

CITY OF BURNABY

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TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: WALKER AVENUE: REVIEW OF TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council authorize staff to discuss traffic calming issues and measures with residents on Walker Avenue from Burris to Imperial.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to Mr. Jim Butt, 6079 Walker Avenue, Burnaby, BC.

REPORT

The Transportation Committee, at its meeting held on 2003 June 11, received and adopted the attached report reviewing traffic calming measures on Walker Avenue between Burris and Imperial as a basis to address resident concerns with the volume and speed of traffic.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Nick Volkow  
Chair

Councillor Doug Evans  
Vice Chair

Councillor Lee Rankin  
Member

COPY: CITY MANAGER DIRECTOR ENGINEERING OIC, RCMP DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING
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**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

2003 June 05

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

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**SUBJECT:** WALKER AVENUE: REVIEW OF TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

**PURPOSE:** To review traffic calming measures on Walker Avenue between Burris and Imperial as a basis to address resident concerns with the volume and speed of traffic.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

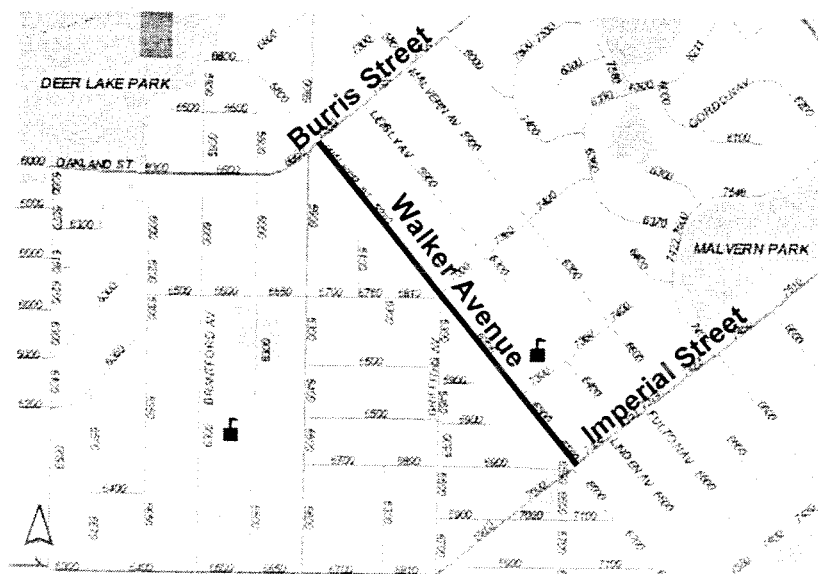
1. **THAT** staff be directed to discuss traffic calming issues and measures with residents on Walker Avenue from Burris to Imperial.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to Mr. J. Butt, 6079 Walker Avenue, Burnaby, BC.

**REPORT**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

At its regular meeting of 2003 April 09, the Transportation Committee under the "New Business" part of the agenda requested staff to review traffic measures on Walker Avenue between Burris and Imperial (**Figure 1**) in response to concerns about traffic volume and

**Figure 1  
Walker Avenue**



speed raised by Mr. Jim Butt, a resident of the area. Mr. Butt has also requested to appear as a delegation at the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee in June.

This report responds to this direction of the Committee by tracing the background to the traffic concerns and measures taken on Walker Avenue and outlining an approach to deal with the remaining issues raised by residents.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Traffic Volumes Increase on Walker Avenue

In October 1984, Oakland Street was constructed and opened and pre-ducting was done for a future signal at both Sperling and Walker Avenue. The pre-ducting allowed for future signal options for the Sperling/Walker/Burris intersection to be maintained. In April 1985, the City received a letter from the Kamensek family expressing concern over increased traffic volumes along Walker Avenue. As shown in *Table 1*, daily traffic volumes on Walker Avenue increased from 2,804 vehicles in September 1984 (before Oakland was opened) to 3,821 vehicles one year later in October 1985.

**Table 1**  
**Traffic Volumes on Walker Avenue**  
**24 Hour Period**

Date of Count	Northbound	Southbound	Both Directions
September 1981	1,126	991	2,117
<b>September 1984</b>	<b>1,903</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>2,804</b>
September 1985	1,900	1,921	3,821
December 1985	1,983	2,187	4,170
April 1986	2,231	2,342	4,573
November 1986	2,310	2,459	4,769
November 1987	2,438	2,709	5,147
June 1990	2,688	2,840	5,528
March 1996	3,483	3,251	6,734
September 1997	3,162	3,433	6,595
March 1999	2,997	3,113	6,110
April 2003	3,100	3,132	6,232

Most of the increase was attributable to vehicles in the southbound direction being able to access Walker Avenue from the west with the opening of Oakland.

Traffic volumes grew steadily from December 1985 to October 1987 when a traffic signal at Walker and Burris was approved by Council. The placement of the traffic signal at Walker Avenue allowed for signalized access to Sperling Avenue by residents on Sperling immediately north of Burris although it did not lead to a dramatic increase in traffic volumes on Walker.

For purposes of comparison, *Table 2* provides traffic volumes for Sperling Avenue, a paralleling Local Collector, which performs a similar function in connecting Burris and Imperial. Until Oakland was opened to traffic in September 1984, Sperling carried approximately 6,515 vehicles per day and Walker approximately 2,804 vehicles. Over the years, daily traffic has increased on Walker but decreased on Sperling until currently, Walker Street carries 6,232 vehicles and Sperling 4,053 vehicles.

**Table 2**  
**Traffic Volumes on Sperling Avenue**  
**24 Hour Period**

<b>Date of Count</b>	<b>Northbound</b>	<b>Southbound</b>	<b>Both Directions</b>
July 1984	3,230	3,285	6,515
September 1984	2,583	1,988	4,571
July 1985	2,272	2,308	4,580
July 1986	1,958	2,234	4,192
July 1988	1,721	1,920	3,641
October 1996	1,741	2,127	3,868
November 2001	1,703	2,350	4,053

**2.2 Resident LIP Requested**

In October 1996, a written request was received in the Engineering Department for LIP road works along Walker Avenue between Burris and Stanley Street as shown in **Figure 2**.

**Figure 2**  
**Walker Avenue LIP**



This put Walker Avenue into the LIP queue. A year later in 1997 November, staff reported to the Traffic Safety Committee responding to a resident petition concerning traffic volume, speed, trucks, and overall safety along Walker Avenue. Residents proposed blocking off Walker, speed humps, a right turn only lane on Walker at Burris or blocking off the southbound lane. Staff recommended that the future LIP for road works include traffic calming measures such as curb extensions but not speed humps due to the status of Walker as a Local Collector.

### **2.3 Traffic Calming Options Considered**

In 1998 February, the Traffic Safety Committee heard a resident delegation from Mr. Kamensek about the benefits of the LIP and feasibility of some of the traffic calming measures discussed by the residents. A concurrent report to the Traffic Safety Committee recommended modifications to the pavement markings along Burris/Oakland at Walker/Sperling to de-emphasize the eastbound to southbound routing along Walker. The Committee amended the recommendations to include a 4-way stop at the Walker/Stanley intersection.

Later in May 2000, a questionnaire was sent to Walker Avenue residents regarding options for traffic calming including intersection curb extensions, mid-block curb extensions and mid-block center medians. The results of this questionnaire indicated the following:

- only 15 (or 44%) of the 34 properties on Walker between Burris and Stanley responded to the questionnaire indicating some degree of resident apathy to the traffic issues raised.
- intersection curb extensions were favourably received (60% support from the residents responding to the questionnaire) but mid-block curb extensions or mid-block centre medians received a mixed and negative response respectively. This response was primarily due to their impact on parking availability and driveway access.
- only 53% of residents responded that they would support the LIP regardless of which traffic calming measures were included suggesting that the LIP may not have received the requisite 66 2/3% support had it been issued to residents at that time.

#### **2.4 Resident LIP Issued**

Reflecting the residents' support for intersection curb extensions, these were included in the roadway design at the Walker/Stanley intersection but not at the signalized intersection of Walker and Burris due to the need to maintain turning movement clearances. Mid-block works, however, were not advanced as part of the Walker LIP petition due to the residents' negative response to these measures.

In February 2002, a LIP petition for road works was sent to Mr. Kamensek but residents expressed concerns for the lack of traffic calming devices included in the LIP-funded roadway design. In March 2002, Councillor Evans, Councillor Volkow and staff met with Mr. Kamensek and a number of other Walker Avenue residents to discuss these concerns.

In March 2003, under the Local Improvement Program, Walker Avenue was reconstructed to an 11 metre pavement width including a curb extension at Walker and Stanley.

### **3.0 CURRENT ISSUES**

#### **3.1 Traffic**

Recent traffic counts undertaken on Walker indicate that both traffic volume and speeds are issues on Walker Avenue.

In the Burnaby Transportation Plan, Local Collectors such as Walker Avenue are expected to carry a maximum of 5,000 vehicles per day. Traffic volumes on Walker have exceeded this volume since September 1987 (5,147 vehicles) and have increased to 6,232 vehicles as of April 2003.

Currently, average traffic speeds over a 24 hour period on Walker are approximately 55 kph northbound and 51 kph southbound. About 50% of vehicles are exceeding the speed limit. Moreover, the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is approximately 63 kph northbound and 60 kph southbound.

#### **3.2 Appropriate Traffic Calming**

Speed humps as a traffic calming measure have been effective in reducing speeds but have raised concerns with some residents of adjoining streets when implemented on Local Collector Streets as part of a Local Improvement Program and were not advanced for inclusion in the Walker Avenue LIP.

Curb extensions have been effective in other locations at reducing speeds, however, in the case of Walker Avenue, the mid-block extensions affect the availability of on-street parking for residents and are constrained by driveways. However, more could be done with line painting to “narrow” the traveled portion of the road without raising parking and driveway issues.

Intersection curb extensions are more acceptable to residents and have been implemented at Walker and Stanley as part of the LIP but need to be reviewed by staff with respect to their specific application at the intersections of Walker and Burriss and possibly Walker and Imperial.

#### **3.3 Funding for Traffic Calming measures**

A Local Improvement Program was implemented on Walker Avenue involving the construction of a finished street with an 11 metre pavement surface, curb and gutter, sidewalks and an intersection curb extension on Walker at Stanley.

However, some of the residents have recently observed that there has been no reduction in the volume or speed of traffic on Walker Avenue and that further measures are required including removal of the traffic signal and installation of a curb extension at Walker and Burris as well. “No Trucks” and “50 kph” speed limit signs are also proposed. Depending on the measures ultimately proposed, they could be funded by the City or through another LIP.

#### 4.0 SUGGESTED APPROACH

The provision of traffic calming measures like speed humps to address the issues of traffic volume and speed on Walker Avenue has been limited by its status as a Local Collector in the Burnaby Transportation Plan. Other measures proposed by the City such as pavement narrowing, medians and mid-block curb extensions have not been warmly accepted by residents and some degree of resident apathy has complicated efforts to reach a consensus. Intersection curb extensions, which had resident support in the questionnaire survey, have been implemented at Walker and Stanley through the resident -initiated LIP. However, to be fully effective in reducing speeds, curb extensions may need to be considered for the major intersections of Walker Avenue with either Burris or Imperial.

As traffic calming treatments at intersections are favoured by residents and are proposed for Walker and Burris by residents in recent communications to the Chair of the Transportation Committee it is recommended that staff arrange a meeting of all residents of Walker Avenue between Burris and Imperial including Mr. Butt to discuss the following measures and others proposed by the residents:

- painted narrowings to narrow the driving lanes by painting a double yellow centre line and parking lines.
- traffic calming measures at the intersections of Walker and Burris and Walker and Imperial.


Staff would report back to the Committee in September.

#### 5.0 CONCLUSION

Residents of Walker Avenue between Burris and Stanley have raised concerns regarding the volume and speed of traffic for some years. Traffic volumes were raised as a concern after volumes increased significantly on Walker Avenue upon completion of Oakland Street in September 1985. Provision of a traffic signal at Burris and Walker may have also reinforced the status of Walker Avenue.



Recent traffic counts have indicated that traffic volumes on Walker exceed the desirable maximum for a Local Collector Street and average traffic speeds exceed the speed limit. Some residents have observed that the reconstruction of Walker Avenue under the LIP has not addressed these issues. However, as there are further measures that have been raised to address these issues, it is proposed that staff meet with residents of Walker Avenue from Burris to Imperial to discuss their concerns and report back to the Transportation Committee.

  
for J S Belhouse, Director  
PLANNING AND BUILDING

RG/jc

cc: City Manager  
Director Engineering

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