

RIVERSIDE DRIVE SPEED HUMPS

WWW.SEYMOURVALLEY.CA

TELEPHONE 604-924-1087

December 3, 2001

Mayor Don Bell
3955 Highland Blvd
North Vancouver, B.C.

Status Update Re: Riverside Speed Humps

Dear Mayor Bell:

While our Mayor and District Council are still not responding to the petition asking to have the speed humps removed, several presentations at the November 19th council meeting caused them to have District Staff meet with a small group of residents. At the meeting last Wednesday it was clear that the rift that existed before the installation of the speed humps has escalated into a serious division of the neighbourhood. There is the majority who do not support the speed humps and a much smaller minority who are adamant that they must stay. This minority believes that speeding has made our neighbourhood dangerous. That belief is not supported by any evidence that they or District Staff have presented. The RCMP officer who attended the meeting also confirmed that Riverside isn't considered a dangerous street. In fact, Riverside may be safer than other comparable streets in the district.

If Riverside Drive isn't less safe than other streets where the district has not installed speed humps, you may wonder why Council approved the Staff recommendation to install speed humps on our street. Two reasons are that they were given biased and incorrect information, because District Staff failed to follow approved policy. Failure to follow policy allowed the interests of a small minority to be presented as the desires of the neighbourhood. The attachments are long but the gist of each is:

- **Errors in the Staff Report to Council**

Like most executives, Council must rely on staff to deal with the details and to recommend a plan. A quick look at the original Staff report to Council indicates that speed humps are what we all wanted, but the report and the process were flawed. Staff didn't even ensure that they had enough support to start a traffic calming study let alone the support needed to recommend the installation of speed humps. This was violation of the District Corporate Policy that provides the checks and balances needed to ensure sufficient neighbourhood support. This is one of the most common errors in the planning of a traffic calming program. Attachment 1 is annotated excerpts of the Report to Council that shows how they were mis-informed.

- **A Persistent Lobby**

In 1997, at the very same meeting where Council returned the speed limit to 50 kph, the head of the Seymour Valley Community Association (SVCA), Mr Ray Burns started to lobby for other traffic calming measures. Correctly or incorrectly, his input has often been interpreted as the wishes of our neighbourhood. At this point, Councillor Crist has advised us that he will only support removal of the speed humps if the request comes from our duly elected representative Mr. Burns. Unfortunately, Mr Burns and the SVCA are virtually unknown outside the group who has supported the speed humps because the meetings and elections are not publicised. In fact, Mr. Burns has ignored our requests to tell us when the next meeting will be. Council and Staff made a serious error by not ensuring that input from Mr. Burns represent the wishes of the community. The chronology of how Riverside Drive got speed humps is summarized in Attachment 2.

So what happens when Council and Staff make such a serious error? If you live in Coquitlam, the Mayor acknowledges the error and removes the speed humps. Attachment 3 is a news article that describes how Coquitlam had to remove \$250,000 worth of speed humps because they also failed to ensure that the program was needed and supported. I hope our Mayor and Council have the integrity to admit the error and remove the speed humps.

To encourage removal of the speed humps, our Mayor and Councillors need to know your views. Write, email or phone each of them. It took 250 phone calls in Coquitlam to get the speed humps removed so we will need similar support. The phone numbers are; Mayor Bell 604-990-2203, Councillors Ernie Crist 604-986-4531, Bill Denault 604-904-7936, Heather Dunsford 604-929-2987, Janice Harris 604-987-8394, Doug MacKay-Dunn 604-924-4641, Lisa Muri 604-929-2550. Email all of them at Council@district.north-van.bc.ca and include the staff by CC them at managecomm@district.north-van.bc.ca.

The person at the District Office who is in charge of the department that manages traffic calming is Richard Zerr, Director of PLANNING, ENGINEERING, PARKS & REGULATORY SERVICES. At the meeting, he said that he would provide a recommendation to Council before the end of the year. Make sure he knows your opinion. Phone him at 604-990-2387 or send him an email at zerrr@dnv.org.

You may also want to call Ray Burns at 604-929-8088 and ask him when the next Seymour Valley Community Association meeting is. We were told that there was or would be one in November or December. We've not heard there was a meeting and our requests for the date of the next meeting have not been answered. A lot of people would like to attend to ensure that Mr. Burns understands how the whole community feels about speed humps.

We will keep you advised as the speed hump removal project goes forward. If you have questions or want to be add or removed from this mailing list, please telephone me at 604-924-1742 or email me at Phil.Holland@ATTGlobal.net.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Holland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phil Holland

Attachment 1

Inaccuracies in District Staff Reporting to Council

Excerpts from:

The District of North Vancouver REPORT TO COUNCIL

July 3, 2001

AUTHOR: Donna Howes, P.Eng. - Assistant Manager, Transportation

SUBJECT: Riverside Drive Traffic Calming Project

RECOMMENDATION: That the detailed design for the speed humps on Riverside Drive as shown in Diagram 3 be completed and installed.

Note: *This recommendation is not within the scope of the task described in council's resolution. The minutes of the October 20, 1997 meeting state that the task is to "conduct a survey of the neighbourhood to determine the level of support for traffic calming on Riverside Drive and report the survey results back to Council." Actions such as exploring alternatives and deciding solutions should not have proceeded until Council agreed there was sufficient support for a full traffic calming study.*

REASON FOR REPORT: Council passed a resolution that staff conduct a survey of the neighbourhood to determine the level of support for traffic calming.

Note: *District Staff were tasked with determining the level of support for traffic calming. The support requirement outlined in the District's Traffic Calming Policy was not reached in the survey conducted in March of 1998 so there wasn't sufficient support to proceed. Staff did not report this and while they could and should have conducted another survey, they did not. This was a direct contravention of DNV Corporate Policy and a violation of the basic principles that most cities use to establish the unbiased need for a traffic calming study.*

As a result, Riverside Drive was included in the traffic calming program for 2000.

Note: *Based on DNV Corporate Policy, the survey requested by council must be sent to all households and businesses in the study. The survey is to verify if there is sufficient support in the study area for a traffic calming study. **At least 50% of the surveys must be returned and a majority of the responses must support traffic calming for a study to proceed to budget consideration.** This survey was not done before a consultant was appointed and the study started. A survey conducted after the study was started did not show sufficient support for the study to be continued.*

SUMMARY: Staff have completed a review of the traffic safety issues on Riverside Drive north of Grantham Drive. This report details this review which included additional data collection and technical analysis together with detailed community consultation. Speeding on Riverside Drive was confirmed to be an issue from the technical analysis.

Note: *This isn't correct. The technical analysis showed the worst case 85th percentile to be 14.5kph over the speed limit for Riverside. The policy states that the 85th percentile must be at least 16kph over the speed limit to meet the criterion for traffic calming. This criterion is the same for local and*

collector roads. The "Traffic Volume" criterion allows 1000 vehicles for local roads and 3000 vehicles for collector roads. The measured traffic volume was 2180 vehicles so we would have failed that criteria if we are a local road but Riverside is a collector road so we are under the criteria in the traffic calming policy.

The majority of residents acknowledge that there are traffic safety concerns and problems with vehicles speeding.

Note: This statement is not supported by the facts because at no time did the majority of residents ever attend a traffic calming meeting or respond to a district survey.

BACKGROUND: Over the past few years, local residents have expressed concern about speeding along Riverside Drive East, north of Grantham Drive. The history of this issue is summarised in Attachment 1.

Riverside Drive, north of Grantham, is a Local Road with an average width of 8m.

Note: Based on the information in DNV Corporate Policy No. 11-8620-1 Riverside Drive is a minor collector road and therefore is subject to different traffic concerns.

This issue has been reassessed with the recently adopted District Traffic Calming Policy, "Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Program and Procedures", August 1999.

Note: If this was done, why was the basic policy requirement to determine the support for a Traffic Calming Study ignored? Staff never had a survey, before or during the process, that obtained the required 51% return.

Traffic counts have been undertaken over a period of time and the results are shown... These counts were assessed with the policy [reference deleted] and this confirmed that further study was required which included a community consultation process.

Note: This is incorrect. Staff used the classification for a local road. Based on the definitions in the Canadian Guide for Traffic calming, and the DNV Corporate Policy, Riverside Drive is a collector road. As a collector road it didn't meet the requirements for further study. One of the differences between a local road and a collector road is that there is a higher need to allow traffic to move in an unimpeded manner on a collector road.]

The main measure for speed is the 85th Percentile Speed which is the speed at or below which 85 % of the drivers are travelling at. This speed is used to compare the levels or degree of speeding on different streets. The traffic count data shows that the 85th Percentile Speed varies from 64.5 km/h (just north of Grantham) to 61.4 km/h (near Swinburne). By comparison, this speed is high for a Local Road in the District. Recent speed studies have indicated that the typical range of speeds (85th percentile) that were recorded on other Local Roads in the District is 52 km/h to 60 km/h.

Note: Staff failed to state that the minimum thresholds for funding in Section 4.1 of 1999 Traffic Calming Policy are that 50% or more of traffic is through traffic, 85th percentile operating speed is 16k/h over the posted speed limit, or that Traffic volume is greater than 3,000 vehicles per day. District data did not confirm that any of these criteria failed.

ANALYSIS: The community consultation is documented in the report from Context Research... Staff also met with a small Community Contact group throughout the process to provide input on the

approach to consultation. Two work sessions with the community were held.In addition, two questionnaires were sent out to the neighbourhood to confirm feedback from the work sessions.

Note: *Throughout this process, the Consultant and District Staff never received a large enough response to accurately judge the desires and objectives of the overall neighbourhood. History has now shown that the conclusions and the recommendations limited input do not have the support of the Riverside Community.]*

The recommendation is to install four speed humps in the lower part of Riverside Drive. This is shown in Diagram 3. The majority of residents acknowledge that there are traffic safety concerns and problems with vehicles speeding.

Note: *Staff keep referring to a majority of residents. This is completely false! How can staff make claims like this when they never got a response from the majority of the residents?*

Support for placing these speed humps is highest among residents in the middle and lower end of Riverside Drive (84% of respondents), where the speeding issue is the most prevalent and of the greatest concern.

Note: *While this is correct, the report to council omits a very important finding. That finding was that only a slight majority of a small sampling of the community supported the speed humps. If you review the Traffic Calming Policy a 51% or greater response is required to start a study. If you look at the traffic calming policies for other cities you'll see that most require the majority or even 66% of the residents in the impact area to support the installation of the traffic calming devices. DNV Policy has ignored this very important measure of community support for the project. We are now seeing the consequences.*

Business Plan:

- **Environmental Impact:** The potential for reducing speeds through communities could also reduce air pollution to a small degree in those areas.

Note: *This is blatantly incorrect. It is a well understood that the repeated deceleration and acceleration that is caused by speed humps will considerably increase fuel consumption and pollution.*

Options:

1. That the detailed design for the speed humps on Riverside Drive as shown in Diagram be completed and installed
- Or
2. Do not install speed humps.

Note: *Council was given these options and on the basis of the information provided, opted to install the speed humps. If they knew that basic DNV Traffic calming Policies had not been followed, that they had been used incorrectly, or that the support of the overall community had not been confirmed, would they have made the same decision? We must now take this to council and ask them.*

Attachment 2

The Chronology Of How Riverside Drive Got Speed Humps.

As you read this chronology, it's important to remember that the issue is the safety of our neighbourhood. Speed is a safety factor but feedback from the RCMP has confirmed Riverside Drive is not a dangerous street and there are some indications that Riverside is safer than some comparable roads in terms of speed related incidents. In addition, neither District Staff, nor the people who have fought for the past six years to have the speed limit lowered, have ever presented any evidence that Riverside Drive is more dangerous than other comparable neighbourhoods. In fact, much of the information presented about traffic speed indicates that the speed limit on Riverside is too low and could be raised. While this would reduce the number of speeders, it's not a realistic solution and like speed humps, should not be forced on the neighbourhood.

So, if our neighbourhood is as safe as others, why has a small minority fought for years to lower the speed? Is there a real issue? I think there is, but there are two parts:

1. A small part of our neighbourhood is unhappy because they feel speed is making the community dangerous. Their perception isn't supported by the evidence, but the fact that they are unhappy should be addressed. We need to do this in ways that improve and create a more cohesive community rather than divide it as the speed humps have done. Solutions such as education and better enforcement of the existing laws may be what we need.
2. The larger problem is our District Council and Staff have only listened to a minority and has responded with a solution ??? that is hated by the majority of the neighbourhood. Their solution has escalated a small rift into a fight that is destroying the mutual respect needed to create a cohesive neighbourhood.

I believe that the District will recognize the damage that the speed humps have done in the neighbourhood and that they will eventually remove them. The sooner this happens the better because it will allow mutual respect within the neighbourhood to be re-established so that we can address the original problem in a way that improves the neighbourhood for everyone.

We also need to recognize that the current policies used by the District are the reason why a small problem has escalated into a much bigger problem. The chronology shows how a small group has been able to manipulate the District. To correct this, District policy must be changed to require the support of the majority of the community before implementing traffic calming measures. This is a policy that most cities use to ensure changes like speed humps are supported.

The Mayor and District Council also need to ensure that a group that claims to represent a neighbourhood is doing what they say. Council has listened to a few people who claim to be the Seymour Valley Community Association even though this group has never represented or was even known to most of the neighbourhood. A policy change must be made to protect neighbourhoods from this type of misrepresentation.

Lowering the Speed Limit

May 27, 1996 – Council Meeting - Mr. Paul Gadon, - "...on behalf of the residents of Riverside Drive, appeared before Council and presented a petition recommending that the existing speed limit of 50 km/h on Riverside Drive between Mount Seymour Parkway and the 2200 block Chapman Way be reduced to 40 km/h..." Council deferred the item to the June 10, 1996 Executive Committee Meeting.

June 17, 1996 - Council Meeting - Mr. Ray Burns, Ms Cindy Kettner ...expressed concern with the lack of speed controls on Riverside Drive.... Ms Sharon Brown, spoke in support of reducing the speed limit on Riverside Drive to 40 km/h... Council asked the staff to prepare a report by July 2, 1996 on all appropriate options for improving pedestrian safety on Riverside Drive, including; a) reducing the existing speed limit on Riverside Drive between Mount Seymour Parkway and the 2200 block Chapman Way from 50k to 40k with appropriate signage; and improvements to street lighting.

August 12, 1996 - Council Meeting - Mr. Ray Burns, Mr. Blair Wilson, Ms Sharon Brown, Mr. Paul Gadon, Mr. Russ Curtis, Mr. Craig Thompson, Ms Leanne Dunster, spoke in favour of a 40 km/h speed limit... Mr. Alex Ritchie, spoke in support of 40 km/h speed limit on Riverside Drive... Council passed a motion that: 1) the speed limit on Riverside Drive between Mount Seymour Parkway and the 2200 block Chapman Way be reduced to 40 km/h for a trial period until March 31, 1997 with appropriate RCMP enforcement; 2) staff continue to meet with local residents to discuss other possible pedestrian safety and traffic calming options; and 3) staff provide a report back to Council following the trial period.

Note: *District Staff and the RCMP did not support lowering of the speed limit.*

Returning the Speed Limit to 50 kmh

October 6, 1997 - Council Meeting - Mr. Ray Burns spoke in favour of retaining the 40 km/h speed limit... Ms Michele Payne spoke in favour of returning the speed limit to 50 km/h, referred to a September 1, 1997 petition containing 212 signatures of support increasing the speed limit. Mr. Blair Wilson, Ms Ann Solheim, Mr. Craig Thompson, Ms Sharon Brown, Ms Carolyn Hayden, spoke in favour of retaining the 40 km/h speed limit on Riverside Drive... Council passed a motion to return the speed limit to 50 km/h; and following the return of a 50 km/h speed limit, that the RCMP provide an ongoing program of public awareness and speed enforcement. Council also passed a motion that staff report back to the October 14, 1997 Regular Council meeting on possible traffic calming measures for Riverside Drive, including cost estimates.

Note: *When Council lowered the speed limit, they had not confirmed that the neighbourhood agreed with the problem or supported the solution. When they learned that there was no support and that lowering the speed limit was not in the best interests of the community, they had to reverse their decision. You would think that they would have learned from this failure.*

The Start of Riverside Traffic Calming

Note: *The Seymour Valley Community Association (SVCA) was formed in 1997 with Ray Burns listed as its head. Some members of council have stated that they supported the changes in our community because they were from the elected representative of the SVCA.*

October 20, 1997 - Council Meeting - Mr. Ray Burns expressed concern for safety of pedestrians, commuters and recreational users who utilize Riverside Drive, recommended a constructive traffic education program and implementation of permanent traffic measures. Ms Ann Solheim, suggested staff work with area residents to research the most effective traffic calming measures. Mr. Norm Nikkel, Assistant Manager - Traffic Department, presented a summary of benefits and drawbacks of speed reducing methods.... He indicated that any speed reducing program needs the support of the residents and an overall survey of all residents is essential for the success of such a program. A motion was carried by council that staff be directed to either liaise with the RCMP to continue periodic enforcement of the 50 km/h speed limit on Riverside Drive and conduct a survey of the neighbourhood to determine the level of support for traffic calming on Riverside Drive and report the survey results back to Council.

Note: *Council was cautioned the support of the residents as indicated by an overall survey was essential for a successful traffic calming program.*

January 16, 1998 - Council Meeting - District Staff sent out a survey asking Riverside residents if they feel that motorists on Riverside drive too fast and if they would support a proposal to implement traffic calming. A draft report dated March 25 showed that only 154 of 269 resident responded. Overall, 51% feel that motorists are driving too fast and only 35% support traffic calming.

Note: *On October 20, 1997, Mr. Norm Nikkel, Assistant Manager - Traffic Department, indicated that any speed reducing program needs the support of the residents. This survey showed that there wasn't sufficient support for traffic calming but District Staff continued to do traffic speed and volume*

surveys throughout 1999. They also hire Hamilton Associates to develop a comprehensive Traffic Calming Program.

April 12, 1999 - Council Meeting - Gavin Joyce, P. Eng., Manager of Transportation and Public Works and Donna Howes, P.Eng., Assistant Manager - Transportation Planning present the Hamilton Report to Council for approval as the District's Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Program and Procedures. In their introductory report, they state that "In October 1997, Council reviewed traffic issues relating to Riverside Drive. Based on the results of this project, it was seen that there is a need to address the whole philosophy for neighbourhood traffic calming and to clarify the expectations of the program and to outline the roles of Council, staff and the neighbourhood."

Note: This links the report back to the original concerns that were raised by Mr. Ray Burns, Mr. Blair Wilson, Ms Ann Solheim, Mr. Craig Thompson, Ms Sharon Brown, Ms Carolyn Hayden, on October 20, 1997 when the speed limit on Riverside Drive was returned to the normal limit of 50 km/h.

A motion was carried that the "Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Program and Procedures, as set out in the December 1, 1998 report of G.D. Hamilton Associates Consulting Ltd. be approved in principle; and that this report be referred to the Community Associations, North Vancouver Transportation Planning Advisory Committee (TPAC), the Advisory Planning Commission (APC) and the Federation of North Vancouver Community Associations (FONVCA), RCMP Traffic and Community Policing Sections for input, and a final report be returned to Council.

August 23, 1999 - Council Meeting - Donna Howes, P. Eng., Assistant Manager, Transportation Planning, Ken Krueger, A.Sc.T -Transportation Planning brought the Hamilton Report back to council for final approval with minor amendments which included requirements for minor collectors. In terms of timing, Ms Howes reported that 'It is important that a procedure and program for traffic calming be endorsed as soon as possible which will guide current applications and assist staff in resolving current issues.' A motion was carried that the Traffic Calming Policy for the District, as outlined in Attachment 1 of the July 20, 1999 report of the Assistant Manager, Transportation Planning and Traffic Technician -Transportation Planning, be ADOPTED.

Note: Prior to Council's final approval of this report, a copy was sent to the Seymour Valley Community Association for comment. Comments from the SVCA were sent back to staff. It is assumed but has not been confirmed that these were provided by Ray Burns. It's important to note that a key criterion in the policy that the SVCA reviewed was that at least 50 percent of the surveys must be returned and that a majority must support a traffic calming study for the request to proceed. The survey conducted in March of 1998 showed that the majority of residents did not support traffic calming measures. It appears that the SVCA and District Staff ignored this requirement even though it was now part of the DNV Corporate Policy.

January, 2001 – Council Meeting - Context Research Ltd was appointed to assist in the development of a Traffic Calming Strategy for Riverside Drive.

Note: The survey conducted in 1998 did not show sufficient support to proceed with this appointment, nor was a new survey conducted.

February 27, 2001 – Ray Burns hosted a traffic calming start up meeting at his home.

March 14, 2001 – A workshop was held at Capilano College. Invitations were sent to approximately 260 homes but only 50 residents attended.

Note: Lack of attendance is a sign that people are not concerned. If people are not concerned about the problem it should not be assumed that they will support a solution that affects their lives on a daily basis. This was a huge RED FLAG that the District ignored.

March 29, 2001 – A resident survey was conducted by District Staff. Approximately 260 survey forms were sent out and 107 people responded.

Note: *This low response should have been interpreted as a lack of concern or support for traffic calming and did not meet the corporate policy requirement of a minimum return of 50%.*

May 10, 2001 – A second workshop was held at Lynmour Elementary School. Attendance was only 28 people!

Note: *District Staff ignored the big red flag in the first meeting but this dismal attendance was an indication that support for the project simply didn't exist. If there is no support for the project, how could the District expect support for a solution? The fact that a majority of people in a community don't support something doesn't entitle the minority to shove it down their throats. District Staff need to recognize this and take action to ensure that their recommendations do support the community rather than a small part of it.*

May 31, 2001 – A resident survey was conducted by District Staff to determine support for speed humps. Only 116 of approximately 260 residences responded and of these only a slight majority favoured the speed humps as proposed or with modifications. In terms of the overall community the support was only 63 of 269 residences or 23%.

Note: *This did not meet the need for community consensus for the proposed solution.*

July 16, 2001 – Mr. Ray Burns, urged Council to approve the installation of speed humps on Riverside Drive for the protection of all motorists and pedestrians. In her report, Donna Howes, P.Eng. - Assistant Manager, Transportation, recommended that the detailed design for the speed humps on Riverside Drive be completed and installed. Council passed a motion that the detailed design for the speed humps on Riverside Drive as shown in Diagram 3 of the July 3, 2001 report of the Assistant Manager, Transportation be completed and installed.

Note: *When Ms. Howes recommended Traffic Calming Policy to council she wrote that it is important to approve it quickly because it was needed to, "guide current applications and assist staff in resolving current issues". The intent and policy were clear but neither were followed. The basic policy requirements of using safety performance data (collisions, collisions involving speed etc) and the need for a clear support of the community (majority of residents must respond) were avoided in favour of supporting a minority of residents who have petitioned and lobbied council for more than six years.*

We didn't ask for speed humps, we have them because we didn't say no. This is negative marketing at its best (worst) and the result is a traffic calming measure that the community has soundly rejected!

Attachment 3

Coquitlam Traffic Calming Project Fails

From www.tricitynews.com November 22, 2001 By Janis Cleugh

"WE WERE WRONG," MAYOR SAYS OF TRAFFIC CALMING

A quarter-million dollars later, Coquitlam council called the city's traffic calming project in the Dawes Hill-Mundy Road area a failure.

Monday, councillors voted to re-work its policy on traffic calming initiatives. The change of policy means residents in the Dawes Hill/Mundy sub-division who were billed \$50 will get their money back.

It also means the unpopular speed humps along Mundy, Dawes Hill and Cape Horn roads as well as Brunette Avenue will be taken out.

And it means that Coquitlam homeowners who want such devices, aimed at slowing motorists, on their streets will not only have to petition council but also have to pay for the entire cost themselves.

The exercise in the Dawes Hill/Mundy sub-division - the city's first traffic calming project - cost \$258,000 to study and implement.

Mayor Jon Kingsbury said the project was a failure. "We were wrong so we deserve to be chastised," he said at Monday's council meeting.

Other neighbourhoods slated for traffic calming are now on hold. These include Chineside, Oakdale, Laurentian/Austin Heights, Burquitlam, Maillardville east and west, and Riverview Heights.

"I don't think it's back to square one," said Neil Nyberg, Coquitlam's general manager of operations. "I think we have learned from our mistakes. The initial support fell significantly by the time the measures were put in place [in Dawes/Mundy]. There was intensive public consultation and, after all, this is the 'City of Choice' and I think council listened to the feedback that was being directed to them."

According to documents, the city fielded more than 250 phone calls and letters from Dawes/Mundy residents after the measures went in. The biggest problems appeared to be the location and design of the devices, the \$50 charge and the method of voting for the project.

The 2,600 Dawes Hill/Mundy residents were asked to vote against the proposal if they did not want it - a voting procedure many homeowners said reminded them of Rogers Cable's former negative option billing practices.

With the new policy, though, traffic calming petitions will require a two-thirds majority vote rather than a 51 per cent negative vote.

But Craig Hodge, chair of the traffic calming panel, said he fears Coquitlam will soon look like the city of New Westminster, with cheap, quick-fix calming devices if petitions are approved on a street-by-street basis with no overall plan on how traffic will flow in the neighbourhood.

And he said calming projects may become elitist, with only the most affluent and well-organized sub-divisions pushing petitions.

Hodge said there still has to be needs assessments carried out by the city to determine if traffic calming is warranted in each sub-division.

"There has to be some sort of checks and balances to make sure the measures are really required," he said. "And it's apparent that there has to be more input from the residents at the start of the process."