

Surrey Association Of Sustainable Communities

Presentation to City of Surrey,
Mayor & Council

Topic: Traffic Calming
June 7, 2004

Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities

Presentation to Council in Committee on Traffic Issues – June 7, 2004

Presenters for SURREY ASSOCIATION OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES:

Shirley Stonier, Ocean Park Community Association

Rob Langford, Fraser Heights Community Association.

The Association

The Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities was formed in November 2002 with representatives of Community Associations and Resident Groups from many areas of Surrey.

Our main purposes are to:

- support and strengthen community leadership in associations and resident groups;
- identify common issues that residents face; research possible solutions; and
- present that research to Council as a way of supporting the overall goal of having all Surrey residents experience a most livable city.

Our guiding principle is from John Ralston Saul's book On Equilibrium

“Democracy is an expression of calm long-term relationships between people. It is the expression of shared knowledge.”

The title is chosen carefully, the key words being:

- Association – a group that supports each other – with no hierarchy - and rotation of locations and chairs
- Sustainable – developing and supporting communities with a focus on long term social, economic and ecological benefits
- Communities – geographical groupings of residents on a scale that inspires a sense of belonging.

The working membership includes representatives from the communities of Bridgeview, Fraser Heights, Guildford, Tynehead, Serpentine, Port Kells, Kennedy Heights, Anniedale, Beaver Creek Heights, Whalley, Newton, Cloverdale, Elgin, Cranley, Semiahmoo, Ocean Park and Crescent Beach. We are always reaching out to new groups of residents.

Funding for Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities

Surrey ASC is supported with a grant from United Way. This grant will allow us to:

- distribute information about community associations, their work and their issues through a web site,
- put on workshops that strengthen community leadership and promote community building,
- mount displays that inform the public of the work of community associations and resident groups, and
- present our research on common issues to Council.

Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities Research Methodology

The Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities approach to research is to gather information, city wide, at the community level; find common themes; research what the City's policies and actions are on that issue; and compare that to other jurisdictions. This gives us the basis on which we can present some recommendations to Council.

Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities research will also be shared with Surrey's community associations and resident groups so that all communities can become fully acquainted with Surrey's vision and planning. We want to ensure that the concerns of residents today will be addressed in policy and practice in the future.

Traffic Issues Research

City wide, traffic related concerns are:

- Cars do not obey current speed zones – especially in park and school areas
- Wide roads encourage excessive speed
- A general lack of pedestrian crossings
- A lack of continuity in sidewalks – pedestrian safety is not met
- Traffic lights are not synchronized and lead to grid lock
- Commuters using side roads to beat the grid lock
- Roads with wide water-filled ditches are hazardous for all forms of traffic

A major finding from the research on traffic issues is that current City policy does not address community needs. We know that some communities have presented their concerns as individual groups – and that there will be others to come. We have also heard some community groups express frustration with the apparent lack of response to their documented concerns.

Research has included a review of the following sites: www.trafficcalming.org; www.best.bc.ca; and www.gdhamilton.com

Surrey's Official Community Plan

On the subject of traffic, your Official Community Plan states that guidelines require the implementation of ways to reduce the impact of traffic in neighbourhoods through design measures such as landscaping, traffic calming or narrower roads, and by improving design of streets for pedestrian and bicycle movements. (See Appendix A - City of Surrey Policies)

We expect the City of Surrey to work toward making those guidelines a city wide, and equitable, practice. We hope that our research, based on broad community experience, will help speed the process.

Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities has identified many traffic issues. This presentation will focus on one topic – that of traffic calming.

Traffic Calming

Traffic calming is receiving considerable attention in Canadian municipalities, but there is variation in how traffic calming is defined and how measures are applied.

The 1998 “Canadian Guide to Neighbourhood Traffic Calming” reads:

“Traffic calming is the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behaviour and improve conditions for non-motorized street users.”

It further defines:

“The purpose of traffic calming is to restore streets to their intended function. This function is to provide both mobility and accessibility, but in differing combinations, depending on the specific location and classification of the street.”

Traffic calming has many potential benefits and these include:

- increased road safety
- increased comfort and mobility for non motorized travel
- increased neighbourhood interaction
- increased property values
- reduced speeds mean reduced road maintenance costs
- reduced environmental impacts

Traffic calming tends to provide the greatest benefits to pedestrians, bicyclists and local residents, while imposing the greatest costs on motorists who drive intensively (i.e., as fast as possible).

Research on Traffic Management in Various Cities and Municipalities

We drew the following conclusions from research done on City policies and practices to do with traffic management. Our research included comparisons to Delta, New Westminister, Vancouver, Saanich, and North Vancouver.

The City of Surrey

We find that Surrey – with the greatest development growth rate - **spends less and lacks vision in planning for increased traffic.** Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities feels that it is time that the City of Surrey develops a better traffic calming policy and develops a comprehensive City wide implementation plan.

Surrey’s policy for determining traffic calming needs has criteria that set the bar too high. Many roads do not warrant action under the current policy, and thus the City does not address the very real needs of these areas.

City of Surrey Traffic Calming Budget

Our research indicates that Surrey currently budgets about \$100,000.00 per year for traffic calming. There have been some recent increases to address urgent community needs in areas where City criteria has been met, and a one time \$100K addition to establish a cost sharing pool for use at locations not meeting criteria where communities will co-fund, that is, where community residents are willing and able to pay for additional fees above the already levied taxes.

Budgets in Other Jurisdictions

- Delta budgeted \$300K just to calm North Delta
- New Westminster budgets \$100K - \$300K per annum
- Vancouver budgets \$4.8 million, and it is interesting to note that their increase in funding from the previous year is 7 times greater than the City of Surrey's entire budget
- Saanich funds all eligible traffic calming projects wholly from General Revenue with the rationale being that the need is not caused, in the main, by the action of the residents. (see Appendix B)

Comparison on Policy

Surrey has a traffic calming policy but senior staff state that there are no fixed plans for traffic calming and that it is handled on a reactive basis only.

North America wide, communities are shifting from a **reactive** to a **proactive** stance and Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities urges the City of Surrey to follow suit.

Vancouver, Delta and Saanich have recognized that a broad proactive plan is required to address community concerns and they are implementing comprehensive calming

A specific plan and a realistic workable budget to address traffic calming throughout our City are required to address the issues raised.

Request for Deliberation and Action:

The Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities requests that Council begin addressing our concerns. We specifically ask that Council direct staff to:

- 1. Work with area residents to revamp the current policy. Residents and community organizations need to be involved as participants**
- 2. Develop new criteria for determining eligibility of and ranking for traffic calming applications**
- 3. Mandate that new developments include traffic calming at time of construction using Development Cost Charges and servicing agreements**
- 4. Look into possible funding sources such as DCC's, ICBC, Greater Vancouver Transit Authority, Provincial and Federal governments, and unallocated City of Surrey surpluses.**

Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities is concerned that Surrey's initiative to have communities co-fund costs above already levied taxes, is not a fair and equitable approach to funding traffic calming. Traffic calming should benefit all residents.

We thank you for giving us the opportunity to make this presentation. We will be available to Council or staff should there be any questions or comments regarding this issue.

Surrey Association Of Sustainable Communities

Compiled data identifying community
concerns

Traffic Issues Workshop November 12, 2003 – identified issues

Crescent Beach – The entire area is a destination, so there is a large influx of outside traffic. There is no respect for the 30km speed zone and the speeding is a problem in this family area. Residents must deal with speeding traffic; teenagers cruising; high numbers of accidents; parked cars blocking walkways; no sidewalks.

Tynehead – The major problem is speeding in school and park zones. 168th Street is a major street and runs through Bothwell Park (south of 96th Ave.) Traffic continues at high speeds through this park zone, used for kids and adult baseball games, dog training and picnics, etc. 164th Street is a wide, flat street and drivers speed through Fern Park, which has a children's play area. There has been no city response to protests to enforce the 30km speed zones.

Fraser Heights – The major problem is with cars speeding and cutting through residential area to avoid Hwy 1. Drivers cut off at the 176th Street ramp and drive through residential area to the 154th Street on ramp to Hwy 1. Also there is congestion getting in and out of area caused by limited roads spanning Hwy 1.

Cranley – this is an enclosed senior's community with one entrance and one exit. There are few sidewalks and visibility is poor at main exit. Some residents speed.

Guildford Area At 104th Ave & 148th St. there is a large Superstore and the massive amount of cars coming to that area makes it unsafe for the students of Hjorth Road Elementary School.

Whalley – Design of subdivisions encourages driving, not walking. School board policies that now allow people to place their children in schools outside of their community encourages more drivers on the road at school times.

Beaver Creek Heights –66th Avenue between Scott Road and 128th Street. There are many schools in this stretch and the traffic speed is 80km – 110km. Many teens are driving to school at this speed also. Streets have ditches and restricted visibility due to road humps. Petitions to the City have not worked.

Serpentine Area – 92nd Ave between 160th and 162nd street. This is a park and school speed zone but people still speed. There is no marked crossing for the school, putting children at risk. There is a high volume of vehicles due to sports fields and a number of private schools in area. This is a straight road, and parents drive off at high speeds. There is no sidewalk to 160th and no crosswalk on this street. People also double-park which prevents left turns. The “no parking” signs have been removed. Residents have tried contacting the police to no avail. They have also tried to slow traffic by walking into the road to make drivers aware of the issues, however that just infuriates the drivers. A large group walk also did little to address the issue. Drivers just get angry and speed as they pass by.

Cloverdale – residents have to deal with gridlock on Fraser Highway, No. 10 Hwy, 176 Hwy, and 64th Avenue. Some roads flood and become impassable. There is concern that there will be inadequate lanes to the new crossing.

South Surrey – gridlock on 152 from 16th to 20th Avenue. Traffic lights not synchronized. Some main roads lack sidewalks.

Ocean Park – four areas of concern – 130th and 16th Ave., 130th and Marine Drive, 128th and 24th Ave., 124th and 24th Ave. (a report to Council is being finalized). 16th and 128 are arterial roads. Traffic speeds are high and the sidewalks are poor.

Rosemary Heights – Residents managed to get “Traffic Consultants” from the City to their meeting. How did that happen? The Engineering Department was represented at their Open House.

Port Kells – In spite of roadwork, roads still flood. There have been discussions with City staff. Traffic lights at 80 and 176 are needed – a number of accidents and deaths there. A roundabout at 88th and Harvie Ave would facilitate traffic flow. Commuters go through residential areas on way to industrial sites. The garbage transfer station to be put in North Port Kells will increase traffic, although GVRD states there will be no problems. Port Kells is a farming community but the signs stating ‘respect slow moving vehicles’ have been removed. The bus drops students for the Clayton Heights Secondary School at a distance where there are no sidewalks. There is also a church in the area that has cars double-parked, with no enforcement of traffic laws. There is a general lack of policing in the area, although the “crime watch” volunteers and their use of radar helps to slow traffic down. This area has commuter roads with wide, water filled ditches. East Clayton development is now having an impact on Port Kells traffic.

South Annedale – 92nd avenue is a speedway with people cutting through to the industrial site but it also happens at night as a shortcut. Between 88th and 92nd avenue at 176th (Hwy 13) residents are unable to get out of those streets due to heavy traffic. Residents have to take a 2-3km diversion to get out of this area and the City is still putting up more development. 96th Avenue and 182nd Street is called “suicide corner”, there is one accident a month. There is also an area where there is one access road to 94 homes because of the new road to the industrial site.

Fleetwood – like Tynehead and Port Kells, Fleetwood residents have to deal with a lack of curbing and deep ditches on busy streets. Fraser Highway is still unfinished.

Bridgeview – had difficulties with traffic on school roads in the 1980’s – 10 years of complaining failed to work, until the new industrial site was developed and the bypass around 128th was put in. However the intersection of 128th and King George Hwy (a major entrance to the industrial area) cannot accommodate the many large trucks turning left. Drivers tend to run the red light to make the turn.

***Communities also raised questions re Rosemary Heights** – Residents there managed to get “Traffic Consultants” from the City to their meeting. How did that happen? The Engineering Department was represented at their Open House.*

Surrey Association Of Sustainable Communities

Appendices

Appendix A	City of Surrey Policy References
Appendix B	District of Saanich Financing Recommendations
Appendix C	List of Participating Surrey Communities
Appendix D	Information on Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities

City of Surrey Policy References

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN (Division A)

The OCP contains many references to enhancing livability by creating safe attractive neighbourhoods and employing CPTED principals. Some specific sections are as follows:

In Section 2 Issues and Policies, Part C Build Complete Communities – requires consideration of safety and a people friendly built environment. Guidelines require the implementation of ways to reduce the impact of traffic in neighbourhoods through design measures such as landscaping, traffic calming or narrower roads and by improving the design of streets for pedestrian and bicycle movements. Additional Guidelines to Encourage Pedestrian Orientation suggest an emphasis on the safety, comfort and convenience of pedestrians when road improvements are planned and consideration of providing sidewalks along all roads and identifying existing areas or roads that require improvements to make them pedestrian-friendly.

Part C also requires taking into consideration the needs of emergency services (fire, police and ambulance services) when planning and designing safe communities, and doing periodic safety audits to improve the identified unsafe conditions.

In Part E of Section 2 – Increase Transportation Choices outlines support for grid roads that provide safe, direct pedestrian and bicycle access to transit, allows for the sharing of streets by bicycles and cars through road design, and reducing the impact of vehicular traffic by designing narrower roads and adding traffic calming features. Under the heading Address Driver, Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety, there is a requirement to design transportation routes to enhance their safety by minimizing conflicts, installing wider sidewalks in areas having more intensive commercial or recreational activity, providing adequate lighting along walkways and roads for safety, and providing convenient and safe crossings for pedestrians with disabilities and mobility difficulties. Additional comments include installing traffic calming measures and circulation controls to encourage only local traffic on local roads through residential areas and a requirement to review the Subdivision and Development By-law in order to achieve more flexible standards for local roads.

Part J – Enhance Citizens’ Safety and Well-being Through Crime Prevention covers implementing and expanding Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

Under Section 7.1 Administration and Procedures – Monitoring Implementation of the Official Community Plan is the provision for policies to be reviewed annually. This is to be done through monitoring of development using indicators such as population, environment, and other quality of community indicators such as perceived personal safety, availability or alternative travel modes and community wellness.

COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL – No Policies on Traffic Calming or Pedestrian Safety.

ZONING BY-LAW 12000 – Only mention of Safe Traffic Movement is for Drive-In Theatres, and the only mention of safety is in the Industrial Zones.

HIGHWAY AND TRAFFIC BY-LAW 1997 13007 – No mention of safety.

District of Saanich

A list of recommendations for finding monies to finance traffic management and traffic calming initiatives.¹

- Broader impacts on traffic and need for traffic calming should be considered when establishing development cost charges.
- The municipality should develop a policy aimed at traffic demand management and should direct any revenues from that policy towards the goals of traffic management.
- A percentage of the current transportation/roads budget needs to be redirected towards the goals of traffic calming and managing traffic for quality of life.
- Road rehabilitation projects need to incorporate the cost of traffic management and traffic calming in their budget at the time of application. All such projects should be consistent with the municipality's policy of managing traffic to improve quality of life.
- A process of public education needs to be established and financed. Private insurance and I.C.B.C. might be a source of financing for a program of education.
- Long term financial analysis of the costs and benefits of traffic management and reduced costs for road upgrading and maintenance, reduced environmental costs, reduced health costs, contribution to solving global problems such as global warming and improved quality of life. While some of these are difficult to quantify, they must be considered nevertheless.

¹ From "District of Saanich: Traffic Calming"

List of Participating Communities

Communities with concerns about traffic issues:

Anniedale

Beaver Creek Heights

Bridgeview

Cloverdale

Cranley

Crescent Beach

Elgin

Fleetwood

Fraser Heights

Guildford

Holland Park

Kennedy Heights

Newton

Ocean Park

Port Kells

Serpentine

Semiahmoo

Tynehead

Vancouver Area Cycling Group

Whalley

Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities

The Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities was formed in November 2002 to act as a coordinating body for Surrey's community based, resident and property owners' associations. It provides an opportunity for local community groups to share experiences in all parts of the City of Surrey; to identify common issues; and to seek solutions that support community-building initiatives.

The Purposes of the Association are:

1. To act as a coordinating body for Surrey's community based, resident and property owners' associations.
2. To act as a resource to emerging groups with the same purposes, when needed.
3. When it is perceived through information sharing that each group has common issues, the group will discuss and determine suitable action.

We believe that communities must be well planned to ensure that each geographical area of Surrey meets not only the larger community needs, but also the needs of local residents in a sustainable manner - socially, economically and environmentally.

A "livable" community is one that encourages and supports a sense of belonging, of knowing one's neighbours and feeling safe. A vibrant commercial area located in each small community, provides friendly contact with local business owners thus strengthening a sense of 'village' in an increasingly urban world.

Surrey's Community Associations, some having historic roots, provide a most suitable delineation for human scale geographic boundaries. These smaller political units ensure the greatest participation of residents in community decision-making.

We are privileged to have representation from many areas of Surrey, from Fraser Heights to Guildford, to Cloverdale, to Port Kells, to Crescent Beach. Our work is presently focused on identifying and discussing issues that are common to residents in all areas of Surrey. The first major research project is on Traffic Issues.

Our Standard Format is:

1. Share community experiences.
2. Identify City statutes governing the situation.
3. Research any City limitations.
4. Complete comparative research from other jurisdictions.
5. Based on the above information, generate some workable solutions.
6. Present to City Council and Staff on behalf of the residents of Surrey.

We will provide a website to inform all Surrey residents of our task forces, and plan to sponsor educational workshop on topics that encourage community building and sustainable living.

We acknowledge the support of Surrey Social Futures and the United Way of Greater Vancouver in helping us start this association.

For more information please contact the Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities Coordinator, Shirley Stonier, 604-531-5545 or stonier@portal.ca , website SurreyASC.com

*“Democracy is an expression of calm long-term relationships between people.
It is the expression of shared knowledge.”*

- From On Equilibrium by John Ralston Saul, Penguin Group (Canada), 2001. Quoted with permission