

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Michael Smith, Public Works Director

Date: August 24, 2015

Subject: **Discussion of the Mount Vernon Road Crosswalk Improvement**

ITEM DESCRIPTION

Discussion of the planned crosswalk improvement on Mount Vernon Road near Stratham Drive

BACKGROUND

In 2014 Public Works staff working with a consultant specializing in pedestrian safety developed a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan to address improvements to crosswalk locations that are not protected by a traffic signal or stop sign. The plan is based on a field review of each location, pedestrian and vehicle traffic counts, discussions with school and neighborhood stakeholders and the current best practices for pedestrian safety design.

Members of city council have requested further review of the proposed crosswalk on Mount Vernon Road at Forest Springs Drive. Excerpts specific to this location from the report presented to the City Council in June 2014 as well as the engineering plans are attached to this memo. The report recommends moving the existing crosswalk at Stratham Drive approximately 200 feet east to Forest Springs Drive. The recommendation to relocate the crosswalk was primarily based on two considerations:

1. The Forest Springs location has better visibility for the pedestrian than the Stratham location.
2. The Forest Springs location allows for the installation of a pedestrian refuge island which is a proven pedestrian safety measure.

Pedestrian islands are supported as an effective safety measure by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and PEDS, an Atlanta pedestrian advocacy non-profit. According to the University of North Carolina's Highway Safety Research Center, pedestrian islands have been shown to reduce incidents between vehicles and pedestrians by 46% at marked crossings. The presence of the island also calls additional attention to the pedestrian crossing and creates a visual cue that reduces speeds.

As documented in the report, stakeholders indicated that the primary walking route to Vanderlyn from Dunwoody Club Forest was via Stratham Drive. One of the stakeholders has now suggested that Meadowlake Drive is the preferred route. From a pedestrian

perspective crossings in the vicinity of both locations provide benefit. Mount Vernon Road has very high traffic volumes with long distances between traffic signal crossings which create a pedestrian barrier between neighborhoods and destinations on either side. Additional crossings at intermediate locations between signals will create a better walking environment along Mount Vernon Road. Staff has developed a sketch of a potential additional crossing near Meadowlake Drive.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends proceeding with the proposed improvements at Forest Springs Drive as outlined in the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. If the council desires to proceed with construction of an additional crossing near Meadowlake Drive the added cost is expected to be between \$15,000 and \$20,000. If rectangular rapid flashing beacons are desired as an additional safety enhancement they can be added at each crossing now or in the future. Each beacon costs approximately \$7,500 with two beacons required per crosswalk location.

Safe Routes to Schools

In 2005, the federal government created a national Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program through the transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, designed to enable and encourage school-aged children K-8 grades to walk/bike to school and to make walking and biking to school safe and more appealing. Funded by the federal program, Georgia's SRTS program funding is for projects with a 2-mile radius of primary and middle schools (grades K-8).

Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is tasked with spending 70 to 90 percent of the federal funding on infrastructure projects and 10 to 30 percent of the funding on non-infrastructure programs (public outreach).

All five of the elementary schools in the City of Dunwoody were considered in this study. Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. and the City of Dunwoody held meetings, throughout November and December 2013, with concerned stakeholders at each of the elementary schools to gain feedback about safety concerns and other pedestrian-focused ideas. The information gathered at these meetings was highly considered throughout the study and in particular the process of prioritizing pedestrian crossings for future treatments.

The following are summaries of the conversations with stakeholders at each school. It should be noted that comments were recorded from those present and that they may not accurately reflect the views of all interested parties. Due to the amount of information, the planning team relied on the information provided by stakeholders and was not able to validate all information, concerns, and data provided by the stakeholders present at each meeting.

Vanderlyn Elementary

On November 25, 2013, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. and the City of Dunwoody met with stakeholders from Vanderlyn Elementary School to identify safety concerns in the walking area around the school. The school has approximately 700 students. The location of the school is shown in *Figure 2*. There are two streets through the Dunwoody Corners neighborhood surrounding the school that are of particular concern with future opportunities.

Hensley Drive (study location #21/#21A) is a main cut-through street to Vanderlyn Elementary. Currently, drivers speed around the curve, creating an unsafe area for pedestrians. There are no sidewalks on either side of the street so students either walk on the grass or in the street. The school and stakeholders would like the city to prioritize Hensley Drive as a location for new sidewalks in its sidewalk plan and to provide additional speed control along the street. A new raised crosswalk on the west side of Hensley Drive and Vanderlyn Drive could also be considered as a future project.

Stratham Drive (study location #7 at Stratham Drive and Mount Vernon Road) is used by walkers from the Dunwoody Club Forest subdivision to the elementary school. There is heavy queuing observed on Mount Vernon Road during the AM peak hours and drivers are seen speeding. The school and stakeholders would like the city to consider further treatment to the crosswalk at Mount Vernon Road and Stratham (study location #7) and to use ticketing to calm traffic.

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Mt. Vernon Road at All Saints Catholic Church Driveway

Nearby School: All Saints Preschool

Land Use: Commercial

Posted Speed: 35 mph

Number of Lanes:

- Mt. Vernon Road – 3
- Jett Ferry Road – 3

Vehicular ADT: 13,705 vehicles/day

Peak Hour AM (PM) Pedestrian Volumes: 55 (2)

ADA Compliance: Yes (no domes)

Sight Distance: Sufficient

Lighting: Insufficient

The intersection at Mt. Vernon Road and the All Saints Catholic Church driveway is located in the northeast quadrant of Dunwoody (#6: See *Figure 2*). There are existing sidewalks on both sides of Mt. Vernon Road, east and west of the intersection. The current crosswalk striping is in fair condition. There are pedestrian crossing signs on both sides of the roadway; however, the east-facing sign is currently covered by vegetation. Motorist warning signs exist approximately 100 feet east and 92 feet west of the intersection. The edge of road consists of curb and gutter. There are no existing treatments to the crosswalks. There is concern that the unsignalized crosswalk is too close to a signalized intersection and could be unsafe for pedestrians during times of heavy traffic and queuing. Also, the west-facing motorist warning sign does not meet the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) guidelines, which state that an advanced warning sign should be placed 100 feet from the crosswalk in a 35 mph zone.

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Mt. Vernon Road at Stratham Drive

Nearby School: Vanderlyn Elementary School

Land Use: Residential

Posted Speed: 35 mph

Number of Lanes:

- Mt. Vernon Road – 2
- Stratham Drive – 2

Vehicular ADT: 18,930 vehicles/day

Peak Hour AM (PM) Pedestrian Volumes: 1 (1)

ADA Compliance: Yes (no domes)

Sight Distance: Limited

Lighting: Insufficient

The intersection at Mt. Vernon Road and Stratham Drive is located in the northeast quadrant of Dunwoody (#7: See *Figure 2*). There is existing sidewalk on the north side of Mt. Vernon Road, east and west of the intersection. The current crosswalk striping is in good condition. Pedestrian crossing signs are posted at the crosswalk. There are motorist warning signs approximately 300 feet east and 480 feet west of the intersection. The edge of road consists of curb and gutter along

the north side of Chamblee Dunwoody Road and shoulder along the south side. The sight distance when crossing southbound is limited due to the horizontal alignment of the roadway and vegetation. There is an existing in-road sign located at the crosswalk.

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Mt. Vernon Road between Ridgeview Road and Trailbridge Drive

Nearby School: None

Land Use: Residential

Posted Speed: 35 mph

Number of Lanes:

- Mt. Vernon Road – 2

Vehicular ADT: 21,909 vehicles/day

Peak Hour AM (PM) Pedestrian Volumes: 7 (2)

ADA Compliance: Yes (with domes)

Sight Distance: Sufficient

Lighting: Insufficient

The crosswalk on Mt. Vernon Road between Hidden Branch Drive and Trailbridge Drive is located in the northwest quadrant of Dunwoody (#8: See Figure 2). There are existing sidewalks on both sides of Mt. Vernon Road, east and west of the intersection. The current crosswalk striping is in good condition. Pedestrian crossing signs are located on both sides of the crosswalk. Motorist warning signs “State Law: Stop for Pedestrians” are located at Ridgeview Road and east of the crosswalk. The edge of road consists of curb and gutter along both sides of Mt. Vernon Road. Sight distance at the crosswalk is good. Flashing beacons are on the two pedestrian signs at the crosswalk, including pedestrian push buttons.

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N Peachtree Road at Brookhurst Drive

Nearby School: Chesnut Elementary School

Land Use: Residential

Posted Speed: 35 mph (25 mph School Zone)

Number of Lanes:

- N Peachtree Road – 2
- Brookhurst Drive – 2

Vehicular ADT: 15,378 vehicles/day

Peak Hour AM (PM) Pedestrian Volumes: 8 (7)

ADA Compliance: Yes (no domes)

Sight Distance: Sufficient

Lighting: Insufficient

The intersection at N Peachtree Road and Brookhurst Drive is located in the southeast quadrant of Dunwoody (#9: See Figure 2). There are existing sidewalks on both sides of N Peachtree Road. The current crosswalk striping is in good condition. Advanced motorist warning signs and pedestrian



Figure 7. Mount Vernon Road at Stratham Drive Concept



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MON. SIGN

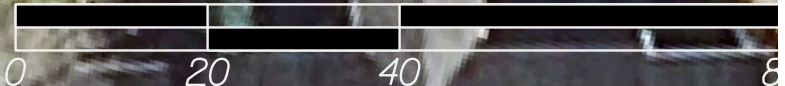
BRICK
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BRICK
BASE (TYP.)

X-TILE
WALL

MT VERNON ROAD
PROPOSED CROSSING RELOCATION
STRATHAM DR TO FORREST SPRINGS DR

SCALE IN FEET





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MON. SIGN

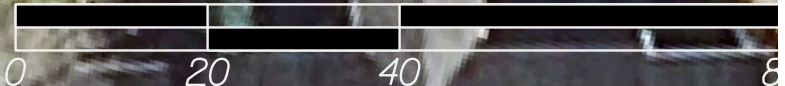
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BASE (TYP)

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MT VERNON ROAD
PROPOSED CROSSING RELOCATION
STRATHAM DR TO FORREST SPRINGS DR

SCALE IN FEET



#17.



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MT VERNON ROAD
PEDESTRIAN CROSSING LAYOUT

