

CITY OF CORONADO
TRAFFIC OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2011

A meeting of the Traffic Operations Committee (TOC) was held on Thursday, January 27, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Scott Huth, Rachel Hurst, John Traylor and Ed Walton were present. Lou Scanlon was absent and unrepresented. Assistant Engineer Dave Johnson was also present.

1. Minutes of the December 9, 2010 Special Meeting – The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Oral Communications – None.

3. Recommendation Regarding the Request to Install a Blue Curb Zone in Front of the Residence at 526 A Avenue – Mr. Johnson said that Gary Isley requested a blue curb zone at 526 A Avenue. He states that his wife, Deanna Merrill, has a disability which requires her to use a wheelchair and would benefit from a blue curb zone in front of their residence. Ms. Merrill fulfills all but one of the requirements of the warrant for a residential blue curb, and that is the area on the property that could be converted to a handicap spot. This is typically a garage. Mr. Isley has a two-car garage on the back of his property which is accessible from the alley. There is a pebble path that leads out of the garage and into the back of the residence. There are some improvements that would need to be made in order for Mr. Isley to be able to accommodate his wife; that would most likely be a concrete path and there would need to be a ramp to get to the level of an addition to the house. He went on to say that in the front of the house there is a staircase that leads up to the living quarters. Ms. Merrill has an electric lift that has been built into the stairs. When you enter the front door, immediately across the entryway are the stairs with the electric lift that lead upstairs. Because of the configuration of the house, it would be more convenient for Mr. Isley and Ms. Merrill if they were able to load her from the front of the house. But again, the warrant is not met and the recommendation is to not install a blue curb.

Mr. Traylor asked how a wheelchair would transition the curb and cross the parkway with handicap parking in front of the house. Mr. Johnson said that typical of other blue curb zones in front of residences, the City doesn't provide a ramp that would be necessary if we were making improvements to the right-of-way at a curb return. Even though there'd be a place to park out front, there'd still be an issue of getting Ms. Merrill onto the curb.

Mr. Traylor wondered if there is the ability to maneuver from the rear of the residence to the stair lift. Mr. Johnson said he could see how it would be difficult to load from the back through the addition and go through the living room to get Ms. Merrill to the stair lift. It's not as short as loading from the front.

Mr. Walton said if the applicant would have to make alterations to the house itself when coming from the back, he'd be inclined to grant the request, but if that's not the case, as he believes, and the warrant isn't met, it shouldn't be granted.

Mr. Huth doesn't get a sense that there's a lot of parking demand on A Avenue in that area. Mr. Johnson said that most of the times he's driven past there it hasn't been too impacted; although the applicants said one of the reasons they are requesting this is because it has been more difficult for them to find a place because one residence across the street has a lot of people parking on the street.

Mr. Traylor moved to deny the request and Mr. Walton seconded it. It passed unanimously.

4. Recommendation Regarding Various Signing and Striping Requests Made by The Landing Condominiums at 1099 First Street – Mr. Johnson said The Landing's board of directors has asked for several improvements which, in their opinion, would improve traffic safety near the entrance to the parking lot. He said that in June the City responded to another request of The Landing's and painted a portion of the parallel parking curb line red as you exit the driveway at this location. The more recently requested improvements include:

- A. Removal of some on-street parking – The Landing requested elimination of two parking spots on either side of the driveway exit “to vastly improve visibility for cars entering the intersection. Presently, if a large car or truck is parked on either side, it completely blocks a driver's ability to see, and he must inch out into the street in order to BE seen as opposed to simply SEEING whether the way is clear.” Mr. Johnson said that on-street parking removal is contrary to the City's Strategic Plan. On-street parking is very important because the City is very limited as to the amount of on-site parking it has. Mr. Johnson said this intersection is similar throughout Coronado; a driver who stops at the driveway threshold hasn't pulled out far enough to see oncoming traffic so the view to the right would be blocked if a vehicle is parked there. As is typical in Coronado, you need to pull out to a safe location where you can see the oncoming traffic. Removal of parking spaces, either on the east or west side, would not increase the safety of this location because it's imperative that you pull out beyond the threshold of the driveway to see the oncoming traffic. Therefore, the recommendation is to not remove any parking spaces at this location.
- B. Adding convex mirrors to allow vehicles to see traffic exiting the driveway – The Landing requested that the City “Install mirrors on either side to reflect oncoming traffic.” Mr. Johnson said convex mirrors are used in a lot of situation, but only on private property. Convex mirrors are not an approved traffic control device that can be placed in the public right-of-way. Therefore, they are not being recommended. That is not to say that The Landing could not install them on their private property if they felt they could help.
- C. A pedestrian crossing – The Landing requested that the City “Install a pedestrian crossing with appropriate signage to encourage cars to approach with care rather than speeding down from Orange or after the stop sign at E from the other direction.” Mr. Johnson said there's already a marked crosswalk at E and one at Orange. Marked crosswalks are installed to guide pedestrians across a complex intersection and they're typically only installed at controlled intersection – that is where vehicles are being stopped so that pedestrians aren't in conflict with moving vehicles. The City does have uncontrolled crosswalks and there is a warrant for their installation. This location does not meet the

warrant's criteria because of the proximity of the existing crosswalks. Crosswalks are not used for traffic control or to calm traffic.

- D. Warning signs – The Landing requested “A warning sign to oncoming traffic that there is cross-traffic entering the intersection; use caution.” Mr. Johnson that the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices* has a sign that says “Cross Traffic Does Not Stop.” That sign is only to be used in conjunction with a stop sign. It goes underneath a stop sign on either side of the street and one of the difficulties with this location is that there is not a stop sign there. Therefore, it is not warranted for this sign to be directed at drivers on First Street. First Street is the principal street and has the predominant movement; therefore, it is incumbent upon traffic entering that street to yield and use caution when entering.

Mr. Johnson said accident history at this location was reviewed. Staff found that there have been no reported collisions over the last three years and only two reported collisions in the last 10 years, so it doesn't appear that this is an inherently dangerous intersection. Because of the traffic volume on First Street it probably can be difficult for people on D Avenue and coming out the parking lot, particularly in the mornings and afternoons, to find a break in traffic to get in, but he doesn't believe there's a safety issue at this intersection.

Paul McCarthy, president of the Landing Homeowners Association, disagrees with Mr. Johnson's analysis. He said the last accident at this location was March 2, 2010. It's a matter of public safety in coming out of the parking lot as opposed to convenience of parking. There's a parking lot that has restrictions on it that the City maintains but it comes under the auspices of the Port District. There is plenty of parking in that area. He said if a vehicle is parked to the right of the driveway exit it's really hard to see. If the Navy base lets out at 2:00 p.m. and you're trying to get out of the parking lot it's difficult. What exacerbates it is the previous stop sign and the one at the traffic light. By the time a driver hits the crosswalk two blocks to the west, he floors it and by the time he gets to where the parking lot is, trying to get out is very difficult. If you come the other way you essentially get three lanes that squeeze down to two right at the parking lot entrance. The population in Coronado is aging, as is the population of The Landing. Sometimes their reactions are not the quickest, but they still drive. He doesn't think what they're asking for is unreasonable.

Marilyn Rees, a resident of The Landing, said she's one of 92 units times however many people are in each unit, so it's all of these residents dealing with this, as opposed to one issue like a blue curb request for one residence. It's a much more dense situation here where it's a constant in and out. The fact that the parking lot is there not only alleviates the parking issues in that area, but it also complicates the number of people turning in as residents are exiting. She thinks the safety conditions are challenging. With respect to the Strategic Objective, identifying and eliminating safety problems as they develop, this is exactly where this falls under and she thinks it supersedes the issue that it's not within the framework of the Strategic Objective to eliminate parking. Extra parking isn't needed; more safety is.

Herb Zoehrer, a resident of The Landing, said it seems there are two strategies we're concerned with: safety and parking. It's sad if we have to wait for an accident to react and make something safer to prevent accidents. He understands that parking is a problem in Coronado. Some things that can be done concern the height and size of vehicles today and how restrictive that is to vision at different intersections. Another corollary to that is the angle parking when you have extremely oversized vehicles with trailer hitches on the back. He thinks this is a larger

problem than just at this intersection. Maybe it should be looked at by the new City Traffic Commission. We have a problem because there are too many cars. He'd like to think we can be proactive rather than reactive. In aviation safety they always try to take actions to prevent accidents in advance, rather than reacting after, and he thinks that's an issue that needs to be addressed by this committee.

Phil Pappaccio, a resident of The Landing, agrees with everything that's been said so far and wanted to bring up another exacerbating circumstance. We live in a resort town and many people walk across D to that parking lot and many people on bikes come in from the sidewalk as well as cross the street. So, in the summertime, all the situations described are exacerbated and it's very difficult to even inch out sometimes because you're blocking the path. You're blocking the bike path if you come out far enough and blocking people coming west along First Street. So it's not just a visibility issue; it's a confluence of circumstances that he thinks makes it imperative that some action be taken.

Mr. Traylor asked about the area that has already been painted red and Mr. Johnson said there is a pedestrian ramp there and it's illegal to park in front of a ped ramp, so it was never marked. The City marked that to preclude parking from the driveway wing all the way east to past the ped ramp, which is about 15' or so.

Mr. Traylor asked if crosswalks can be placed at intersections without stop signs or traffic control and Mr. Johnson said they can; they are called uncontrolled marked crosswalks. Several criteria must be met in order to determine whether or not it's a warranted location for a marked crosswalk. They include enough pedestrians at that location, cars not traveling greater than 35 mph and proximity to other existing crosswalks, among other things. This location does not meet the warrant for an uncontrolled marked crosswalk. Mr. Traylor asked if a crosswalk is a visual determining factor for slowing traffic and Mr. Johnson said it can be, but in a situation like this, if you put a marked crosswalk where drivers rarely see somebody crossing, then when one shows up and they're not expecting to see a pedestrian there, that can cause problems. That's why they're placed at locations where pedestrians are frequent and there's a need to cross, so that drivers understand that there's the expectation that pedestrians may be crossing there. In this location, we would much rather have pedestrians crossing at the signalized intersection at Orange so they can cross with the light. And there's another controlled intersection 300' to the west at E Avenue. Not only does a crosswalk at this location not meet the warrant, but it doesn't appear that it's necessary.

Mr. Traylor asked if one or more curbside parking spaces were to be removed, would parking in the lot be available and Mr. Johnson said that it is a public parking lot.

Mr. Huth asked if a Class 2 bike lane coming across the front of The Landing is being proposed in the Bicycle Master Plan. Mr. Huth said there is a migration of vehicles here and they tend to blend in past the bike lane as you head west. He's hearing that there's a desire to get a safer island out in the roadway and was wondering if a bike lane could provide something that's a little safer transition or if something similar can be achieved by a small white hatched area by the red zone. He said even if you remove a vehicle you still need to pull out to be able to see down the lane of traffic. Mr. Johnson said if the bike lane were to be extended back toward the Orange intersection it would be a citable infraction if someone were to drive in the bike lane and would be an incentive to keep vehicles centered on the road.

Mr. Walton observed that the driveway and parking lot acts a lot like the avenue, if you look right across to D Avenue. He sees it not so much as a private driveway, but as a street coming across and he thinks it needs to be treated the same as a street intersection. On D Avenue there's

no stop sign and parking right up to the curb return. He doesn't think it is an unusual situation in Coronado to have to inch out to notice vehicles and he is not inclined to grant a red curb there because it's acting like an intersection like all the others.

As far as a crosswalk, he said that with the exception of one person who talked about bicycles and pedestrians, the majority of testimony has been about visibility and vehicles and he doesn't think it's a pedestrian problem. He doesn't think there's a problem with pedestrians crossing in this area and he doesn't want to use a crosswalk, which is designed for pedestrians, as a traffic control device.

He doesn't think mirrors would be effective and they can't be used in the right-of-way because they're not a traffic control device. Perhaps The Landing can put them on private property if they feel they would assist.

He agrees with Mr. Johnson that warning the First Street drivers to be careful wouldn't really help and it really needs to be the D Avenue and people exiting the parking lot who need to use caution; they're the ones merging with traffic, so he doesn't feel a warning sign is warranted. Mr. Huth pointed out that the Vehicle Code requires cars to inch out when you're entering a street.

Mr. Walton said the Bicycle Master Plan is being developed and this is one area that the consultant could look at. He agrees that if vehicles coming westbound could be aligned closer to the center line, it would provide additional space and may be a good idea. He thinks this should be considered in the Bicycle Master Plan study.

Mr. Traylor asked if this is a permit parking area and Mr. Johnson confirmed that it is. Mr. Huth asked if there is a sign to direct people to the public parking lot and Mr. Johnson said there's a green sign with a "P" on it, but he doesn't know how many people recognize it as a public parking sign. Mr. Huth would like to see another sign that makes it more clear that there's a public parking lot here.

Mr. Walton suggested that rather than eliminating a full 18' parking space, the area in question could be treated like a curb return and paint it like there was a pedestrian ramp there and then it would be treated like a standard intersection. He doesn't want to set a precedent for removing a full parking space at an intersection when it's not done in any other locations.

Ms. Hurst asked if this is in the geographic area where the City's required to maintain a certain number of on-street parking spaces. Mr. Johnson said he would have to research if the City is required to maintain a minimum number per Coastal Commission requirements. Mr. Huth didn't think that would affect red curbing on a corner because they did red curbing at Bay View Park and it didn't require Coastal's permission. Mr. Walton said the red curbing he is proposing would not take a parking spot and therefore would not need Coastal's approval.

Mr. Traylor moved to paint the curb return from the parking lot driveway down First Street to a distance equal to a handicap ramp, making sure there are no Coastal Commission limitations that would prevent it. This would be temporary until other alternatives, including the bicycle lane striping back to the east, are explored. Mr. Huth seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.