

## **Proposal from Rich to the North Avenue Task Force**

### **Public Input Plan: Updated**

**November 25, 2015**

In the “Resolution Relating to the North Avenue Plan” it states, on line 47 “By its nature as a pilot study, if public input from the New North End does not support its continuation, the City will restore the 4-3 lane pilot area to its original configuration...”

One of our tasks is to measure community input. This document includes our initial recommendations for gathering and measuring public input from the New North End.

**Goal: To Measure Public Input, Sentiment and Experience of the North Avenue Pilot**

**Objective: To be as inclusive and accessible as possible in order to gather input from the vast majority of people who use North Avenue in the New North End.**

#### **Strategy:**

Our strategy is to create survey mechanisms that allow us to capture input and sentiment from a broad segment of the Burlington population, living and working in the New North End, using North Avenue.

We envision using both online and offline tools to gather input.

We envision creating surveys and questions that delve into the experience and sentiment of using the updated North Avenue corridor.

We envision different outreach strategies, with tailored surveys, for specific populations using North Avenue.

We plan on working with sentiment, survey and outreach experts in Burlington, UVM and in statewide organizations to optimize all of our efforts.

We plan on working with city organizations, such as the Burlington office of Innovation and Information, IgniteBTV and CodeBTV.

We plan on creating mechanisms to minimize the potential for abuse or “ballot-stuffing.”

The outreach/input effort will run under the aegis of the city and the Department of Public Works but will be a collaborative effort with different organizations.

If successfully implemented, we view this public input mechanism as a pilot that the City of Burlington might use for future engagements.

### **Approach**

The first question to address is how to define “public input” for the purpose of this measurement.

In it’s simplest form, we believe that “public input” should measure everyone and anyone who lives in the New North End and/or who uses North Avenue in their everyday life. That includes people who drive on North Avenue, people who walk by and on North Avenue, people who bike on North Avenue, and people who take public transportation on North Avenue.

We also believe that we should measure public input from anyone who is capable of providing an opinion, no matter how well or ill thought out, no matter if they have light or heavy experience on the Avenue. Our viewpoint is: if they use North Avenue, we should listen to them.

Our outreach would specifically target:

- Residents of Wards 4 and 7
- Retirees living in Elder Homes north of Burlington High School
- Children attending Burlington High School, Hunt Middle School, Flynn School and C.P. Smith School
- People working along North Avenue

### **Capturing Input**

We recommend that we use a two-pronged approach for gathering input.

- The first option would be a paper-based input form. It would allow anyone with a pen or pencil to fill it in and easily drop it in a public, easily accessible collection box, placed in various locations throughout the New North End, or to fold it up and mail it in.
- The second option would be a digital-based input form. This form would be accessible on any Internet connected device, including computer, tablet or smart phone. People would access this digital form through a widely publicized and shared customized Web address.

### **Verification**

In both public input collection approaches, we recommended adding a security layer as much as possible. We know from long experience that it is easy to game a public opinion survey. In order to reduce opinion fraud as much as possible, we recommend the following:

The digital version should connect to city or public household data. Using that data, we would verify

- The address participants identify
- The number of residents in that household
- The geolocation through reverse IP lookup
- That people in the household only vote once
- The number of votes coming from individual computers

The paper version would have manual checks against the same city lists to ensure that over-opinions are not coming from the same household.

### **Input Questions**

Working with survey and sentiment experts, we recommend crafting surveys about the North Avenue Corridor Pilot to elicit as much sentiment about the actual experience of using the new street as possible. Our intent is to create a 10-question survey that goes beyond simple “Yes/No” answers but delves into more experiential measurements.

The survey will also measure typical street activities for participants.

In that way, we will be able to measure input about safety, stress, comfort, convenience and neighborhood development.

We recommend doing a pre-survey in the spring before the pilot to establish a baseline.

### **Citizen Outreach**

We recommend adjusting the survey based on specific groups. To that end, these specific surveys would go hand and hand with various outreach efforts.

- Ward 4 & 7 Citizens – We would use various touch points, such as city bill stuffers, online media and public meetings to drive people to the online survey. We would also do in person drives, at Hannaford’s or other public venues using iPads or paper surveys. As a last resort, we may go door-to-door or phone outreach during the last several weeks.
- Retirees – We would do targeted outreach and in person meetings at the various elder homes in the neighborhood, using iPads and paper surveys.
- Schools – We would work with school administrations to do in-person outreach and provide teachers and administrators with tools to drive student participation.
- Businesses – We would target workplaces and business owners with in-person meetings and signage to encourage people to participate.

The separate outreach and surveys will allow us to segment different data inputs and sets and compare against one another.

## **Timing**

We recommend running the public input collection after the pilot has run for 4-6 months. We recommend running the public input collection for a total of six weeks (at least). Both of those will

- A. Give people time to test the pilot and to reflect on how it impacts them
- B. Ensure that we reach as many people as possible giving everyone a good, solid chance to allow their voices to be heard.

## **Assessment**

The survey questions will allow us to assess whether opinion supports continuation of the changes or demands rolling them back. Our position is that if a majority of targeted residents oppose the pilot it should be rolled back.

There are about 10,500 residents in Wards 4 & 7. We assume that at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of them use North Avenue on a regular or semi-regular basis. When we add students and workers into the mix that might bring the total number of people we are targeting to about 8,000 in all.

## **Data**

We recommend collecting names, addresses and emails for verification purposes only. We recommend destroying all personal data associated with these surveys within 90 days of final assessment.