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MEMORANDUM

TO: Trevor Walter, PE – Public Works Director/City Engineer
City of Baxter

FROM: Justin Anibas, PE (MN), PTOE

DATE: March 18, 2025

RE: Cypress Drive and Greenwood Road - Bus Stop Red Flashing Lights Stop
Compliance
SEH No. BAXTE 183117

REQUEST

Reichert Bus Service has noticed stop compliance concerns for northbound Cypress Drive traffic when southbound school buses are stopped at Greenwood Road, despite the school buses having red flashing lights and bus stop signs extended during the stop. As a result, Reichert Bus Service has requested signage to warn drivers of the upcoming bus stop and warn drivers that they are required to stop for buses with flashing red lights.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Currently, school buses stop at the intersection of Cypress Drive and Greenwood Road along southbound Cypress Drive to pick-up and drop-off children living in the multi-family residential units on Greenwood Road, west of Cypress Drive. No children cross Cypress Drive from the east side to get to the bus stop on the west side of the roadway. The bus stop cannot be relocated onto Greenwood Road, west of Cypress Drive, because the existing cul-de-sac on Greenwood Road is not large enough for buses to turn around.

At this location, Cypress Drive is a 5-lane roadway with two travel lanes in each direction and a two-way center left turn lane. The speed limit on Cypress Drive is 40 mph and has a daily traffic volume of approximately 3,200 vehicles per day based on a 2023 traffic count. The intersection of Cypress Drive and Greenwood Road currently operates under minor street stop control, with Greenwood Road traffic being required to stop. Under the minor stop control, drivers on Cypress Drive generally do not have to stop at the intersection under normal conditions. **Figure 1** shows the intersection and surrounding area.

With no children currently crossing Cypress Drive, the compliance issues with northbound vehicles not stopping for the bus stop at the intersection of Cypress Drive and Greenwood Road does not present an immediate safety issue for children trying to get on or off the bus. However, it is still illegal for drivers to not stop for a bus with flashing red lights and stop sign extended and compliance issues at this location could lead to compliance issues elsewhere where it may present significant safety issues. With the existing width of the roadway, it is possible that some drivers on northbound Cypress Drive do not see the buses stopped and/or do not believe they are required to stop for the buses because they are 40-50 feet away from the stopped bus.

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Figure 1 – Intersection Location



BUS STOP SIGNAGE REVIEW

Guidance from the Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MnMUTCD) was reviewed to determine if additional signage along Cypress Drive could be provided to improve compliance for drivers stopping for buses at bus stops. The MnMUTCD provides guidance on two different types of signs related to bus stops and bus flashing lights stop compliance, which is summarized below:

- “State Law Stop for School Bus When Red Lights Flashing” sign (R16-X1)
- School Bus Stop Ahead sign (S3-1)

Figure 2 – MnMUTCD School Bus Stop Signage



R16-X1



S3-1

“State Law Stop for School Bus When Red Lights Flashing” Sign

Based on Chapter 2B of the MnMUTCD, these signs “*should be installed along State Highways following State Entrance signs. Their intent is to inform motorists entering into Minnesota of some of the common motor vehicle laws*”. However, engineering judgement could be used to place these signs in other locations. Therefore, it is recommended that “State Law Stop for School Bus When Red Lights Flashing” Signs (R16-X1) be placed in advance of the intersection of Cypress Drive and Greenwood Road for both directions of Cypress Drive traffic to improve stop compliance for the school buses stopping at the intersection. If compliance issues remain, a custom plaque saying “Both Sides of Road” or “Both Directions of Travel” could be added.

School Bus Stop Ahead Sign

Based on Chapter 7 of the MnMUTCD, these signs “*shall be installed in advance of locations where a school bus, when stopped to pick up or discharge passengers, is not visible for an adequate distance and where there is no opportunity to relocate the school bus stop to provide adequate sight distance*”. There is no horizontal curvature, vertical curvature, or other obstructions that would prevent northbound traffic from seeing the southbound buses on Cypress Drive. Therefore, this sign would not be recommended at this location. In addition, these signs are targeted more towards alerting drivers that a bus stop exists and less at improving stop compliance for the school buses.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

With no children currently crossing Cypress Drive, the compliance concerns with northbound vehicles not stopping for the bus stop at the intersection of Cypress Drive and Greenwood Road does not present an immediate safety issue for children trying to get on or off the bus. However, it is still illegal for drivers to not stop for a bus with flashing red lights and stop sign extended and compliance issues at this location could lead to compliance issues elsewhere where it may present significant safety issues. With the existing width of the roadway, it is possible that some drivers on northbound Cypress Drive do not see the buses stopped and/or do not believe they are required to stop for the buses because they are 40-50 feet away from the stopped bus.

Based on review of MnMUTCD guidance, it is recommended that “State Law Stop for School Bus When Red Lights Flashing” Signs (R16-X1) be placed in advance of the intersection of Cypress Drive and Greenwood Road for both directions of Cypress Drive traffic to improve stop compliance for the school buses stopping at the intersection. If compliance issues remain, a custom plaque saying “Both Sides of Road” or “Both Directions of Travel” could be added.

Other efforts that could be considered to improve stop compliance for bus stop locations citywide:

- **Targeted Police Enforcement** – police enforcement targeted at drivers who disregard school bus stop signs/flashing lights. This could improve compliance issues for a while, but it is likely that compliance issues may return if enforcement does not continue.
- **Mass Media Education** – news stories, newspaper articles, social media posts, etc. targeted at educating drivers on the laws around stopping for school buses. The limitation with education is that it will only reach a certain portion of the population. Education is also typically only effective when paired with some form of enforcement.