SE 8th St Neighborhood Traffic Improvement Project

Traffic Committee Meeting #1, 1E-108, Bellevue City Hall

June 5, 2013

Bellevue Staff in attendance:

- Vangie Garcia, Senior Project Manager, Neighborhood Traffic Safety Services
- John Murphy, Assistant Planner, Neighborhood Traffic Safety Services
- Ken Carlson, Fire Marshall, Fire
- Mike Remington, Deputy Chief, Fire

Neighborhood Residents in Attendance:

- Steven Habib
- Alda Halldorsson-Duin
- Yuko Katsube
- Joe Lamanno
- Nick McClure
- Victoria Palmer
- Kari Peterson
- Lin Song
- Bruce Spong
- Chris Stefano

Vangie opened the meeting and went through the agenda:

- Introduction and expectations of traffic committee
- Project scope
- Existing conditions
- Project limitations
- Overview of roadway aerials (group exercise)

She went over some basic ground rules for the traffic committee:

- Please raise your hand to ask questions or make a comment during the discussion
- Everyone at the table that wants to participate will have an opportunity to provide their input and ask questions
- Respect the time for others to share their responses
- New ideas and different opinions are encouraged and are a part of this process/discussion
- Silence cell phones and other electronic devices during the meeting
- Off-topic discussions will be “tabled” to keep the group moving through the agenda and on-time

Project scope:

The scope of this project is to address the cut-through traffic that is happening on SE 8th St and SE 6th St during the PM peak. This committee will be integral in helping select what physical measures will be chosen as well as be project representatives to the neighborhood to keep them aware of what is going on.

Data and survey summary

John touched on the results of the speed/volume studies as well as the license plate study which indicated that cut-through traffic was occurring during the PM-peak period (4-6 pm) leaving SE 6th St and SE 8th St at Bellevue Way (cut-through is defined as at least 30% of peak period traffic cutting-through with at least 30 vehicles being cut-through). Additionally, speeds are typical for similar 25 mph residential streets in Bellevue. Vangie noted that perceiving vehicle speeds can be difficult to accurately gauge. Standing on the side of the road where there are limited pedestrian facilities can make it feel like vehicles are traveling faster than they really are.

SE 6th Street		
	Eastbound	Westbound
Average	22 mph	20 mph
85th*	29 mph	28 mph

SE 8th Street	
	Eastbound and Westbound
Average	22 mph
85th*	28 mph

** 85% of vehicles travel at or below this speed*

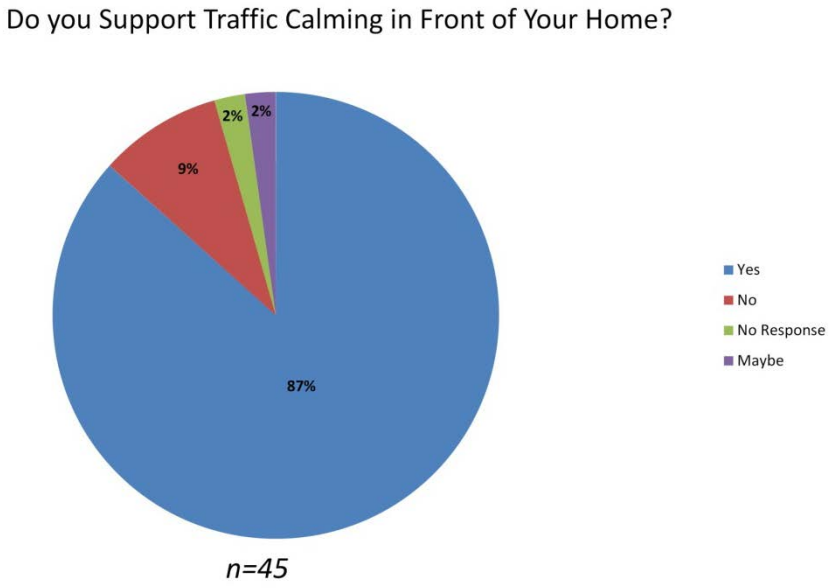
Q: How are speed studies conducted?
A: Pneumatic tubes—those black rubber tubes—stretch across the roadway to pick up vehicle speeds and volumes.

With the data indicating that cut-through traffic is occurring at the two locations mentioned above coupled with the requests that we have received from the neighborhood, the City decided to make this a project.

Residents were mailed a survey asking them to indicate their support for traffic calming measures in the neighborhood. The two options presented were:

- **YES.** I support the concept of neighborhood traffic calming measures, even in front of my home.
- **NO.** I do not want any neighborhood traffic calming measures installed anywhere along this corridor.

Overwhelmingly, survey respondents support traffic calming measures in the neighborhood with only 9% of respondents not supporting traffic calming measures.



Emergency Response:

Mike Remington and Ken Carlson were present to give the Fire Department's perspective to physical measures that may impact emergency response times. Mike noted that the Fire Department works for City residents but there are some considerations when installing any physical measures that force emergency vehicles to slow down. He noted that Fire Station #1, located on Bellevue Way near SE 8th St, uses SE 8th St as a main connection to the neighborhoods west of the area. Ken explained that tools that narrow the roadway are more preferred than tools that you have to go up and over. It was also noted that each physical measure can have some effect on response time so a number of physical measures along a route would have an accumulative effect. For example, speed humps can reduce response times by 7 seconds per hump so a series of three would add an additional 21 seconds to the overall response time. Ken noted, generally speaking, that full closures have the greatest impact on response times, followed by speed humps, then speed cushions, then chicanes.

Q: What is a partial closure?
A: Ken stated that the new traffic improvement project on NE 5th St is an example of a partial closure. *[While this is an effective tool at reducing cut-through traffic, this is more of a chicane or one-lane zone. An example of a partial closure can be located off 100th Ave NE near Bellevue Square. Motorists are unable to turn off 100th Ave NE on to NE 4th St; vehicles can only exit NE 4th St].*

Q: Can speed humps, similar to the ones west of 100th Ave SE on 99th Ave SE south of SE 7th St, be installed?
A: Ken noted that if a series of speed humps were installed on SE 8th St, similar to those on 99th Ave SE, that total delay to reach 99th Ave SE would reach 35 seconds, which is not inconsequential.

Q: [When talking about speed cushions] Do fire trucks have wider wheel bases than vehicles?
A: Yes, fire trucks have slightly wider wheel bases than cars allowing them to traverse through the speed cushion without making contact with the speed cushion. "Normal" vehicles are not as wide which induces a rocking motion when traversing the speed cushion encouraging the motorist to adjust their speed.

However, the City has seen that standard SUVs have a similar wheel base to fire trucks and are able to go through a speed cushion like a fire truck. This occurred at an existing speed cushion location and further measures needed to be installed to try and deter the violators.

When talking about chicanes and split speed humps, a participant noted that we really need to focus on the core issue: cut-through traffic. Cutting down the traffic would help address the concerns at hand.

Comment: When construction on Main St has clogged up traffic over the last few years, vehicles have found the cut-through route of 100th and SE 8th St to Bellevue Way. With future development projects along Main St and Bellevue Way in the works, this will potentially further encourage cut-through traffic through the neighborhood.

Q: Has parking on NE 8th St impact emergency response times from Station 1?
A: Not really.

Vangie then went into some of the **project limitations**, including:

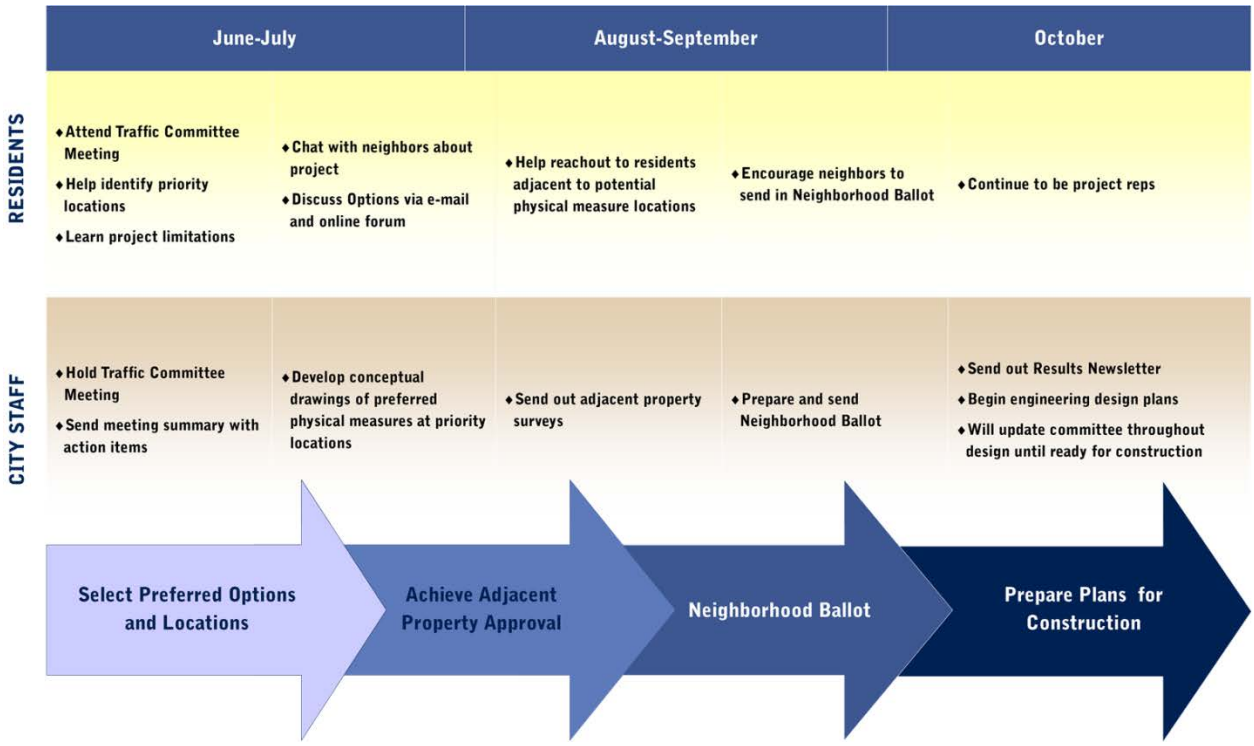
- Though it was noted by multiple people on the initial survey, sidewalks will not be part of this project. Sidewalk projects are prioritized and selected via the Neighborhood Sidewalk Program (http://www.ci.bellevue.wa.us/neighborhood-sidewalk-plan.htm).
- Though there is some concern is about cut-through traffic and vehicle speeds on SE 10th St, the scope of this project is limited to SE 6th St and SE 8th St because the data show that's where the cut-through traffic is occurring. Furthermore, the budget for this project is ~$100,000 which means we have to focus and prioritize the locations that will best address the problem-at-hand: cut-through traffic. **Update: speed studies have been requested for 102nd Ave SE and SE 10th St to see if there is need to include these streets in this project. SE 10th St was included in the cut-thru study and did not trigger.**
- The configuration of driveways, slope of roadway, and roadway width on both SE 6th St and SE 8th St, and presence of the fire station require coming up with creative solutions to address the issue. Therefore, measures or tools that may have worked well in other parts of the City may not be as effective or even feasible in this neighborhood. The charge of the traffic committee is to understand these limitations and help come up with effective tools that are feasible and supported by 65% of the neighborhood. The traffic committee will play a key role in educating neighbors on the project in the neighborhood. For any physical measure to be installed, 100% of adjacent property owners must support the project before the plan goes to the wider

neighborhood where 65% of the neighborhood must approve before the project is built (note: this is not 65% of returned ballots but 65% of all ballot recipients).

Vangie then relayed observations made during our initial field review **highlighting two specific locations where we might be able to focus our efforts:**

- Intersection of 100th Ave SE and SE 8th St: this intersection is uncontrolled meaning that there are not any stop signs for any of the legs (opposed to the SE 6th St/100th Ave SE intersection where westbound traffic on SE 6th St has a stop sign). It was noted during the field review—which included a City traffic engineer—that many southbound drivers on 100th Ave SE take the corner onto SE 8th St rather sharply. To mimic the configuration of SE 6th St, it was suggested that a stop sign could be installed for westbound SE 8th St traffic. Additionally, to give drivers a specific area to stop, a stop bar sign could be painted on the roadway so drivers know exactly where a safe stopping point is. Finally, to guide southbound 100th Ave SE drivers through the curve onto SE 8th St, raised pavement markers could be installed as drivers approach the intersection. The markers remind drivers of the appropriate distance they should travel before starting their turn onto SE 8th St.
    - This idea was generally well-received by the attendees with the concluding thought that *something* should be done here and this could be a start.
- Segment of SE 8th St between two 102nd Ave SE segments: One of the challenges of this project is to design measures that effectively discourage cut-through traffic within the constraints of the budget. To design an effective project that accomplishes this, careful consideration must be paid to the placement of the measure. Locating some sort of measure on SE 8th St between the two 102nd Ave SE segments could go a long way in discouraging motorists from using SE 8th St and thus eliminating possibly pushing more traffic onto SE 10th St. Vangie then suggested the idea of chicanes or split speed humps as possible ideas for this area. Configuration and further discussion of these locations was addressed during the break-out session where attendees and City staff poured over detailed images of SE 6th St and SE 8th St to talk about possibilities for improvements.
    - During this discussion, there were several comments regarding the high number of school-age children living in the neighborhood along with the presence of bus stops along SE 8th St and SE 10th St. There was also reiterated concern about pushing vehicles from SE 8th St to SE 10th St.

Just before the poster exercise, Vangie went over the **schedule** for the project and reiterated that any physical measure will require adjacent property approval before obtaining 65% neighborhood approval through a neighborhood-wide ballot. From experience with past projects, adjacent property approval has been the key to a good neighborhood plan and the traffic committee members will be key in reaching out to those residents who may need to understand the concerns from their neighborhood. The current plan for this project is that this meeting would be the only 1-on-1 meeting with the traffic committee; additional correspondence will be largely done online via email and project website.



Group Exercise: Evaluating project area and exploring traffic improvement ideas

The traffic committee was broken into two groups with the task of looking at two detailed aerial views of SE 6th and SE 8th Streets. The groups were instructed to carefully look at the configuration of the streets noting specific locations where they would like to see improvements. After 5-10 minutes, the groups switched to evaluate the other aerial giving everyone an opportunity to look at the whole neighborhood.

The main findings of the group exercise are as follows:

SE 8th Street:

- There was widespread support for the stop sign idea and raised pavement markers to delineate the southbound lanes of 100th Ave SE at SE 8th St and 100th Ave SE.
- On SE 8th St, east of the 102nd Ave SE segments, there was discussion about the presence of school bus stops and how children generally walk the street when waiting and getting off the bus; during the winter months, the street—due to lack of sidewalks and hilly terrain—can be especially treacherous for children walking from 102nd Ave SE south of SE 8th St to the bus stops.
- Mock-ups of chicanes at the 102nd Ave SE segments were drawn to show how changes could possibly deter traffic but also improve sightline safety as 102nd Ave SE approaches SE 8th St from

the north and south (the south segment is currently stop controlled while the north segment is not controlled).

- There was discussion about speed humps (no split speed humps in this discussion) in the flatter section of SE 8th St between 102nd Ave SE and 100th Ave SE.
- Sightlines concerns due to large hedges were raised at both segments of 102nd Ave SE as they approach SE 8th St.

SE 6th Street:

- There were some comments about the impact that East Link Light Rail would have on the neighborhood with potentially more traffic traveling on 102nd Ave SE and turning west on SE 6th St to avoid Bellevue Way. A speed hump idea was mentioned for between 102nd Ave SE and SE 100th Ave SE.
- Participants noted the difficulty of making right and left turns from SE 6th St on to Bellevue Way, partially due to an incline at the end of SE 6th St.

Conclusion

Following the group exercise, Vangie reiterated that gaining adjacent property support will be a major next step in moving this project forward. It is encouraged that traffic committee members start discussing the project with neighbors, especially those adjacent to the areas that were discussed at the meeting. The next steps will be for staff to further investigate the feasibility of physical measures at possible locations, such as 100th Ave SE/SE 8th St. As future communication will be primarily in electronic form, the committee may need to consider if another face-to-face meeting will be helpful in gaining support of the neighborhood for the overall plan. Vangie and John thanked everyone for coming and the meeting ended on time.

Action Items:

- **Vangie will be ordering approach volume studies for the intersections of 100th/SE 8th St and 102nd/SE 6th St for stop signs by Traffic Operations staff.**
- **Work will begin to create conceptual drawings of physical measures.**