

Berkeley Park Traffic Mitigation and Planning Update 8/15/2005:

- **The planning process:** Currently we have an ad hoc planning committee that has been formed to carry forward the recommendations from the Blueprints planning (including those regarding traffic mitigation). This group can (and should?) be formed as a formal committee within BPNA.

There is currently disagreement over the general direction that this process should take. Three competing concepts have been discussed: (1) Work only on implementation and do not pursue additional visioning efforts. (2) Move ahead immediately with a neighborhood master plan and allocate all available resources to its timely completion, and (3) Center our planning effort on a single aspect of our current plan that can draw in more broad based support (i.e. "Waterworks Park"). Additional concepts are welcome. BPNA should determine by consensus which concept the planning process will follow.

- Traffic mitigation is not an area for which BPNA has a dedicated committee (should there be one?) This topic spans several areas in which neighbors have been working (planning, zoning, beautification, etc.).
- Traffic is not a single issue. No single action can mitigate all the undesirable consequences of vehicular traffic. Spatial and temporal traffic density, speed, safety, and convenience can pose competing goals. Examples of this in our neighborhood are the turn lanes being built on Bellemeade. These will reduce the spatial density of cars (i.e fewer cars on Bellemeade at any given point in time) and increase the convenience and safety of people in cars who use these intersections. These are all good things. They will also increase the average speed and temporal density (i.e. more cars passing a point Bellemeade in a period of time) and decrease pedestrian safety (both along the road and at the widened intersections). These are all bad things. Whether they will increase or decrease cut-through traffic on adjoining streets depends on a variety of conditions and has been a subject of some debate within BPNA.

Reducing the number and speed of cars on our residential streets will mean that it is less convenient for us to come and go from our homes by car. In planning our traffic mitigation strategies it is critical that we understand this tradeoff. Other neighborhoods (the best example is Peachtree Park) have accepted substantial inconvenience to improve the environment of their neighborhood streets. Are we willing to accept this?

- The \$100,000 dollar pledge by Selig enterprises has not been earmarked for traffic mitigation or any other specific purpose. The only restriction on the use of the money is that it must go toward improvements within Berkeley Park. The money is not currently available. When it becomes available specific traffic mitigation measures or planning activities would be appropriate expenditures. According to the conditions of the agreement under which it was pledged, expenditure of this money must be approved by Selig, BPNA, NPU-D, and the NCA. Since BPNA is a member of NPU-D and Selig sits on the board of the NCA, this approval process should be fairly straightforward.
- Over the past ~18 months several actions related to traffic mitigation have been taken by BPNA members. What follows is a brief summary of those:
 - (1) **Blueprints plan:** The blueprints plan contains recommendations to mitigate traffic. If you have not read it, please do.
 - (2) **Northside Dr. planning:** Currently the Northside drive plan contains recommendations for extending the NSD median Northward beyond Holmes (short-term recommendation) and constructing an extension to Trabert St. (Long-term recommendation) that will create a new east-west connector outside of the residential core of Berkeley Park. The plan also includes sidewalks that will connect Bellemeade Ave. to Bishop St. (short-term recommendation). Adding to the pedestrian capacity and the pedestrian environment should slow traffic and decrease its volume.
 - (3) **Howell Mill Rd. Planning:** The widening of Howell Mill Rd. around its intersection with Chattahoochee should begin in the next year or so. The increased carrying capacity of Howell

Mill should reduce cut-through traffic in Berkeley Park. Cut-through traffic will also be reduced by eliminating the straight-through movement from Chattahoochee Industrial Blvd. onto Holmes St. A bulb-out for this intersection was discussed but is not part of the plan. The plan also calls for a left-turn lane onto Bellemeade Ave. from Howell Mill Rd. southbound that will add to our neighborhood traffic. The mature tree east of the Ace hardware next to Bellemeade Ave will be spared in this project, and the transition into a turn lane will be made more abrupt than in the original plan. This will slow traffic and increase the holding capacity of the turn lane as compared to the original plan (a win-win!). Other ideas for this project that are being considered by the city's planning team include reducing the speed limit on Bellemeade Ave. and adding a stop sign at the corner of Bellemeade Ave. and Buchanan St. Hopefully both these improvements will be included in the project, but we do not have a commitment at present.

- (4) **Tree planting:** Our tree planting with Trees Atlanta last year added many new trees along the rights-of-way of our neighborhood streets. As these mature they should help to slow traffic along our streets.
- (5) **Zoning review:** A zoning review of the Kroger site revealed that its driveway should have been dedicated as a public street. We are currently awaiting word from the city's zoning enforcement office to determine the status of this dedication. Once the driveway has been converted into a road, we should be able to address many of the complaints that have arisen surrounding its current use.
- (6) **Traffic Consultation:** We have been promised a free traffic consultation from Ed Ellis. This is currently scheduled for the afternoon of September 7th.
- (7) **Speed humps:** Many neighbors are interested in getting speed humps to slow traffic. There are three major considerations with regard to these: emergency vehicle traffic, aesthetics, and consensus. With regard to the first of these, there is a configuration for speed humps that is compatible with emergency vehicles. This is a 3-hump configuration that allows a vehicle to straddle the middle hump by driving down the center of the road. There are many examples of these in other cities. Has anyone seen one in the Atlanta area? With regard to the second consideration, a hump need not be an asphalt mound with Day-Glo paint. Many other cities have very attractive speed humps (Alexandria VA. for example) and there are attractive humps in Atlanta (on the Georgia Tech campus). With regard to the third consideration, 70% of the people living on a street need to approve (via a signed petition) a speed hump that is to be installed on that street. If you live on a street that needs to be humped, start talking to your neighbors about this.
- (8) **Signage:** We now have "slow down" signs throughout the neighborhood. We are also planning new neighborhood entrance signs. Creating appropriate entryways into the neighborhood should discourage cut-through traffic and make drivers more conscious of their behavior.
- (9) **Precedents:** Once another neighborhood (particularly one in Atlanta) gets a traffic-calming device installed, it becomes easier for the rest of us to get such a device. There aren't any prizes for being the first to get something! If you are driving around and see something that you think might be appropriate for our neighborhood, don't keep it a secret. Tell everyone you can!