



CITY OF RICHMOND

REPORT TO COMMITTEE

TO: Public Works and Transportation Committee *To PWST - May 24, 2001*
FROM: Gordon Chan, P. Eng. **DATE:** May 7, 2001
 Manager, Transportation **FILE:** 6450-09
RE: FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON PROPOSED TRAFFIC CIRCLE AT HEATHER STREET AND DAYTON AVENUE - RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. That the following traffic and pedestrian safety measures as described in the attached report be approved, with the source of funding to be the 2001 Minor Capital Program for Traffic Calming:
 - (a) installation of a traffic circle at the intersection of Heather Street and Dayton Avenue at an estimated cost of \$5,400;
 - (b) construction of a pedestrian walkway with extruded curb on the west side of Heather Street between Dixon Avenue and Dolphin Avenue at an estimated cost of \$26,300; and
 - (c) minor modifications to the Dixon Avenue driveway to the Garden City Shopping Centre to improve sightlines.
2. That area residents be advised of the results of the neighbourhood survey and the pending construction of the traffic and pedestrian safety improvements.
3. That staff be directed to monitor traffic conditions in the Heather Street area for a period of one year after installation of the various measures and report back to Council on the effectiveness of the traffic calming measures in addressing the issues of excessive travel speed and short-cutting.

Gordon Chan, P. Eng.
Manager, Transportation

Att. 2

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY		
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STAFF REPORT

ORIGIN

A number of Heather Street residents have expressed concerns regarding traffic movements on Heather Street, the need for improved pedestrian facilities, and the Dixon Avenue access to the Garden City Shopping Centre. Staff reviewed traffic conditions in the area and presented a report on these issues at the February 7, 2001 meeting of the Public Works and Transportation Committee. A recommendation of that report to consult with area residents on a proposal to install a traffic circle at the intersection of Heather Street and Dayton Avenue as a traffic calming measure to address residents' concerns with traffic speeds on Heather Street was approved. Staff were directed to carry out the consultation process and report back to Council on the results.

Area residents were asked to provide comments on the proposed traffic circle in a mail-back survey of the neighbourhood conducted in April 2001. This report summarizes the results of the survey and presents a recommendation with respect to the proposed traffic circle and other pedestrian facilities.

ANALYSIS

1. Public Consultation Process

On April 19, 2001, survey letters were sent to all residents of Heather Street between Blundell Road and Francis Road and all residents of Dayton Avenue between Garden City Road and Ash Street inviting comments about the proposed traffic circle. Attachment 1 contains a copy of the letter and questionnaire.

2. Results of the Survey

Of a total of 154 questionnaires sent out, 70 surveys were returned for a response rate of 45.5 percent. Of the 70 respondents:

- 48 (69%) were in favour of the proposed traffic circle at Heather Street and Dayton Avenue;
- 4 (6%) were not in favour of the traffic circle as they thought it unnecessary;
- 4 (6%) were not in favour of the traffic circle and wanted to have the ditches filled instead or were opposed to another traffic diversion in the area;
- 5 (7%) were not supportive of a traffic circle but would like other measures used to slow traffic (e.g., four way stop or speed humps);
- 1 (1%) was not in favour of the proposed location and would like to have the traffic circle at Heather Street and Dolphin Avenue; and
- 8 (11%) were not in favour of the traffic circle but provided no rationale for their preference.

Based on the survey results, which indicate that a majority of the respondents support the proposed traffic calming measure, staff recommend that a traffic circle be installed at the Heather Street and Dayton Avenue intersection to address residents' concerns with excessive travel speeds and short-cutting.

2.1 Specific Comments from Residents Supporting the Traffic Circle

Of the total of 39 respondents who supplied comments on their questionnaires that elaborated on their preferences (Attachment 2), 25 of the respondents provided feedback in favour of the proposed traffic circle. The reasons for the residents' support of the traffic calming measure are summarized below.

- *Reduce Speeding and Number of Accidents* – Fifteen of the 24 respondents expressed support for the traffic circle as they believe it would be effective in reducing the existing excessive travel speed on Heather Street and the associated potential for vehicle crashes at the Heather Street and Dayton Avenue intersection.
- *Reduce Traffic Volumes and Short-cutting* – Two respondents are in favour of the traffic circle, as they believe it would discourage short-cutting on Heather Street and contribute to lower traffic volumes on the street.
- *Reduce Speeding and Short-cutting* – Two respondents indicated that they support the traffic calming measure, as it would effectively address both concerns of excessive travel speed and short-cutting on Heather Street.
- *General Support* – Six of the 24 respondents expressed general support for the traffic circle but did not provide a specific reason for their support.

2.2 Specific Comments from Residents Not Supporting the Traffic Circle

With respect to the 14 respondents who provided comments that were not in support of the traffic circle, four respondents did not feel that speeding was a concern and therefore a traffic circle was not necessary. Of the remaining 10 respondents who provided remarks, staff offer the following comments.

- *Concerns of Traffic Diversion* – Some residents (2 of the 14) expressed concern that the proposed traffic calming measure would constitute another traffic diversion that would block through traffic. It should be noted that the traffic circle would not prevent through traffic from travelling along Heather Street or Dayton Avenue.
- *Filling of Ditches* – Some residents (2 of the 14) wanted the ditches on Heather Street filled in. The survey letter advised residents that the upgrade of Heather Street to a full urban standard (e.g., in-fill of ditches, installation of street lighting, etc) was beyond the scope of the traffic safety improvements identified and suggested that a Local Improvement Project could be initiated to fund the upgrade of the street.
- *Alternative Traffic Calming Measures: Four-Way Stop* – Several residents (4 of the 14) expressed a desire for a four way stop at Heather Street and Dayton Avenue instead of a traffic circle. It is noted that stop signs are installed to establish the right of way and to prevent crashes based on established industry recognized practices. The Heather Street and Dayton Avenue intersection does not meet these criteria based on recorded traffic volumes and the accident history for this location. Unwarranted or arbitrarily placed stop signs often result in a poor level of compliance. Traffic studies and experience show that using stop signs to control speeding is ineffective and may lead to negative traffic safety consequences. For these reasons, a four-way stop at this intersection is not supported.
- *Alternative Traffic Calming Measures: Speed Humps* – One resident suggested speed humps on Heather Street rather than a traffic circle. Generally, the use of speed humps within a residential area is not recommended as they can have negative effects such as:
 - reduced response times for emergency vehicles;
 - discomfort to casualties when being transported;
 - discomfort to infirm drivers or passengers; and
 - transmission of vibrations to nearby residences, especially with large vehicles such as garbage trucks.

- *Alternative Location of Traffic Circle* – One resident suggested that the proposed traffic circle should be located at Heather Street and Dolphin Avenue due to the proximity of children playing in Dolphin Park, which is located on the southeast corner of the intersection. The Heather Street and Dayton Avenue intersection is the preferred location as it is the mid-point of Heather Street between Francis Road and Blundell Road. In addition, the road geometry at the Heather Street and Dolphin Avenue intersection does not allow for the installation of a traffic circle due to the presence of the open ditch on the southeast corner.

3. Further Actions

If Council approves the recommendations contained in this report, staff will proceed to implement the proposed traffic circle and pedestrian walkway and will advise the Garden City Shopping Centre property manager to undertake the other improvements requested at the shopping centre Dixon Avenue driveway. Staff will also monitor the traffic conditions on Heather Street for a period of one year after the installation of the traffic circle and report back to Council on the effectiveness of the traffic calming measure in slowing vehicle speeds and discouraging short-cutting.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The installation cost of a traffic circle at the Heather Street and Dayton Avenue intersection is estimated at \$5,400. The cost to construct a pedestrian walkway with an extruded curb on Heather Street between Dixon Avenue and Dolphin Avenue is estimated at \$26,300. The funding source for both of these traffic safety improvements is the 2001 Minor Capital Program for Traffic Calming.

The traffic safety improvements proposed for the Dixon Avenue access to the Garden City Shopping Centre can be implemented at no cost to the City as the property owner has agreed to undertake and fund the work.

CONCLUSION

Staff have completed the public consultation process on the proposed installation of a traffic circle at the Heather Street and Dayton Avenue intersection with the residents of Heather Street and Dayton Avenue. The survey results indicate that 69 percent of the respondents support the installation of the traffic circle. Staff therefore recommend that a traffic circle be installed at the Heather Street and Dayton Avenue intersection. The work associated with the traffic circle will be co-ordinated with the construction of an extruded curb pedestrian walkway on Heather Street between Dixon Avenue and Dolphin Avenue. After installation of the traffic circle, staff will monitor traffic conditions in the area for a period of one year and report back to Council on the effectiveness of the traffic calming measure in slowing vehicle speeds and discouraging short-cutting.



Joan Caravan
Transportation Planner



City of Richmond

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April 17, 2001
 File: 6450-01

Urban Development Division
 Fax: (604) 276-4177

Heather Street and Dayton Avenue Area Residents

Dear Resident:

Re: Proposed Traffic Circle at Heather Street and Dayton Avenue

In response to concerns raised by some of the area residents, the City of Richmond is considering the introduction of a traffic circle at the intersection of Heather Street and Dayton Avenue to address the issue of speeding on Heather Street between Francis Road and Dixon Avenue. The proposed traffic calming measure is expected to create roadway conditions that are intended to discourage speeding. An information sheet describing traffic circles is attached with this letter.

At the February 12, 2001 Council meeting, staff were directed to seek the input of area residents on the traffic calming proposal. Your comments on the proposed traffic circle are requested to enable the City to fully address the neighbourhood traffic concerns. Please return the attached questionnaire with your response in the enclosed postage paid, addressed envelope by **Friday, May 4, 2001** to:

Joan Caravan, Transportation Planner
 Transportation Department
 City of Richmond
 6911 No. 3 Road
 Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Your input will be incorporated into our recommendation to Council on the proposed traffic calming measure. If you have any questions on this issue, please call me at 276-4035.

Some Heather Street area residents have also expressed a desire for the upgrade of Heather Street to a full urban standard. As this request is beyond the scope of the traffic safety requirement identified, area residents may wish to initiate a Local Improvement Project (LIP) to fund the upgrade of the street. A brochure describing the City of Richmond's LIP process is enclosed for your information. Note that the proposed installation of a traffic circle is independent of any LIP process to upgrade Heather Street.

Thank you for your co-operation and input.

Yours truly,

Joan Caravan
 Transportation Planner

RICHMOND
 Island City, by Nature

Survey of Heather Street and Dayton Avenue Residents
Proposed Traffic Circle at Heather Street and Dayton Avenue

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

I support the installation of a traffic circle at Heather Street and Dayton Avenue.

I do not support the installation of a traffic circle at Heather Street and Dayton Avenue.

Comments on proposed traffic calming measure: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this questionnaire in the postage paid, addressed envelope provided and post by **Friday, May 4, 2001**.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey.

Transportation Department
Urban Development Division
City of Richmond

**Neighbourhood Survey
Proposed Traffic Circle at Heather Street and Dayton Avenue**

**SPECIFIC COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS
April 2001**

Residents of the Heather Street and Dayton Avenue area offered the following comments and suggestions on the survey form.

1. Responses Supportive of the Traffic Circle

- This is a good idea. Since Heather St. traffic is blocked from going through to Blundell Road, there is less traffic now. Speeding was the Number 1 problem before and almost every day an accident occurs. I am hoping that this traffic circle should be constructed ASAP.
- It will slow the traffic down. We are now on the dead end and it is great.
- Would be much appreciated as cars zoom around, to and from, this park at Heather and Dolphin. I am sure it would alleviate the speeding in this area. Thanks.
- We would appreciate the trimming of bushes and trees at southeast corner of Heather. Very difficult to view oncoming traffic. Please also consider and trim trees at southeast corner of Garden City and Dayton. It is necessary to reach out about a half car to judge traffic speed which can be excessive.
- I am in favour of the proposed traffic circle at the corner of Heather and Dayton. Any deterrent to speed inside this residential area is welcomed. I have seen the results of speed accidents at this corner.
- If this does not make a big difference in the "through traffic" I want the new driveway off Dixon closed.
- It may just solve some of the problems we've had or are having at that area.
- While we support the idea of a traffic circle along Heather, we feel that attention should be paid to the fact that people are speeding past the Dolphin and Heather intersection as well. There is a park on Dolphin and this is already a 30 km/h zone but people are not obeying the limit here. Perhaps installing the traffic circle at Heather and Dayton would help (it certainly wouldn't hurt). We would like to see traffic slowed on Heather and Dolphin as well because there are always many children in the area.
- I think the traffic circle is a wonderful idea and our family and friends support it 100 % – thank you! Keep up the good work!!
- Yes we agree 100 % in the traffic calming measure as we have small kids and cars are driven fast. Also we are supportive of the upgrade of Heather St. to a full urban standard as the rest of the streets are fully upgraded.
- It's about time that you listen to this proposal. We live at the corner of Heather and Dayton, we witnessed a lot of accidents occurred here.
- Please make the traffic circle as large as possible, i.e., I would even prefer a blockage in the intersection as I have found excessive traffic in the subject area as people are short-cutting through the school zone area (especially during school hours) creating speedy drivers and excessive noise to the residents. There are always pedestrians walking on Heather St. to go to the shopping mall. Less traffic will make it a safer place for walking pedestrians. Please also erect a 30 km/h speed sign on Heather Street (between Dayton and Dixon).
- This will cut down the previous speeders; and certain people who do not seem to recognize STOP signs. The STOP sign will not be necessary with a roundabout, therefore the poor record of accidents and multitude of near misses at this "junction" should greatly improve. (Aside from traffic calming measures, stiffer tests to have a licence should be implemented. The driving in Richmond is appalling and a joke). To other communities, driving through Richmond is regarded as a horror!!
- A correct solution to a very bad intersection.
- There has been a lot of accidents at this corner caused by speed and people going through the stop signs.
- This is long overdue! Should have been done so the cul de sac behind IGA at Heather and Blundell would not have been necessary. Please consider removing!!

- Would the location at Dolphin & Heather be more suitable to control the speed nearer the park?
- Excellent – it will be nice to live in a quiet residential area and not high traffic area with its related problems.
- A sound idea for proposed intersection.
- A good idea! I've seen these traffic circles in New Westminster and thought at the time it was an excellent way of slowing vehicles down and hopefully curb the excessive amount of traffic. For drivers who speed on Heather Street, it has become a better alternative than Garden City because you don't have to worry about getting caught! The traffic circles also enhance the area.
- We think it is a good idea but feel the need of safety for the pedestrians on such a narrow street. Perhaps the sidewalks could be improved.
- My two main concerns are the number of vehicles travelling down Heather Street and also their speed. The proposed traffic circle would address both of these issues as cars would be forced to slow down while others may choose to use Garden City because of the traffic circle.
- As a resident of Dayton Avenue, I am very concerned with excessive travel speeds and short cut traffic on this road. If a traffic circle will slow down travel speed and discourage traffic from short cutting through, I am very much for it.
- I am worried about emergency vehicles being able to get around a traffic circle!
- Hope this can reduce the amount of driver speeding down Heather St to by-pass the traffic light on Garden City.

2. Responses Not Supportive of the Traffic Circle

- There is block on Heather Street and Blundell Road, therefore traffic on Heather Street is very, very good now. I think installing another circle at Heather Street and Dayton Avenue is a waste of money that will come from residents.
- I would like to know who is propelling the necessity for more speed control on Heather? I am there three to four times daily. It's no worse there than other streets so why the expenditure? Use four-way stop signs at Heather and Dayton. The closure at Blundell and Dixon was useless as far as speed control. It re-routes traffic onto Dixon east and west and is an inconvenience to all. Terrible planning other than making the townhouse builder happy – for which reason I don't know because it looks plain silly. Suggestions:
 - take away closure at Heather and Blundell and rebuild to a traffic circle;
 - use 4-way stop signs at Heather and Dayton.
- I have a solution that is simple, cost-effective and it "works" extremely well. It's called a 4 way stop. In my opinion, the survey that your department has sent me is incomplete, in that a 4 way stop sign option has been omitted.
- Reducing traffic and speed along Heather St., between Blundell Rd. and Francis Rd., has been a concern for many years. I have lived on Heather St. for about 15 years and reside a few houses down off of Francis Rd. Within that time, I have witnessed first hand, the amount of automobiles taking advantage of this "short cut." As you may know, Dolphin Park is situated on the southeast corner of Heather St. and Dolphin Ave., and reducing traffic and speed is a must. I agree that traffic calming measures (circle) would be a good idea, however, I strongly disagree with the location that is proposed. Ever since the new townhouse complex were developed at the Blundell Rd. side, a cul de sac has eliminated through access down Heather St. As a result, traffic has been reduced, as people find it more troublesome to zig zag their way in and out. That been said, traffic and speed is still of a concern at the south end of Heather St. Numerous times, I have seen and heard cars and motorbikes speed along Heather St., on the Francis Rd. side (I suppose many younger drivers are trying to show off to their buddies as they approach and leave the popular Dolphin park basketball court). This leads me to suggest a better location of a "Traffic Circle", at the intersection of Heather St. and Dolphin Ave. I believe this will have the same effect as the cul de sac at the north end, in reducing at least the speed factor among the users of Heather St. By doing this, there will also be an incentive to fill in the ditches along the park (it'll save the poor kids from trying to retrieve their soccer balls out from the ditch). I appreciate you trying to make Richmond a safer and better place to live. I hope that my input on this matter will be of help to you with your decision. Thank you.

- How many traffic diversions are you going to put up in this area, anyhow? You already have two – one at Dayton and Ash and the other at Heather and Blundell. We have learned to live with them but they both cause us a great deal of inconvenience. If you put this new one in at Heather and Dayton I still haven't figured out how I am going to get over to my mother's house that is one block away from me on Dayton. Why not install some 4 way stops signs? We have also found that these diversions split neighbourhoods up. We never see our neighbours anymore because their driving routes have been changed. This may not seem like a "big deal" to you but to us it is!! Maybe if you gave out a whole lot of tickets for speeding and going through the existing "stop" signs a few of these speeders would slow down or try out another route!
- Traffic circles are a backward way of handling traffic. Look at Edmonton's. They are the cause of their accidents. Use the money for filling ditches on Heather.
- One traffic diversion on Dayton Avenue is enough. I have lived on this street for over 40 years and this diversion has already cut me off from my old and new neighbours. If I want to go to my daughter's I need to go many blocks out of my way when she lives just around the corner. Why don't you install some stop signs and hand out some traffic fines instead of making it inconvenient for everyone in the neighbourhood!!!
- I'm afraid I don't see the point of a traffic circle at Heather and Dayton. Won't drivers still speed between Dayton and Francis? I think it would be another obstacle as did cutting off Dayton at Ash then Heather at Blundell.
- The proposed traffic calming measure is good. But the Heather St. and Dayton Ave. have been quiet enough and the installation of a traffic circle at the place will cause a lot of dust to the area and inconvenience to the residents; therefore it is not necessary to do it.
- First of all, why not consider speed bumps? Speed bumps along the Dayton Avenue and Dolphin Avenue areas would slow the speeding drivers down. Would this not be worth a letter of proposal to the residents of these areas? Why only one option for consideration?
- I feel it would be more prudent to delay the traffic circle and allow the City to fill the ditches on the east side of Heather Street. The ditches are an eyesore and a safety hazard as well. Therefore the City should address the ditches since they are more of a concern to traffic safety and the well being of the children in the area.
- We have requested a four way stop at the subject intersection for several years because of the many accidents, but think it was installed at General Currie and Heather by mistake. That intersection did not present a problem. Yes, people do speed along Heather regardless of the of the 30 km/h speed sign for Heather Park. A four way stop would be more effective and far less costly. A traffic circle is a nuisance, and depends on the courtesy of the driver. The money could be spent more usefully by filling in the ditches along Heather Street from Dixon Avenue to Francis Road. The result would be a more useable road such as we have between Dayton and Dolphin. A traffic circle would be better than nothing but a four way stop at both Dayton and Heather and another at Dolphin and Heather would be the best and cheapest.
While we are on the subject of Road Improvements would you please look into a "No Parking" sign on Garden City Road (east side) between Blundell and Dixon Avenue as it creates a major hazard when exiting from the Garden City Shopping Centre – especially turning north.
- Not necessary. I do not see a speeding concern at all as it is only a very short street and no way vehicles can speed excessively.
- There is no need to install a traffic circle as the STOP sign already serves such purpose. Don't waste money.