

CITY OF CORONADO
TRAFFIC OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

March 24, 2011

A meeting of the Traffic Operations Committee (TOC) was held on Thursday, March 24, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Scott Huth, Rachel Hurst, Lou Scanlon, John Traylor and Ed Walton were present. Assistant Engineer Dave Johnson was also present.

1. Minutes of the January 27, 2011 Meeting – The minutes were approved unanimously with Mr. Scanlon abstaining.

2. Oral Communications – None.

3. Recommendation Regarding Updating the City’s Warrant for Installation of 12-Minute Green Curb Zones – Mr. Johnson said that staff was asked to review green curb zones by the Coronado business community to ensure that green curbs are being installed in an effective and consistent manner. The City has a warrant for green curb installation which states that 1) a green curb zone is warranted to provide high turnover in curbside parking at a public building, a quasi-public building or a commercial building frequented by a large number of quick stop customers.

Staff is proposing to change the warrant specifically to address the evaluation criteria, location flexibility and a five-year re-evaluation clause. It is being recommended to add a section to the Municipal Code, similar to what is already in there for red, yellow, white and blue curbs. Green curbs are mysteriously missing from the Municipal Code, so staff proposes to add Section 56.30.105 which will state that the City Council may designate places where parking is limited to 12 minutes. There has been some confusion about what the time limit is for green curb zones; there have been some 20-minute zones. This warrant will make it clear that it is a 12-minute zone. The green curb zone will be in effect between 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., all days except Sundays and holidays, unless the resolution designates different hours and times. The City will also be assessing the green curb zones on a five-year basis to make sure they’re still serving the businesses as originally intended.

Mr. Huth noted that the Committee had received an email from Karen Finch that provided feedback to Mr. Walton’s presentation to the Chamber of Commerce and it appears to be in line with what staff is proposing.

Rita Sarich, Coronado MainStreet, said the Board had been concerned about perhaps unfair or inconsistent application to requests for green curbs in the downtown. They are happy to see that staff is going to address some sort of policy. She thinks the recommendation does that. She asked if a business requests a green curb in front of or near that business whether the City will notify the other businesses in the area and give them the opportunity to say if they’d like one as well. She also would like to know how duplicate requests will be resolved. She noted that the green curb at Park Place Liquor is metered and she wondered what thought had been given to metering.

Mr. Johnson said that notification to other businesses would occur during the notification of the Traffic Operations Committee (TOC) meeting where the green curb request would be considered because staff notifies businesses and residents within 300'. We wouldn't typically notify anyone *before* it became a TOC item. In response to Ms. Sarich's question about placement, he said it has been pretty much on a first-come, first-serve basis. The warrant doesn't specifically state a green curb will be placed in front of the business requesting it; in fact, it says "The City does not guarantee green curb zones will be recommended for installation immediately adjacent to the requesting property. The following criteria will be used to determine the most appropriate location for a warranted green curb zone" The other caveat in the warrant states that we shouldn't have limited time parking zones that amount to greater than 25% of the block face. Mr. Johnson said there hasn't been much debate about the placement of green curbs in the past; most of the other businesses near a green curb have been OK with the location and have felt that it's been useful for them also.

He commented on the green curb at Park Place Liquor. When Rotary Plaza was being constructed, diagonal parking was installed by the liquor store. At that time, about half the spaces were limited-time parking and the other half were two-hour metered parking. The issue came to the TOC and it decided, with the Council's backing, that there should be two-hour metered parking at all the spaces except the one closest to the liquor store which would be a 12-minute metered zone. Right now the internal mechanism is missing from that meter and he will work with the traffic department to have it installed. There are other 12-minute metered green zones in town, but there is not a criterion as to when 12-minute zones are metered. Ms. Hurst felt that green curbs should be metered when they fall within a metered area.

Ms. Hurst noted that item 4. b. on the draft warrant states that "Consideration will be given to location and number of other facilities on the same block . . . as determined by a majority of business establishments on the block face" so it sounds like there will be some kind of participation by other businesses. Mr. Johnson said he thought that would probably be voluntary for the adjacent business owners who want to come to the Committee and express their opinions. The warrant is not worded such that the City would contact the businesses prior to notifying them that a request was scheduled to be considered by the TOC. Mr. Huth felt the businesses should be contacted for feedback before the issue goes to the TOC.

Mr. Traylor noted that the Chamber requested that there not be more than one green curb zone per block face and Mr. Johnson said the warrant has a broader restriction in that it states there should be no limited parking zones that take up more than a quarter of the block face. He's not sure if there are any blocks with more than one green zone, but there are combinations of 20-minute yellow zones with green curb zones and even some white passenger zones.

Ms. Hurst requested clarification on item 5. of the draft warrant which states that the green curbs will be re-evaluated every five years "if the requesting property has changed ownership, or at the request of the original applicant." Are the curbs to be evaluated every five years or is it another case if the property has changed ownership? And what if it's not the "original applicant"? What if someone else wants it re-evaluated? Mr. Johnson suggested the warrant could state it would be re-evaluated every five years, like residential blue curb zones are once a year.

Mr. Walton said he believed that MainStreet is also agreeable to the one per block criterion for green curbs. He'd like to add another criterion to cover metering and would propose saying that if the green curb zone falls within an existing metered parking zone the green zone being contemplated also be metered. He wouldn't want to see people seeking out a 12-minute

zone to avoid paying a meter and staying there longer; in that case there wouldn't be a quick turnover. He agrees that there should be consensus from the block and criterion 4. b. should be modified to make it clearer that we want consensus. If the place an applicant wants a green curb is not the best location he doesn't think it would be fair for them to pay for the installation, as the current warrant requires, so he thinks this needs to be modified as well.

Mr. Walton moved approval of the new green curb warrant with changes to include item 2 about payment for installation if it's not at the applicant's original requested location; that the block face be notified and if there's an alternate location that the consensus of the businesses be obtained before it comes to the TOC; the addition that if it's in a metered area, the green curb shall be metered; and that item 5 will only state "Once installed, a green curb zone will be re-evaluated every five years." Mr. Scanlon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. Recommendation Regarding a Request for Installation of a Marked Pedestrian Crosswalk at the Intersection of Second Street and Prospect Place – Mr. Johnson said this issue has come up many times in the past. It was reviewed against the warrant for a pedestrian crosswalk in 2002 and 2009. The result of the analyses showed that all of the criteria are met except gap time. Gap time is the amount of time it takes a pedestrian to cross the street; in the case of a 48' street, at four feet per second, you need 12 seconds of a clear gap (no cars coming during that time). Five 12-second gaps are required in a five-minute period during the peak hour. At this location there are always at least five 12-second gaps which is why this location does not meet the warrant for a pedestrian crosswalk.

However, if the TOC feels that something needs to be done here even though it doesn't meet the one criterion, he wanted the Committee to be aware that there are existing pedestrian ramps at the intersection, but they're on the wrong location on the north side, so they would have to be relocated. In addition, if a marked crosswalk were to be installed, at least one parking space would be lost and on-street parking is in very high demand in this area.

Rita Sarich, not speaking as the director of Coronado MainStreet, said it's unfathomable to her to take away a parking space in this area; it's the worst place to park.

Mr. Traylor made a motion to support the staff recommendation to deny a marked crosswalk at this location; Mr. Huth seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. Recommendation Regarding Possible Improvements to the Bike Path Crossing at the Coronado Cays Entrance – Mr. Johnson said that the City Council recently approved the Bicycle Master Plan. In that plan there is a short-term project that looks at removing all of the stop signs along the class I bike path and replacing them with yield signs. The debate is that bicyclists and pedestrians alike do not treat the stop signs properly; they treat them more like yield signs. In order to install controls that address what is occurring at the crossings, rather than making scofflaws out of everyone by having stop signs, staff is recommending the short-term project to remove all stop signs and stop stencils along the bike path and install yield signs and yield stencils. In addition, for the Coronado Cays intersection because of the number of pedestrians that cross, staff feels there needs to be some enhanced striping. The Engineering Department proposes to add some additional, enhanced pavement striping on the approaches to the intersection. Both northbound and southbound there would be a "Crossing Ahead" pavement marking, approximately 200' from the intersection. Once you get within 50' of the intersection, it is proposed to install "Yield Ahead" pavement markings with triangular "Yield Ahead" pavement stencils. At the intersection crossing itself there would be a yield symbol and the

sharks' tooth symbol along with the associated yield sign. To highlight this, there would be diagonal broken lines extending from the "Yield Ahead" stenciling to the yield sign; this is about a 50' section.

Mr. Walton noted that these are interim safety improvements; when the Bicycle Master Plan was adopted there were two proposals for permanent solutions, one being at grade and the other being a tunnel. Those need to have environmental reviews, but there was not funding for that, so that will take place at a future date.

Mr. Scanlon said it's his understanding that the current stop signs don't meet the traffic code as far as the regulation size. He is assuming that the yield signs would be the regulation size so they can be enforced. The police need something the courts will uphold. Mr. Johnson said standard signs would be used on the bike path, but there may be some confusion about what size should be used. He knows that the Police Department feels the signs are undersized for enforcement and the Engineering Department will check into that. The reason the smaller size signs have been used is that Chapter 1000 of the Caltrans Manual says that you can use reduced signs on pedestrian and bicycle paths.

Mr. Huth wasn't sure if it is safer to have a yield sign instead of a stop sign for those cyclists who would be prone to stop. Mr. Johnson replied that the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities* says when assigning right-of-way at bicycle crossings (such as the crossing at the Coronado Cays), "the unique behavioral characteristics of the path user and motorist alike must be taken into consideration. Regarding behavior, it must be recognized that some path users may have a very low delay tolerance; a strong desire to maintain momentum; little traffic knowledge; or sometimes a 'regulations don't apply to me' mentality. Assigning incorrect priority [such as a stop sign] or being overly restrictive in an attempt to protect path users can lead to confusion and unsafe practices by both path users and motorists, increasing the potential for a collision." To replace stop signs with yield signs is reflective of what the users of the bike path are doing now anyway. It's not practical to expect all users to stop at this location.

Larry Peterson, general manager of the Coronado Cays, said he doesn't feel staff gave much thought to its recommendation. The homeowners' association (CCHOA) sent a letter to the Mayor and City Council with four specific recommendations:

1. Installing signs warning bicyclists about the intersection, for example:
 - A. "Crosswalk ahead, prepare to dismount and walk your bike" or
 - B. "Bicyclists yield to vehicles," as shown on page AA21 of the Bicycle Master Plan;
2. Installing pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (HAWKs) or Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs), as discussed on page AA27 of the Bicycle Master Plan;
3. Installing a barrier that requires bicycles to be walked through a "turnstile" or "S" curve-type structure. Barriers like these are discussed in the Bicycle Master Plan; and
4. Removing the stop signs on the bike path, which are misleading as they apparently are unenforceable.

Mr. Peterson addressed the CCHOA's recommendations:

1. A. California law says when a bicyclist comes up to an intersection with a crosswalk, it's the law that they must dismount and walk their bike. The City put a sign up in

front of the Cays that says “Pedestrian Crosswalk.” Therefore, a person walking their bike becomes a pedestrian and the crosswalk becomes not something a bicyclist can speed through. The expectation, the way it’s set up, is that cars are at fault if they hit the bicycle.

2. Install HAWKs. This may not be approved by Caltrans but it’s certainly an option for the City to look at and possibly start a trend to use them. This is in the Bicycle Master Plan.

3. Installing a barrier that requires bicycles to be walked through. In the addendum to the staff report it says “Such devices should be used only where extreme problems are encountered.” He would say this intersection qualifies for that.

4. Removing the stop signs on the bike path which are misleading is a good idea because people don’t adhere to them.

Mr. Peterson said the CCHOA had also asked for a slow-down zone. Many times, outside that intersection, cars are going 70 miles per hour. The CCHOA director of security witnesses on almost a daily basis, some problem in that intersection. Maybe this request should go to Caltrans. He asked who has jurisdiction over the intersection and said the bike path was never designed to be a high-speed bicycle path. There used to be a planter box outside the kiosk that prevented bicyclists from going through. It appears to him that bicyclists are being catered to; where does a person driving a car have any rights in that intersection? A Cays homeowner has written the City, threatening to sue the City for not doing anything. He wants to go on record saying that the City has created a dangerous condition with the thing that sticks up out of the ground that’s permanently planted there, so when a motorist from the Cays comes out, they look at it and say “now what do I do?” More often than not there’s someone behind them that’s ready to hit them in the rear and the first motorist takes off. It’s very confusing and he would request that that be removed. Also, he was deeply troubled by the first staff recommendation. There is a serious problem in that intersection and staff’s initial recommendation was to do nothing. He is very frustrated and the board feels the same way.

Doug Metz said he concurs with Mr. Peterson and said if this Committee or this Council determines that this is not a dangerous intersection [inaudible]. The staff report says that the Bayshore Bikeway Plan does not recommend any stop signs; the implication is that bicyclists should be unimpeded, go to the max, if they wish to, anyplace. Where in that Bayshore Bike Path is there another intersection serving approximately 2,500 people, having two or more cars on the average, plus service, City, utilities, commercial and other vehicles? This is a unique intersection and is not designed the best way and we must take measures considering that it is a highly-trafficked intersection and make the assumption that it is dangerous. He has witnessed near misses. No matter what you do short of a barrier, they’re going to go zipping through. He thinks the only solution is a barrier. He has ridden the Los Gatos bike path and they have three-inch, heavy stainless steel barriers and aesthetically, it’s not objectionable. He urged staff to look at other cities. The addendum to the staff report says there has to be a serious or dangerous situation before a barrier is considered but he thinks the Cays entrance deserves at least the consideration of a barrier. Shy of barriers, he can conceive of a signal system, particularly as you go north. There could be a sensor that would sense a car coming and on the other side would be a blinking light that would signify “danger, car approaching intersection.” Rumble strips could be considered.

Mr. Traylor asked if barriers had been considered in the past and Mr. Johnson said no, not in this location. He said that in today’s practice, barriers are a last resort. He’s not familiar

with the Los Gatos trail, but if they are using a barrier that makes a cyclist get off their bike, he'd assume it's a situation where they've had fatal accidents because the practice is to not impede a bicyclist's movement unless there's a dangerous situation where there have been fatalities. He said that SANDAG's bike and pedestrian committee has looked at this intersection and feels that improvements can be made; these improvements are suggested as alternate projects in the City's Bicycle Master Plan, but barriers are not part of this plan.

Ms. Hurst referred to the CCHOA's letter and said staff has addressed their recommendation 1. A. and it sounds like 1. B. is consistent with staff's recommendation to do yield markings. Staff has also addressed why 3. is not appropriate at this location and 4. is consistent with staff's recommendation. She asked Mr. Johnson to address the use of HAWKs at this location. Mr. Johnson said this is in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* and is being used in some other states, but not the state of California. Even if it were an approved device, he's not sure it could be used in this situation because it is a signal that is activated by pedestrians to stop traffic only when a pedestrian is crossing. He's not sure how a HAWK system would work with an existing signal so close to the intersection. Mr. Scanlon pointed out that under the current Vehicle Code a motorist approaching an inoperative signal is required to stop, so the Vehicle Code would have to be changed throughout the state.

Mr. Walton said he thinks that if a HAWK were to be installed you'd have a signal and then a short distance later another signal for the highway and there is a warrant for how close signals can be spaced and it wouldn't meet that. Therefore, he doesn't think a HAWK would be appropriate to install at this time. The Bicycle Master Plan discussed reconfiguration of the intersection where the bike path would be tied into the existing traffic signal and he thinks this is something that will be explored further.

Mr. Huth said Mr. Peterson had asked who has responsibility for this intersection and Mr. Johnson said, referring to the "slow down" request, if it's on the state highway, Caltrans would need to make a recommendation. Mr. Walton clarified the responsibility for the intersection and said he believes the CCHOA has an encroachment permit to do specific landscaping and other amenities but they do not have responsibility for the overall land. Mr. Walton said the CCHOA's request for a "slow down" zone would have to be approved by Caltrans. It would need a speed survey and he doesn't know if it would be very successful because the City hasn't had a lot of success in trying to reduce the speed limit when the prevailing speed is what it is, but it can be looked at.

Mr. Scanlon asked if there is an issue with skateboarders and rumble strips and wondered if there's another method, like increasing undulations, which would not knock the wheels off skateboards and strollers but could perhaps get wheeled vehicles to slow down as they approach the intersection. Mr. Johnson said rumble strips are not recommended because they can affect rollerbladers and others. He said alternative treatments on paths are not popular because of that, whether they're large undulations or small divots in a roadway. They can affect the performance of a pedestrian or a cyclist. The state of the practice is not to do treatments that would inherently slow bicyclists and pedestrians because of the possibility of them being injured on that section of pavement.

Mr. Traylor would like to make sure that whatever size signage is put up is enforceable.

Mr. Traylor said staff's recommendation meets two of the CCHOA's requests (items 1. B. and 4.) and he doesn't think moving ahead with those items should be delayed. He made a motion to accept the recommendations in the addendum to the staff report. Mr. Huth wondered if enhanced stencils would be used at bike intersections other than the Cays and Mr. Johnson

suggested going ahead with the Cays markings and seeing how they work before they're installed elsewhere to see if we're getting the behavior we anticipate. Mr. Walton said that the City Council already approved changing out the stop signs for yield signs when it adopted the Bicycle Master Plan because that's part of the plan. He'd like to look at enhanced pavement markings at some of the bike path intersections. Mr. Walton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Huth asked if the Committee wants the Engineering Department to further investigate blocking the bike path to force bicyclists off their bikes to cross the intersection as pedestrians. He made a motion that Engineering investigate other techniques to be used on the path to encourage bicyclists to dismount and cross as pedestrians. Mr. Walton said that Engineering staff has already looked at that and is of the opinion that they don't want to force people off their bikes. He said that Mr. Johnson had already explained some reasons why and he feels that bicyclists would find a way around the barrier such as jumping onto the highway and crossing where we don't want them to cross, but staff will do whatever the Committee recommends. Ms. Hurst seconded Mr. Huth's motion and said maybe the evaluation should be of the pros and cons of this sort of thing and see what the benefits and negatives are. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:44 p.m.