

**CITY OF CORONADO**  
**TRAFFIC OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**Monday, December 7, 2009**

A special meeting of the Traffic Operations Committee (T.O.C.) was held on Monday, December 7, 2009, at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Ed Walton, Rachel Hurst and Lou Scanlon were present. Kim Godby represented the absent Scott Huth and John Traylor was absent and unrepresented. Principal Engineer Jim Newton was also present.

1. Minutes of the October 22, 2009 Meeting – Approval – Ms. Godby moved to approve the minutes, Mr. Scanlon seconded the motion and they were approved unanimously, with Ms. Hurst abstaining.
2. Oral Communications – None.
3. Recommendation Regarding a Request to Install a Blue Curb Zone in Front of 134 H Avenue – Mr. Newton said that Ms. Grace Volkman, resident at 134 H Avenue, requested a blue curb zone be installed in front of her residence. She wrote that she has a disability that makes walking difficult for her. Her property is not served by a driveway in the front; it does have alley access from the back where there is a three-car garage. The applicant has explained that it is difficult for her to get back to the garage.

The City has a policy for installing residential blue curbs and there are three criteria that must be met: (1) The requestor is in possession of a handicap placard; (2) There is no space on the property that could be used or converted to accessible on-site parking; and (3) The applicant is not capable of unassisted travel for more than 50'. In this instance, the second condition is the only one that is not met due to the garage that is present on the property. Therefore, staff recommends against the installation of a blue curb as the property does not meet all three requirements as stated in the City's blue curb policy.

Chris Wood, 142 H Avenue, lives next door to the requestor. There is currently 40' of parking space in front of the requestor's house and in front of his house there is 20'. He and his wife are in the Navy and both have vehicles. He has observed over the past couple of months that there's only one car that parks in front of 134 H Avenue and the requestor is usually picked up by friends. There are two walkways that intersect the sidewalk up to her house and a couple of times Ms. Volkman has requested that he park in front of his house; if there's not enough parking space sometimes he has to overlap, but there is a second walkway she can use to get to the street.

Mr. Walton said exceptions have been made in the past but he's a little reluctant in this case because there is available parking on the property. He has driven past the area several times and it seems like there is available parking. It doesn't seem like that area is crunched for parking like some of the other areas in town.

Ms. Hurst said that if this area were to be made a blue curb zone then it would not be available to every other person who would otherwise be able to park there. She would not like to see the space not utilized for parking when that's what it's for.

Mr. Scanlon made a motion to approve the staff recommendation not to install a blue curb at this location, Ms. Hurst seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. Recommendation Regarding the Request to Install a Left-Turn Restriction on Third Street at the A/B Alley – Mr. Newton said that Tom Shine, 339 B Avenue, requested the implementation of additional time restrictions for the turning movements into the A/B alley (between A and B Avenues and Third and Fourth Streets). In his request, Mr. Shine described how vehicles pull into the alley, apparently looking to go toward the southern end of the island; when they get to the end of the alley, approaching Fourth Street, the number of cars tends to back up and makes access into the alley from Fourth Street difficult and even access into some of the garages difficult if not impossible at times. Historically, streets and alleys in this area have experienced increased traffic volumes during peak traffic hours, particularly during the mornings and afternoons, by drivers looking for a shortcut to the southern end of the island. As they exist today, A, B and C Avenues all have turning restrictions off Third between 5:00-8:00 a.m., as do the alleys in between them. In addition, the alley between B and C Avenues has an additional restriction in the afternoon from 2:30-4:30 p.m. Staff observations of these alleys suggest that the restrictions are helping restrict cut-through traffic. Recent volume counts in the A/B alley show that while the restrictions are in place fewer than 10 cars an hour pull into that alley illegally; in the afternoon, when the restriction is not in place, that number increased to 20 to 30 cars an hour. Looking at some data dating back to 2006 when the restrictions were implemented, it appears that the afternoon restriction is working for the B/C alley; the number of cars going down that alley is fewer than 10 cars per hour in both the morning and afternoon. With the City's overall goal of trying to keep through traffic out of those alleys and on some of the more major surface streets, it's staff's recommendation to implement a turning restriction for the A/B alley in the afternoon.

Ms. Hurst asked if the afternoon restriction on one alley but not the other was purposeful or inadvertent and Mr. Newton said that it appeared to be inadvertent.

Karen Nealey, 325 B Avenue, spoke for herself and on behalf of her husband, in favor of some sort of left-turn restriction from Third to the A/B alley. They view this as a safety issue. As you come off the bridge, both sections of the roadway are parallel, but once they diverge, Third Street makes a very sharp S-turn. The sharpness turns at right about A Avenue and there is not time enough for any vehicle to make a reasonable decision as to whether it's safe to make the turn. Right now there is no consistency in turn restrictions in this corridor and if safety is the main concern, she thinks consistency should follow from that.

Tom Shine, 339 B Avenue, commended staff for their thoroughness and approach to this problem and clearly he is in support of it.

David Klein, 333 B Avenue, said that turning left into the A/B alley is problematic from a safety standpoint. Just last week, a child was hit in the alley. He agrees that a left-turn restriction with the times presented would be hugely advantageous to adopt. He also feels strongly that even when people are permitted to turn outside of that restriction, the speed with which they traverse the alley is in excess of the speed limit in most cases. The reason they're going down the alley is to save time and make a shortcut. He has witnessed people going at least 35 mph and on a couple of instances, even faster than that. It's completely unreasonable for anyone to think it's a freeway. In the future he'd like to readdress some type of afternoon restrictions on A and B Avenues because people turn left in order to cut south. They are often backed up all the way to Third, they get frustrated and are beeping their horns, and will even go on the left side of the lane of traffic, double barrel all the way up to Fourth; then when someone's

trying to turn left onto B, they meet a car head on in a lane that car should not even be in. That is not an uncommon occurrence.

Carrie Himmelberger, 1311 Fourth Street, the corner of Fourth and the A/B alley, has lived at this address since 1987 and every year the problem has become worse. Often, when she's coming down Fourth, trying to make a left-hand turn into the alley to her garage, she is blocked by cars sitting in the center of the alley. They honk at her and yell obscenities at her to get out of the way. Something needs to be done. Also, it's very dangerous trying to turn into her alley from Fourth Street because people do not drive the speed limit and there's a danger of getting rear-ended.

Rachel Klein, 333 B Avenue, thinks it would be advantageous to post the speed limit sign in the alley. She thinks that people may think it's a 25 mph zone when it's actually 15.

Chris Wood, 142 H Avenue, said that in four months Coronado will have two more carriers at North Island. If we can set a precedent now that there are no shortcuts he thinks we'll have fewer problems come April, May and June, when 10,000 new sailors try to get acclimated to figuring out the right ways to come on and off the island.

Mr. Scanlon moved to approve the staff recommendation to install a left-turn restriction at this alley, Ms. Hurst seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Mr. Walton reminded the audience that residents trying to get to their garages will have to drive around during those hours which is somewhat of an inconvenience. He said that this will have to be approved by the City Council before it can be implemented.

5. Recommendation Regarding a Request to Install "Keep Clear" Pavement Legends at the Intersection of Orange Avenue and Loma Avenue – Mr. Newton said Ms. Millie Creager asked the City to consider installation of "Keep Clear" pavement legends at the intersection of Orange and Loma Avenues. Ms. Creager described how traffic can back up from the traffic signal at the intersection of Orange and Adella and was hoping that the installation of the words "Keep Clear" on the pavement, similar to installations elsewhere in the County, would help remind motorists to keep that intersection clear if and when the traffic queues do reach that intersection. Staff contacted Caltrans because Orange Avenue is a Caltrans facility and received a response that they are not supportive of the idea, for two reasons: (1) The intersection of Orange and Loma is wide and the installation of a "Keep Clear" legend isn't practical; and (2) the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*, which is sort of a Caltrans "bible" of traffic markings, doesn't give guidance on the use of "Keep Clear" markings in this particular case. Further discussion with Caltrans staff and some research show that the *MUTCD* mentions the use of "Keep Clears," but only with regard to signalized intersections, which this is not.

The City did some additional research and observed the intersection on several occasions at three different times of day, once in the morning between 6:15-7:15 a.m., once in the mid-day between 12:00-1:00 p.m., and in the late afternoon between 4:00-5:15 p.m. The morning hour was chosen because that is where the City sees the highest number of cars on the street; the 12:00-1:00 p.m. hour was chosen to see if the lunchtime rush had any effect on the intersection; and the 4:00-5:15 p.m. time was chosen because Ms. Creager felt that it is worst around 5:00 p.m. In the morning the intersection was watched during 34 traffic signal cycles at the intersection of Orange and Adella. During that time the queue from the traffic signal backed up to the Loma intersection a total of 10 times and of those times, five times traffic did block the intersection; this is about 15%. Between noon and 1:00 p.m. 24 signal cycles were observed and the queue backed up to Loma three times, but none of those times did traffic physically block the intersection. In the evening time frame there were 27 signal cycles and nine times traffic backed up to the Loma intersection; of those nine times, traffic blocked the intersection four times,

roughly 15%. Staff noted that as it got closer and closer to 5:00, the traffic was more consistently longer and reached the Loma intersection more frequently, but after 5:00 the traffic queues shortened rather rapidly. Other observations included that even when the intersection was blocked it usually only took one traffic signal cycle at Adella to clear out the vehicle queue and allow vehicles off Loma. It usually takes two to three minutes per traffic signal cycle. Looking at the relatively low number of vehicles being affected (usually fewer than 10 cars in the morning and afternoon, the peak time for cars coming off of Loma being between 12:00-1:00 with about 40 cars per hour). Based on the low number of vehicles affected and the fact that the City does not have Caltrans' support it is staff's recommendation to not install pavement legends.

Millie Creager, 1040 Loma, requested the pavement markings. This is done in La Jolla and people obey the request when they see it. She said her timing was bad because right now there is very little traffic in Coronado; it's sort of the shoulder season. During the spring break and especially in the summer the traffic backs up and it becomes frustrating to sit on Loma Avenue trying to cross Orange Avenue. If the City is depending on the observations being done to pass or not pass this request she requested that this be tabled until there is a summer count. It's hard for residents to get across; it's hard for pedestrians to cross when the traffic is blocking Loma Avenue because the cars are jamming and it's very unsafe to walk around. Loma is a very specific street that needs the "Keep Clear." The other streets don't need it. When you're going from First to Tenth Street it's a straight shot and drivers can see if cars are backed up or not and they are polite and mostly keep the intersections clear. Once you've passed Tenth the street curves and by the time you get to the light at the Hotel Del on Adella there's enough of a curve that people get sort of trapped at Loma, they didn't realize there was a light up there and they are sitting there. She asked if staff would consider looking at this issue one more time.

Susan McMillan, 1045 Loma Avenue, agrees with Ms. Creager that there's a lot of traffic there. In the summertime drivers don't necessarily feel that it's going to back up that far, but then they're stuck in the intersection. She asked that this be looked at again in the summer. She thinks the numbers will change dramatically.

Hugh Campbell lives on D Avenue, a few blocks away. On one occasion he was at this intersection and witnessed a pedestrian being hit crossing the street when someone was trying to shoot between all the traffic and make a left turn. It's different in the summer and those who understand the dangers can go a block out of their way to cross the street, but for the people that don't live here he thinks it's dangerous and there could be markings. He doesn't buy the Caltrans argument that they don't have it in their manual; this is a specific case, a specific place, in a small town where their highway runs through. He doesn't think we should be guilty of being compartmentalized into somebody's rule that doesn't understand our particular situation. It's pretty severe half the year.

Mr. Walton agreed that the winter traffic is not as heavy as in the summer. One of the issues the Engineering Department is going to face is that it is a Caltrans facility; anything that does get placed there has to be approved by Caltrans. With the information presented by staff he doesn't think the City could convince Caltrans that it is necessary at this time. Right now he is inclined to deny the request but he would like to see what the numbers are in the summer to see if it substantially increases the queuing and the backups. He made a recommendation to bring this back to the Committee in the summer; Mr. Scanlon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.