



CITY OF
EAST GRAND RAPIDS

750 LAKESIDE DRIVE SE • EAST GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49506

(616) 940-4817

www.eastgr.org

NOTICE

March 30, 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. Elmwood Drive between Lake Drive and Breton 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 (like the completed water main and sanitary sewer replacement and rehabilitation that has been completed) 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 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 option at the All Way Stop intersection of Elmwood Drive and Woodlawn Avenue. In lieu of a public open house, the City is still able to answer your questions and discuss the project. City staff is available to answer questions via phone or e-mail. To contact staff via phone, please call 616-940-4817 or if 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 500 feet from either direction or the Elmwood Woodlawn intersection. **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 5pm on April 13, 2020. All project ballot/comment cards will be included with materials to the City Commission for their potential 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 reported concerns of speeding and disobeying stop signs on Elmwood Drive between Lake Drive and adjacent to Woodlawn Avenue. A summary of the studies is noted below:

- Elmwood Drive carries approximately 2,300 vehicles traveling east and west-bound on a weekday.
- The 85th percentile of vehicle speeds noted for each study for both directions of traffic on Elmwood from 2017 were, 25mph/27mph and in 2018 were 26mph/27mph.
- No reported accident crashes have occurred in the past five years on this street segment.
- 10 citations have been issued for disobeying stop signs in the past five years at the All-Way stop signed intersection at Elmwood Drive and Woodlawn Avenue.

Speeding:

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 2017 and 2018 demonstrate that 85th percentile of vehicles are traveling at or 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 5 mph and upwards to 7-8 mph.

Intersection Traffic Control Devices/Signs:

The three-legged intersection of Elmwood Drive and Woodlawn Avenue 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. Elmwood Drive averages 2,300 vehicles per day while Woodlawn Avenue averages 270 per day between Maplewood Drive and Elmwood Drive. Improperly placed All-Way stop configurations have a low adherence to stop signs placed on the dominant street segment, in this case east and west-bound Elmwood Drive. The appropriate traffic control configuration should be stop/yield signs for at north-bound Woodlawn Avenue while there should be no stop signs for east and west bound Elmwood or there can be a street configuration design alternative consideration.

City staff and traffic/civil engineering consultants have looked at and provided for an alternative for the construction of a neighborhood mini traffic circle in lieu of the status quo or consideration to change signage.

A neighborhood mini traffic circle is a small circular, raised island placed in the center of a residential intersection to mitigate improper use of All-Way stops with the added benefit of lowering vehicle speeds on a street segment. Unlike large roundabouts, traffic mini-circles focus more on controlling right of way and 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