



VILLAGE OF WILMETTE

1200 Wilmette Avenue
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS 60091-0040

MEETING MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, July 11, 2012

7:00 P.M.

SECOND FLOOR TRAINING ROOM OF VILLAGE HALL

Members Present: Chairperson Cathy Albrecht
Commissioner Mark Wagstaff
Commissioner Paul Chouinard
Commissioner Santacruz

Members Absent: Commissioner Pat Lilly

Staff Present: Brigitte Mayerhofer, P.E., Director of Engineering Services
Dan Manis, Civil Engineer II
Brian King, Chief of Police
Ron Andrews, Police Traffic Coordinator

Guests Present: Peter Lemmon, from Traffic Analysis & Design, Inc.

I. CALL TO ORDER.

Chairperson Albrecht called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES; TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING OF MAY 9, 2012.

Chairperson Albrecht directed the Commission's attention to the draft minutes of the Transportation Commission meeting of May 9, 2012. Commissioner Chouinard moved approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wagstaff. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote. **The motion passed.**

I. PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND SIGNAGE AT UNPROTECTED CROSSWALKS

Ms. Mayerhofer introduced the discussion by providing an overview of pedestrian crosswalk signs. The areas considered for safety enhancements are Wilmette Avenue and Sheridan Road. This issue was raised by residents in response to Evanston's recent addition of pedestrian

crosswalk signs. The Transportation Commission and the Municipal Services Commission have shown interest in moving forward with a pilot study and possibly a policy that would reduce the opportunity for sign proliferation.

Mr. Lemmon with Traffic Analysis and Design Incorporated (TADI) performed a compliance study to determine how many cars are stopping for pedestrians. Wilmette and 15th was the location for this study. Ms. Mayerhofer asked the Commission to reference Exhibit One in the Pedestrian Control Review & Stop Compliance Counts report from Mr. Lemmon.

Ms. Mayerhofer continued to discuss the proposed flashing beacons for Wilmette and Prairie. She noted the beacons are on a basic pole, with a school crossing sign and a rectangular flashing beacon that is pedestrian activated. The flashing strobe catches the driver's attention. Past studies show there is around an 80% compliance rate.

She continued to explain that Wilmette Avenue will have eastbound and westbound stop bars. The eastbound stop bar will be set back from Oak Circle. The R1-5b signs will be installed where the stop bars are located. The intersection's sight distances are poor, so a recommendation has been made to reconfigure the curbs which will place the RRFB's (Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons) closer to the intersection so the driver can see them. Ms. Mayerhofer noted they were pedestrian activated and solar-powered.

Commissioner Albrecht asked if the money for the curb bump outs is part of the grant. Ms. Mayerhofer said it was not. Ms. Mayerhofer noted the \$28,000 grant will pay for the RRFB's at the intersection.

Wilmette and 15th also crosses a significant number of children. Although it does not warrant the RRFB's it is a good location for the R1-5b "STOP HERE FOR PEDESTRIANS" signs. The Village hired TADI to perform a pedestrian crossing compliance study at this location. The study shows 12 out of 149 vehicles stopped for pedestrians to cross. Ms. Mayerhofer noted that the curb bump out itself will bring the pedestrian in better view.

Commissioner Chouinard inquired about and the low compliancy rate of drivers stopping for pedestrians.

Chief King responded by explaining that the Illinois law does not require vehicles to stop for pedestrians who are standing on the sidewalk facing the crosswalk. It does, however, require vehicles to stop once the pedestrian makes his or her way into the intersection.

Commissioner Chouinard added that it would be nice if these signs had a battery to add light during evening crossing. Ms. Mayerhofer noted the signs are made of reflective material to make them visible at night.

Chairperson Albrecht said she believes the bump outs will help make drivers aware that there is a crosswalk there.

Chief King said the previous design of the bump outs at Prairie and Wilmette helped reduce right hand turn violators on Wilmette Avenue. He noted the turning volumes were too high so residents petitioned for the no right turn.

Chairperson Albrecht refers to a picture which shows the lighting and noted a concern if too bright the signs may cause a disturbance.

Ms. Mayerhofer said she will look into light shields.

Chief King added these signs are in place in his area and they are effective and a good distraction.

Ms. Albrecht asked if the lights pulse.

Chief King said they do pulse.

Ms. Mayerhofer told the Commission that letters would go out to residents prior to the installation of the signs. Letters were already sent out to residents directly impacted and to date staff has not received any major opposition. There are some concerns regarding additional hardware placement near resident's property but nothing that would compromise the need for these safety enhancements.

Commissioner Chouinard asked if any of the signs shown in the exhibit are in place currently in the roadway at this location. Ms. Mayerhofer said there were not.

Chairperson Albrecht said that Wilmette and Prairie stands out as the appropriate experimental location for the signage.

Ms. Mayerhofer introduced Peter Lemmon to the Board who then presented his report on Wilmette and Prairie.

Mr. Lemmon did a warrant analysis about what kind of traffic control devices would be appropriate for this intersection, ruling out a full traffic signal. One step down from the traffic signal would be this type of signage.

Commissioner Santacruz questioned why the RRFB's were not officially approved according to the report.

Mr. Lemmon responded they are not officially approved until after they are in place and functioning properly.

Commissioner Santacruz added he liked this sign and felt it is a good education for residents who may be unaware that it is a state law to stop for pedestrians in a crosswalk.

Ms. Mayerhofer explained that the only signs that can be use must have the "stop" sign, because of the state law.

Commissioner Wagstaff noted and recommends that squaring one side of road can be supplemented with placards stating it is a state law. He also said he believes drivers do not realize the state law and he would prefer that the State law language is added.

Chief King added the pedestrian is responsible to make sure there is a gap in traffic before entering the street. There is a lot of confusion about this and in other communities they actually put up a placard explain what the Village's obligations are to enforce the law.

Chairperson Albrecht agreed stating that these signs could cause confusion if the driver assumes that because there is a pedestrian on the sidewalk waiting to cross that he should immediately stop to let the pedestrian cross.

Commissioner Wagstaff added you do not want the pedestrian to assume the traffic will stop for them. He noted that south of Sheridan on Ridge in Evanston, they have the same sign with not a lot of pedestrian traffic. He said these signs in Evanston have developed good driving habits for drivers to stop for pedestrians.

Ms. Mayerhofer said there is no action required from the Commission at this time stating that this is just an informative discussion about 15th and Wilmette. The first step is to install the signs and then complete a "post-signage" compliance study to measure effectiveness.

Commissioner Wagstaff asked if the signs could be placed without the modified curb. Ms. Mayerhofer recommended using the balance of funds in the 2012 Road program to install the curb modifications this year. She noted the \$28,000 in grant money was awarded specifically for Prairie and Wilmette. The Village Board would have to approve the reappropriation of road program money for this purpose.

Ms. Mayerhofer said that at the last Municipal Services Committee meeting she felt the Committee agreed that the curb bump outs were an important safety enhancement. Ms. Mayerhofer noted that any policy that may be derived from this pilot study will include pedestrian and vehicle warrants and other elements to ensure the signs are not overused.

Chairperson Albrecht added her concern that signage with the bump outs may not help determine if the signs work and suggested a multi-tiered pilot to evaluate the signage first. She also suggested using the *Wilmette Life* to post a public service announcement to educate pedestrians and drivers of the State Laws regarding signage. Ms. Mayerhofer also suggested sending letters to residents in the immediate area.

Commissioner Chouinard inquired about the compliance rate at Central Street. Ms. Mayerhofer responded that the compliance rates are low at Central Street.

Chief King suggested posting the education onto a barricade for temporary use.

Mr. Lemmon said the pedestrian-activated sign is great to handle the demand when it is there and no disruption when it is not. Chairperson Albrecht mentioned concern about kids playing with it.

Ms. Mayerhofer said that concern was also for the ped signal on Lake between 15th and Park but this was never an issue.

Commissioner Chouinard suggested placing the signage up during the summer so when school starts there is already an awareness to them. Ms. Mayerhofer said the actual beacons would not go in until spring and noted that her concern with just putting the signs first as the sight lines is poor. She recommends putting up the signs after the bump outs are installed.

Chief King concurred with that.

Commissioner Chouinard asked about pulling out more parking if that would help. Ms. Mayerhofer noted that parking is very important in that area, but something that will be looked at.

Ms. Mayerhofer asked if the Commission would like to move forward with placing the signs at Wilmette and 15th after education is sent out.

Chief King asked how long it would take to do the bump outs. Ms. Mayerhofer said they would be completed in a month.

Commissioner Chouinard asked if the funding has an expiration date. Ms. Mayerhofer responded that the bump outs, which absorb most of the cost, can be done at any time also noting that both intersections can be done at the same time. She noted that costs for the beacons will be approximately \$24,000 which includes the post, the sign assembly push button mechanism, and installation.

Commissioner Chouinard is in favor of Wilmette and 15th for bump outs and signage. He recalled that installing both treatments at the same time will have the most impact. Chairperson Albrecht agreed that the sign will be more effective with the curb bump outs. She asked staff to gather some feedback from Evanston on how effective just having the sign alone is. Commissioner Wagstaff inquired how the bump outs will impact cyclists.

Mr. Cruz noted there will be room for the cyclist to travel adjacent to the driving lane.

Commissioner Chouinard suggested some signage cleanup and removal of current signs if possible.

Commissioner Chouinard made a motion to move forward with the bump outs and signage at 15th and Wilmette and Prairie and Wilmette if the funds are approved by the Village Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wagstaff. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Mayerhofer referred the Commission to Mr. Lemmon's summary of his study on pedestrian traffic and vehicle traffic on Sheridan Road. The findings suggest the current condition is safe. Ms. Mayerhofer does not recommend any treatments at this point.

Chairperson Albrecht added that the suggestion was to freshen up the striping on the crosswalks at Sheridan. Staff noted this was completed.

Commissioner Wagstaff added he was in agreement with not doing anything at this time on Sheridan Road. He believes there may be some future discussions in regard to improvements between Isabella and Linden.

Commissioner Chouinard added the traffic on Wilmette is probably higher during the week verses Sheridan Road which would be heavier on weekends because of Gillson Beach. He confirmed that the results of the study on both vehicle and pedestrian traffic support no changes on Sheridan road at this time.

Ms. Mayerhofer added that the desire is to have pedestrians use the underpass to cross at Sheridan.

Commissioner Albrecht noted that she definitely uses the underpass.

Commissioner Wagstaff added he was not sure that people know it is there and the Commission suggested signage to bring attention to the underpass.

Ms. Mayerhofer added that currently it is not accessible due to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District has closed it down for construction.

Commissioner Chouinard said there is no recommended action on Sheridan Road at this time.

II. OLD BUSINESS

Chairperson Albrecht asked if there was any other business and introduced Commissioner Santa Cruz as the newest member of the Commission.

III. ADJOURNMENT.

At 8:31 p.m., Commissioner Wagstaff moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. **The motion carried.** No further discussion occurred on the motion.

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

Minutes Respectfully Prepared by Kathy Goodman, Engineering Department Secretary