



City of Vancouver  
SE Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP)  
**Steering Committee Summary**  
**September 27, 2001**

**Members Present:**

Jeff Bissett  
Jim Etzkorn  
Patrick Greene  
Dennis Johnson  
Nannette Kistler  
Bob Knight  
Deb Wallace  
Lyn Wilson

**Project Team Members:**

Todd Boulanger, City of Vancouver  
Transportation Services (COV)  
Matt Ransom, COV  
John Manix, COV  
Randy McCourt, DKS Associates  
Chris Maciejewski, DKS Associates  
Kristy Laing, The JD White Company, Inc.

**Opening**

Randy McCourt, DKS Associates, began the meeting with brief introductions. Jim Etzkorn noted that he was recently elected the Neighborhood Traffic Safety Chair for the Vancouver Neighborhood Alliance. Randy asked that committee members continue to forward any comments they may have about the NTMP goals to Todd Boulanger, City of Vancouver, at [todd.boulanger@ci.vancouver.wa.us](mailto:todd.boulanger@ci.vancouver.wa.us).

**Local / Neighborhood Routes**

Randy distributed a map identifying the local / neighborhood cut-through routes, as marked by the Steering Committee at the last meeting. He said that this map will continue to be updated throughout the process. Randy also distributed a map showing the arterial street system and classification. He said that this may be useful to the committee when prioritizing projects. Randy noted that at last month's meeting, there was a tendency to mark arterials as local routes. These were found to be routes that the committee identified as neighborhood streets, even though they are classified as arterials.

**Street Categories**

Randy distributed a third map, Figure 12 Street Categories, to the Steering Committee. He reviewed the various categories, as shown on the map. Randy said that categories A and B are streets that are related to the City's Transportation System Plan, while categories C and D are more applicable to the SE Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan. Category C is unlikely to be an emergency response route, and category D would not be an emergency response route. Because categories A and B are possible emergency response routes, the number of tools that can be used on these streets is limited. The intent of the street classification is to match the appropriate tools with the streets. Most of the time the issue with neighborhood traffic improvements is with the process. Citizens and the City need a process that can be applied on a day-to-day basis. This makes it easier for citizens to understand the program and ways street improvements are carried out.

**Program Options**

Randy reviewed the memorandum, emailed to committee members and distributed by Todd, regarding the process for the Neighborhood Traffic Management (NTM) Program. He reviewed five different programs that may be considered. These programs are detailed in the memo, and included multi-level NTM, Capital Improvement Program (CIP) related, neighborhood complaint, warrant/threshold, and functional classification.

Randy said that some cities have mixed and matched programs. He then asked committee members if they see elements that should be included in Vancouver's program. A representative from the City of Vancouver

Police Department said that she preferred the multi-tiered approach. The department receives numerous traffic complaints, and she noted that the department does not come close to satisfying the public with complaints on congestion, speed, etc. Sometimes it is reality that citizens call about, while sometimes it is perception. Another member said that solutions need to be a combination of programs. No one solution would answer every road. He does not think that the functional classification program would work.

A member asked if the programs have previously been implemented. Randy said that all have been implemented by different cities. The success rate increases when there is a tiered program developed through effective neighborhood involvement.

Two other members thought a multi-tiered program is needed. A member noted that she did not like the complaint method. She said that she can see the functional classification program as a start. Concerns were noted about the CIP program forcing neighborhood projects to compete with other transportation projects. Investment needs to be allocated for traffic calming, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements.

Another member expressed support of the multi-level approach. He noted that it is essential to have citizens involved in the process. Communication failures with neighborhoods can cause disaster. The warrant / threshold program would put pressure on people to organize and put together a neighborhood association.

Randy said that in Salem, programs started through the neighborhood associations. Changes first had to be supported / sponsored within the neighborhood association, and that became the warrant / threshold.

A member requested comparison information on how programs work in other cities. Randy said he would distribute a matrix of this information. Others who have implemented plans will present at a future Steering Committee meeting. A member said it is important to know the cost, how effective the program is, and how the community benefited from the program.

A member asked about the project timeline. Randy said that a NTM plan will be drafted in the winter of 2001, continuing to 2002. In the spring of 2002, the plan will be released to the public, with a project list. The two keys are to put a process into place, and to develop a project list. A member asked when the committee would decide on a program. Randy responded that he will design a multi-tiered program that mixes in other elements. He said he has received general direction from the committee, and will start from there and bring a draft back to the table.

### **Measuring Criteria**

Randy said that at some point it must be determined if there is a neighborhood traffic problem, its extent, and what problem should be addressed first. He noted that there will not be sufficient resources to fix everything.

Randy presented criteria to measure the need for a project. *Speed* is easy to measure and quantify. Often, 85% speeds of 28 to 32 miles per hour is a point at which neighbors commonly become concerned. *Volume* focuses on the number of vehicles per hour or per day, measured by road count tubes. Two to three thousand cars a day on a residential street can commonly be seen as the environmental capacity of a street. Research does not identify a specific capacity number that changes from neighborhood to neighborhood. *Pedestrian / multi-modal accessibility* can be measured through the presence or absence of sidewalks or presence of bike lanes or transit.

A member noted frustrations with the lack of curb cuts and with the curb cut installation process. She says that curb cuts often compete with neighborhood parks for funding. Randy noted a neighborhood with children has a different environment than does a neighborhood with older residents. A majority of curb cut requirements are included in the design standards, and in new developments. However, a large proportion of older development needs curb cuts.

One member said that, last month, there was discussion about the need to be pedestrian friendly. Will this program address pedestrian needs, or is it focusing on traffic calming and traffic management? Randy responded that there are two parts to the NTM program: 1) a review of the design standards for new development – such as sidewalks and curb cuts; 2) managing what is already in place. If criteria are set giving high points for sidewalks, prioritization can be influenced.

A member suggested including a factor for the use of property along the street, such as schools, churches, public buildings, etc. The density of the property is also important.

John Manix, City of Vancouver, requested that criteria consider income level, noting a small number of low/moderate income neighborhoods in the southeast portion of the city. He suggested that low-income neighborhoods be given a higher score for the prioritization list. He also suggested looking at projects that involve partnerships with potential financial assistance to a project.

A member requested a more specific definition of *activity center* to include major retirement communities and day care centers, where the age of residents will not vary. John suggested using this definition for ranking sidewalk improvements.

The group discussed street classification, cut-through traffic and emergency response routes. Randy continued to review the measurable criteria. *Noise* is measured in decibels, but this may already be measured through speed or volume. Statistics are not available that compare variations in noise levels for low volume streets. Noise varies in terms of peak hour, proximity of schools, weather, etc. He also noted that stop signs and speed humps can increase noise levels.

*Traffic diversion* also needs to be considered. If a calming device is installed on one street, traffic may reroute to neighboring streets. *Cost* can include funding versus income levels. *Standards* are things such as street width, visibility, landscaping. *Connectivity* looks at the number of routes in the neighborhood. *Volume* may also be a measure of connectivity. There are several measures that look at multi-modal transportation. Some projects allow pedestrians, bicycles and buses to use a street.

Randy would like the committee to prioritize these criteria and use them to identify project worthiness for transportation funding. A member asked that *proximity to transit route* be added as a criterion (it was pointed out that this criteria was already represented in the bus/truck route criteria)

Three criteria were added to the list: population density, neighborhood income level, and proximity of land use. The committee members then scored the criteria using fake money to assign value. The scoring results indicate that speed and volume are the highest priority level for criteria. The second level includes proximity to land use, impacts to emergency response, population density/pedestrian activity centers, and multi-modal accessibility. The remaining criteria all received a small percentage of the total points.

### **Next Meeting**

Next month, the committee will identify a series of streets for further research to create a range of statistics for assessment. Randy distributed a list of potential demonstration projects to the committee; members can add to this list at the next meeting. He would like to find a project that some of the process can be applied to, then refine the process. The project team is conducting a detailed operational analysis on connectivity, targeting the area of 136<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He defined *road diet* as reducing the number of lanes and or width of street. Emergency Response Diverters are streets that do not allow car traffic, but allow for ambulances, fire trucks and bicycles.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.