

FACILITATOR'S REPORT

Town of Southern Shores

Introduction

This document is intended as an internal report to the Town for use as a reference for the staff and Town Council. It is meant to be read alongside the accompanying power point deck. The report provides the facilitators understanding of the results of an October 2, 2014 Public Input meeting, and subsequent Council discussion held during the November 18, 2014 Council meeting. Original documents in the form of easel pad sheets were retained by the facilitator.

The Public Input meeting was designed to allow the Council to participate in a public brainstorming around the problems created by extreme summertime traffic in and through the Town of Southern Shores. The subsequent discussion with the Council was facilitated with the goal of having concrete steps to take to attempt traffic solutions. Both of these meetings had the additional goal of promoting a public discussion of the parameters of the town's authority in this matter.

Description of the problem

Throughout the summer, but most particularly during the summer weekends, thousands of vehicles enter into the town via the Wright Memorial Bridge (Route 158). Most of these cars are destined for parts north of Southern Shores. Route 12 is the only major road that traverses north from Southern Shores, from its intersection with 158, the through Duck and into Currituck County.

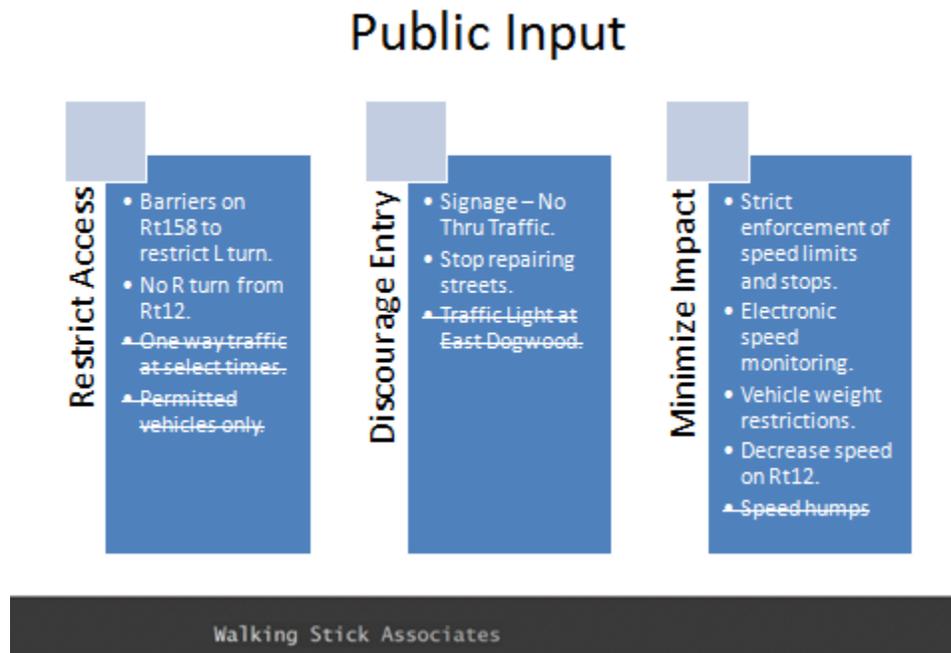
The traffic traveling from Route 158 to Route 12 causes problems. Because there is a bottleneck in Duck, the Route 12 traffic backs up to a near standstill. The Route 158/12 intersection regularly jams, bringing the slow moving traffic to a full stop. Residents have problems getting to work, getting home and getting around generally.

Traditionally, the residents have gotten around the traffic problems by using the residential neighborhood roads that radiate north of Route 158. In essence, they cut through the neighborhoods. Recently, the summer traffic has relied on this tactic as well, resulting in those neighborhoods facing the same traffic patterns and problems as described above on Route 12.

The Public Input Meeting, October 2, 2014

Roughly 130 residents attended the public input meeting. I gave all attendees the opportunity to present their ideas for solving or minimizing the traffic problems. I added those ideas to a list I had previously generated based on input provided to me by the Mayor and Manager (citizen emails to town officials, citizen crafted letters to the editor and citizen social media posts). Upon completion of the brainstorming session, I facilitated a public discussion about each proposal. The attendees debated whether an idea was feasible or not; would it help solve the problems; would it create any new problems. As they worked through each one, the group added details and parameters to some ideas

while others they abandoned altogether. The results as follows, and are also shown on slide 3 and 4 of the accompanying power point deck. The abandoned ideas are included and shown as crossed out.



Public Input

- Other items:
 - Multi Use Trail
 - Try/test different things
 - 3rd lane flex travel
 - Box the intersection
 - Increase police presence
 - Form a coalition
 - More data to citizens

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Council Discussion, November 18, 2014

The discussion at the Council meeting centered on the list of possible actions that had been developed at the public input meeting, with an eye toward committing to concrete achievable actions. I reviewed the list that had been created with the Council and invited them to add any new information. I also invited the attendant citizens to add any new ideas they may have come upon since the public input meeting. The new items are shown below and also on slide 5 of the power point deck.

Public Input, addendum 11/18

- Box additional intersections
- Expand the turn restrictions
- Tell MapQuest it's a school zone
- Reduce speed limits
- Staggered check ins
- Declare as a limited private road
- Declare as an expanded private road
- Give up the Powell Bill \$ so we can restrict access
- Duck Plan
- Upcoming DOT meeting

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The Council engaged in a full discussion of the relative merits of all the proposals and the potential for success inherent in each one. We took a stab at defining what success would look like, which exercise uncovered the fact that each of the Councilors were using the same yard stick to measure success – Safety. They want to be confident that the citizens can get around their town and neighborhoods safely and that emergency vehicles can get anywhere they need to, whenever they need to. Finally, the Council detailed specific actions that they would complete within two timeframes – the December 2014 Council meeting and the January 2015 Council meeting. Those actions are shown below and on slide 6 of the accompanying power point deck.

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Action Items

- At the January 2015 Council Meeting the Mayor will report on coalition building effort:
 - continue working with the Kitty Hawk and Duck Mayors to come to agreements about the steps that Kitty Hawk can take that will alleviate the problems experienced by Southern Shores.
- At the December 2014 Council Meeting the Manager will
 - Clarify and confirm the position of the DOT regarding speed limits, flex travel lanes and turning restrictions
 - Conclude discussions with the Chamber of Commerce regarding the staggered check-ins initiative
 - Develop fiscal notes on the various iterations of restricting road access
- Additionally, the Council instructs that the topic of the deteriorating signs be placed on a future council agenda.

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Conclusion

The Town leadership takes the traffic problem very seriously, but has no authority to take meaningful actions. Their strength lies rather at influencing the opinions and behaviors of other players. And they have played their hand well. By holding this very well advertised public input hearing, and by keeping this issue alive through additional discussions, the Town may well have established the topic as a problem worth solving. Their success is evidenced by this new event: The DOT and Currituck County have now announced a public hearing on the topic, to be held in mid-December.

It has been my pleasure working with you on this issue.

Madeleine Henley
Walking Stick Associates
December 4, 2014

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