

156 East First Street
New Richmond, WI 54017
Ph 715-246-4268 Fax 715-246-7129
www.newrichmondwi.gov

May 7, 2015

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE:

**Ron Volkert
Jim Zajkowski
Craig Kittel**

There will be a meeting of the Public Works Committee on Wednesday, May 13, 2015, at 4:30 p.m. in the ED Lab of the Civic Center, 156 East First Street, New Richmond.

Agenda:

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Adoption of Agenda**
- 3. Approval of minutes from the previous meeting, April 8, 2015**

Old Business

- 4. Sidewalk Construction/Repair Policy**
- 5. Dakota Avenue Bike Route**

New Business

- 6. Compost Site**
- 7. Parking/Curb Modifications at Library**
- 8. "Children at Play" Sign**
- 9. Alley Between Knowles & Minnesota**
- 10. Temporary Driveway Access to County/ESR Building**
- 11. Downtown Wayfinding Proposal**
- 12. Communications and Miscellaneous**
- 13. Adjournment**

**Jeremiah Wendt,
Director of Public Works**

A majority of the members of the New Richmond City Council may be present at the above meeting.

Pursuant to State ex rel. Badke v. Greendale Village Board, 173 Wis. 2d 553, 494 N.W. 2nd 408 (1993) such attendance may be considered a meeting of the City Council and must be noticed as such, although the Council will not take action at this meeting.

Copies:

Fred Horne
Jim VanderWyst
Northwest Community Communications

Mark Samelstad
The News
City of New Richmond Website

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 8, 2015

Members Present: Craig Kittel and Ron Volkert

Members Absent: Jim Zajkowski

Others Present: Jeremiah Wendt, Mike Darrow, and Jeanne Bergman

Craig Kittel called the meeting to order.

Craig Kittel moved to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Ron Volkert, and carried.

Craig Kittel moved to approve the minutes from the January 19, 2015 meeting, seconded by Ron Volkert, and carried.

Sidewalk Snow Removal Policy

At the last meeting, the Committee agreed to use door hangers, instead of mailing certified letters, to property owners who were in violation of the snow removal policy. Changes to improve the door hanger have been made. On advice from Nick Vivian, City Attorney, we will not be including any liability language. Door hangers will be used primarily along Knowles Avenue. Residential complaints will be addressed as they come in.

Dakota Avenue Bike Route

Jeremiah Wendt gave an overview of the north and south bike route layout, design guidelines, and proposed signage. In May, we hope to hear if we are the recipient of a St. Croix Foundation Grant for this project. These funds, if awarded, will help cover the cost of signage. Discussion followed on designating some of the streets on the northside bike route as "No Parking". Jeremiah will inform those affected by the parking restrictions. Ron Volkert moved to proceed by notifying the community of the route, and to move forward with painting, pavement markings, and implementation of the bike route plan provided no significant negative feedback is received, second by Craig Kittel, and carried.

Urban Non-Point Source Planning Project Contract

The City received a DNR grant in 2014 for this project. The grant was for an amount up to \$84,500 with matching funds from the City in the amount of \$40,890. Staff has secured funding through the STH 64 Corridor Communities Stormwater/Wastewater Coalition with matching funds so the project can be completed with no out-of-pocket expense to the City. Staff has developed a contract with MSA Professional Services (who is providing services to the coalition) to create a model for stormwater runoff and pollutant reduction along with a Best Management Practice (BMP) toolbox. Ron Volkert moved to approve the amended contract, seconded by Craig Kittel, and carried.

Sidewalk Construction/Repair Policy

The committee reviewed the proposed amendment to *Ordinance 70-3 Sidewalk Construction and Repair*. Key highlights of the revised ordinance include:

- Costs of new and replacement sidewalk would be split between the City and the adjacent property owner
- Assessments could be repaid in one lump sum, or over a set time period with an interest rate to be determined by the City

- A plan for sidewalk construction and replacement would be developed annually by the Public Works Committee and submitted to the Common Council for approval
- Multi-use trails are not included in the policy, as staff did not find this to be standard practice

Considerable discussion took place on the following:

-Costs

-Repayment options

-Interest rates

-The need for an annual plan and/or policy for improvements

-Who should pay for the improvements

-Pros and cons of the homeowner vs the City making the improvements

Ron Volkert moved to table the Sidewalk Construction/Repair Policy for further review, seconded by Craig Kittel, and carried.

2015-2016 Street & Utility Improvements

Jeremiah updated the Committee on the design contract with SEH for the 2015 - 2016 Street and Utility Improvements projects. He suggested we have three different contracts as stated below:

-Design Services contract for all projects

-Construction Services contract for the scope of work to be done in 2015

-Construction Services contract for the scope of work to be done in 2016

Staff would like SEH to have a separate contract with the Town of Richmond on the 175th Avenue project to protect all parties involved. Jeremiah reported that if SEH prepares the Urban Funding Grant application for the North 4th Street project, they will be ineligible to design the project.

Communication and Miscellaneous

None

Craig Kittel moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ron Volkert, and carried.

Minutes submitted by Jeanne Bergman



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TO: Public Works Committee

FROM: Jeremiah Wendt, Public Works Director

DATE: May 7, 2015

RE: Sidewalk Construction/Repair Policy

Background

Based on feedback from the Committee at the January 19, 2015 meeting, City Staff and the City Attorney have drafted revisions to Ordinance 70-3 related to sidewalk construction and repair. The revised ordinance is attached to this memo, showing the proposed changes from the existing ordinance. Key highlights of the revised ordinance, requested by the Committee include:

- Costs of new and replacement sidewalk would be split between the City and the adjacent property owner
- Assessments can be repaid in one lump sum, or over a set time period with an interest rate to be determined by the City
- A plan for sidewalk construction and replacement would be developed annually by the Public Works Committee and submitted to the Common Council for approval
- Multi-use trails are not included in the policy, as staff did not find this to be standard practice

If this revision to the ordinance is recommended for approval by the Public Works Committee, it would be put on the agenda for consideration by the Common Council.

Sec. 70-3. - Sidewalk construction and repair.

(a)

Procedures. Not less than annually, the Public Works Committee will make a recommendation to the Common Council for the construction of new sidewalks, and the repair/replacement of existing sidewalks. The Common Council may determine that sidewalks be constructed and establish the width, determine the material and prescribe the method of construction of standard sidewalks pursuant to this section.

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(b)

Cost of new construction. If the Common Council determines that a new sidewalk shall be constructed in a location where no sidewalk currently exists, the costs of the sidewalk construction shall be shared between the City and the abutting property owner, with each entity paying 50% of the cost to construct the sidewalk. The cost to construct the sidewalk will be determined each year based on current market pricing, and applied on a per lineal foot basis when calculating the abutting property owner's share. The City will construct the sidewalk, and the City Clerk-Treasurer shall bill 50% of the cost thereof (as established in paragraph b) to the Property Owner. The property owner shall have the option to pay the bill in one lump sum or to have it placed upon the tax roll as a special tax against said lot or parcel of land, to be repaid over 10 years at an annual interest rate of 6%. The property owner shall be responsible for the payment of new sidewalk construction, repair or reconstruction or curb and gutter and shall pay said costs in accordance with the terms and policies of the Common Council of the City.

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(c)

Repair or replacement. Pursuant to Wis. Stats. § 66.0907, the Common Council may order at any time property owners to repair or remove and replace any sidewalk abutting their property which is unsafe, defective or insufficient, or which is damaged by the acts of the property owner or his agents.

(1) If the property owner complies with the City's order, the City shall reimburse the property owner for 50% of the cost of the sidewalk project at the lineal foot rate as established in paragraph b.

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(2) If the property owner shall fail to so repair or remove and replace such sidewalk within 20 days after service of the notice provided in Wis. Stats. § 66.0907(3)(c), the Common Council or its designee shall repair or construct such sidewalk and the City Clerk-Treasurer shall enter bill the total 50% of the cost thereof (as established in paragraph b) to the Property Owner. The property owner shall have the option to pay the bill in one lump sum or to have it placed upon the tax roll as a special tax against said lot or parcel of land, to be repaid over 10 years at an annual interest rate of 6%.

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If an emergency situation exists which is caused by a sidewalk in need of repair, the Common Council or its designee shall immediately direct the property owner to immediately make repairs. If the property owner shall fail to repair such sidewalk within the required period, the Common Council shall make the necessary repairs and the City Clerk-Treasurer shall enter the total cost thereof on the tax roll as a special tax against said parcel.

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(e)

~~(14)~~

~~Minor repairs. Nothing in this section shall apply to minor repairs, the cost of which does not exceed \$100.00; such repairs may be made at the direction of the Council without notice, and the cost thereof may be charged to the abutting property owner in the same manner as provided in this section for major repairs will be borne by the City.~~

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(c)

Permit. No person shall hereafter lay, remove, replace or repair any public sidewalk within the City unless he is under contract with the City to do such work or has obtained a permit therefor from the Street Superintendent or his designee at least seven days before work is proposed to be undertaken. No fee shall be charged for such permits. Such a permit shall be issued upon a showing that there will be compliance with all applicable, laws, standards and ordinances.

(d) ~~(f)~~

~~*Nonconforming sidewalks.* No sidewalk which shall be constructed contrary to the provisions of this section shall be considered a legal sidewalk and the same may be ordered to be replaced with a legal sidewalk and with one that is in conformity with this section, the same as if no sidewalk whatever had been built or constructed in the place where any such sidewalk is located.~~

Sidewalk specifications.

(1)

General. Concrete sidewalk construction shall meet the specifications and provisions set forth in this section and shall be constructed in locations and to line and grade as established by the City.

(2)

Subgrade. Subgrade shall be two inches of sand fill, thoroughly and uniformly compacted and brought to correct grade placing of concrete and thoroughly wet down immediately before concrete is placed. Soft, porous and unsuitable subgrade material shall be removed and replaced with sand or other satisfactory material, and the subgrade shall be thoroughly and uniformly compacted and moistened immediately before the concrete is placed. On embankments, the subgrade shall extend at least one foot beyond each edge of the sidewalk.

(3)

Concrete. The minimum quantity of cement per cubic yard shall be six sacks of 94 pounds each. Concrete shall be mixed for at least one minute. Gravel shall be of good quality and washed. Concrete shall test 3,000 pounds compression in 28 days.

(4)

Forms. Concrete shall be placed in straight forms of wood or metal of sufficient strength to resist springing, tipping or other displacement during the process of depositing and

consolidating the concrete. Concrete shall be placed in the forms on a moist subgrade, deposited just above the finished grade and consolidated and spaded sufficiently to bring the mortar to the surface and to prevent honeycombing. It shall then be struck off level with the top of the forms and finished with wooden flats. Forms shall be securely fastened, staked, braced and held firmly to required line and shall be sufficiently tight to prevent leakage of mortar, and all forms shall remain in place for 24 hours after pour.

(5)

Jointing, floating and finishing. Soon after screening and while the concrete is still plastic, the surface shall be floated with wood, cork or metal floats or by a finishing machine. At all places where the sidewalk intersects another sidewalk or curbline, a one-half inch expansion joint shall be placed. Transverse expansion joints of one-half inch thick and four inches wide and five feet long or premolded material shall be located every 30 feet. Sidewalks must be marked off to make blocks five-foot square and be at right angles to the parallel lines. Any new sidewalk adjoining an old sidewalk or a sidewalk which abuts curb and gutter shall have one-half by four-inch expansion joints of premolded material.

(6)

Slope. All forms must be approved by the Street Superintendent or designee before concrete is poured. To provide adequate drainage, the sidewalk shall slope toward the curb at a minimum rate of one-fourth inch per foot of width of sidewalk. All joints and edges shall be finished with a one-fourth inch radius edging tool. Sidewalks shall be constructed within the limits of the street, and unless otherwise specifically indicated, there shall be a one-foot strip of street property left between the property line and the edge of the sidewalk.

(7)

Width and thickness. Residential walks shall be 4½ feet in width and not less than four inches thick, except within driveway approaches where the minimum thickness shall be six inches, provided that walks in residential areas may be repaired or replaced to a width not less than the existing width. Sidewalks in front of commercial or industrial establishments shall have a width as determined by the Common Council and be five inches thick, except within driveway approaches where the minimum thickness shall be seven inches.

(8)

Finishing. The concrete shall be struck off true to grade, finished smooth and given a broom finish in transverse direction. Edges and joints shall be given a finish with a one-quarter inch radius edging tool. Dry cement shall not be spread on a wet surface to take up excess water. Finishing operations shall be delayed until water has disappeared. No tool marks shall be left on exposed surfaces. In case of rain, the walk shall be covered to protect the surface from being damaged. Walks shall be kept free from all traffic at normal temperatures for 48 hours and in cold weather (below 50 degrees Fahrenheit) for 96 hours.

(9)

Curing and drying. As soon as any of the concrete work herein before mentioned has been finished and hardened sufficiently to prevent excessive marring of the surface, it shall be cured and protected against rapid drying. Failure to comply with this requirement shall be deemed sufficient cause for suspension of the work. Curing shall be accomplished by the impervious coating, wet fabric or paper methods. For impervious coating or membrane curing, only those materials meeting requirements of ASTM Spec. C156-44T, "Method of Test for Efficiency of Materials for Curing Concrete" shall be used. Said specifications are hereby adopted by reference as if fully set forth herein.

(10)

Cold weather requirements for forms. When the temperature is less than 40 degrees Fahrenheit, all concrete placed in the forms shall have a temperature between 50 degrees Fahrenheit and 70 degrees Fahrenheit and shall meet the requirements as per Wisconsin Department of Transportation specifications for cold weather concrete.

~~(14)~~

~~*Minor repairs.* Nothing in this section shall apply to minor repairs, the cost of which does not exceed \$400.00; such repairs may be made at the direction of the Council without notice, and the cost thereof may be charged to the abutting property owner in the same manner as provided in this section for major repairs.~~

(e)

~~*Repair or replacement.* Pursuant to Wis. Stats. § 66.0907, the Common Council may order at any time property owners to repair or remove and replace any sidewalk which is unsafe, defective or insufficient, or which is damaged by the acts of the property owner or his agents. If the property owner shall fail to so repair or remove and replace such sidewalk within 20 days after service of the notice provided in Wis. Stats. § 66.0907(3)(e), the Common Council or its designee shall repair or construct such sidewalk and the City Clerk-Treasurer shall enter the total cost thereof upon the tax roll as a special tax against said lot or parcel of land. If an emergency situation exists which is caused by a sidewalk in need of repair, the Common Council or its designee shall immediately direct the property owner to immediately make repairs. If the property owner shall fail to repair such sidewalk within the required period, the Common Council shall make the necessary repairs and the City Clerk-Treasurer shall enter the total cost thereof on the tax roll as a special tax against said parcel.~~

(f)

~~*Nonconforming sidewalks.* No sidewalk which shall be constructed contrary to the provisions of this section shall be considered a legal sidewalk and the same may be ordered to be replaced with a legal sidewalk and with one that is in conformity with this section, the same as if no sidewalk whatever had been built or constructed in the place where any such sidewalk is located.~~



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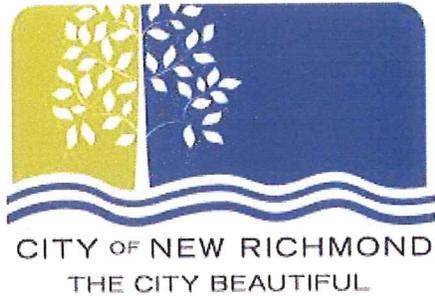
TO: Public Works Committee

FROM: Jeremiah Wendt, Public Works Director

DATE: May 7, 2015

RE: Compost Site

Staff will provide an update on usage of the compost site so far in the 2015 season.



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TO: Public Works Committee

FROM: Jeremiah Wendt, Public Works Director

DATE: May 7, 2015

RE: Parking/Curb Modifications at Library

Background

Public Works staff, in conjunction with Library staff, is proposing modifications to the sidewalks/curb and gutter adjacent to the library that would accomplish the following:

- Replace concrete panels at the existing handicapped parking space to maintain ADA compliance.
- Create one additional handicapped parking space.
- Replace the sidewalk to First Street with a handicapped ramp.

Recommendation

Staff have located the utilities in this area, and with the approval of the Public Works Committee, would propose to make these changes in the next two weeks. Detailed plans will be discussed at the meeting.



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TO: Public Works Committee
FROM: Jeremiah Wendt, Public Works Director
DATE: May 7, 2015
RE: Children at Play Sign

Background

A resident called to request a "Children at Play" sign on Cypress Trail, due to concerns about volume and speed of traffic in the area. Staff has researched the issue, and attached a 2007 study from the Wisconsin DOT that addresses this specific item.

DOT, the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE), and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) do not recommend installation of this type of sign because "such signs do not give clear and enforceable guidance to drivers, provide a false sense of security to parents and children that may increase risk, expose the government to liability, give the false impression that areas without such signs do not have children, represent an unnecessary cost that then propagates as additional signs are requested and violate the principle that signage should be based on engineering, not political, decision making."

Recommendation

Based on the references above, staff does not recommend installation of "Children at Play" signs. However, we feel that it is a policy decision that should be addressed by the committee.



Effectiveness of “Children at Play” Warning Signs

Prepared for
Bureau of Highway Operations
Traffic Engineering Section, Traffic Design Unit

Prepared by
CTC & Associates LLC
WisDOT Research & Library Unit
September 25, 2007

Transportation Synthesis Reports are brief summaries of currently available information on topics of interest to WisDOT staff throughout the department. Online and print sources for TSRs include NCHRP and other TRB programs, AASHTO, the research and practices of other transportation agencies, and related academic and industry research. Internet hyperlinks in TSRs are active at the time of publication, but changes on the host server can make them obsolete. To request a TSR, e-mail research@dot.state.wi.us or call (608) 261-8198.

Request for Report

WisDOT is engaged in an effort to reevaluate and update its policies regarding roadside warning signs related to children, such as “Children at Play,” “Blind Child,” “Deaf Child,” etc. We were asked to review research on the effectiveness of these types of signs to better ground WisDOT’s policy decision.

Summary

There is no evidence that special warning signs of this sort reduce driver speeds or crash rates. This is the unanimous conclusion of the many credible sources we located on this topic. This claim is supplemented by a number of often-cited “common sense” observations that such signs do not give clear and enforceable guidance to drivers, provide a false sense of security to parents and children that may increase risk, expose the government to liability, give the false impression that areas without such signs do not have children, represent an unnecessary cost that then propagates as additional signs are requested and violate the principle that signage should be based on engineering, not political, decision making.

These arguments are used most frequently against Children at Play signs, and many of them—such as the arguments that CAP signs encourage playing in the street and that if in one location with children they should properly be in all locations—do not apply to Deaf Child, Blind Child, Handicapped Child or Autistic Child signs. These latter signs receive much less explicit discussion in the sources we located.

The **National Research and Guidelines** section of this TSR presents positions on child-related traffic warning signs with papers by U.S. DOT, FHWA, NCHRP and the Institute of Transportation Engineers. Though these all discourage the use of such signs, none of them cites specific research demonstrating that these signs are ineffective, and one source, the ITE *Design and Safety of Pedestrian Facilities* entry below, implies that no such studies exist, stating that “No accident-based studies have been able to determine the effectiveness of warning signs.”

State and Local Research and Practices contains a brief representative sampling of state and local positions on this topic. While many areas make use of these signs, we located no explicit defenses on

engineering grounds for their use. A common theme is the ongoing struggle to explain to members of the public that their requests for these types of signs are based on faulty assumptions about their effectiveness.

Many of the sources we located refer generically to multiple “studies” that have shown special warning signs to be ineffective, but despite extensive research we were unable to identify any specific projects meeting this description.

National Research and Guidelines

FHWA Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (2000)

http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno-millennium_06.14.01.htm

A search of the MUTCD found no instances of “CAP,” “watch for children,” “slow children,” “blind child” or “deaf.” Related guidance includes the following:

- From Section 2C.02, Application of Warning Signs
(<http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/HTM/2003r1/part2/part2c.htm#section2C02>): “The use of warning signs should be kept to a minimum as the unnecessary use of warning signs tends to breed disrespect for all signs.”
- From Section 2H.03, Regulatory and Warning Signs
(<http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/HTM/2003r1/part2/part2h.htm#section2H03>): “All regulatory and warning signs installed on public roads and streets within recreational and cultural interest areas shall conform to the requirements of Chapters 2A, 2B, and 2C” (the chapters on general, regulatory and warning signs).
- CAP or other message signs are not specifically prohibited as long as they conform to the standard shape (diamond) and colors (black letters on yellow background) and as long as no symbols are used. Some state-specific MUTCD supplements (such as in New York) present the option of a CAP or similar sign.

Institute of Transportation Engineers: Traffic Control Devices Handbook (2001)

Paper copies are available from the WisDOT library.

Page 444 states that “Agencies should avoid the use of CAUTION – CHILDREN AT PLAY or SLOW CHILDREN nonstandard signs since such signs may imply ‘that the involved jurisdiction approves of streets as playgrounds, which may result in the jurisdiction being vulnerable to tort liability.’” (This quote is reproduced and expanded in *FHWA Course on Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation: Pedestrian Signing and Pavement Markings* at http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/univcourse/swless14.htm.)

To determine the original research basis for these claims, we noted that this source cites ITE’s *Design and Safety of Pedestrian Facilities* (below) for the claim that using CAP signs “may result in the jurisdiction being vulnerable to tort liability,” whereas this latter source, in its comments on CAP signs, refers back to this one.

Page 444 also states that “there are conditions where selected traffic control devices may be considered, such as around parks, or conditions where children may have disabilities and drivers need to take extra care.” This implies that Blind/Deaf/Handicapped/Autistic Child signs may be appropriate in some circumstances, though no evidence is cited on the effectiveness of these devices.

ITE: Design and Safety of Pedestrian Facilities (1998)

http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/PED_BIKE/docs/designsafety.pdf

Chapter 4, Pedestrian and Motorist Signing, states (page 42 of the PDF): “No accident-based studies have been able to determine the effectiveness of warning signs. However, this is understandable because of the complex nature of events leading into each accident.” Of the 41 agencies responding to a questionnaire used in preparing this report, four reported that “all types of pedestrian-related signs and pavement stencils were helpful,” while some agencies “responded that they use these devices in the hope that they will provide some benefit to pedestrians.” (See page 39 of the PDF.) Also on page 39: “Signs should only be installed when they fulfill a need based on an engineering study or engineering judgment. In general, signs are often ineffective in modifying driver behavior, and overuse of signs breeds disrespect and diminishes effectiveness. Unnecessary signs and posts represent a hazard to errant motorists and may cause an

obstruction to pedestrians and bicyclists. Furthermore, unnecessary signs are a waste of taxpayer dollars, represent an ongoing maintenance cost, and are a source of visual blight.”

NCHRP Synthesis of Highway Practice No. 139: Pedestrians and Traffic-Control Measures (1988)

Paper copies are available from the WisDOT library.

This report, quoting an earlier version of the *Traffic Control Devices Handbook* than the one listed above, says “Nonuniform signs such as ‘CAUTION—CHILDREN AT PLAY,’ ‘SLOW—CHILDREN,’ or similar legends should not be permitted on any roadway at any time... the removal of any nonstandard signs should carry a high priority.”

NCHRP Synthesis of Highway Practice No. 186: Supplemental Advance Warning Devices (1993)

Paper copies are available from the WisDOT library.

This report gives examples of numerous related signs currently in use. A specific example of a CAP sign is given on pages 38-39: “The device is not considered effective, but installation of the sign satisfied parent and political leaders. Generally, the residents and homeowners’ organization must pay to have this sign installed. The use of this sign and its variations has been discouraged by many agencies because the message implies that it is acceptable for children to be playing in the street. It is nonstandard due to the use of a symbol not contained in the MUTCD.”

U.S. DOT Message Points (February 11, 2002)

Paper copies are available from the FHWA. Please send a request to Fred Ranck, fred.ranck@fhwa.dot.gov.

This communication states U.S. DOT’s position on CAP signs, which is to conform to MUTCD standards. Highlights include:

- Studies of the effectiveness of CAP signs by ITE, TRB and FHWA to date do not demonstrate a reduction in crashes involving children nor a reduction in speeds. (Note: ITE and FHWA staff were unaware of any studies.)
- From an ITE “traffic tips” series that answers residents’ commonly asked questions about signs, etc.: “...studies made in cities where (CAP) signs were widely posted in residential areas showed no evidence of having reduced pedestrian crashes or vehicle speed.” Several cities report that measured speeds on residential streets experienced no decrease after the installation of CAP warning signs. Further, several cities reported no decrease in the incidence of traffic crashes involving a child hit in the street after the installation of CAP warning signs.

Fred Ranck of FHWA also states that “Children at Play” is not an appropriate message for a warning sign; rather “Watch for Children” is an appropriate message consistent with other warning sign messages.

State and Local Research and Practices

We have included some comments on CAP and other signs by state governments; state DOT research programs, including tech transfer efforts; and communities. Most sources agreed with the information from national sources. We have presented such exceptions as we were able to locate. We did not find any references to research supporting the use of these signs or other cogent arguments against the national stance regarding these signs.

Multiple States

More or less identical arguments repeating the national points made above appear in a number of state DOT tech transfer documents, including Massachusetts

(http://www.ecs.umass.edu/baystate_roads/newsletters/2001_fall.pdf),
New Hampshire (<http://www.t2.unh.edu/spring02/pg4.html>), California
(www.techtransfer.berkeley.edu/newsletter/05-1/signs.php) and Minnesota
(<http://www.mnltap.umn.edu/publications/exchange/2001-1/atplay.html>).

This source states that “most collisions involving children are not actually caused by driver behavior (which this sign has very little demonstrated effect on), but by unsafe, erratic actions by children... The CHILDREN AT PLAY sign may well be understood by kids and families as a suggestion that it is acceptable for children to play in the street, and thus, by producing a false sense of security, be

counterproductive. Furthermore, CHILDREN AT PLAY signs tend to propagate through neighborhoods, popping up on every block that has a child living on it. Signs lose credibility with motorists when they appear too often. Instead of being extra diligent, drivers tend to ignore the signs, particularly if no children are playing near the CHILDREN AT PLAY signs. When these signs appear too often, they raise questions like: If there is no sign does that mean there are no children present and no need to watch for children?"

Alaska

Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska, Traffic Department FAQ

<http://www.muni.org/traffic/FAQ.cfm>

This FAQ asks: "Are there any guidelines for the installation of Children at Play signs?" Alaska DOT answers: "Yes. Children at Play signs are typically posted on neighborhood streets directly located off higher speed roadways." This approach may bypass many of the national arguments against the use of these signs.

Colorado/Wyoming

2006 Section Activities Report: Colorado/Wyoming Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (2007)

<http://www.ite.org/elected/Colorado-Wyoming%20Section.pdf>

This report states that "nonuniform signs such as 'Caution—Children at Play,' 'Slow—Children' or similar legends should not be permitted on any roadway at any time," presenting the national reasons and citing the FHWA 1983 *Traffic Control Devices Handbook*. According to the *ITE Journal*, May 1988, "Children at Play signs may make parents feel more secure but they don't work and they carry no enforcement value."

Colorado LTAP Newsletter, Spring 2004

http://ltap.colorado.edu/newsletter/Newsletter_Spring04.pdf

On page 3, this newsletter addresses the Web site question, "What does MUTCD say about 'Children at Play' signs?" It repeats the national arguments and gives the additional argument, drawing from the TRB report *Maintenance Management of Street and Highways Signs* that deviating from the MUTCD (which does not include Children at Play and similar warning signs) is a bad idea because "about 29 percent of tort liability lawsuits against highway departments are related to traffic signing."

Florida

Florida Technology Transfer Traffic Information Program Series (TIPS), from the Florida Section (District 10) of the Institute of Transportation Engineers

<http://mctrans.ce.ufl.edu/transportationTopics/tips.htm>

Two TIPS are relevant to this TSR:

- **"Won't a Children at Play sign help protect our kids?"**
(<http://mctrans.ce.ufl.edu/transportationTopics/tips.htm#4>) This tip states that "studies made in cities where such signs were widely posted in residential areas show no evidence of having reduced pedestrian crashes, vehicle speed or legal liability. In fact, many types of signs which were installed to warn of normal conditions in residential areas failed to achieve the desired safety benefits. Further, if signs encourage parents with children to believe they have an added degree of protection—which the signs do not and cannot provide—a great disservice results... . Specific warnings for schools, playgrounds, parks and other recreational facilities are available for use where clearly justified."
- **"Why are traffic engineers reluctant to install Deaf Child or Blind Child warning signs?"**
(<http://mctrans.ce.ufl.edu/transportationTopics/tips.htm#74>) This tip gives the following reasons against using nonstandard, highly specific signs of this sort:
 - A Deaf Child or Blind Child sign does not describe where the child might be. Most streets within a residential area have children who react in the same way, and each driver must be aware of all children in a neighborhood environment.
 - These signs provide parents and children with a false sense of security that their children are safe when playing in or near the street.
 - When the novelty of such a sign wears off, the signs no longer attract the attention of regular passersby.

- Unique or unusual warning signs are a target for vandals and souvenir hunters and have a high replacement cost.
- Unique message signs have no legal meaning or established precedent for use in basic traffic engineering references. Their use is discouraged because of both the lack of proven effectiveness and undesirable liability exposure.
- Many traffic engineers feel that special warning signs are warranted at a location adjacent to a school for the deaf or for the blind, and have considerably more merit than those at a location where a deaf or blind person may only cross occasionally.

Maine

3.6.3 “Special” Warning Signs: “Children At Play,” “Deaf Person,” “Disabled Person,” “Horse Crossing,” etc.

<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/working-with-dot/section3.php>

This regulation states that “...the driving public does not react favorably or positively to these signs in most cases. In the late 1990s, the MaineDOT changed its policy on the installation and maintenance of these signs. It is virtually impossible for the MaineDOT to keep track of every handicapped person, playing child and crossing horse in every town along all state roads... Knowing that these signs are generally ineffective, MaineDOT does NOT advise the use of these signs because allowing one sets precedence and generates many more requests and creates a new financial burden on the municipality.”

Michigan

Speed Control in Residential Areas

<http://www.ite.org/traffic/documents/tcir0053.pdf>

Page 24 of the PDF states: “Special warning signs such as ‘Children at Play,’ ‘Watch for Children’ or others that warn of normal conditions are not effective in reducing speeds in residential areas,” among other of the standard national arguments against these signs. It continues: “The MMUTCD provides standards for signs warning drivers that they are approaching recreational facilities such as parks and playgrounds. However, there is not enough evidence to determine the effect of these warning signs on vehicle speeds.” (Reference: Michigan Department of Transportation and the Michigan State Police, *Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices*, 1994 edition.)

City of Troy, Mich.: “How about a ‘Children at Play’ sign?”

<http://www.troymi.gov/TrafficEngineering/Children%20at%20play.html>

According to this document, “Studies made in cities around the nation where such signs were widely posted in residential areas show no evidence of having reduced pedestrian crashes, vehicle speed or legal liability.” According to research in the City of Troy: “Studies in the City of Troy have also shown very low effectiveness of the sign and therefore have not installed them in the past several years. Before and after studies showed no reduction in speeds.”

Minnesota

Frequently Asked Questions, Office of Traffic, Safety and Operations

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/faq/faq-signing.html#m>

Question: “I would like to have a ‘deaf child/blind child/slow children at play’ sign installed on my street/highway near my home. How do I get this accomplished?”

Answer: “Mn/DOT does not install this type of sign on state highways since it is not enforceable (it is a warning sign) and it can lead to a false sense of security. If you are requesting signing on a city street, contact the city offices.”

North Carolina

Traffic Engineering Policies, Practices and Legal Authority Resources

NCDOT will install these signs upon receipt of a formal written request meeting certain criteria:

- Blind Child Area Signing: http://www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/traffic/tepp/Topics/B-10/B-10_p.pdf
- Autistic Child Area Signing: http://www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/traffic/tepp/Topics/A-18/A-18_p.pdf

- Deaf Child Area Signing: http://www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/traffic/tepl/Topics/D-02/D-02_p.pdf

This strategy seems typical of a number of states. According to http://www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/traffic/tepl/Topics/C-05/C-05_mm.pdf, “Children Playing warning signs are not approved for use on the state highway system right of way. These signs tend to promote a false sense of security for the children and encourage them to actually play in the roadway, since traffic is warned of their presence.”

Ohio

Slow Children at Play Signs

http://dot.state.oh.us/dist1/planning/TrafficStudies/children_at_play_signs.htm

According to this policy, “These signs are not used by Ohio Department of Transportation on the rural state highway system and ODOT discourages others from using them.”

This text is repeated in the *Office of Traffic Engineering Traffic Engineering Manual*, page 19 of the PDF: http://dot.state.oh.us/traffic/Publication%20Manuals/TEM/Part_02/part_02_complete%20for%20072007.pdf

Virginia

A Look at What Some States are Doing. “Deaf Child Area” Signs Available in Virginia (1988)

From AASHTO QUARTERLY, Vol. 67, No. 4, p. 13.

Paper copies are available through the transportation library system.

VDOT officials have developed a policy that allows the use of Deaf Child Area warning signs. Parents of hearing-impaired children can request these signs through the VDOT residency for the area where the sign is desired. The request must be supported by medical certification of the child’s hearing loss. The signs will be allowed on nonlimited access roadways of the primary or secondary system. Jurisdictions maintaining their own streets and highways are encouraged to use similar guidelines for the use of these signs.

West Virginia

Traffic Engineering Directive 225: “Children at Play” Signing (1999)

<http://www.wvdot.com/engineering/Manuals/Traffic/TED/TED225.pdf>

This directive states that “since the other signing alternatives convey to motorists specific regulations or warning or more permanent roadway conditions rather than conditions that may exist at unspecified times, Children Present signs should only be installed after all the other alternatives have been considered.”



156 East First Street
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www.newrichmondwi.gov

TO: Public Works Committee

FROM: Jeremiah Wendt, Public Works Director

DATE: May 7, 2015

RE: Alley Between Knowles Avenue and Minnesota Avenue

Background

The electric department has been performing work in the alley between Knowles Avenue and Minnesota Avenue from West Second Street to West Third Street, which resulted in the removal of approximately 325 square feet of pavement. Because of the continued development of businesses adjacent to that alley, the concern has been raised that the entire alley should be repaved. This alley did receive an application of spray patching last fall to address concerns about cracks, potholes, and drainage.

The estimated cost to patch the areas that have been removed is \$1,000 (to be paid by the electric utility), while the estimated cost to repave the entire City-owned portion of the alley is \$15,000. If the Committee recommends repaving of the alley, staff could contact the adjacent property owners to see if they want their privately-owned areas paved along with the City portion, at their expense. Funds for the City portion could be borrowed as part of the CIP, but have not been budgeted for in the operating budget this year.

Recommendation

Staff does not feel that repaving this alley is a significant priority, given the other projects that are being considered, and the fact that maintenance has been recently performed there. As such, we are not recommending that the alley be repaved at this time, but be addressed in the future.



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TO: Public Works Committee

FROM: Jeremiah Wendt, Public Works Director

DATE: May 7, 2015

RE: Temporary Driveway to Access County/ESR Building

Background

The County is planning construction of a new facility at their property on CTH K. During construction of the new facility, they need to maintain access to the existing ESR building. They would like to keep the traffic that is accessing this building separate from the construction-related traffic, which necessitates a temporary driveway on the western edge of their property.

City Ordinance 70-39(a)(2) says "The number of driveways to serve an individual property fronting on a street shall be one, except where deemed necessary and feasible by the Common Council for reasonable and adequate service to the property, considering the safety, convenience and utility of the street." As such, the addition of this temporary driveway requires council approval.

Recommendation

Staff is recommending approval of the temporary driveway for the County ESR facility.



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TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Jeremiah Wendt, Public Works Director

DATE: May 7, 2015

RE: Downtown Wayfinding Proposal

Background

Staff will present a downtown wayfinding proposal at the meeting.