

Ann Arbor Police Department
MEMORANDUM

October 1, 2013

TO: Mr. Steve Powers, City Administrator
FROM: John Seto, Safety Services Administrator
SUBJECT: Main Street Closure Final Report to City Council



Background:

As a part of the Council Resolution approving the Street Closures for University of Michigan Home Football Games during the 2013 season, it was also resolved that I give a preliminary report to City Council on September 16th, hold a neighborhood meeting after the first three games and provide City Council with a final report at the October 7th meeting.

Review of modifications to the original closure plan:

Prior to the resolution approving the street closures, the initial community meeting was held on July 24th. As a result of input received from the citizens during this meeting, several modifications to the request were made prior to Council consideration:

- Southbound lanes of Main Street would remain open to all traffic until one hour before the game begins.
- Barricade signs limiting local traffic only will also have information that residential parking is open. (It was discovered that this was not in place for the first game. Staff insured it was in place for the remaining games)
- The communication plan will include advising people that Main Street will be open after the game.
- Signs and Signals staff will evaluate post game traffic and signal timing along out bound W. Stadium.

In collaboration with Public Services staff and the University of Michigan Police, the Ann Arbor Police Department continued to make modifications to the Main Street closure plan after each of the first three games:

- After the first game – Locations of detour signs and barricades were adjusted to improve traffic flow and set up time.
- After the second game – Public Services evaluated and made adjustments to traffic signal timing. Signs and Signal staff also manually operated some intersection signals.
- After the third game – We received information that Eastbound Pauline detoured traffic heading toward Main was congested immediately before the game due to the high volume of pedestrians. We will attempt to mitigate this for future games by getting the officers assigned to Main and Pauline out to direct traffic earlier.

The Communications Effort:

- AAPD held first neighborhood meeting on July 24th.
- Lane closure approved by City Council during August 8, 2013 meeting. Meeting aired live on CTN and online and is available to download via video on demand.
- Articles in annarbor.com and Ann Arbor Chronicle with closure map on August 9th.
- Map and information promoted via Community Television Network.

- Map and information posted on City's website and prominent link to map posted on Lane Closure webpage throughout football season.
- Gov Delivery - Lane Closure notification e-mail and text messages to Gov Delivery subscribers on August 16th.
- Multiple city social media promotions via Twitter and Facebook during the week of August 26th.
- Lane closure flyer distributed via UM neighborhood e-mail lists August 27th. This flyer also announced the second neighborhood meeting scheduled for September 24th.
- Additional communications by UM Athletics provided to ticket holders, students, residents and visitors.
- Distribution of flyer to all Neighborhood Watch Block Captains on August 27th.
- Chief Seto appeared on the Inside Michigan Football radio show with Chief Piersante on August 28th to discuss the road closure.
- AAPD Officers personally distributed lane closure notification flyer on August 29th to the Allmendinger neighborhood.
- September City resident newsletter distributed on August 30th.
- An additional notification for the September 24th community meeting was sent out to affected Neighborhood Block Captains on September 13th.
- Chief Seto reported preliminary findings to City Council on September 16th and the Neighborhood meeting scheduled for September 24th was announced.
- Follow-up Neighborhood meeting held on September 24th.

My Personal Observations:

During the first three games, I spent most of my time walking around the neighborhood closest to the Main Street closure, speaking with both residents and visitors parking on residential yards. I spoke with several residents who felt the closure was affecting the traffic flow resulting in fewer people parking on their properties. Other people I spoke with advised they were not affected by the closure and some were complimentary of the additional police presence.

After the third game, I had further communications with one of the residents who wanted to reiterate that his parking was negatively impacted due to the street closure. This resident was able to provide specifics as to how many empty parking spots he had during the first three games. He reported that he had 4 empty spots during the first game, none during the second game and 1 during the third game. However, he also wanted to point out that he had to start parking cars 1½ hours earlier and he had always been full in previous years.

Another resident who had concerns about fewer parking customers after the first game advised me after the second game that he now thought the closure was a good thing. He felt this way mainly due to the added police presence before the game and he advised this was a good trade off with any impact he may experience from fewer parking customers.

I do believe the closure has impacted the traffic pattern and as a result affected some residential lawn parking in the first block east of Main Street. This is primarily due to the fact the traffic pattern is now coming in from the west and available lawn parking further west of the UM Stadium is utilized before they get to the last block just west of Main St. The Sergeant assigned to the Allmendinger neighborhood reported that he did not find any residents further west who had concerns with the residential parking situation.

As for the traffic pattern as a result of the Main St. closure, I did not observe any significant problems before or during the game. Any post game traffic issues would be consistent with previous years since Main St. has opened prior to the end of each of the first three games. We will continue to monitor the rest of the season.

Summary of September 24th Neighborhood Meeting:

There were approximately 12 residents present at this meeting. These were the concerns raised:

- Numerous comments were about the traffic congestion after the games and it was especially bad after Notre Dame.
- Some advised the number of empty spots on their residential parking was greater due to the street closure.
- Some expressed concerns of people congregating in the middle of the streets before the game.
- The helicopter present during the Notre Dame game was unnecessary and created a lot of noise.
- Some also commented that noise from UM Stadium is excessive.

Actions as a result of the September 24th Neighborhood Meeting:

- Although post game traffic should not be directly impacted by the Main St. closure, AAPD will assign an Officer to patrol the Allmendinger Neighborhood after the game.
- One resident suggested additional announcements that Main St. is open after the game. AAPD will have our Officer at the Main and Stadium podium make this announcement for post game pedestrian traffic.
- One resident suggested additional stop signs be placed at Edgewood and Potter. Public Services will evaluate the feasibility of this additional traffic control device.
- One resident suggested the signage to advise people that residential parking is open could be clearer. The suggestion was to have the signs say, "Football Parking Open". Public Services will make these new signs and have them in place for the remaining games.
- The Officers assigned to the Allmendinger Neighborhood before the game have been keeping the streets clear. These Officers will continue to focus on this concern.

Final Recommendation:

Throughout this process, we have heard from some residents that the closure is unnecessary and unjustified. Many have made suggestions on how this closure may be modified. Many of these suggestions have been implemented and have resulted in improvements. The concern from residents closest to Main St. who report fewer parking customers due to the closure is challenging to resolve. However, I believe there have been many modifications made and we will continue to explore additional options to lessen this impact.

The majority of the other concerns in regards to post game traffic congestion are not directly related to the Main St. closure; however, it did bring to light this issue from the residents most impacted by this traffic problem. Some traffic control initiatives such as traffic signal timing and manual operation of traffic signals have already been implemented by Signs and Signals. Public Services will continue to evaluate and determine if there are additional solutions.

As a result of my personal observations and feedback I have received from citizens, I am still in support of the Main St. closure. I also believe that much has been learned from these first three games and from the community input. All City staff will continue to evaluate any modifications that may lessen the impact to residents while still accomplishing the objective of overall public safety during University of Michigan Football games.