbound traffic does not travel solely on Longvalley. Additionally, the streets in the Prestwick/River Falls neighborhood are set up on an east/west and north/south grid and would not create a traffic hazard like the Longvalley curve. Spreading and scattering the Northbrook West traffic by allowing several routes to Walters and Landwehr would not intensify traffic for just one road but would spread it out. Less traffic, fewer hazards.
Close off Longvalley at Meadow except for Emergency Vehicles. See Photographs attached as Exhibit E. This option would not pose any safety hazards to Northbrook West but would improve safety for the Longvalley neighborhood.

Place traffic calming devices (boulevards, narrowing, traffic circles, stop signs). Road narrowing and/or other traffic calming devices may provide additional protection to pedestrians using sidewalks along the curve.

Reduce speed limit to 20mph. The difference in speed limits between the neighborhoods encourages motorists to accelerate along Longvalley.

Village Subdivision & Development Code
Transportation & Circulation Systems: Section 4-102:

Section 4-102 (A)(6) of the Code should guide the Safety Commission as it addresses the issues pertaining to Longvalley Drive. Longvalley measures 27 feet wide and fits the classification of a local street. The parameters for the design of local streets in Northbrook are as follows:

1. Traffic movements should be minimized;
2. there should be a uniform and low volume of traffic;
3. excessive speeds should be discouraged;
4. and topography of the street should be taken into account.

See Exhibit F – Village Subdivision & Development Code.

Conclusion:

The Arrowhead subdivision and the Northbrook West subdivision were developed in the 1950’s and 60’s. The increase in automobile ownership and the mobility of the population today should cause the Village to consider changes to Longvalley Drive. Longvalley Drive is not adequate to handle the current traffic volume.

The residents of Longvalley Drive are asking the Safety Commission to recommend to the Village Board the aforementioned changes to Longvalley, Prairie and Meadow, in any combination, or for any other relief as the Safety Commission sees fit.