

## **BACKGROUND:**

The 1998 Jubilee Neighbourhood Transportation Management Plan (NTMP) included road closures on several local streets to eliminate cut-through traffic. The closures were installed on a trial basis in April 2001. The cost to install the closures (including a remote-controlled gate on Coronation Street, and fire pre-emption devices at three signalized intersections) was \$50,441. Impacts on traffic flow were generally consistent with expectations, however the response from motorists affected was greater than anticipated. An April 2002 consultant review confirmed that while the closures met the main objective of the plan, there were some negative impacts and recommendations were made to mitigate these impacts.

Fern Street was re-opened January 24, 2003, following Council resolution and public consultation. Council also instructed staff to complete an evaluation of the trial road closures and report back with recommendations. This report provides that evaluation and includes recommendations on a future direction.

## **TECHNICAL DATA AND PUBLIC INPUT:**

Traffic data, (including volumes on the closed streets, adjacent local streets and arterials) and accident information for the area was collected throughout the trial period, and used in the evaluation process. In conjunction with the technical review, residents of the closed streets and the 1700 block Bay Street, as well as public agencies, community associations, and various other stakeholders, provided feedback on the impact of the road closures. The City also received significant input from the public throughout the trial period.

These comments, along with the data collected, revealed positive and negative impacts of the trial road closures in the Jubilee neighbourhood.

The positive impact of these closures were:

- reduced volume and speed on the local streets experiencing cut-through traffic
- many residents of the closed streets expressed that their 'quality of life' had improved – street noise had been reduced, there was an increased "sense of community", and the calmed street environment benefited pedestrians and cyclists
- reported collisions in the neighbourhood were reduced

The negative impacts of the closures were:

- additional volume on adjacent local streets (Belmont, Pearl, and Taylor and Townley in Saanich) created new resident concerns
- traffic re-directed to the arterial streets (Bay, Richmond, Shelbourne, Begbie, and Fort) resulted in congestion at various times of the day at the Bay/Shelbourne and Bay/Richmond intersections, and in the 1700 block of Bay
- travel times for motorists crossing the neighbourhood (both local and non-local residents) increased, due to less direct routes

Other items identified during the evaluation:

- transit was unaffected by the road closures
- while concerns were expressed regarding increased travel times and congestion, emergency operations (ambulance, fire) were unaffected by the road closures

## **ISSUES:**

From all the public comments received through the trial period, one central theme emerged – the rights and convenience of motorists versus the safety and livability of residents. Many residents of the closed streets feel "livability" issues associated with the trial road closures outweigh the inconvenience of less direct travel routes to and from their residence. However, many other

neighbourhood residents, including some living on the closed streets, expressed concerns over increased travel distance and inconvenience associated with the road closures. Because Bay Street is the only open east/west road in the neighbourhood, the average increase in travel time across the neighbourhood is 1-2 minutes.

Fern Street was re-opened January 24, 2003. As a result, traffic volumes on Belmont Avenue and on Fern Street have returned to pre-closure levels.

Ashgrove Street was closed to facilitate the proposed expansion of Begbie Green Park. It was not identified as a problem cut-through route in the 1998 Jubilee Transportation Management Plan. The decision to close Ashgrove in conjunction with the trial road closures was necessary to better understand what impacts this may have relative to the overall road closures. Since the expansion of Begbie Green Park is currently not identified in the 5 year Capital Plan there is no need for this closure to remain.

Begbie at Shelbourne is recommended to remain closed. The option of opening this intersection and restricting left turn movements at the Pembroke and Richmond intersection was explored, however this would cause considerable difficulty for people trying to access the medical offices on and pharmacy on Birch Street primarily from the neighborhoods to the south and east.

#### **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT RATHER THAN ROAD CLOSURE:**

Although the trial road closures met the original objective of eliminating cut-through traffic on the local streets, the impact was greater than expected. While many residents on the closed streets in the Jubilee neighbourhood appreciate the calmer environment on their residential street, the less direct travel routes created by the closures inconveniences cut-through motorists, and some residents of the closed streets. Residents, emergency service personnel and other members of the community are generally more supportive of traffic management measures that do not unduly restrict access in and out of a neighbourhood.

To address the concerns and negative impacts identified, yet maintain the quality of life benefits of the closures an objective of managing cut-through traffic rather than eliminating it may be more appropriate. This would involve regulating volumes on the local streets, while providing more reasonable circulation options within the neighbourhood.

Proposed traffic management measures that restrict full access to local streets, while accommodating neighbourhood travel patterns, may address the concerns raised, and provide effective traffic management. The measures would continue to prohibit vehicle movements typically used by commuter cut-through traffic (left-right pattern), while improving internal circulation and access for neighbourhood motorists. The changes would maintain the benefits of the closures (keeping commuter traffic off local streets by eliminating left turn movements), and would also address the negative impacts of the closures (internal circulation concerns, use of adjacent local streets, congestion at some signalized intersections and in the 1700 block Bay Street). Measures would include a combination of central medians, islands, channelized turn lanes and diverters to allow "right-in/right-out" movements (see attached plans). The following Table 1 describes the proposed treatments by individual intersection.

## JUBILEE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES

**Table 1**

| <u>Intersection</u>         | <u>Proposed Treatment</u>  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. Kings at Shelbourne      | channelized island   |
| 2. Kings at Richmond        | central median with full bicycle access and provision for south and westbound left turns |
| 3. Haultain at Shelbourne   | channelized island   |
| 4. Haultain at Richmond     | central median with full bicycle access and provision for south and westbound left turns |
| 5. Denman at Shelbourne     | central median with full bicycle access and provision for north and westbound left turns |
| 6. Denman at Richmond       | central median with full bicycle access  |
| 7. Coronation at Shelbourne | central median with full bicycle access  |
| 8. Coronation at Richmond   | channelized island   |
| 9. Ashgrove at Begbie       | closure to be removed  |
| 10. Chestnut at Begbie      | central median with full bicycle access  |
| 11. Chestnut at Fort        | central median with full bicycle access  |

\*Note: Begbie at Shelbourne closure to remain and replaced with removable bollards.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends replacing the Jubilee road closures with traffic management measures that allow limited access to the streets closed during the trial period. The cost for this work, including barrier removal, is estimated at \$65,000, and would be a 2004 Capital Budget item. Staff will explore opportunities for plantings as part of these improvements. If approved, up to \$20,000 could be re-directed from the 2003 capital budget to begin implementation immediately. To prevent a return to pre-closure cut-through volumes and speeds, these measures should be installed prior to removing the road closure barriers.