REPORT
2004 APRIL 19

CITY OF BURNABY

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TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF INTERIM TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES ON WALKER AVENUE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council authorize removal of the three interim median islands from Walker Avenue, between Oakland and Stanley Streets.

2. **THAT** copies of this report be sent to residents of Walker Avenue and Sperling Avenue, each between Oakland and Stanley Streets.

REPORT

The Transportation Committee, at its meeting held on 2004 April 14, received and adopted the *attached* report reviewing the effectiveness of interim traffic calming measures on Walker Avenue between Oakland and Stanley Streets.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Nick Volkow
Chair

Councillor Doug Evans
Vice Chair

Councillor Lee Rankin
Member

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

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

2004 April 6

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

OUR FILE: PL 94000 - 20
Neighbourhood Transportation Plan - Walker / Sperling

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

PURPOSE: To review the effectiveness of interim traffic calming measures on Walker Avenue between Oakland and Stanley Streets.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1 **THAT** the Transportation Committee request Council to authorize removal of the three interim median islands from Walker Avenue, between Oakland and Stanley Streets.

2. **THAT** copies of this report be sent to residents of Walker Avenue and Sperling Avenue, each between Oakland and Stanley Streets.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

At its regular meeting of 2003 October 20, Council approved the installation of three raised median islands on Walker Avenue, between Oakland and Stanley Streets, on an interim basis. A typical installation is shown in ***Figure 1***. The primary objective was to reduce the speed of vehicles on Walker Avenue. There was also the possibility that the islands might reduce traffic volumes, which was also of interest to the residents.

The median islands were installed in late October. The interim installation was to be reviewed for effectiveness after six months. This report presents that review.

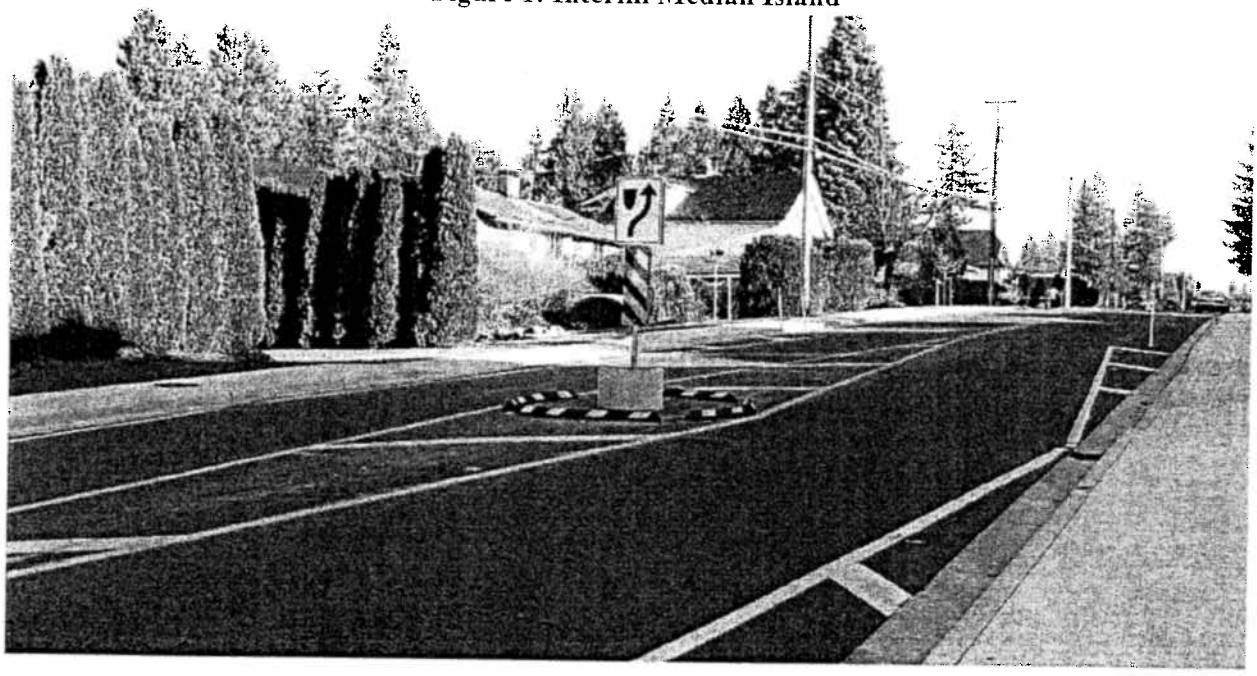
2.0 EVALUATION

Prior to the installation of the median islands, the average speed on Walker Avenue was 52.8 km/hr. Our latest counts indicate a current average speed of 51.3 km/hr, a decline of 3%.

The weekday volume prior to the median islands was 6,160 vehicles. The current value is 5,740, representing a decline of 7%.

These results indicate that the median islands have had a modest impact in reducing vehicle speeds and volumes.

Figure 1: Interim Median Island



However, there are other considerations. Since the implementation of the interim median islands, residents from Walker Avenue have appeared as delegations to Council and Transportation Committee, and have also expressed their views to staff. These include:

- The reductions in traffic speed and volume are too small to be noticed. Thus, the median islands are not perceived as having provided any benefit.
- Vehicle noise has increased, possibly due to drivers attempting to navigate the median islands at higher than the design speed.
- Parked vehicles near the median islands have been hit by moving vehicles.
- In their eagerness to pass slower-moving vehicles, some drivers are crossing the double-yellow line and passing on the far side of the median islands.

- Aggressive driving has sometimes put pedestrians at risk.

- The installations are unsightly.

The combination of the statistical results and anecdotal reports suggest that many drivers are treating the circuitous routing as a challenge rather than a reason to slow down. The result of this aggressive driving is that the residents perceive that their level of safety and comfort has declined.

As the installation of the median islands has had only modest benefit and has not been viewed positively by the residents, it is recommended that the traffic islands be removed, and the original road centreline be restored.

3.0 NEXT STEPS

This leaves the question of how to address the original concerns of high volumes and speeds on Walker Avenue. Various residents have proposed alternative solutions. City staff are reviewing these and are also developing some options.

These potential measures on Walker Avenue could have an impact on other neighbourhood roads, in the form of increased traffic. For this reason, staff have previously recommended that these measures be considered in the context of a larger Community Transportation Plan (CTP) process. Council endorsed this approach at its meeting of 2004 March 1. That process has now begun. Residents of the surrounding neighbourhood have been made aware of the issues and time line, and data collection is in progress.

It is important that any subsequent measures to address the Walker issues be considered within the context of the larger CTP process. To do otherwise would be to undermine that process. It would obviously be inappropriate to consult with residents after the fact. As approved by Council on 2004 March 1, the CTP schedule includes an initial Open House in May, working group discussions during the summer, leading to an Open House of possible solutions in October, revisions as necessary, and final Council approval of the plan in December.

Residents have expressed interest in the types of measures that could be considered within the CTP process. These include:

1. **Speed Humps.** This common method of speed reduction was previously excluded in view of Walker Avenue's status as a Local Collector road. However, with the larger consultation process of the CTP involving residents of adjacent streets , it can now be considered as part of an overall solution.

2. **Signal Timing / Phasing.** The operation of key traffic signals, such as Walker at Burris and Canada Way at Imperial, can be reviewed in an attempt to divert more traffic around the neighbourhood on arterial roads.

3. **Removal of Walker / Oakland / Burris Signal.** This signal was originally installed in 1988 at the request of residents north of Oakland / Burris. These people were finding it difficult and unsafe to cross Oakland as pedestrians, or to exit their neighbourhood in vehicles. Recent communications from residents confirm that they still value the signal. Residents of this area have to cross Oakland / Burris in order to access most local amenities, such as schools and the convenience store. There are three access roads, of which Walker is the only one that is signalized. Any plan to remove the signal would need to consider pedestrian and vehicular access issues for this area.

4. **Curb Bulges.** At the intersection of Walker with Oakland / Burris, eastbound Oakland and northbound Walker are marked as one lane each, but they are wide enough that two lanes of traffic often form. This makes it easier for traffic to enter / exit Walker Avenue. It may be possible to implement curb bulges that would limit each of these approaches to a single lane, such as the concept illustrated in ***Figure 2***. This would reduce the capacity of the intersection, and thus limit the number of vehicles that could use Walker Avenue.

5. **Imperial / Walker Intersection Treatments.** As shown in ***Figure 3***, Walker Avenue effectively intersects Imperial Avenue at two points: at the regular intersection and at an oblique intersection with Salisbury Avenue. The combination provides two points of access to Walker Avenue from Imperial Street. Modifications could be made to these intersections to de-emphasize Walker Avenue.

6. **Traffic Circles.** Traffic circles have been demonstrated to handle traffic in a safe and efficient manner. ***Figure 4*** shows a concept for a twinned traffic circle, encompassing both the Walker and Sperling intersections on Oakland Street, and providing a crosswalk with centre refuge. This could allow for the elimination of the Walker signal. Other concepts based on traffic circles can also be considered.

None of the above options has been analyzed, so feasibility has yet to be determined. The options have been described here only to indicate some of the possibilities that are under consideration. It is anticipated that additional concepts will be developed through the CTP process. These will be discussed at the Open House in May, and subsequently at other CTP events.

Figure 2: Curb Bulges

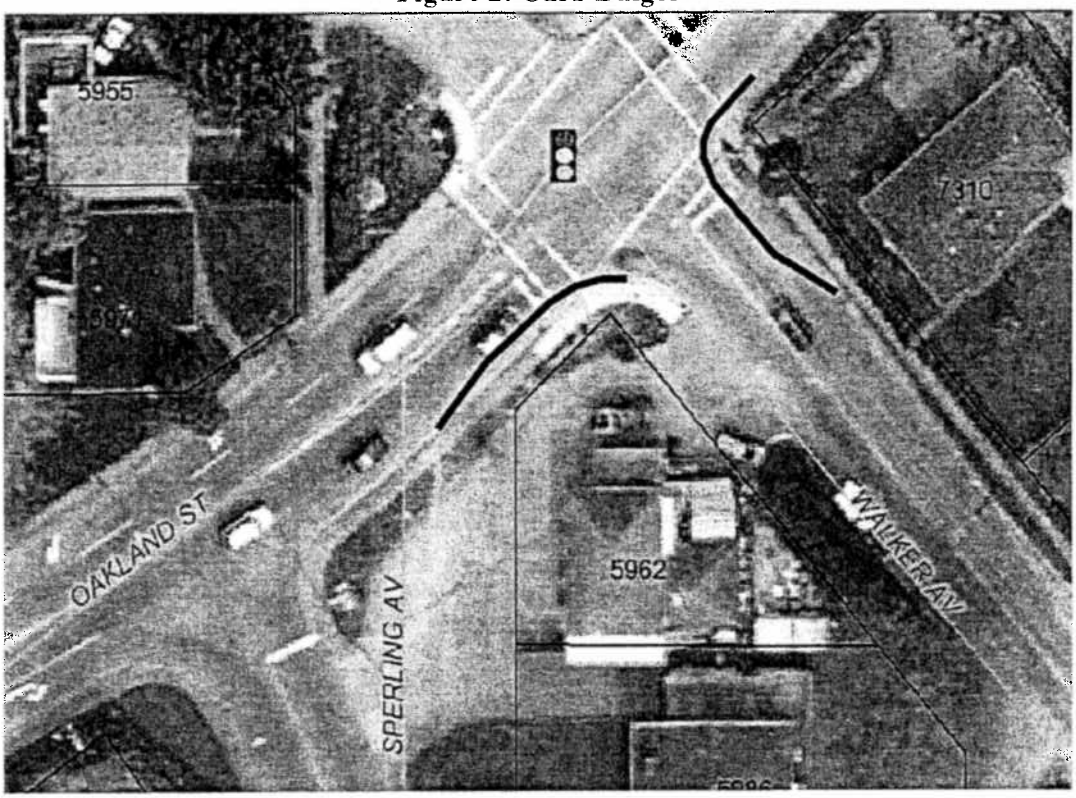


Figure 3: Intersection of Walker and Imperial

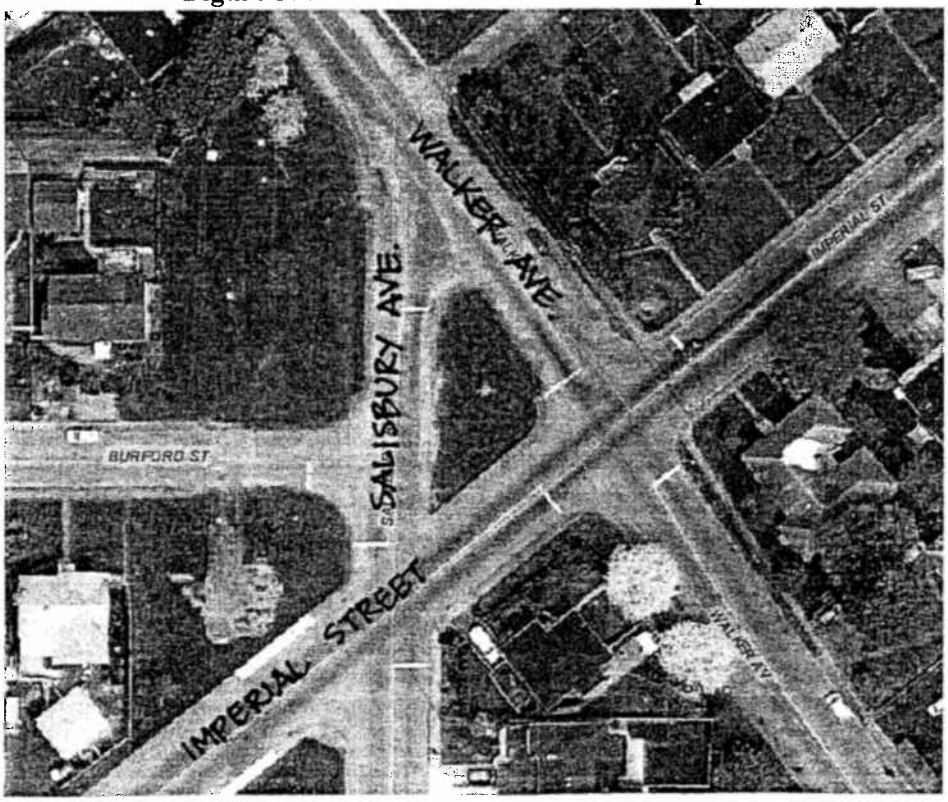
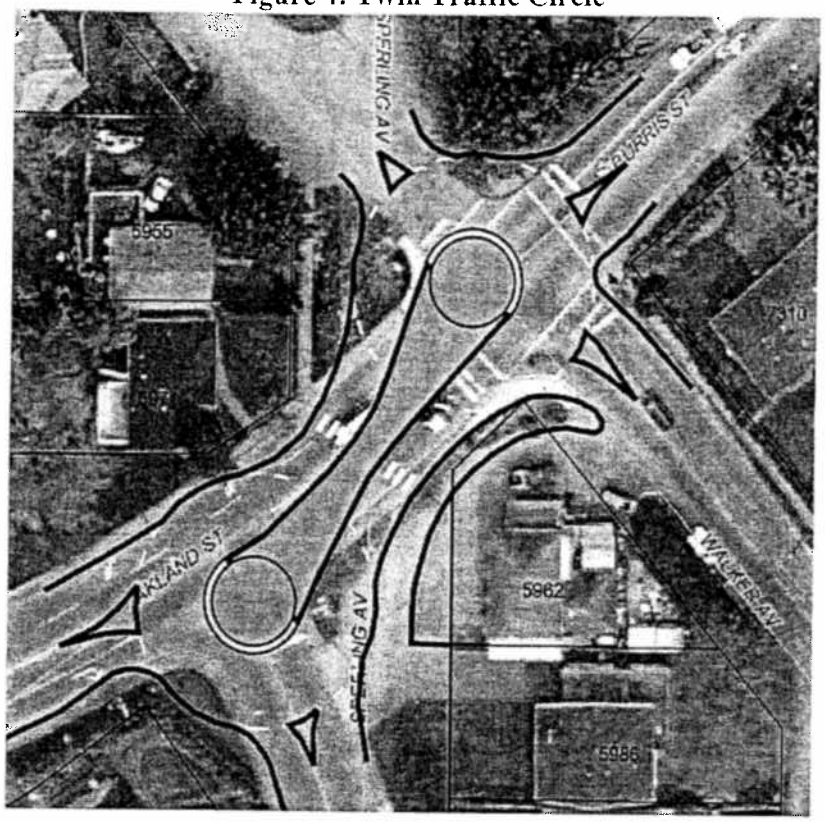


Figure 4: Twin Traffic Circle



4.0 CONCLUSION

The three median islands on Walker Avenue have produced a modest improvement in vehicle speeds and volumes. However, these benefits have been offset by aggressive driving behaviour, in which some drivers are navigating the islands at speeds significantly higher than the design speed (and sometimes on the wrong side of the road). This has led to impacts with parked cars and near-misses with pedestrians. It is therefore recommended that the interim median islands be removed. Measures to address the volume and speed issues on Walker Avenue will be identified and evaluated as part of the Community Transportation Plan process, currently in progress.

J. S. Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

SR/jc

cc: City Manager
Director Engineering
Fire Chief
Officer in Charge, RCMP

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