REPORT
2004 MARCH 01

CITY OF BURNABY

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TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS

SUBJECT: **WALKER AND SPERLING AVENUES: COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROCESS**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council approve a Community Transportation Planning process for the Walker/Sperling area as outlined in Section 4.0.

2. **THAT** Council forward copies of the amended report to all residents of the Community Transportation Plan area shown in Figure 3.

REPORT

The Transportation Committee, at its meeting held on 2004 February 11, received a report reviewing traffic issues raised by the residents of Walker and Sperling Avenues, requesting approval to initiate a Community Transportation Plan process for the area.

The Committee requested that the Walker and Sperling Avenues report be amended to reflect the submissions made by a delegation representing Sperling Avenue residents. The delegation advised that the residents want to improve the safety and slow the speed of cars on Sperling Avenue not take traffic volume off Sperling.

A delegation representing the Walker Avenue residents inquired as to what date Council approved the signal implementation at Burris and Walker Avenue and further, why the traffic signal was installed at the Burris/Walker Avenue intersection location. Figure 3 in the report has been amended to extend the consultation area to the north of Oakland/Burris. This is to encompass those people that would be affected, if, as requested by Walker residents, the existing traffic signals at the corner of Burris and Walker were to be removed.

The Sperling Avenue delegation further advised that recently the Principal of Brantford Elementary School had suspended the use of the Student Safety Patrol who monitor the pedestrian

crosswalk at Sperling Avenue and Burford Ave. This decision was made due to the concerns for the safety of the students serving on the school patrol. The Transportation Committee requested that a staff report be prepared on the advisability and feasibility of installing traffic corner bulges at Sperling and Burford Avenues, as an interim measure.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor N. Volkow
Chair

Councillor D. Evans
Vice Chair

Councillor L. Rankin
Member

COPY: CITY MANAGER
DIRECTOR ENGINEERING
DIRECTOR PLNG. & BLDG.
OIC, RCMP

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE	2004 February 25
FROM:	DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING	OUR FILE: 08.640"W"

SUBJECT: **WALKER AND SPERLING AVENUES: COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROCESS**

PURPOSE: To review traffic issues raised by the residents of Walker and Sperling Avenues, and request approval to initiate a Community Transportation Plan process for the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** the Transportation Committee recommend that Council approve a Community Transportation Planning process for the Walker / Sperling area as outlined in Section 4.0.

2. **THAT** the Transportation Committee recommend to Council that copies of this report be forwarded to all the residents of the Community Transportation Plan area shown in ***Figure 3***.

REPORT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report responds to concerns raised by the residents of Walker and Sperling Avenues. These concerns relate to the volume and speed of traffic on their roads, primarily in the blocks between Oakland Street and Imperial Street.

Traffic calming measures, in the form of mid-block traffic islands, were introduced to one block of Walker Avenue (from Oakland to Stanley) in 2003 October. The report demonstrates that this has led to a decline in both the speed and volume of traffic on Walker Avenue.

However, volumes are still too high on Walker Avenue, given its status as a Local Collector road. In addition, vehicle speed remains a concern on both roads. Further measures are possible, but must be implemented carefully to avoid diversion of traffic onto other neighbourhood roads. A more comprehensive process is therefore recommended to involve the surrounding neighbourhood in the development of a Community Transportation Plan.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Walker Avenue, from Burris to Stanley Street, was upgraded with curbs and sidewalks in 2003 March. Mid-block traffic islands designed to deflect vehicles and thereby reduce travel speeds were installed in 2003 October in the same block. This was in response to concerns expressed by Walker Avenue residents regarding the need for immediate measures to calm traffic on Walker.

At its regular meeting of 2003 November 12, the Transportation Committee received a delegation from residents of Sperling Avenue. The residents were concerned about the impact to Sperling Avenue of the above-noted traffic islands on Walker. A primary concern of Sperling residents was the possibility of traffic diverting from Walker to Sperling Avenue.

Also at the meeting of 2003 November 12, the Transportation Committee received a delegation from Walker Avenue residents expressing their concerns that the mid-block traffic islands were ineffective at reducing vehicle speeds.

In response to these concerns, the Transportation Committee referred the issues raised by the delegations to staff for a report.

This report responds to this direction of the Committee by assessing the issues raised by the residents of both Walker and Sperling Avenues, and outlining a broader approach to address these issues.

3.0 ISSUES RAISED BY RESIDENTS

This section comments on the specific concerns raised by the two delegations.

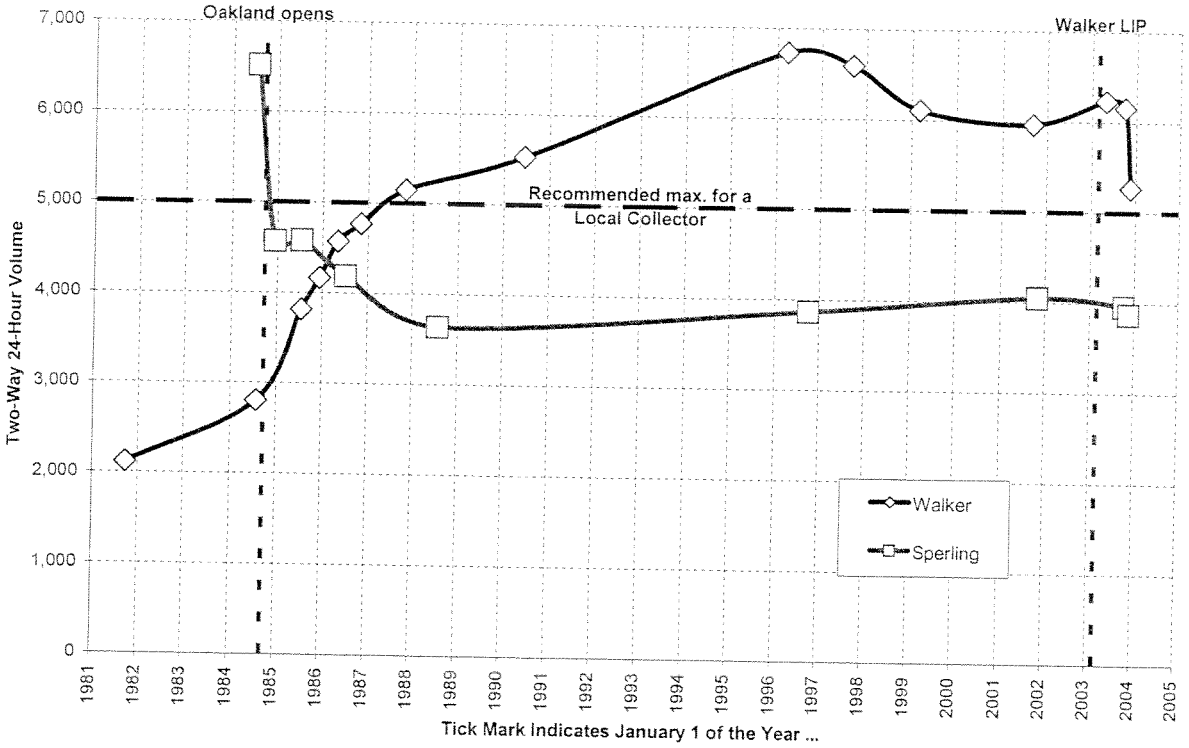
3.1 Diversion of Walker Traffic to Sperling

Sperling residents were concerned that the implementation of the traffic calming measures (traffic islands) on Walker Avenue would tend to divert traffic to Sperling Avenue. If this were the case, traffic volumes on Walker would be expected to decrease and traffic volumes on Sperling would increase.

As shown in ***Figure 1***, this has not happened. Weekday volumes on Sperling Avenue have remained essentially unchanged, while those on Walker have declined by about 15%. While the islands may have discouraged some drivers from using Walker Avenue, those drivers are not choosing Sperling Avenue for their new route.

For reference, ***Figure 1*** also indicates the dates of Oakland Street opening (1984 September) and implementation of the Walker Avenue improvements under the Local Improvement Program (2003 March). It also shows the recommended maximum volume for a Local Collector road, which applies to Walker Avenue but not Sperling Avenue (which is a Major Collector - Secondary). The ***figure*** also demonstrates the dominant role played by Sperling Avenue prior to the opening of Oakland Street.

Figure 1: Traffic on Walker and Sperling Avenues (Oakland to Stanley)



3.2 Reduced Traffic Speeds on Walker

Walker Avenue residents have indicated that the traffic calming measures have been ineffective in reducing vehicle speeds on Walker. However, speed counts taken before and after the installation of the traffic islands indicate that speeds have declined. The average southbound speed has declined by about 3 km/hr, from 50 to 47 km/hr. The average northbound speed has declined by about 6 km/hr, from 55 to 49 km/hr. This is illustrated in ***Figure 2***, which shows two-way speed profiles. There are fewer cars travelling faster than 50 km/hr, and more cars travelling slower.

3.3 Sperling Traffic Speeds

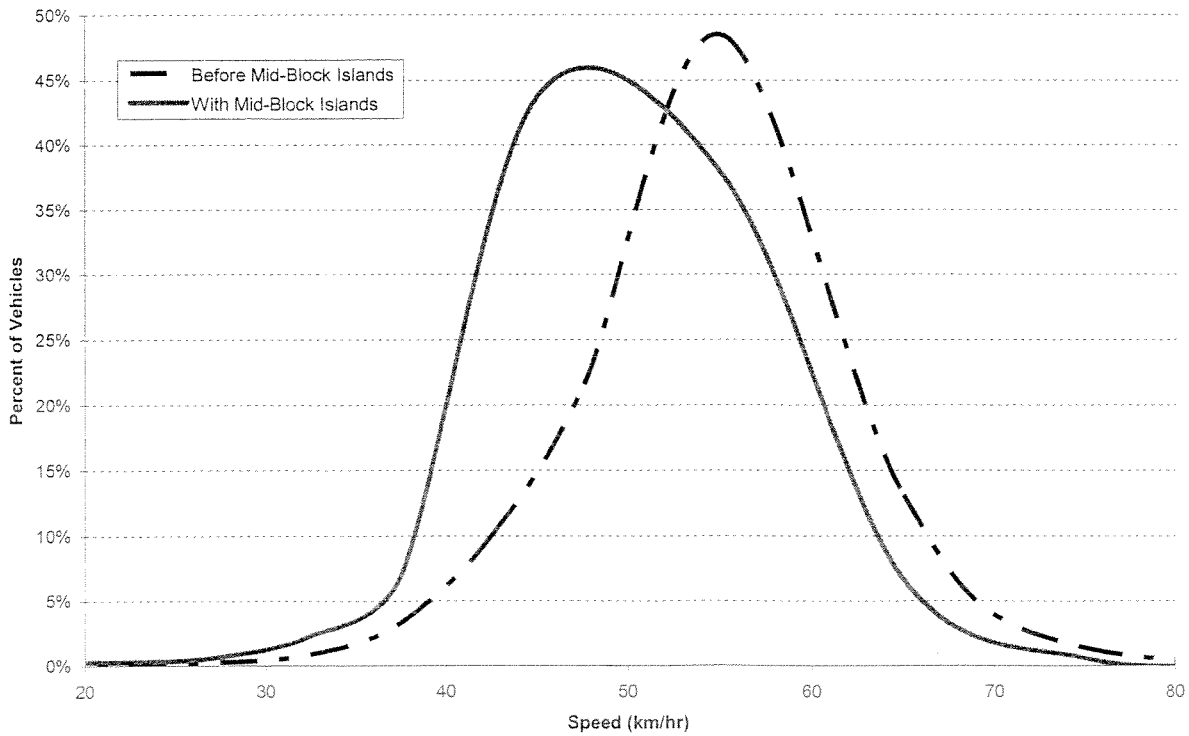
Sperling residents have indicated that traffic speeds are also an issue on their street. Speed counts were conducted on Sperling Avenue, after the installation of traffic islands on Walker. They show average southbound and northbound speeds of 49 and 50 km/hr, respectively. These are quite similar to the current speeds on Walker Avenue.

3.4 Conclusions to Date

The speed data demonstrate that:

- the median traffic islands have reduced average traffic speeds on Walker Avenue; and
- there has been no diversion of traffic from Walker to Sperling Avenue (i.e., no volume increase on Sperling) as a result of the installation of the traffic islands.

Figure 2: Speeds on Walker Avenue, Before and After Implementation of Mid-Block Islands



The traffic calming installed on Walker Street was intended as an interim measure which could be provided expeditiously and would not negatively affect other residents of the area. The follow-up monitoring has shown that the traffic islands have had the desired effect of slowing traffic down without diverting traffic to Sperling Avenue.

3.5 Outstanding Issues

The traffic calming measures on Walker Avenue have demonstrated some success in addressing the residents's concerns. However, there are issues that remain to be addressed.

3.5.1 Traffic Volumes and Speeds on Walker Avenue

While there have been recent volume decreases, the current daily average of 5,300 vehicles remains above the 5,000 maximum recommended for Local Collectors in the Burnaby Transportation Plan.

Similarly, while speeds have declined, almost half the drivers continue to exceed the speed limit.

Further traffic calming actions on Walker Avenue would involve measures intended to reduce traffic volumes to below 5,000 vehicles per day, and to further reduce the number of vehicles that travel at higher speeds.

3.5.2 Traffic Speeds on Sperling Avenue

As noted above, average traffic speeds on Sperling Avenue are similar to the recently-reduced speeds on Walker. This again indicates that there are a significant number of vehicles travelling at higher speeds. Some of the residents have suggested a number of measures to reduce these speeds, such as:

- four-way stop signs;
- curb bulges;
- median traffic islands, similar to Walker Avenue;
- speed humps; and
- increased speed enforcement.

Curb bulges and speed enforcement are examples of measures permissible on a Major Collector - Secondary street, such as Sperling Avenue.

Unless warranted by traffic volumes, stop signs are undesirable solely as a means of speed control, as they create more stop-start actions, noise, and emissions.

Speed humps would not be acceptable on Sperling Avenue due to its status as a Major Collector - Secondary, a bus route and a route for emergency vehicles. Moreover, the use of these more aggressive traffic calming measures could divert more vehicles onto Walker Avenue or other roads in the neighbourhood.

3.5.3 The Bigger Picture

Some area residents have suggested that the volume of traffic through the neighbourhood would decline if that traffic could be better accommodated on the surrounding arterial road system (e.g., Kingsway, Royal Oak). While it must be recognized that some of these proposals raise other issues, resident suggestions to date include:

- synchronizing traffic lights on Kingsway during rush hours;
- removing on-street parking from Edmonds during rush hours;
- widening Edmonds between Kingsway and Griffiths (this would only provide two travel lanes and two parking lanes as permitted by its classification as a Major Collector - Greenway); and
- providing a left-turn bay from southbound Royal Oak Avenue to eastbound Kingsway.

4.0 THE ROAD AHEAD: A COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION PLAN

This section outlines a recommended process for addressing the remaining issues.

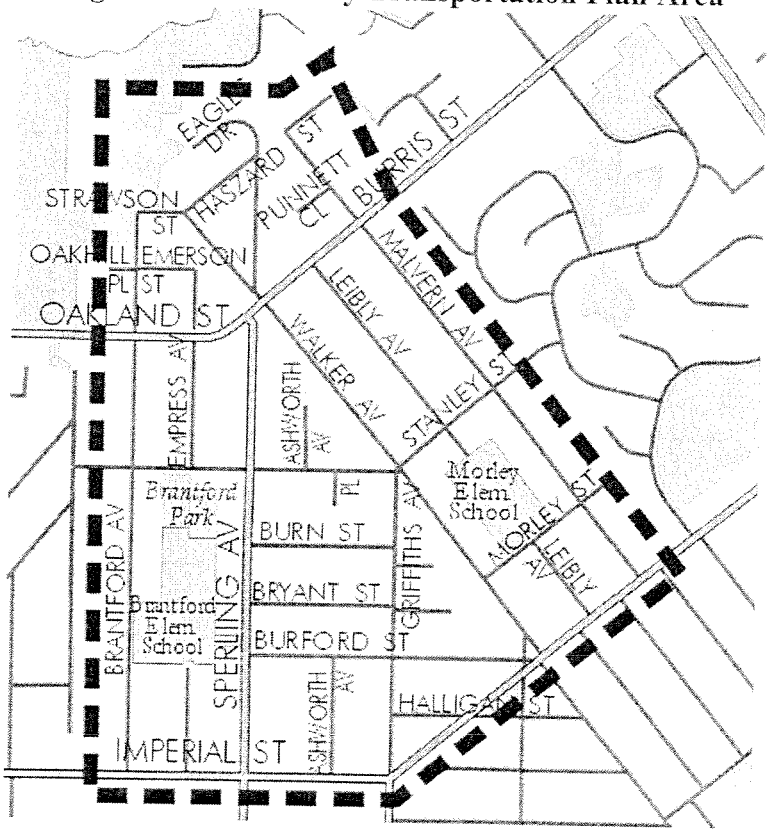
4.1 The Larger Neighbourhood

The interest of the residents of both Walker and Sperling Avenues in these issues suggests the need for a broader neighbourhood process which would develop and implement an integrated traffic calming program. This Community Transportation Plan (CTP) would address traffic speed and volume concerns, while attempting to avoid the spillover effects that often result from taking a "one-street" approach. Moreover, the classification of both Walker and Sperling indicates the need to maintain their utility for residents from the surrounding neighbourhood to get to and from their homes.

The proposed CTP area, as shown in ***Figure 3***, is based on the need to include the following resident groups:

- residents of Walker Avenue from Burris to Imperial;
- residents of Sperling Avenue from Oakland to Imperial; and
- residents living on adjacent streets who take access from Walker and Sperling, or could be affected by diverted traffic as a result of traffic calming measures.

Figure 3: Community Transportation Plan Area



4.2 Engaging the Community

The following process is proposed for identifying transportation improvements aimed at meeting the objectives of the neighbourhood:

1. **Announce Status (March).** Upon approval of Council, send copies of this report to all homes in the CTP area.

2. **Research (March - April).** Collect additional field information to get more factual information about the issues and causes. At a minimum, this will include additional mid block traffic counts and turning movement counts. This can be used to get a general picture of origin-destination patterns. It will likely be supplemented by a license plate survey to provide better information on through trips (i.e., those that don't begin or end in the neighbourhood). It is important to recognize that many of the local issues are the result of non-local traffic, and it is important to get a better understanding of the origin and destination patterns of these through trips. As part of this task, we will also conduct a review of the various solutions proposed to date, and generate new ones.

3. **Notification (early May).** Prepare and send a brochure exploring the issues and presenting good and bad features of the proposed solutions. The brochure will includes notification of the upcoming Public Meeting, and a questionnaire on issues and solutions.

4. **Public Meeting (late May).** This will open with a presentation by City staff on facts, issues, constraints, and some suggested alternatives. After the presentation, the issues will be explored via break-out groups of about 10 people each, facilitated by City staff members. This will provide an opportunity for residents to state their views, express their concerns, ask questions, and hear what their neighbours think. Questionnaires from the brochure will be available for written input via drop off, mail in, fax, or Internet. The questionnaire will also ask people to indicate if they are interested in participating in a Residents' Committee (see below).

5. **Development of Traffic Calming Plan by Residents' Committee (June - August).** A representative sample of volunteers (from above) will be chosen for the Residents' Committee (e.g., three from Walker, three from Sperling, three from the rest of the neighbourhood). With analyses and technical support provided by City staff, the Committee will develop and refine a traffic calming plan for the neighbourhood. This will take place over a series of meetings, in which the Committee first receives the results from the questionnaire, has an opportunity to learn more about the strengths and weaknesses of various traffic calming methods, and then begins to develop and refine their plan for the neighbourhood within agreed-upon guidelines.

   We usually prefer not to conduct public consultations during the summer months. In this case, the residents have expressed a strong desire to proceed

quickly. In addition, the summer-time consultation would just be with a small group of volunteers, rather than the community at large.

6. **Report (September).** Present the draft Plan to Transportation Committee. Seek Council approval to take the Plan to a public Open House.

7. **Notification (October).** Summarize the draft Plan (and reasons for it) in a brochure. Include a questionnaire, and notification of the Open House.

8. **Open House (October).** Displays will describe the draft Plan, and the reasons behind it. Staff will be available to answer questions and receive feedback.

9. **Finalization (November).** Finalize the Plan based on feedback received.

10. **Report (December).** Present the final Plan to Transportation Committee and Council, and seek approval to implement.

11. **Circulate (December).** Mail the final report to residents in Study Area.

12. **Implementation (2005).** Some features of the Plan will probably be suitable for quick implementation, whereas others may take longer.

In going through this process, the objective will be to address the issues identified by the residents, without pushing the problem onto other streets in the neighbourhood. The process will allow residents from all neighbourhood streets to have opportunities for input. However, it will still acknowledge the different roles that the various streets are expected to fulfill. A strategy or outcome that is suitable for one street may not necessarily be suitable for all.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Residents of Walker Avenue between Burris and Stanley have raised concerns regarding the volume and speed of traffic for some years. Interim traffic calming measures in the form of traffic islands were installed in 2003 October. Monitoring of the effect of these measures on traffic volumes and speeds has shown that there has been a significant reduction in the average speed of vehicles, but there has been no diversion of traffic to Sperling Avenue.

However, both Walker and Sperling residents continue to raise issues regarding traffic speed and volume on their streets which cannot be addressed on a street-by-street basis without consulting adjacent residents. It is, therefore recommended to initiate a more broadly-based Community Transportation Planning process in the neighbourhood to resolve these issues in an integrated and coordinated way.

The proposed Walker/Sperling CTP process could be initiated in 2004 March with approval by the Transportation Committee and Council of the recommendations in this report. Staff would report back to the Committee with a draft CTP in September.

J S Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

SR/RG:jc

cc: City Manager
Director Engineering

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