

# CITY OF CORONADO

## TRAFFIC OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

**Thursday, July 23, 2009**

A meeting of the Traffic Operations Committee (T.O.C.) was held on Thursday, July 23, 2009, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Scott Huth, Rachel Hurst, Lou Scanlon and Ed Walton were present. Ed Hadfield represented the absent John Traylor.

1. Minutes of the June 25, 2009 Meeting – Approval – Mr. Scanlon moved to approve the minutes, Ms. Hurst seconded the motion and they were approved unanimously with Mr. Hadfield and Mr. Walton abstaining.

2. Oral Communications – None.

3. Recommendation Regarding a the Installation of Two In-Street Pedestrian Crossing Signs, Reconfiguration of a Loading Zone around Coronado High School and Discussion of “No Bike Riding” Stencils around the School Sites – Mr. Johnson said that the City Council approved the formation of a Student and Traffic Circulation Review Committee (STCRC) to look at ways of increasing safety and reducing congestion around the high school, middle school and Village elementary school. The Committee, which was represented by the Police and Engineering Departments, representatives from the elementary, middle and high schools and parent representatives, met several times in the spring. Brainstorming sessions came up with several things that the Committee felt would increase safety and congestion in the area. The items that Engineering explored were the use of in-street pedestrian crossing signs, reconfiguration of a loading zone on D Avenue in front of the high school, and some pavement stencils indicating to bicyclists that bikes shouldn't be ridden on the sidewalks.

In-street pedestrian crossing signs are currently in use on First Street at B Avenue. The school locations identified for these signs were on Sixth Street and Seventh Streets at E Avenue; these are uncontrolled intersections with marked crosswalks and these streets are prime feeders from outlying neighborhoods onto the school zones. Both locations meet the warrants for installation of these signs and staff is recommending that signs be installed at those locations.

The high school underwent a lot of construction over the last six or seven years and the loading zones were kind of being juggled because of the different construction activities going on. The latest iteration of loading zones to help the school with construction was two separate loading zones, one in front of the theater, an open curb zone, and another loading zone just south of the open curb zone. Cars would park between the two loading zones and it made it difficult for people to get in and out of the zones. It was suggested to combine the two zones, starting at the southwest curb return of Sixth and D and extending it southerly 100'. This way the high school can set up candlesticks with signs to indicate loading and unloading of the area in the morning. Another suggestion was that with this new loading zone, signs be installed adjacent to the loading zone similar to what's already in place at the middle school which indicates the hours of operations for these zones. A white zone, per the

Municipal Code, is operational 24 hours a day; it was felt it wasn't necessary to have this zone operational 24 hours a day, but instead during the school hours of 7:30 a.m.-4:30 a.m.

Mr. Hadfield said that he sees a lot of after-school activity where the loading zone is utilized quite extensively, beyond the normal school operating hours, for plays, after-school functions and sporting events. The schools are very busy. He would like to see it more uniform with the Municipal Code in that a loading zone is a loading zone. Mr. Johnson said the hours of operation being suggested are based on feedback from the STCRC. However, the loading zone in front of the theater was prompted by COSA; they felt they needed it for the times during performances, which is later than 4:30 p.m. It may need to be extended in the evening hours a little further or consistent with the Municipal Code which is 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Mr. Scanlon asked if the signage would except Saturdays, Sundays and holidays and what about the summers? Mr. Johnson said he felt the intent of the STCRC to have it just during school days. He said that summer days would be included unless there was wording such as "summers exempted," but that type of wording has not been used in Coronado. Mr. Scanlon asked if it would be legal to put "while school in session" and Mr. Johnson responded that the Vehicle Code is specific in saying that the dates and times must be listed. He doesn't believe that using verbiage such as "when school is in session" would be enforceable.

The elementary school representative asked that pavement stencils be placed on the sidewalks around the elementary school, indicating to cyclists that they shouldn't be riding their bikes on the sidewalk. During the times children are going to school in the morning and getting out in the afternoon it can be chaotic; pedestrians cross all over the place, bikes ride all over the place and it can be a dangerous situation. It was suggested to use a stencil similar to those in the downtown area that has a circular universal "No skateboarding, rollerblading, bicycling" message. Unfortunately, this wouldn't be enforceable without signage; in the downtown area there are signs to supplement the pavement markings. Mr. Johnson is not recommending signs around the school because he doesn't think it was the intent of the STCRC or the TOC to try to prevent bicycles on the sidewalks all the time, but maybe pavement stencils would give the administrators something to indicate to the students that they're not supposed to be riding during the loading and unloading times. Staff recommends placing the stencils at strategic locations around the school and if it's felt necessary, come back later and look at signage.

Mr. Scanlon pointed out that there's nothing in the Municipal Code to prohibit bicycle riding in the school area. From a police perspective there's an issue with signage that cannot be enforced, primarily because the public expects the police, when they see signage or stencils, to take enforcement action. When, if by law they cannot do that then the perception is that the police are not doing their job. He is opposed in general to erecting signs that they have no ability to legally enforce.

Mr. Huth is not sure he's supportive of installing "No Bikes" stencils; he would prefer stencils on the ADA pedestrian ramps that would be less regulatory and could say something like "Walk bikes beyond this point." The City is already battling bikes in the commercial district and he'd like some uniformity of dealing with the regulatory part. He'd like to encourage good behavior rather than crack down on it. Mr. Hadfield agreed and said he felt this is more of an education issue than a regulatory issue and if we want to make it a regulatory issue, even a soft one, it should be consistent with what is done throughout the rest of the City. He is hesitant to approve stenciling.

Mr. Johnson said that the other component of this is the schools being responsible for the education of bicyclists; so stencils may be helpful in conjunction with what we've told will be a fairly regular educational program by the schools and our Police Department to let cyclists know that they should be walking their bikes around the schools.

Mr. Walton said the City will be working on a Bicycle Master Plan and there will probably be an ad hoc committee looking at that master plan. This is an issue that they can take up. He agrees with Mr. Scanlon that we don't want to put in regulatory signs or stencils in places where they can't be enforced.

Mr. Scanlon made a motion to approve a recommendation to install the in-street pedestrian signs and to reconfigure the existing loading zones and install signage to the effect that the loading zone is in effect from 7:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Saturdays, Sundays and holidays excepted. Mr. Hadfield seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. Recommendation Regarding the Request to Install a Blue Curb Zone in Front of the Jamaica Village Clubhouse – Mr. Scanlon looked at the area and noted that the recommendation is to place the zone at the end of Jamaica Village Road; there is a staircase there that goes down about three or four steps into the building. If you go down to the south end of the parking lot there's a handicap ramp in that vicinity. It seems to make more sense to place a van-accessible handicap parking space near the ramp as opposed to where the staircase is. Mr. Johnson said he discussed this with the homeowners' association and they felt this was where the accessible path is. Mr. Scanlon asked how many people using the club use wheelchairs because typically you have a handicap parking space as close as possible to the entrance to a facility, with an accompanying accessible path. This location is unique in that the closest spot to the front of the facility is different than where the accessible path is. The homeowners' association said they felt where Mr. Johnson had it located, in front of the facility, would be good, but based on the users, there may be a desire to have it closer to the accessible path which is 100' or so away from the facility they're heading for.

Mr. Huth said he read of a survey which indicated that only 15-18% of the people with handicap placards were in wheelchairs. Mr. Johnson said the homeowners' association couldn't recall anybody who accesses that facility and regularly uses a wheelchair, but there are people with handicap placards that could most likely make those three steps down to the facility.

Mr. Walton moved the recommendation to install one handicap blue curb zone in front of the Jamaica Village clubhouse and Mr. Hadfield seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

5. Recommendation Regarding a Left-Turn Restriction on Alameda Boulevard at Fifth, Sixth and/or Seventh Streets – Mr. Johnson said this issue has been before the TOC three times over the last five to six years. In 2005 the TOC sent a positive recommendation to the Council to install a turn restriction. Today's staff report contains an error indicating that the TOC denied that request; that is not accurate. The issue went forward to the Council with a positive recommendation for a left-turn restriction; it was not passed by the Council on a two to two vote. One Councilmember had to recuse himself from voting because he lived near the location.

Mr. Johnson said that traffic volumes on Fifth Street have decreased; perhaps the reconfiguration of the gates at Third and Fourth Streets is making it easier for people to use Third and Fourth directly rather than doing a circuitous route like they were before, trying to find the shortest path out of the gate. There still is a considerable amount of vehicles that

turn onto Fifth Street in the afternoon. Accident rates are not significant and don't warrant turn restrictions.

He said it was interesting to find that the Student and Traffic Circulation Review Committee did not recommend any traffic controls like this. They didn't feel that through traffic on Fifth Street was of such a great concern that they wanted to pursue a left-hand turn restriction. They felt that the congestion around the school zones was more that the area is a free for all with parents and students getting in and out of the area.

The staff recommendation is to not install turn restrictions on Fifth, Sixth or Seventh Streets.

Peter Hunt, 809 Fifth Street, said that Dr. Felix [CUSD superintendent] came to the City Council in January with support of the concerns to look into this issue and hence the committee with the parents that looked at it. The staff analysis in today's agenda says that Strategic Plan 4.1.1 is to reduce the traffic on residential streets. He submits that, more importantly, the strategic objective of traffic safety should be included. Objective 2.5 is to identify and eliminate traffic problems as they develop; 5.2 is to reduce serious injury accidents and reduce collisions. The strategy for that is to install traffic control devices at intersections where appropriate. More importantly, Strategic Objective 2.6, safe pedestrian crossings, specifically says the problem of getting schoolchildren to and from school safely has already been recognized and increased traffic volumes will aggravate the situation. The objective there is to ensure the safety of schoolchildren crossing the streets and the strategy is again to install traffic control devices where warranted to improve safety. The no-turn restriction effort is 100% in alignment with the current City of Coronado Strategic Plan. Staff's report cites four reasons why they don't support this restriction. The first is that traffic volumes have gone down significantly. In the spring data there was only one of two aircraft carriers in port and the second aircraft carrier was in port for only a portion of the time the measurements were taken. If you take the volume between 2002 and 2009, the actual volume has gone up 40%, so it depends on what part of the chart you look at. More importantly, the traffic during those hours on Fifth is eight to ten times the hourly rate of any other time of the day on that street. Additionally, only Fourth and First Streets have more vehicles in the afternoon hours, the hours that schoolchildren are getting out, than any other street; in fact, the volume on Fifth Street is four times more than any other numbered street at the times schoolchildren are coming out of the elementary, middle and high schools. The second point staff makes is the accident rate has remained steady; actually, the accident rate at Orange and Fifth and Sixth has doubled between 2005 and 2007. The Fifth intersection was graded "F" in the 2005 Major Traffic Study. He went on to say that all these statistics are not relevant; volume going up or down, accidents going up or down. There are accidents and there's lots of volume, 300 to 400 cars an hour going down Fifth Street every afternoon during school. Our strategy is a hope strategy; it has been a "we're lucky, not smart" strategy when it comes to our children getting seriously injured. Staff's third reason for not recommending a restriction is that vehicles will just find another route. That's why in his letter eight months he said restriction signs need to go on Fifth and Sixth and maybe even Seventh. Then you need to put them here [indicating on a map] just like in this section of the City [indicating again] where there are almost 20 signs restricting cars from going down where there are no schools. What has significantly changed since this happened 11 years ago is that three schools were built. He thinks we're losing sight of all the change that has taken place and how it changed the dynamics of this environment tremendously. The fourth reason staff gives is that the parents at North Island would have to find an alternate route; actually, an easier route for a lot of them is to go out the Ocean gate, or they can go up a couple blocks

and go around and back into the school area. He believes he has properly rebutted all four of staff's reasons. He's not talking about taking people's rights away from their garages or alleys for that much time. It's 160 days a year, a total of 326 hours a year, to significantly increase the safety of our children. He read the letters that were submitted on this issue; he saw 11 in support, some very strong support, and two stating there should be no restrictions on any streets. He showed a slide of the areas around First and Second with signs and said the folks who are against restricting turns would be against the signs in this area. He said his issue is altruistic and about the safety of children on this street. He comes out of the gate and goes down Fifth Street when school is letting out to go see his children; he said he is part of the problem. He can't go down the widest street in the City, Palm, where there are no schools and there are no children, compared to what is going on on Fifth around the time school gets out. We need to look at what dynamics have changed over the last 10 years in this area.

Julia Viera, 563 Alameda, very much disapproves the idea of having the left turn changed. She thinks the difference in the Navy gates has made so much difference. There is way less traffic on Alameda now than there used to be. She doesn't even think decals for parking are needed anymore because there's parking on the base. When she comes down Third Street and turns left on Alameda she wants to get into her garage and wants to be able to turn left on Fifth and so do all her neighbors. She hopes the Committee will pay attention to the recommendation in the staff report.

Polly Valliere has lived at the corner of Fifth and H for fifty years. It's appalling to hear someone say the traffic has not increased. She has noticed that when the carriers are in there is more and more traffic, not less. They're lined up in front of her house and children run in front of them. When there's a police car parked the cars will stop at the stop sign but often they don't. They've seen death on that corner twice.

Pam Hollinger, 415 Alameda, suggested a no right turn off of the base onto Alameda during certain hours. She has a problem when she comes out of her garage and goes down to Fifth to try to get on to Alameda. It's impossible; cars are on two wheels, coming around the corner. If there was a no turn during certain hours that would help solve the problem. It would be just as easy for people to go out the Ocean gate. The problem a left-turn restriction would incur is that people would start going down the lettered streets and alleys.

John McKechnie, 540 Alameda, said he's done his own studies on traffic. The City did its traffic study by placing a counter on Fifth Street just east of Alameda Boulevard. He counted Alameda and found that only 30% of the cars on Alameda turned down Fifth. Seventy percent were on Alameda. He would reject the recommendation to put a no right-hand turn coming off the base. He found the vast majority of the traffic on Alameda to be local residents; the 70% were not going past Fifth to turn on Sixth. Only five percent turned down Sixth. The rest of the cars went down Alameda and turned into Country Club. So this is a resident issue, not a base traffic issue. One other problem with the suggestion that there be no turns onto Fifth is that the people who live in the Country Club area have no alleys and if you put all the traffic onto Alameda they cannot get out of their driveways. Traffic would be backed up from the Sixth Street stop sign. The majority of the traffic is not on Fifth. The Fifth Street no turn business is a NIMBY operation. Think back to the diverters on A and B. That was a zoo; the traffic problems that caused were enormous, throughout the City. He said that if there's no traffic coming down Fifth the cars will move to Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth and increase the amount of traffic in front of the other schools. There's one school on Fifth Street; on Sixth Street there are three schools. He doesn't think it's smart to move the traffic off Fifth and put it on Sixth. He said that the traffic coming off the base is people

defending our country and they deserve to be given a little bit of leeway. They want to get home; let's let them get off the base fast. These are people we want to shop in Coronado, but we don't want them to drive on our streets? That isn't fair.

Frank Tierney, 550 J Avenue, was the Councilmember who was recused. If we were to put no left turns on those streets it just means that people would go down Fourth and turn on J and various other streets to get where they want to go. The reason they take Fifth is because there's no traffic light at the other end. To squeeze other neighborhoods by pushing traffic from one area just means you're pushing it into someone else's area and they will find ways to get around it. In spite of all of the school stuff he's heard today, it's not the problem. The issue is traffic and traffic will continue to be here with us. People who live over there and shop at the base would be precluded from going back to their homes if a turn restriction is installed and will have to drive down several more blocks, only to make a U-turn and go all the way back. He concurs with staff's analysis; this is not a requirement. It would just bottle everything up in that particular juncture. He went back to the diverters; it took almost an act of Congress to get rid of them and all they did was stack up traffic. If you start putting restrictions in the area, we will have denied access to our homes legitimately. He thinks this would be a very, very bad thing to do. The specifics of sending traffic into other people's areas is a NIMBY motion and is not what he considers good government. He supports staff's analysis that turn restrictions are not required and would only cause consternation; it would also cause people who live in the Country Club area to get all backed up trying to get to their homes.

Mr. Walton said he did a survey similar to Mr. McKechnie's. He spent about three hours there over a couple of days, watching traffic. He had very similar numbers; 73-74% were on Alameda going past Fifth Street. He noted that 20% of the vehicles turning right off the base made a turn on Fifth Street. Another phenomenon was traffic crossing Third Street and coming up Alameda from the north end of town; he doesn't know if they were coming from First Street or if they're coming from Third Street from another area of town. He heard talk about people being denied access to their homes so he followed vehicles during the peak hours and they were heading toward the bridge. He followed 10 people and eight of them went directly to the bridge. So there is significant cut-through traffic and he's torn because he doesn't want to see traffic cut through residential neighborhoods. Anything the City does will force traffic somewhere else so he is reluctant to put a restriction in that's going to cause a problem in another area. He thinks safety is the real issue. Is this a safety problem? Granted, there's a lot of traffic that's cutting through, but there isn't a significant amount of accidents. There has been one pedestrian accident in the most recent three-year history. The committee that the City and the school district set up is going to help change some of the behavior of the drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists and he thinks that's what we need to focus on.

Mr. Scanlon commented on the suggestion that there be a no right-turn restriction on Alameda at Fourth. In the future there's a thought to put a traffic signal at Fourth and Alameda and it would seem that there would be a further incentive to turn right onto Alameda when there's a red light. If that signal light is put in place it would be a tremendous incentive to stay in that right lane to avoid the red light. Mr. Johnson noted that the City does not have jurisdiction to place any type of restriction on that leg of the intersection and his personal opinion is that the Navy would be reluctant to do any type of turn restriction. Mr. Walton noted that the City Council has elected to reconsider the traffic signals at its first meeting in September.

Mr. Hadfield moved to approve the staff recommendation; Mr. Scanlon seconded it and it passed unanimously.

6. Discussion Item – Motorcycle, Bicycle and Bus Stop Locations – Mr. Huth placed this on the agenda to discuss issues that are coming up in the downtown area. He has observed in the downtown area, specifically between Eighth and Adella, including Churchill and Isabella, and typically where there is metered parking, motorcycles taking up full parking spaces. A lot of other agencies have designated motorcycle parking areas which tend to optimize the ability for people to park motorcycles. He's observed that in beach cities they're typically toward the ends of the blocks. It helps organize parking where there's a limited amount of parking space. Mr. Scanlon observed that when there's motorcycle parking at the end of a block it prohibits high-profile vehicles from parking there and therefore people have better sight lines when they pull up to the intersection. The Police Department often gets complaints about large trucks at the very end of a block. Mr. Huth felt there are some red zones that could be converted to motorcycle parking.

Mr. Hadfield said an idea to increase the potential number of parking opportunities would be to start limiting the number of bus stops. There are bus stops on every block and some of them may be currently underutilized. Motorcycle parking could be placed in those particular areas. Mr. Huth said he's seen quite a bit of variation in bus stops in other communities. He's seen what appear to be areas that are less than the MTS standard that Coronado is using. He thought there might be merit in talking with MTS about ridership and location of bus stops. He knows there are some popular bus stops, but there are others where he's never seen anybody there. Mr. Hadfield said he'd had the same observation.

Mr. Huth said that the Public Services Department has been battling trying to find places for bicycle parking. This has been addressed in the design of the downtown improvements, but a business can change and there will be a request for more bicycle parking. There's a huge amount of bicycle traffic in front of food establishments and he's wondering if it makes any sense to look at the bus stop areas and create a combination motorcycle/bicycle location. It would do quite a bit for the sidewalks because now there are a lot of obstructions on the sidewalks from people tying bikes up to trees and parking them in the middle of the sidewalk. This isn't just single bikes; it's bikes with kid carriers on the back as well. He'd like to develop a protocol for where to locate bike racks; Public Services is getting inundated with questions about them.

Mr. Walton said that a Bicycle Master Plan is coming up and bicycle storage and bikes on sidewalks could be incorporated into that. We would then hear what the biking community thinks about that.

Mr. Walton recommended contacting MTS about the number of bus stops and ask them to provide their usage – how many people are on and off at each stop – and see if there any that can be eliminated. In the past they've been reluctant to give up anything.

Mr. Walton didn't feel there is much demand for motorcycle parking and Ms. Hurst agreed and said she wouldn't want to give up a car parking space to convert it to motorcycle parking if it's going to be unutilized. However, since motorcycles are small, there might be spaces that aren't being utilized for cars now because they're too small and those are the spaces, if they're in appropriate locations, where motorcycle spaces would be a good addition. Mr. Huth said there are several areas on the ends of blocks that have red zones; there's one in particular on Eighth and Orange. It appears that you can put one or two motorcycles there and still have a little red zone.

Mr. Scanlon said there's a concept called "crime prevention through environmental design" and one of the things that's a problem in Coronado is motorcycles being stolen. It's probably not a problem to have motorcycle parking on Orange, but having it on side streets which are out of the public view may create an opportunity for more motorcycle thefts.

Mr. Walton said the red curb inventory will be addressed in the *Coronado Currents*, asking people if there are any areas that they'd like to see reduced. Maybe some of the red curb identified to be reduced could be converted to motorcycle parking.

The meeting adjourned at 3:19 p.m.