

REPORT / RECOMMENDATION



To: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Agenda Item #: IV. H.

From: Mark K. Nolan, AICP, Transportation Planner

Action

Discussion

Date: March 17, 2015

Information

Subject: Traffic Safety Committee Report of February 4, 2015

Action Requested:

Review and approve the Traffic Safety Committee Report of February 4, 2015.

Information / Background:

The Edina Transportation Commission (ETC) reviewed the February 4, 2015 Traffic Safety Committee Report at their February 19 meeting and moved to forward the report to the City Council for approval; see attached draft minutes.

Attachments:

- Traffic Safety Committee Report of February 4, 2015
- Draft ETC Meeting Minutes of February 19, 2015

Traffic Safety Preview

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

The Traffic Safety Committee (TSC) review of traffic safety matters occurred on January 07. The City Engineer, Public Works Director, Transportation Planner, Traffic Safety Coordinator, Sign Coordinator, Assistant City Planner, and Police Lieutenant were in attendance for this meeting.

From these reviews, the recommendations below are provided. On each of the items, persons involved have been contacted and staff recommendation has been discussed with them. They were informed that if they disagree with the recommendation or have additional facts to present, they can be included on the February 19 Edina Transportation Commission and the March 17 City Council agenda.

Section A: Items on which the Traffic Safety Committee recommends approval

A1. Request for further signalization of the 49th ½ Street crosswalks

This request comes from the business association at 50th and France, noting the ineffectiveness of the signed only crosswalks along 49th ½ St. On 49th ½ St. there were 4.5 gaps per five minutes for the central crosswalk, 4.9 gaps per five minutes on the east crosswalk, and 4.2 gaps per five minutes on the west crosswalk during the AM peak 1-hour segment, the east crosswalk was analyzed for gaps in the afternoon and had an average of 2.8 gaps per five minute interval during the PM peak. All of these meet warrants for improvement to actuated pedestrian signals. Research has shown that continuous flashers do not increase long term pedestrian safety, as drivers grow accustomed to their presence. Pedestrian actuated flashers have higher rates of yielding as they are not flashing except when drivers are expected to yield. The city's crosswalk policy is located in Appendix B.



Photo : 50th and France area, current crosswalk on 49th 1/2

After review, the Traffic Safety Committee recommends that this request be approved and Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons with pedestrian actuation (push-buttons) to be installed. These installations will take place as funding permits.

A2. Request for enforcement of No-Parking Zones near the Creek Valley School at pick up times

This request comes from a resident who has concerns about parents who are picking up their children at Creek Valley Elementary, the requester says that these parents stand their vehicles south



Map : Parking/standing is occurring legally is marked in green, illegal parking/standing is taking place in areas marked red

on Gleason, beyond the intersection with Creek Valley Rd. and on Creek Valley Rd. A site investigation was conducted and Gleason, south of Creek Valley is signed for no parking. Creek Valley Rd. has no parking restrictions, and there were cars parking on both sides of the street to either queue to pick up their children in their vehicles, or walk their children across the school yard to a waiting vehicle. Gleason was also seen as a major queuing place for vehicles, with queues reaching 8 cars south of the intersection with Creek Valley Rd. The Minnesota State Statute for parking laws is provided in Appendix A.

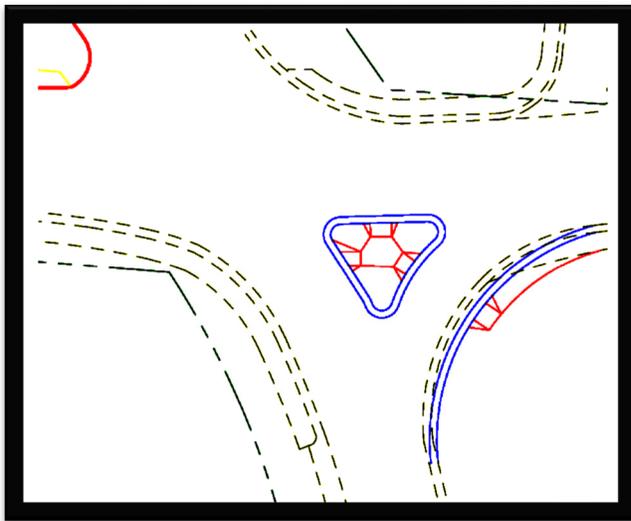


Photo : Gleason Rd. illegal parking, looking south from Creek Valley

After review, staff recommends that this item be approved, with parents being informed of this action’s illegality by flyers handed to them at school pick up times. Enforcement will also be used after educational materials have been distributed.

A3. Request for a redesign of the Eden Ave at Grange and Wilson Roads

This request comes from a resident who notes that the intersection is very chaotic, that the centerlines of opposing streets do not align, and that there are no pedestrian amenities. The demand for pedestrian facilities will be reviewed in the spring, but the current design has been the subject of some focus by the engineering department, and thus a small redesign of the intersection was done. A free-right “Pork-chop” island is recommended to be added to the southern approach, this will reduce crossing distances for pedestrians, shrink the intersection, and allow the southern stop sign to be moved much closer to the conflict points of the intersection, increasing visibility. This intersection has been the site of 3 crashes since 2010.



Drawing : The proposed curblines in the Southeast corner are shown in blue, black is existing.



Map : Eden Ave and Wilson/Grange Rd. The proximity of the intersection to freeway access, the skew of intersection, and its location in a high traffic area all contribute to its chaotic nature.

After review, staff recommends that this request be approved, with further study being done to ensure turning movements are possible at this intersection to finalize design. Crosswalks at this intersection will be studied in the spring. The intersection will then be added to the queue of projects that the city is considering when funding is available.

A4. Signage of Curves on Gleason Road, from Dewey Hill Road north

This request comes from staff, as an extension of a previous request by a resident who was concerned about the number of people losing control of their vehicles on Gleason Rd. The Traffic Safety Committee asked for all sections of Gleason, under the city's jurisdiction, be reviewed for proper design speeds. In appendix C, the design speed of the curves (rounded down to the nearest 5 mph) is indicated, occasionally in two directions when the design speeds of the inside and outside curves were seen to be different. Super-elevations (banking of the curves) were assumed to be a normal 2% crown throughout.

After review, the number of curves with design speeds below 30 miles per hour was too great to place a sign at each curve. Thus staff recommends placing the maximum safe speed below existing curved road ahead signs, assigning a maximum safe speed at the beginning of road segments on Gleason.

Section B: Items on which the Traffic Safety Committee recommends denial

B1. Request for school zone speed limit enforcement and clarification of "when children are present."

This request was submitted on behalf of Cornelia Avenue residents who are concerned that motorists do not obey the reduced school zone speed limit on Cornelia Avenue. The posted school zone speed limit on this section of Cornelia Avenue is 15 mph. The speed limit is 30 mph at other times. The reduced speed limit is in effect "when children are present, going to or leaving school during opening or closing hours or during school recess periods" (Minnesota Statutes, section 169.14, subdivision 5a(a)). The reduced speed limit is signed as shown in the photo to the right. The request asked for "signs posting the school speed zone times or something else to make clear what 'when children are present' means."

Some municipalities around the country take various approaches to clarifying this issue (e.g. posting times on a placard, installing flashing lights, etc.) while others choose to post signs similar to Edina with no additional measures.



Photo : Sign on Cornelia



Map : Cornelia School

Speed data for this section of Cornelia Avenue was reviewed. Data showed 85th-percentile speeds below 30 mph on weekdays. Speed data specific to the times when the school speed zone was in effect (and when children were present) were not able to be aggregated in a conclusive manner. The Edina Police Department provided a record of speeding citations issued on streets adjacent to Cornelia School during the summer and fall of 2014. The record showed 58 citations issued for speeding on W. 70th; however, it is unknown whether any of the citations were for speeding when the school zone speed limit was in effect. The record showed no citations issued for speeding on this section of Cornelia Avenue. The Police conducted a sting operation around school zones in October.

After review, the Traffic Safety Committee recommends denial of the request to clarify when school zone speed limits are in effect, whether by posting supplementary placards listing school speed zone times or some other measure. The request for enforcement of the school zone speed limit has been referred to the Edina Police Department.

B2. Request for decreased delay for left turns onto and crossing 50th Street at Arden Avenue

This request comes from a resident in the Country Club neighborhood, who notes that exiting the neighborhood on 50th is very difficult especially at high traffic times, and who does not wish to use Wooddale to turn left onto 50th. A video study was performed, and the area has very few gaps from the 50th and France Area, and many of these are removed from right turns from Maple and 49th



Map : Arden Ave and 50th St. is circled. 50th and France area can be seen on the right of the map

½ St. Typical numbers for gaps in the weekend rush hours, when the queue of vehicles on 50th does not reach the intersection of Maple and 50th, was 4.5 gaps acceptable to left turns in 10 minutes, and when accounting for those gaps used by right turns, the gaps were reduced to 3 every ten minutes. In the morning, there were more gaps, averaging 6.7 gaps per ten minutes acceptable for left turns at Maple, with right turns reducing the amount of gaps available to left turns to 5.3 gaps per ten minutes. The requestor also noted that the lack of gaps made crossing the street more difficult, but the pedestrian gaps were not investigated as the lack of gaps for motor vehicles signaled that there would be few acceptable pedestrian gaps.

After review, staff recommends denial of this request, as there was not enough traffic on Arden to warrant control of 50th, and a lack of available options to decrease traffic on 50th being available to staff.

Section D: Other Traffic Safety Items handled

D1. A resident noted that on 70th Street at York, old lane assignments were still present and conflicted with more recent signage. Sign shop staff removed the signage.

- D2. A visitor called on a Friday afternoon asking how traffic would be on Saturday on TH 100 due to MnDOT construction. Using the internet to find the TH 100 project, the Traffic Safety Coordinator told the requestor that there were no planned construction activities and therefore less delay was expected than previously had been experienced when lanes had been closed for the project.
- D3. A resident emailed that roads were in poor condition, and that the intersection of Parklawn and France had a signal that was mistimed. The traffic signal request was forwarded to Hennepin County, while the street maintenance request was sent to the Public Works department.
- D4. A requestor noted that with the free right "Pork-Chop" islands on France now removed, the crossing distances were further for pedestrians at some intersections; however the pedestrian clearance interval had not been lengthened. These reports were forwarded to Hennepin County.
- D5. A manager of a senior facility requested that northbound York at 76th have a restricted right turn on red to allow for more gaps for left turn exits from the facility's parking. This requestor was given contact information for Hennepin County.

Appendix A: State Parking Laws

169.34 PROHIBITIONS; STOPPING, PARKING.

Subdivision 1. Prohibitions.

(a) No person shall stop, stand, or park a vehicle, except when necessary to avoid conflict with other traffic or in compliance with the directions of a police officer or traffic-control device, in any of the following places:

(1) on a sidewalk;

(2) in front of a public or private driveway;

(3) within an intersection;

(4) within ten feet of a fire hydrant;

(5) on a crosswalk;

(6) within 20 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection;

(7) within 30 feet upon the approach to any flashing beacon, stop sign, or traffic-control signal located at the side of a roadway;

(8) between a safety zone and the adjacent curb or within 30 feet of points on the curb immediately opposite the ends of a safety zone, unless a different length is indicated by signs or markings;

(9) within 50 feet of the nearest rail of a railroad crossing;

(10) within 20 feet of the driveway entrance to any fire station and on the side of a street opposite the entrance to any fire station within 75 feet of said entrance when properly signposted;

(11) alongside or opposite any street excavation or obstruction when such stopping, standing, or parking would obstruct traffic;

(12) on the roadway side of any vehicle stopped or parked at the edge or curb of a street;

(13) upon any bridge or other elevated structure upon a highway or within a highway tunnel, except as otherwise provided by ordinance;

(14) within a bicycle lane, except when posted signs permit parking; or

(15) at any place where official signs prohibit stopping.

(b) No person shall move a vehicle not owned by such person into any prohibited area or away from a curb such distance as is unlawful.

(c) No person shall, for camping purposes, leave or park a travel trailer on or within the limits of any highway or on any highway right-of-way, except where signs are erected designating the place as a campsite.

(d) No person shall stop or park a vehicle on a street or highway when directed or ordered to proceed by any peace officer invested by law with authority to direct, control, or regulate traffic.

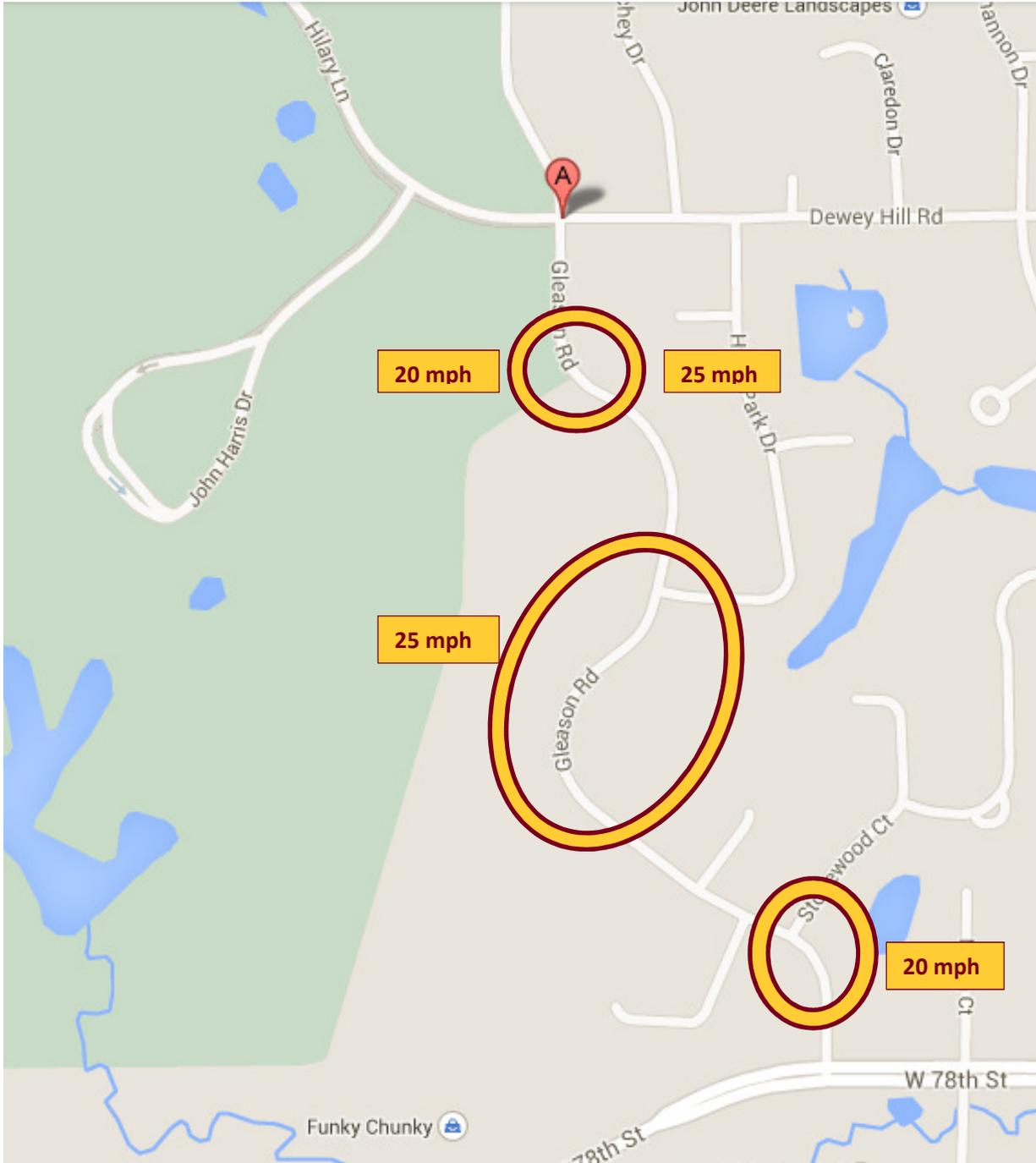
Subdivision 2 has been removed by the Traffic Safety Coordinator, as it was not relevant to the cases at hand.

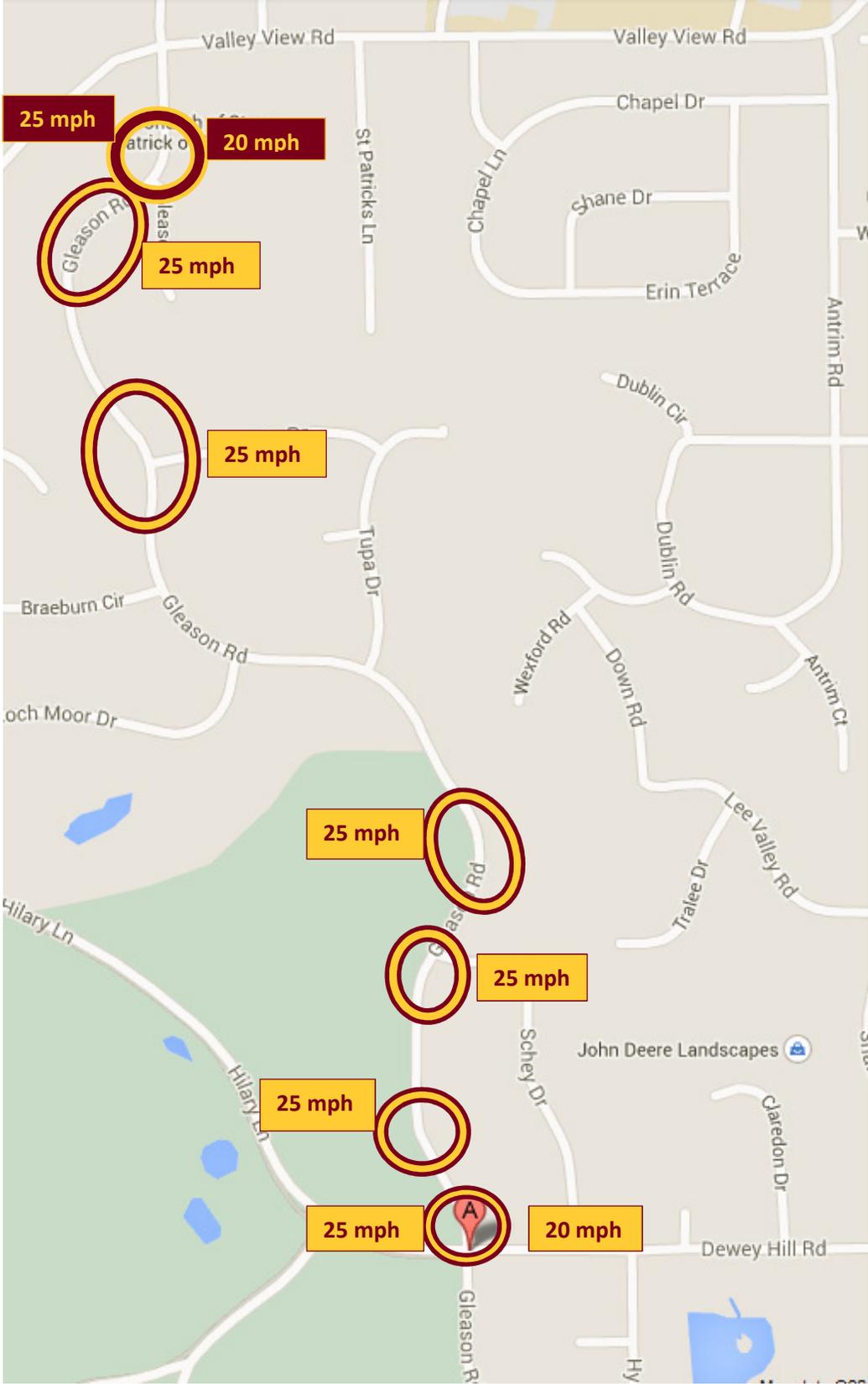
Appendix B : Crosswalk Policy

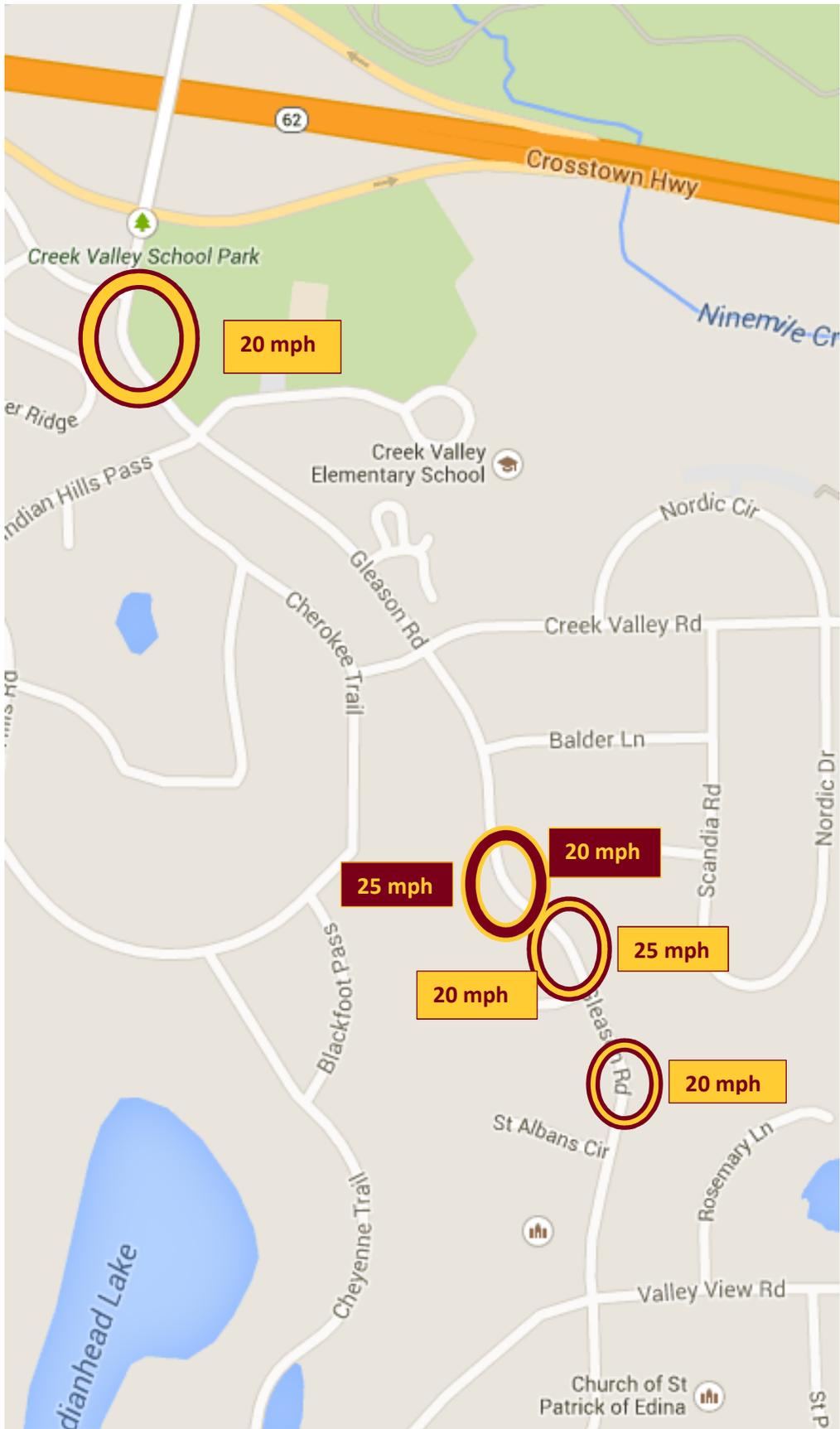
Marked Pedestrian Crosswalks

- A. Marked crosswalks are placed at locations that are unusually hazardous or at locations not readily apparent as having pedestrian movement.
- B. Marked crosswalks will only be placed in an area that has in excess of 20 pedestrians crossing for a minimum of two hours during any eight hour period.
- C. Marking for crosswalks will be established by measuring the "Vehicle Gap Time". This is the total number of gaps between vehicular traffic recorded during the average five minute period in the peak hour. Criteria for markings are:
 - 1) More than five gaps – pavement marking and signage only.
 - 2) Four to five gaps – add activated pedestal mounted flasher.
 - 3) Less than three gaps – add activated overhead mounted flasher.
- D. Crosswalks will not be placed on arterial roads or roads with a speed limit greater than 30 mph unless in conjunction with signalization.
- E. Other conditions that warrant crosswalks:
 - 1) Routes to schools
 - 2) Locations adjacent to libraries, community centers, and other high use public facilities.
 - 3) Locations adjacent to public parks.
 - 4) Locations where significant numbers of handicapped persons cross a street.
 - 5) Locations where significant numbers of senior citizens cross a street.
- F. Crosswalks will only be placed at intersections.

Appendix C:







**MINUTES OF
CITY OF EDINA, MINNESOTA
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
COMMUNITY ROOM
FEBRUARY 19, 2015
6:00 P.M.**

ROLL CALL Answering roll call was members Bass, Boettge, Iyer, Janovy, Nelson, Olson, and Spanhake.

ABSENT Campbell, LaForce, Rummel

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Motion was made by member Spanhake and seconded by member Boettge to approve the meeting agenda. All voted aye. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF January 15, 2015

Motion was made by member Nelson and seconded by member Olson to approve the minutes of Jan. 15, 2015. All voted aye. Motion carried.

COMMUNITY COMMENT - None.

REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Traffic Safety Committee Report of February 4, 2015

A1. For clarification, member Janovy said she was the requestor and her request was to get the meaning of “when children are present” and for enforcement because she heard complaints from residents in the area. She believes this is a denial because she has not been told the meaning of “when children are present.” She suggested moving it to section B and revise for clarity.

A3. Member Janovy said she is not in disagreement with this but recalled when the same issue was raised a few years ago, she was given a different answer. Planner Nolan said the police said drivers are not allowed to park but they would prefer to handle it through the school instead of by citations and they have already reached out to the principal.

A4. Member Janovy said she was not comfortable approving this so far in advance of the study because they don't know what the solution might be. Chair Bass said this would be an immediate safety improvement to a small area that would not be expensive to improve now or in the future.

B1. Member Janovy said a different standard is used on B1 than in A2. She said ‘delay’ is a better measure than ‘gap.’

Motion was made by member Janovy and seconded by member Olson to forward the revised Feb. 4, 2015, report to the City Council.

All voted aye.

Motion carried.

Updates

Student Members – None.

Bike Edina Working Group

Member Janovy reported that they have a new co-chair, Lori Richmonds. Open Streets planning is under way.