



Council Worksession  
May 24, 2022  
5:00 pm

Present: Mayor Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas (joined the meeting remotely at 5:55 p.m.)  
Councilmember Abdullahi Abdulle (attending remotely)  
Councilmember Graeme Allen  
Councilmember Pam Axberg  
Acting Mayor Emily Dunsworth

Absent:

Staff in Attendance: Devin Massopust, Craig Schlichting, Tony Paetznick, Gina Foschi

Guests in Attendance:

Residential Speed Limits

Massopust reported this conversation stemmed from a State law change that now allows local authorities to adjust speed limits on residential roadways. He reported one of the most frequent complaints staff receives was related to the speed of traffic in certain neighborhoods. He explained this matter has been discussed by the Public Safety Commission two separate times and before having the Council take a formal vote, staff wanted the City Council to discuss this matter.

Schlichting stated New Brighton is an active community with residents that request quality of life improvements. Traffic speeds and the proximity of vehicles to our most vulnerable population are common complaints. He provided the Council with a history on speed limits in the community noting in 2019 the State passed legislation that would allow the City to reduce residential speed limits to 25 miles per hour. Accident data from the past seven years was reviewed with the Council. It was noted staff presented this data to the Public Safety Commission and the group recommended that the City Council take a consistent approach of 25 miles per hour on all roads controlled by the City.

Councilmember Abdulle expressed concern with the speed of traffic along Silver Lake Road, County Road E and Old Highway 8, but he understood these were County roads. Massopust stated these roadways were carrying large amounts of traffic through the community.

Acting Mayor Dunsworth indicated she hears a lot of motorcycles speeding down Silver Lake Road in the summer months.

Massopust commented on the number of signs that would need to be replaced in the City if a change were made and requested direction from the Council on how to proceed. He noted if the Council supported a change, this item could be brought back to the Council for formal approval in June. He discussed the educational campaign that would occur if a speed limit change were made.

Schlichting reported Minneapolis, St. Paul, and St. Anthony have already changed their residential speed limits

to 25 miles per hour. He noted Mounds View, Arden Hills, Shoreview, Fridley, and Roseville would be considering a change in the future.

Paetznick discussed the approach the Public Safety Department had towards speeding. He reported the focus for his officers would be on enforcement, education and proper messaging to the community. He noted the speed cart and fixed signs with driver feedback would be used to assist with enforcement. He suggested an additional speed cart be purchased to assist with addressing traffic safety.

Schlichting commented further on how a living streets plan would assist with meeting the City's long term strategies, while also addressing driver behavior.

Councilmember Abdulle asked if staff calculated the number of crashes that occurred on County roads versus City streets. Schlichting explained he did not have this calculation, but noted the majority of the crashes in the City were occurring on County roads (Silver Lake Road, Old Highway 8, Long Lake Road). He reported there were very few accidents occurring on the City's residential streets.

Councilmember Abdulle stated he was pleased the County was discussing a change to their speed limits as well. He commented further on how speeding impacts crashes and injuries. He stated the lower the speed in residential neighborhoods, the better. He supported the Council further exploring a living streets plan or other changes that could be made in order to lower the speed of traffic on residential streets. He thanked the Public Works staff and Director Schlichting for all of their impressive work on this matter.

Councilmember Allen explained he supported changing the resident speed limit to 25 miles per hour. He stated the cost to implement the new road signs was quite insignificant. He indicated this change would address the numerous complaints the City receives regarding the speed of traffic in New Brighton neighborhoods. He didn't want to see the City wait until someone was harmed before taking action.

Councilmember Axberg explained he was conflicted noting she was an active walker and biker. She indicated she did not feel unsafe walking on the streets and questioned why the City did not have sidewalks. She stated she would like to sit and think on this more. She feared that if the speed limit were lowered that the City would be receiving more complaints about speeding.

Acting Mayor Dunsworth stated she supported the City being proactive than reactive when it comes to this matter. She also wanted New Brighton to be streamlined with neighboring communities. She commented on the amount of time that has been spent on speed studies and noted a change to the overall residential speed limit would address this concern too.

Councilmember Abdulle explained that by reducing the speed of traffic from 30 to 25 miles per hour the chances of being fatally wounded by a moving vehicle are greatly reduced. He commented on how speeding cars were dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists. He supported the City being proactive and supported the City reducing the residential speed limit to 25 miles per hour.

#### Fencing Consortium Joint Powers Agreement

Massopust commented on how the last two years has changed the way municipalities consider risk management and how to protect their facilities.

Schlichting discussed the benefits of being a part of the fencing consortium in the metro area in order to protect critical infrastructure and to maintain essential services in the event of civil unrest. He listed the essential services in the City that were already fenced, such as the water tower and water treatment plant. He stated in an emergency situation, additional fencing may be required to protect City Hall and the Police Department. He

explained in the spring of 2021 the Hennepin County Chiefs of Police created a metro region-wide initiative in order to provide those cities that were facing a crisis with anti-scale fencing in hours and not days. The logistics, training, and staffing requirements for the fencing initiative was further discussed. He further reviewed photos of the 8' by 4' wide anti-scale fencing with the Council. It was noted 53 cities have already joined the consortium.

Foschi discussed the cost for the consortium stating the expense would be funded through the Risk Management Fund. She reported the impact to the budget would be minimal as the expense to the City would be \$7,000 annually.

Paetznick stated possible alternatives to joining the consortium would be to contract directly with a vendor for rental, however the cost would likely be \$100,000+ and could take several days for deployment. He explained the City could purchase its own fencing, which would be expensive and would have to be stored indoors. In addition, a number of public works staff would have to be trained and readily available to deploy the fencing. Another solution would be to install permanent fencing around the Public Safety Center campus, which would be a significant capital expense and would also impact daily operations/public access to the building. He stated he did not support this option due to the cost and how the public safety facility would be impacted. He indicated the fencing consortium would provide the City with a great option in the event of an emergency.

Schlichting discussed the incentives to join the consortium stating fencing would be available, there would be one call for response, a trained team would manage and deploy the fencing and external resources would be brought in to setup the fencing. He reported the fencing consortium did request \$5 million in funding from the State of Minnesota in 2022 and this request was denied, but the group would be making a request again in 2023. He indicated the state funding would cover the cost of the fencing which would result in a savings of over 50% of the annual cost for members. He commented further on the benefits of being a member of the consortium stating the deadline to be an original member was September 2, 2022. He discussed the three actions the city would have to take prior to joining the consortium and it was noted two of the three items had already been completed. It was noted the third item on the list would be to have the City Council adopt a Resolution joining the Fencing Consortium, which staff would like the Council to consider at their June 14 meeting.

Councilmember Allen asked if two communities could be covered at the same time by the fencing. Schlichting stated there would be 10,000 feet of fencing which would cover two cities at once, unless the other city was Minneapolis.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned served on the fencing consortium board. Massopust stated the board would be made up of members from the representative cities. Paetznick explained the board would have five members and the members would serve for a two year term.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas inquired if the cities New Brighton has JPA's with for police/fire mutual aid services would be joining this consortium. Schlichting stated Blaine, Bloomington, Spring Lake Park, Fridley and Columbia Heights have already joined the consortium. He reported other cities surrounding New Brighton would be considering the fencing consortium yet this summer.

Councilmember Abdulle questioned what the monthly fee would be for the fencing consortium. Foschi stated the annual fee would be approximately \$7,000. She reported if the fencing was deployed to New Brighton there would be a monthly fee of \$36,000 charged to the City. She indicated the City had funds within its Risk Management Fund to cover this expense.

Councilmember Dunsworth asked if this contract would be in perpetuity or would the contract have a sunset date. Paetznick stated this was a good question and explained the City could opt out of the consortium at any point. He indicated he looked at the yearly fee as an insurance policy for the City to ensure fencing was in place should an emergency occur.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned if the Council reviewed all of its risk management systems or protocols on a yearly basis. Foschi reported insurance policies were reviewed on an annual basis and a lot of the times the coverage stays consistent. She indicated the City had a safety committee that reviews OSHA compliance and on the job safety matters. Massopust explained staff has the health insurance put out for bid every other year.

Councilmember Abdulle stated he believed the fencing consortium was a good idea but recommended the Council review this program every so often to see if it was still in the best interests of the City, especially if there was a cost increase.

Councilmember Allen explained he was interested in joining the fencing consortium. He asked if the fencing could be used in the event of a natural disaster. He questioned if there were more members, would the price go down. Massopust reported the cost would go down if more members joined the consortium.

Councilmember Dunsworth stated she believed the consortium was a great idea.

Worksession adjourned at 6:23 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Spangrud  
City Clerk