

## COUNCIL WORKSHOP ITEM

**ITEM:** File #08-03  
**DATE:** August 7, 2003  
**PREPARED BY:** John J. Bajor, Jr. Public Works Director  
Dorin Fera, Traffic Manager  
**PURPOSE:** Elmore Avenue: Lee Avenue to Belmont Road Speed Review

### BACKGROUND:

It is Staff's judgment, based upon the latest round of traffic data collected, that vehicular speeding is not as significant an issue along Elmore Avenue. While there are motorists exceeding the 85% speed, they are few, and the vast majority of the motorists along Elmore Avenue are driving appropriately within expected vehicle speeds. This pattern is not unique, but is typical throughout the Village.

The Village will be receiving a Speed Limit Radar sign on loan to be installed on Elmore Avenue for a temporary period. The unit is smaller, more accurate in speed recording, and has been proven to be effective in reducing travel speeds within its vicinity.

Staff advises that the Parking and Traffic Commission forward a positive recommendation to the Village Council such that the following be implemented:

Designate pedestrian crosswalks at the locations on the following streets:

- Lee Avenue, across Lee Avenue on the south side of Elmore Avenue.
- Elmore Avenue, across Elmore Avenue on the west side of Bending Oaks Place.

Designate standard crosswalks at the following locations:

- Bending Oaks Place and Bending Oaks Court, across Bending Oaks Place and Bending Oaks Court on the north and south sides of Elmore Avenue.

### ATTACHMENTS:

Recommendation of Parking and Traffic Commission – June 11, 2003.

June 11, 2003 Minutes of the Parking and Traffic Commission, File #08-03 discussed on pages 8 through 14.

### RECOMMENDATION:

Place this item on the Workshop Agenda for August 26, 2003 for Council review and consideration.

August 7, 2003

**MAYOR BRIAN KRAJEWSKI AND COUNCIL MEMBERS**

RE: P & T File # 08-03                      Elmore Avenue: Lee Avenue to Belmont  
Road Speed Review

**Dear Mayor Krajewski and Council Members:**

On Wednesday, June 11, 2003, the Parking and Traffic Commission adopted the following motion:

**MR. KREN MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL TO INSTALL PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALKS ON LEE AVENUE AT THE SOUTH SIDE OF ELMORE AND ON ELMORE, CROSSING ON THE WEST AT BENDING OAKS PLACE. THE OTHER TWO CROSSWALKS AT BENDING OAKS PLACE AND BENDING OAKS COURT TO BE STANDARD CROSSINGS.**

**MR. CARLQUIST SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**Roll Call:                      AYE: Commissioners Kren, Stapleton, Thurston,  
Wendt, Yeksigian, Carlquist, Chairman Johnson**

**NAY: None.**

**Motion Carried:              7:0**

Pedestrian activity has been recorded on Elmore both at the Lee Avenue and Bending Oaks Place intersections. The pedestrian activity was lower than expected, since the day was generally overcast and thunderstorms did occur. At Lee Avenue in a 10-hour count summary, there were 57 pedestrians, with a peak of 13 during the 6:00 to 7:00 AM hour. At Bending Oaks Place, during the same period, there were 61 total pedestrians, also with a peak of 13 during the 7:00 to 8:00 AM hour. Pedestrian Crossing warning signs with enhanced crosswalks are warranted at both locations.

Sincerely,

Ross Johnson, Chairman  
Parking & Traffic Commission  
**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE**

RJ/cc

**Chairman Johnson** asked the Commission secretary for a roll call on the motion.

**Roll Call:**           **AYE: Commissioners Kren, Stapleton, Thurston, Wendt, Yeksigian, Carlquist, Chairman Johnson**

**NAY: None.**

**Motion Carried: 7:0**

For the record, Chairman Johnson read an email dated June 11, 2003 from Patricia M. Miles Szczurek, 5235 Fairmount, to the Village of Downers Grove, discussing her concerns about the safety hazards of Fairmount Avenue. She favored parking on one side of the street and asked that the Parking and Traffic Commission review the matter thoroughly and allow the safety of the residents to "drive the decision."

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **File #08-03 Elmore Avenue: Lee Avenue to Belmont Road Speed Review**

**Chairman Johnson** read the staff report for file #08-03.

### **BACKGROUND**

This issue was last investigated for the May, 14, 2003 Parking and Traffic Commission meeting. This report is an update based on the collection of additional vehicular and pedestrian data.

### **STUDY**

Staff has collected another round of vehicular traffic data along both Elmore Avenue and Lee Avenue on the following dates: May 28<sup>th</sup>, May 29<sup>th</sup>, May 30<sup>th</sup>, and June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003. This new data was compared with the previous traffic data collected in December, 2002 and April, 2003.

The volumes were compared for consistency and reasonableness. The findings of the data collection are as follows:

- On Elmore Avenue, the April, 2003 traffic counts are an anomaly; the 490 average daily traffic (ADT) volumes are not representative.
- On Elmore Avenue, the May, 2003 and December, 2002 traffic volumes are very similar and realistic; the ADT daily traffic on Elmore Avenue is 640 vehicles per day.
- On Lee Avenue, the ADT counts were consistently 950 vehicles per day for all the count dates between December 2002 and May 2003.

The 85% travel speed of 32 mph for the new counts on Elmore Avenue is shown to be consistent with the previous 32 mph, versus 35 mph in the April, 2003 count data. Vehicular crashes are not a major issue along either Lee or Elmore Avenues; between 2000 and April, 2003 there was one vehicular crash. It was an improper backing maneuver on Elmore Avenue 500' west of Bending Oaks Place.

The issue of providing all-way Stop control at the Lee Avenue and Elmore Avenue intersection has been evaluated again. In accordance with the MUTCD warrants for a multi-way stop, an average of 300 vehicles per hour entering from the major street for 8 hours of an average day, or a combination of 200 vehicles/pedestrians/bicycles entering from the minor street, or if five or more accidents occurred during the last 12-month period, would warrant multi-way stop control.

At this time, the requirements for multi-way stop control comprised of both vehicular and pedestrian activity are not satisfied at this intersection.

Pedestrian activity has been recorded on Elmore both at the Lee Avenue and Bending Oaks Place intersections. The pedestrian activity was lower than expected, since the day was generally overcast and thunderstorms did occur. At Lee Avenue in a 10-hour count summary, there were 57 pedestrians, with a peak of 13 during the 6:00 to 7:00 AM hour. At Bending Oaks Place, during the same period, there were 61 total pedestrians, also with a peak of 13 during the 7:00 to 8:00 AM hour. Pedestrian Crossing warning signs with enhanced crosswalks are warranted at both locations.

A license plate survey was conducted concurrent with this latest traffic counts to determining the level of appropriate use and cut-through traffic along Elmore Avenue. Again, in a 10-hour count summary, the volume of non-neighborhood traffic between Belmont Road and Carpenter Street, was approximately 1% of the total traffic. This clearly shows that there is not a significant issue with inappropriate use along Elmore Avenue.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is Staff's judgment, based upon the latest round of traffic data collected, that vehicular speeding is not as significant an issue along Elmore Avenue. While there are motorists exceeding the 85% speed, they are few, and the vast majority of the motorists along Elmore Avenue are driving appropriately within expected vehicle speeds. This pattern is not unique, but is typical throughout the Village.

The Village will be receiving a Speed Limit Radar sign on loan to be installed on Elmore Avenue for a temporary period. The unit is smaller, more accurate in speed recording, and has been proven to be effective in reducing travel speeds within its vicinity. Staff is awaiting its arrival, which could be any day now.

Staff advises that the Parking and Traffic Commission forward a positive recommendation to the Village Council such that the following be implemented:

**DESIGNATE PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALKS AT THE LOCATIONS ON THE FOLLOWING STREETS:**

**BENDING OAKS PLACE, ACROSS BENDING OAKS PLACE ON THE NORTH AND SOUTH SIDES OF ELMORE AVENUE.**

**LEE AVENUE, ACROSS LEE AVENUE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF ELMORE AVENUE.**

**ELMORE AVENUE, ACROSS ELMORE AVENUE ON THE WEST SIDE OF BENDING OAKS PLACE.**

**Mr. Schiller** discussed the geometrics of the roadway play into the issues raised on this matter. Staff has taken steps to install crosswalk warning signs to further identify areas where children and pedestrians are crossing the roadways. The warning has been used in prior locations where regulatory control is not warranted but where crosswalks are moderately used by pedestrian traffic and has the potential for pedestrian/vehicle conflict. Per a question about the crosswalk data, Mr. Schiller explained 25 or more pedestrians in one count period must exist as well as having a peak hour of 10 pedestrians or more, which criteria was also met.

**Mr. Schiller** further explained that license plate checks by staff took place at Bending Oaks for those motorists traveling down Elmore; on Lee Avenue; and at Carpenter and on Gilbert to identify those motorists cutting through to get to the downtown along Gilbert. The traffic numbers traveling past Carpenter and into town were lower than what staff estimated. Most of the traffic appeared to be either turning at Lee, turning into the park, traveling through Denburn Woods or traveling on Carpenter. Motorists were not traveling true east/west bypass traffic. Due to weather conditions, however, staff was unable to get the p.m. return traffic readings, but estimated figures could have been in the 3% to 5% range, which was under extraordinary bypass traffic.

**Chairman Johnson** welcomed audience members for their questions or comments.

**Mr. Whowell**, 5417 Lee Avenue, inquired as to what time of day the license plate survey was conducted, wherein staff indicated the study began at 7:00 a.m. and was completed at approximately 4:00 p.m.

**Chairman Johnson** commented the 1% seemed low as well as the overall total volume being low especially due to 80 or more homes existing on the street.

**Ms. Chris Fregeau**, 1918 Elmore, asked why residents on Lee Street were not invited to the meeting or included in the mailing since staff was evaluating traffic control signals on Lee at Elmore. She conveyed the sidewalk project was started in September and was still not completed. She was not at the meeting for Lee residents but was aware that many issues were discussed. Since the street has approximately 1,000 cars a day, at an average of 36 miles per hour, she believed it was a new situation with a crosswalk. She said she spoke with Mr. Schiller about the MUTCD warrants and raised the fact that concerns existed with the access for a brand new crosswalk, the new sidewalks, more car volume, and coming from two approaches, which were blind hills. As she understood it, Lee residents who were opposed to the sidewalks were concerned about safety and the close proximity to the traffic. She found it difficult to look at a statistically sound sampling for only one day for one month. She said no indication in the MUTCD manual addresses intersections with two blind hills and she did not need a manual to tell her that it was not a safe situation, commenting as the chairman had, indicating that stop signs were to protect the right of way. She commented motorists would not see the white striped lines for the pedestrian walkway.

Discussion followed as to who Mr. Schiller and Ms. Fregeau believed notices were sent to and those who did not receive notices.

**Chairman Johnson** explained the warrants were not close to being warranted and the main reason for this meeting was to report back the findings for the traffic count. However, additional signage could be provided.

Responding to Chairman Johnson's question, Mr. Schiller indicated that not quite enough pedestrian traffic would qualify for an all-way stop sign, but at the same time, noted that the study was cut short and there could have been a higher pedestrian count. He personally felt there was a large volume of pedestrians in the area of discussion, as he drove the area on a daily basis. Mr. Schiller offered to have staff provide a pedestrian count, but also explained a gap analysis would not be required to get a pure pedestrian count.

**Mr. Schiller** discussed the warrants for a four-way stop sign at Fairmount and 59<sup>th</sup> Streets as an example, explaining it was due to the high volume of pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

**Mr. Kren** indicated other situations similar to the discussion at hand existed, citing Florence Avenue and the commuters walking from the train between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Consideration had to be taken into those types of pedestrian counts. He asked if a format for pedestrian counts was previously reviewed some years ago, i.e., the sidewalk matrix, wherein Mr. Schiller explained about four years ago data was collected but never moved forward. Mr. Schiller explained the threshold was going to be increased to require crossing guards, at the time. However, the Village did not have the resources or ability to hire the necessary crossing guards.

**Mr. Kren** raised the fact that State law requires motorists to yield to pedestrians in a designated crosswalk; however, he expressed concern that more and more motorists disregard stop signs and cross walks. Additionally, he asked how the Village was planning to control the site and suggested notifying the public that disregard for yielding to designated crosswalks could result in a citation.

**Sgt. Nehls** indicated some of his officers spent time on the 1900 block of Elmore on May 28, June 4 and June 5, 2003 between 7:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. and issued two citations and seven verbal warnings. The counts and speeds were low.

**Ms. Fregeau** responded she was not advocating a stop sign at Lee and Elmore. She was more concerned about keeping promises to people and indications which were given at the time the sidewalk was proposed. She believed communication with residents should continue, but she also conveyed if speeding was occurring in her own neighborhood at 9:30 p.m. at night, consistent enforcement was necessary. Ms. Fregeau discussed the construction occurring in her neighborhood which might affect traffic counts. She asked to align sidewalks at the crosswalk.

**Mr. Bill Bollenberg**, 5473 Bending Oaks Place, as a housekeeping matter, he explained that the Village cannot have a crosswalk across Bending Oaks Place on the north and south sides of Elmore Avenue because it only goes to the south. Bending Oaks travels to the north. He believed the crosswalks were not in character with the neighborhood of Bending Oaks Place and Court. He could see connecting the two sidewalks across Elmore because they run on an angle, but was not really in favor of it due to the nature of where the sidewalks were located on Elmore. The issue was that numerous cross-walks existed across Elmore by placing the sidewalk on only one side of the street. Mr. Bollenberg believed the amount of foot traffic which crossed Bending Oaks Courts and Place at Elmore was fairly insignificant resident tended to walk out of their driveway to cross the street. The crosswalk across Bending Oaks Place would be very difficult to negotiate because of the foliage on Knollwood. Motorists would have to pull into the crosswalk in order to make a turn.

**Mr. Bollenberg** also felt the counts were low and asked if school children were counted, wherein Mr. Schiller reported they were. Mr. Bollenberg estimated approximately 35 children waited for the bus, with an additional seven to eight parents. He believed the counts should be higher. If crosswalks were to be installed, he asked why Challen Place was not considered and if a crosswalk was not to be considered there, south of Elmore, then there was no reason to have one at Bending Oaks Place, south of Elmore or Bending Oaks Court, north of Elmore.

After some clarification by Mr. Bollenberg, Mr. Schiller explained Challen Place was not considered due to the street not having two side streets that line up with a crosswalk which would cross north to south. While not a four-way intersection, it created the east side of one leg and the west side of the other in a direct north/south line. Therefore,

residents walking down either Bending Oaks Place or Court had the ability to go up the street without crossing the road, cross at Elmore, cross again across Elmore, and get to a designated bus stop with a clear line of sight and traffic gaps.

**Mr. Bollenberg** believed having a crosswalk across Bending Oaks Court or Place from east to west was not seen as a solution.

**Ms. Fregeau** asked if Mr. Bollenberg's suggestion was more for the cars to recognize the crosswalk coming off the blind hill or for traffic calming, wherein Mr. Schiller explained crosswalks were for both purposes.

For the record, Chairman Johnson proceeded to read two email sent to the Village, the first from Mr. Don Wade, 5402 Challen Place dated June 5, 2003, and the second email from Ms. Jill Smart, 5240 Challen Place, dated June 6, 2003.

**Mr. Dan Burgess**, 5409 Benton Avenue, has a co-worker in the area of discussion but felt crosswalks were a waste of time and motorists would not yield to pedestrians in crosswalks. He favored more "Yield to Pedestrian" signs and to alter the public's mind set.

**Mr. Bollenberg** encouraged the Village to control their rights-of-ways at intersections through vegetation clipping and making residents aware of the issue.

**Chairman Johnson** agreed it was an issue and encouraged Mr. Bollenberg to contact the Village if sign visibility was obstructed by vegetation. Chairman Johnson was also in favor of holding another study if the commissioners felt the study was off by some figures.

**MR. KREN MOVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL TO INSTALL ENHANCED CROSSWALKS ON LEE AVENUE AT THE SOUTH SIDE OF ELMORE AND ON ELMORE, CROSSING ON THE WEST BY BENDING OAKS PLACE. THE OTHER TWO CROSSWALKS AT BENDING OAKS PLACE AND BENDING OAKS COURT TO BE BARRED CROSSINGS.**

**MR. CARQUIST SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**Mr. Kren** stated so many intersections existed, especially those going to the handicap ramps, that it becomes difficult to make a decision as where to stop or start. Many traffic counts could be held at numerous locations which would supercede the intersection of discussion.

**Ms. Fregeau** raised a question about a bus stop pad created at Bending Oaks and Elmore (south side of the street), wherein Chairman Johnson believed the recommendation for the striped crosswalk at Bending Oaks and Elmore was due to confusion in the intersection, the existing bus stop, and the fact that significant pedestrian traffic was in that area.

However, Mr. Schiller clarified that staff did review the issue and explained that by statute, an implied crosswalk exists at every intersection. Staff, by right, will stripe the barred crosswalk without any necessary recommendations which provides detailed delineation that a crosswalk exists. A designated crosswalk, however, indicates a higher volume of pedestrian traffic to protect motorists and pedestrians, which was the type of markings proposed for the intersection.

**Chairman Johnson** asked the Commission secretary for a roll call on the motion.

**Roll Call:**           **AYE: Commissioners Kren, Stapleton, Thurston, Wendt, Yeksigian, Carlquist, Chairman Johnson**

**NAY: None.**

**Motion Carried: 7:0**

**Chairman Johnson** suggested that staff provide a follow-up pedestrian study as well as a review of traffic warranted signs since the weather was improving and Lee Avenue was nearly completed. Commissioners and staff agreed. Mr. Schiller mentioned he has received calls about increased weekend traffic and offered to collect weekend counts.

Discussion followed on whether the ADT figures sounded reasonable at 600 to 700 cars in a 24-hour period, wherein the chairman felt there was not a lot of traffic but asked residents of their observation.

**Ms. Fregeau**, 1918 Elmore Avenue, discussed she is out and about in the neighborhood and traffic did appear light. However, reasons did exist for it. For example, in the fall some blocks were blocked and now there was construction. She discussed the figures for Lee Avenue some years ago when the sidewalks came in, were over 1,000 cars.

Discussion followed on the low bypass traffic on Belmont Avenue, wherein staff clarified the bypass was an appropriate use of the roadway, i.e., from a road to a residential road, to a collector, to an arterial road. Ms. Fregeau believes the figures were misleading.