

**TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: BURNABY HEIGHTS/CAPITOL HILL TRAFFIC ISSUES**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. THAT Council authorize staff to proceed with the neighbourhood traffic consultation process as outlined in this report.

**REPORT**

The Transportation Committee, at its meeting held on 2009 February 11, received and adopted the *attached* report advising of a proposed process to address the traffic issues (non-local traffic, traffic volume, traffic speed, noise and pedestrian safety) raised by the residents in the Burnaby Heights and Capitol Hill neighbourhoods.

This process would involve collecting information on existing and future traffic in the neighbourhoods, presenting the issues for public input and, based on a feedback, developing a traffic plan for the neighbourhoods' consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor N. Volkow  
Chair

Councillor S. Dhaliwal  
Vice Chair

Councillor R. Chang  
Member

Copied to: City Manager Director Planning & Building Director Engineering OIC, RCMP Fire Chief
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**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 2009 February 5

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

**FILE:** 37500 - 01  
*Reference: Burnaby Heights*

**SUBJECT:** BURNABY HEIGHTS / CAPITOL HILL TRAFFIC ISSUES

**PURPOSE:** To advise the Transportation Committee of a proposed process to address the traffic issues raised by residents in the Burnaby Heights and Capitol Hill neighbourhoods.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** the Transportation Committee recommend that Council authorize staff to proceed with the neighbourhood traffic consultation process as outlined in this report.

**REPORT**

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

Over the past number of years, Council and the Transportation Committee have received delegations and correspondence from a number of residents in the Burnaby Heights and Capitol Hill neighbourhoods.

On 2004 September 07, the Traffic Safety Committee received a delegation from Mr. I. Hnatuik, representing 100 residents of the 4200 Block Albert Street, expressing concerns regarding commuter traffic, noise from fire trucks and other large trucks, and vehicle speeds. In response, traffic counts on Albert Street were undertaken and a temporary traffic circle was installed at the intersection of Albert Street and Rosser Avenue.

At their regular meeting of 2006 September 13, the Transportation Committee received a delegation from Mr. P. Cech of the Capitol Hill Community Association and Mr. I. Hnatuik of the Heights Community Association referring to traffic safety issues on Oxford and Eton Streets.

On 2007 January 08, Council received a delegation from I. Hnatuik representing a citizen's group called the Albert Street Traffic and Safety Committee requesting that

actions be taken to ensure that through-traffic remains on Hastings Street and that staff create a comprehensive plan to address traffic issues in North Burnaby.

At the 2008 October 08 meeting of the Transportation Committee, Councillor S. Dhaliwal tabled an email from Diane Mar-Nicolle with five suggestions to address the infiltration of non-local rush hour traffic, originating from Hastings Street that affects Eton and Oxford Streets. Also at this meeting the Committee received correspondence from Mr. R. Wilmot expressing concerns with the increase in the volume and noise of traffic on Albert Street resulting from vehicles bypassing traffic congestion on Hastings Street during peak hours. Mr. Wilmot requested that traffic calming measures be applied on Albert Street and requested more traffic enforcement of motorists that disobey stop signs and traffic signals. Arising from the discussion, the Committee adopted the following motion:

“THAT the Committee request staff to develop terms of reference to ensure traffic stays on arterial routes in rush hours.”

Appearing elsewhere on the Committee’s agenda is a petition from 29 people in the Burnaby Heights area. The petition expresses the desire that neighbourhood access not be restricted unduly, as residents wish to be able to enter/exit the neighbourhood without being forced onto Hastings Street. The Skeena Tunnel in Vancouver (accessed from Cambridge Street) is specifically named as a desirable route for residents of the neighbourhood. The petition favours “resident only access”, in which access points, such as the Skeena Tunnel would be open to residents but not through travellers.

This report responds to the direction of the Transportation Committee to develop a process to address traffic issues raised by residents of Albert Street, Burnaby Heights and Capitol Hill.

## 2.0 TRAFFIC ISSUES

The following summarizes the issues raised by residents of Burnaby Heights and of Capitol Hill:

- *Non-Local Traffic* – Mr. Hnatuik, Mr. Cech and Mr. Wilmot cite as a primary issue the diversion of non-local traffic to avoid congestion on Hastings Street. Mr. Cech has indicated that non-local traffic is travelling via Empire, Cambridge, Beta and Penzance to avoid traffic queuing on Hastings at Willingdon. Mr. Hnatuik and Mr. Cech have indicated that this non-local traffic will increase as a result of population growth to the east in Burnaby (UniverCity, etc.) and in the NE Sector, Maple Ridge. As well regional transportation improvements, including the Pitt River Bridge construction and the pending Gateway program to twin the Port Mann Bridge and expand Highway 1 were identified as being expected to generate increased traffic through Burnaby.

- *Traffic Volume* – Mr. Hnatuik indicates that non-local traffic has resulted in an increase in traffic volumes on Albert Street to approximately 5,000 vehicles per day.
- *Traffic Calming Approach* – both Mr. Hnatuik and Mr. Cech cite the need for a traffic calming approach using street closures and traffic diverters, as applied in the Downtown West End and the East Vancouver neighbourhoods of Hastings Sunrise and Grandview Woodlands, as the best way to keep traffic on Hastings Street and out of local neighbourhoods.
- *Speeding, Stop Sign Violations* – Mr. Hnatuik and Mr. Cech have identified the speed of vehicles on both Albert Street and Beta/Penzance as related issues. There are anecdotal reports of motorists exceeding the speed limit and ignoring stop signs on Albert Street. Mr. Cech also notes that vehicles are violating the 30 kph speed zone on Penzance Drive adjacent to Confederation Park.
- *Noise* – Correspondence from Mr. R. Wilmot notes the issue of increased noise on Albert Street attributable to non-local traffic. Mr. Hnatuik refers more specifically to the noise generated by fire trucks using jake brakes returning via Madison Avenue and Albert Street to the fire hall at Hastings and Carleton.
- *Pedestrian Safety* – Mr. Hnatuik refers to the difficulties for pedestrians crossing Albert Street during peak periods and the pedestrian safety issue posed by vehicles violating stop signs.

Residents also propose that a comprehensive process involving both the Burnaby Heights and Capitol Hill neighbourhoods be undertaken to address these issues.

### **3.0 PROPOSED PROCESS**

#### **3.1 Previous Traffic Calming Processes**

Prior to construction of the Cassiar Connector in 1992, Cambridge Street, Eton and Oxford Street had significantly higher traffic volumes than today. Most of the east-west streets in the neighbourhood connected directly with Hwy 1 at Cassiar Street and the Cambridge Overpass connected Cambridge to McGill Street - a major commuting corridor.

By severing the direct east-west links to Hwy 1 and McGill Street, the construction of the Cassiar Connector reduced total traffic volumes on Eton and Oxford Street ranging from 7,500 to 8,000 vehicles per day in the late seventies to 4,000 to 4,500 vehicles per day. Since 1982, further neighbourhood traffic calming initiatives were undertaken by City of Burnaby and the City of Vancouver including the following:

- **Traffic Diversion Plans:** In 1982, three traffic diversion plans were proposed in the area which were subsequently rejected by the larger neighbourhood through a formal consultation process. The first plan proposed *One-way Streets* on the western-most and eastern-most blocks of the neighbourhood. This plan was favoured by 8% of respondents. The second plan proposed *Diagonal Diverters* to create a zig-zag pattern through the neighbourhood. Oxford and Gilmore were proposed to be interrupted and a two-block diversion was proposed to be created in the middle of the neighbourhood. This concept was favoured by 14% of respondents, mostly on Oxford. The last plan proposed *Barricades on Boundary* to close the centre median on Boundary at all intersections except Albert and Edinburgh. This proposal was favoured by 14% of respondents, mostly on Oxford and Cambridge. The fourth plan, a *Status Quo* option was supported by 64% of respondents. As a result, one of the first three options were implemented but left turn lanes were added on Hastings Street to reduce traffic congestion.
- **Cambridge Diagonal Diverter:** In 1987, a diagonal diverter was installed on Cambridge Street at Esmond Avenue to prevent traffic from McGill Street via Cambridge Street in the City of Vancouver from continuing along Cambridge in Burnaby. This resulted in traffic diverting to Oxford Street and Eton Street.
- **Left Turn Restrictions:** In 1993, the year after the Cassiar Connector opened, the City of Vancouver prohibited left turns during peak periods from the McGill off-ramp eastbound to Cambridge Street. This made it more circuitous and difficult for peak-period traffic from the Second Narrows Bridge and McGill Street to use Cambridge Street in the City of Vancouver to access the Burnaby Heights area.
- **Alternating Stop Signs:** Between 1994 and 1997, alternating stop signs were implemented in the Capitol Hill (1994) and the Burnaby Heights (1996/7) neighbourhood to improve traffic safety.
- **Burnaby Heights Plan A/Plan B:** In 1999, a comprehensive process was initiated to address the concerns of the residents of Eton and Oxford Street regarding the speed and volume of non-local traffic. At an Open House in the area, residents of Burnaby Heights, Vancouver Heights and Capitol Hill were presented with two options, a traffic calming plan (Plan A) involving traffic circles and street narrowings, and a traffic diversion plan (Plan B) involving street closures and traffic diverters along Boundary Road. Plan A received 62% support from resident of Burnaby Heights, while Plan B received 43% support. Residents of Capitol Hill and Vancouver Heights showed less support for Plan B. Plan A was subsequently implemented.

- **Burnaby Heights Traffic Calming Plan:** In 2002, as part of a public process, staff proceeded with development of a (non-diversionary) traffic calming plan for Burnaby Heights. The Burnaby Heights Traffic Calming Plan (BCTHP) was approved by the neighbourhood in 2002 and, subsequently, by Council in 2003. The Plan included measures to install stop signs and street narrowings on Eton and Oxford streets, a Green Wave traffic signal coordination Program on Hastings and improved local transit service.
- **Local Street Designations:** Between 2003 and 2009, both Oxford and Eton Street were reduced in classification from Local Collector to Local Residential Street. This has allowed both streets to be narrowed from 11m to 8.5m through the resident-initiated Local Area Service Program.

To date, the processes for development of appropriate responses to issues in the above noted area have involved a careful examination of traffic data, the development of options, and a review by the affected neighbourhoods to determine specific measures for implementation. A similar process could be followed for the review of traffic issues in Burnaby Heights and Capitol Hill, as expressed by residents today.

#### 4.0 **PROPOSED PROCESS**

The proposed process to address the traffic issues in Burnaby Heights and Capitol Hill draws upon the lessons learned from previous transportation planning work undertaken in these neighbourhoods. In the past, efforts to develop diversionary traffic plans have not been well received.

The phases of the proposed process would include:

##### 4.1 **Data Collection**

Staff have initiated a data collection program in the Burnaby Heights and Capitol Hill areas. When completed by mid February, information will be available for the following:

- **Traffic Volumes** – obtainable hourly over a 24 hour period identify locations where traffic volumes are higher than the desirable limit for the classification of the street in the Burnaby Transportation Plan.
- **Vehicle Classification** – information on the type of vehicle from motorcycle to semi trailer truck. Heavier vehicles tend to be a greater factor in street noise.
- **Traffic Speeds** – obtainable in 5k/hr increments will determine the location and proportion of traffic exceeding the speed limit.

The data collection program will provide information to determine the location and magnitude of the traffic issues raised by residents. The information will also allow a determination as to whether the traffic issues are focussed on specific streets or scattered throughout the area and whether further information is required on the extent of non-local traffic obtainable through a licence plate (survey) trace. The latter is a more detailed but also more expensive form of data collection that would be conducted if warranted by the traffic volume counts.

#### **4.2 Issues Assessment**

An assessment of the issues raised by past delegations would be conducted based on traffic information for the existing situation coupled with a transportation model forecast of future traffic volumes in 2021 for streets in the Burnaby Heights and Capitol Hill areas. The traffic forecast would include the impact of major projects, such as Port Mann Bridge/Highway 1 and the new Pitt River Bridge. The Issues Assessment will be presented to Council with recommendations for proposed next steps. The next steps will depend on the findings of the Issues Assessment. The following paragraphs cover some of the possibilities but are not at this time a commitment to a particular course of action.

#### **4.3 Proposed Traffic Calming Options**

Based on the issues assessment, staff would propose an approach to address the issues raised. The approach may range from localized traffic calming measures for individual streets to comprehensive traffic plans for the Burnaby Heights and Capitol Hill neighbourhoods and would be reviewed through an appropriately-scaled public consultation process. For example, such a process could be similar to the one used for the Walker / Sperling Community Transportation Plan.

#### **4.4 Traffic Calming Plan**

A Traffic Calming Plan for Burnaby Heights and Capitol Hill would be presented to the Transportation Committee and Council based on the input received from the public. If the plan is approved, implementation would follow.

### **5.0 CONCLUSION**

Residents of Burnaby Heights (Albert Street) and Capitol Hill have raised issues with regard to non-local traffic, traffic volume, traffic speed, noise and pedestrian safety in their neighbourhood.

This report proposes a process to address these issues similar to that applied in previous traffic planning initiatives undertaken in the area. This process would involve collecting information on existing and future traffic in the neighbourhood, presenting the issues for public input and, based on this feedback, developing a traffic plan for the

To: Transportation Committee  
From: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING  
Re: Burnaby Heights/Capitol Hill Traffic Issues  
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neighbourhood's consideration and subsequent recommendation to Council. However the extent to which this path is followed would await the completion of the Issues Assessment.

It is recommended the Transportation Committee request Council to authorize staff to proceed with the neighbourhood traffic consultation process as outlined in this report.



B. Luksun, Director  
PLANNING AND BUILDING

RG:jc

cc: City Manager  
Director Engineering  
O.I.C. RCMP  
Fire Chief

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