

**Park Point Community Club  
Traffic Safety Meeting  
January 19, 2021**

**Participants**

Duluth Police Department  
Chief Mike Tusken  
Deputy Chief Nick Luvosky  
Lieutenant Chad Nagorski  
42 Park Point Community Residents

**Meeting Purpose**

To discuss Traffic Safety Concerns on Park Point with the goal of identifying -- in collaboration with the Duluth PD -- reasonable solutions to mitigating the speeding and reckless driving occurring on Park Point.

**Agenda**

Welcome:	Dawn Buck, PPCC President
Opening Remarks	Pat Sterner, PP Resident
Update from Duluth PD	Chief Mike Tusken
Discussion: Possible Solutions*	All
Next Steps	Chief Tusken, Dawn Buck, Pat Sterner
Adjourn	Dawn Buck

*\*To include how PP residents might assist through a Neighborhood Watch effort (record violations, track speeds, etc.).*

**Opening Remarks**

The meeting agenda is very straightforward: to address Traffic Safety Concerns on Park Point with the goal of identifying -- in collaboration with the Duluth PD -- reasonable solutions to mitigating the speeding and reckless driving occurring on Park Point.

This is not a new issue by any means.

In 2003 a Committee of Park Point Residents expended a considerable amount of time and energy addressing traffic safety and other relevant issues impacting the Park Point Community. During that time residents submitted one hundred and forty six (146) written notes naming issues of concern on the Point.

The Community Club meeting where the agenda was developed was attended by residents and several City officials, including the Chief of Police, Fire Chief, Director

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of Public Works, Parks Manager, City Facilities Management Manager, Mayor, several candidates for that office, and many City Council Members.

As a result of the meeting a Quality of Life Committee was established and twelve residents worked on the committee over twelve weeks, developing action plans with including specific remedies to the community's concerns.

Of three primary concerns identified by residents, *Traffic was the number one issue.*

Fast forward 17 years to the summer of 2020, with increased numbers of folks coming to Park Point. And the impact of COVID notwithstanding, Park Point now has 3 hotels, more vacation rentals, and has become a 'destination beach' in national travel magazines, Travel and Leisure being the latest.

And the problems are the same:

- Excessive Speeding (way over 40 mph -- 50-60 mph)
- Passing both over the double yellow line AND in the recreation/parking lane
- Distracted and/or drunk drivers (cell phones, texting)
- Drag racing, especially on the weekends after 9 pm - but during the week as well.

The goal for the meeting tonight is to FIND SOLUTIONS.

How can Park Point residents be proactive with the Police Department in curtailing - if not stopping - the egregious traffic violations that daily threaten residents and tourists alike as we all bike, walk, and run on the Point.

What can the Police Department realistically do to create a 'no tolerance' zone for drivers who disregard the speed limit and traffic rules?

What can Park Point residents realistically do to monitor, track and report violations, and help the Police Department?

Ultimately, what can Park Point residents and the Police Department do *together* to make Park Point a safer place for residents and the thousands of visitors that come each year to enjoy Park Point?

### **Summary of Discussion**

DPD Chief of Police Mike Tusken spoke about the DPD's efforts to monitor and manage speeding and traffic safety violations, noting that the Speed Signage works to help slow the majority of drivers. He also spoke about the speed surveys done on Park Point in the past, noting that average speeds were 35 mph. However, he also acknowledged that perception is the reality for Park Point residents who do not feel safe in their neighborhood - and that traffic stops for speeding do not reflect the dangerous driving happening on the Point.

Chief Tusken said that while the speed signage does help slow most traffic, it is a temporary solution and what is needed is sustainability in managing traffic safety on Park Point. This means changing the behavior of the people who drive on Park Point - including its residents. It also requires the Park Point community to come together as a neighborhood, working with the DPD, to collaborate on solutions and actions.

Chief Tusken identified three areas through which we can collaboratively address traffic safety:

1. Police Presence and Enforcement
2. Traffic Calming
3. Prevention

The subsequent discussion focused on issues and related ideas for implementation in all three of these areas.

### ***Police Presence and Enforcement***

#### Issues

- Congregation of large groups at Park Point (i.e., Cruise for Cancer)
- Speeding/Noise at 19<sup>th</sup> Street specifically to/from the stop sign
- Speeding by folks leaving after ice fishing (5-7 pm)
- Drag racing from the stop sign. Pretty consistently on Friday and Saturday nights at 10pm each night there are 20+ cars racing.
- Reckless driving (passing, tailgating, speeding, etc.)

#### Proposed Solutions

- Increased police presence/more directed patrols during targeted days/times
- Residents monitor and track specific days/times when speeding happens by their homes
- Call 911 for reckless driving
- Neighborhood Watch groups (as organized through the PP Community Club) monitor and track speeding, reckless driving at designated points, reporting license plate numbers to DPD through the PP Clearinghouse (potentially through use of a hand held radar gun and process to record/analyze).
- DPD send letters to registered owners of cars reported by Neighborhood Watch, notifying the car was identified
- If DPD is not available, it might be worthwhile to ask the DNR conservation officers to hang out for a bit at the Park (end of the Point) and watch behavior.

## **Traffic Calming**

### Issues

- Passing over the yellow line or in the pedestrian/bike lane
- Speeding
- Tailgating
- Distracted or Impaired Driving

### Proposed Solutions

- Identify the best locations, days, and times for two Speed Display signs and implement. Survey residents about who is willing to 'host', and who does not want a bright sign in front of their home.
- Additional signage to help control speeding, including:
  - Additional stop signs: possible locations could be at the Lafayette Community Center (31<sup>st</sup> street) or 38<sup>th</sup> street before the Rowing Club and Franciscan Center.
  - A clear sign at the Aerial Bridge (before and after) reminding motorists to slow down, drive 30 mph, be aware of kids, bikers, pedestrians. *"Slow Down for Children"* (Many people make an illegal left hand turn on Morse Street just before the bridge (by Grandma's) which stops traffic trying to get across the bridge. Frustration builds and so once cars finally across the bridge they take off. Signage before and after the bridge could be very helpful; possible also a larger "No Left Hand Turn" sign at Morse Street.)
  - Maintain visibility of 30 MPH signs (Neighborhood Watch could work with neighbors to make sure there is clearance)
  - Place radar speed signs along Minnesota Avenue
  - More clear signage about not parking in the recreation lane in the summer, and driving more carefully/looking for pedestrians/bicycles/kids. (Comment from Lt. Nagorski: I work closely with the Traffic Engineering Department and will discuss more no parking signage with them and include you in the email. NOTE: please also include Dawn Buck and Pat Sterner)
  - Add messages about traffic safety to the Electronic Beach Warning signs at the 12<sup>th</sup> street beach parking lot and in the Park. If not feasible, consider purchasing another Electronic sign for placement somewhere on the Point with traffic safety messaging.
- Put highly reflective paint along the pedestrian/parking lanes
- Deploy a "fake" squad car in different locations on the Point (e.g., old grocery store lot) with a mannequin in Uniform (Neighborhood Watch could administer this)
- Install Rumble Strips along the pedestrian/bike/parking lanes
- Install a Crosswalk between the Franciscan Center and the Duluth Rowing Club
- Through Neighborhood Watch, ask residents to purchase and place Chartreuse "Kid Alert" Guards along Park Point.
- Consider placing orange cones along the pedestrian/bike/parking lane during the summer

- Would it be feasible to do a ‘makeover’ of the S Curve signage to make it an electronic sign? If the City did not have the funding for that, perhaps those funds could be raised via the Canal Park Business Association.

#### Additional Comments

- Decrease top speed to 25 MPH (*Comment from Chief Tusken: decreasing the speed requires community education and behavior change; has not been shown to be effective enough*)
- Allow residents to use removable speed bumps; signage warning of speed bumps would need to be put into place (*Comment from Chief Tusken: speed bumps are problematic, especially with so many non-PP residents who would not be aware - even with signage. They can cause accidents, and also are impediments to first responders.*)
- Ask Park Rangers to help manage speeding and reckless/distracted driving, as well as large groups congregating at the Park at night. (*Comment from Lt. Nagorski : Due to the Pandemic in 2020 we were unable to hire Park Rangers. DC Lukovsky and I are discussing how we could potentially hire them for this summer.*)

#### Prevention

- Through Neighborhood Watch, engage with the business community on Park Point to ask them to communicate with their employees and guests about traffic laws and safety. (*Comment from Lt. Nagorski : The Canal Park Business Association works closely with community partners like the Duluth Police Department. I can get their presidents info to Dawn who could send a letter from the PPCC and I can reinforce with them your request and concerns.*)
- Through Neighborhood Watch, engage with the business community that provides services to Park Point (UPS, FedEx, other delivery services, contractors, etc.) to communicate with their employees about traffic laws and safety.
- Develop and deploy Public Service Announcements through the City and news media to highlight traffic safety issues on Park Point. Specific messaging can include: seasonal increase of traffic, recreational visitors, and respecting the Park Point neighborhood.
- Establish a Clearinghouse ‘site’ for the Park Point community to gather ideas and information for further dissemination to Chief Tusken/DPD to help achieve sustainable changes for managing traffic safety and enforcement.
- Use the Breeze (27<sup>th</sup> of the month cutoff) as a tool for obtaining feedback and data to go to the Park Point Clearinghouse for dissemination to the DPD.

## **Next Steps and Proposed Actions**

### ***Immediate (next 30 days)***

- Pat Sterner, Rory Strange and possibly one other Park Pointer to ‘canvass’ neighbors about the best placement of the Speed signs.
- Distribute short questionnaire to gather immediate information:
  - Would you be willing to ‘host’ a speed sign in front of your home?
  - Would you be willing to be a part of Neighborhood Watch?
  - Where do you think the highest speed zones are?
  - What days and times of the week do you see the highest number of traffic safety violations (excessive speeds, passing, tailgating)?
- Establish a Clearinghouse ‘site’ with protocols for providing information and ideas.
- Identify the areas of highest concern for speeding and reckless driving.

### ***Mid-Term (next 90 days)***

- Increased police presence based on ‘high traffic concern’ days, times and locations.
- Establish Neighborhood Watch groups with parameters and initial instructions for monitoring traffic. Begin deployment of Groups to monitor and report on traffic.
- Create and disseminate communications to Park Point Commercial interests - (Franciscan, Rowing Club, Airport, Hotels, Bayshore, The Canal Park Business Association) about traffic safety. This could include meetings with members from the PPCC/Neighborhood Watch Groups.
- Purchase and place “Kid Alert” Guards along Minnesota Avenue.
- Work with DPD to obtain and place a retired police squad car at key locations on Park Point.

### ***Long-term (90+ days)***

- Address and incorporate additional signage as feasible (stop signs, radar speed signs, slow down signs, etc.)
- Work with the City to employ highly reflective paint and/or rumble strips along the bike/pedestrian lanes.
- Work with the City and News outlets to deploy print and other PSAs about traffic safety on Park Point, with emphasis in summer months.
- Continue communications with Park Point and Canal Park businesses.
- DPD Letters to registered owners of vehicles recorded as speeding or engaged in reckless driving.