

Public Participation Guidelines For The Community Traffic Management Process

*City of Edmonton
Transportation and Streets Department
Approved by City Council, April, 2003*

Executive Summary

The Transportation and Streets Department undertakes community traffic management studies in accordance with the Transportation Master Plan (Strategic Goal D: “Mitigate the Community impacts of the Transportation System by developing and implementing measures and programs aimed at reducing the use of non-arterial residential roadways by through traffic.”).

The public participation process is an integral component in the development of a community traffic management plan. The extent of public participation required depends on the scope of the transportation issue(s), the type of input needed to determine a resolution to an issue, and the stakeholders who are immediately impacted.

The purpose of this report is to update and enhance the process, originally approved by City Council in 1993. Particular emphasis has been placed on the “public participation” opportunities inherent throughout the community traffic management plan development process. Conclusions are based on a review of the original (1993) process, as well as on feedback from Transportation and Streets Department staff, input from a “focus group” of community participants in previous or current traffic management planning activities, and a review of the processes used by other North American jurisdictions.

The report seeks to address and clarify a number of key questions arising from the traffic management study process:

- What are the key steps in the community traffic management planning process?
- Which communities should be involved in this process?
- Who makes up the “community” and who are the project stakeholders?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the Transportation and Streets Department staff and the “Community Transportation Committee”?
- What level of community support is considered sufficient to proceed with implementing a traffic management plan?
- How can communication amongst stakeholders be improved throughout the process?

Nineteen “guidelines” shape the public participation process to be used by the Transportation and Streets Department in working with communities to develop community traffic management plans. The following are key changes to the original (1993) process:

- Information on traffic management plan development is provided to project stakeholders and the community-at-large on a more frequent basis;
- “Selection criteria” for community participation in the traffic management study process are more prescriptive;
- Communities requesting a traffic management plan are required to demonstrate support for the planning process prior to project initiation;
- Transportation and Streets Department staff are the “project managers” for all community traffic management studies;
- “Study area” boundaries and project “stakeholders” are defined early in the process; these boundaries may or may not coincide with defined “neighbourhood” boundaries;
- The Community Transportation Committee is expected to work collaboratively with the Department to “champion” the process and the resulting traffic management plan;
- A “Terms of Reference” for each project will be developed at the outset of each project, including a “communications plan”;
- Both quantitative and qualitative information will be considered in determining stakeholder support for a traffic management plan.

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Introduction

The Transportation and Streets Department undertakes community traffic management studies in accordance with the Transportation Master Plan (Strategic Goal D: “Mitigate the Community impacts of the Transportation System by developing and implementing measures and programs aimed at reducing the use of non-arterial residential roadways by through traffic.”).

Community transportation issues arise from both external and internal Department activities. External activities leading to Departmental reviews of transportation concerns include:

- Inquiries from individual residents, community groups, City Council and/or Standing Committees of City Council;
- Area Redevelopment Plans;
- Land development / re-development proposals.

Internal activities may also lead to community transportation issues, and may include:

- Ongoing transportation system monitoring to preclude the development of major community traffic concerns;
- Determination of community-related impacts associated with transportation projects.

The public participation process is an integral component in the development of a community traffic management plan. The extent of public participation required depends on the scope of the transportation issue(s), the type of input needed to determine a resolution to an issue, and the stakeholders who are impacted.

Community transportation issues can be classified into two categories. Minor or isolated issues that impact a small area of a community are primarily dealt with outside of the community traffic management planning process. For example, requests for signing changes at local intersections may be resolved without the involvement of the community. The second category includes major, or more complex community-wide issues, or minor issues with solutions that impact a community on a broader scale; these issues are dealt with in a more comprehensive manner through the development of a community traffic management plan. For example, a concern for short-cutting traffic in a community with parallel roadways will require extensive community involvement to determine solutions that do not exceed the level of inconvenience the community is willing to tolerate, and at the same time will not negatively impact stakeholders on adjacent roadways.

Section 1 of this report outlines the public participation process that has been used by the Transportation and Streets Department to address community transportation concerns since the process was approved by City Council in 1993. Section 2 provides a summary of the insights provided by participants of a Focused Discussion Group workshop, held in July, 2002, to critically review the 1993 public participation process and suggest improvements. In Section 3, a summary of the findings of a survey of North American municipalities is included, with information on their policies and guidelines for dealing with the public in a community traffic management planning process. Section 4 of this report outlines the recommended guidelines for public participation in the community traffic management process for the City of Edmonton. Conclusions and opportunities for future initiatives are discussed in Section 5.

The recommended guidelines are applicable only to the community traffic management process. Isolated or less-complex operational issues will continue to be dealt with by the appropriate Branch of the Transportation and Streets Department outside of the traffic management planning process.

The use of the word “community” is prevalent throughout this document and has been used purposefully instead of the word “neighbourhood” to avoid confusion with the “Standard Neighbourhood” definition used by the City of Edmonton’s Planning and Development Department. “Community” is more broadly defined to include all people belonging to a “locality” or sharing common interests, often transcending defined neighbourhood or Community League boundaries. “Community” includes not only residents, but also other institutional and business stakeholders in the “community”.

Community “traffic management” is used throughout this report to include community-based initiatives that address community-based transportation concerns. “Traffic Calming” is defined as “the use of mostly physical measures to mitigate the negative impacts of vehicular traffic on a community”, and is the most common means of managing traffic in communities.

Section 1 – The “Existing” Public Participation Process (1993)

The document entitled “The Public Participation Process in the Review of Neighbourhood Transportation Concerns” was developed in 1993 and has provided a basis for public consultation for community traffic management projects since that time. This document was received by City Council on December 14, 1993, and the outlined process (Exhibit 1) and criteria for community selection (Exhibit 2) were approved at that time.

The “existing” (1993) process is comprised of the following steps:

Traffic Issue Identification: City Administration, City Council, or the Public identifies a community transportation issue and forwards a concern to the Transportation and Streets Department.

For Minor or Localised Issues: The issue is directed to the appropriate Section for review and implementation of solutions as required.

- Where a single proposed solution exists, a petition from the “most affected” residents is required to verify support for the proposal (the Transportation and Streets Department will assist individuals and/or community groups in the development of the petition);
- Where the solution is more complex, or where alternative solutions exist, the Transportation and Streets Department issues a “Transportation Bulletin” to affected residents and stakeholders. Responses are analysed and alternatives are further defined based on technical data (may involve data collection), Departmental guidelines, and operational considerations;
- In all cases, each household / business is provided with one bulletin, although respondents may be property owners or renters;
- A minimum of 30% of bulletins delivered must be returned, with 2/3 majority of respondents in support, in order for a proposal to proceed to implementation.

For Major or Complex Issues: Data is collected and evaluated by the Transportation and Streets Department to determine the extent of concerns.

- When an issue is determined to affect an entire community, then a more comprehensive plan may need to be developed;
- A “Community Transportation Committee” is formed to work with the Transportation and Streets Department Branch;
- The Transportation and Streets Department collects additional data and conducts a more comprehensive evaluation of the transportation issue(s).
- Public input is obtained through community meetings and Transportation Bulletins.
- The Community Transportation Committee and the community reviews traffic management plan alternatives and a proposed plan is finalised and forwarded for City Council approval. Council is provided with information outlining the level of community support for the proposal.
- Trial implementation is undertaken where feasible, in order to evaluate and fine-tune the effectiveness of the plan measures. The trial period is followed by a further community “review” of the plan and Council approval for permanent implementation.
- Non-Statutory Public Hearings at the Transportation and Public Works Committee of Council are not a requirement for community traffic management plans, but are generally held if requested.

Basic Principles for Public Participation

The 1993 document suggests a number of basic principles for public participation in the review of neighbourhood transportation concerns:

- Public consultation must begin early in the planning process;
- Public stakeholders should be involved in the design of the process;
- The public participation process should be straightforward and open, with clearly identified roles to encourage participation;
- A community's sense of ownership and empowerment encourages stakeholders to identify concerns and work cooperatively to create solutions;
- Public involvement processes should be flexible and adapt to circumstances not anticipated at the outset of the planning process;
- The emergence of conflict during the process is legitimate and necessary for the consideration of trade-offs and priorities;
- Commitment to effective public consultation must be reflected in the resources allocated to the process;
- Staff must have the requisite skills and authority to effectively deal with the public;
- Impartial facilitators should be used to manage conflicts.

Identified Process Issues

A number of issues were identified during the development of the 1993 document:

- Process initiation: When should the community become involved?
- Neighbourhood representation: Who is a stakeholder? Do formal community groups represent the community? How can participation be encouraged and to what extent should efforts be made to obtain representative public participation?
- Community "voice": Who has the right to voice an opinion on neighbourhood transportation issues? Should property owners, renters, and businesses have an equal voice? Should individuals or groups from outside the community have a voice in community decisions?
- Objectivity: How can the Transportation and Streets Department build consensus and maintain the objectivity to address issues of conflict?
- Level and extent of involvement: How much public "consultation" is adequate?
- City-wide priorities: When the expectations of individual neighbourhoods conflict with city-wide priorities, or when individuals' expectations within a neighbourhood conflict, the final outcomes are often politically determined; how can the Transportation and Streets Department's efforts to work with communities in an equitable and consistent manner be supported?
- Inequitable community treatment: How can the Transportation and Streets Department build a trusting relationship with communities based on equitable treatment and collaborative approaches?

Evolution of the 1993 Public Participation Process

The development of the Department's public participation process has been dynamic; since 1993, strategies and recommendations have been further developed based on the public participation principles and the issues outlined above (*resolutions and outcomes since 1993 are italicised*):

- That additional selection criteria be determined as a means of prioritising communities requiring traffic management plans, facilitating a “planned” rather than reactive approach, based on a consistent and equitable selection process;
(*Council Approved “Neighbourhood Selection Criteria” is included as Exhibit 2*);
- That a neighbourhood monitoring / tracking system be developed to provide the information required for priority-setting and identifying those communities most in need;
(*The Transportation and Streets Department monitors traffic volume and speed in response to community concerns; this information is provided to Council on an annual basis along with recommendations for communities to be considered priorities for future community traffic management studies*);
- That a five-year time limit be imposed on a community before a new traffic management plan review in the same community is considered (this does not apply to transportation concerns that require immediate attention due to safety and/or operational issues);
(*Consideration of previous traffic management activities in a community is included in the Community Selection Criteria in Exhibit 2*);
- That an internal process for public participation be developed to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the Transportation and Streets Department and communities in the development of a traffic management plan;
(*The general process is outlined in Exhibit 1*);
- That Terms of Reference be established at the start of the community traffic management planning process;
(*A “template” for a Terms of Reference was created but has not been used consistently in recent projects*);
- That a process be established whereby other Sections / Branches / Departments have the opportunity to review traffic management plans as key stakeholders;
(*The Transportation Projects Review Committee provides a forum for disseminating information and garnering feedback on transportation projects including traffic management plans*);
- That an information pamphlet be developed for distribution to community stakeholders to provide a brief overview of the process involved in the preparation of a traffic management plan;
(*A pamphlet was created*);
- That community traffic management measures, proposed within a traffic management plan, be approved by City Council prior to both the trial period and to permanent construction;
(*Council must approve all community traffic management plans before trial implementation and prior to permanent construction*);
- That a summary of public involvement in the development of a traffic management plan be provided to City Council to assist in the decision-making process;
(*A summary is included as part of the project report forwarded for Council consideration*);

- That staff teams assigned to traffic management projects remain constant through to project completion, wherever possible, and that project team members receive training to acquire the necessary public participation skills;
(Limited staff resources have made it difficult to maintain consistent staff “teams” assigned to projects; training is provided as needed);
- That mechanisms to increase the level of support services available for projects be investigated as a means of increasing current resource effectiveness and providing professional quality products (e.g. communications and graphics);
(Most communications and graphic design are undertaken in-house by Transportation Planning staff; supplementary resources have not been funded to provide a higher level of communication);
- That the Transportation and Streets Department provide an annual report to City Council outlining current and proposed community traffic management study areas;
(“Annual Status Report” provided to Council).

Exhibit 1

Public Participation and the Existing Neighbourhood Traffic Planning Process (March 1993)

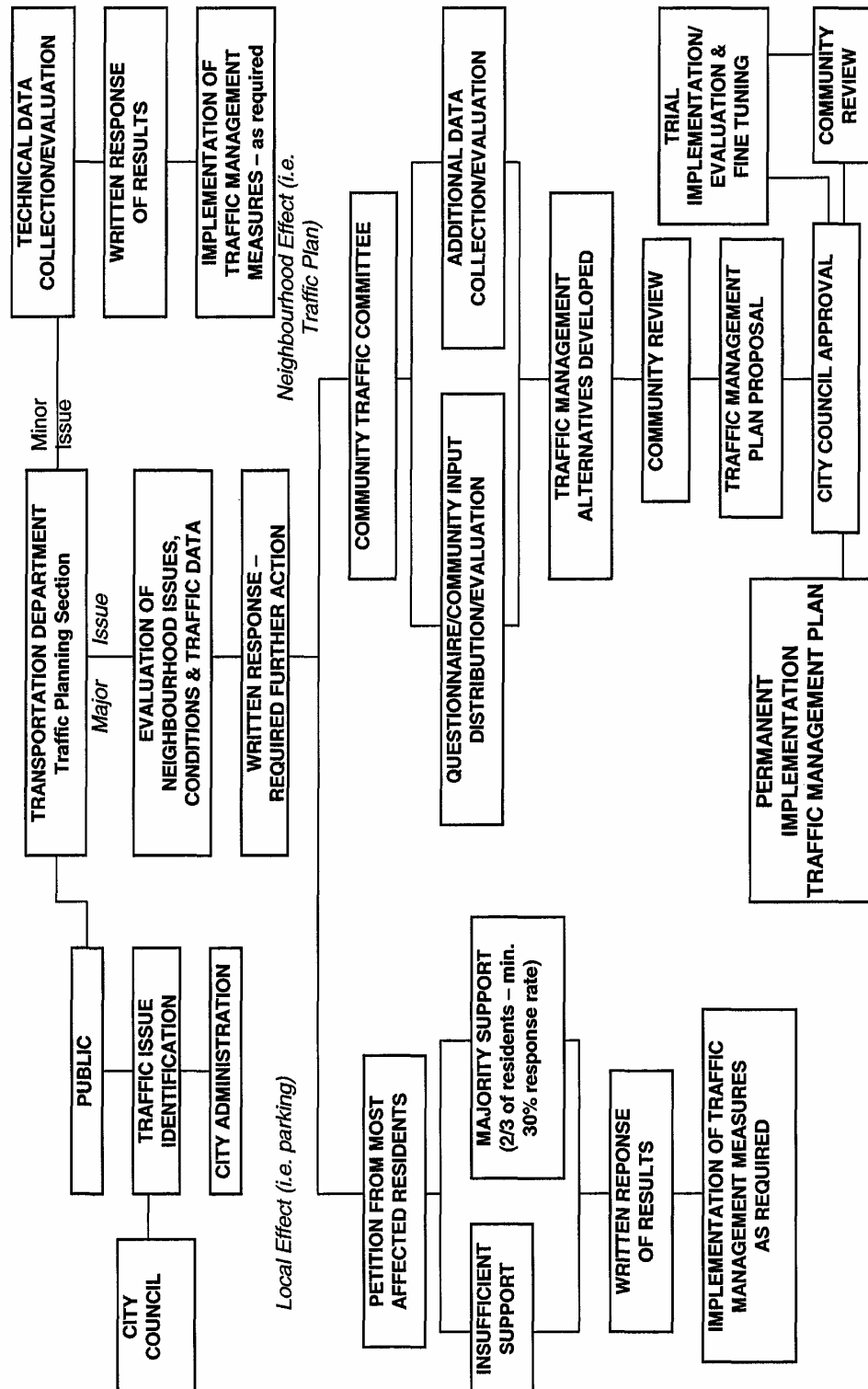


Exhibit 2**Neighbourhood Selection Criteria for Future Neighbourhood Transportation Planning Studies (1993)****Priority Areas:**

1. Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) or Neighbourhood Infrastructure Program (NIP) areas.
2. Areas subject to significant land use development proposals.

Other Considerations:

1. The number and date of requests from individuals and community groups.
2. The complexity and severity of transportation concerns. (Isolated, relatively minor operational / safety issues may be dealt with directly by the appropriate resources, without a NTP study).
3. The availability of information and data to rationalize and evaluate the implementation of a NTP study.
4. The existence of a Neighbourhood Traffic Committee.
5. The stability of traffic patterns in the area. (Neighbourhoods affected by temporary conditions, such as adjacent roadway construction, will not be considered a priority in the NTP study process).
6. Previous NTP study activities. (Priority will be given to those communities which have not previously been involved in the NTP study process).
7. City-wide transportation priorities and requirements.

Section 2 – July 2002 Focus Group Discussion

On July 11, 2002, the Transportation and Streets Department convened a focus group to discuss the community transportation management process, and more specifically, the survey process used to assess the level of acceptance by a community for the proposed traffic management measures. The session was facilitated by Marilyn Stecyk of Kaleidoscope Consulting. Seventeen representatives of communities that had either finished or were currently involved in, the traffic management planning process participated in the focus group. A summary report is included in Appendix A; the following overview summarises some of the insights provided by the focus group discussion.

- The community traffic management process should be a shared responsibility between the City and the community;
- Information about the community traffic management process must be solid, comprehensive, and consistent – it was recommended that a “handbook” be developed that lays out the components of the process, and that this handbook be integral to the initiation of the Transportation and Streets Department’s work with community stakeholders, enabling the process to move forward more expeditiously;
- A “Terms of Reference”, identifying the components of the traffic management plan and the process through which such a plan is developed, should be established at the outset of the process;
- “Study Area” boundaries must be defined at the outset of the process and should not be altered during the process without a solid rationale;
- Stakeholders include people who live in the community and those who own / operate a business in the community, as well as persons associated with institutions and other agencies in the community;
- There may be differing levels of stakeholder participation – some stakeholders may only need to be informed and/or provide general input, while others will need to be involved in the process and participate in “surveys” to determine plan directions; participation levels should be defined at the outset of the process;
- The “approval” process should be clearly communicated (ultimately, it is City Council that must approve the Transportation and Streets Department’s proposed and recommended traffic management plans, prior to implementation);
- A successful planning process would reassure stakeholders that all of the relevant issues have been identified, and long-term solutions that actually make a difference in the community have been developed to address these issues. Collaboration and the timely completion of the planning process are also important indicators of success.

The focus group cited the “survey process” as being the major area of concern with respect to the development of community traffic management plans. Comments included the following:

- The survey process needs to be consistent – it should not be “ad hoc” for each community;
- The survey process needs to be fully communicated and understood at the outset of the plan development process;
- Response requirements must be feasible and appropriate to unique community situations (particularly for communities with a higher proportion of rental properties or seasonal population shifts);
- All “community” stakeholders should be surveyed – try to avoid surveying only portions of defined “neighbourhoods”;
- The “mail-back” survey may not be the most effective method of gathering public response, however, there was general consensus that only one survey instrument or methodology should be employed;

- There was little consensus on whether survey responses should be viewed quantitatively or qualitatively.

The focus group also indicated that a strong leadership / partnership responsibility must be held by the community involved in the development of a community traffic management plan. Comments included:

- Community League and Transportation Committee representatives must take ownership of and champion the plan development process;
- The Community League should assess the general interest of the community before requesting / commencing the development of a community traffic management plan;
- Community leaders must be committed to working with the Transportation and Streets Department throughout the process;
- More active involvement of City Councillors, and in particular, the Ward Councillors should be encouraged by the community;
- The community shares a primary responsibility for communication to its members; vehicles for communication include the community newsletter and perhaps a website; communication of information is key to the process, but communities must also encourage members to participate in the process.

In conclusion, the focus group participants felt that the current traffic management planning process essentially works well. Additional efforts expended on project initiation and communication, and a focus on consistency were viewed as enhancements to the existing process.

Transportation and Streets Department Staff Perspective

Transportation and Streets Department staff also reviewed the “questions” that were put to the July 11 focus group participants, and provided some insights from the point of view of staff who have participated in the development of community traffic management plans (a full summary of comments is included in Appendix B):

- A “vision” is essential in establishing goals and objectives for the traffic management plan;
- The current process used by the Transportation and Streets Department makes sense – enhancement to the communications process should be considered;
- Perhaps there is a need to undertake some preliminary work before committing resources to community transportation management, in order to ensure that the community understands the issues, their role in solving the problems, and the trade-offs that may be required to implement a “solution”;
- Roles and responsibilities need to be firmly established at the outset of the process;
- Boundaries should make “transportation sense” (for example, arterial roadways);
- It is essential to establish a level of trust between stakeholders and the Transportation and Streets Department;
- Other Branches and Departments are also key stakeholders in community traffic management plans;
- Using a variety of mediums to obtain survey responses works well (mail-back, fax, phone, e-mail);
- 30% response rate, with 2/3 majority of respondents in support has worked well in the past;
- Must recognise that Department resources must be committed to developing and implementing a communications plan.

A number of “indicators” of a successful process include:

- Community Transportation Committee has a clear vision;
- Community representatives take ownership and champion the plan;
- Community works *with* the Transportation and Streets Department;
- Community stakeholders feel their input has been heard, particularly those “stakeholders” who may not be surveyed within the “area of impact”;
- Community interest and participation is high throughout the process;
- Community understands the objectives of the traffic management plan;
- Nobody can claim that they weren’t aware that their community was involved in the development of a plan;
- Council is involved and supports the process as well as the resulting traffic management plan.

Section 3 – The Community Traffic Management Process in Other Cities

In 2002, the Transportation and Streets Department surveyed community traffic management practices in ten Canadian and American cities:

- Victoria, British Columbia
- Nanaimo, British Columbia
- Vancouver, British Columbia
- Burnaby, British Columbia
- Delta, British Columbia
- Calgary, Alberta
- Toronto, Ontario
- Seattle, Washington
- Portland, Oregon
- Sunnyvale, California

Ottawa and Regina were also surveyed but were in the midst of reviewing their own community traffic management practices, and were unable to provide information at this time.

Survey results are summarised below:

- Five of the ten cities (Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Portland, Sunnyvale) indicated that traffic management plans are prepared on an area-wide basis and for roadway corridors within communities. Three municipalities (Victoria, Delta, Burnaby) only undertake area-wide traffic management activities, and two municipalities (Seattle, Nanaimo) employ “traffic calming” as a “spot-improvement” program for local roadways;
- Calgary uses flexible but defined area boundaries for each study to ensure the efficient use of staff and volunteer resources;
- In five municipalities (Victoria, Vancouver, Delta, Calgary, Toronto), priority areas for community traffic management plans are approved by City Council;
- City Councils in seven of the ten municipalities (Victoria, Vancouver, Delta, Burnaby, Calgary, Toronto, Sunnyvale) approve traffic management plans prior to trial and/or permanent implementation;
- Six municipalities (Nanaimo, Vancouver, Delta, Calgary, Toronto, Sunnyvale) have an approved traffic management “policy” (policies in Calgary and Sunnyvale are also currently under review). Seattle has a formal policy for the implementation of traffic circles only;
- Five municipalities (Victoria, Nanaimo, Delta, Seattle, Sunnyvale) have used external consultants to prepare traffic management plans. Calgary does not typically use consultants, but on one occasion used a “facilitator / transportation consultant” for a community having difficulties in reaching a consensus on plan development. Seattle requires that communities hire a consultant to develop comprehensive traffic management plans when warranted by larger-scale issues or when an entire neighbourhood requests traffic calming measures;
- All but one city (Burnaby) conduct preliminary traffic volume / speed surveys to determine the need for a community traffic management plan and to prioritise communities according to greatest need. Only two municipalities (Calgary, Toronto) use a “point” system for evaluating and prioritising communities;

- Four of the municipalities (Vancouver, Delta, Burnaby, Calgary) indicated that they work with a community “transportation committee” in developing traffic management plans. In Victoria, the “community association” represents the community. Calgary indicated that the purpose of their “transportation committees” is to work collaboratively with the transportation engineers / planners in all phases of plan development, representing community interests, and garnering local support;
- Resources used for traffic calming practices include the TAC / ITE “Canadian Guide to Neighbourhood Traffic Calming” and the Canadian and U.S. versions of the “Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Public Participation

Victoria

- Public meetings and open houses, questionnaires and surveys, and public hearings are used;
- “Walkabouts” with community members are conducted at open houses;
- Both residents and businesses are involved in the process;
- Generally, 2/3 majority support is required before a traffic management plan is implemented.

Nanaimo

- External consultants are used to develop traffic management plans;
- Questionnaires are distributed to residents and public meetings are held to go over the details of the questionnaire;
- Generally, only the residents of the impacted roadway are involved in the process;
- A petition of affected residents must show 75% “in support” to proceed with implementation.

Vancouver

- Transportation committees, open houses, and surveys are used;
- Generally the whole community of stakeholders that will be impacted by the project are included in the process;
- Mail-back surveys are used, with 60% of returned surveys required to be in “support” in order to proceed with traffic management (required response rate is not specified).

Delta

- The process commences with a community “walkabout”;
- Transportation committees, public meetings and open houses, questionnaires and surveys are used;
- All property owners and residents within the community are included in the process; residents may be owners or renters; school councils are included as a special interest group;
- Survey responses indicating “support” or “acceptance” of a proposed plan are tallied; there is a struggle to achieve any more than approximately 15% of surveys returned;
- Feedback from those outside the community is not solicited but is also not prohibited.

Burnaby

- Transportation committees are used and open houses are held;
- Businesses are not included in the process;
- Response rate is not considered important; 50% support is required to proceed with implementation.

Calgary

- Process is flexible; appropriate public participation techniques are determined to successfully complete a project;
- Transportation committees, public meetings and open houses, questionnaires and surveys, and public hearings at Council are used;
- Community “walkabouts” to observe areas of concern are also used;
- Households, businesses, and institutions in the study area are involved in the process and are represented on the transportation committees; including external “stakeholders” from outside the impacted community (i.e. the “shortcutters”) would confound the process to the point that community traffic management would be difficult if not impossible to implement;
- The whole community is invited to participate at public forums and open houses and in opinion surveys at key points in the process;
- In the past, there were no set levels of support required for traffic management projects, although a “majority level” of support was suggested (at least 60% is desirable); response rates are not defined in Calgary’s “policy”, however anything lower than 15% is felt to be difficult to defend, so generally a minimum response rate of 20% is used;
- Calgary is currently revising its policy such that 25% of “affected” households are required to indicate support via petition prior to embarking on a traffic management plan for a community. In addition to resident support, written support from the community association, alderman, and Police representatives must also be provided;
- Calgary may or may not use trial measures for roadway narrowing, but full or partial roadway closures are generally installed first as a trial. If found to be effective, traffic management measures are usually installed permanently without further public consultation or Council approval.

Toronto

- Traffic management projects are considered “Class B” projects under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act; as a result there are two mandatory points of public contact which are published in local newspapers: a notice of commencement of study, and a notice of completion of study;
- The public is also notified of a Public Hearing held at a Community Council Meeting (a standing committee of City Council), where the public is invited to speak regarding the proposed project; any member of the public may speak;
- All affected households fronting or flanking the roadway under study are included in the process;
- All households fronting or flanking the affected roadway are sent a copy of the ballot; a minimum 51% return rate is required, with at least 60% responding in favour of the project.

Seattle

- Isolated measures – “requestor” petitions impacted areas (within one block of the proposed measure); if support is demonstrated, community meeting is held to discuss the project;
- Larger-scale projects – depending on project scope, the public on adjacent roadways may be involved; community circulates a petition, letters sent out asking for input, and community meetings to provide information and determine community direction;
- Both households and businesses / institutions are included in the process. Each unit in a multi-family dwelling is considered one household. Each household / business / institution is given one “vote”. Generally, the “household” is taken as the person or persons occupying the dwelling unit, regardless of property ownership or rental;
- A measure is deemed to be “supported” if 60% of those in the impacted area sign the petition.

Portland

- Open houses are held, with notices sent to affected residents, businesses and institutions;
- A petition with 2/3 of impacted households and businesses signing in favour must be submitted to proceed with implementation of a traffic management plan.

Sunnyvale

- A community petition is required to demonstrate interest in traffic management;
- Public meetings are held throughout the process, with meeting notices sent to all property owners and building tenants;
- Only residential streets are considered for traffic management projects, therefore businesses are not involved;
- At least 60% of impacted residents, and 100% of the residents within 100 feet of the proposed measure must support installation prior to implementation.

Communications:

- Victoria advertises events on their web site and in local newspapers;
- Calgary is currently developing a CD-ROM entitled “How To Deal With Community Traffic Issues”;
- Seattle has published a handbook entitled “Making Streets That Work”.

The following additional information was obtained from a survey on “traffic calming” published by the Urban Transportation Monitor in September, 2000:

- Level of “neighbourhood” support required before a request for traffic calming becomes eligible for further investigation: 51% of respondents indicated greater than 60% support is required (most common response), with 11% of respondents requiring greater than 80% support (based on comments, it appears that 60 to 75% is the norm);
- 49% indicated that only residents / property owners along the road where traffic calming measures are proposed are polled; 51% indicated that they poll a wider area prior to implementation;
- 38% indicated that tenants of rental properties are polled, 28% indicated that the property owners are polled, and 34% indicated that both groups are polled.

Section 4 - Guidelines

That the updated Community Traffic Management Process (Exhibit 3) be adopted.

That “public information” be provided to the community-at-large and especially to those stakeholders in the project study area at critical points in the community traffic management planning process.

The foremost amendment to the Transportation and Streets Department’s previous “process” (1993) is the inclusion of “public information” at key steps in the planning process. “Public information” implies feedback on the project status throughout the process, as well as providing education as to the technical aspects of community traffic management, to be delivered through a variety of mediums, to the community “at large” and in particular to those stakeholders within the defined project study area.

Other amendments to the process are discussed more fully as follows.

That the selection criteria (Exhibit 4) for undertaking traffic management plans in communities be expanded to include: (a) communities that are scheduled for future roadway rehabilitation, and (b) minimum threshold levels for traffic volumes, speeds, and shortcutting.

The Transportation and Streets Department’s process for the review of community transportation concerns and the criteria established for the selection of candidate neighbourhoods provide a means of addressing the growing city-wide demand for community traffic management studies with limited staff resources in a more planned, efficient, consistent, and equitable manner.

The criteria have been updated to include the condition that priority should be given to those communities that are scheduled for future roadway rehabilitation; implementation of traffic management measures in conjunction with rehabilitation projects ensures that construction is undertaken in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

The criteria have also been amended to include threshold levels for traffic volumes, traffic speeds, and shortcutting traffic to ensure that perceived problems are indeed significant issues that should be addressed through the implementation of a traffic management plan. Minimum threshold levels would ensure that Transportation and Streets Department resources are directed to those communities experiencing the most critical traffic problems. *(Thresholds are based on those established by the City of Calgary).*

That the Transportation and Streets Department’s information report, indicating the communities which have been selected for future community traffic management studies, be adopted by City Council on an annual basis.

City Council approval of the Department’s candidates for future community traffic management studies will ensure that Council and Department priorities are aligned, and will demonstrate Council’s support for those communities participating in the process of plan development.

That communities (or individuals) requesting a traffic management plan be required to submit an “expression of interest” signed by a minimum 25% of household units in the immediate vicinity of the area of concern, indicating support for initiating the community traffic management planning process. The request should also include a letter of support from the relevant Community League(s) or other representative community association.

Requiring a community “expression of interest” prior to embarking on the process of developing a traffic management plan ensures that Transportation and Streets Department resources are focussed on those communities that have demonstrated an interest in pursuing solutions to address community-wide transportation issues. Transportation and Streets Department staff may assist those requesting a traffic management study in preparing the “expression of interest” form and in defining the boundaries of the area to be petitioned.

This requirement will also serve to raise public awareness of the transportation issues in the community and ensure that all members of the community are engaged in the process to develop a traffic management plan from the very beginning. The community may also use the exercise of gathering support on the “expression of interest” as an opportunity to gather the names of individuals who might be interested in participating on a Community Transportation Committee.

That the Transportation and Streets Department, in collaboration with the Community Transportation Committee, develop a Terms of Reference for the community traffic management study as the first step in the planning process.

A clearly defined Terms of Reference, developed with the Community Transportation Committee at the outset of a community traffic management study, provides a common reference for all parties involved in the process and facilitates communication and project management.

Minimum requirements for the Terms of Reference will include:

- A “community” transportation vision and a “team” mission statement;
- Definition of “study area”;
- Study goals and objectives;
- Community Transportation Committee membership;
- Defined roles and responsibilities for the Transportation and Streets Department staff and Community Transportation Committee members;
- Expectations and “norms” for staff and committee members;
- Proposed study schedule, including frequency of meetings and an agreed-upon termination point;
- Proposed “communications” plan.

That Transportation and Streets Department staff act as “project manager(s)” for all community traffic management studies.

The Project Manager is responsible for managing and coordinating the resources of a project to achieve pre-determined objectives of scope, quality, time, cost, and participant satisfaction. While it is the intention of the Transportation and Streets Department to work collaboratively with the Community Transportation Committee and the community “at large” to create a traffic management plan that addresses the needs of each community, project management by the Transportation and Streets Department is required to obtain the most effective and efficient use of both staff and budgetary resources and to ensure that project timelines are adhered to.

Other Transportation and Streets Department Roles and Responsibilities:

- Working with the Community Transportation Committee to develop Terms of Reference for the study;
- Educating the community with respect to technical information and Transportation and Streets Department policies and guidelines;
- Collecting and analysing data to quantify transportation issues;
- Determining those transportation issues that are of significant magnitude to warrant inclusion in the traffic management study;
- Developing and evaluating the traffic impacts and technical feasibility of alternatives to ensure that safety and operational issues are addressed, and that Departmental guidelines and procedures are followed;
- Ensuring that city-wide transportation priorities are recognised;
- Serving as liaison between other Sections / Branches / Departments / Agencies within the City of Edmonton Administration to ensure that service provision is not compromised;
- Survey development, distribution, collection of responses, and analysis;
- Reporting to City Council as required on status of projects and obtaining Council approval for plan initiation and implementation;
- Coordinating the installation of approved trial and permanent traffic management measures.

That two types of “community” traffic management planning studies be recognised – the “neighbourhood” study, and the “collector roadway” study, and that study area boundaries be set accordingly at the outset of the plan development process, recognising that study area boundaries may not coincide with the standard “neighbourhood” or “Community League” boundaries as defined by the City of Edmonton.

Based on past experience, the Transportation and Streets Department has identified two distinctive “types” of community traffic management studies. The neighbourhood traffic management study is a comprehensive study that addresses various transportation issues, generally within a single neighbourhood; the study area boundary for this type of study is usually the defined standard neighbourhood boundary. The collector roadway traffic management study focuses on a single roadway corridor which often intersects a number of “neighbourhoods”. The study area boundary should encompass all impacted neighbourhoods, however, some preference should also be given to those community members within the immediate impact area of the collector roadway. Generally, the emphasis of a collector roadway traffic management study will be traffic “calming” and the immediately impacted area should encompass those properties within one to two blocks of the collector roadway corridor.

The City of Edmonton’s “standard neighbourhoods” are defined by the Planning and Development Department. Particularly in the inner city, neighbourhood boundaries do not always coincide with logical “transportation” boundaries (arterial roadways, for example). In developing a community traffic management plan, it may be necessary to define study area boundaries that conform to significant transportation facilities and geographical features, recognising that these boundaries may encompass only part of a neighbourhood or in some cases, several neighbourhoods.

A preliminary definition of the study area boundaries should be determined at the outset of the plan development process and may be refined through the “issues identification” stage of the process (depending on the transportation concerns, the study area may need to be enlarged to encompass portions of adjacent neighbourhoods, or the study area may be reduced in size in recognition that the most critical community issues are contained in a smaller portion of the neighbourhood with minimal impacts on the wider community). Once the study area has been finalised, the boundaries should remain consistent for the duration of the process, to ensure that “new” stakeholders are not added mid-process and that existing stakeholders are able to see the process through to its conclusion.

That “stakeholders” in a community traffic management study include all individuals and groups associated with the residential, business, and institutional land uses contained within the study area boundaries. The process should focus on the participation of residents, users of community facilities, and employees of community businesses, rather than property “owners”.

All community stakeholders should have the opportunity to participate in a traffic management study, regardless of socio-demographic characteristics, property ownership, tenure in the community, or divergent points of view. Absentee property owners should be kept informed about the process by their tenants; however, the focus of Departmental and community resources should be directed to encouraging the participation of those stakeholders within the study area boundaries whose lives will be impacted on a day-to-day basis by the traffic management plan (particularly residents – whether home-owners or renters).

That the Transportation and Streets Department continue to work with a “Community Transportation Committee” throughout the plan development process; the Transportation Committee should be comprised of volunteers representing the major stakeholders and geographic segments of the study area (residents, businesses, institutions).

The establishment of a “Community Transportation Committee” provides access to a representative group of stakeholders committed to addressing community transportation concerns, facilitating communication and collaborative decision-making. Obtaining representative community participation during the initial, rather than final, stages of developing a community traffic management plan promotes a more effective and efficient planning process.

Transportation Committee size, composition, and responsibilities will vary from community to community, depending on the level of interest and the nature and extent of the transportation issues specific to the community. Community Leagues and/or other community associations will be expected to assume a leadership role in identifying a balanced and representative group of stakeholders in the community to participate on the committee.

Community representation should ideally include:

- Representatives of Community Leagues or other established community groups (e.g. Homeowner’s Association);
- Residents residing in close proximity to “issue” locations and residents “at large” from throughout the community (depending on community composition, efforts should be made to encourage representation of home-owners, home renters, and residents of both single-family and multi-unit dwellings);
- Business owners and/or business association representatives;
- Institutional representatives (school administrators and church officials);
- Representatives of other community agencies, service organisations, and associations;
- Representatives of adjacent communities to encourage information-sharing.

That Community Transportation Committees work collaboratively with the Transportation and Streets Department to provide “local” knowledge of their community, to facilitate communication, to build consensus on transportation issues and solutions, and to “champion” the traffic management planning process and the resulting plan in their community.

The primary objective of the Community Transportation Committee is to work *with* Transportation and Streets Department staff to assist in the identification of the most critical transportation concerns in the community and the development of viable and acceptable solutions to address these issues. The focus of the Committee should be on consensus building, rather than on “voting” on issues and proposals, recognising that traffic management involves trade-offs, and that generally not all committee (or community) members will be completely satisfied with all decisions. Inasmuch as possible, it is essential that participants remain committed to project from beginning to end to ensure the stability of the Community Transportation Management process and the Committee.

Other Community Transportation Committee Roles and Responsibilities:

- Working with the Transportation and Streets Department staff to develop Terms of Reference for the study;
- Assisting in the identification and prioritisation of community transportation issues;
- Assisting in the development and evaluation of traffic management measure proposals from a “local” perspective and reviewing Transportation and Streets Department products / reports;
- Facilitating communication with the community and representing the Community Transportation Committee to inform and obtain information from community members through public participation opportunities (public meetings, workshops, and open houses, community newsletters, questionnaires);
- Acting as liaison with the Transportation and Streets Department and community and stakeholder groups;
- Obtaining endorsement of proposals from relevant community groups.

That the “stakeholder” group be expanded to include adjacent communities in specific instances where it is determined by the Transportation and Streets Department that the traffic management proposals under consideration may have a significant impact on those adjacent communities.

Consultation with distant communities is not undertaken during the process to develop a community traffic management plan (i.e. those who are shortcutting through a community are not asked to support measures that would effectively impede their use of the shortcut route). However, the stakeholder group should include members of adjacent communities if it is identified that traffic management measures designed for the originating community may impact traffic patterns beyond that community (for example, when there is a potential for the diversion of traffic from one community to the next). The extent of the involvement of adjacent communities under these circumstances will be dependent upon the degree of the anticipated impacts, however, the involvement of adjacent communities should begin as early as possible in the community traffic management process and carry through to the conclusion.

That other City Departments and Branches of the Transportation and Streets Department be regarded as internal “stakeholders” in a community traffic management study, and that the need to provide other City services be recognised as imposing some necessary limitations on the traffic management options available to communities.

Critical City services, like emergency response, waste management, and public transit rely on the roadway network for community access. Civic representatives should be consulted throughout the traffic management study process to ensure that their services are not unduly compromised. If necessary, “internal” limitations and constraints on the traffic management options available to a community should be written into the project Terms of Reference.

That Transportation and Streets Department staff, in collaboration with the Community Transportation Committee, develop a proposed “communications plan” as part of the project Terms of Reference, and that Departmental resources be allocated accordingly.

Focus Group participants, Transportation and Streets Department staff, and the survey of North American municipalities all identified “communication” as a key component of the traffic management study process. Focus Group participants and staff alike considered that the greatest enhancement to the Transportation and Streets Department’s existing “process” should be in the area of communication, between staff and the Community Transportation Committee, and between the community at large and both civic and community stakeholders.

Communication improvements in the community traffic management study process would include:

- Updating the existing “brochure” outlining the process for addressing community transportation concerns in the City of Edmonton;
- Preparing a CD-ROM on “traffic calming” in the City of Edmonton, outlining the traffic management planning process, and providing information on traffic calming measures with significant use of graphics and photographs;
- Providing general information on community traffic management plans on the City of Edmonton’s website as well as specific project information and status updates for those communities involved in the traffic management process;
- Developing a “handbook” of reference materials to be provided to Transportation Committee members at the outset of the process;
- Working with the media (newspaper, radio, television) to promote transportation management study “events” throughout the planning process (public meetings, for example);
- Improving notification of upcoming events for the community at large (newsletters, bulletins, posters, roadside notice boards);
- Providing periodic status reports to the community at large;
- Providing project information and Community Transportation Committee contact information in community newsletters;
- Using the “open house” format for public meetings to a greater extent, with consideration given to travelling “road shows” to be taken to key facilities in each community.

That the Transportation and Streets Department investigate mechanisms to increase the level of support services available for community traffic management projects to enable the initiatives outlined in the communications plan.

Ongoing resource limitations and lack of support services means most communication and graphic design associated with community traffic management studies are undertaken in-house by Transportation and Streets Department staff (planners, engineers, and technical assistants). In order to carry out the initiatives outlined previously, access to resources outside the Department's traffic management "team" will be essential. In particular, specialist "communications" support will enable Department staff to carry out the requirements of a project communications plan, and graphic design support will enable the Department to present project information in a professional and visually interesting manner.

That the Transportation and Streets Department continue to use the "mail-back" questionnaire as the primary means for determining community support for the implementation of traffic management measures.

Historically, the Transportation and Streets Department has used hand-delivered "Transportation Bulletins" to survey residents and community stakeholders in order to determine whether sufficient community support exists to proceed with a recommendation to Council that a traffic management plan be implemented either as a trial or on a permanent basis. Mail-back questionnaires, with self-addressed, stamped envelopes, have proven to be most effective as each household, business, and institution is guaranteed the opportunity to participate in the survey. Generally, alternative means of responding to the survey are also provided – via e-mail, phone, or fax.

While the mail-back questionnaire should continue to be the primary medium for obtaining feedback on the traffic management planning process, it may be supplemented by questionnaires at public venues and during public meetings and open houses. These types of questionnaires would be designed to obtain feedback, but should not be considered to represent a vote of "support" or "non-support", as there can be no assurance that all stakeholders are able to be present in the public forum.

That the Transportation and Streets Department employ a series of "Transportation Bulletin" questionnaires to determine the level of support within the community for the proposed traffic management measures, prior to seeking Council approval for both trial and permanent implementation of a traffic management plan. Surveys should include those stakeholders deemed to be most impacted by the proposed measures, as well as the community "at large" within the pre-defined study area.

The "area of impact" for a specific traffic management measure is dependent on the measure itself. For example, roadway narrowing through curb extensions and/or centre medians does not prohibit public access and therefore has a more localised impact, while a road closure severely impacts public access and may, in fact, cause community-wide traffic patterns to alter. Once the Community Transportation Committee and Transportation and Streets Department staff have arrived at a consensus on a proposed plan, each measure should be examined and its "area of impact" jointly agreed upon. For most "neighbourhood-type" traffic management plans, the entire community will be impacted by the plan as a whole. For most "collector" corridor traffic management plans, the most impacted area will lie within one to two blocks of the collector roadway.

Two levels of survey should be employed. Those stakeholders within the defined “area of impact” for each proposed traffic management measure should be surveyed on their support for the applicable measure as well as for the plan as a whole. Those community stakeholders within the study area, but beyond the “area of impact” of the individual measures should be surveyed on their general level of support for the plan as a whole. Generally, this second level of survey will enable stakeholders in the wider community to participate in the survey process, without overriding those in the “area of impact” who must deal with the existing transportation concerns and the resulting mitigating measures on a day-to-day basis.

That the Transportation and Streets Department consider the quantitative survey results in determining the level of community support for traffic management initiatives, and that this information be provided to City Council in support of the Department’s recommendation to implement a community traffic management plan on either a trial or permanent basis.

All community traffic management plans must be approved by City Council prior to implementation. Recognising that Council support for a plan is predicated on community support for a plan, it is essential for the Transportation and Streets Department and the Community Transportation Committee to demonstrate that the proposed traffic mitigation measures are endorsed by the community as a whole, and by the individual stakeholders that are determined to be most impacted.

Results of the “area of impact” survey lend themselves to be reported statistically. Based on Department experience, as well as an indication of the experiences of other municipalities, an expected survey response rate of about 30% is considered a fair indication of community interest. Of those responding to the survey, 60% in support of a traffic management measure is considered as sufficient endorsement to proceed to implementation. A simple majority support would not be considered as sufficient – this result only indicates that a community is “divided” in its support, and does not provide satisfactory evidence that a consensus has been reached.

If the Transportation and Streets Department, with the concurrence of the Community Transportation Committee, finds that either the survey response rate and/or the majority of support is “close” to the predefined thresholds (30% response, 60% of respondents in support), then this information shall be provided to City Council for consideration in its decision to approve the traffic management plan. As the intent of the survey is to determine whether there is sufficient interest and support for proceeding with the traffic management plan, the defined thresholds are not considered as absolutes (for example, a 29% response rate with 59% majority in support may still be interpreted as a relatively strong indication that a plan should be implemented, even though the statistics do not quite meet the thresholds).

In the event that the community-at-large does not endorse a community traffic management plan to the same extent as those stakeholders in the “area of impact”, and in the event that the Transportation and Streets Department and the Community Transportation Committee concur that proceeding with the plan has merit, information on the levels of support of both the community and the most impacted stakeholders will be provided to City Council for consideration in its deliberation of the recommended plan.

That the Transportation and Streets Department also consider the qualitative survey results in determining the level of community support for traffic management initiatives, and that this information also be provided to City Council in support of the Department's recommendation to implement a community traffic management plan on either a trial or permanent basis.

Surveying stakeholders in the wider community within the study area on their level of support for the proposed traffic management plan as a whole enables the Transportation and Streets Department and the Community Transportation Committee to get a general feel for the level of satisfaction of the community at large. This information should also be provided to City Council as it considers its approval of the recommended traffic management plan. A selection of comments taken from the surveys may also be used to reinforce the more statistical survey results; however, recognising that Council cannot consider each and every survey response, the selection should be a representative sample of the overall comments. Where possible, letters of support from key community stakeholder groups should also be provided to City Council.

Exhibit 3
The Community Traffic Management Process – January 2003

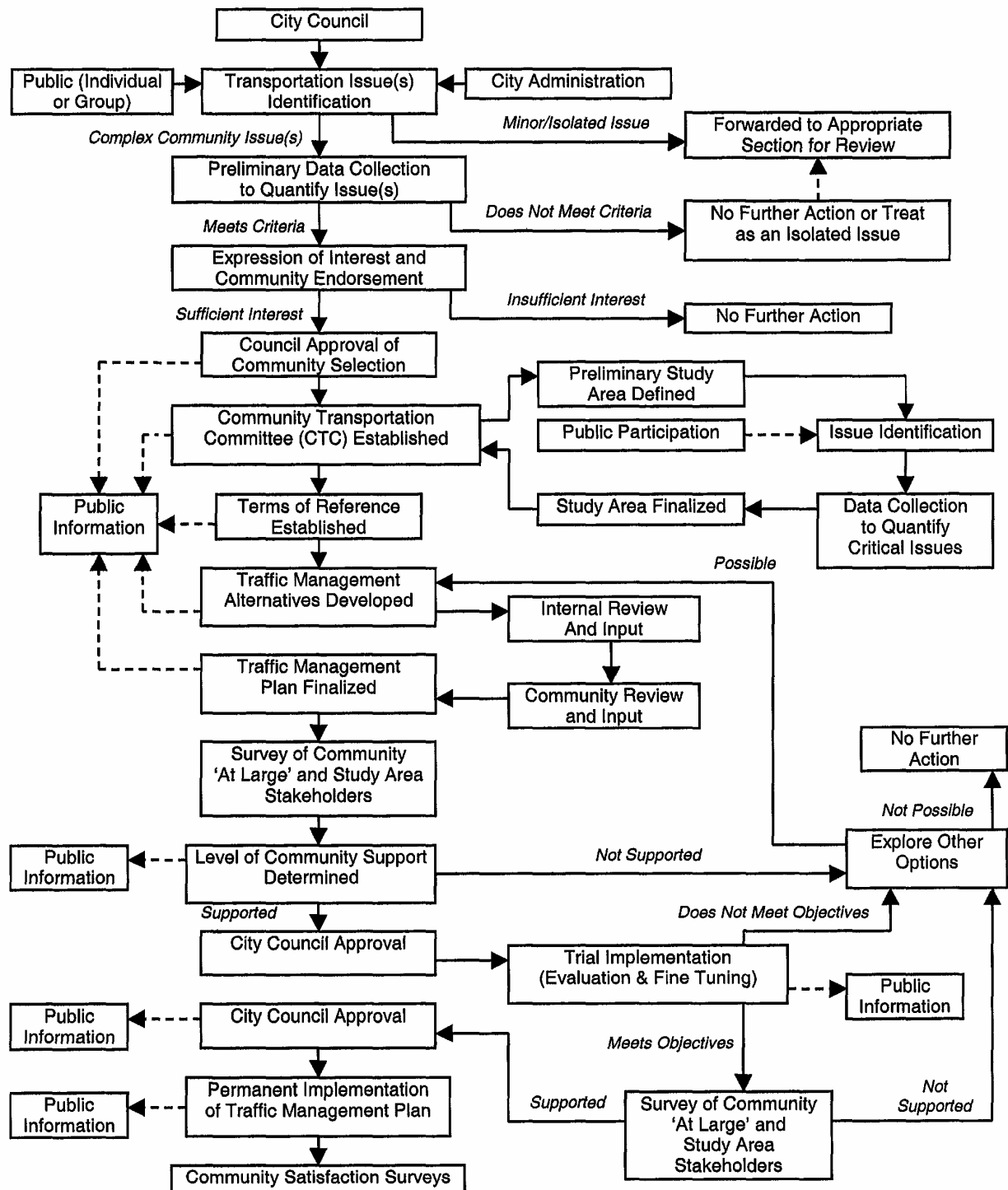


Exhibit 4

Community Selection Criteria For Future Community Traffic Management Studies (2003)

Priority Areas:

1. Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) or Neighbourhood Infrastructure Program (NIP) communities.
2. Communities scheduled for future roadway rehabilitation projects.
3. Communities subject to significant land use development proposals.

Other Considerations:

4. The number and date of requests from individuals and community groups.
5. The complexity and severity of transportation concerns. (Isolated, relatively minor operational / safety issues may be dealt with directly by the appropriate resources, without a CTM study).
6. The availability of information and data to rationalise and evaluate the need for implementation of a traffic management plan (see note below).
7. The existence of a Community Transportation Committee.
8. The stability of traffic patterns in the area. (Communities affected by temporary conditions, such as adjacent roadway construction, will not be considered a priority for a traffic management plan).
9. Previous traffic management activities. (Priority will be given to those communities which have not previously been involved in the process to develop a community traffic management plan).
10. City-wide transportation priorities and requirements.

Note:

The following criteria will be considered in the determination of need and priority for community traffic management:

- *Daily and/or peak hour traffic volumes above the expected traffic volume based on adjacent land uses;*
- *Greater than 40% shortcutting traffic on the most significant shortcutting route during the highest volume peak hour;*
- *Average traffic speeds above the posted speed limit, with 85th percentile speeds at least 7 km/hr over the posted speed limit.*

Section 5 – Conclusions and Future Initiatives

Community “quality of life” holds great importance for the citizens of Edmonton, and the protection of residential roadways from the negative impacts of motor vehicle use is a critical theme that emerged during the development of the Transportation and Streets Department’s “Transportation Master Plan” in the late 1990’s. In response, the Transportation and Streets Department undertakes community traffic management studies to address concerns for the safety of all road users resulting from excessive traffic volumes and speeds on residential roadways in the city.

This document outlines a number of guidelines to improve the process used by the Transportation and Streets Department to develop community traffic management plans. Particular emphasis has been placed on the role of the “community” in the process, with a focus on public participation opportunities and the enhancement of communication throughout the process.

It is the intent of the Transportation and Streets Department that this document be considered as the first part of the City of Edmonton’s “Community Traffic Management Guidelines”. Part Two will be developed to discuss more specifically, and in greater detail, the role of “traffic calming” in community traffic management. It is anticipated that this second document will form the basis for a “handbook” to be provided to future Community Transportation Committee volunteers, and other interested stakeholders in the community traffic management process.

Glossary

Area Redevelopment Plan:	Describes the objectives of the plan and how they are proposed to be achieved, the proposed land uses for the redevelopment area, if a redevelopment levy is to be imposed, the reasons for imposing it, and any proposals for the acquisition of land for any municipal use, school facilities, parks and recreation facilities or any other purposes.
Arterial Roadway:	A major roadway for which the primary function is to provide for vehicle movement. Traffic management plans are generally not considered for arterial roads.
Collector Roadway:	A roadway for which vehicle movement and access are of equal importance. Collector roadways may be considered for traffic management plans.
Community:	A group of individuals with common interests. A community may be defined by neighbourhood boundaries, but may also include other residential, business, and institutional stakeholders.
Community Traffic Management:	The development and implementation of measures and programs aimed at addressing transportation issues within a community, such as reducing the use of non-arterial residential roadways by through traffic.
Community Transportation Committee:	Volunteers representing the major stakeholders of the study area (residents, businesses, institutions) working collaboratively with the Transportation and Streets Department to provide “local” knowledge of their community, to facilitate communication, to build consensus on transportation issues and solutions, and to “champion” the traffic management planning process and the resulting plan in their community.
Local Roadway:	A roadway for which the primary function is access to adjacent properties. Local roadways may be considered for traffic management plans.
Measure:	A physical device, regulation, or action that affects the movement of motor vehicles, bicycles, and/or pedestrians.
Neighbourhood:	“Standard neighbourhood” boundaries are defined by the City of Edmonton Planning and Development Department.
Plan:	A formulated and sufficiently detailed description of how an objective or number of objectives are to be accomplished. A Traffic Management plan typically describes measures to be used, where they are to be located, in what order and at what times they will be implemented, and how the costs of the measures will be funded.

Public Participation:	Open, ongoing, two-way communication, both formal and informal, between the Transportation and Streets Department and its stakeholders in the community traffic management process.
Shortcutting:	Traffic with neither an origin nor destination in a community, which is travelling through a community to bypass congestion on the arterial street network, or to make use of a more direct route.
Stakeholder:	A group or individual that is impacted by a transportation issue or will be impacted by any option being considered to resolve a transportation issue.
Study Area:	For the purposes of community traffic management activities, study area boundaries are defined by geographic features and/or major roadways, which typically present a significant barrier to travel and interaction.
Traffic Calming:	The combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behaviour and improve conditions for non-motorised street users.
Transportation Master Plan:	Approved by City Council in 1999, the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) establishes a strategic framework to describe how the City of Edmonton will address its future transportation needs to the year 2020.

Appendix A

July 2002 Focus Group Report

Neighbourhood Traffic Planning

Focused Discussion Group

July 11, 2002

Discussion Summary

Prepared for:
City of Edmonton
Transportation and Streets Department
Traffic Planning Branch

Prepared by:
Marilyn Stecyk, Principal



Introduction:

On July 11, 2002 the City of Edmonton Transportation and Streets Department convened a focused discussion group to discuss the Neighbourhood Traffic Planning (NTP) process and more specifically, the survey process used to assess the level of acceptance by the community for proposed traffic measures within the communities.

Seventeen representatives of communities that had either finished or were currently participating in NTP processes participated in the discussion and provided the following insights or advice to the City administration.

The benefits of the NTP:

Neighbourhood traffic planning is recognized by the community as both a traffic planning and a community development/community building process. From that perspective the process becomes a shared responsibility between the City and the community.

Benefits of Neighbourhood Traffic Planning:

- Reduced traffic flow and the speed through the neighbourhood
- Increased safety levels for children and other pedestrians in the neighbourhood
- Redesign helps signify that, “these are neighbourhoods”
- Communities can work together to identify and resolve issues
- Increased community awareness of traffic issues
- Building community and networking opportunities
-

Elements of an effective NTP process include:

- Solid, comprehensive and consistent information about neighbourhood traffic planning and the parameters of Neighbourhood Traffic Planning—perhaps in the form of a handbook or manual
- A start-up process that lays out all of the components to stakeholders
- A strategic plan that addresses the components—the type of NTP, the scope of the consultation, identifies the project budget or a financial plan, the communication strategy, the roles, relationships and responsibilities, and the approval processes—and is developed and communicated at the outset of the process
- A clear and comprehensive orientation for community members at the initiation of the process
- Multi-faceted communication processes that provide consistent information to community members, and neighbouring communities where beneficial
- Getting as many people involved as possible
- Solid technical support from the City
- Leadership from a few key players
- Plain language information that people can understand

Indicators of success:

- The vast majority of people involved agreed that all of the relevant issues have been identified.
- Collaboration between communities
- Timely completion of the plan
- Long term solutions that actually make a difference in the community

Two types of NTP’s:

A result of the discussion was the identification of two distinct types of Neighbourhood Traffic Plans:

1. Focused Neighbourhood Traffic Plans that deal with a collector road that cross cuts several neighbourhoods. It would deal with specific issues related to the impacts of the collector road and focus more on traffic calming.
2. Comprehensive Neighbourhood Traffic Plans that deal with the traffic issues within a specific community.

The Survey Process:

The major area of concern regarding Neighbourhood Traffic Planning was the survey process. The comments about the survey process included:

- There needs to be a *consistent process* that is fully explained at the beginning of the process. While there may be some exceptions in specific situations, the process should not be ad hoc in each community.
- In the opinion of the workshop participants, the parameters of the current process require amending to ensure that the *response requirements are feasible and appropriate* to unique community situations. Participants who represented diverse communities felt that the survey parameters as they now stood were untenable for some neighbourhoods. Specifically, neighbourhoods that had large seasonal populations or large high rise apartments felt it was impossible to meet the response requirements currently applied.
- Several communities suggested that the use of a mail back response should be revisited in the context of other, *more current, more effective vehicles for gathering input*.
- There was a strong consensus that *only one instrument or method should be employed* and not a mixture of response mechanisms.
- There were diverse views on the type of information analysis:
 - Some participants felt strongly that the quantitative survey method was not an effective way to measure community response to NTP recommendations and that a more qualitative input process would be beneficial.
 - Other participants felt that a quantitative result is more useful and concise way for City Council to gauge the opinions of the community as opposed to larger qualitative comment analysis.

Recommendations to improve the survey process:

- At the outset, the type of study must be determined and communicated.
- The parameters of the process for obtaining community opinions should be clearly defined, agreed upon and communicated from the outset of the process.
- Regardless of which type of study is being conducted; it is essential to define the geographic study area and stakeholders with a solid rationale for changing boundaries at anytime throughout the process.
- Stakeholders, and their roles, should be clearly defined in the initiation phase. (i.e.: Some stakeholders may only need to be informed while other will need to be involved. Some stakeholders may provide input prior to the survey but not included in the survey.)
- The approval authorities must be clearly communicated. Stakeholders should understand that they are responding to a survey and not making the decisions since City Council makes the decision.
- Only one survey instrument should be used to gather feedback from stakeholders.
- The City should explore alternatives to the mail back response process.
- While the survey process was still appropriate to the Comprehensive NTP process, it is not appropriate for the Focused NTP process.

Role of the community and community leadership:

Community leagues perceived the NTP process as both a technical issue management process and a community building process. Therefore, they saw a strong leadership/partnership responsibility for themselves in the development and implementation of a Neighbourhood Traffic Plan. The key points they made were:

- *Leadership:* While they looked to the City for resources and expertise, they also felt that it was the job of the community league and the appointed representatives to champion or take ownership of the process in the community.
- *Representation:* To that end, it was essential that the community identify leaders who understood the required commitment and would work with the City throughout the process.
- *Orientation:* They felt that an orientation process on Neighbourhood Traffic Planning at the outset was essential; as was the collaborative development of a strategic framework that laid out the process and parameters, and roles and responsibilities. Several people, who felt that the NTP process could be completed in a timelier manner, felt that taking the time for education and information up front would enable the process to move forward more expeditiously.
- *Council Involvement:* Several participants felt that the active involvement of City Council and more specifically Ward Councilors could be a benefit to the process and that the responsibility for including/inviting them lay with the community and not the City administration.
- *Communication:* Effective communication was identified as both a key factor and a major challenge. Communication was seen as a primarily the responsibility of the community with assistance from the City. Several participants felt that some form of webpage would be a great benefit and queried whether it could be hosted by the City on its website or some other arrangement worked out as most communities do not have the resources or expertise to host a webpage.

In addition a range of other communication tools were identified as effective methods—posters, open houses, bulletins and community league newsletters. The point was made that frequent and varied communication is required to catch the attention of residents who are being bombarded with information. Also, the community league must make a point of communicating to residents how important their participation is in the NTP process.

Advice on specific issues:

Throughout the discussion some specific points for consideration were identified as being integral to the improving the NTP process:

- *Stakeholders:* People who live in the community or own or operate a business in the community should be considered as respondents to the survey process.
- *Scope of Consultation:* The community is the smallest subset the City works with, if you are going to survey the community then survey the entire community not part of it. The Community League Executive should assess the general interest of the community before the process starts.
- *An NTP manual:* A strong recommendation was the development of a Neighbourhood Traffic Planning manual or handbook that would include a glossary of terms, a communication plan template, the components of traffic planning and the general process overview including an explanation of the investment of time, effort and/or financial resources required by the community.
- *Trial Implementation:* Participants strongly felt that the manner in which temporary or trial measures were implemented affected how people responded to them and could prejudice the outcome of the survey process. They recommended that the City attempt to use better physical objects that provide aesthetically acceptable and safe ways of implementing trial measures.
- *Consistency:* While the communities realized that staff turnover is inevitable, they felt that the effectiveness of the NTP process relied on the relationships and trust that are established between the City and the community. They stressed how beneficial it is if there is a consistent administrative contact.
- *Council presentations:* Participants felt that the way in which Council presentations are made can unfairly bias councilors. They felt that people who are speaking against the plan should speak first and the NTP committee should speak last or have the opportunity for rebuttal or clarification.
- *Appropriate measures:* Not all traffic improvement measures need to be the result of an NTP. Transportation should be empowered to take measures to maintain neighbourhood standards.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the advice that the participants offered on improving the process, they strongly felt that the current process is a good one that works well. They cautioned against “fixing something that isn’t broken.” The most strongly stated area for improvement was in the start-up and community education process. They felt that consistently applied parameters that were clearly communicated at the outset supported by a community orientation process and handbook would go a long way to shortening the time required for the process and precluding community members taking exception to the process.

Workshop Attendees:

Tim Fitzpatrick
Shelly Tupper
Derrick Forsythe
Marlies Kerckhof
Julian Martin
Cliff Norum
Frank McMahon
Hugh Calder
Al Slemko
John Lackey
Dave Turner
Rob Hankinson
Sandy McLeod
Audra Jones
Brice Stephenson

Queen Alexandra
EFCL Representative
Queen Mary Park
Hazeldean
Ritchie
Prince Charles
Bonnie Doon
Pleasantview
Pleasantview
Crestwood
Allendale
Garneau
Garneau
Transportation Planning Branch
Transportation Planning Branch

Appendix B

Transportation and Streets Department Staff Comments

Transportation and Streets Department staff also reviewed the “questions” that were put to the July 11 focus group participants, and provided some insights from the point of view of staff who have participated in the development of community traffic management plans:

General

- Community traffic management is an opportunity for community “development”;
- A “vision” of the role played by transportation in the community is essential in establishing goals and objectives to be achieved by the traffic management plan;
- Community representatives must be committed to the plan development process and to working with the Transportation and Streets Department.

Overall Process

- The current process used by the Transportation and Streets Department makes sense – enhancement to the communications process should be considered;
- Perhaps there is a need to undertake some preliminary work before committing resources to community transportation management (i.e. to ensure that the community understands the issues, their role in solving the problems, and the trade-offs that may be required to implement a “solution”);
- Roles and responsibilities need to be firmly established at the outset of the process (for example, does the Transportation and Streets Department lead the process, or act as a resource to the community?).

Study Area

- Study area boundaries should include the area that will be impacted by the traffic management proposals – generally the whole neighbourhood; adjacent communities should be kept informed of the progress in the plan, perhaps through representation on the Transportation Committee;
- In some cases, the study area boundaries will not encompass entire neighbourhoods – boundaries should make “transportation sense” (for example, arterial roadways).

Community Stakeholders

- Stakeholders need to be involved from the outset of the planning process, taking ownership of the plan to see that it succeeds, and minimising “reaction” to information that is shared “after the fact”;
- Stakeholders are those who are physically evident in the study area, those identified by the community representatives, and those who come forward with a vested interest in the process and the plan outcome;
- The process should be inclusive – it is essential to establish a level of trust between stakeholders and the Transportation and Streets Department so stakeholders will view the process as fair and feel that their input is valuable;
- Where possible, the wider “community” should be included in the decision-making process;
- The Transportation Committee should be comprised of representatives of all stakeholder groups; the committee must realise that each member is an equal voice, and should work to achieve consensus;
- Community Leagues do not necessarily represent the voice of the community as a whole; efforts need to be made to reach non-members;
- Appropriate resources need to be provided to stakeholder representatives at the outset of the process to enable them to make qualified decisions.

Other Stakeholders

- City Council ultimately approves all community traffic management plans prior to implementation; Councillors should be involved throughout the process and encouraged to attend Transportation Committee meetings whenever possible;
- Other Branches and Departments are also key stakeholders in community traffic management plans, and improvements are necessary to ensure that appropriate information is provided to these agencies, and that these “internal” stakeholders have ample opportunities to provide feedback throughout the plan development process.

Community Support

- It needs to be recognised that communities are “unique” – rationales for departing from the “standard” process must be established, and should be objective and equitable;
- Feedback and “support” for traffic management proposals can be acquired through questionnaires at public meetings, and through survey distribution to those “most affected” as well as the community at large;
- Questionnaires must be clear and succinct, with unbiased questions;
- Transportation “bulletins” should be designed so they do not appear to be “junk mail”;
- Using a variety of mediums to obtain survey responses works well (mail-back, fax, phone, e-mail);
- Generally, those who are opposed to an idea are the first to respond to surveys – can it then be inferred that “no response” is the same as “no opposition”?
- 30% response rate, with 2/3 majority of respondents in support has worked well in the past;
- The input from the wider community should be considered in making the decision to implement a traffic management plan, either on a temporary basis, or permanently.

Communication

- Communication on a “community-wide” basis is key to the success of the process;
- In “communities” where Community League participation is low, particular effort must be made to provide information to non-members;
- Communication is also the responsibility of the community representatives (for example, newsletters should provide contact information,);
- Other means of communication need to be explored (media coverage, website, setting up displays at key location throughout the community, advertising of upcoming public meetings, etc.);
- “Progress” reports should also be provided to the community-at-large during the process;
- It is essential that Department resources are used to prepare good quality maps, plans, and visual displays;
- Must recognise that Department resources must be committed to developing and implementing a communications plan.

A number of “indicators” of a successful process include:

- Community Transportation Committee has a clear vision;
- Community representatives take ownership and champion the plan;
- Community works *with* the Transportation and Streets Department;
- Community stakeholders feel their input has been heard, particularly those “stakeholders” who may not be surveyed within the “area of impact”;
- Community interest and participation is high throughout the process;
- Community understands the objectives of the traffic management plan;
- Nobody can claim that they weren’t aware that their community was involved in the development of a plan;
- Council is involved and supports the process as well as the resulting traffic management plan.