

Summary of Charrette #1 Group Work Sessions:

***Local Improvements,
Traffic Calming and Beautification***

April 20th, 2013, Elijah Smith School



INUKSHUK PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT LTD



Executive Summary

The aim of the April 20th charrette event was to discuss proposed infrastructure improvements, traffic calming, beautification, streetscapes, and neighbourhood identity within the Hillcrest Neighbourhood Planning Process. Thirty-eight residents took part in the charrette event which was held from 10:00 am to 3:30 pm at the Elijah Smith School. This document provides a summary of the ideas and concerns brought forward by participants. The event ended with an Open House held from 4:00 to 5:00 pm which was attended by four people (three residents and one member of the business community).

Morning Session:

The charrette opened with a recap by Inukshuk of the Visioning Workshop that was held on April 6th. This was followed by a presentation by Brock Coulthard, Engineering Assistant at YECL who updated participants on the utility work planned for Summer 2013. Wayne Tuck, City Engineer then provided an overview of the proposed infrastructure improvements that are recommended in the *Hillcrest Infrastructure Pre-Design, Draft Report* (a summary of the report was available online prior to the event).

Despite the desire to adhere to the schedule of the day, additional time was required to complete the presentation and to allow for an extended question/answer period.

Afternoon Session 1:

Following the presentations, participants were divided into three groups based on their street of residence. The task of the session was to discuss the proposed infrastructure improvements. Flip-charts were used to record comments, concerns, support, and alternate ideas identified by participants. A number of common points emerged from the groups, which include:

- Desire to keep collector roads narrow (these being Roundel Road and Hillcrest Drive) and incorporate traffic calming to reinforce a more residential feel (e.g. chicanes, bulb-outs, traffic signage, landscaping)
- Desire to keep local road widths narrow (these being Chalet Crescent, Kluane Crescent, Sunset Drive South, Park Lane, Dalton Trail, Roundel Road west portion, and Sunset Drive North east portion)

Participants generally questioned the rationale and appropriateness of road widths proposed in the Infrastructure Pre-Design. Current road widths in Hillcrest are between 6.5 to 10 m on collector roads, and 4 to 6 m on local roads. Proposed widths range from 9 to 12 m on collector roads, and 8.5 to 9 m on local roads. Preference was expressed for narrow widths to be maintained while still accommodating all users/uses (e.g. buses, pedestrians, cyclists, parking). It was argued that if effective traffic calming measures were implemented, the area would be safe without requiring road widening to accommodate features such as bike lanes.

Parking emerged as a common discussion topic amongst the groups. Participants acknowledged that most residents have at least two vehicles, which was not the case when the neighbourhood was first developed. Participants wrestled with the issue of parking congestion, noting that many people park at least one vehicle on the street and that cars parked in driveways often protrude into the public right-of-way. Participants expressed that they would like to see a compromise in the proposed infrastructure improvements that maintains narrow roads while incorporating a mix of the following parking strategies:

- Requiring property owners to park vehicles on private property to allow for clear travel lanes
- Preserving parking on both sides of the street, where widths allow
- Restricting parking to one side of the street, where necessary

It was noted that preference for parking will be influenced by related choices on curb and gutter, to define road edge and manage storm water run-off, versus preservation of the existing gravel shoulder and swale road profile.

Afternoon Session 2:

The second group-work session focused on beautification, and was broadly organized into four themes:

- Streetscape and Neighbourhood Character
- Highway and Neighbourhood Entrance
- Green Belts and Trails
- Central Park Area

Once again, participants were divided into three groups. Shared themes emerged, including support for tree and shrub planting in boulevards, where possible, to support traffic calming and beautification objectives. Preference was expressed for a non-manicured look that incorporates indigenous, 'edible', and attractive wild plants.

Discussion on the neighbourhood sign and entrances raised many points, including desire for making the present sign more visible, adding a second sign to the entrance at Roundel Road, adding signage along the Alaska Highway, and adding a local map and events board near the entrance.

In terms of additional uses for the Central park area in the future, there was considerable support for the following ideas/new uses:

- Community garden and/or greenhouse
- Gazebo
- Fire pit
- Utility connections to support recreational uses (e.g. water for gardening and hockey rink)

All groups wanted to see trailhead signage improved in the green belt areas.

Process Feedback:

Participants indicated a strong desire for future meetings to be scheduled to continue the discussion on local improvement options, and road widths in particular. They asked to see examples of traffic calming measures that are used elsewhere, visualization of how their suggestions for road widths might work, and what the associated trade-offs might be. Some were unclear as to why the YECL improvements are not being integrated with infrastructure improvements and questioned if utilities could be buried through this process.

Again the venue served the event well, and participants expressed support for the childcare that was arranged for this charrette in the gymnasium by Hillcrest Community Association. The City was asked to support this option at the next event.

Resident Attendance, by Street: (38)

Sunset Drive North:	11
Sunset Drive South:	2
Park Lane:	3
Dalton Trail:	4
Chalet Crescent:	5
Kluane Crescent:	11
Roundel Road:	2

Event Staff:

- Ian Robertson, Inukshuk
- Rand Center, Inukshuk
- Tamara Griffiths, Inukshuk
- Mary Ellen Read, Northern Front Studio
- Erica Beasley, City of Whitehorse, Planning Services
- Mike Ellis, City of Whitehorse, Planning Services
- Wayne Tuck, City of Whitehorse, Engineering Services
- Dale Cebuliak, City of Whitehorse, Engineering Services
- Marc Boulерice, City of Whitehorse, Parks and Trails

Detailed Summary

Group Session 1: Local Improvements and Traffic Calming

The aim of the session was to discuss infrastructure improvements that are proposed in the *Hillcrest Infrastructure Pre-Design, Draft Report*. Participants were divided into three groups according to their street of residence. Each group was asked to have a discussion on the improvements that affect their areas most, and also provide comment on the improvements proposed for Hillcrest Drive and Roundel Road. This section provides a summary of the comments/concerns/support/ideas generated. Note that not all points reflect group consensus and given the time constraints, not all improvements were covered by each group.

Group A: Residents on Sunset Drive North and Roundel Road

Street Improvements:

- Roundel Road, west portion, needs curbs for drainage
- Properties on Sunset Drive North are lower than the road – needs curbs to help control drainage
- No discussion on specific widths – improvements should focus on controlling speeding via narrower/calmed roads
- No speeding issues noted for Roundel Road
- Speeding concerns noted for Sunset Drive North
- General agreement on sidewalk for south side of Roundel Road, east portion – no sidewalk on north side
- Bike lanes not needed on Roundel Road, east portion
- Consider rebuilding Roundel Road, east portion, with the following cross section (south to north side): 1.5 m sidewalk / parallel parking lane / eastbound driving lane / westbound driving lane / curb

Traffic Calming:

- Roundabout needs alignment to reduce speeds from Sunset Drive North to Roundel Road east
- Implement a raised intersection at the intersection of Chalet Crescent East and Hillcrest Drive
- More traffic calming needed on each side of proposed Hillcrest Drive / Dalton Trail roundabout
- Speed limit recommended at 30 km throughout the neighbourhood
- Add pinch point on Sunset Drive North near # 80, 81, and 34 Sunset Drive North to ensure traffic slows at this point
- Investigate adding a raised crosswalk speed hump to middle of Sunset Drive North – good spot could be oriented towards existing walkway between #10 and #12 Sunset Drive North

- Consider drainage basins for Sunset Drive North – may be best at midpoint between drainage areas
- Add bulbouts at intersection of Burns Road / Roundel Road to narrow intersection and facilitate pedestrian traffic on proposed Roundel Road sidewalk
- Add raised crosswalk to connect playground area to Elijah Smith School trail

Bus:

- Concerns about City bus speed and sightlines at corners
- School bus has a blind corner by # 80 Sunset Drive North

Parking:

- Make “no parking” beside new apartments on Roundel Road
- Needs to be a letter immediately from City Whitehorse advising residents that only parallel parking is permitted on Roundel Road at new apartments
- Parking should be on one side of the road only

Bike Lanes:

- Suggestion for bike lane on park side of Park Lane East instead of multi-use lane – noted that it may not be feasible due to need to accommodate drainage in park area

Group B: Residents on Dalton Trail, Park Lane and Hillcrest Drive

Road Widths:

- 8.5 m road width is more acceptable if it includes all infrastructure (curbs and gutters)
- Why does Hillcrest Drive need to be so wide? Anything more than 9 m is excessive

Street Improvements:

- Put a sidewalk on the north side of Hillcrest Drive only – dual sidewalks not needed
- Park Lane East sidewalk should be on the east/green space side so that it connects to Hillcrest Drive sidewalk
- Driveways of new townhouses on Hillcrest Drive will be dangerous with cars pulling out on slope of Hillcrest Drive
- Is it an option for Hillcrest Drive and Roundel Road (east portion) to have curbs and gutters and nowhere else?
- Grade of Dalton Trail / Kluane Crescent / Hillcrest Drive intersection of concern for a roundabout – roundabouts work better on flat grades
- The 3 m radius of the proposed Hillcrest Drive roundabout may not work
- Support for realignment of Park Lane / Sunset Drive intersection – will improve safety
- Note that most kids access the playground area from within green space – child safety on Park Lane is not that big of a concern

Bus:

- There is no advantage to the bus being re-routed to Park Lane West
- Fewer residences on Park Lane East means less disturbance from buses than there would be on Park Lane West
- Bus tends to drive too fast
- Design road widths for the community first – then plan where the buses should go

Traffic Calming:

- Speed bumps suggested on Hillcrest Drive between Kluane Crescent and Park Lane
- A yield or stop sign is needed at Park Lane / Sunset Drive North intersection
- Wider streets encourage speeding – keep them narrow
- Traffic calming should start at Burns Road to stop highway speed mentality

Parking:

- Parking should only be allowed on one side of the road throughout neighbourhood
- Parked cars “hang-out” of driveways into right-of-way – why don’t people park on their own land?
- People park on street near their houses to plug in their cars in the winter
- Since only the centre of the road is ploughed in winter, parking area is greatly restricted
- Even if made wider, Park Lane corner will be difficult due to parking on street and poor sightlines

Bike Lanes:

- Do not widen roads to accommodate bike lanes – focus on slowing traffic for all users and keep Hillcrest Drive and Roundel Road as shared streets

Group C: Residents on Kluane Crescent, Chalet Crescent, and Sunset Drive South**Road Widths:**

- What is the logic for 8.5 m? Is it for on-street parking?
- Don’t agree with the 11.5 m width for Hillcrest Drive

Street Improvements:

- Chalet Crescent may need to have ‘exceptions’ to allow on-street parking due to property configuration
- Do curb and gutters result in storm sewers?
- Hillcrest Drive sidewalk should be on north side to Park Lane
- Need transition zone between Alaska Highway to Summit Drive
- Need for accessibility year round and walkability

- Sunset Drive South could be two way
- Consider Chalet Crescent / Kluane Crescent curb on inside and ditch on outside

Traffic Calming Measures:

- Kluane Crescent could be one way at proposed Hillcrest Drive / Dalton Trail traffic circle
- Find alternative to proposed Hillcrest Drive / Dalton traffic circle
- Need a transition zone between highway and neighbourhood
- Kluane Crescent and Chalet Crescent could be made one way because of steep grades but this would double traffic on Sunset Drive South

Parking:

- In principle get resident cars off the streets – recreational vehicles can be stored elsewhere if not enough space
- Parking on one side of street only would be a compromise
- Chalet Crescent has more on-street parking need
- Where parking bays are required should really be the question rather than how many chicanes are necessary

Bike Lanes:

- Can there be bike lanes on Hillcrest Drive without widening the street? What are the options? City Engineering should look at this

Group Session 1, Recap:

Each group had specific concerns for the area it covered. However a few common points emerged:

- Questions were raised as to City's logic for wider roads when the neighbourhood wants them kept narrow
- There was support for bike users but it was generally felt bike users might not need a bike lane especially if traffic speed can be reduced
- Parking should only be on one side of the road, and there should be less resident cars parking on the roads
- Traffic speeds on Roundel Road and Hillcrest Drive when people turn off the Alaska Highway are an issue. There has to be visual and physical clues to slow people down so they adjust to the slower neighbourhood speed. This transition should be designed into the road improvements.

Group Session 2: Beautification

Discussion topics included, but were not limited to:

- Streetscape and Improvements
- Highway and Neighbourhood Entrance
- Green Belts and Trails
- Central Park Area

All three groups preferred to focus on all of the topic areas in the time available, rather than focus on one topic. The session was adjusted accordingly.

Group A: Left Wing (when facing library)

Trees and Vegetation:

- Trees needed in all right-of-way areas (use colour, all varieties, include indigenous species)
- Trees could be planted on private property too (neighbourhood planting scheme)
- Landscape the potential new bulb-outs and use a variety of plants
- Use edible landscaping on proposed roundabouts, like in Takhini North
- Separate proposed sidewalk from asphalt on Hillcrest Drive, then landscape the boulevard – this would help with making a visually narrower road
- Beautification needed on south side of Roundel Road (east portion)

Highway and Neighbourhood Entrance:

- Hidden oasis is nice aspect to neighbourhood – don't draw attention to entry area
- Old Air Force map/sign was functional – bring that back?
- Concerns about 'swamp' location of current neighbourhood sign – too far from road
- Current sign is meaningless
- Support expressed for current sign
- Landscaping needed to integrate multifamily housing on south side of Roundel Road (east portion)
- Need a second Park Lane sign

Green Belts and Trails:

- Snowmobile access concerns – need to establish only specific access points
- Give HCA keys to gates that bar vehicle access to trails
- Develop interpretive signage and maps
- Do a map for the trailhead at the top Hillcrest Drive and at Chalet Crescent and Hillcrest Drive

Central Park Area:

- Consider a greenhouse
- Add water connection
- Small soccer area and mini skateboard area
- Fire pit by rink to be regulated by community
- More trees needed here too

Group B: In Front of Library

Trees and Vegetation:

- More trees and shrubs needed of all types
- No manicured landscapes, no lawn – Fireweed nice choice
- Create a highway median similar to Riverdale
- Engage businesses to buy plants and community can do the work with City or private partnerships
- Dry stone retaining walls would be nice

Lighting:

- Summit Road at Sunset Drive North is a dark spot
- Generally more low lighting is good
- Use LED lighting
- Playground needs more lighting

Highway and Neighbourhood Entrance:

- Traffic calming on Roundel Road and Hillcrest Drive should start at Burns Road
- Could rumble strips be used? Though noise might be a nuisance
- Two entrances in and out of Hillcrest are needed with clear turning lanes (incorporate into Alaska Highway improvement planning)
- Explore traffic light option
- Neighbourhood sign needs to be elevated
- Hillcrest sign needed on Highway before reaching the entrance (i.e. green YG highway signs)
- Engage local business to plant and beautify their properties in partnership with the community

Central Park Area:

- A community garden would be nice in green space beside Park Lane – good solar orientation and potential for water connection from Park Lane
- Explore geo-thermal potential of park

- Explore addition of a gazebo and maybe a fire pit between playground area and potential community garden
- Paved portion of Sunset Drive South should be left as gravel surface after YECL utility work is done this summer

Group C: Right Wing (when facing library)

Trees and Vegetation:

- More trees where ever possible
- Trees on roundabouts

Highway and Neighbourhood Entrance:

- Lanes on Hillcrest Drive need delineation
- Sign on Roundel Road and Hillcrest Drive to identify entering to residential area – similar entry treatment for both
- Explore a pullout with neighbourhood events board near Summit Road
- Chicanes, bulb outs, trees, shrubs can be used for visual interruptions and physical breaks in the transition zone
- Organize flow for pedestrians and bikes from Hillcrest Drive to airport perimeter trail
- Landscape back of highway development lot between Hillcrest Drive and Roundel Road

Streetscape:

- Garbage cans, benches and sidewalks near bus stop on Hillcrest Drive and trail to Elijah Smith School
- Add section of sidewalk on south side of Hillcrest Drive between bus pullout and Dalton Trail
- Unique street lights
- Raised intersection, pedestrian crossing at Chalet Crescent West entrance with Hillcrest Drive
- Link Hillcrest Drive to airport trail for bikes and pedestrians

Green Belt and Trails:

- Refurbish trailhead signs and motorized access barriers as needed

Central Park Area:

- Get rid of unofficial parking lots
- Paved path along Park Lane East from Elijah Smith School trail to playground
- Community garden/greenhouse, on East side of Park Lane East near playground

- Repave portion of Sunset Drive South after YECL services replaced – good place for children to learn to ride bikes
- Water connection need by rink and community garden

Group Session 2, Recap:

Each group had flexibility in the topics that it chose to discuss. Only one group mentioned lighting, for example. This does not mean it is not important to all residents. A few common points emerged:

- Unanimous support for more trees and plants in boulevard areas
- The idea of a community garden and/or greenhouse was strongly supported as a new use in the Central park area
- General concern about motorized trail use, and lack of signage on the trails/green belt area
- Distinction is required to be made between the Alaska Highway and the neighbourhood
- Landscaping should be used to help address traffic calming
- The Hillcrest sign needs to be repositioned