

Woodridge Neighborhood Traffic Committee Meeting #3 —Summary

Meeting date: Wednesday, October 25, 2017, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Meeting location: 1E-121, Bellevue City Hall, 450 110th Avenue NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

Goal of meeting:

Analyze Committee-suggested ideas in addressing commuter traffic and hear staff feedback on those ideas on how to move forward.

Agenda:

- 6:30: Check-in
- 6:35: Introduce new Committee member
- 6:40: Goal of meeting
- 6:45: Recap of previous two meetings
- 6:50: Project updates
- 7:05: Summary of Committee plans
- 7:30: Staff feedback and ideas
- 7:45: Next steps and discussion
- 8:00: Meeting adjourned

Why this meeting was held:

- To share with the Committee staff's feedback on their suggested ideas in addressing commuter traffic.
- For staff to propose their ideas to address commuter traffic based on Committee-suggested ideas
- Have a discussion among Committee and staff on all ideas in addressing commuter traffic

Attendance:

- Woodridge resident Peggy Albin replaced Ryan Terry on the Committee. Mat Rocha is also no longer on the Committee. In total, there were nine Committee members representing Woodridge that attended the meeting. Attendance is designated with a checkmark.

- Thomas Andrew
- ✓ Mark Dodrill
- ✓ Jeff Ginsberg
- Trevor Heringer
- ✓ Erin Kenway
- ✓ Becky Lawson
- Wolf Loera
- Karen Long
- ✓ Sandy Nicholls



- ✓ Dave Osmer
- ✓ Baker Rawlings
- ✓ Rich Siegel
- Sharon Stedman
- Melody Thomas
- ✓ Peggy Albin

- Representatives from the City included:
 - John Murphy, Neighborhood Traffic Safety Services, Transportation Department
 - Andrew Kyrios, Neighborhood Traffic Safety Services, Transportation Department

Meeting notes:

- The meeting began by welcoming Woodridge resident Peggy Albin. She is replacing her neighbor Ryan Terry on the Committee.
- Timing of the overall project is currently on schedule.
- Before reviewing the Committee-suggested ideas from Meeting #2, it was emphasized to Committee members to remember that they are representing a community of 5,000 residents
 - Not everyone will agree with each other's ideas
 - Important to reconcile differences
- The project scope was brought up to remind the Committee the purpose of this project:
 - Discourage commuter traffic (volume) from using the neighborhood
 - Focus during the evening hours on primary routes
 - Understand the issue is not all the time or every day
- Brief summaries from Meetings #1 (Aug. 9) and #2 (Aug. 23) were provided
 - Meeting #1 key points:
 - Commuter traffic is causing frustration in Woodridge
 - Congestion on freeways/main arterials and routing apps significantly contribute to commuter traffic
 - Traffic studies were conducted in May 2016 to gather data on commuter traffic
 - Meeting #2 key points:
 - Addressing commuter traffic is not easy
 - There are tradeoffs and community support is needed for implementation
 - Woodridge is one big neighborhood, and the City has never handled commuter traffic in this capacity before
- The ideas to address commuter traffic from each Committee group that were presented at meeting #2 were recapped:
 - Group 1's key ideas:
 - Speed humps
 - All-way stops
 - Speed limit reduction
 - Group 2's key ideas:



- Local access only signs
 - Directional signs
 - All-way stops
 - Speed zone cameras
 - Turn restrictions
 - Group 3's key ideas:
 - All-way stops
 - Curb extensions
 - Lighted crosswalks
 - Turn restrictions
- Each specific idea recommended by the Committee groups was detailed upon by staff on how it would address the project scope
 - Rectangular rapid flashing beacons and/or improved crosswalk street lighting
 - Although they improve crosswalk safety, this idea does not address the scope of the project
 - The idea has been forwarded to traffic engineering to be reviewed and evaluated in a separate process
 - Reduced speed Limit (to 15 of 20 MPH)
 - The city does not implement speed limits below 25 MPH
 - Exception is during school zones during start and dismissal hours
 - As the name implies, although yellow speed advisory signs that may be seen around curves sometimes have speed limits below 25 MPH, they are technically just suggested speeds and are not enforceable
 - Does not address scope
 - Speed ticketing cameras
 - Washington State law only permits speed ticketing cameras during school zone speed (20 mph) hours
 - Police handle speed ticketing cameras and their placement
 - General police traffic enforcement can be requested here: <https://police.bellevuewa.gov/police-services/traffic-enforcement-request>
 - Curb extensions
 - They do not do much to reduce the volume of vehicles
 - Speed humps
 - Historically, they have been used to address commuter traffic. However, due to the severity of commuter traffic in Woodridge, they would have negligible impact
 - Already speed humps in Woodridge; they are not deterring commuters
 - Directional Signs
 - Minimal impact in keeping commuter on arterials
 - Still following-up with staff regarding possible implementation
 - "Local Access Only" signs



- Generally, not used in Bellevue because they are basically impossible to be enforced by Police
 - Minimal impact in deterring commuters but could create unreasonable expectations
 - Do not influence navigation apps routing
 - Stop signs
 - Should not be used for speed control
 - Require engineering perspective
 - Details on Committee-suggested all-way stop at 128th Ave SE & SE 26th Pl is noted further down on this page
 - Turn restrictions
 - They are more restrictive in addressing commuter traffic but they also have more potential tradeoffs
 - Residents are also affected by the restriction
 - May redirect traffic to other neighborhood streets
 - To be most effective, police enforcement is needed
- Once staff finished explaining the Committee-suggested ideas, they proposed their ideas that were based off the Committee-suggested ideas
 - All-way stop at the 128th Ave SE & SE 26th PL intersection
 - Staff are moving forward in implementation. This was an idea heavily promoted by the Committee to improve the traffic flow of vehicles turning from SE 26th Pl.
 - Flagged signs will be installed ahead of the intersection to inform drivers of the new stop signs
 - A marked crosswalk will also be installed at the south leg of the intersection to enhance the appearance of the all-way stop
 - “Do Not Block Driveway” yard signs
 - Residents may request these signs to place in their yards
 - Motorists blocking driveways has been a major concern for residents
 - Per Transportation department standards, pavement markings are not being pursued at this time but guidance is being developed that better authorizes their use
 - “Residential Area” Signs
 - Still planned to be installed at each of the four entrances
 - Signs are currently in the office and will work with our in-house crews to get installed
 - Traffic Signal Optimization
 - Once the paving of Richards Rd is complete, the signals on Richards Rd will be optimized to improve traffic flow efficiency
 - The signal at Richards Rd and SE 26th ST will have flashing yellow arrows added for vehicles turning onto Richards Rd
 - Possible turn restriction at 128th Ave SE & SE 32nd ST



- No left turn from southbound 128th Ave SE to eastbound SE 32nd St (towards Richards Rd)
 - Would be in affect Monday – Friday, 5-7PM
- Knowing the topic of turn restrictions would generate much attention, staff further detailed the Committee on turn restrictions
 - The purpose of the turn restriction is to make it more challenging for commuters to use Woodridge to reach their destination
 - Turn restrictions have tradeoffs for residents. Although they may reduce the volume of commuter traffic, they will create longer travel times for some residents
 - Placement of turn restrictions should not be taken lightly, as we do not want to redirect motorists onto other neighborhood streets
 - Motorists will need time to adjust to the turn restrictions. There will be confusion at first
- The City has been piloting turn restrictions in a neighborhood South of downtown in response to East Link construction. Here are some observations from that pilot
 - There has been an initial reduction in traffic volumes
 - Some residents feel, the time of the turn restrictions, 4-7 PM, is too long
 - Concerns from some residents about accessing and leaving the neighborhood
 - Enforcement has been difficult
- Staff discussed more about the proposed possibility of a turn restriction at the 128th Ave SE & SE 32nd ST intersection which would restrict the left turn at the intersection when traveling down the hill
 - The majority of motorists from 4-7PM turn left at the intersection onto SE 32nd St to the direction of Richards Rd
 - It is sometimes falsely thought that the majority motorists stay straight to gain access to the I-90 ramp during these hours
 - Any time a turn restriction is proposed, it is important to recognize if any other street would be adversely affected
 - To prevent motorists from avoiding the turn restriction at the 128th Ave SE & SE 32nd St intersection, a turn restriction or partial closure may be necessary at SE 30th St.
 - Since turn restrictions generate diverse perceptions, they would be piloted to understand their effectiveness and to gather feedback from the community
 - The length of the pilot would be 3-6 months
 - Once data and feedback is generated on the pilot turn restriction, additional turn restrictions could be proposed at a later time or the turn restriction could be eliminated entirely

Discussion points:

Here are key comments and questions that were brought up by the Committee that are worthy of additional information or not specifically addressed in the meeting notes.



- A Committee member brought up the idea of completely restricting non-residents from accessing the neighborhood through a gate or decal system. This idea is not supported by staff for several reasons including:
 - The streets in Woodridge are public. Making the neighborhood gated or restricted from non-residents through a decal system would essentially be making the community and streets private
 - There is no local or national program that addresses commuter traffic like that
 - There are myriad logistical challenges, such as how to handle guests?
 - Enforcement would basically be impossible
- A Committee member asked if we would be addressing speeding through this project
 - The scope of the project is to address traffic volumes. We will not specifically address speeding, but tools used to address traffic volumes may also reduce speeding. In the past, tools used to address commuter traffic involved implemented speed-calming measures such as speed humps to make it an “inconvenience” for the motorists to drive on. However, due to the severity of commuter traffic in Woodridge, this approach would not be effective.
- A Committee member inquired about the Holmberg development project near SE 9th PL
 - Staff are aware of the development project, but advised Committee members to directly contact the city planner involved with the project. The contact information for the city planner is listed on the sign informing the “Notice of Proposed Land Use Action”
- A Committee member thought one turn restriction may not be enough, and suggested to implement more turn restrictions
 - Turn restrictions are best when they are “phased in.” Implementing many turn restrictions at once would make project analysis more difficult. Implementing multiple turn restrictions in the initial stages of the pilot could generate too much criticism from the community as well. To limit confusion, we do not want to put up too many signs either. If appropriate, additional turn restrictions could be implemented at a later time.
- A Committee member felt the staff suggested turn restriction time of 5-7 PM should instead be 4-7PM. Other committee members agreed with this suggestion
 - Staff are open to this suggestion. The time of 5-7PM was originally proposed to make the turn restriction less restrictive, but it is doable to include the 4 PM hour if the Committee wants it.
- Multiple Committee members asked and commented on the length of the turn restriction pilot
 - Staff suggested the pilot last 3-6 months. It is important for the pilot to be “long” enough to allow time for motorists to adjust for the change. Staff would be gathering data and community feedback during this time. Views on the turn restrictions may change once residents have become accustomed to the change
- The Committee inquired “how long will the changes will take”?
 - Residential area signs will be installed within the next month
 - Yard signs will be available in the next few weeks



- Ideally, concurrent installation of the all-way stop and marked crosswalk would be completed in two months
 - Many factors influence the time of installation (e.g. weather)
- Turn restriction would be implemented once all-way stop is installed

