

INVER GROVE HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MONDAY, JUNE 6, 2022. 6:00 PM - 8150 BARBARA AVENUE

1. Call to Order: The City Council of Inver Grove Heights met in person for a Work Session on Monday, June 6, 2022. Mayor Bartholomew called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Roll Call: Present In-Person: Mayor Bartholomew; Council Members; Piekarski Krech, Gliva, Dietrich, Murphy; City Administrator Kris Wilson, City Clerk Rebecca Kiernan, Deputy City Clerk Katie Malott, City Attorney Bridget McCauley Nason, Public Works Director Brian Connolly, Finance Director Amy Hove, Assistant Finance Director Sam Hosszu, Police Chief Melissa Chiodo, Police Commander Josh Otis, Police Commander Dennis Haugland.

Others Present In-Person: Kristi Sebastian, Dakota County; JoNette Kuhnau, Kimley Horn

3. Discussion Items:

A. Progress Update #2 on the Dakota County Regional Roadway System Visioning Study

Public Works Director Brian Connolly mentioned Kristi Sebastian from Dakota County and JoNette Kuhnau from Kimley Horn, would provide an update.

Kristi Sebastian, Dakota County Western Service Center, 14955 Galaxy Avenue, stated that the Regional Visioning Study began last year. This presentation is an update of the study that was done in 2010.

Study Area:

- Northeast Eagan
- Northwest Inver Grove Heights
- Mendota Heights
- Sunfish Lake

The study builds on what was done in 2010 to confirm some of those recommendations are still needed or where they may not need those recommendations and/or a change.

Study Process:

- Traffic Capacity
- Traffic Safety
- Roadway Network/Connectivity
- Environmental and Property Impacts

JoNette Kuhnau, Kimley Horn, St. Paul, mentioned they are the consultant doing the technical work on this study. The following was presented:

Land Use/Development Forecasts:

- How many households and how many businesses/jobs

Traffic Capacity:

- Evaluated traffic conditions with future development and the existing transportation system.
- Areas that would be congested/no longer function:
 - Trunk Highway 3, County Road 63/Delaware Avenue, north of 494: Dodd/Trunk Highway 149 and County Road 26

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Crash History: Identifies where there may be safety needs on the current system:

- Determines a "Critical Rate" level where there would be an evaluation for further improvements.
- Determines an area is above the Critical Rate and would be evaluated for further improvements.
 - County Road 26 and 63: Currently under construction. Expect the roundabout to address the safety issue.
 - Highway 55 and County Road 26: Congested intersection, a lot of traffic.

Roadway Network/Connectivity:

- Looks at arterials. Highway 149, County Roads 28 and 63.
 - Need to look at the Highway 55 and County Road 28 and 63 intersections. As traffic volumes continue to grow the traffic signal may not continue to serve traffic there.
- Collector streets that take traffic from residential/local streets and connect them to the highway network.
 - As improvements are made, city street access/connections would happen every 1/8 to 1/4 mile.
- 65th Street. A need to be able to connect residential streets to the highway network.
 - The recommendation is to complete the street network in the area.
- Recommendations on Trunk Highway 3 and County Road 26 would not change if 65th Street wasn't built.
 - Recommend spot improvements on Trunk Highway 3 (turn lanes and/or intersection improvements).
 - County Road 26 from Trunk Highway 3 to Babcock is recommended to be a 3-lane roadway. One through lane in each direction with a median or center turn lane at access points.

Roadway Expansion Impacts:

- Looked at where corridors were that adding more traffic lanes would have a significant impact.
- Environmental Resources: Wetlands, endangered species, historic properties, sites in MPCA inventory, parks, environmental justice, and community assets such as schools and libraries.

Ms. Sebastian discussed the process to develop transportation improvements stating the focus seemed to be along Argenta and County Road 63. By doing most of the improvements in the center area, it addresses the need where there would be major development occurring. Key areas:

- Original interchange identified at 494 and 63 that was confirmed to be needed with this plan. Folded interchange for providing inbound/outbound from 494 to 63 from the south.
- Widening of Delaware was identified as a 4-lane need.
- Intersection improvements at 55 and 63 at Argenta would be a good long-term improvement based on the arterial.

Mayor Bartholomew mentioned for clarity, roads listed were: #1 is 70th Street, #2 is the proposed 65th Street, and #3 is the 80th Street realignment.

Ms. Sebastian agreed and stated that #1 - 70th Street is 26, #2 is 65th Street, and #3 is the realignment of Amana coming down 28/80th Street, this would be relocated across from the existing roundabout.

Ms. Sebastian discussed implementation:

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- Nothing is programmed from a project perspective.
- Several would need more evaluation. For example, the interchange.
- The Trunk Highway 3 area is planned to be an evaluation in collaboration with MnDOT starting next year.
- Development and safety needs will drive some of the timing.

Next Steps:

- A public open house was held last week. There were 60 in attendance.
- A virtual open house will stay open through June 24th.
- Finalize study recommendations and be back before Council for adoption of the new study.

Questions/comments/discussion:

Councilmember Piekarski Krech referred to County Road 26 if 65th Street did not get put through and questioned if it would be three lanes versus the four lanes the County planned for.

Ms. Sebastian replied the 2040 numbers decreased needs in several areas including this one. Three lanes meant one in each direction and some form of a center lane be it median or marked.

City Administrator Kris Wilson questioned if the future 494 interchange/Argenta could be north on Argenta, cross 494, and then go west.

Ms. Sebastian replied it only accesses to the south, it's not going to be a full access to go north.

Travelers can get on and off of 494 and go south, but not go into the communities of Sunfish Lake and Mendota Heights.

City Administrator Wilson asked if there was the ability to get off east or west on 494 to travel south into Inver Grove. For example, coming north out of Inver Grove, would travelers have the ability to access both 494 east and west.

Ms. Sebastian responded yes.

Councilmember Murphy asked why they couldn't go north.

Ms. Sebastian replied there is more significant development happening to the south. Due to safety and environmental perspectives, they determined not doing the north.

City Administrator Wilson referred to #6 where it states a need for a north/south.

Ms. Kuhnau replied area #6's recommendation was for a city collector street. Due to development, there would be a need for a collector street to connect residential traffic to the highway network. The recommendation was to connect it to County Road 71 because it was least likely to draw cut through traffic.

Mayor Bartholomew questioned the status of the small area plans for the area.

City Administrator Wilson replied a plan was prepared but not adopted by the City Council.

Councilmember Piekarski Krech questioned if it meant the county wasn't planning to move through the area.

Ms. Sebastian replied that the Pine Bend study identified a need to have a collection function.

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Councilmember Piekarski Krech mentioned there wasn't a plan to do Alverno and expand that as a part of Argenta/Yankee Doodle.

Ms. Sebastian replied the study showed an alignment of what might work, it was always intended as a city roadway. The county would not program the city street. It may be needed once development comes. The study could be updated to modify the alignment.

B. Certification of Delinquent Utility Bills

Finance Director Amy Hove introduced the newest member of the finance team, Sam Hosszu, who is the new Assistant Finance Director. He has been with the city for nearly one month. Sam is originally from South St. Paul and came to the city from River Falls.

Finance Director Hove discussed the possibility of restarting some of their normal collection processes that were performed on an annual basis in the past. During COVID and some of the emergency protocols, they were put on hold.

Background:

- City administrative code speaks to the process. It states delinquencies be certified to the County Auditor no later than October 10th each year.
- Minnesota Statute gives the city the authority.
- In 2020 and 2021 delinquent utility bills were not certified to Dakota County.
- Staff proposes restarting the process in 2022 for collection with 2023 property tax bills.

The certification process includes:

- August: Staff sends out a certification letter to anyone with an unpaid balance of more than \$50.00.
- Staff proposes sending out reminder letters in June/July addressing the fact that the process is restarting.
- October 10th: Deadline to pay off balances.
- October 24th: Staff comes before the Council and requests certification on the assessments.
 - 8% admin fee, 8% interest is added.
- November: List is sent to Dakota County with the accounts not paid for collection with 2023 property taxes.
- March 2023: Dakota County mails out property taxes.
- City receives those in July and December 2023.

Mayor Bartholomew referenced the 8% admin fee and questioned if it could be lowered and if there was the flexibility to lower it.

Finance Director Hove replied 8% is currently in the administrative code, she was unsure of having the percentage lowered but would check into that further.

Finance Director Hove discussed response rates to the certification letters going out. 2017, 2018, and 2019 were the last years this process was done. Balances reduced by 44% after the August mailing.

- There have been customers that go through this process yearly, roughly 22%.

Staff would like the Council to consider resuming penalties.

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- There have not been late fees with utility bills throughout this timeframe. Recommend beginning with the October billing.
 - A 3.33% monthly late fee is in the administrative code.
- Notifications about the change would be included within Insights, on the back of the monthly utility bill, and on a special insert in the utility bills.
- Staff continues to offer utility bill assistance information to residents.

What other communities have done:

- A survey was put out on the Finance Officer's Listserv to see what other cities have done during the Pandemic and what they were currently doing.
 - Some suspended late fees, some had hybrid assistance programs
 - All respondents restarted their normal delinquent utility processes

Questions/comments/discussion:

Councilmember Murphy asked if the 20% fees were certified, if those would come back to the city. He asked what the grace period was on the late fee.

Finance Director Hove replied 16% goes on the unpaid balance, it does come back to the city. The 3.33% would be for new delinquent balances after they were sent to the county. It would be 3.33% on the monthly unpaid balance, it accrues. Once ready for certification next year, 16% is then added to whatever the unpaid balance is. The 3.33% is applied the day after it is due.

Finance Director Hove stated she would like to bring forward a resolution formalizing the reinstatement of the process at next week's City Council meeting.

Councilmember Murphy requested Staff investigate why 8% was chosen.

Finance Director Hove replied it was in a 1990 Administrative Code.

C. Police Department 5-year Staffing Plan

Police Chief Melissa Chiodo mentioned that Police Commanders Josh Otis and Dennis Haugland were present for questions. They all worked on the plan together. Strategic planning for 2022 through 2026 was discussed:

- One of the guiding principles is a safe environment with the action plan to:
 - Work towards the lowest crime rate in Dakota County
 - Work towards a 90% satisfaction rate of feeling safe
 - Annually analyze staffing levels based on the changing needs of the community
 - Adjust as needed

Calls for service 2015-2021:

- In 2015 the city was 6th out of 12 cities in calls for service.
- At the end of 2021 the city was the 3rd highest in calls for service in Dakota County.
- Significant rise of 6-8% per year for calls.
- In 2021, 30,400+ calls for service.
- 64% increase in calls from 2015-2021.
- Continued growth in the city.
- Currently authorized for 45 staff:

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- 1 Police Chief
- 3 Commanders
- 1 Lieutenant
- 7 Sergeants
- 33 Officers

Suggested target authorization: 1 Police Chief, 2 Commanders (one of the Commanders is retiring this year), 2 Lieutenants (One over patrol, one over administration), 8 Sergeants, and 35 Officers. The change would be to add 3 additional officers.

Assignments of Officers for the 33:

- 24 are assigned to take 911 calls in the city
- 4 for investigations
- 1 Traffic safety/DWI
- 1 School Resource Officer (SRO)
- 1 K-9 Officer
- Strategic Response Unit (team that handles livability issues in the city, crime patterns, and transit pop up)

Breakdown of Assignment of Officers if adding 3:

- Add to the Patrol (911 response) 3 officers
- Take away the 1 officer from traffic safety/DWI

The department currently runs with 6 officers per shift. Having 27 officers would allow for the ability to have 3 shifts, allowing them to overlap shifts during higher peak call times.

Looking to add a Sergeants position.

- Add 1 Sergeant to investigations
- Add 1 to the Strategic Response Unit

Proposed timeline:

- 2022: Reclassify a Commander to a Lieutenant
- 2023: Add 3 Patrol Officers (COPS Grant?)
 - Promote 1 Officer to Sergeant
- 2024: Add 1 FTE Crime Analyst (provides support to help solve open cases, tracking crime patterns, allocation of resources, and planned prevention strategies with sworn counterparts).
- New Resources: 2023 Imbedded Social Worker (Dakota County funded).

Staffing considerations:

- Higher level of police response, crime prevention, and community outreach.
- Department currently runs with 2-12 hour shifts without overlap.
- With 3 or more officers, the department could run with 9- or 10-hour shifts.
- Shift overlap would take place during the highest call load. (11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.).

2021 patrol officer coverage:

- 224 out of 730 patrol shifts were run with 3 or fewer officers on patrol
- 32% of shifts ran with 3 or less officers
- 30 overtime shifts, 255.75 overtime hours
- 28% of the time days and 33% of the time nights didn't meet staffing of at least 3 officers

Benefits of 12-hour shifts:

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- Employee friendly, work in a consistent team, ease of scheduling.

Concerns of 12-hour shifts:

- Fatigue/lack of sleep, patrol coverage, general wellness, declining productivity after 10 hours, time off requests get denied more when short staffed.

Benefits of 10-hour shifts:

- Consistent daily roll calls due to overlap, better patrol coverage, less overtime needed, less fatigue, better sleep, better ability to approve use of benefit time, ability to work 2 in a car at times.

Concerns of 10-hour shifts:

- Fewer days off, team policing may not work, different schedule pattern than they were used to.

Council feedback is requested on how the department currently uses staffing and plans for staffing.

Questions/comments/discussion:

Councilmember Murphy questioned the status of the COPS Grant. He asked how overtime was paid and about having another K9.

Police Chief Chiodo replied the city would be notified in August or September. She referred to overtime stating it was hourly, paid time and ½. She said she never says no to anything regarding a possible 2nd K9, it could be if needs dictate.

Councilmember Piekarski Krech inquired about budget implications.

Police Chief Chiodo replied adding 3 with fringe and benefits, without grant coverage, is approximately \$124,000 a year per officer. A total of \$375,000 without grant funds.

Councilmember Gliva asked about the Traffic/DWI Officer. She questioned the overlap.

Police Chief Chiodo replied the Traffic/DWI Officer is budgeted by the department. Funding was received for an 18-month period (for 6 and then 12 months). She replied about overlap stating shift hours have not been set yet and how overlaps would work. It depends on how the shift is planned, there could be four hours during peak overlap.

Mayor Bartholomew requested information on where other communities lie regionally and nationally, population, officers per population, and square miles covered in a community.

Police Chief Chiodo responded they do not use that as a benchmark because some cities have different crimes.

Councilmember Piekarski Krech asked how it was determined how many were needed.

Police Chief Chiodo replied it comes down to calls they handle and the capacity. They want the balance to be able to handle calls and be proactive in the community.

Councilmember Gliva inquired about call volume going down and why.

Police Chief Chiodo replied some is due to the COVID peak and/or staffing difficulties in handling calls and different city directives.

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Councilmember Dietrich referenced the fire station study and if that would affect public safety plans. She addressed the Patrol/DWI mentioning it would be staff doing the same thing, just not dedicated to that one item.

Police Chief Chiodo responded the fire station study should not affect them. She replied about DWI patrolling stating there are a lot of staff that are proficient.

Police Chief Chiodo mentioned this has been brought before the Union leadership.

Next steps would be to work on the 2023 budget, submit the budget request for 3 more officers, and work on the 2nd part of the grant application with Commander Otis.

4. Adjourn:

City Administrator Kris Wilson informed the Council on the following:

- Requested the Council RSVP for the Commissioner Appreciation Picnic taking place June 20th.
- The Work Session for July has been moved to the third Monday, July 18th.
- The Fire Department Study is currently scheduled for the July 18th meeting along with those doing the Utility Rate Study.

Motion by Murphy to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Minutes prepared by Recording Secretary Sheri Yourczek