

**Community Issues Meeting DRAFT Minutes
October 12, 2015 6-8:30pm, Whittier Park**

Attendees: Brooke Erickson, Elise Redmond, Nancy Redmond, Jeff Cowmeadow, Christine Popowski, Scott Smith, Dave La Violette, David W. Schroth, Jesse Oyervides, Collin Ehret, Mark Yamaguchi, A. Keith, Brian Foster, Felino de la Pena, Larry Ludeman, Joanna Krause Johnson, Darrell Washington, Kati Wikkola, John Wilson, Jeff Nelson, Brett Vandebussche, Billy Werk, Jeff Helseth, Erica Christ, Mary Gazea, Kenya Weathers

Staff: Marian Biehn, Paul Shanafelt, Camilla Jamal, Lucy Lawson

Presenters: Lt Brian Anderson, 5th Precinct; Whittier Alliance Board; Shane Morton, Traffic & Parking Services, Public Works; Mark Yamaguchi

Call to order at 6:09 by Brett Vandebussche, CI Chair. Reminder to follow code of conduct and respect other's opinions. Introductions were made. Attendees were asked to review the September 14, 2015 minutes. A **Motion** to approve September 2015 minutes. **Carried.** A **Motion** to approve October agenda as written. **Carried.**

Announcements/Community Comments & Discussion

Safety Initiatives – Bike Patrol Proposal/5th Precinct Update

Lt Brian Anderson

Bike Patrol Proposal

The Whittier Alliance has NRP safety funding for extra police patrols and is considering applying it to a bike beat for officers to be out in the community. Lt Anderson talked about his experience running the bike beat for Lyndale n'hood, and gave the Whittier n'hood crime and safety update.

- In bike patrols, community engagement is primary – there is much more face-to-face contact and it's easy for community members to flag down a bike patrol officer.
- Out of 24 shifts at Lyndale, there were 324 loggable events, a big portion of those were from officers making community contact, including with businesses – things that people don't call in. Bike patrol officers are very visible and approachable, and often hear about smaller issues that citizens may not call in but are concerned about. Officers also show up at schools.
- Another benefit is that on a bike you can roll up on situations without people realizing it's the police. In the event of an arrest, the bike officers call in a squad car to help transport the arrestee, or to fill out the paperwork using the squad computer. The focus would be more on community interaction than arrests, however. Out of 24 shifts in Lyndale, arrested 5 people.
- For the Super Bowl in 2018, Minneapolis Police Department is going to have a large winter bike presence, so currently investigating winter bikes and winter biking gear. Currently the police don't have that winter biking equipment, even though it's possible, so bike patrols are for the summer months. Can do more foot patrols in winter.
- Bike patrols can be daytime or night time – it depends what the n'hood wants. In terms of times when there will be the biggest benefit, on Friday/Saturday nights there's lots of foot traffic, and more at the end of the day. Shifts of 3pm-8pm and during weekends is when would get the most out of it.
- In terms of consistency in which officers assigned, it could be same officers or drawn from a city-wide pool, depending on how it's set up. Lyndale's patrol was the same officers, so people got more familiar with them. Lyndale paid for it entirely, and Whittier would be doing the same.
- The n'hood can tailor the patrol's approach to its needs and what areas it wants targeted. For example, a zero tolerance approach to the Nicollet-Franklin intersection could easily occupy all of the officers' time.
- Whittier Alliance previously found extra police beats reduced car theft. Lyndale didn't see measurable differences in crime statistics but did see tangible positive differences in targeted problem areas – e.g. reduced public drunkenness at the Pillsbury Youth Farm Garden at 31st and Pillsbury.
- WA has funds for police patrols. A voice vote of attendees indicated support for

implementation of bike cops as early as possible in the spring.

5th Precinct Update

Lt Anderson presented a map of all traffic stops in Whittier n'hood for the year, including 'intersections of concern' from an informal n'hood survey. Pillsbury & 28th around Karmel Square, Lake St, Nicollet, Blaisdell, Lyndale & Franklin are where you see the most traffic stops. The others are sporadic through the district. By the end of the year the number will be close to 5000. Many traffic stops result in people being given education or advice rather than being taken in. A map of 911 calls in the area would also be interesting.

Lt Anderson presented select reported crimes in Whittier for September-October. Seeing a trend of Hispanic individuals and small lone females being targeted in robberies. Biggest thing in area is burglaries.

Crime Prevention Specialists are similar to the old 'safe officers', and Chelsea Adams is the one for this n'hood. She will work with people. 311 is another resource. YTD crime is down 20% on average compared to 2014, burglaries being the exception.

Functional officer numbers are below authorised officers at the moment, partly due to changes to retirement rules. Community members commented that this precinct being #2 in crime stats, it should be staffed more. The plan for the Super Bowl is to bring in outside officers. Being the largest, Whittier gets more resources than any other n'hood in the precinct.

WA Safety Initiatives

Marian Biehn

The Whittier Alliance runs a number of volunteer and community events, including to resident and business initiatives to reduce crime. Attendees encouraged to sign up for safety task force, block club leader or contact, Whittier Walkers, etc.

Invite for Safety Task Force

Kenya Weathers (WA board member)

Kenya outlined his vision for a Crime and Safety Task Force for the Whittier n'hood. Most offenders are not from the n'hood, but victims are. He felt on his block of 22nd and Clinton the n'hood was being bullied. Task Force will deal with issues of safety and crime, be a representative to service providers, aid community to solve recurring issues with narcotics, burglaries, etc., and collaborate with police.

Whittier Events – Fall Clean Up, Oct 17

Paul Shanafelt

Meet at church at 12.30 and participate to clean up n'hood.

Whittier N'hood traffic issues

Shane Morton, Traffic & Parking, City of Mpls

Shane Morton took questions from meeting attendees about traffic issues and Public Works processes. He began by saying he understood residents had a lot of concerns with the street system, and had reviewed the 6 pages of specific issues with intersections and street segments in the n'hood before the meeting. He thought the Livable Streets Task Force might be a better forum for hammering out the n'hood safety concerns at the intersection level.

- At the last meeting 28th and Stevens was raised as a strong concern because the light was out, and there was a portable stop sign. Intersections fail on a daily basis. If there is a portable stop sign, the light is in the process of being fixed.
- One of tools Public Works uses is a crash database. Intersections along 27th may have made the top 20 a few times, but there are 10,000 intersections in City.
- A newspaper article named the top 20 trouble spots, and the top 3 were all in Whittier. Franklin-Nicollet was #1 for pedestrian and auto crashes. With a fully controlled intersection (traffic lights), there is a limit to how many changes Public Works can make. Community member suggested eliminating some parking near the intersection. Eliminating parking near businesses is not welcomed by the businesses.
- Speed humps are really only for local streets. The County controls the signs that tell you your

- speed. He wouldn't recommend one for this area – unlikely to make a difference.
- In terms of how residents and organisations take steps to make streets safer, if have funds, but not permission, first and foremost a lot of requests come from 311. Two speed humps in the last 8 years were funded by n'hoods. To get a n'hood funded one, just need 75% of affected properties on a block to give permission – as long as not a state route, i.e. main arterial road (anything with a line in the middle).
 - Concerns were raised about no parking signs (that property owners pay for) not being enforced when offenders are still in the vehicle, and 'no parking' signs vs 'no stopping' were discussed. Parking in driveways is forbidden by State and City ordinance. Morton said he will research the 'no stopping' signs in Uptown. Parking issues can cause hostility between visitors and residents, particularly around Karmel Mall.
 - Attendee raised that in St Anthony have stop lights with lights around them. Minneapolis has researched this, lights can be a concern with seeing cross traffic and pedestrians, and often adjacent houses aren't pleased. Another concern was that it makes the non-blinking stop signs 'less serious'.
 - Attendee noted that for many streets in n'hood the crosswalks aren't marked, and asked what the cycles are for painting crosswalks. City hasn't found painted lines very effective for drivers, mostly they're there for pedestrians to indicate the one the City prefers you to use. The crosswalk gives the pedestrian a sense of safety. Do mark 4000 every year. This year got to more than usual. City now using less paint and more durable markings, which last 5-7 years, rather than 1 year, like paint.
 - Franklin & 3rd is a particular problem intersection.
 - Many participants agreed that 1st Ave doesn't have enough signage to remind people that it's a two-way street and mark the transition from two-way to one-way. It also has some sight-line issues.
 - Blaisdell Ave is a speedway, especially in the late afternoons.
 - Regarding graffiti on signs, Public Works was recently instructed to raise all signs by a couple of feet. Now getting complaints people can't see signage – too high. Difficult balance.

Whittier Farmers Market

Mark Yamaguchi

Mark Yamaguchi gave an informational presentation re possible farmers market in the Whittier n'hood. Mark and his family moved to Whittier from Kingfield, and miss having a farmers market in n'hood. He provided a map of farmers markets and their days and times in City of Minneapolis. Proposal is for a market in Cavalry Church southern parking lot on Saturday mornings, next to the new children's playground.

- Handout included a site map showing that with a 10x10 stall plan, could have 15 stalls. Market would encourage healthy eating, have EBT access for low-income residents, and increase community engagement. Calvary Church is eager to use its assets for the good of the n'hood. Jeff Cowmeadow of Calvary Church confirmed they want to be an asset to the community, and market-goers with children can use the beautiful new playground.
- Idea behind mini-markets, such as Stevens Square, is that they are hyper-local, for surrounding residents. Access to farmers market would probably be through the alley.
- Attendee asked about traffic, and concept is market would be more walking directed. However, 150 people come to the church on Sunday mornings, mostly using street parking, so there is some capacity.
- In terms of farmers driving in produce and where their trucks would go, the church has existing partnerships in n'hood with a law firm, chiropractic firm, etc., that might be reasonable places for parking.
- In terms of who would manage/coordinate market, the church front desk has resources to answer calls during week, and church would hire someone to manage Saturday mornings by Church. Some community gardens, such as Soo Line, might be able to provide produce.

- Contact Church or Mark if you have ideas or questions – happy to answer.
- Mark has talked to a few small farmers market operators as research. Vision is for something small, where residents can get vegetables.
- If CI vote positive, will take proposal to Cavalry board. If that is positive, search out vendors over winter and open in Spring.

CI Motion 1: The CI committee supports the proposal for a farmers market in the Whittier n’hood.

Carried: 17-0-0

Livable Streets Taskforce

Paul Shanafelt

The new task force came out of the recent CI meeting about parking and traffic. Task force members have been meeting once a week and corresponding via email

Statement of Purpose: The purpose of the Livable Streets Task Force is to advocate for infrastructure improvements in the Whittier neighborhood that create safe and friendly streets for pedestrians, cyclists, passengers, and drivers.

- Task force is undertaking a community-wide survey to gather input, and wants to be a conduit that can synthesize the information, take to Public Works and implement changes. Interested community members, can help out just with the safety survey, and if they want to attend meetings, that’s even better.
- Certainly phone or email the Whittier Alliance office with any traffic concerns.
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Reopen Nicollet-Site Visioning & Planning

Marian Biehn

Marian gave a brief report on the first two Reopen Nicollet Ave Planning and Visioning workshops held on Oct 3 & 10.

- There was lots of input from the attendees which resulted in 7 different visions. The next step was to consolidate the 7 into one big rambling, very interesting statement. Will be made available on WA website.
- Did site walk on Saturday to assess the positives and negatives of the site as it currently is. The comments from Workshops 1 and 2 have been posted on WA website. Next step will be to put up the vision for electronic feedback.
- Workshops focused on what participants valued in the n'hood and what changes people wanted and did not want.
- The WA and n'hood is paying in conjunction with the Midtown Greenway for planning for the site. The developers and the City will hopefully take it from there.
- One of concerns was Nicollet becoming a speedway, which Public Works can start thinking about. The idea of a 'village feel' also raised – nice fit with a farmers market. So the CI meeting had a nice through line this month.
- Future Workshop Dates – next one November 24, Location TBD, save the date.

Old/New Business

Whittier Alliance has home improvement loans, at 2% interest for 10 years. Rental rehab loans are also available, at similar excellent rates.

Motion to Adjourn: 8:07pm. Motion Carried.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lucy Lawson.