



Island Crest Way Citizen Panel Meeting Minutes

January 29, 2009

Community Center at Mercer View

Attending: Mark Berejka, Deborah Ehlers, Bryan Goode, Betty Harper, Thomas Jones, Todd Kelsay, Scott Milburn, Elliot Newman, Peter Orser, Shawn Parry, Mary Stoll, Sam Sullivan, Bonnie Wojciehowski, Eva Zemplenyi, Mayor Jim Pearman, Council Member Dan Grausz

Excused: Jake Jacobson

Project Team: Assistant City Engineer Anne Tonella-Howe, Joe Giacobazzi and Jan Ciganik of KPG, Inc.

Facilitation Team: Steve Lancaster, Joy Johnston

CALL TO ORDER

S. Lancaster called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

MINUTES

Members of the Citizen Panel were asked if they approved of the Minutes of the December 9, 2008 Meeting. There were no objections or changes.

REVIEW OF NEW DATA FROM LAST MEETING

J. Giacobazzi explained that the A1 alternative design and cost had been modified to reflect a reduced cul-de-sac based on further research. He also reviewed the new C3 alternative that was created by the Citizen Panel at the December 9 meeting. He then posted the results of the panelists' ratings. Panelists rated each of the following alternatives based on the goals established by the City Council and agreed upon by the Citizen Panel.

ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Based on feedback received from the Citizen Panel at the November 13, 2008 and December 9, 2008 meetings, the following alternatives were rated by the Citizen Panel according to the goals:

- **A1:** Island Crest Way configured as a 4-lane road through the corridor. Outer lanes striped as shared bike lanes using "sharrows" and pedestrian crossing with touch signal just south of the Merrimont intersection. SE 44th St closed to outgoing and incoming traffic (cul-de-sac). Cost estimate: \$1,100,000
- **A2:** Island Crest Way configured as a 4-lane road through the corridor except at the Merrimont intersection where it would become a 5-lane road (adding northbound and southbound turn lanes), SE 44th St. open to outgoing right turn traffic only and closed to incoming traffic. Cost estimate: \$2,000,000
- **B2:** Island Crest Way at Merrimont configured as it is currently but improved with roadway widening, signing, and landscaping. Also, the roadway section between Merrimont Drive and 86th Ave SE restriped to a 3-lane configuration. SE 44th St. open to outgoing right turn traffic only and closed to incoming traffic. Cost estimate: \$460,000

- **C3:** Island Crest Way configured as a 3-lane road south of the Merrimount intersection and 4-lane road north of the Merrimount intersection. The southbound section north of Merrimount configured as shown in B2, with widening for a right-turn only lane onto Merrimount. SE 44th St. open to outgoing right turn traffic only and closed to incoming traffic. Cost estimate: \$500,000
- **D2:** Install a signal at the Merrimount intersection. Island Crest Way configured as a 4-lane road through the corridor. SE 44th St. open to all outgoing and incoming traffic. Cost estimate: \$1,500,000
- **D3:** Install a signal at the Merrimount intersection. Island Crest Way configured as a 4-lane road through the corridor except at the Merrimount intersection where it would become a 5-lane road (adding northbound and southbound turn lanes). SE 44th St. open to all outgoing and incoming traffic. Cost estimate: \$2,200,000

NOTE: The project boundaries as defined in the Charter are the Island Crest Way corridor and its cross-street intersections, not to extend beyond SE 42nd Street to the north and Landsdowne Lane to the south.

Discussion:

- M. Stoll asked about the cost of property acquisition in order to widen the road to accommodate the traffic signal alternatives.
- T. Jones asked whether the cost of any alternative over \$500,000 was worth looking into. He indicated it would be important to explain what would be achieved by spending more.
- The group discussed impacts to driveways, property impacts and retaining walls.
- B. Harper said that the property acquisition and impact to driveways is not as much of an issue in the D2 option.
- E. Newman asked whether it made sense to even consider a \$2,000,000 option if Council would not be able to come up with the funding.
- E. Zemplenyi asked why the traffic signal is more expensive than the traffic light that is going into the Town Center and if the funds could be reallocated for Island Crest Way and Merrimount.
- J. Giacobazzi said that the traffic signal in the Town Center is a Growth Management Act level of service requirement. The expense related to the Island Crest Way/Merrimount signal is due to the need to acquire property in order to accommodate a signal configuration, not the signal itself.
- T. Kelsay asked what the public reaction has been when a road diet has been installed in other communities.
- J. Giacobazzi said that usually the reaction is negative, then usually people like it later.
- B. Harper distributed studies that she had found indicating limitations on road diets.
- M. Berejka said that human intuition can sometimes be wrong. The models [of road diets] show no significant decrease in travel time.
- S. Milburn said that it is important to look at travel times during peak times.
- S. Parry said that the traffic modeling doesn't show that in this case, there aren't alternate routes.
- The group discussed what the priority issues were and brought up throughput and jockeying. They also discussed if money could come from other projects in order to pay for one of the more expensive options (such as a traffic signal).
- D. Grausz said that the Council has already cut funding to several projects because of the economy such as the completion of the project along East Mercer Way to create safer shoulders for biking.
- M. Berejka said that being fiscally responsible means being cheap, but "not silly."
- E. Zemplenyi asked how the City's insurance company would regard a traffic signal and whether it should just be left as is until the City can afford to put in a signal.
- S. Milburn said that it would be better to give an answer so that the City Council can make a decision.
- S. Sullivan asked if doing nothing is an option.
- B. Goode said that the group hasn't discussed the C3 option which showed the most support of the group based on the ratings.
- It was suggested to bring back the B1 option and then vote as a group to see what alternatives had the most support. Panel members had a few moments to lobby for their options before a vote was taken. Panel members were given the option to vote for their top three votes. Results were as follows:

A1 – 3
A2 – 3
B1 – 7
B2 – 7
C3 – 9
D2 – 3
D3 – 0

The group agreed to eliminate the A and D options because they received the least amount of support.

The B1, B2, and C3 alternatives were reviewed.

B. Wojciehowski said that C3 addresses the lane switching issue, but B1 & B2 do not.

E. Newman said that B1 does not solve the problem with 86th Ave.

There were a few comments about creating pedestrian islands and the importance of flashing crosswalk lights.

There was consensus to drop the B1 alternative.

S. Milburn said the main difference between B2 and C3 is that C3 might address the jockeying problem, but B2 addresses the issue of people going too slow (less distance without the ability to pass).

B. Wojciehowski said that throughput is not such a big issue because the distance of the 3-lane configuration on C3 is still relatively short.

E. Zemplenyi is worried about accidents and causing problems for buses and people turning into driveways because of the 3-lane option.

M. Berejka said that it's actually easier for people to turn into driveways with the 3-lane option because they can slow down along the shoulder rather than in the middle of the road.

D. Ehlers asked if bike lanes are necessary or even safe on Island Crest Way.

S. Sullivan said that bikes could travel on 86th Ave, but not Island Crest Way.

The group more thoroughly discussed the C3 option.

B. Wojciehowski said that she appreciated that the longer 3-lane configuration of C3 eliminated the jockeying and provided better safety and better pedestrian crossings.

M. Stoll said that it is important as a community to be patient and have tolerance.

D. Ehlers said that for those who live in the south end, the 3-lane option would be a problem.

B. Goode agreed that there is an emotional tendency to want to get through faster, but that it's safer to go the speed limit.

E. Newman said that he supported the C3 option mainly because it is safer for pedestrians.

E. Zemplenyi said that she doesn't think 3 lanes will be useful.

T. Jones said that cars usually line up in the left lane anyway so the intersection is already functioning as a 3-lane road.

S. Parry said that he didn't vote for any of the options because he doesn't think the information provided by the consultant has been thorough enough.

S. Milburn re-emphasized the importance of flashing crosswalk lights.

E. Zemplenyi said that she still supports a traffic signal.

Some in the group indicated that their support of B2 was because their preferred alternatives (A or D alternatives) were now off the table.

P. Orser said that it is important that whatever happens, that it is aesthetically pleasing.

There was consensus to move forward with the B2 and C3 alternatives as the recommendation to the community and to the City Council. B. Harper abstained. The next step is a community meeting (scheduled for March 3) to present the alternatives and get community feedback.

PUBLIC COMMENT

S. Lancaster then opened the floor to those who were not on the Citizen Panel at 8:30 pm.

Lloyd Gilman said 80% speed is safe so if 90% of drivers go 41 miles per hour, that is safe. He said that Island Crest Way is not a community street and asked if the community gets to vote on the outcome. He said that the Citizen Panel and City staff are propagandizing. He said that there would be more traffic on Merrimount if there is a light.

Jackie Minnola said that she lives on the south end of the Island and that it takes 20 minutes to cross Island Crest Way safely when she is walking. She said it is dangerous at 86th Ave.

Ira Appelman said the "so called" Citizen Panel is political cover for the City Council and that the City Council wants bike lanes along Island Crest Way. He said that the votes were rigged.

Bob Harper said that the Citizen Panel is trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist and that the intersection worked fine the way it was.

The public comment portion of the meeting concluded at 8:40 pm.

CONCLUSION

A community meeting would be scheduled and Citizen Panel members are invited to attend to discuss the design options with the community.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

NOTE: The community meeting has been scheduled for March 3 from 6-8 pm at the Community Center at Mercer View.