

CITY OF CORONADO

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

December 15, 2011

A special meeting of the Traffic Operations Committee (TOC) was held on Thursday, December 15, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Scott Huth, Mike Blood, Rachel Hurst, Lou Scanlon and Ed Walton were present. Assistant Engineer Dave Johnson was also present.

1. Minutes of the October 27, 2011 Meeting – The minutes were approved unanimously.
2. Oral Communications – None.
3. Recommendation Regarding a Request to Prohibit Motorcycles from Passing Queued Vehicles on the Right in front of the Coronado Yacht Club – Mr. Johnson said a request had been received from the Coronado Yacht Club to analyze traffic patterns along Pomona Avenue in front of the Yacht Club. They describe an issue in the morning and afternoon peak hours when vehicles traveling northbound on Pomona are queued at the stop sign beyond the entrance to the Yacht Club; at times motorcycles will pass vehicles on the right in what is typically the parking lane along the curb line. This causes issues with vehicles coming southbound on Pomona, wanting to turn left into the Yacht Club entrance. When motorcycles are passing on the right a left-turning vehicle cannot see that motorcycle and there's a potential for vehicular conflict.

He described the intersection as a "T" intersection with a driveway entrance to the Yacht Club where vehicles enter and exit. There are no controls on Pomona Avenue at that location, but there is a stop sign for vehicles exiting the Yacht Club entrance. They are required to stop behind the sidewalk and bike path delineation and then can proceed into the intersection and make their turning movement when clear.

Staff looked at some alternatives to eliminate motorcycles from passing on the right. The first alternative was concrete bulb-outs. A bulb-out is a curb that juts into what in this case would be a parking lane at the entrance to the Yacht Club. This would eliminate a through movement when there are no vehicles parked along the curb line. It would eliminate at least one, possibly two parking spaces, on either side of the driveway entrance. There are also relatively high costs involved in a hardscape treatment like this, but a bulb-out could eliminate some of that movement although, because motorcycles are very maneuverable, they could still end up passing on the right and then move back into the traffic flow to get around a bulb-out.

Another alternative is to install candlestick delineators along the curb line at strategic locations to discourage motorcycles from being on the right. This is a less costly option; the candlesticks are replaceable and flexible. This is not a permanent improvement, but is something that can delineate an area of no travel.

The last option is reconfiguration of the driving lanes. Currently, there is one lane in each direction with parallel parking against the curb line on either side. The driving lanes could be reconfigured to add a two-way left-hand turn lane in the middle, which would be delineated

by a double-striped “island.” That would force vehicles over to the curb, farthest to the right. Although this would most likely eliminate driving on the right-hand side, it would also eliminate any parking along the curb and curbside parking is heavily utilized in that area. It’s probably not the most favorable solution from a loss of parking standpoint.

In the last three years there has been only one reported collision along this stretch of Pomona; the primary cause was DUI and there have been no reported collisions involving motorcycles and left-turning vehicles into the Yacht Club driveway.

He said staff believes that installing barriers or other improvements to prevent motorcycles from passing on the right is possible, but at this time it’s not recommended. There is not an accident history that would support this type of a treatment.

Greg Walker, 921 E Avenue, represents the Coronado Yacht Club board of directors. They feel very strongly that this is a very serious issue. He personally has had two very close calls, his wife had one and last year’s commodore had one. This is something that is happening regularly. If anyone is driving a low-profile car and trying to make a left-hand turn into the Yacht Club, motorcycles come up on the right and can’t see the cars and drivers can’t see them and there are often near collisions. They agree with some of what staff has said; they personally like option 1. Mr. Walker personally wants “road furniture” out there; the Tour de France is pretty successful in how they force traffic in the right direction. He realizes he won’t get this. He doesn’t understand why we want to keep the shoulder open for bicyclists. He fought hard in the 1980s to get the bike path put in over the railroad right-of-way and he never sees cyclists in that part of the road. They do not want to see all the parking taken. At the least they’d like to ask the City to go with option 2 to try to divert the motorcycles. He sees this as a very serious problem and the board of directors believes that a bad collision is imminent. He talked to the police once and was told there haven’t been any problems and that motorcycles can pass on the right and are allowed to share the road. There are a lot of patients in Coronado Hospital – motorcycle kids who hit somebody they didn’t see – and now they’re on a ventilator. He does not want to see that.

Larry Hofstetter, 428 Palm Avenue, is also a member of the Yacht Club. In the last six months he’s had two very close calls making a left-turn into the Yacht Club with motorcycles. One was so close that the motorcycle jacked up and ended up on the sidewalk and kept going. Close call information is more important than accident information – you need to look at and listen to that. Close calls mean that accidents are going to happen. It’s very dangerous having somebody come by that you can’t see, on the right side of traffic that’s stopped. The cars are courteous, they let people through, but then you get a motorcycle coming up very fast. He thinks the intersection coming out of the Yacht Club is in the wrong place; it either needs to come into Strand Way out of the Yacht Club or across from Tenth Street. Out in the middle of the block where there are no stop signs on the street is the wrong place to have cars coming in and out of the Yacht Club.

Lou Milioti, 917 Fifth, is the general manager for the Yacht Club. He reported that there have been a lot of near misses; he’s had several himself and it’s only a matter of time before somebody gets killed. He thinks the cost of \$1,000 for candlesticks is really nothing when you consider the price of a life.

Mr. Johnson said if there were a two-way left-turn lane there, with a painted median, you’d essentially eliminate the entire curbside parking from the Strand Way entrance all the way to the stop sign. He believes the two-way turn lane would need to extend the entire block in

order to have any effectiveness. If you only had a small section of the two-way turn lane you would still get motorcyclists that would go in and out of traffic to avoid that one location.

Mr. Huth asked if crosshatching the roadway had been considered and Mr. Johnson said he felt that would be ineffective because motorcycles are so maneuverable they would go right through the crosshatching or maneuver around it without any difficulty. In staff's opinion, anything less than a physical barrier would be ineffectual.

Mr. Blood wondered if Botts' Dots could be used with hatching or if rubber temporary curbing like that used at the roundabout could be used for a bulb-out.

Mr. Walton said bicyclists use the road between Strand Way and the Yacht Club and he would be concerned about installing Botts' Dots or any sort of barrier that would interfere with bicycles because they do like to hug the right side of the road. He has observed motorcyclists passing on the right; they seem to be in a hurry to get off the island and he doesn't know if a painted line would stop that maneuver.

Mr. Scanlon said the California Highway Patrol (CHP) website has a question about whether it's legal to pass on the right-hand side and the CHP's opinion and interpretation of the CVC is that it is legal if it's possible to do so safely. So lane splitting or lane sharing with moving vehicles or when vehicles are stopped (which is called lane filtering) is legal in California and a few other states in the United States. It's evidently fairly common throughout the world and is looked at as a means of expeditiously moving traffic during heavy congestion. It is prohibited to drive on the shoulder, but he believes the CVC specifies unpaved or unmaintained shoulder. It's also illegal to pass in the breakdown lane; that's why you don't see motorcyclists doing that in the far left lane. It's most often done on the right-hand side of the number one lane or the lane farthest to the west on a freeway. Most courts would say that it's not illegal; if the police were to cite for that it would be dismissed.

Mr. Blood mentioned Mr. Walton's having commented on bicyclists using the shoulder and asked if there isn't a bike lane right next to that. Mr. Walton said there is and he's amazed that they'd want to travel in the travel lane with vehicles, but they do.

Mr. Walton said the Yacht Club is going to be undergoing a major renovation and perhaps part of their plans could incorporate some ideas that the TOC could review as well. Mr. Walker said what the Yacht Club is proposing is not going to affect the street. He said the gate was put there when they did the land swap and Strand Way was reconfigured. He said the Yacht Club would very much support the Botts' Dots concept. If you're worried about cyclists on the road, we have a very good bike path and the City should encourage cyclists to stay off the road.

Mr. Scanlon asked about grooving the pavement perpendicular to the line of travel so that bicycle tires wouldn't get into the grooves. Mr. Johnson said that's a treatment that can be done, but it's discouraged by bicycle advocates because even if they aren't longitudinal they do cause discomfort for bicycles, pedestrians and rollerbladers. You don't see them used very much because they're not that effective; the only place he can recall seeing transverse, tactile warnings used is on 125 northbound when you come off the freeway to a stop intersection at 65 mph. The engineers who designed the freeway want you to know you're coming to a stop. He wouldn't recommend this because motorcycles would just drive over them.

Mr. Blood asked about humps and Mr. Johnson said that humps may create a dangerous situation; that's why there aren't things in the travel way that deflect cars or bounce motorcycles around. Mr. Huth brought up that there are already speed humps on that road and Mr. Johnson said they are designed as "speed cushions or pillows" and are not speed bumps like you'd see in a parking lot, like the Golf Course where there are real abrupt bumps to keep speeds down. The

speed humps on Pomona and Glorietta are designed to lower the very high speeds, but they allow drivers to drive at the speed limit. They're not designed to make people go well below the speed limit.

Mr. Huth asked if there is signage that would address this situation and Mr. Scanlon said the only thing he could think of is a sign that would say something like "Caution – Traffic Entering Driveway."

Mr. Huth asked if a stop sign at this location had been considered and Mr. Johnson said that it was analyzed when improvements to Strand Way and the Yacht Club entrance were made, but it didn't meet the warrant because the primary street is Pomona and there is not enough traffic on the driveway side. Another criterion is that there has to be 800' between stop sign locations and there is another stop sign not far away.

Ms. Hurst asked when a "No Passing" sign is appropriate and Mr. Johnson responded that they are typically used when sight distances are not available for proper passing. In this location there is a broken yellow line, so passing on the left when it's safe to do so would be perfectly legal.

Mr. Walton moved to accept the staff recommendation that no additional traffic controls be installed, but he would like to explore the possibility of whether a "No Passing" regulatory sign could be put in and then enforced. Mr. Scanlon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. Recommendation Regarding a Request for Review of Pedestrian Crosswalk Timing and Protection at the Intersection of Orange Avenue and First Street – A resident expressed concern that vehicles that get a green light heading northbound on Orange Avenue and are turning left, don't yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk. The resident asked if the City could look into extending the pedestrian phase to allow pedestrian movements to begin before the green light movement so they can get into the crosswalk and be seen better by motorists while they're turning left. There is a phase of this sort in place at Pomona and Orange Avenue. If you're crossing Pomona on the north side of the intersection and you press the pedestrian button you get a "walk" indication before northbound vehicles get a green light; this is done to allow pedestrians to get into that intersection so that vehicles are required to yield to them. The drawback to this is that the amount of time where a pedestrian is given the "walk" indication prior to the green light is essentially an extension of the cycle length where no vehicle movements are occurring. At the First Street intersection there isn't an accident history where pedestrians have been hit by left-turning vehicles. It's incumbent upon a driver to yield to a pedestrian in the crosswalk and it's also incumbent upon a pedestrian to not walk into a crosswalk in imminent danger of being hit by a vehicle and therefore, we wouldn't recommend an extension of the pedestrian phase at this location.

Mr. Blood moved to accept the staff recommendation to not modify the signal timing at the intersection of First Street and Orange Avenue, Mr. Scanlon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.