

Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, October 15, 2013, at 8:01 p.m., Mayor Eva Galambos presiding.

Councilmembers present: Councilmember John Paulson, Councilmember Dianne Fries, Councilmember Chip Collins, Councilmember Gabriel Sterling, Councilmember Tibby DeJulio, and Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnery.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Public Works

1. Third Quarter CIP Review

Director of Public Works Garrin Coleman stated Council previously received the CIP update information. If there are no questions regarding the update, staff will post the update to the City website. One question that did come up is regarding the Northridge Bridge. That project is funded with State Toll money and Toll reserves. The SRTA loan and grant fund is funded through the General Assembly, which is a separate fund.

2. Review of Neighborhood Traffic Calming Manual

Director of Public Works Garrin Coleman stated Director of Transportation/Traffic Brad Edwards will discuss the current Neighborhood Traffic Calming Manual policy and the proposed policy. A map is included in the presentation that shows where all the traffic calming devices are located in the City as well as the placement of the radar speed feedback signs. A majority of the signs were funded through the Energy Efficiency Community Development Block grant (EECBDG). Table 1 of the agenda material lists the peer City traffic calming petitions. This list explains the petition criteria and evaluation criteria from several cities for peer reference. Two items added to the policy are the radar speed feedback and a neighborhood striping policy. This is where a neighborhood can create a center line or edge line to narrow the lanes.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Brad Edwards stated the current traffic calming policy was adopted in 2008 from a previous policy in 2006. This will be the second revision that is proposed for the policy. Generally, staff alters the minimum criteria that a neighborhood would have to meet to have traffic calming measures installed. Staff has looked at the measures to be employed and made changes to what will be available and appropriate to put in neighborhoods. The three traffic calming measures are speed humps, speed cushions, and radar speed signs. Added to the policy for traffic calming are the radar speed signs and the neighborhood self-striping program. Since 2008, the City has received 134 requests for traffic calming. This is how many citizens have called the City expressing interest in the policy for traffic calming. The interest spans 77 different streets. The City has installed a total of three speed humps. In FY12 Council extended a budget of \$200,000 for the program. Since that time, the City has spent only \$30,000 of that money. The City has also installed a total of 46 radar speed feedback signs. A bulk of the signs were paid for by a EECDBG grant. Page 3 discusses what was not changed in the policy. Staff re-wrote almost the entire policy. Who can request traffic calming is any homeowners association (HOA), neighbor group, or resident. The cost sharing is the same, which is a 50% split between the City and the HOA or residents. The implementation of traffic calming has to be approved by the neighborhood and the City as well. The safety and operational warrant criteria did not change. These are criteria that require compliance in order for the traffic calming to be safe.

Councilmember Gabriel Sterling asked why the 50/50 cost split is listed twice on the no changes to policy list.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated the cost sharing and implementation in the policy are two separate sections that discuss two separate issues that show up in the document.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny asked if all applicants for the neighborhood traffic calming have to participate 50/50. She asked if there is a mechanism where the City can install speed humps and the City pay for the total cost.

Councilmember Tibby DeJulio stated the only speed humps he remembers Council approving are the ones on Jolyn and Pine Forest and those were paid for by Walgreens. He asked if any more speed humps have been installed.

Councilmember Chip Collins stated three speed humps have been installed in his district. These met the City policy and were funded. Each application does not have to come before Council for approval, since there is already funding in the budget.

Councilmember Sterling asked if there is about \$170,000 left in the traffic calming budget.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards responded yes.

Director of Public Works Coleman stated as a peer reference, the City of Marietta staff has to bring every speed hump installation before Council for approval.

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated residents should not get carried away and have too many speed humps installed throughout the City.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated no traffic calming is allowed on any street with over a 30 m.p.h. speed limit due to City street classifications. The only streets allowed to have traffic calming are neighborhood streets.

Councilmember Sterling stated Glenridge and Spalding Woods would not qualify under the policy at this point.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated at this point he cannot answer that question. Under the policy, bicycle and pedestrian access will be preserved. The measure cannot divert traffic to another local route. Page 4 lists modifications to the policy. The section/category is listed on the left, next to that is the current policy. To the right of that is the proposed modification. For plan development, the existing ordinance includes a two-step process. This process involves enhanced enforcement by installing radar trailer devices to slow drivers down. After that, the traffic is measured again. If it does not warrant, based on the new speeds from the enhanced enforcement, traffic calming is not allowed. For the proposed policy this process has been removed.

Councilmember Sterling asked why there is no longer a two-step process.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated that is where a majority of the applications were being denied.

Councilmember Sterling asked if this is a good thing that the process "weeds out" applications that may need to be denied.

Councilmember Collins stated almost all of the applications were denied. The only reason that the requirement that 90% of the property owners must approve the request is being lowered is because staff

could not find 90% of the residents at home. The changes are to lower the requirements slightly, so more of the neighborhoods that want traffic calming can qualify.

Councilmember Sterling stated he understands the rationale in terms of lowering the requirements. He is not a huge fan of the traffic control devices due to the safety issues attached in terms of slowing down police cars and fire trucks. He understands the rationale, but is not sure he agrees with it, yet.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated currently 90% of property owners must approve a petition and that number is suggested to be lowered to 75%. A definition called area of impact has been added to the policy. This is a new section that is not in the existing policy. The safety and operational warrant criteria have now been added to clarify the criteria.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked where section 3.1 A is located on the presentation.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated this presentation is just pointing out the differences between the current policy and proposed policy. Referencing that section in the proposed policy, it will state the description. Sections A-J are the engineering evaluations that staff was performing.

Councilmember DeJulio asked why the traffic calming device raised intersection was removed.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated raised intersections are not safe to install without a stop sign. If a stop sign is installed, a raised intersection is not needed. In order to install a stop sign, the City has to meet the stop sign warrant. Ten years ago, when creating this policy, a raised intersection was included, but now that is not a safe resolution for traffic calming.

Director of Public Works Coleman stated the raised intersections affect public safety response times. The same type of speed reduction can be accomplished by using speed cushions.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated the radar speed sign and striping have been added to the policy as traffic calming devices that can be used. Page 5 lists additions to the policy. Much of this section is in the policy in intent, but was called for by the engineering judgment clauses. Section 2.4 addresses the area of impact criteria.

Councilmember Sterling asked if the area of impact references the main access point.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards responded yes. Staff looks at the area, what is the primary route and properties that abut the road where the speed hump is to be installed.

Councilmember Fries stated the Huntcliff Subdivision is a four and a half mile circle. If a homeowner wanted to install a speed hump, they would have to get 75% of the four a half miles of neighbors to agree.

Councilmember John Paulson asked to review Section 3.1, traffic safety warrants. According to the policy, all of the requirements have to be met before traffic calming can be installed.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards responded yes.

Councilmember Paulson stated many applications have been submitted to the City, but they were not approved. If the applications that were not approved were reevaluated based on the new policy, would they be approved?

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards responded yes, but he cannot speak to the petition section, since most of the applications did not make it to solicit to 90% of the neighborhood. Many of the applications would have passed the safety criteria. Most of the applications were denied because speed or volume thresholds were not met. They wanted the device placed a steep slope, or on a curve, which could cause a driver to wreck their vehicle.

Councilmember Sterling asked if 70% or 20% of the applications would have been approved based on the new policy.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated more than 50% of the applications would have been approved.

Councilmember Fries asked if those applications are being put back on a list for approval now.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards responded no.

Councilmember Collins stated there are two applications from his district that are ready to resubmit once this policy change is passed by Council. Applying for the traffic calming is a voluntary process and is the only thing that works to slow drivers down. He has lived on two streets previously that have speed humps that have worked slowing down drivers.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated Section 2.7 on page 5 deals with the removal of a traffic calming device. This section has been added, which includes the reversed petition process in order to remove a device, unless there is a safety issue.

Councilmember Sterling asked, under the policy, who makes the decision if there is a safety issue.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated this will be a staff level decision. Section 3.1 B adds a minimum design criteria for roadway length of 1,000 feet. He referenced an illustration that shows the 1,000 feet requirement. The minimum separation distance is 300 feet. There has to be 200 feet from the intersection to allow for clearance of vehicles. Generally, the speed humps should be anywhere from 400 to 600 feet apart. Section 3.1 C adds the 7% grade criteria for the 1,000 feet, which is a safety issue. Section 3.1 D addresses the minimum curvature radius for sight distance. On page 6, Section 3.1 E addresses the sight distance and references the City ordinance for driveways. Section 3.1 H states the City will not install traffic calming that will create a stormwater issue. Section 3.1 I states the City will assign and stripe per federal codes. Section 3.1 J references spacing defined by the City. Section 4.0 references criteria for radar speed feedback signs. For the radar speed sign, the minimum speed criteria has to be met for it to be installed. If there is no speeding over a certain threshold, the traffic calming device cannot be installed. The devices cost about \$10,000 a piece. The neighborhood self-striping program language has to be updated to state the neighborhood is 100% responsible for the cost.

Councilmember Sterling asked what is self-striping.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated the City does not stripe local roads of 25 m.p.h. or less. If a neighborhood wants to stripe their road, the City will accept the application, if they are willing to fund the project 100%. The City will work with the neighborhood and provide the contractor to do the striping per City standards.

Councilmember Collins asked how striping calms traffic.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated edge lines that are closer than twelve feet can be striped in order to reduce the lane width. This causes anywhere from a 1 to 2 m.p.h. reduction in speed. Raised pavement markings can be installed if there are safety issues.

Councilmember Collins stated at one point the City was performing a study of the effectiveness of the speed radar detection devices. He asked if there is any data showing the signs are slowing drivers down.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated the study has not been done as of yet. Staff is having technical difficulties with the equipment. Thirty-four units have been installed this year and staff is working to make sure the equipment is operational.

City Manager John McDonough stated staff thought the equipment was designed to capture some of the information. He asked if, due to a software glitch, staff has not been able to extract the data to complete the analysis.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards responded not exactly. The data that the radar speed signs return is not good study data. What happens is a car approaches and the radar fires and receives a speed, the radar fires again and gets another speed, and fires again and gets another speed. The machine cannot tell how many cars have driven by, because the radar hits the same car multiple times. There may be two to three cars driving close together and the radar fires the same way, so instead of reading one car three times, it might read six cars three times. This is a problem with the equipment. Staff has installed in the road pavement counters that count speed, but there is not a large enough sample database.

Councilmember DeJulio stated he passes one of these signs on his way to work and when he sees he is two to three m.p.h. over the speed limit, he slows down. He thinks the radar machines work in slowing down traffic.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated page 8 lists the three criteria that were completely removed from the document. The first one is the minimum traffic volume requirement for traffic calming. Previously the requirement was 400 to 4,000 vehicles per day.

Councilmember Fries asked why that requirement has been removed.

Councilmember Sterling stated in neighborhoods where this is a problem, there will not be this volume of traffic.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated the requirement that the 85th percentile speed must be an average of 11 m.p.h. higher than the posted speed limit, has been removed from the policy. Staff looked at dropping that number to a lower amount, but at some point there is a diminishing return. The last item that was removed is the language to preserve emergency vehicle access. Staff is looking at using the speed cushions in lieu of speed humps, which do not slow down the fire trucks.

Councilmember Sterling asked what is the cost difference between a speed cushion and speed hump.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated a speed hump costs around \$3,000 and a speed cushion costs around \$1,500. Staff wants to address any comments Council may have and to modify the document in anyway to have it approved at the November 12th City Council meeting. The policy still needs to be reviewed by legal, the public safety departments, and have a community outreach.

Mayor Eva Galambos asked out of all the traffic calming applications, how many would be approved by the new policy.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated if the petitions received the appropriate number of signatures, more than 50% of the applications would be approved.

Councilmember Collins stated there is \$170,000 in the traffic calming funds.

Councilmember Fries stated the two applications in Councilmember Collins's district will probably be funded.

Mayor Galambos asked the cost for a typical traffic calming project.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated since he has been employed at the City three speed humps have been installed at \$3,000 a piece.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked if the City spent \$30,000 on three traffic humps.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards responded no. The \$30,000 includes the maintenance on the humps currently in place throughout the City, replacement of humps, striping, and new signs. This money was used to purchase one radar speed sign as well.

Councilmember DeJulio asked if when a road is repaved the hump is replaced.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards responded yes.

Director of Public Works Coleman stated if the cushions are replaced, they are taken up and then placed right back down.

Mayor Galambos asked Councilmember Collins how much the traffic calming projects cost in District 3.

Councilmember Collins asked if there were two humps on one street.

Director of Transportation/Traffic Edwards stated Chaseland, Cromwell, and Heards Creek Drive all received speed humps. Heards Creek Drive has one, Chaseland or Cromwell either have one more two speed humps.

Councilmember Collins stated the City spent about \$6,000 for speed humps. He has received no complaints and the residents in the neighborhood are happy.

Councilmember Paulson stated this is something that the community spends a lot of time talking about. The City is changing the policy and approving it in less than thirty days and he wants this communicated to the citizens for community input.

Councilmember Sterling asked that the updated policy be included on the City webpage with a direct link.

There was a consensus of Council to move this item forward to the November 12th City Council meeting.

City Manager John McDonough stated in addition to purchasing the property at Powers Ferry for Heards Ferry Elementary, the Fulton County School Board took an action to consolidate their administrative functions to a single facility in Sandy Springs. The school board voted to purchase the property that is adjacent to Heards Ferry Elementary, which is the other building next to the school.

Councilmember Sterling stated the Fulton County School Board also purchased the Charlie Roberts building on Northridge Road to construct it into a North Fulton Learning Annex.

Councilmember Collins asked if they will use the existing office building.

City Manager McDonough responded yes. Fulton County plans on retrofitting the building and placing 400 employees in the building.

3. Hear an Update on Lake Forrest Drive

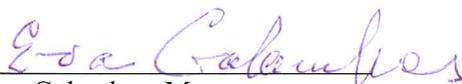
City Manager John McDonough stated staff has been working with an engineer under the emergency procurement process to settle on a design. Staff has identified a design that will be a containment catch system. The plan is to build this on the public right-of-way, so there will be no impact to adjacent properties. There are a couple of variations of that design that will be provided to Council in order to receive feedback for consensus of one option over another. Staff is in the process of lining up contractors to give prices once a final design is determined and consensus is received from Council. Due to there not being a City Council meeting for another month, this process will be done by consensus given it is an emergency procurement.

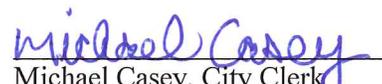
Councilmember Gabriel Sterling asked if the stabilization is called a rock fall containment system.

Assistant City Manager Bryant Poole stated the project is still being referred to as a slope stabilization.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Date Approved: November 12, 2013


Eva Galambos, Mayor


Michael Casey, City Clerk