



City of Vancouver
SE Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan

Steering Committee Summary
July 26, 2001

Members Present:

Jim Etzkorn
Dave Fontana
Chuck Hoover
Dennis Johnson
Chris Nowak
Gary Thompson
Tim Schauer
Terry Schoft
Gail Spolar
Lyn Wilson

Project Team Members:

Todd Boulanger, City of Vancouver Transportation Services (COV)
Traci Chumbley, COV
Matt Ransom, COV
John Manix, COV
Randy McCourt, DKS Associates
Karen Ciocia, The JD White Company, Inc. (TWC)
Kyle Brown, TWC

Introductions

Todd Boulanger, City of Vancouver (COV), began the meeting by welcoming those in attendance to the first City of Vancouver Subarea Plan Steering Committee meeting. The agenda for this meeting was kept short to encourage the groups' participation. The Steering Committee is comprised of 14 members from neighborhoods and business as well as technical experts. Until recently, neighborhood traffic management was typically approached on a smaller scale. The east side of Vancouver is experiencing larger-scale traffic problems and with the recent annexations, these problems needed to be addressed. Todd then introduced project team members and consultants.

Karen Ciocia, The JD White Company, Inc. (TWC), stated that nametags used at this meeting are temporary and placards will be used next month. The project team wanted to ensure that everyone's name was spelled correctly before constructing the placards. Karen circulated a form with the committee's contact information for the group to check for accuracy. Karen stated that the committee is welcome to e-mail or call if they had any questions throughout the project. It was also emphasized that if the committee hears any unknown terms during the meetings, they are encouraged to ask for clarification. Other TWC staff members, Kristy Laing and Kyle Brown, are additional contacts if members need information. The meeting was then handed over to Randy McCourt, DKS Associates, who described main agenda topics.

Randy stated that he wished to introduce the project at tonight's meeting while also collecting information from the committee regarding their opinions on traffic calming, and positives and

negatives of the existing transportation system. The project team formulated a short agenda to encourage the committee to return with unique ideas. It was reiterated that if the committee was confused with any terminology, they were encouraged to ask for clarification. Randy then asked the committee to briefly introduce themselves.

Chuck Hoover is a member of the Bella Vista Neighborhood Association and a participant in the City of Vancouver Transportation System Plan Community Advisory Team. Chuck is also a former Planning Commissioner and has participated on the Vancouver Planning Oversight Committee (VPOC).

Gary Thompson is the director of transportation for the Evergreen School District.

Tim Schauer is an engineer with McKay and Sposito in Vancouver. His company designed many of the eastside neighborhoods that are considered pedestrian friendly.

Jim Etzkorn is president of the East Neighborhood Alliance Group (ENAG) and a member of the Vancouver Neighborhood Alliance (VNA) Traffic Safety Committee.

Gail Spolar is representing C-TRAN and is a member of the Bella Vista Neighborhood Association. Heather Coston will be representing C-TRAN at future meetings.

Chris Nowak is representing the City of Vancouver Police Department in Mary White's absence.

Dave Fontana is representing American Medical Response in Jeff Bissett's absence.

Lyn Wilson is representing Independent Living Resources who typically works with the City.

Dennis Johnson is representing the Vancouver Bicycle Club.

Terry Schoft is with the City of Vancouver Fire Department and is substituting for Dennis Walker at this meeting.

Review of the Scope of Services

Randy stated that it is important for the committee to realize the wide range of perspectives and opinions on the committee. The second item on the agenda reviewed the project's scope of work. Task one is the public involvement component of the project and will be lead by Karen. Committee members are encouraged to communicate with the community as outreach is an integral component of this process. It is important to emphasize that this project is process-driven. Without the ongoing process of the Steering Committee, the project will not be as successful. Additional perspectives will be collected later in the project as the process progresses. Tasks two and three focus on data collection and modeling. Task four consists of developing a goals / needs assessment which tonight's exercise initiates. Tasks five and six are the core components of the study. Task five is comprised of a pilot project and a management strategy matrix. Task six employs reasonable methods in developing the design of traffic calming devices. Task seven will be the drafting of a local street standard plan development guidebook. This task will be made possible through assistance from OTAK, the engineering firm working on the project. Task eight is the final task. Everything may not be identified in the final report, though the committee will have the opportunity to identify a wide variety of potential actions. Again, the process portion of this project is the single most important element in its success.

Monthly meetings will be held with workshops later in the project. The neighborhoods in the subarea have experienced a great deal of issues with livability and the City chose to select a larger subarea in order to determine if a regional approach to studying traffic issues is successful. If so, the City will likely perform a city-wide study of neighborhood traffic.

Matt Ransom, City of Vancouver, stated that his interpretation of the scope of work is developing a policy and process which will then be tested. This is a unique approach as the process is often not tested.

Randy stated that he will provide background information to the committee through the use of maps. It was emphasized that these maps are draft and will change throughout the life of the project due to the dynamic nature of the databases they were created from, and the new information that will be created by this study.

Randy described a map of sidewalks in the subarea. Pedestrian accidents in the study area were also included. It was seen that these accidents typically occur near arterials such as Mill Plain Boulevard. Additional statistics were included in the map as follows: The total street mileage in the subarea is 262 miles with local streets comprising 192 (73%) of those miles. The total street mileage with sidewalks is 110 miles, with local streets encompassing 77 (70%) miles. It is also important to note that a majority of the sidewalks in the project boundaries are located in the eastern portion of the subarea.

Todd stated that though sidewalks can be found, some may not be suitable for all due to a lack of curb cuts, etc.

Randy stated that though database updates are not the focus of this study, existing sources need updating and this project will likely set efforts in motion. The committee is free to add any details to the existing maps as more data is certainly welcome. Randy warned that the maps are not precise and the committee should be continually aware of this.

Karen asked Randy to describe the project boundaries. Randy replied that the project area is NE 87th Avenue east to SE 192nd Avenue, and NE 18th Street south to the Columbia River. Approximately 20 neighborhood associations are located in the study area. Existing data sources will be fused with others to attain desired results.

Randy presented a map of public transportation routes in the subarea. An important aspect of this map is the ability to correlate bus stops which see high use with the existing sidewalk infrastructure. If a bus stop is experiencing a high capacity in an area with poor existing conditions of sidewalks, it can be identified for action. Matt stated that the transit routes are incorrect on the map due to the fact that it does not show recent changes to routes, nor does it include Evergreen Transit Center.

A map illustrating the range of speed limits was presented. A majority of the roads have a 25 mile per hour speed limit due to the large number of local routes in the subarea.

Randy discussed a map displaying the number of motor vehicle collisions in the subarea relative to a street's functional class. A high amount of collisions are seen on arterials. It was noted that of 1161 accidents in the study area from 1997 to 2000, 90 (5%) occurred in residential areas. A majority of accidents occurred on Mill Plain Boulevard, a principal east-west arterial.

A bicycle route map with collisions was also presented to the committee. As is seen with other maps, only 10% of the collisions occurred on local streets. This map speaks most poignantly as to the barriers which separate neighborhoods. Arterials are seen to be a threat to bike because they are unsafe to cross.

The final map displayed the various Neighborhood Action Plans occurring in the subarea and existing traffic calming efforts. It is hoped that data from the police could later be incorporated into this map to show where speeding occurs. A committee member stated that they knew of an effort in the City Manager's Office that aims to increase the accuracy of collecting such data. Efforts to enhance the efficiency of logging traffic complaints have also been implemented. Randy responded that this would help immensely and would follow-up to gain access to the information.

Todd described the significance of Neighborhood Action Plans. These plans are the effort of each neighborhood association and focus on traffic and other issues. Action plans are considered a legal document and a conduit for funding.

John Manix, COV, stated that an effort to study pedestrian accidents will be beginning soon. The City is unsure as to how the study will be coordinated though it will likely include an education program.

Todd stated that the tools of traffic calming (bulbouts, chicanes, etc.) must be balanced with the needs of the community. The safety and livability of the neighborhoods should coexist with other services such as police and fire response.

Randy stated that most of the information presented to the committee will be map-oriented. Though some data may be deficient now, by the end of the project it may improve due to the committee's efforts.

Traffic calming studies, as we are familiar with them today, began in San Francisco. As a result, other studies along the west coast were established. Portland, Oregon was the leader in implementing calming efforts. Lessons were learned from neighbors in these studies and they will be referenced throughout the course of the current project. Traffic calming efforts typically receive approximately 75-90% support from the public. Efforts such as speed humps and speed trailers were often successful. When problems did occur, it was often found in the public process. Studies should be process-oriented in order to gain the public's perspective.

Randy then turned the meeting over to the committee who listed their impressions of traffic calming. They included:

- Livability and safety.
- Adherence to speed laws which make the streets safe for pedestrians.
- Limiting the speed of vehicles.
- Enforcement coupled with calming.
- Speed bumps, circles, bulbouts.
- A means to reduce the threatening nature of automobiles.
- Neighborhood-focused means of problem solving. Compromise.
- Streets sometimes unsafe for bicycles and pedestrians. Opportunity to reduce threatening nature of automobiles through use of bike lanes and landscaping.

- Creative ways to mitigate traffic concerns. Methods to get traffic to follow the intent of roadway.
- Trip reduction.
- Noise reduction.

Randy asked that each member to formulate one positive and one negative aspect of Vancouver's transportation system. If a member supplied a positive response, they would follow with a negative, and vice versa. They included:

Positive

- Neighborhood streets in Fisher's Landing are well-planned in terms of width and curvature.
- Bike lanes on SE Ellsworth Avenue and SE Talton Avenue.
- SE 164th Avenue is "smooth sailing."
- Ability to cross SE Briarwood Drive safely.
- The beginning of SE 164th Avenue is the "right idea."
- Area west of SE 140th Avenue includes a system of well-connected streets.
- SE 136th Avenue from Mill Plain Boulevard to NE 18th Street has had very few accidents.
- McGillivray Boulevard has many good qualities and is a pleasant drive. The route is also a major east-west bike arterial
- Hearthwood Boulevard's landscaped parkways lends to traffic calming.
- Vancouver's tree ordinance lends to natural means of traffic calming.
- Separated sidewalks.
- Speed bumps that accommodate fire and ambulances.

Negative

- McGillivray Boulevard's design lends to speeding. The actual speed of motorists on this route is often more than what they perceive. Stop signs are often ignored and pedestrians are threatened by their exposure to traffic.
- SE St. Helens Avenue between NE 97th and NE 98th Avenue is often used as a cut-through and is too wide.
- Schools are often not connected with bike lanes.
- Traffic signals are not synchronized on Mill Plain Boulevard between NE 104th Avenue and Chkalov Drive.
- SE 164th Avenue has insufficient pedestrian access and feels like a freeway.
- The neighborhoods in the vicinity of SE 15th Street and SE 170th Avenue have streets that are difficult to navigate and find addresses. The naming protocol of the City's streets does not make sense and the streets do not form a complete network.
- NE 98th Avenue is the result of standards that create wide streets. This induces speeding and is a poor use of the land.
- SE 112th Avenue, from Mill Plain Boulevard to NE 18th Street: cut-through with large traffic loads.
- Bulbouts on SE St. Helens Avenue to NE 98th Avenue conflict with bicycle traffic.
- Large amount of traffic accidents in the Countryside Woods neighborhood (NE 155th Avenue between Mill Plain Boulevard and 18th Street.)

A committee member asked if the City has plans for speed bumps in the Countryside Wood neighborhood. John stated that the City does not currently have speed bumps planned for that area.

Karen stated that a bike / walk forum is being held on Saturday July 28, 2001 at Esther Short Park from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. A video copy of Dan Burden's recent presentation is also available for committee members to view. Karen then asked the committee if they preferred to receive meeting materials via e-mail or standard mail. The committee responded that they preferred e-mail. Karen stated that the committee can notify the sender if they are unable to open file attachments.

Randy stated that the next meeting will consist of how to transform ideas to reality. Todd asked the committee to read Dan Burden's publication on traffic calming and formulate ideas for the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 7:00 p.m.

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