



CITY OF
EAST GRAND RAPIDS

750 LAKESIDE DRIVE SE • EAST GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49506

(616) 940-4817

www.eastgr.org

NOTICE

March 18, 2020

Dear Resident:

The City of East Grand Rapids evaluates the pavement condition rating (Paser) of all City streets to prioritize street project funding based on asset management principles in alignment with capital improvement planning. Argentina Drive between Pinecrest Avenue and Plymouth Road is currently rated between a Paser 2 and 3 (poor condition) which prioritizes this street segment as a candidate for grind and resurfacing project funding for this spring. As part of the project planning process, the City completes or reviews utility assessments as well as other variables including, but not limited to, traffic engineering studies, accident history and reported resident concerns. The ideal time to address any potential changes to a street segment is during a planned street project.

Normal protocol for the City is to host an open house for residents along a street to meet with staff and consultants to learn about and view plans as well as to ask questions in advance of City Commission consideration. Due to the restrictions in place with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic the City is not able to host a large public open house gathering at this time. With this change, this notice sent to you has been intentionally detailed to provide all information that would normally be provide at an open house event. Also included with this notice is the plan sheet for the proposed neighborhood mini traffic circle options. In lieu of a public open house, the City is still able to answer your questions and discuss the project. The City is open to in-person visits by appointment. Please call [616-940-4817](tel:616-940-4817) to meet with staff. If you would like to communicate questions via e-mail, please feel free to contact the following EGR staff members:

Doug La Fave: dlafave@eastgr.org

Brian Bigorowski: bbigorowski@eastgr.org

Dave Johnson: djohnson@eastgr.org

Enclosed with this informational notice is a project ballot/comment card provided to all residents within the impacted stretch of Argentina Drive. Please complete the card and e-mail a photo of it back to one of the staff members noted above, drop it off in the EGR drop box (main entrance vestibule at the Community Center/City Hall) or mail it back to the City:

City of East Grand Rapids
DPW Admin/Engineering
750 Lakeside Drive
East Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Please complete and return the project ballot/comment card by April 10, 2020. All project ballot/comment cards will be included with materials to the City Commission for their consideration at the April 20, 2020 meeting. Please only send one card per address/household only. Due to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, the April 20, 2020 meeting may be cancelled or postponed. All public meeting agendas and materials are available via the City website at: <https://www.eastgr.org/111/Agendas-Minutes>

Project background and information:

In recent years the City of East Grand Rapids has conducted several traffic engineering studies with respect to traffic safety on Argentina Drive between Breton Road and Plymouth Road based on reported resident concerns. A summary of the studies is noted below:

- Argentina Drive carries approximately 700-800 vehicles on a weekday, with approximately 133-135 of those vehicles' trips occurring during both the morning and afternoon peak hours.
- The 85th percentile of vehicle speeds noted for each study for both directions of traffic from 2014-2019 are: 25 mph/26 mph, 25 mph/28 mph, 27 mph/27mph, 27 mph/27 mph, 31 mph/30 mph, 30mph/31 mph, 31 mph/28 mph.
- No reported accident crashes have occurred in the past five years on this street segment.

The traffic engineering industry standard utilized in setting the regulatory speed limit for a street uses the "85th percentile speed". The 85th percentile speed is defined as, "the speed at or below which 85 percent of all vehicles are observed to travel under free-flowing conditions past a monitored point." Another way to consider this is the speed at which only 15% of traffic violate on average. Traffic Engineers use the 85th percentile speed as a standard to set the speed limit at a safe speed, minimizing crashes and promoting uniform traffic flow along a corridor.

The speeds studies conducted from 2014-2019 at various locations along Argentina Drive indicate that the 85th percentile of vehicles are traveling within the conservative exceedance range allowance of 5mph over the set regulated speed, which is 25 mph. The exceedance range of the set regulated speed can range on the conservative end as noted at a 5mph and upwards to 7-8mph.

The four-legged intersection of Argentina Drive/San Lucia Drive is currently controlled with All-Way stop signs. This traffic control placement is not in accordance with appropriate traffic engineering standards. All-Way stop sign configurations should be placed when there are relatively equal volumes of traffic from the intersecting streets. Argentina averages 700-800 vehicles per day while San Lucia averages 400 vehicles per day north of Argentina and only 55 vehicles per day south of Argentina. This notes that the appropriate traffic control configuration should be stop/yield signs for north and south bound San Lucia while there should be no stop signs for east and west bound Argentina or a street configuration design alternative.

In planning for the Argentina Drive street construction project City staff recognized that 85th percentile of traffic has trended up to the conservative exceedance range allowance of 5mph at 30 and above at 31 mph as well as the traffic control All Way signage noted above. In looking at a combined approach for traffic calming and intersection issue, City staff and traffic/civil engineering consultants propose the construction of two neighborhood mini traffic circles as an alternate option to the status quo on Argentina Avenue.

A neighborhood mini traffic circle is a small circular, raised island placed in the center of a residential intersection to mitigate vehicle speeds. Unlike large roundabouts, traffic mini-circles focus more on controlling vehicle speeds and are not designed to handle higher traffic volumes.

Applications:

- Mini traffic circles are applied on local or collector streets (that experience speeding and/or a history of collisions)
- On two-lane collector streets, traffic mini-circles are typically applied when average daily traffic (ADT) is less than 5,000.
- Serve as an alternative for signalization or stop signs in a low volume, neighborhood context.
- At All-Way stops that are incorrectly placed to slow traffic.

Placement and Design Guidance:

- Installed at intersections and should be no less than 600 feet apart to maintain a reasonable speed throughout the street.
- Each approach to the traffic circle should be yield controlled.

- The center islands may be landscaped. The City of East Grand Rapids has a right-of-way landscaping policy.

Benefits:

- Reduces vehicular speeds and potential for crashes.
- Eliminates possibility of vehicle head-on collisions.
- Provides opportunities for aesthetic landscaping and storm water infiltration.
- Improves the pedestrian and bicycling environment.
- Facilitates safer bicycle movements through residential intersections.

Disadvantages:

- Can be confusing for some drivers if they are unfamiliar with circular intersections.

Pictures of Neighborhood mini traffic circles below:



If there are any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact the Department of Public Works at 616-940-4817.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during these unprecedented times.

Respectfully,

East Grand Rapids Department of Public Works