

ITEM 1
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 18
COUNCIL MEETING 85/03/04

RE: LETTER FROM MR. GEORGE STEINMANN, 4206 UNION STREET,
N. BURNABY, B.C., V5C 2X4
GILMORE AVENUE AT UNION STREET

MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the recommendation of the Director Engineering be adopted.

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TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER 1985 02 27
FROM: DIRECTOR ENGINEERING
SUBJECT: GILMORE AVENUE AT UNION STREET

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT this report be received for information purposes.

SUMMARY:

On 1985 January 14 Council adopted the recommendation of the Traffic Safety Committee to convert the then existing four-way stop at Gilmore and Union to a two-way stop with stops on Union. This conversion was completed on 1985 February 04. Council also adopted the recommendation for a six-month review of the conversion. This interim review is in response to the delegation appearing before Council this evening.

REPORT:

Attached to this report is Item "D" of the 1985 January 14 "Report of the Traffic Safety Committee" to Council. Item "D" states the reasons for the recommendation to convert the four-way stop to a two-way stop. Included in this latter report was the statement, "Unfortunately the average motorist tends to be a habitual driver and the removal of stop signs could produce undesirable results." Recognizing this problem, when we implemented the conversion we placed advance warning signs with amber flashers for nighttime use on Union Street and special black on yellow warning tabs beneath the remaining stop signs to inform approaching motorists of the changes.

Within the first week after the conversion we received two or three calls from motorists who alleged there were no advance warning signs. In each case we asked the caller to

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have another look and if they still did not see any advance warning signs to call us back. None did. Nonetheless, we checked the signing ourselves and the advance signs were in place as per instructions.

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On 1985 February 08 we recorded the first accident at the intersection since the conversion. This accident, a right angle collision, was apparently of a relatively minor nature and according to the accident report it occurred on icy roads which may have been a contributing factor. The second reported accident, on 1985 February 12, also involved icy roads as a westbound vehicle slid through the stop sign and a southbound vehicle swerved to avoid it. No vehicle-to-vehicle collision occurred and the only damage was that sustained by the southbound vehicle and the objects which it struck, i.e., a newspaper box and a Metro Transit bus stop post.

While the change in traffic control may have been a contributing factor to these two accidents, the existence of icy road conditions may have been an equal or greater factor. We do not feel that these two minor accidents warrant the reinstallation of the four-way stop.

One concern expressed by a local resident who phoned to complain about the removal of stops on Gilmore at Union was that school children crossed at this location. The neighbourhood elementary school is Kitchener School, located four blocks south of the subject intersection. There is a patrolled and marked mid-block pedestrian crosswalk located opposite the main entrance to the school and it is there that school children should be crossing Gilmore Avenue. School children also have the option, although it is not the recommended one, of crossing Gilmore at Parker where there still exists a four-way stop. The above mentioned local resident, who lived on Union Street, after having the reasons for the change explained to her was apparently in favour of the change.

Our recommendation to retain the existing two-way stop does not preclude the previous recommendation to review the situation six months after conversion. This review will include accident statistics, vehicle volumes and vehicle speeds.


DIRECTOR ENGINEERING

DE:cf
cc: () Traffic Supervisor
() Traffic Safety Committee
Attach.

Excerpt from the 1985 January 14 Traffic Safety Committee Report

D. REQUEST FOR A FOUR WAY STOP - INTERSECTIONS OF UNION STREET AND MADISON AVENUE AND UNION STREET AND CARLETON AVENUE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT the four way stop at Gilmore Avenue and Union Street be converted to a two way stop with stops on Union Street.

(CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY)
2. THAT staff report to the Traffic Safety Committee in six months on the effects of implementing recommendation #1.

(CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY)
3. THAT Mr. & Mrs. George Steinmann, 4206 Union Street, Burnaby, B.C., V5C 2X4, be sent a copy of this report.

(CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY)

R E P O R T

A petition containing 45 signatures and dated 1984 October 18 was received from Mr. and Mrs. George Steinmann, 4206 Union Street, Burnaby, B.C., V5C 2X4, requesting an investigation into automobile and property damage caused by speeding and careless drivers in the 4200 Block Union Street. As a measure of safety for children and pedestrians alike, the petitioners recommended the placement of a four way stop control at the captioned intersections.

A report dated 1984 November 14 was received from the Director Engineering responding to the petitioner's concerns, the contents of which are contained hereunder:

"Neither of the captioned intersections meet the accepted warrants for the installation of a four way stop control. One part of the two part warrant requires five accidents per year of a type considered correctable by this form of control. The intersections of Carleton and Madison Avenues with Union Street have recorded 15 and 8 right angle accidents respectively since 1976 with peak years of 3 and 2 right angle accidents, also respectively.

The petition containing the captioned request stated that there had been '...three serious accidents where parked car and property have been damaged' within the past six months. A check of police records found reports for three mid-block accidents on the subject section of Union Street, one of which we feel was not accidental but was deliberate. The circumstances for this particular 'incident' would not have been correctable through the requested stop sign controls, nor would the other two accidents, both in the 4200 Block Union Street been correctable because of the major contributing factor appearing to have been alcohol, as both resulted in Criminal Code charges.

The use of stop signs as speed control devices is not recommended as studies have indicated that they result in a high disobedience rate and increased speeds between stop signs. For example, in our own study conducted on Oxford Street between Madison and Willingdon Avenues after the stop signs at Oxford and Madison were reversed the median, average, highest and lowest recorded speeds were all increased from those recorded before the reversal. Only the 85th percentile speed was reduced and this by an insignificant 0.6 km/h.

Some of the other adverse effects of using stop signs for other than their intended purpose, i.e. to correct accident histories or to designate collector streets, were reported to the Committee on 84 06 26. We could expect similar results in the subject neighbourhood if the requested stop signs were installed.

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It has been the stated intent of both the Planning and Engineering Departments to declassify Union Street from a local collector street to a residential street. The existence of Parker Street as a collector street two blocks south of Union Street makes the latter superfluous as a collector.

Towards this end we contracted, under an L.I.P. Project, Union Street from Boundary Road to Gilmore Avenue to an 8 metre (28 foot) standard and cooperated with the City of Vancouver in the restriction of the median opening on Boundary Road at Union Street to northbound left turns only. This latter improvement was primarily intended to correct an accident problem but also served to reduce the traffic volumes on Union Street.

Prior to the restriction in the Boundary Road median the volumes on Union Street east of Boundary were approximately 2,500 vehicles per day. After the restriction the volumes dropped by over 50% to less than 1,200 vehicles. This lower volume has held fairly constant since with the most recent count showing an increase which may have been attributable to the transit strike.

To complete the declassification of Union Street as a local collector street we need to construct, to an 8 metre standard, those remaining sections of Union Street which are still an interim standard. We have received requests from the subject section of Union Street, Gilmore to Willingdon, and also for Union Street, Alpha to Beta for inclusion in a Local Improvement Program. The latter section may go forward in 1985 but the subject section may not go forward until 1986 at the earliest.

Upon completion to the final standard of pavement the next step in declassification is the removal of stop signs controlling the intersecting north/south streets. This removal of assigned right-of-way, from Union Street, would act as a further deterrent to through traffic and to speeding traffic as it places the onus on all drivers approaching the uncontrolled intersection to be prepared to stop and yield if there is traffic on their right.

Unfortunately the average motorist tends to be a habitual driver and the removal of stop signs could produce undesirable results. In order to minimize the possible adverse effects we will be staging the implementation of the final step in the declassification. The first stage would be the conversion of the existing four way stop at Gilmore Avenue and Union Street to a two way stop with the assigned right-of-way to Gilmore Avenue, a designated collector street. Hopefully this would result in a further reduction in traffic volumes on Union Street, which if successful would allow us to proceed with the second stage, removal of stop signs at the remaining north/south streets.

While the latter part of this report appears to have gotten away from the original request and, in fact, could be viewed as going in the opposite direction, i.e. removal of existing stop signs vs installation of additional stop signs, we feel that the ultimate standard will have the same effect, reduced speeds and volumes. The above mentioned first stage in the final step of declassification, the conversion of Gilmore-Union to a two way from a four way stop could be accomplished without the remainder of the works being completed. 'APPENDIX I' attached outlines the procedure that is to be followed in making this changeover.

The only experience we have with the conversion of a four way stop to a two way stop was at Cliff Avenue and Halifax Street where we reversed the original two way stop from Halifax to Cliff with a six month interim four way stop. The only accident reported since the conversion was a sideswipe collision considered not correctable by stop sign control. In view of this we are recommending the removal of the north/south stop signs on Gilmore Avenue at Union Street and that we report back to the Committee in six months. This report to include the effects of this removal and the possibility of proceeding with the next stage of declassification of Union Street between Boundary Road and Gilmore Avenue.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE:

1. THAT the requested four way stops on Union Street at Madison and Carleton Avenue not be installed.
2. THAT the four way stop at Gilmore Avenue and Union Street be converted to a two way stop with stops on Union Street.
3. THAT staff report to the Committee in six months on the effects of implementing recommendation #2.
4. THAT Mr. & Mrs. George Steinmann, 4206 Union Street, Burnaby, B.C., V5C 2X4, be sent a copy of this report."

NOTE:

With respect to Recommendation No. 1 abovenoted, the votes were recorded as being equal both FOR and AGAINST the question, therefore, the question was declared negatived and LOST.

(FOR: Aldermen Emmott and Rankin, Messrs. Beedie and Bennett

OPPOSED: Alderman Nikolai, Mrs. Smith, School Trustee Jones and Mr. Woods)

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