CITY OF GARDEN CITY  
Traffic Advisory Committee  
Meeting Agenda  
Monday, Dec 3, 2012  
5:30 p.m.

A. Call Meeting to Order:

B. Members Present:

C. Members Absent:

D. Others Present:

E. Approval of Minutes:

F. Summary of Current Projects:
   - US-50/83/400 and Schulman Avenue Improvements
   - South Main Street KLINK

G. Old Business:
   1. Spruce and Fleming Intersection Control
      - The visual narrowing markings recommended by the Board and approved by the Commission have been installed. Staff will monitor the intersection over the next year.
   2. Mary and Fleming Sight Issues
      - At the June meeting the Board discussed a perceived safety issue for Mary Street traffic at this intersection. The issue is sight distance for vehicles turning left onto Fleming Street (see attached exhibit). The Board agreed to revisit this issue after traffic patterns at this location had adjusted to the new GCHS location. Staff will have updated traffic counts available at the meeting.
A review of the accident history of the intersection shows one accident due to this sight issue over the past five years.

This sight issue is present on any four lane roadway where turning is permitted at four-leg intersections (i.e. Campus Drive, Fulton Street). Mary Street and Fleming is one of the City’s busier intersections of this type.

The traffic signal at the intersection of Mary Street and 3rd Street exhibits one way to alleviate the problem. This signal is configured to not allow conflicting traffic movements on Mary Street in one cycle, first showing green only to all westbound movements (including the left turn), then showing green only to all eastbound movements.

This configuration is less efficient than the current setup of a protected westbound left turn, followed by greens for both westbound and eastbound movements. Staff implemented this configuration at 3rd Street in an attempt to reduce accidents caused at least partially by geometric sight issues (hill) specific to that intersection.

The best solution would be to widen Mary Street to five lanes at the intersection, including a dedicated left turn lane. However, such a widening project is not currently funded.

H. New Business:

3. Main Street Parking Requests

Alan Ashinhurst (The Women’s Clinic) has submitted two requests regarding the on-street parking in front of the clinic (see attached):

- Designate the area of Main Street between the entrance and exit to the clinic’s parking lot as “No Parking”. Mr. Ashinhurst believes vehicles parked in these two stalls create a sight issue for clients leaving the lot.

- Designate the area of Main Street in front of the clinic (currently signed as “One Hour Parking 8AM-6PM”) as a loading zone. Mr. Ashinhurst explained that these stalls are often used for longer periods than the permitted hour, and clients in need of close parking are unable to use these stalls.

This sight issue can be found throughout the community on roadways with on-street parking. Low-profile vehicles can have sight issues when exiting driveways and entrances, especially when trucks or SUVs occupy the on-street parking.
There are no unusual site conditions in this situation outside of the relatively high amount of traffic using the exit. Staff has requested the accident history at this location will have it available at the meeting.

The proposed parking restrictions would have minimal impacts to adjacent properties at this time.

Special parking restrictions such as “One Hour Parking” are enforced upon citizen complaint; the PD cannot dedicate resources to consistently monitor them. A “Loading Zone” designation would be similarly enforced.

4. Hagar Addition “Children at Play” Signs

The City has received a request for the City to install “CHILDREN AT PLAY” signs (see attached email) at the entrances to the Hagar Addition.

Staff has researched these signs extensively while responding to similar requests, and has found no publications or studies recommending these signs as an effective method to increase the safety of residential streets. In fact, almost all research and guidelines discourage the use of these signs – several examples are included in this packet.

Recently, the Board has been consistent in denying requests for these signs, citing the many arguments against them:

- They are not official warning signs and are not recognized by the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which the City is required by law to adhere to.
- The signs provide no clear and enforceable guidance to drivers.
- Studies have found that these signs do not affect driver behavior.
- As parents assume the signs will affect driver behavior, they can provide a false sense of security.
- The presence of these signs in some residential areas suggests that children are NOT present on streets without them.
- These signs can expose the government to liability.
- These signs are an unnecessary cost that can multiply as additional signs are requested.
• Many states have established policies stating they will not install these special warning signs. Kansas does not have a published policy that Staff is aware of. At a recent meeting of southwest Kansas city staffs, Public Works staff from Dodge City and Liberal indicated that those cities do not install these signs.

5. Hagar Addition Reduced Speed Limit

• Staff has also received a request to lower the speed limit on streets in the Hagar addition, or to install a speed limit sign.

• By statute, and as signed at the city limits, all streets in Garden City have a speed limit of 30 mph unless otherwise signed. This includes all residential streets aside from a few specials cases around the hospital, zoo, and parks that are signed 20 mph.

• Federal guidelines require that speed limits be set within 5 mph of the 85th percentile speed of free-flowing traffic. Staff has repeatedly found 30 mph to be an appropriate speed limit for residential streets throughout the community.

• Posting lower speed limits may slow a few people down, but the majority of traffic will continue to drive at the speed they feel appropriate. This creates two problems:
  
  ➢ A wider variation of speeds on the road, leading to more accidents.
  
  ➢ The perception that the police have created a “speed trap”.

• Staff conducted a speed study at two locations within the neighborhood; this study revealed 85th percentile speeds of 30 and 31 mph, which are appropriate for a residential street (attached).

• Where residents have concerns about traffic speeds, Staff has consistently found that police enforcement has been the most effective method of calming.

• If the Board would like to consider lowering the speed limit, Staff would recommend doing so for residential streets Citywide. Lowering the speed limits on specific streets on a case-by-case basis would set a precedent that would likely generate many similar requests, creating inconsistency around the community.

I. Additional Items for Discussion Only (No Formal Action Required):

6. Downtown/Main Street Traffic Configuration

• The City’s 2013 Connecting Link Project will involve a sealing of Main Street between Kansas and Fulton, presenting the opportunity to revisit the lane configuration.
• The downtown area currently is striped for four lanes of traffic, with the diagonal on-street parking stalls striped at a 35 degree angle. Larger vehicles parked in these areas often intrude into the outside lanes, creating a hazard for through traffic.

• The traffic volumes for Main Street through the downtown area could be carried by a single lane of through traffic in each direction and a center turning lane with little or no decrease in level of service.

• Moving to a three-lane section (similar to the attached exhibit) would also allow the diagonal parking to be striped at 45 degrees, allowing for approximately 20 more parking stalls.

J. Committee Member Observations:

1. Gloria Allen - Chairperson:

2. Jed Mayes – Vice-Chairperson:

3. Julie Christner:

4. Ron Hall:

5. Keith Collins:

6. Sgt. Paul Pauley:

K. Adjourn Meeting
Vehicle looking for gap in oncoming traffic to turn left and blocking view of opposing left turn.
To whom it may concern,

My son Brian was recently hit by a truck in the Hagar Addition area. I have requested additional signage in this area due to excessive children playing and riding bikes. There are no slow or caution signs around to warn people that don’t live in this area that children are everywhere and people need to be aware! We have high traffic especially on the weekends. I was told that the sign would give the children belief that they can play in the streets. This is not true, first of all the kids don’t read the signs and all the children are doing is going to each others houses to play and do homework with other after school. I firmly believe that these caution signs are very much needed at each entrance. Also I believe that the speed study that was recently conducted in this area should have been done on the weekend when the traffic is high. I would also like to see a reduced speed limit in this area or at least a speed limit sign. Thank you for your time and effort in this matter.

Very Concerned Parent,
Amanda Culbertson
Citizens in Garden City sometimes request that the City install “SLOW CHILDREN PLAYING” signs (or a variation) in residential areas. They assume that these signs will warn drivers that children may be present and in turn influence them to lower their speeds through these areas.

However, recent studies have shown that these signs actually do more harm than good:

- There is no evidence that these signs reduce driver speeds or prevent accidents.
- These signs do not give drivers any clear and enforceable guidance.
- The signs may create a false sense of security for children and parents, and may be perceived as promoting play in streets.
- Children can be present on any residential street and drivers should always be aware in these areas. Since it is not feasible to sign all streets, selective signage can send mixed messages.

These signs are not official traffic control devices recognized by the Federal Highway Administration, and their use is discouraged by local agencies.

### “SLOW CHILDREN PLAYING” SIGNS

![Image of SLOW CHILDREN PLAYING sign]

### OTHER SPECIAL WARNING SIGNS

The City also receives similar requests for signs warning drivers of deaf, blind, or autistic children that may be in a particular area.

![Image of BLIND CHILD AREA sign]

![Image of DEAF CHILD AREA sign]

These signs have the same problems as “SLOW CHILDREN PLAYING” signs. When the novelty of such a sign wears off, it does not attract the attention of drivers nor affects their behavior.

### REQUESTS FOR STOP SIGNS

Citizens concerned with speeding on their streets have also requested stop signs at nearby intersections in hopes that it will slow traffic.

- Stop signs are meant to control traffic at intersections where accident frequency, traffic volume, or sight distance warrant their presence.
- Studies have shown that stop signs installed in locations where they are not warranted tend to frustrate drivers and can actually increase traffic speeds around them.

### SPEED LIMITS FOR RESIDENTIAL STREETS

By ordinance, streets in Garden City have a speed limit of 30 mph unless signed otherwise. This includes the majority of residential streets.

Citizens will sometimes request that the speed limit be lowered on their street. Such an action presents two problems:

- Per Federal guidelines, speed limits are to be set within 5 mph of the 85th percentile speed of free-flowing traffic on a roadway. Speed studies have consistently shown 30 mph to be an appropriate speed limit on residential streets with this criteria.
- Lowering the speed limit typically does not affect the majority of speeders. Speeds significantly above the 85-percentile tend to remain at those levels regardless of speed limit adjustments.

### HOW TO ADDRESS SAFETY IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The most effective way to manage speeding on residential streets is through police enforcement. Citizens concerned with speeding on their streets should take note of the times and days when they observe the problem, and notify the Garden City Police Department (276-1300).

Parents should also educate their children on the dangers of playing in roadways and encourage them to use nearby City parks or playgrounds instead.
RESIDENTIAL TRAFFIC SAFETY

City Staff receives several requests from citizens each month to install signage or lower speed limits on their streets. This document looks at these requests from the traffic engineering perspective, and discusses the most effective means of maintaining safe roads in your neighborhood.

We hope you will find this informative and come away with a better understanding of residential traffic challenges. The safety of drivers and pedestrians on our residential streets is very important to the City of Garden City, and a partnership between government and citizens is the best way to achieve this.

TRAFFIC ADVISORY BOARD

The City’s citizen Traffic Advisory Board meets monthly to hear citizen requests regarding traffic and parking issues within the City. Requests can be made through the City’s Public Works Department. Staff will research the request and present the information at the next meeting, and the Board will make their recommendations to the City Commission.
or regulatory sign (except for NO PARKING signs) to avoid information overload and to allow for an improved driver response. When placing signs, care should be taken in relation to other signs to avoid sign clutter and to allow adequate motorist response. The MUTCD specifies a 76- by 76-centimeter (cm) (30- by 30-inch) sign size. However, it may be helpful to use a larger (91- by 91-cm [36- by 36-inch]) sign on higher speed or wider arterial streets.

![Image of pedestrian crossing sign](image)

**Figure 10-5. Photo. This pedestrian crossing sign is fluorescent yellow green (FYG), allowing it to be more visible.**

At the actual location of the pedestrian crossing, the pedestrian crossing sign (W11-2) is used but supplemented with a black-on-yellow diagonally downward pointing arrow plaque (W16-7p). This combination of pedestrian crossing sign and supplemental arrow plaque is intended to indicate the pedestrian crossing location.

The Playground sign (W15-1) may be used in advance of a designated children's play area to warn motorists of a potentially high concentration of young children. This sign should generally not be needed on local or residential streets where children are expected. Furthermore, play areas should not be located adjacent to high-speed major or arterial streets, or if so, should be fenced off to prevent children from darting into the street.

According to the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) publication, *Traffic Control Devices Handbook*, CAUTION—CHILDREN AT PLAY or SLOW CHILDREN signs should not be used since they may encourage children to play in the street and may encourage parents to be less vigilant. Such signs also provide no guidance to motorists as to a safe speed, and the sign has no legal basis for determining what a motorist should do. Furthermore, motorists should expect children to be at play in all residential areas, and the lack of signing on some streets may indicate otherwise. The signs are unenforceable and act as another roadside obstacle to pedestrians and errant motorists. Use of these nonstandard signs may also imply that the involved jurisdiction approves of streets as playgrounds, which may result in the jurisdiction being vulnerable to tort liability.

School Warning signs include the advance school crossing signs (S1-1), the school crossing sign (S2-1), SCHOOL BUS STOP AHEAD (S3-1) sign, and others. School-related traffic control devices are discussed in detail in part VII ("Traffic Controls for School Areas") of MUTCD. A reduced speed limit sign with flashing lights can be installed ahead of the actual crossing (see figure 10-6). The lights are set
Question/Request: CHILDREN AT PLAY SIGNS

The Traffic Operations Department frequently receives requests from parents and homeowners associations for “CHILDREN AT PLAY” signs in residential areas. These requests stem from concerns for the safety of their children in the street and near their homes. Unfortunately, these requests are based on a false belief that these signs actually provide protection. Citizens fail to realize that these signs are deceiving and ineffective.

For this reason, the City of Fort Collins Traffic Operations Department will not install, or allow to be installed, Children at Play signs. These signs have not been shown to increase driver awareness and are not recognized as a standard highway sign by the Federal Highway Administration. Studies have shown no evidence that these signs prevent pedestrian accidents or decrease the vehicle speeds. Children at play signs also give parents and children a false sense of security and can be misinterpreted to mean that it’s okay to play in the street. It is important that parents teach their children about the dangers of playing near or in the street and should discourage them from doing so.

Another consideration with these signs is that nearly every street has children on it and would require a sign to be posted on every block. This is not only impractical but would render the signs meaningless. Streets with no signs might also imply that no children live there and could lead to unsafe driving on those particular streets. Warning signs are effective tools if used sparingly to warn motorists of uncommon hazards that are not apparent to drivers. The use of unnecessary signs generally promotes a disrespect for all signs. To address pedestrian safety, specific warning signs for school zones, pedestrian crossings, playgrounds and other recreational areas are used where they are truly warranted.

The City of Fort Collins Traffic Operations Department does provide “Slow Down in our Neighborhood” yard signs that can be obtained from the Traffic Operations Department. These are for residents to place in their yard as a reminder to drivers. Yard signs are free of charge and can be picked up at the Traffic Operations Department Facility at 626 Linden Street on Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
2-Lane Complete Street Concept
Central Business District