

Excerpt from Minutes of the Regular
Advisory Traffic and Safety Board Meeting
Of June 10, 2008

**2008-0273 GREAT OAKS WEST SUBDIVISION NO. 2, SECTION 9
TRAFFIC CONTROL ORDERS SS-140 and YS-101**

Mr. Matich gave background on the matter, saying the Home Owners' Association (HOA) of the Great Oaks Subdivision No. Two initiated the study. The subdivision is in the southwest quadrant of Tienken and Livernois, and does not include Chestnut Lane and Chestnut Circle. Great Oaks West Subdivision One and Two are separate from each other. The traffic study was recently performed for the existing streets located within Great Oaks West Subdivision No. Two. At the time all of their street name signs were wooden, and we asked them to come into compliance with the MMUTCD 2005. This mandated that we have our street name signs upgraded for size and reflectivity. When we contacted the HOA they said that their signs required quite a bit of maintenance, and agreed back in April of 2007 to work with the City to have them conform. As of this date the City has not put in the new street name signs. We are still working with the HOA and their contractor based upon the decorative fiberglass or cast aluminum sign supports they want. The new City street name signs will be placed on their posts.

In addition to that we looked at the intersections, and found three intersections that need to be upgraded for the regulatory traffic control devices. The first one was Laurel Avenue at Hickory Hill Drive. At that intersection we recommend going from a YIELD Sign condition to a STOP Sign, where Laurel would stop for Hickory Hill. The second was Hackberry Court and Hackberry Circle, which currently has no sign. Our recommendation is to have at least one leg of an intersection approach controlled, therefore we recommend a Yield because there is adequate sight distance at this intersection. The third is Hackberry Circle at the east leg of Hickory Hill. We recommend going from a Yield to a Stop control based on the limited sight distance at that intersection.

As we walked through the subdivision with the HOA representatives we found other intersections that had limited sight distance. The HOA asked that they be the ones to approach the residents first, before the City sent out their standard violation letters. So we are in the process of working on the situation with the HOA.

Chairperson Colling asked what their time frame was for checking back with the HOA on the sight distance issues. Mr. Matich said they had asked for a two-week period. Because of risk management liability once we are put on notice we like to respond within two weeks. He thought that time period had probably elapsed, so we should be pushing the issue. At one of the corners the resident agreed to have his tree removed.

Mr. Matich said that after reviewing the crash data from TIA we found no crashes within a three-year period for any of the intersections. The warrants for the traffic controls are based upon the available sight distance.

Chairperson Colling said he assumed the action Mr. Matich would like the Board to take is to recommend the adoption of the TCO until amended or superseded. Mr. Matich wanted to let the Board members know they had to cancel the old traffic control order and assign a new TCO for all the Stop and YIELD Signs for Great Oaks West One and Two. So we are rescinding the old TCO adopted by the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC), and superseding it with a City TCO request to City Council for their consideration. Mr. Shumejko explained there was a little quirk where some of the TCOs in Great Oaks West No. One were tied in with some of the same TCO numbers as in Great Oaks No. Two, so to clean it up we are rescinding the old one and creating the new one for the entire subdivision.

Chairperson Colling said there being no members of the public present to speak on this issue he would open the matter up to the Board. He asked if anyone had comments or questions.

Mr. Cardimen said Mr. Shumejko and Mr. Matich had indicated that there were no crashes, and the warrants were going to be justified based on sight distance. Mr. Cardimen stated a number of communities including Livonia have been taking out STOP Signs. Even though there may be problems like these, what they are trying to do is solve the problem by eliminating the sight distance issues, and not by putting in STOP Signs. His question is, "Is that valid in this case or not? Do they really need the STOP Sign?"

Mr. Matich responded we could simply go out and clear out the corners and the sight triangles, and see that each property does not have anything planted at the corners. We have never chosen that way to go about it, even though we have the power to do so. In seventy percent of our subdivisions somebody has planted something in the quadrants of the intersections. For these intersections we measured the sight distance, and the second factor is the curvature of the road. Some of the older subdivisions were platted where the curves and the geometrics of the intersections are such that they don't meet today's standards as far as the available intersection sight distance. If the intersections were designed today they would have more of a T-intersection with the horizontal curves being further away from the intersections. We took that into consideration.

Mr. Matich asked if Livonia was changing the STOP Signs to YIELD Signs, or to no controls at all. Mr. Cardimen said they were eliminating over 50% of the STOP Signs in the community by going back and evaluating why they were put in there in the first place, and then making corrections. He said he was not promoting that, but was asking the question based on what is taking place in the communities that are getting rid of STOP Signs rather than adding them.

Chairperson Colling said they had done a similar thing in Berkley, but Berkley had a policy where every intersection was signed to one degree or another. In Rochester Hills we don't necessarily sign every intersection. The policy has been to sign one leg of an approach. That could be a court yielding to a main street with no signs on the main street, and this Board and staff have been exceedingly judicious about putting in STOP Signs.

Mr. Shumejko said Brooklands is an example of a grid street where we try to alternate every other intersection. Mr. Cardimen say that was fine, he was just asking the question for his own benefit as the “new kid on the block.”

Chairperson Colling said if they were signing every corner on every intersection he would say yes, but that has never been the case. In some of the older areas of the City like the Brooklands and the south side of Auburn Road from Crooks to Grace and Cone, that alternate signage path has been around for thirty years that he knew of. It has worked pretty well and they’ve done a pretty good job in the newer subdivisions throughout the City.

Chairperson Colling said we make traffic control updates as we review and we go through the streets in our normal rotation, and asked Mr. Shumejko how long it took to go through the whole City. He asked if it was four years, and Mr. Shumejko said it might take longer than that now. Realistically they were probably in a mode where they didn’t have the staff to go through every section of the City in a normal review cycle. They had reviewed this subdivision because they had come in with a request for decorative posts, and at this time the City was more reactive than proactive.

Mr. Matich said there are examples of intersections where people don’t plant anything in the quadrants, but typically people buy the corners because they are premium lots. Then they put in everything they can get for landscaping, so the City is always fighting that battle. Mr. Shumejko said we are not out looking for these sight distance issues, but if a resident in a subdivision calls us with a complaint, we are obligated to review it and act on it. This might be by sending them a letter that they are in violation of City ordinance and must trim their landscaping, or looking to see if there are other measures that can be taken.

Chairperson Colling asked if there were any other discussion or comments on this item. Mr. Matich said that the HOA is in favor of these changes. They met with the president, vice president, and a couple of other board members. They were all aware of the meeting tonight, and were in agreement with these changes.

Chairperson Colling asked if anyone was prepared to make a motion.

A motion was made by Mr. Cardimen to approve the issuance of Traffic Control Orders STOP Sign-140 and YIELD Sign-101, and to recommend that the City Council approve them until rescinded or superseded. Mr. Hunter seconded the motion.

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Absent: Mr. Blackstone, Mr. Schneck

Motion carried.