



CHAPTER

1

SUMMARY

Introduction

In the spring of 2001, the City of Vancouver authorized the development of a neighborhood traffic management (NTM) program for the City's southeast area to comprehensively address the issues of traffic and livability on residential streets. Currently, citizen complaints include speeding on residential streets, neighborhood cut-through traffic, impacts of development and growth, and multi-modal accessibility barriers. This study was meant to advance the City's current project-by-project traffic calming efforts to address issues in a systematic manner that could ultimately be implemented on a Citywide basis.

The purpose of NTM is to address the negative livability impacts of unchecked speed and volume on neighborhood streets. This not only means fixing existing problems on existing streets, it also means not relocating the problem to another area. In addition, it means addressing neighborhood street impacts of new development so that no further problems are created. Issues addressed by NTM typically include vehicle speeds and volumes, multi-modal facilities, and connectivity.

While the need for NTM can generally be attributed to growth in the community, other existing factors also play a role in creating this need. One of these factors is the recent increase in vehicle-miles traveled and the continued reliance on the automobile as the primary mode of transportation. Another is the practice of building wide residential streets that create barriers for pedestrian and bicycle travel and increase vehicle speeds.

As a result of continued growth in the community, there is a greater potential for the quality of life in neighborhoods to be impacted by increased traffic volumes and speeds. As arterial streets become congested, drivers find alternate routes. Many times, these alternatives are local or neighborhood streets.

A citizen steering committee was formed to guide consideration of NTM in SE Vancouver and provide recommendations to the city council for adoption on this matter. The committee met eight times over the course of one year, reviewing information regarding traffic calming, establishing goals, and working through development of a process for implementation. The following list summarizes the key elements of the NTM Plan:

- No new speeding or volume problems will be created by new developments or roadway projects. Neighborhood street impacts will be reviewed in each project's Traffic Impact Study and will require mitigation measures. New developments and roads will be designed with streets incorporating NTM into design.
- A two phase NTM Process, which relies on citizen and neighborhood association involvement, has been devised to deal with neighborhood issues and traffic calming measures.
- A prioritization system has been set up to guide public funding.
- Cross-sections for neighborhood residential streets to appropriately manage speed and volume have been recommended (28 to 32 feet in width).
- Guidelines have been established for street design that includes characteristics of all modes of transportation (pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and auto).
- A nexus between provision of added connectivity and traffic calming to enhance livability has been incorporated into the action plan.
- The recommended action plan included elements of traffic calming, mode enhancements (pedestrian, bike, and transit), and complementary TSP projects.

This NTM program will be reviewed by City Council, where it will be considered for adoption. Once adopted, this plan will be incorporated into City Code and will become a component of Vancouver's Street Standards and Transportation System Plan. The following sections summarize the chapters of this NTM Plan.

Existing Conditions

The first step in the development of the NTM program was to define the existing conditions in the SE Vancouver area. Chapter 2 includes data collected from the City of Vancouver, C-Tran, and multiple Neighborhood Action Plans (NAPs). The NAPs call for improvements to neighborhood livability. Review of current neighborhood issues (complaints and input from the steering team) correlates problem locations with streets that commonly are wide and do not have pedestrian facilities. The conditions defined in this chapter include:

- Study Area
- Roadway Functional Classification
- Public Transportation
- Primary Emergency Response Routes
- Snow Plow and De-icing Routes
- Street Width
- Motor Vehicle Collisions
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Collisions
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
- Neighborhood Traffic Issue Locations
- NAP Specific Improvements
- NTM Inventory

Policy and Process

Chapter 3 focuses primarily on the Neighborhood Traffic Management (NTM) process for retrofitting existing streets. The process, developed through citizen steering committee meetings, stakeholder interviews, and staff review, includes elements to address problems in existing neighborhoods and to address new developments and traffic growth. The NTM process was developed on the foundations of the four Es of NTM (Education, Enforcement, Engineering, and Enhancement) and includes a significant component of community involvement and approval.

Figure 1-1 summarizes the process described in Chapter 3. The goals that were developed by the citizen steering committee to guide the process include:

- Support and develop community cohesiveness by establishing a process to reduce threatening motor vehicle traffic on existing streets (using retrofits) and on new streets (using design standards) without relocating problems to other streets.
- Design and build streets with appropriate standards (width, visibility, landscaping, maintainable, aesthetics, appropriate traffic calming tools) that balance operations with their designated speed and volume.

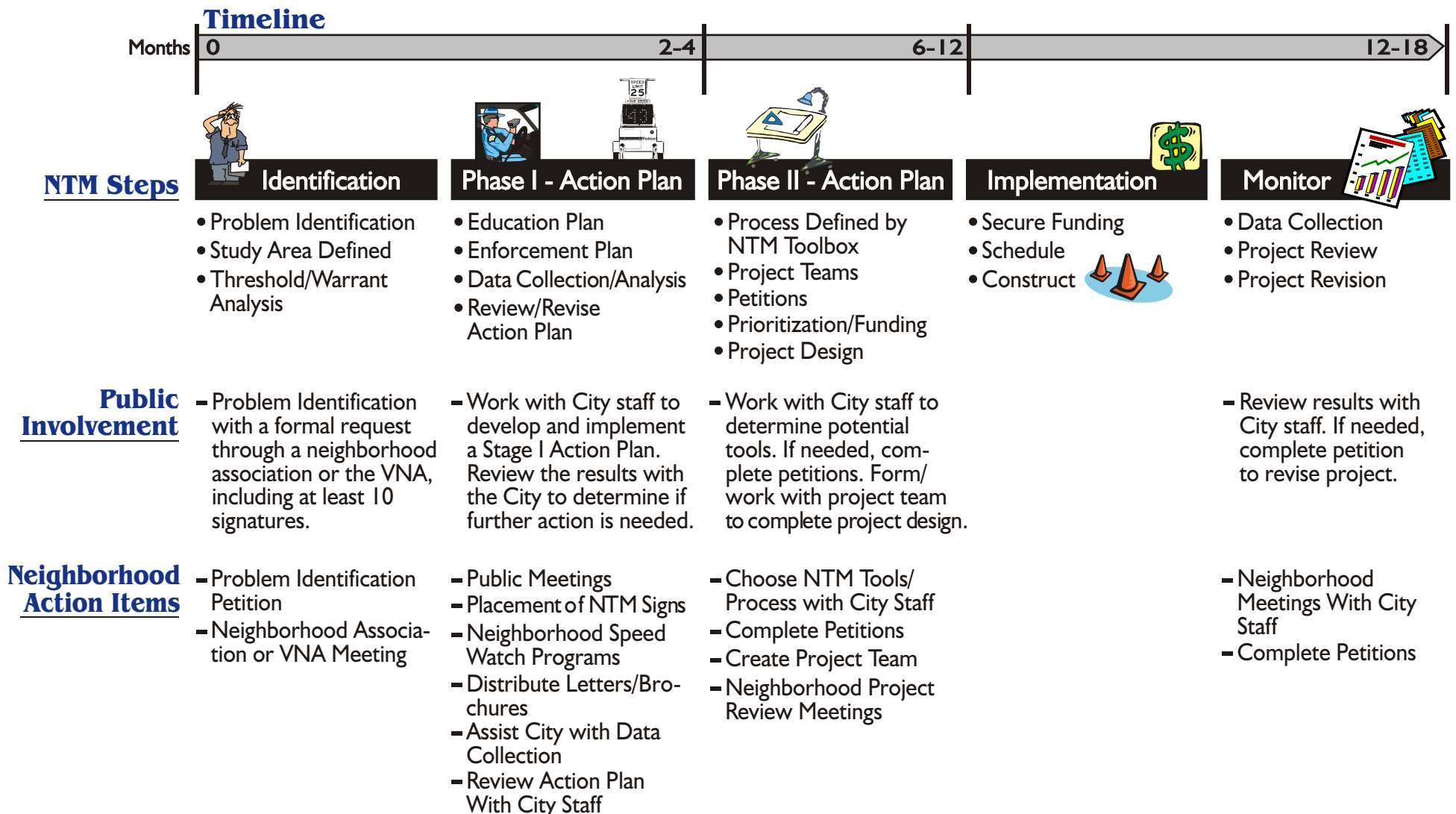
- Address requirements/ desire for arterial capacity and alternative routes to utilize arterials in order to avoid motor vehicle intrusion into neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood developments should be multi-modal and accessible by removing barriers, improving street crossings, filling sidewalk gaps, and providing routes to schools, parks, and activity centers.
- Through truck routes should be focused onto NTM Category “A” routes to minimize inappropriate truck traffic in residential areas.
- NTM project designs should be “maintenance friendly” and should include maintenance costs in their budgets to ensure sustainability.
- Minimize impacts to emergency response routes, public transportation, school buses, and other service delivery vehicles.
- Maintain an education program (eg. meetings, classes, website, newsletters, before and after studies, or brochures) that improves driver awareness and behavior in neighborhoods.
- Prioritize transportation improvement funds for NTM projects.

Development and Street Design Review

The most opportune time to address future neighborhood livability and to avoid problems is when new streets are constructed and at development review. Chapter 4 defines process, guidelines, and actions for the implementation of this component of the NTM Plan. The objective is to not create any more problems than already exist and to not compound existing problems (so that the process defined in Chapter 3 can begin to reduce the number of neighborhood concerns). The actions that are required to adopt these components include:

- Adopt the NTMP as a street design standard
- Adopt Comprehensive Plan Code amendments that refer to the NTMP for residential street design standards
- Adopt Comprehensive Plan Code amendments that require NTM elements to traffic analysis requirements
- Adopt the NTMP as a project review standard
- Adopt Code amendments that require the mitigation of NTM impacts prior to opening of a new street
- Adopt Code amendments that create a fee (cash-out) option for a project that does not wish to enter the NTM process as part of the project team

NTMP Process (Simplified):



Note: Projects with high priority and/or private funding sources may make it through the process in a shorter time frame. In addition, individual NTM tools have different implementation periods depending on the street type. Projects that reach Phase II, but do not rank high enough for public funding would be postponed to the next annual funding cycle.

**Figure 1-1
NTM Process Summary**

Street Design Guidelines

Chapter 5 develops design guidelines that will guide the adoption and implementation of NTM in neighborhood and street design. In addition, Chapter 5 provides guidelines on the proper design of streets to maintain a safe and appealing pedestrian and traffic environment. These guidelines provide a tool for educating citizens and assisting project teams. The components discussed in Chapter 5 include:

- Purpose of Guidelines
- Street Anatomy
- Traffic Environment
- Tools for Improving the Pedestrian Environment
 - ◆ Border Areas
 - ◆ Expanding the Border Area
 - ◆ Crossing Area
 - ◆ Connectivity
 - ◆ Place Making
- Pedestrian Access to Transit
- Updating Existing Street Standards
- Improving the Traffic Environment

NTM Action Plan

In order to create a viable area-wide NTM Program, an Action Plan was developed to define the magnitude of potential NTM projects in the study area. The action plan helps define not only where potential projects may need to be considered, but also the level of funding and programs that may be needed to address neighborhood livability concerns. Chapter 6 defines an Action Plan that includes Education, Enforcement, Engineering, and Enhancement.

The Action Plan projects developed in Chapter 6 focus on improving neighborhood livability by both implementing traffic calming retrofits on existing streets and improving multi-modal connectivity with system wide sidewalk and bike lane in-fill. The estimated cost for this type of action plan is a \$1.1 million annual budget over 30 years.

The type of NTM improvement projects, and the corresponding level of funding needs, will be chosen by Vancouver citizens and City Council. Current City NTM budgets (approximately \$100,000 per year) cannot fully fund all of the projects identified in the action plan. Chapter 6 discusses public funding options to supplement the current City NTM budget. The area-wide policy level funding issue includes the following options:

- Adding NTM funding to a transportation levy in the City of Vancouver
- Adding a specific sidewalk improvement funding to a transportation levy in the City of Vancouver
- Partial funding through the CIP
- New voter approved funding dedicated to NTM
- Privately funding NTM without public funds
 - ◆ Local residents pay cash
 - ◆ Local residents agree to a local improvement district
 - ◆ Private development funds NTM as a mitigation measure of project approval or as an element of site plan design
- Funding as a mitigation measure of a transportation project (for example, a roadway project that potentially could impact a neighborhood and includes NTM measures in its funding plan to address impacts).