



**Prosperity & Livability Committee**  
*Chaired by Council Member Ewing*  
**Members: Ewing, Alexander, Hill and Wagner**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Lobby Conference Room**  
**March 2, 2016 – 9:00 A.M.**

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

Committee Chair Jason Ewing, and Committee Members Alyce Hill, and Jay Wagner

**Absent:**

Committee Member Latimer Alexander

**Also Present:**

Council Member Cynthia Davis

**Staff Present:**

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager; Mark McDonald, Director of Transportation; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

**Others Present:**

Judy Stalder, TREBIC

**News Media:**

Pat Kimbrough, High Point Enterprise

**Handouts:**

- *City of High Point Policy for Traffic Calming Devices in Residential Areas*
- *Process Flow Chart for Traffic Calming Policy*
- *Traffic Calming Peer Evaluation Summary: US Cities, NC Cities, Raleigh and High Point*

**Note: These handouts will be attached as a permanent part of these proceedings.**

*Prior to the meeting being called to order, Committee Member Wagner informed staff of a Planning and Development Committee topic for discussion in the very near future: Possible policy change- Infrastructure (water/sewer).*

*Chairman Ewing called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m.*

### **Traffic Calming Study**

*Mark McDonald, Director of Transportation, mentioned the presentations that were made during a Committee Meeting regarding Complete Streets and a Peer Review that the City of Raleigh did regarding traffic calming. At that time, the Committee asked for a summary of the Peer Review in comparison to the city's policy and practices as it relates to the results of the study that Tom Fiorello presented at that time.*

*Mr. McDonald then reviewed the results as contained in the color coded chart that he put together that shows a comparison as to where the city's traffic calming policy and practices are as compared to other jurisdictions. He felt this was a good step towards making some policy changes, maybe re-writing the city's policy and looking at how traffic calming is approached as a whole. He reported that there have been a number of people to inquire about the policy, but there has actually only been one neighborhood group that has followed completely through with the policy and this was Laurel Oak Ranch on Old Plank Road.*

*The study considered policies from US Peers, NC Peers, Raleigh, as well as High Point's policy.*

- 1. Who can initiate? Any citizen or group can be the initiating party.*
- 2a. Eligible Streets. Raleigh and North Carolina, US and North Carolina as a whole focuses only on residential streets. Raleigh and High Point include provisions for it to also include residential streets, as well as neighborhood collector streets. Mr. McDonald pointed out Washington Street would not qualify under the city's policy or under any of the other policies because it is not a residential street and does not fit the criteria that would qualify it for typical traffic calming measures.*
- 2b. Treatment types. Vertical (speed humps), Horizontal (roundabouts, chokers, chicanes, signing, etc...). All the groups studied indicated they would permit any and all of these and the selection of what was used would be based on what the individual situation would be best served by.*
- 2c. Time on project list. This one did not apply to High Point, Raleigh or any of the NC Peers, although there were some cities who responded nationally that had a list of potential qualifying projects, but for funding reasons they would not get done within a one-year period of time, so they were put on a project prioritization list.*
- 3a. Relevant to evaluation. The top five are speed, volume, crash history, proximity to schools and other pedestrian destinations. High Point uses three of these, but has not specifically looked at schools or other pedestrian destinations. Mr. McDonald felt these*

*were some things that the city would consider should a request be put in and it included a school zone, or a neighborhood where a school was situated in that neighborhood. Some of the US and NC Peers considered land use around the area, but it was not considered much of a factor. Other conditions that could be considered are: sidewalks, bike routes, sight distance, grades, street length, signing/markings. High Point also looks at strength length. Response time is something else that High Point considers and longer emergency response. Response times are a primary objection of fire and rescue services while other issues include street maintenance and snow removal. Mr. McDonald noted one thing that comes up a lot is the long-term maintenance and who would take care of them. Mr. McDonald suggested as the Council moves through possible revisions to the traffic calming policy, it would be helpful to have police, fire/rescue and public services involved in the conversations.*

*Chairman Ewing mentioned there are entrances to some National or State Parks that use traffic calming before the entrance to slow the traffic down. Mr. McDonald explained this could fall into the pedestrian destination category, but this specifically did not come into play. He noted given the right situation and if there was a lot of pedestrian activity, it may be something that staff would look at.*

*3b. Speed criteria. Posting an appropriate and enforceable speed limit on a street is necessary to determine if speeding is a problem; the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is a guideline for determining posted speed. Mr. McDonald explained the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile means that 85% of the traffic measured during a study is traveling at or below the posted speed limit. High Point uses the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile greater than 5 mph over. He noted that if the speed limit is posted at 30 mph and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile comes in at 36, it would satisfy the city's criteria. Mr. McDonald pointed out speed is the biggest issue to be addressed.*

*3c. Volume criteria. Another factor to consider is volume. Some cities have developed ways of ranking the volume by assigning points based on a certain number of vehicles per day, but there is no consensus and there is no set number. High Point looks at does the current volume on the street exceed the general expectations for that street. Mr. McDonald advised that it would be rare to have streets to qualify or be part of a program like this where the volume would be exceeding the streets capacity in focusing on residential applications.*

*Under the volume criteria, Committee Member Wagner asked if it would be more beneficial to have low or high points. Mr. McDonald replied that the higher the volume would yield more points for approval.*

*3d. Crash criteria. Different jurisdictions use different criteria. A majority of the US Peers use a crash rate over three years. North Carolina groups consider the total number of crashes that may have occurred in a three-year period. Mr. McDonald shared that whenever High Point gets a request, staff pulls the crash reports for an entire section to review the types of crashes occurring and weed out the crashes where speed was not a contributing factor.*

*Committee Member Wagner asked if any of the cities gave any emphasis on crashes involving pedestrians or cyclists. Mr. McDonald replied that he was not aware of any specifically, but pointed out this is something that High Point considers.*

*4. Meeting participation and 5. Petition signatories. Mr. McDonald reported that anyone can attend and participate in the meetings as they are open meetings, but they are primarily limited to the residents of the affected area. When a petition is filed or when a request is made, High Point asks the neighborhood to create some sort of committee for ease of communications. Mr. McDonald noted in the Laurel Oak Ranch traffic calming request, they designated a person from the Homeowner's Association as well as someone from their property management group and these are the two people that staff communicated with throughout that process.*

*Council Member C. Davis asked if there was a reason it was not marked as a representative committee. Mr. McDonald explained as far as meeting participation, all the meeting residents were on there, but he wanted to leave representative committee on the list to discuss that option and staff does have representative committees to talk with. He pointed out none of the peer groups limited participation to a representative committee; it was always a more open group involved in the process.*

*Mr. McDonald explained that High Point typically does not limit participation to the residents of the project street only because in most cases, there will be more people affected than those residing in the immediate area being studied. He noted the petition is for those properties only along the project street, but others are included as far as meeting input to help define an influence area that could be affected.*

*Committee Member Hill asked for clarification regarding whether or not the petition is just for the street and Mr. McDonald noted it is actually the influence area (mostly the street, but can be a few houses one way or the other).*

*5. Project funding. Nationally and across North Carolina, a majority of the cities that were involved in the survey include some funding in their annual budgets to participate in funding some level of traffic calming, although there was no set amounts. Raleigh uses a combination and put funding in their capital budget, but also use some bond funding, some grant funding, as well as some resident participation.*

*High Point's policy requires measures to be fully funded by the requesting neighborhood (by the residents).*

*Committee Member Hill asked if the resident funding was more prevalent in neighborhoods with homeowner's associations that may have the authority to make everybody pay as opposed to an older neighborhood where there is no homeowner's association. She shared the complaints on Rotary as an example and noted in that case there would be a minimal amount of neighbors that might be subsidizing it for everybody. Mr. McDonald reiterated that the city has not typically had that many requests and has applied only one in Laurel*

*Oak, which does have a very strong homeowner's association and very strong resources to apply.*

*He pointed out several years ago, staff received a request from a Hillcrest neighborhood for traffic calming and for whatever reason; it went out for petition, but never came back. He agreed that how the resident funds are accumulated and managed could definitely be a factor. He noted the composition of the neighborhood also plays a role and leads to questions about program equity (some neighborhoods can pay, while some cannot).*

*Committee Member C. Davis asked if this same consideration is given on Evergreen as they have been coming back and forth to the city for some traffic calming measures for 14 years. She noted Evergreen is 32 feet on both ends, 15 feet in the middle which makes it impossible for anyone to pass a school bus or fire truck. She shared that there is more traffic on Evergreen now because people are using it as a cut-through from Bojangles to get to Edgewood and/or to Westchester. She asked if this same principal would apply here to be funded by the residents considering the need for widening and the amount of cut-through traffic that uses Evergreen.*

*Mr. McDonald felt this would be a street improvement that would be made through some other means. Committee Member C. Davis argued that traffic is still the issue there and the fact that they get substantial traffic from Edgewood and from Westchester at peak times during the day. Mr. McDonald asked if the neighborhood has followed through with the process to request traffic calming on the street and Committee Member C. Davis replied that several years ago it was being considered.*

*Committee Member Wagner pointed out the widening aspect would be a capital improvement to the street, but if it is a traffic calming issue, then that would apply. Deputy City Manager McCaslin could not recall the city widening any neighborhood streets in the recent past. Mr. McDonald clarified that widening usually involves minor thoroughfares or connector type streets and gave Oakview Road as an example. He noted that Oakview Road is almost entirely residential with a school and a couple of churches on the street, but it serves a different purpose in that it connects Johnson Street all the way to Old Winston Road.*

*Council Member C. Davis felt the biggest confusion on Evergreen is that every other street and all the streets adjacent to them are wide enough to handle the traffic except for Evergreen. She stated they were told three times that it was on the list for improvements to widen it, but reiterated that it has never come to fruition. Mr. McDonald explained it would be on a list with many other streets where the conditions could be very similar and staff would base any recommendations for making improvements on the volume, use, and what the general purpose would be and rank it against the others. Chairman Ewing asked if there might be a list pertaining to widening residential cut-through streets. Mr. McDonald replied that there is not a specific list that has all of them, but do realize there are some that carry higher volumes and offer different levels of connectivity such as Triangle Lake Road, Burton Street, Gordon Street. He emphasized there are some pros and cons to making improvements on a street like Evergreen and noted that although it might make passing traffic easier, but it could also make it more of a cut-through. Council Member C. Davis*

*argued that they not only have the problem with excess traffic and speed on Evergreen, but the narrow width of the road is problematic in the case of avoiding an accident because the only place to go would be in someone's yard, or the ditch.*

*7a. Removal process. 7b Removal funding. Mr. McDonald pointed out for whatever reason on these last two items, Raleigh did not list their response. High Point's removal process is the same as the installation process, which requires a petition to have it taken out with the removal cost being absorbed by the neighborhood if the request is approved. Some cities that responded have early removal penalties; some will share costs or assume full responsibility after a pre-set date.*

*Mr. McCaslin asked staff if it would be safe to say that the city has had a number of inquiries over the years for various traffic calming measures, but when they find out they will be responsible for the cost, they tend to go away. Mr. McDonald felt this was definitely a big deterrent and many times when they find out they have to raise the money to put in the traffic calming devices, it makes it cost prohibitive.*

*Committee Member Wagner asked any of the cities who responded allow additional points for neighborhoods that do raise a portion of the funding to boost and move them closer to the top of the list. Mr. McDonald noted he was not aware of anyone that does this specifically, but felt this was something that could be considered in the process and consideration could be given as to the availability of funding whether it is all private funding, all public funding, or a combination of both. Committee Member Wagner felt this might create an incentive for residents to go out and raise at least a portion of the funds. Committee Member Hill pointed out it does not deal with the iniquities of the neighborhoods. Mr. McDonald clarified that according to the existing policy, the city would not be putting any funding into it all other than staff resource time.*

*Assistant City Manager Randy Hemann asked staff if narrow-width streets are not typically used to slow traffic down. Mr. McDonald explained that lane or road width does play a big factor in this and he felt this was part of the issue on Old Plank Road. He suggested looking at the neighborhood design criteria for streets and it would also help to encourage on-street parking where feasible because this also helps to slow traffic down.*

*Chairman Ewing mentioned new development and if the city should consider changing the criteria to allow for narrower streets versus wider streets. Mr. McDonald noted that staff does think about this more and explained in the past when streets have been designed, staff has been following specific criteria as to the width, curvature, etc.... and staff has started trying to be a little more flexible in the application. Overtime, it will require making the numbers different and Mr. McDonald felt the thought process regarding the Complete Streets Policy would be to create streets that serve the purpose of moving traffic in and out of neighborhoods, but without these issues.*

*Given the choice of either building sidewalks on both sides of a street or build six feet of street, in terms of expenses it would be least expensive to build the street. Judy Stalder with TREBIC agreed and pointed there are design criteria now that requires creation of streets*

*that will be a problem in the future. Mr. McDonald noted that is true and staff does try to exercise a little more flexibility in how they look at these things. Ms. Stalder felt it was important to keep in mind that in the past, it was important to get from point A to point B in a fast manner, but now it is unsure as to if this is best because sometimes people want to walk or ride bikes. Mr. McDonald pointed out the questions about street widths go back to the response time issues and noted in the 60s and 70s, fire departments wanted wider streets due to the size of their trucks.*

*A brief discussion followed regarding the reasoning behind making James Road as wide as it is. No one could pinpoint and say for certain as to why.*

#### *Lindsay Street Roundabout*

*Mr. Hemann asked about the initial reaction from the public when the roundabout was put in behind the Library and how that public perception has played out. Mr. McDonald explained when the Lindsay Street improvements were first envisioned, it was proposed to be a five-lane thoroughfare, but then questions arose as to if there was a real need for five lanes because this would require a lot of right-of-way, utility issues, and result in more impacts on the property. Staff felt the design was not good, so the engineering and transportation staff entertained the idea of putting in a roundabout, then Duany's visit to High Point resulted in a recommendation to re-design it with the two peanuts for pedestrians. Mr. McDonald believed most people like the way it looks and have figured out how to maneuver it. He added that traffic circles and roundabouts have become more prevalent nationally.*

#### *Mock Runs for Traffic Calming Requests*

*Committee Member Wagner mentioned a conference he attended recently that had a session for low cost options to affect change in areas and one of the things they shared was a situation where a town required a demonstration project for a traffic calming request. As part of the petition, they got the neighborhood involved and then they did a demonstration project by creating a temporary traffic circle using splitters and temporary paint for a month so they could get a feel of what it would be like before constructing something permanent. Mr. McDonald shared that the city did something similar with Old Plank Road, they painted a circle on the road and put traffic cones out for a while (before the construction) to make sure that vehicles could get around it. Committee Member Wagner offered to email the link to staff and Council.*

*Council Member C. Davis mentioned the dieting of Main Street and noted that some people suggested that temporary measures be taken to see what it might look like and to see how it might impact businesses, etc... and how traffic would flow, but it never happened.*

#### *Need for Crosswalk on N. Main at Hillcrest*

*Chairman Ewing noted that he received a few calls regarding safety concerns regarding the crosswalk on Main Street at Hillcrest near the Brown Truck. Mr. McDonald noted that staff has looked at this and in addition to upgrading the signage, would try to make it more visible, but would do this with a group of other intersection projects as a package. He advised these intersection projects are in queue in engineering and they were working on*

*getting the contract documents together. He anticipates the work being done later this spring or summer.*

#### *Cycling Concerns on Lexington Avenue*

*Committee Member Wagner expressed concerns about the safety of the numerous cyclists that use Lexington Avenue west of Westchester, going out into Davidson County. He asked if this area was on the radar for any improvements. Mr. McDonald advised that it was actually put on the list for the State Transportation Plan to be improved from Kentucky Street out and they were proposing curb/gutter, sidewalks, and/or provide enough width for bike lanes. Committee Member Wagner agreed that a dedicated bike lane would be good in this area. Council Member Hill questioned the data for crashes, etc... as many of the incidents and near incidents go unreported. Mr. McDonald reiterated that it is the first year on the list and will be considered at the MPO session later this month. Committee Member Wagner asked if it might be possible to get some Safe Routes to Schools funding for this because of the proximity of Northwood School to do some bike lanes. Mr. McDonald noted that this would be well beyond the scope of Safe Routes for Schools funding.*

*Council Member C. Davis mentioned the property above Mayberry's where condos were proposed and noted that the property owner had to give up property for the widening project. She noted that at a recent MPO meeting, they were talking about starting on the 74 corridor in Jamestown and coming that way to widen it all the way up, then turn towards the university, but decided to take it out towards Main Street. She asked if they did not move this up on the project list. Mr. McDonald clarified that it is on the list for consideration, but it is not a funded project.*

*Mr. McCaslin asked about the Committee's recommendation regarding a Traffic Calming Policy. Mr. McDonald suggested Council use parts of the city's current policy as a guide and develop a new policy that would include some type of prioritization and some way of funding participation. He asked Council to consider some funding that could be used that could also be used as participatory seed money for some of these projects. Committee Member Wagner agreed and felt there should be some sort of evaluation criteria for prioritizing to make the process as objectionable as possible and to ensure that Council is spending the money wisely. He suggested copying Raleigh's policy and moving forward. Chairman Ewing asked staff to provide Council with a copy of Raleigh's policy.*

*Mr. McDonald agreed that would be a good starting point, but noted that Raleigh does not do a petition, but does do a ballot. Committee Member Wagner liked the idea of requiring a petition because it would result in more of a community building participatory process than a petition.*

*Mr. McDonald asked the Committee to read over the information and to share any thoughts/suggestions with him. Chairman Ewing suggested that the Committee review this information and Raleigh's policy and come back to discuss it in May before finalizing the budget so they could determine the funding to put the policy into place.*



*Developmental Standards for New Roads*

*Chairman Ewing asked staff to look at the development standards for new roads and stated he would like the city to be more proactive in narrowing some of those guidelines.*

*Committee Member Wagner suggested the timing may be better to do this after the new Unified Development Ordinance is approved.*

*Proposed Baseball Park*

*Chairman Ewing advised that there have been a lot of private dollars put into studies for the proposed baseball park and they are currently in the midst of doing a second study. He asked if Council might be supportive of drafting an MOU for consideration that would say that when everything comes together, Council will support either a dollar for dollar match up to a certain amount just to try to push the committee to be able to go out and start fundraising for the project, to get some major contributors and donations to move the project along simultaneously while the study is being done.*

*He explained that historically when studies come back, it takes a year or two for the results to be discussed, then other things come along and the study just sits on the table.*

*There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.*

Respectfully Submitted,

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Lisa B. Vierling, MMC  
City Clerk

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Jason P. Ewing, Chairman