

CITY OF CORONADO
TRAFFIC OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

The regular meeting of the Traffic Operations Committee (T.O.C.) was held on Thursday, June 28, 2007, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Present were Scott Huth, Ed Walton and Tony Peña. Danny Mastro represented the absent Kim Raddatz and Laszlo Waczek represented the absent Lou Scanlon. Assistant Engineer Dave Johnson was also present.

1. Minutes of the May 24, 2007 Meeting – Mr. Peña moved to approve the minutes and Mr. Walton seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Waczek abstaining.
2. Oral Communications – None.
3. Recommendation Regarding a Request to Install a 25-Foot Red Curb Section at the Intersection of Maria Place and Pomona Avenue – Mr. Johnson reported that this issue was discussed at last month's T.O.C. meeting, but staff realized that they had identified the wrong location proposed for red curbing on the exhibit map, therefore, it was decided to bring the issue back with an accurate exhibit depicting the location the red curb is proposed to be. He pointed out the location on the overhead map.

He recapped the staff report: Mr. Zaino, 1513 Maria Place, requested that a red curb zone be installed on Pomona south of Maria Place. He stated that when cars are parked there a dangerous situation occurs where a driver exiting off Maria Place onto Pomona is unable to see oncoming traffic, resulting in a possible collision situation. He proposed that the solution be a red curb standoff on Maria south of Pomona so that parked cars would not impede the sight line to oncoming Pomona traffic. Mr. Johnson said that a review of the most recent three-year accident history at this location showed that there were no reported collisions; this intersection is very similar to many intersections in Coronado. Pomona and Maria intersect with Maria having a stop control and Pomona being a through street; therefore, traffic on Pomona is not required to stop or yield right-of-way to vehicles on Maria. Also, due to the width of the streets, it's incumbent upon drivers to make a complete stop behind the limit line and go beyond that limit line safely to see if oncoming traffic is occurring; that's similar to all Coronado streets because of the need to maintain parallel on-street parking. As a result of that condition, it's the staff recommendation that no red curb be installed at this location because the red curb zone being proposed wouldn't significantly increase the amount of sight distance for oncoming vehicles and would result in the loss of a parking space where parking is highly utilized.

Tom Whitson, 1519 Maria Place, spoke in reference to the area indicated on Exhibit A at the last T.O.C. meeting. He described that as covering the location of the white car on the curve of the intersection. About the location of the white vehicle, down from the intersection, there is a speed hump. Vehicles go a lot faster after a speed hump

and that's the hazard that he's faced with when making a turn from Maria Place onto Pomona. The vehicles are going fast and there are a lot of them. Early in the morning, during commuting time, they're almost bumper to bumper. He is concerned that children crossing on their way to school have to peek around that car in order to safely cross the street. As he lives practically across the street from there, he sees the concern that the young kids have. It blocks the hill area almost completely and there are two other cases that are hazardous. One is the bicyclists who ride on the sidewalk on their way to school and pass that park location very quickly – it is very difficult for them to see an oncoming car. The second, most hazardous, proposition is baby carriages that are poking out beyond that car – the mother has no way of seeing through that vehicle in order to give safe passage to her baby. This location is about 20' between the street pole and the utility pole. He thinks it would give everyone a great deal of comfort if they knew that was a safe way for kids to get to school.

Charlotte Zaino, 1513 Maria Place, read a note from neighbors, Fred and Peggy Scheffel, who could not be present: “We cannot attend the Traffic Operations Committee on Thursday, the 28th, 2007. We are concerned about the traffic hazard at the corner of Maria and Pomona. It is difficult to see the traffic from the right when making a left turn and this is due to parked cars. We think this area is classified as A-1; therefore, there should not be a shortage of parking space for the residents and their guests. Does this committee think we need an accident before the hazard is corrected?” Mrs. Zaino said most area residents have garages, sometimes two-car and there is lots of room on Pomona – people do not have to park on that curb. There's plenty of parking on Maria. She asked whether today's staff report was the same as that presented in May; she thinks the only thing that is different is Exhibit A. On this report it says “elimination of the parking space will not alleviate this condition.” She's being told that elimination of those three or so spaces will not alleviate this condition. How can you say that? If those three parking spaces were not taken she would have absolutely no problem getting out of her street; she could easily make a left-hand turn if no one was parked in those three spaces. She can't understand how eliminating these spaces wouldn't alleviate this condition. It's simple – if there was no one parking on the curb she could see; otherwise she can't see. She commented that the Scheffels would have been at the meeting if they could, as would another neighbor who is down with flu.

Larry Zaino, 1513 Maria Place, said that it was stated that this intersection is really no different than others. If we drop Third, Fourth and Orange for the amount of traffic that goes through them, he'd like to know where Pomona stands on the list of the amount of traffic. Is it high? Is it low? Are they all about the same? He thinks Pomona is probably around fourth or fifth of all the streets in Coronado.

Marge West, 1514 Maria Place, doesn't understand the reasoning in saying that there's never been an accident there. Are you waiting for one to happen? She agrees with Mr. Zaino that Pomona gets a lot of traffic. She thinks that some of these other corners do not have a block where people can park; there are lots of places where they can park up and down the block, so maybe Maria should be considered a little special. She hopes the T.O.C. will reconsider.

Glen Vita, 835 Pomona, introduced himself as a professional civil engineer in the State of California. He agrees with the staff recommendation.

Mr. Huth closed the meeting to public comment and addressed several questions to Mr. Johnson that had been brought up by the speakers. He asked how Pomona ranks against some of the other streets in terms of traffic counts and Mr. Johnson said Pomona,

with the exception of Third, Fourth and Orange, is at least the second most traveled street with Ocean Boulevard probably being the most traveled non-Caltrans controlled roadway.

Another question concerned the conclusions about comparing this to other intersections and Mr. Johnson responded said that with the exception of the volumes on Pomona and the slight angle that Pomona intersects Maria Place with, which could be an issue with the sight line to oncoming traffic, with the allowance of parallel parking throughout the City, there are very few intersections where a driver can stop behind the limit line, per the Vehicle Code, and see with enough distance to oncoming traffic to execute a turn. That's why he feels this intersection is very much like many of the intersections in that you have to come to a stop behind the limit and proceed beyond that to see the oncoming traffic to safely execute your turn. Mr. Huth said he thinks that's a point that's missed; the anticipation of entering into traffic requires you pull out farther into an intersection and he believes that this is consistent with a lot of intersections in town. When you start your maneuver you have to inch out into the road and he wanted to make sure that everyone understood that; part of dealing with the visibility of oncoming traffic is taking that into account.

Another question was whether the area where the white car is parked on the diagram is being discussed or just the area that is the subject of this report. He recalled that the possibility of a stand-off at the driveway and/or at the ADA ramp was discussed but couldn't recall if anything had been concluded. Mr. Walton said he believed it was carried over, so the whole corner is still open for discussion. Mr. Huth asked if there was any recommendation for stand-offs for that particular item and Mr. Johnson said they could be considered, but he doesn't know whether that would alleviate the concerns that the residents have brought forth. Mr. Huth said he was addressing it because of the comments made about traversing the sidewalk, being hidden behind the car and then coming into the intersection. He pointed out that pedestrians and bicyclists also have a responsibility to enter intersections safely. He asked if putting in a standard three-foot stand-off would eliminate parking in that area and Mr. Johnson said it's about a 25' area, so it might preclude larger vehicles from parking there, but three-foot stand-offs at the driveway and the accessible ramp would probably still leave it open to smaller vehicles being able to park there.

Mr. Walton said he thinks the issue is sight distance and the proposal is to try to improve the sight distance. If you're in a vehicle turning left on Pomona and you're parked where the red car on the diagram is on Maria, drawing a straight line from the driver's seat, missing that car, to the oncoming car on northbound Pomona, it's about 170', giving about four-and-a-half to five seconds of reaction time if a car is traveling 25 mph. He thinks that's adequate to safely pull out and maybe the issue is the volume of traffic and there may not be that gap to get onto Pomona during peak hours. In his mind this is not an issue of sight distance so he is going to support the staff recommendation and not recommend a red curb at that location. He would consider stand-offs at the ramp; he feels that would be helpful to people.

Mr. Waczek spent some time at that intersection today and said that when you initially stop at the limit line you have a clear sight toward Glorietta (your right), but as soon as you pull forward to have a better view of the traffic on Pomona coming southbound, your vision is obstructed if there are vehicles in that area. Pomona is not like any other residential street because it is a shortcut to get out of town and there is a heavier volume of traffic there than other streets, as David indicated. He noticed that

once you creep forward to line up your sight vision the two vehicles that were parked there today (and he's in an SUV, so he had a little higher advantage), it did block the view and it took a little more maneuvering time to get out into the intersection to make sure that it is clear. In a lower profile vehicle it would be even tougher to see that. Because of the high traffic volumes on Pomona and knowing that people don't always drive 25 mph on that street despite the speed humps, he would be inclined to say that not allowing vehicles to park there would have a benefit to the line of sight. He recommends that not allowing parking there at least during the peak traffic hours would definitely help the line of sight on that street.

Mr. Peña usually doesn't like the idea of customizing restrictions like no parking during certain hours. He prefers the staff recommendation.

Mr. Mastro drove through that intersection a couple of times with different configurations of parked vehicles and found that if you stop at the limit line you do have a clear view south as long as there are no cars parked on that radius, but you don't have a clear view to your left at the limit line because of the vehicle parked at the corner of Pomona and Maria Place. So, regardless, you need to creep past the limit line. If you eliminate those two parking spots by painting a red curb, it will open up the line of sight somewhat, but you'll still have to creep forward to get that line of sight and for how much more line of sight it would provide he's not really sure whether it would be worth losing those two parking spots. It will also encourage vehicles to creep forward into traffic to utilize that line of sight.

Mr. Waczek referred to last month's meeting minutes where Mrs. Zaino read from the Strategic Plan 4.2.1.2 "in the central commercial and beach areas there is a growing parking problem which adversely affects residents, businesses." He questioned whether the Strategic Plan is focused primarily on areas that are frequented by tourists or business customers or does this stretch into the residential areas? Mr. Johnson replied that the Strategic Plan encompasses the entire city and the reference to the beach and central commercial district was a lead in to why the Strategic Plan was adopted. In those areas, there is definitely a need for maintaining on-street parking, but the Strategic Plan does encompass the entire city and needs to be applied throughout.

Mr. Peña observed that when traffic gets bad sometimes you have to change your habits. It's not unusual for him when he's driving around Coronado, when the traffic interval is tight and when he wants to go left, he'll go with the flow and go right and find a better opportunity to turn off. You have to adjust sometimes to the prevailing traffic and the way the road system is set up. He doesn't see any inherent danger at this intersection as opposed to many, many others that have been reviewed in the past.

Mr. Walton said that a precedent would be set if this were approved. At most corners you do have to creep up past the limit line to get a comfortable line of sight and if we start looking at every corner we may see this one particular request promulgated throughout the community.

Mr. Huth observed that there's a lot of traffic here and he can see being frustrated trying to make it in between cars because there's not a lot of gap time and in some cases the speed humps reduce the gap between cars because they tend to pile up and you get a frustrated person who's trying to jockey everything in there at the same time. And yet there are intersections on Olive that you can't see past and you have to be way out in the middle of the street. He's comfortable with doing stand-offs and wondered if there was a desire to do that because of the kind of unusual arc of the corner. He asked if there was consensus on doing stand-offs and asked what the impact would be. Mr. Johnson said

that in order to encourage smaller vehicles to park in this location rather than the large profile vehicles that have been seen there over the last couple of years, especially with all the construction that's been going on, if the Committee was leaning toward stand-offs, it would be reasonable to do a stand-off at the driveway apron and also at the ramp. That way larger vehicles would be precluded from parking there and only smaller, low profile vehicles could park in that area. It's about 23' from the ramp to the beginning of the driveway wing, so it's one parking space. Two stand-offs would cut it down to 17'. The length of compact spaces in the city is 15', so it would be about the size of a compact parking space.

Mr. Peña recommended that two stand-offs be painted, one at the curb cut and one at the driveway and also moved to support the staff recommendation. Mr. Walton suggested that the stand-offs be on both sides of the pedestrian ramp and Mr. Peña amended his motion to include both sides. Mr. Walton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. What is being recommended is a total of nine feet of red curb stand-offs.

Mr. Huth informed the audience that this will go forward to the City Council and the people in the audience will be notified. It will either be heard in August or the first meeting in September.

The meeting adjourned at 2:43 p.m.