

Speed Bumps on SW Garden Home Road a Distinct Possibility

by Dean Smith, Ashcreek NA Chair (June 2011 SW Neighborhood, Inc News, page 2)

The City is completing a study that raises the real possibility that as many as 17 speed bumps may be placed along an approximately 2-mile portion of SW Garden Home Road (GHR) by next year. Will Stevens, program manager of Traffic Calming at the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), met with the Ashcreek Neighborhood Association (ANA) board on May 9th to describe the results of the study and the process necessary to get the “traffic calming” devices placed between the eastern end of GHR at SW Capitol Highway near Multnomah Village and where it intersects with SW Multnomah Boulevard near the Old Market Pub & Brewery to the west.

Although limited funds are available, Mr. Stevens said it was likely that the speed bumps could be constructed by next year if the affected neighborhoods (represented by their neighborhood associations) and residents along GHR support the project. The current design would be for 22-foot “table bumps” that would have six-foot ramps on each end with a 10-foot flat “table” in the middle. The bumps would stretch across the entire width of the roadway. This is a design that works well, he said, on roads used by Tri-Met buses.

Garden Home Road is classified as a neighborhood collector (but is not considered a major emergency response route). In order for speed bumps or other traffic calming devices to be placed on a neighborhood collector, daily traffic volumes must not exceed 4,000 trips per day without triggering a more complex, broader public approval process (GHR carries an average of 3,400 vehicles per day) and the 85th percentile of speeds recorded on the street must be at least 5 miles per hour (MPH) over the posted speed limit, which is 30 MPH.

According to the City’s survey, conducted April 27-29th, at the 85th percentile the average speeds recorded were 38 MPH. This means that 15% of vehicles traveling along this section of GHR are exceeding the speed limit by at least that amount. The worse news is that the 90th percentile the average speed record was in excess of 42 MPH with approximately 25 cars per day tracked at velocities of 47-49 MPH in the 30-MPH zone. Mr. Stevens said these represented “somewhat alarming” numbers.

The next step in the process is to finalize the study and project design, followed by a community-wide meeting hosted by the City to describe the project and receive community input. After that, the City would bring the proposed plan to the neighborhood groups, likely in late summer or early fall, for approval.

Meanwhile, ANA is polling Ashcreek neighbors, via its email list, on their attitudes

and thoughts about the potential for speed bumps on GHR. The matter will be on the agenda at ANA's next Board meeting, Monday June 13th. (7 pm in Room 34 of the Multnomah Arts Center). Neighbors are encouraged and welcome to attend. Residents of ANA who want to comment also may do so by sending an email to:

Roger Averbeck, ANA Transportation Chair: roger.averbeck@gmail.com

Please indicate whether you are generally supportive, neutral or opposed to the idea. This input will be shared at the June 13th ANA Board meeting and forwarded to Mr. Stevens at the Portland Bureau of Transportation.