

Woodridge Neighborhood Traffic Community Meeting—Summary

Meeting date: Thursday, March 2, 2017, 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Meeting location: International School, 445 128th Avenue SE, Bellevue, WA 98005

Goal of meeting:

Have Woodridge residents talk with Transportation Department staff about:

- Traffic conditions in Woodridge
- Learn how cut-through traffic is typically addressed
- Share perspectives on how cut-through traffic impacts residents

Agenda:

- 7:00: Check-in
- 7:10: Presentation start
- 7:45: Keypad polling
- 8:00: Break out for staff discussion
- 8:30: Meeting adjourn

Why this meeting was held and what we heard from the community prior to the meeting:

- In 2016, Neighborhood Traffic Safety Services (NTSS) staff received more than a dozen discrete calls and emails from Woodridge residents concerned about increased commuter (or cut-through) traffic during the PM peak period
- There are only four points to enter the neighborhood and five to exit
- The neighborhood is constrained by the freeways to the south and west, major arterials to the north and east, and sandwiched between two major growing commercial centers (downtown and Factoria).
- There is a general concern that afternoon commuter traffic is:
 - A traffic safety issue
 - Impacting neighborhood livability
 - Inhibiting ability to access homes
 - Inhibiting ability to quickly exit the neighborhood
 - Caused by apps and adjacent congestion
- Approximately 1,500 household in the Woodridge community were invited
- A link to the pre-meeting survey was mailed out to all households; there were 272 respondents to the survey

Attendance:

There were approximately 90 people that attended the meeting. Representatives from the city included staff from the Transportation Department (Neighborhood Traffic Safety Services and Traffic Engineering), Police Department, and Fire Department.



Meeting notes:

- Assistant Director of Traffic Management Mark Poch kicked off the meeting. He spoke about:
 - Cut-through traffic is an increasingly common concern heard from all over the City on streets
 - Neighborhood Traffic Safety Services and Traffic Management staff have long been working to minimize the impacts of cut-through traffic
 - It's understandable why concerns have increased; Bellevue has grown from a relatively quiet, suburban bedroom community to a bustling city in its own right with a gleaming skyline (jobs and housing) and major new transportation investments, such as East Link
 - Our geographic setting of beautiful lakes and mountainous terrain is a blessing and a curse as it substantially limits the ability to simply "build out" the transportation system to meet demand
 - Further, living in a growing and prosperous region make it all the more attractive for new residents
 - Our transportation network in Puget Sound will have to accommodate an additional 1.5 million people and 1.2 million jobs by 2040 (from 2010).
 - As such, travelers in the region are seeking options from biking, walking, carpooling, telecommuting, and transit
 - The recent passage of ST3 is a signal that transportation choices options are needed in a growing region
 - Current demand continues to be high: Sound Transit experienced a 23.1% system-wide ridership increase in 2016 over 2015
 - Bellevue's population continues to see positive growth with an anticipated population of 160,000 in 2035
 - Job growth continues to outpace population growth in Bellevue. The number of jobs in Bellevue grew at an average annual growth rate of 1.8% from 1995 to 2015.
 - The TomTom Traffic Index ranked the Seattle region as having the 4th worst traffic in the United States
 - The TomTom Traffic Index is published to provide drivers, industry and policy makers with unbiased information about congestion levels in urban areas.
 - Trying to fix cut-through traffic concerns is a difficult task usually requiring large-scale fixes outside of the neighborhood. For example, cut-through traffic is often symptomatic or larger issues that are based outside of the neighborhood.
 - Fixing those issues require a lot of time and capital
 - The transportation network can be viewed as a hierarchy with tiers: freeways, arterials, local streets.
 - As freeways clog, the arterials begin to stack up
 - As arterials clog, motorists seek relief on local streets which is where we are now
- The presentation component of the meeting was led by Associate Planner John Murphy (of the Neighborhood Traffic Safety Services group). The following is a synopsis of key points covered



during the presentation. The full presentation can be found here:

<https://www.bellevuewa.gov/12685.htm>

- We met because city staff have heard from many residents about commuter traffic using Woodridge streets, primarily on 121st/123rd/128th Aves SE/SE 26th St. This traffic is impacting neighborhood livability, creating safety concerns, and making it difficult to get to/from home.
- The goal of the meeting was to share information, learn from the community, hear from staff, and ask questions
- Woodridge is a community characterized by single family residential development, views of the mountains and cities, wide, curvy streets, relatively minimal parking on its streets, easy access to downtown, Factoria, and freeways, and is relatively quiet.
 - Many neighborhoods in Bellevue share this characteristics
- Bellevue’s population, number of housing units built, and number of jobs has increased dramatically since 1990.
- In turn, the transportation network needs to carry many more people
- Travel times—and their variability during commute times—was covered. A fictional trip between Bellevue City Hall and Factoria Square Mall was imagined. This trip, 3.7-4.7 miles (depending on route) can take anywhere from 15-50 minutes depending on traffic.
 - The influence of routing apps, such as Google Maps and Waze, was discussed. In some cases, these apps can direct traffic onto Woodridge streets as it’s often the quickest route when traffic is congested on nearby arterials
- Cut-through traffic was defined as “drivers not having an origin or destination in the area”
 - Motorists stopping at a location in the area, even briefly, are not considered to be cutting through
- Cut-through traffic can be caused by congestion on arterials, convenient nearby bypass options, growth, lack of travel options, routing apps, and more
- Specifically, traffic in Woodridge may be caused by the high number of households (1500) in the community, the location of Woodridge elementary, proximity to Richards Rd, Factoria, and the freeway ramp, the curvilinear street pattern, only 4 entrances into neighborhood, and only 5 exits out of neighborhood
- Traffic volumes were counted as recently as December 2015 on 123rd Ave SE near SE 15th St. The results indicate that half of all daily traffic (3,500 vehicles per day) occurs during the AM (7-9 am) and PM (4-7 pm) commute times
- A recent field review to 128th Ave SE and SE 32nd revealed that a lot of traffic through this intersection is accessing the freeway ramp—either from southbound 128th Ave SE or westbound SE 32nd St. Additionally, a lot of traffic traveled south on 128th Ave SE to eastbound SE 32nd to access Richards Rd.
- We’ve worked extensively in Woodridge in the past including the recent traffic improvement project on 123rd Ave SE from SE 20th Pl to SE 26th St in the school zone to reduce speeds (project included a traffic circle and medians/curb extensions that were coordinated with the sidewalk project on the east side of 123rd Ave SE), the four speed humps on 123rd Ave SE and 128th Ave SE to address speeding vehicles, sidewalk



WOODRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC COMMUNITY MEETING: SUMMARY

improvements on 123rd Ave SE south of SE 20th Pl and on 128th Ave SE, crosswalk improvements by Woodridge Swim Club, and the long-term roadway maintenance of 121st/123rd/128th Aves SE.

- The most recent project, the traffic improvement project on 123rd Ave SE from SE 20th Pl to SE 26th St, helped to reduce speeds in the school zone. Staff worked with a group of approximately 10 Woodridge residents—in the form of a Traffic Committee—to determine the best way to reduce speeds. Initially, staff thought speed humps would be the best solution. But, after starting work with the Traffic Committee, it became apparent that the community did not want any more speed humps in the neighborhood. Staff worked with the Traffic Committee to identify features that met the objective of reducing speeds while building something that the community desired. This process is critical to the work of Neighborhood Traffic Safety Services and helps to create a collaborative relationship with the community.
- A pre-meeting survey was sent out to all residents in Woodridge that asked respondents (n=272) why too much traffic in the neighborhood is a concern.
- Survey results can be found in the [presentation](#) but the high-level results are:
 - A little more than half (55%) of respondents lived south of Woodridge Elementary
 - On a scale of 1-100 (1 being traffic isn't bad at all and 100 being way too much traffic), an average score of 85 was reported. This indicated respondents generally think there is too much traffic in the neighborhood.
 - The most pressing issue related to too much traffic is the ability to get to/from one's home
 - Respondents overwhelmingly thought that the reason for traffic in the neighborhood is because commuters are avoiding congestion on Richards Road
 - The SE 8th St/121st Ave SE intersection is the most commonly used entrance to get into Woodridge
 - That same intersection is also the most used to exit the neighborhood; though 42% of respondents use SE 32nd/Richards Rd or the freeway ramp to get out of the neighborhood.
 - There were 177 comments received on the open comment portion of the survey. Comments affirmed that traffic is bad, that traffic is most pronounced during the afternoon, that school traffic doesn't help, distracted driving is common, and more.
- The presentation then moved into the interactive polling element of the evening. Attendees were given a keypad polling remote that allowed them to answer questions that were displayed on the screen. Attendees could respond in real-time and see results in real-time. There were approximately 75 responses to the 15 question. Full details can be found in the [presentation](#). High-level results are:
 - Most attendees (82%) are long-time residents (11 or more years living in Woodridge)
 - Roughly half (53%) of attendees took the pre-meeting survey



- Roughly 40% of attendees lived directly on one of the main routes through the neighborhood (121st Ave SE, 123rd Ave SE, SE 20th Pl, 128th St, or SE 26th St)
 - 29% often use a routing app such as Waze; 16% never have
 - 96% of attendees believe traffic is worse on weekdays versus weekends
 - 85% of attendees believe traffic is worst during afternoon/evenings
 - 77% of attendees believe traffic is equally worse throughout the year rather than just during the school year or just during the summer
 - 79% of attendees have altered their schedule/plan to avoid traffic in Woodridge
 - 81% of attendees have altered their travel route to avoid traffic in Woodridge
 - When asked about the direction in which attendees enter Woodridge at the SE 8th St/121st Ave SE intersection, 39% make a right from eastbound SE 8th St to southbound 121st Ave SE; 47% equally make a left and right off SE 8th St into the neighborhood
 - The single most pressing concern of Woodridge commuter traffic is the ability to get to or from one's home (47% of attendees cited this reason); 5% of attendees cited the speed of cars creating unsafe walking/biking conditions as the most pressing element of commuter traffic in Woodridge.
 - 55% of attendees said they would be willing to travel farther and/or longer for the possibility of less traffic in Woodridge
 - 83% of attendees believe the SE 8th St/121st Ave SE intersection is the entrance by which commuter traffic is entering the neighborhood
 - Attendees were roughly split as to where commuters are exiting with 50% of attendees believing the primary exit point is SE 32nd St whereas 45% of attendees the freeway is the primary exit point.
 - Roughly half (49%) of attendees are entering Woodridge between 4-7 pm on weekdays compared 25% that are exiting the neighborhood; 26% neither come or go
- A few of the upcoming projects near Woodridge were discussed including:
 - Utilities inlet station repair (Richards Road and SE 26th St): March-July
 - Richards Road median project: March (30 working days)
 - Richards Road overlay: 2017
 - Tools commonly used to address cut-through traffic tools were discussed. These tools include stationary radar signs, speed humps, local access only signs, one lane zones/chicanes, turn restrictions, partial closures, and full closures. These tools vary in effectiveness and in terms of impact to residents. For example, while a full closure would be very effective in discouraging commuter traffic, it would be equally effective in limiting the ability of residential traffic to use the street.
 - These tradeoffs highlight the importance of working with the community when putting together a plan to address complex issues such as cut-through traffic
 - Finally, next steps were discussed including city staff ordering traffic studies that are informed on the results of the meeting (happening spring) and the formation of a traffic committee that will help identify a plan to address cut-through traffic. Implementation of the plan will likely occur later this year/early 2018.



- This concluded the presentation component of the evening.
- Attendees then talked with Fire, Police, and Transportation staff to talk about:
 - Emergency response times
 - Police enforcement
 - Cut-through traffic tools
 - Engineering
 - Other questions

Written comments received via comment cards during the meeting include the following (comments are written verbatim):

- A good meeting/good communication. Questions survey, I hope answers were recorded.
- What about “local traffic only” signage? Signage that says “Don’t block arterial streets while stopped”
- Please add another lane on southbound 114th. The southbound lane blocks access to the northbound left turn. We can not get into the neighborhood.
- More police patrolling during high traffic volume and before school would be great. When will you do a new traffic volume survey? Data from December 2015 is not accurate. We have more volume than that. Why are you still considering a business at the bottom of SE 8th knowing this is the area where most people enter and exit. This will back up traffic more. Traffic is a problem already.
- At the location of the new commercial building under the trestle, is it possible to make the exit out of that lot a left turn only to limit traffic going up the hill?
- Thank you for spending the time and resources to listen to us and work out solutions for our neighborhood traffic problems. Would like to see a smart light to provide a green left turn arrow from SE 26th St to turn L onto Richards Rd. during peak hours. Thank you.
- Thanks for this meeting! Looking forward to more info.
- Good mtg & info. Appreciated the interactive question/answer opportunity.
- Local access only – please! Signs at entrances/exits. Local residents stickers on car. Hire off duty patrol to monitor non local access traffic. Some ideas may not be city but city input and direction would help.
- What is the plan when Richards is cut to 1 lane? How is managing the MORE horrendous traffic planned to be controlled? Richards Rd. is already a problem.
- Please place speed radar signs in Woodridge during Richards Rd. median and overlay project. Have police to ticket periodically. Thank you for listening to our voices and collaborating on solutions.
- One word: Waze. With the rising popularity of that app, commuters have discovered a cut-through Woodridge in an attempt to avoid the I-405/I-90 interchange/bottleneck. Enforce speeding.
- Radar speed signs should be installed on 128th as well. Put up local access signs now. Keep police emphasis in place.
- Need 4-way stop at 128 and SE 26th so traffic must take turns so that residents can go across 128th WB and turn right to go NB. Currently cut-through traffic southbound blocks this



intersection without letting any cut-through traffic no resident to turn left which blocks the residents from getting into the 'hood. This would also slightly disincentivize cut-through from choosing this route. It would also be good to install a stop light at SE 32nd the end of 128th at the freeway entrance. The timing could be adjusted during rush hour to just trickle cars out of the 'hood again disincentivize cut-through from choosing this route.

- SE 26th St is a like freeway exit w/excessive speeds to detour to—exiting off Richards Rd up the hill to a stop make left turn to Factoria—yet some go across at more than needed speed on up hill. I feel the need for workable speed bumps on both 26th and Road leading to Factoria (speed bumps on main drag are useless can be easily crossed at 30 mph—were installed when road repaved—would cut down on speed as well as usage during rush hr. Also a 4 way light at top of 26 would slow traffic down. Feel my access to where homes are that one uses to bypass other traffic should be equipped with speed bumps or other means of slowing traffic and eliminating the bypassing of other main arterials. Also feel that police fines for people using as bypass could be increased to make drivers think twice before using as shortcut. Primary increase in traffic in Woodridge is population which leads to more drivers.
- I would like to see a new city law enacted that would fine a driver \$50 for blocking access to a residential driveway. I would be happy to pay for such as sign to be placed next to my house to enable my access during busy times. I understand that enforcement would not be easy but I think there are some feasible solutions.
- I would like to join the traffic committee. Make 32 st one-way during rush hour 4-7 pm going east to west. Work with state to improve I-90 entrances.
- I think that adding stop signs at the intersection of SE 26th and 128th Ave would help to make the flow of traffic up the 26th street hill better, even at busy times. It would that intersection into a 4-way stop, and make the flow more equitable even at busy times. The impact at non-busy times would be acceptable as a trade-off.
- We live on the bottom of the hill. Visibility is poor a lot of curving on my area. Too much traffic to get in or out.
- I'd like to make comment to the Woodridge Traffic Committee. Who do I contact of where can I send comments. Thanks.
- The crosswalk near Woodridge pool. Lots of people (12 kids live in the first 3 houses on 14th) use the crosswalk-summer for the pool and all year to access the trail. How about blinking yellow lights like are near Samena on Lake Hills Blvd?
- Don't spend/waste \$1.00 of 1 minute on speed signs or speed controls. We aren't going 5 mph w/heavy traffic. Concentrate 100% effort on cut-through traffic.
- Concern: getting home my work on Mercer Island via I-90 to Factoria exit, turning left to SE 32nd, going 1 block to right turn on 128th and left on SE 27th @ 4:45-5:00 pm usually takes 30-45 minutes when it should take 10. Traffic on 128th and SE 27th blocking access to SE 27th. Traffic speeding W→E on SE 27th trying to get around traffic has come very close to hitting children ages 2-8 on the street. Pedestrians trying to cross the street at 128th Avenue SE and SE 32nd (in crosswalks) almost getting hit by cars from both directions.
- One concern is the growing number of commuter that are starting to use 127th Ave as well. Being ??? curves, it has become a safety hazard.



- What about local traffic only signs?
- I can't get my kid home safely from the bus stop. I have people driving into the crosswalk (same lane) when I'm with my son. People don't stop for the school bus.
- My daughter came home the other day (tank turnover day) LIVID at how long it took from SE 8th to SE 25th PI SE. LIVID I tell you. Hopping mad at all the cut through traffic. Took almost as long to get from Redmond → SE 8th as SE 8th to here. When it's bad, it's very bad.

Woodridge Neighborhood Traffic Community Meeting

Comments received on big board titled "There's a lot happening in and around Woodridge besides cut-through traffic. What else is on your mind? (please write below)." Comments are written verbatim and not corrected for grammar.

- Crime
- Cars parking on street blocking walkways and sidewalks
- Multi-family housing in single-family homes (e.g. on SE 27th between 124 and 126th) and excess car parking
- I-405 widening
- East Link
- Over-crowding of school
- Cars turning into the crosswalk when I am crossing with my kids
- Cars not stopping for the school bus
- Cut-through traffic, speeding, tailgating, and not following traffic laws
- Factoria exit from I-90: trying to get to Woodridge when most traffic is turning into Factoria and backed-up
- Special pavement on I-405 is effective. Use more of it! (I-90 and the rest of 405)
- Too much hidensity (sic) apts/condo to contribute to problems
- Cars parking on entrances to 130th Ave SE from SE 26th cause hazard to traffic. 2 cars (one is green) park there overnight and don't live on the street.
- 126th (SE 19th-20th)—cars parked and using road to U-turn or turn around (parked in the wrong direction)
- More police during school pick-up/drop-off
- SE 18th and 126th site distance
- 18504 SE 16th street site distance
- SE 30th St—bad visibility at crest of hill when cars are parked

