

TRAFFIC AND SPEEDING

In May 2007, the Council authorized a speed study for the short stretch of Hunts Point Road, from the stop sign to the traffic circle. This study was in response to residents having trouble backing out of their driveways, and in concern for the safety of small children that live along this part of the road.

As we suspected, the speeds were much higher than the posted limit. Traveling southbound (entering Hunts Point), 55% of the cars were traveling over 25 mph (the posted speed limit is 20 mph); and exiting Hunts Point, headed northbound, 67% of the cars exceeded 25 mph (see "Speed Study" on Hunts Point website), www.HuntsPoint-wa.gov.

We further disaggregated the data by day and time, and found no trends. We would like to believe it was construction workers, racing to or from their jobs, but it was not. It is all of us that are speeding, all of the time. We were also surprised to see the traffic count here was nearly 6,000 vehicle trips per day. This is a busy road, and we have to slow down!

The Council is evaluating several measures to slow drivers down in this area. The immediate options are as follows:

1. Police to issue warnings and speeding tickets.
2. Paint "20 mph" in large letters on the road.
3. Repaint the center line and fog lines to make the road "feel narrower".
4. Extend the landscape buffer from the corner lots, north to the traffic circle that divides the road from the gravel sidewalk.

After these measures are implemented, we will once again test the speeds next spring. If those measures do not slow traffic, the Council will consider additional and less popular traffic calming measures such as speed bumps and road narrowing. We have over 100 children living on Hunts Point now, so please be considerate and Slow Down!

MILFOIL

This past summer was a very bad year for milfoil. We tested a new program to cut and remove the milfoil. This "Harvesting" method was relatively ineffective due to the overwhelming amount of milfoil this year caused by very clear water and hot weather in June; ideal milfoil growing conditions. In early August, we switched gears and chemically treated the lake. In late August, the harvester boat was used to collect and remove floating milfoil from the bays and canals.

This past summer, we mainly learned how to do it better for next year. We have been working with two milfoil contractors, the DOE, and Yarrow Point on a plan for next year. We have learned that there is a more expensive chemical application which can be used in June, just as the milfoil begins to grow. Currently, we treat the water between July 15th and August 1st, during the "fish window". We plan to apply two separate chemical applications next year, then use the harvester boats to remove dead and floating milfoil. Waterfront residents can also hire private contractors to install bottom barriers and to remove milfoil with divers using a small pontoon boat.

We are working with Yarrow Point to join us in these milfoil programs. They have just begun public meetings and are early in the milfoil education process. Some of the residents are concerned about the chemical treatment. See "Milfoil" on the Hunts Point Website, www.HuntsPoint-wa.gov.

The chemical that we use is 2,4-D, or triclopyr. This is the active ingredient in "weed and feed" lawn fertilizers. It is a selective agent that only kills milfoil. All other aquatic plants are unaffected. It is best to not swim for 24 hours after application, and to turn off irrigation systems that pump from the lake for two days. Within 3 days the chemical is totally absorbed and is gone. These chemicals are safe to people, fish, and non-milfoil water plants. We learned a great deal about milfoil control this year, and will implement a more effective program for next year.

EMERGENCY PLAN

After Hurricane Katrina, all Towns and Cities are required to have a local emergency plan in place. The Planning Commission has taken the lead on this endeavor, and has an excellent emergency plan in place. We are preparing for an 8.5 magnitude earthquake. The Emergency Team is staffed by 35 resident volunteers. We conducted a “mock emergency” practice day in May 2007, and will practice again on the Saturday before Clean Up Day, on May 17, 2008. This year’s drill went well, and we will improve it again next year.

In recruiting doctors to the Emergency Team, we learned that many are concerned about legal liability. In response, the State Legislature passed House Bill 1073 last year. This law provides immunity to doctors that are registered on the Town’s Emergency Team, except in the case of a doctor’s gross negligence or willful and wanton misconduct.

I have been working with Dr. Bob Kropp, who is the head of Medina’s Medical Emergency Team, to revise HB1073. Although we will not get “blanket immunity” for doctors, we are drafting a new bill to:

1. Eliminate the gross negligence standard and replace it with willful and wanton misconduct, proven by clear and convincing evidence...a much higher standard.
2. Direct all malpractice claims to a commission or grand jury to weed out the frivolous lawsuits before they can be filed.
3. Seek an umbrella liability insurance policy for the Town to cover doctor’s legal defense costs.
4. Revise and broaden the “Good Samaritan Law”.

We are making headway, and it will likely take two or three legislative sessions to get this accomplished, but this is our goal. Many thanks to Dr. Kropp, a former Hunts Point resident, for his dedication and leadership as head of the medical response teams for Medina and Hunts Point. For more information go to the Hunts Points website at www.HuntsPoint-wa.gov, click on “Doctor Immunity”.

PETER HENNING, LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

I recently read an article about one of my favorite residents, and my former neighbor, Peter Henning. Peter was recently honored in receiving the “George Norlin, Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award” from the University of Colorado. The article is posted on the Hunts Point website at www.HuntsPoint-wa.gov, click on Peter Henning.

The article tells the life story of how Peter Henning, a dairy farmer from Stanwood, started college at age 34, became a Ph.D in Nuclear Physics, “tamed” the hydrogen bomb, began a real estate development business at age 55, built, then later sold 30 warehouse buildings, traveled the world with his wife and sons, and now quietly supports Virginia Mason Hospital in a very big way. I have known Peter for 20 years, and I didn’t know this much about him until I read the article. He is quiet and humble... a true class act.

Peter Henning also served on the Planning Commission and Town Council for many years in the 1980’s and 1990’s. No one could ever afford to hire this type of brains and talent. We are lucky that he and others like him volunteer their time to the Town of Hunts Point.