

CITY OF CORONADO

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday, May 28, 2009

A meeting of the Traffic Operations Committee (T.O.C.) was held on Thursday, May 28, 2009, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Scott Huth, Ed Walton, Lou Scanlon and Rachel Hurst were present. Ed Hadfield represented the absent Danny Mastro. Assistant Engineer Dave Johnson was also present.

1. Minutes of the April 23, 2009 Meeting – Approval – The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Oral Communications – Mildred Dahill, 1068 Isabella, commented on Item 4, the request to install a blue curb zone in front of 1104 Isabella. This is one house in and she suggested installing two spaces instead of one; it would be easier for handicapped people to spot it.

3. Recommendation Regarding a Request to Install Curb Markings in Front of the Mail Drop Box at the Corner of Fourth Street and Palm Avenue – Mr. Johnson said that Sally Ann Zoll requested a yellow curb zone be installed in front of the mailbox on the short section of curb length adjacent to Palm Park. The California Vehicle Code allows municipalities to install curb zones for certain functions; it states that a white curb zone can be used for depositing mail in an adjacent mailbox. The regulations also state that through the Municipal Code the City can dictate the times and days that the zone is active. The Municipal Code states that a white zone (passenger loading zone) is operational 24 hours a day except in front of a theater or an elementary school. Ms. Zoll finds that cars are parked along this approximately 25' curb length and has noticed that a lot of times the cars parked there have a "For Sale" sign on them. She feels that not only would this open up the area for citizens to use the mailbox, but would also maybe discourage the on-street for sale vehicles. Based on this, staff is suggesting that a 20' white curb zone be installed.

Pete Fagan, 379 F Avenue, lives catty corner to the park where the mail box is located. He disagrees with the recommendation in the staff report for several reasons. The staff report accurately points out that the recommendation and request are inconsistent with the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan was well thought out, but there can always be exceptions. An exception to a Strategic Plan must set forth a unique and compelling reason why that exception is needed. There is nothing unique about this. He understands that one of the issues is cars for sale; there are other ways of dealing with that such as resident-only parking. What really is the case is that an individual resident who doesn't live within several blocks of that area would like to be able to park closer to the mail box. Mr. Fagan looked at some other boxes in the City; there's a box at Seventh and F, next to the school, with cars parked all around it, and there are no markings. There are boxes in the 800 block of Orange Avenue in front of the Union Bank and in front of the Chamber of Commerce and they are on red curbs because they are bus stops. He also pointed out that the Strategic Plan talks about

maximizing parking for the residents and that area is already impacted. A block away the density has increased as a result of recent building; this will add to the already problematic parking. Also, there's not an overwhelming majority of people here saying they want to be able to park there and mail a letter without walking too far. There's no study from the post office that he knows of saying that the post office has weighed in and said this could have higher utilization or it has low utilization. How many people really use this box? You've only heard from one resident that doesn't live in the immediate area that talks about it. There's no indication that this box is heavily utilized or that by painting a curb there it would be more heavily utilized. With respect to cars with "For Sale" signs, that's a resident-only permit parking area and there are other ways to address this. He recommends that the recommendation not be followed in this case because there are no unique or compelling reasons to go against the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Johnson said an email from two other residents had been received that was not in favor of the recommendation. The Committee members confirmed that they'd seen that email.

Mr. Scanlon asked if the mail box was curbside with the ability to deposit mail from within the vehicle and Mr. Johnson said it isn't.

Mr. Hadfield asked if the City has a standard for markings related to mailboxes and Mr. Johnson said there is no standard and in doing research on this issue he found no mailboxes marked with a white zone. Some of them are in red zones by chance because maybe a bus stop was placed there after a mailbox was located. Mr. Hadfield asked what the enforcement is for parking in a white zone and Mr. Scanlon responded that it is a citation.

Mr. Huth was concerned that, aside from parking being at a premium in a residential area, parking adjacent to a park is also a premium. You can't access this mailbox like you can at the post office and you need to get out of your vehicle to access it. In this case, the times he has been by this location he sees any number of places where people can park their cars and walk a little bit to it. If we have a request in the future, it might be a good thing to ask the post office about what kind of activity there is for this box and other boxes in the community.

Mr. Walton was concerned because twice he's visited this box to look at it and he saw people double parked. He'd like to try to avoid that. At the same time, he thinks people can walk thirty feet to drop their mail off.

Mr. Hadfield made a motion to recommend against the staff recommendation. He doesn't feel that what he's seen, activity-wise, warrants painting the curb white. He feels that available parking is a greater premium for the entire area as opposed to increasing the convenience for somebody. Mr. Scanlon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. Recommendation Regarding the Request to Install a Blue Curb Zone in Front of 1104 Isabella Avenue – Mr. Johnson said that Ms. Sally Krummenacher requested a blue curb zone be installed in front of her residence. For a residential blue curb to be approved the applicant must have no area on their property that can be converted to parking, or a driveway; they must be in possession of a valid blue curb placard; and a doctor's recommendation must be received. All supporting documentation has been received. Based on the site assessment staff recommends that a blue curb zone be installed here.

Mr. Hadfield said the City seems to be getting a lot of these requests and he asked how we keep track of whether the blue curb is still needed over time. Mr. Johnson replied that every July he sends renewal notices to individuals who have residential blue curb zones requiring that they provide a copy of a valid placard. If it is not provided the blue curb is

removed. Mr. Hadfield asked if staff had identified any potential limit to the amount of curb that the City will mark and Mr. Johnson said the warrant says nothing about a limit.

Susan Keith, 801 Tolita, is a friend of Ms. Krummenacher. Ms. Krummenacher was not able to come today and asked Ms. Keith to come in her stead. Come summer, there's no parking in that area at all. In the past her husband would double park, drop her off and park one or two blocks away. He's now under hospice care and is no longer driving, so she is now the main driver in the household and she cannot walk that far. Ms. Krummenacher is aware that she is not the only one who can use this spot; that anyone with a blue placard can use it.

Mr. Scanlon moved to approve the staff recommendation to install a blue curb at this location, Mr. Hadfield seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. Recommendation Regarding the Request to Review the Traveled Way Width Associated with the New Diagonal Parking Adjacent to the Intersection of A Avenue and Ynez Place – The staff recommendation to leave the existing layout of the diagonal parking stalls as is was approved unanimously on consent.

6. Recommendation Regarding a Left-Turn Restriction on Alameda Boulevard at Fifth Street – Mr. Johnson said that in August 2002 and March 2005 the T.O.C. heard requests to install a left-turn restriction onto Fifth from Alameda during the afternoon hours. In 2002 the issue was brought up due to increased traffic occurring on Fifth Street as a result of the semi-diverters installation. The City Council decided that they didn't want to continue to piecemeal traffic controls because of the change in traffic patterns as a result of the semi-diverters and a left-turn restriction was not installed. The diverters were removed in January 2005 and the issue was brought up again. Staff did some research on turning movements and volumes along Fifth Street at that time. Again, the recommendation was to not install a turn restriction because staff felt if turns were restricted onto Fifth traffic would continue down to Sixth to make the turn and the problem would be pushed to a different area. Therefore, no action was taken. In 2009 there is a perception that there is a lot of traffic and congestion on Fifth Street, particularly in the afternoon hours, so the Council asked the T.O.C. to look at it again. Traffic counters were placed on Fifth Street between Alameda and J to see if traffic volumes had increased and over the last seven years there has been quite a drop in volumes. The afternoon hours are congested; Mr. Johnson feels that a lot of the congestion stems from the schools and the loading and unloading that goes on there. There is a fair amount of vehicles turning onto eastbound Fifth Street from Alameda coming off the base but his anecdotal thoughts are that they are not the main cause of the congestion. There is a lot of activity in that area at that time and the vehicles turning onto Fifth seem to be a target for anybody that feels that would be a solution. The staff recommendation is to not install a left-turn restriction onto Fifth Street for the same reasons stated in prior years; that is, it would push the problem down Alameda farther or cars would go through Alameda and make a right on I or J. There are many ways to get to the same location. A turn restriction will not solve the problem. Also, a lot of people on the base have children at the schools and they need access to that area to pick them up; it wouldn't just be through traffic that would be restricted – people who actually needed to get to that destination would be restricted as well.

Mr. Johnson said that the Council asked that the school district, Engineering Department and Police Department get together to develop some solutions for the congestion around the schools; a committee has been formed and a few ideas have been developed. We'll come up with a program to hopefully organize the loading and unloading and some of

the things that are causing congestion around the middle school and the high school. If that is successfully implemented we will see congestion lessen slightly in that area.

Ms. Hurst asked how this issue arose and Mr. Johnson said there was a resident, Peter Hunt, who sent the City some photographs of the congestion in Fifth Street. He compared those pictures to some he took on Second Street and said there's no traffic there. There are different dynamics going on there. The Council asked staff to look into the issue again.

Mr. Huth asked if it could be determined what is school-oriented traffic versus pass through and Mr. Johnson said that would be difficult. Someone would have to be out there all day long looking at traffic flow; all he can get is raw volume data.

Mr. Scanlon said that a considerable number of children are engaged in after-school activities, in some cases specifically because the parent doesn't get out of work until the base lets out. They're engaging in these activities in conjunction with their parent picking them up at 4:00 or 5:00 in the afternoon.

Mr. Walton added that the ad hoc committee perceives the problem as a driver, pedestrian and bicycle behavioral problem, not a volume problem. If the root of the problem can be corrected that may solve the congestion problem. He made a motion to support the staff recommendation to not install a turn restriction on Alameda at Fifth and Mr. Scanlon seconded it. It passed unanimously.

Mr. Scanlon felt it might be worthwhile to do a traffic count when school is out of session and there are no school activities taking place. That may give some indication of a difference in volume.

7. Recommendation Regarding Sight Distance at the Intersection of Fourth Street and A Avenue – The staff recommendation to add no additional curb markings at this location was approved unanimously on consent.

8. Recommendation Regarding Strand Way Curb Parking and the Existing Stop Sign Installation Adjacent to the Boat House Restaurant – The staff recommendation to prohibit parking on Strand Way between the Boat House Restaurant and Pomona Avenue and to leave remaining the existing stop sign on southbound Strand Way at the Boat House Restaurant was approved unanimously on consent. The logistics of signing this will be worked out with the Police Department.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.