

**MINUTES OF THE
TARA HILL AREA TRAFFIC CALMING TASK FORCE**

Wednesday, September 8, 2004

Dublin Municipal Building – 5200 Emerald Parkway

Present:

Task Force Members

Randy Luikart	John Jung	Amy Salay (arrived at 7:40 p.m.)
Amy Gerhart	Vince Blaeser	Dave Cecutti (arrived at 7:50 pm)
Deborah Frazier	Tina Wray	

Absent: Tim Lecklider, Kimberly O'Brien

Staff Members Present:

Paul Hammersmith, Jeannie Willis, Ken Richardson

Guests Present:

R.D. Zande Consultants: Joe Sullivan, Dave Samuelson, Brian Hagerty, Tina Wawszkiewicz

Call to Order:

Mr. Luikart called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Wray moved to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2004 Task Force meeting.

Mr. Jung seconded the motion.

Vote on the motion: Mr. Luikart, yes; Mr. Blaeser, yes; Mr. Jung, yes; Ms. Gerhart, yes; Ms. Frazier, yes; Ms. Wray, yes.

Public Comment:

Mr. Luikart stated that due to the number of residents present, he would revise the agenda order to move the public comment segment forward. For the benefit of those in attendance for the first time, he provided a brief background on the Task Force's efforts to date. He noted that a work session involving the placement of pseudo traffic calming devices on wall maps is scheduled for tonight's meeting. That will now follow the public comment section. If members of the public want to leave following public comments, or prefer to remain, they are welcome to do so.

Chris Sarych, 6905 Conquistador Ct., stated that he was disappointed to discover the media provided no information regarding this meeting. Radio AM 1610 offered nothing, and Cable Channel 9 provided the past meeting date on its list of community affairs. If the radio and TV were up to date, the community would be better represented.

David Riegle, 5393 Tara Hill Drive, stated he is concerned that the Task Force has completely eliminated the option of vertical traffic-calming elements. He lives near the intersection of Tara Hill and Downpatrick, where there is a stop sign. He has been amazed at the large number of drivers who do not stop at that intersection. Speed bumps would be an effective control for that type of problem.

Dennis Hair, 5687 Tara Hill Drive, stated that he lives at the intersection of Literary Lane and Tara Hill Drive. The stop sign is near his driveway, and he has difficulty exiting his driveway due to the fact that drivers do not stop at the stop sign. Law enforcement is nil; it needs to be escalated there. He is very concerned that a small child will wander from one of the homes in that area into the street. Speed bumps would be effective in that area. One child's life is more important than the inconvenience and cost of a few minor repairs to a fire truck.

Dan Huss, 6911 Literary Lane, inquired if the goal of the Task Force is to reduce both the volume and the speed of traffic. The current volume of traffic is 4,000 vehicles. He is hopeful that the goal is to reduce the volume as well as the speeds.

Mr. Luikart responded that while the goal is to reduce both, there is a realization that due to size of the neighborhood and the fact that Tara Hill is an arterial street, the volume cannot be reduced significantly by traffic-calming devices. There are, perhaps, other factors outside the neighborhood that will impact the volume, such as the opening of the new high school and road improvements completed on other streets.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that while the neighborhood itself generates a large portion of the volume, the cut-through traffic could be reduced. He asked Mr. Samuelson to explain.

Mr. Samuelson that the principal goals of the Tara Hill traffic study were to reduce speeds and improve safety; volume was less important. Currently, cut-through traffic is approximately 20% of the 4,000 vehicles. The study projected that traffic calming could reduce the volume by about 20% or 800 vehicles. Today, additional factors are known, such as the roundabout and the future left turn from Avery-Muirfield to Post Road, and those factors are anticipated to divert some cut-through traffic from Tara Hill Road.

Mr. Huss inquired about the plans for the Recreation Center entrance. He has seen preliminary plans for a winding road and a roundabout-type treatment at the Post Road entrance to the Recreation Center. Deterring traffic at that entrance would only shift traffic to Tara Hill.

Mr. Samuelson stated that this would be a good point at which to share information prepared on this topic. Traffic flow through the Rec Center entrance off Downpatrick was discussed at the previous meeting and the Task Force requested the consultants to specifically address that area. He distributed handouts accompanied by PowerPoint slides. The questions were: (1) What percentage of the Rec Center traffic uses the Downpatrick entrance; and (2) What is the volume level on Downpatrick? Their studies revealed that the Downpatrick entrance is used not only to access the Recreation Center, but also to access other sites in the Coffman Park complex – the municipal building, school parking, and the outdoor recreation areas. Based on peak hour counts and trip rates based on national averages, study results estimate a total traffic use of the Coffman Park area of approximately 5,500 vehicles per day. In the morning peak hour of 7:00 – 8:00 am, 33% of the total traffic entering the Coffman Park area comes from Downpatrick. During the evening peak hour, it is 27%. Their estimate is that 30% of the Coffman Park traffic utilizes Downpatrick, which is approximately 1,600 vehicles. He added that it was not possible to determine what proportion originated from within or outside the study area.

Ms. Frazier inquired if there has been continued consideration of utilizing a gate at the Downpatrick entrance to limit the access to particular times or events.

Mr. Hammersmith responded that it would be necessary for staff to determine if the Downpatrick entrance was a condition of approval for the Rec Center. If so, what would be required to make changes at this point in the process? He indicated staff would investigate that question.

Mr. Samuelson noted that when traffic calming is implemented on Tara Hill, it would likely reduce the level of traffic using Downpatrick to access Coffman Park.

Bob Lowe, 5647 Tara Hill, stated that there were several meetings of the Planning Commission during the approval stage for the Rec Center supplemental parking lot. Many Downpatrick area residents attended those meetings. The City assured those residents that a gate would be placed at the Downpatrick entrance to block daily vehicle traffic. It could be opened during events.

Mr. Luikart inquired if the future left turn on to Post Road off southbound Avery-Muirfield would divert some of that traffic.

Mr. Samuelson responded that is the anticipation.

Mr. Blaeser stated that he would assume that residents of the Tara Hill study area are the primary group using Downpatrick to access the Rec Center.

Mr. Samuelson agreed. The study area is made up of approximately 2,200 homes or 20,000+ trips per day.

Mr. Frazier stated that if a large percent of the traffic to the Rec Center comes from the Tara Hill area, would they be too inconvenienced if required to use another entrance?

Mr. Blaeser responded that the users would become conditioned to a different route.

Ms. Wray noted that eliminating the Downpatrick entrance would force the school parking traffic to use one of the other entrances to Coffman Park. That alone should improve the safety factor on Tara Hill.

Mr. Luikart noted that the Task Force's decision to limit the use of vertical traffic-calming devices on Tara Hill was not due to the increased need for repair to emergency vehicles. The primary concern was the additional jeopardy emergency patients are placed in during transportation. However, if it is determined that there is no other effective measure that can be used at certain locations, there may be some judicious use of speed humps. The Task Force will attempt to balance competing needs.

Ms. Frazier noted that during their site visit, Task Force members were impressed with the effectiveness of traffic circles in reducing speeds.

Ms. Gerhart suggested that interested residents visit the southwest area in which some of these types of traffic-calming devices have been implemented – Rings, Norn and Wilcox Roads, for instance. Their effectiveness is evident.

Mr. Jung addressed the earlier statement that emergency vehicles are using Tara Hill as a cut-through route. That is not the case -- the Tara Hill area is their destination.

Ms. Frazier suggested that one method of educating the public would be through the local newspapers. Staff could provide an educational article explaining the study results that justified traffic calming for Tara Hill and point out similar traffic calming that has already occurred in the southwest area.

Ms. Gerhart agreed community education is important. The intent of the next Task Force meeting is to involve the City's Community Relations department in structuring a community education plan.

[Ms. Salay arrived at 7:40 p.m.]

Mr. Hammersmith inquired if the Task Force had any comments about the placement of the signs for tonight's meeting.

Mr. Jung noted that the meeting signs were placed too close to the intersections for drivers to read. He suggested they be placed more inbound.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that staff would reposition the signs.

Vicki Failla, 5423 Roscommon Road, stated that she lives near one of the "rolling" stops. She has been a school crossing guard for 14 years at the Wichita and Fallen Timbers intersection. She noted that last year, she crossed approximately 40 children in the morning and again in the afternoon. Her observation is that parents transporting children to/from school are the primary speed offenders. They have placed her and the children in jeopardy on numerous occasions. There is a critical need for effective speed deterrents.

Wolfgang Lant, 5999 Beery Lane, stated that he lives at the corner of Beery Lane and Tara Hill, which is near the stop Ms. Failla has indicated. He has observed the situation at that stop and corroborates Ms. Failla's testimony. He stated that the problems on Tara Hill could be divided into two areas – the one with three stop signs and the other with a straight speedway. Cars race through that area at speeds up to 50 mph. He inquired if speeds are lower in the section with stop signs – he would expect them to be somewhat effective. He suggested that traffic calming be studied and constructed when an area is being developed. When implemented after an area is developed, it can significantly impact homeowners, taking away portions of their yards. He requested that when traffic calming is implemented retroactively, stop signs or other devices that do not necessitate taking property be used.

[Mr. Cecutti arrived at 7:50 p.m.]

Mr. Samuelson responded that volume and speed studies were conducted at several locations along Tara Hill Road. In the middle of Tara Hill, traffic volume drops due to vehicles turning in different directions throughout the neighborhood. Their study validates Mr. Lant's observation – that the traffic in the section of Tara Hill with the three stop signs moves at a slower speed than traffic in the section without stop signs. Traffic in the area of Fallen Timbers moves at the greatest speed. The study also revealed a trend related to certain times of the day – in peak hours, the volume increases and speed reduces; in off-peak hours, volume decreases and speed increases.

Kevin White, 7003 Carrick Ct., stated that he lives near Downpatrick. He attended an earlier meeting where they discussed the Coffman Park concept plan. He is relieved to see the Task Force has moved past an early idea for 14 speed humps. He is concerned about safety, but speed humps are a hardship for those who live the area and must travel Tara Hill several times a day.

Mr. Luikart thanked everyone for sharing their opinions. They are valuable to the Task Force as they continue with their considerations. He requested that the residents continue to follow the topic and to attend future meetings of the Task Force.

At 8:00 p.m., the Task Force separated into two teams for a work session in which they placed traffic-calming markers at key sites on wall maps of Tara Hill Road.

At 9:15 p.m. the work session terminated, and the Task Force commenced discussion of the two draft plans. Following discussion, Mr. Hammersmith stated that the R.D. Zande team would combine the two plans, and the merged plan would be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Hammersmith distributed and reviewed a future time line for the Task Force work. He noted that at Council's September 13 study session, R.D. Zande would be presenting a report on their recently completed intersection evaluation. The intersection at Avery-Muirfield and Sells Mill is number 8 on the list of 8 intersections prioritized for signalization. The intersections were ranked according to point criteria. He added that next year, the operating budget would include a study of the Valleystream/Tullymore/Avery/Muirfield intersection. He stated that the intersection at Avery-Muirfield and Post Road is in the design phase. He reviewed the City's anticipated schedule for road improvements along Avery-Muirfield and Post Road.

Ms. Salay noted that many changes would occur in the area between Post and Perimeter Roads and south of Perimeter in conjunction with the hospital that will be constructed.

Mr. Hammersmith stated that the hospital would be located between Kroger and Pacer Global Logistics.

Ms. Frazier inquired if the signalization of Sell Mill and Avery-Muirfield is likely to occur.

Mr. Hammersmith responded that it would not occur within the next two years.

Ms. Gerhart noted that it would be a simpler and less expensive project than signalization of the other intersections, as it would not require any improvements to the road.

Mr. Samuelson responded that the intersection does meet a signal warrant on the basis of a school crossing. However, that need is presently with school crossing guards and 20-mph flashers. There were 8 accidents at that intersection in the last three years, so it is close in some other warrants. It is necessary to wait until the impact of the new roundabout on this intersection can be assessed before making a final judgment.

Mr. Samuelson continued his presentation, including:

- the Tara Hill study area exterior intersection evaluation
- Traffic Calming Concept 1 – Speed Humps
- Traffic Calming Concept 2 – Vertical Measures, a combination of pavement treatments, speed humps, raised intersections, and raised crosswalks
- Traffic Calming Concept 3 – Vertical Measures with Chokers
- Traffic Calming Concept 4 – Mixture of Vertical and Horizontal Measures
- Traffic Calming Concept 5 – Suggested Measures on (a) West Half of Tara Hill and (b) East Half of Tara Hill

Ms. Salay noted that the educational component of the Task Force work is essential. She is very interested in trying the Pace Car Program in the Tara Hill area. The Community Relations division would be able to provide excellent promotion of the program.

Discussion continued regarding law enforcement in the Tara Hill neighborhood. The Task Force assessment was that police presence is observed more before the evening peak hour. Perhaps during the evening, their presence is required on busier routes. Police surveillance near the stop signs that are being ignored would resolve that problem.

The next meeting of the Task Force will be on September 29. That agenda will include discussion of a communications plan in conjunction with the Task Force timeline, and the merged plan of the Task Force.

The Task Force meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Submitted by:

Deputy Clerk of Council

