

Minutes of 6/22/05 Traffic Study Advisory Group Meeting w/ Joe Kott and Ashok Aggarwal Regarding College Terrace Traffic Calming Trial

Attending: Kathy Durham, Paul Garrett, Joe Kott, Ashok Aggarwal, John Mark Agosta, Grace Liu, Louise Roche, Karie Epstein and Erika Enos.

Absent: Sharon & Bruce Andrews, Virginia Ferguson, Paul Lomio, Emily Marshall, Kim Raftery, Steve Woodward and John Ciccarelli

Meeting began at 8:20 a.m. at Kathy Durham's house with introductions. Joe Kott introduced Ashok Aggarwal , the city's senior traffic engineer who is retiring June 30, 2005 but will help on our project until his departure. This is because as of last Monday, Heba El-Guendy is out indefinitely because of illness. Joe will let us know next week who will replace Ashok on this project after 6/30.

Other news: Although the city budget for 2005-06 eliminates funding for the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program, the Transportation Division will see projects currently in the works through to completion (especially ours).

Ashok and Joe then explained both the technical findings of the engineering work done since the November Council vote and the new timeline that they believe is realistic. What follows are the key points discussed. We asked for a short and clear update from them for the July newsletter, plus visuals that explain the specifics to interested residents that can be placed online. (Update: these visuals were received and are now included at the end of these minutes.)

A. ENGINEERING REVIEW OF SIX SPEED TABLE LOCATIONS

The general locations of the speed tables (2 on California Ave and 4 on Stanford Ave) remain as proposed by Jim West and approved by the neighborhood advisory vote and the City Council vote. But in the process of preparing the engineering specifications for actual construction, Ashok has determined that none of the speed tables can be placed close enough to the intersection to allow them to be striped as raised crosswalks.

The problem is that in each case, right at the intersection there are physical impediments that prevent construction of ramps meeting ADA standards to allow for disabled access to a raised crosswalk from being constructed. These impediments include one or more of the following near each speed table site: utility pole, storm drain, bus stop, manhole cover, fire hydrant, catch basin or driveway.

Questions mostly focused on pros and cons of providing additional crosswalks between current crosswalks on Stanford Avenue (at Yale, traffic signal and Bowdoin):

1. Can crosswalks be painted at intersections when speed tables are nearby?

A: No, not without careful evaluation of the speeds after speed tables are installed. In general, painting crosswalk lines is not associated with increased safety for pedestrians. But in response to expressed concerns, Joe agreed to revisit this question for Stanford/Wellesley and Stanford/Oberlin after trial has been implemented for several months and the next round of speed and volume data has been collected.

2. What about the flexible signs used with uncontrolled crosswalk at Churchill/Paly driveway?

A: These do raise driver awareness but are generally used at uncontrolled crosswalks with much higher pedestrian counts. People can cross safely and legally now at Oberlin and at Wellesley (technical term is "safe gaps"). Children should use existing crosswalks near school or at Yale or Bowdoin.

3. Will speed tables be safe for cyclists?

A. Yes. Tables are 3" high, and the transition from gutter level is gradual so even young cyclists will not be thrown off balance. Good examples of how bike lanes and speed tables work are on Channing Ave. and Louis Road.

4. What about more speed limit signs?

A: Speed tables work better than signs because they physically change driver behavior. Signs are passive and there's strong evidence that a lot of drivers don't notice them. Required signage for speed tables will be part of our trial's budget; we do have \$25-30k reserved for changes after trial period but must keep in mind priorities.

B. SPECIFIC LOCATIONS FOR SPEED TABLES

Ashok shared detailed visuals, showing aerial views of each location with specific locations noted. He will provide these to us as PDFs which we can post. Here is a quick summary of specific placements discussed (Note: "curb return" = point where the curb becomes straight after corner):

1. Stanford/Wellesley (west side): 10' west of curb return.

2. Stanford/Oberlin (west side): 10' west of curb return.

3. Stanford Ave./west of Dartmouth (in front of Susan Rosenberg's house): just east of entrance to "staff parking only" driveway at back of Escondido School. Discussion regarding locating speed table west of driveway; Might encourage more jaywalking, better on the east as "heads up" for the traffic

signal at Hanover. Ashok noted that the east of driveway location is also more visible due to vegetation on CT side of street. (Update: Ashok looked at site again after meeting and recommends installation of speedtable at 15' west of Dartmouth.)

4. Stanford Ave/west of Amherst: to be placed just inside the Palo Alto border, as agreed before. Some questions about merits of placement further west, but Ashok emphasized that negotiating with Santa Clara County would be long and difficult. AG members suggested the "heads up" before the Bowdoin stop sign might have a positive safety impact on drivers. Kathy will check with Steve W. on need for outreach meeting with residents.

5. California Ave./Wellesley : 10' West of curb return. Bus stop a factor here but frequency has been reduced to 1 per hour so wear and tear not as significant; doable.

6. California Ave. between Princeton and Oberlin. Here, given resident opposition to the 10 foot west of curb return location, the two options are midblock or near Oberlin. Outreach meeting definitely in order. (Update: Ashok checked location again, per request at meeting, for any impediments and determined that the speedtable can be installed 15' east of Oberlin---not feasible 10' east due to a utility cover.)

We need to determine which locations will need additional outreach meeting with residents and work with Joe to make them happen in timely fashion. Erika suggested idea of posting actual sign near proposed locations for a week. Transportation staff will also do mailings to "abutting" residents (those in immediate vicinity of speed tables).

C. TRAFFIC CIRCLES

No engineering surprises here. As before, 5 circles proposed at the following locations:

1. Yale/Cambridge (due to T intersection and width of road, this one smaller than rest)
2. College/Yale
3. College/ Oberlin
4. College/ Hanover
5. College/ Columbia

Ashok reminded us that 8 parking spaces will be lost at each location (two at each of the 4 corners) - not negotiable w/ circles. Circle itself bordered by 2' wide "mountable curb" to accommodate occasional larger trucks. Need minimum of 19'6" between circle and each corner (to accommodate fire trucks). Staff will test proposed dimensions using cones and fire trucks. Good example of what temporary circles will look like is on Emerson/Everett. Joe reported only 2 complaints regarding new circles in Downtown North - this is a very positive sign.

AG members reminded Joe and Ashok of changes in some current stop sign placement due to traffic circles, which had been carefully determined by Jim West with extensive input from AG.

Discussion focused on landscaping circles: Good example of landscaping for traffic circles is Lytton/Guinda. Addison/Bryant is too high-maintenance. Here are the steps required for getting landscaped circles:

1. 1 year trial, temporary circles with no cuts in asphalt (formed concrete like at Indian/Moreno).
2. When trial over, follow Council-established guidelines. Decide if hardscape or landscape. With landscape, must have water source; recommend drought tolerant plants. Need to determine who has responsibility to water new plants first six months until get established.
3. Once 2. above is determined and we need water source, then are able to cut pavement and bring in power, water, etc to circle in pavement; must have funds for it as is expensive. (Joe Kott also noted that in current City climate, Public Works protests traffic calming projects that require additional maintenance, "fierce resistance". Kathy reminded Joe that coordinating the repaving of College Ave could reduce costs here.)

AG members noted that some aesthetic treatment is needed to gain buy-in from nearby residents. Maybe during trial we can put pots on circles to make look nicer. Also, Paul Garrett made creative suggestion that CT try to get Canopy to work with us to do appropriate landscaping plan and periodic maintenance. AG must do due diligence regarding this and other ideas before trial installation with neighborhood.

D. TIMING OF TRIAL

The August construction date we were given last February was unrealistic. Ashok gave us a detailed description of what happens from here. Realistic estimate = minimum 6 month process:

- a. Final design (est. 2-3 months after precise locations determined)
- b. Internal review by Public Works, Utilities, Fire Dept (est. 2-3 weeks)
- c. Documents required are prepared by Purchasing Dept and reviewed by Attorney (est. 4-5 weeks)
- d. Request for bids (est. 1 month)
- e. Execute contract (est. 1 month)

Best case scenario is construction of trial measures in Jan/Feb 2006, barring weather delays (say "early spring construction" to be safe).

The following two contractors have done most of the recent installations in the city and Joe felt satisfied with their work: George Bianchi and JJ Albanese.

Given this delay, we must explain to residents why "delay"; will be done in forthcoming newsletter after July 4th weekend.

Discussion on neighborhood outreach: all agreed it will continue and is of highest importance—during this delay period and during trial period. Erika suggested there was a need for outreach to those residents with different opinions on the Mayfield Agreement as well as those near the physical measures.

In response to questions about the summary of May volume and speed counts promised by Heba, Joe explained that they do not have copies yet; will check and get back to us.

Karie raised related traffic regulation issues (covered in email to Kathy which Kathy will forward to Joe) regarding:

- a. changing to double yellow striping on Stanford Ave. (as on County portion of Stanford Avenue, due to increased passing cars)
- b. placement/replacement of speed signs, esp. at Amherst border
- c. placement/replacement of truck weight limit signs

Quick discussion of Stanford students and their driving; agreed ongoing outreach needed not just w/ neighborhood and commuters, but with Stanford and their Parking/Transportation Office.

Meeting adjourned just before 11:00 a.m.