

CITY OF CORONADO
TRAFFIC OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

June 26, 2014

A meeting of the Traffic Operations Committee (TOC) was held on Thursday, June 26, 2014, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Mike Blood and Cliff Maurer present. Rachel Hurst was absent and represented by Tom Ritter; Jon Froomin was absent and represented by Mike Lawton; Ed Walton was absent and represented by Jim Newton. Assistant Engineer Dave Johnson was also present.

1. Minutes of the May 22, 2014 Meeting – The minutes were approved, with Mr. Ritter abstaining.
2. Oral Communications – None.
3. Recommendation Regarding a Request to Accommodate Valet Parking for the Commercial Establishments in the 100 Block of Orange Avenue – Mr. Johnson said the City was approached by Tim Aaron, the owner of Nicky Rottens, with a proposal to operate a valet service in front of 126 Orange Avenue, which is being developed as Shima Restaurant. Currently, as a result of their development agreement, Nicky Rottens is required to provide five parking spaces behind the hardware store at 140 Orange Avenue and in order to utilize those spaces, they currently have a valet service to provide service to those spaces. This issue is in front of the TOC to assess the safety aspects of the proposed changes to the valet operation.

Engineering staff reviewed the three-year accident history along the 100 block of Orange Avenue and found that there were eight collisions in the southbound lanes, which averages 2.6 collisions per year. Five of those collisions involved two vehicles and two of the five were classified as rear-end collisions, with unsafe speed and following too closely as the primary cause factors. The other accidents were classified as sideswipe and were caused by DUI and improper turning. The last three accidents of the eight were all broadside and occurred within the intersection of Orange Avenue and Second Street. It appears that only one of these collisions occurred from a vehicle pulling into or out of a parking space. Therefore, it doesn't appear from a safety standpoint that a valet parking operation would pose a safety issue in this area.

At present, there is dedicated two-hour metered parking along the 100 block of Orange Avenue, the northernmost location which now serves as a valet operation for Nicky Rottens after 6:00 p.m. Staff is recommending that the valet parking operation in front of Nicky Rottens be combined with the proposed valet operation at 126 Orange Avenue and, in order to do this, is also recommending that two metered parking spaces in front of Shima be used to facilitate valet parking. The reason is that if valet parking is going to be provided for the restaurants in the 100 block of Orange Avenue, it would be best to provide it at somewhat of a mid-block location. Shima has a tentative agreement in place with the Marriott Hotel at the east end of Second Street to utilize 20 parking spaces in its parking garage. Shima's proposed hours of operation would be from 11 a.m. to the close of business (up to 2 a.m.). A golf cart would be utilized to shuttle the drivers to and from the hotel.

In order for this operation to be successful, staff has recommended that the valet service provide meter bags printed with the times of operation. Right now, the City doesn't have any valet services that are running this early in the day, with the exception of the service at Sharp Coronado Hospital. It's being recommended that, if this is approved by the Council, it be done on a six-month trial basis so the utilization of the valet services during the early hours can be assessed. If approved, a podium with signage listing the hours of operation would be required and the valet service would be required to pay for the meter fees because the meters would be taken out of service from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Mr. Ritter asked for clarification as to whether the two spaces at 126 Orange Avenue would replace the existing valet parking space on the corner at Nicky Rottens and Mr. Johnson confirmed that is the intention. Mr. Ritter then asked how the success of the six-month trial period would be measured and Mr. Johnson responded that the operator would be asked to provide the City with the actual number of vehicles that are serviced on an hourly basis.

Mr. Newton asked for clarification about what the TOC was being asked to do – there are some recommendations that seem to be attached to the Commercial Use Permit (CUP), but the CUP is something the City Council would consider. Mr. Johnson said the TOC is being asked to look at the proposed location and whether that's the appropriate spot.

Tim Aaron, owner of Shima and Nicky Rottens, said he's trying to get cars in and then out of the neighborhood. He said Ace Parking has a new program where customers can text that they're ready for their car instead of giving a card to the valet who then has to go all the way to the Marriott to get the car. Then the valet will text back that the car is ready. Mr. Aaron's partner owns the condo above and behind Nicky Rottens so there are about eight garages where the shuttles will be parked.

Brian Gansert, president of operations for Ace Parking, said the way to maximize efficiency, knowing that there is a relatively small drop-off/pick-up zone, is to get the vehicles in and out as quickly as possible. During the arrival period, Ace staff will be positioned to take those cars away as quickly as possible. They'll use texting and a radio system so they are alerted as soon as possible that the customer wants their car. There will be a minimum of three people at all times and the valet podium would not be left vacant. They estimate that a one-way trip will take about one minute.

Mr. Ritter wondered if Ace could track the times that valet parking is used and Mr. Gansert said he didn't know if it could be tracked per hour because they'll be running cars, but he'll know every day how many cars are parked for lunch and dinner.

Tim Rohan thinks this is a great idea and it could help alleviate some of the huge parking problems in that neighborhood. He'd want some sort of guarantee that they wouldn't be parking on the streets, because it's easier, and then going to fill up the Marriott. He thinks it would be easy for Ace to track the usage by looking at the texts of people looking for their cars.

Karen Finch, Coronado Chamber of Commerce, said this concept was brought up at a February 2012 TOC meeting and back then it was a concept that they were hoping to implement for the 100 block in the future, so it's come to fruition. The goal is to reduce the number of cars parking and circling in that area and to help the economy in that area. They're also hoping that it will be a benefit to the entire community, not just the restaurants in that area.

Rita Sarich, Coronado MainStreet, said that to lose even one parking space in the busy downtown is difficult. To have the possibility of three parking spaces controlled by valet parking, or to take them out of commission, is very concerning to the MainStreet Board. That is, if you can't fold the current operation into the proposed operation quickly, that would be three parking spaces. MainStreet has always said valet parking as used appropriately and legitimately,

is a wonderful solution to parking problems, as is joint use, and so is supportive of it in theory. If the Council decides to approve this proposal, would it not be possible to add an additional parking space to the current parking space? It's not in the middle of the block but at least it would not have to go through any other process and we wouldn't have the potential of losing three parking spaces. Mr. Ritter asked for clarification and Ms. Sarich explained that if the current valet station needs to go through another process, perhaps Planning and Council, and the addition of two more parking spaces is approved, then that is a net three out of commission. If the current valet parking plan has to be amended, then why not, in the interim, have that valet parking space right south of the current station, instead of by 126 Orange Avenue? It would also be interesting to understand the measurements and type of evaluation that is going to occur in six months. Her question is whether the current valet service has to go through some other review before it can be combined; she's concerned about the net loss of three parking spaces, even temporarily. So if it does have to go through a review, why not attach the second parking space to the current space and valet it from there?

Mr. Blood asked Mr. Johnson what other review process would be necessary and Mr. Johnson said it was his understanding that if the TOC feels there are no safety issues involved with the proposal it would go to the City Council for a Commercial Use Permit process and there would be no further review of the valet operation. Mr. Newton asked if the intent would be a net loss of only two at any time and Mr. Johnson replied yes. He said the proposal is that if the Council approves valet parking in front of Shima, the one space in front of Nicky Rottens would revert to regular parking. Ms. Sarich said it is germane for this body because if you are talking about whether it's at 126 or expanded into the 100, then it's a matter of location and it would imply a safety concern. Mr. Johnson said expanding the location at the northern end of the block had been looked at, but it was felt it wasn't consistent with the request and that placing it more in the mid-block, where they want it, did not pose any additional safety hazards.

Harry DeNardi said he is concerned about the amount of traffic on First and Orange during the period when the base leaves the City. For at least five days a week we have stacking and gridlock from First and E to Fourth and Orange. He's challenged to understand how we're going to get a valet operation to be functional during this period of the day. He doesn't know how you're going to move traffic when you're in gridlock. He said that relative to safety, the staff report says "from a public safety standpoint it is not anticipated that valet parking would be any different than restaurant patrons parking." He feels the difference is that the effort will be doubled – a car will back in or drive in and then leave, doubling the number of operations for parking. The other issue is that staff is asking the TOC to recommend to the City Council approval of this plan over and above safety and he thought we were here to talk about safety.

Eddie Warner has two concerns – one is the estimated time frame for the one-way trip; given the speed limit in that area and the number of stop signs, she wouldn't want pressure put on the drivers to make it a minute trip. Saying it's a minute trip is very impractical. She's also concerned about the pick-up process where the server or the diner notifies that they're ready for their car. In her experience, especially with a group of people dining, when you say you think you're ready to leave and when you actually leave is vastly different. Her concern is if she texts that she wants her car and her car is brought out and she gets delayed, where does that car sit while the valet is waiting for her to come out?

Mr. Aaron said texting is an option and can be looked in with the six-month review. He said their proposal is for two spots, but they'll gain 20 parking spots at the hotel that can be flipped and constantly used. Giving up two to gain 20 for an eight-hour period is what he's trying to accomplish. This operation is for any patron, not just restaurants. If people want to

come to retail shops or the veterinarian, the valet is set for all the patrons that come to Coronado. 126 Orange seems to be the area where the sidewalk opens up, so it made sense to ask for parking there, but it could be up three spots; it doesn't matter.

Mr. Blood said the net gain – two for 20 – makes sense to him. He's seen something similar on Prospect in La Jolla. Prospect is very similar to Orange Avenue. There is a parking garage and they run a lot of cars into that garage, hustle back up, and are ready to park more cars.

Mr. Ritter said from a safety standpoint he thinks it's safe. He agrees that there's a lot of traffic in the afternoon, but he doesn't think many people will be using the valet service during that time of congestion. Outside of safety, he thinks there are some practicality issues that the Planning Commission or City Council will have to address; that is, is it efficient to have two spaces removed? And the TOC will have to make a recommendation about how that is evaluated. If no one's parking there, it's probably not worth it for the betterment of the public to have it. As far as the evaluation, he thinks how many cars come in and out at what time of day should be kept track of. It would also be nice to correlate that with how much they're charging for the valet service so we can see what may be the factor in whether or not people are using the service.

Mr. Maurer said that during the time North Island Naval Air Station is exiting, he would think that if someone wants to use a restaurant or retail in that area, if there's accessible curbside parking, that would be their first choice, and if there's not he thinks having a valet would be a better choice than having that person circle the block three or four times during a very highly congested time of traffic. Even though using a valet means an extra trip, he thinks the valet is a more efficient solution.

Mr. Newton is in support of this. The existing valet operation at Nicky Rottens shows that it can operate safely. He thinks that for the intent of serving the whole 100 block, it makes more sense to put it toward the middle of the block, but as long as it's all combined into one spot, whether it's in front of Shima or Nicky Rottens, he doesn't think that's a big deal, but he does prefer the location toward the mid-block.

Mr. Lawton thinks the two mid-block spots are better than the end of the block, particularly with the traffic accidents that were mentioned.

Mr. Ritter moved to approve the staff recommendation to approve the valet parking plan with the inclusion that the golf cart would be staged at the Marriott, there would be a six-month review, and that the operator will track the time in and time out and how much they're charging. Mr. Newton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. Recommendation Regarding a Request to Install Enhanced Crosswalk Markings and Signage at the Intersection of Orange Avenue and Seventh Street – Mr. Johnson said a year ago a resident expressed concern regarding his difficulty in crossing Orange Avenue at Seventh Street and contacted Caltrans to ask if they could recommend any improvements. This was not a request that came through the City; therefore the City was not directly involved in the request, but it appears that Caltrans responded to the resident and said they felt this intersection should have enhanced crosswalk markings and some different signage. Some time went by without anything happening and the resident contacted the City asking the status of Caltrans' recommendations. The recommendation to the TOC is to work with Caltrans to install the recommended enhanced crosswalk markings and replace the existing pedestrian warning signs on the approach to the intersection with the most recent version of the signs. The current signs are yellow and the new version is fluorescent green and is to be used in all school zones. The

existing crosswalks, which are two transverse white lines across Orange Avenue, would be replaced by ladder-style crosswalks which are more visible.

Mr. Maurer said that in his experience vehicle drivers don't necessarily observe the two white lines, but when a pedestrian steps into the ladder-style crosswalk, the driver is more apt to obey the law, stop, and let the pedestrian cross. His concern with Orange is that when the traffic volume is heavy, but not real heavy, the pace of the cars is at a higher level, and with a double lane in each direction, is that if the car closest to the pedestrian stops to observe it and if that's a large vehicle, the car in the far lane does not see the pedestrian and that person walks out and gets hit by the second car, not the first one. Are we possibly solving a problem and creating a problem that could have a more catastrophic concern? He thinks that to cross Orange between Fourth and Tenth you almost need a light to do it safely. People in a crosswalk know they have the right-of-way but there are four lanes of traffic with the median to get across and all you need is one of those lanes to have someone be inattentive and there's a problem.

Mr. Ritter thinks the ladder-style lines will be more visible and make it a little safer.

Mr. Newton asked Mr. Johnson for a history with Caltrans with respect to the second car concern. He knows that the City has made that argument against putting the "yield to pedestrians" signs in the center line for that very reason and he thinks there's some Caltrans history where they've drawn a similar argument and said no to certain things. Mr. Johnson said it's his understanding that prior to 1985 or 1986 there were marked crosswalks at all crossings in Coronado along Orange Avenue. In the vicinity of Loma and Orange the described situation resulted in a fatality and Caltrans was sued and, as a result, whenever maintenance was done on Orange Avenue, the marked crosswalks that were in place were not reinstalled because they didn't want to encourage pedestrians to take the right-of-way and have a situation similar to what Mr. Maurer was describing. This location at Seventh and Orange is the only marked crosswalk on Orange Avenue and the reason for it is that, although this location is not on the Safe Routes to School (which is actually on Sixth Street), it's been found that pedestrians find it more convenient to cross at Seventh due to the gaps in traffic than to wait for the traffic signals at Sixth and Eighth and therefore, the City has, for the last 11-12 years, provided a crossing guard during the morning and afternoon school transit times to provide additional safety.

Mr. Johnson said there have been 17 collisions at this intersection in the last three years, two involving a vehicle and a bicycle; none involving a pedestrian. The majority of these collisions were due to right-of-way violations or rear-ends resulting from unsafe speed. The unsafe speed is usually because someone has stopped and waited for a pedestrian and the vehicle behind them doesn't realize that they're stopping to yield. It doesn't appear that there's a safety issue with pedestrians at this location.

Mr. Lawton felt that any enhancement that can be made to visually make drivers aware that this is a crosswalk area will be beneficial to pedestrians.

Mr. Maurer asked why the markings are proposed for the north side rather than the south and Mr. Johnson responded that he feels it's because that's the side the school campus is on. If student pedestrians stay on the north side they don't have to cross the street at another location. If we were to mark the south side that could encourage pedestrians to use that side and they would have to cross the street again one more time.

Mr. Maurer asked if more accidents occurred on the southbound or northbound side of the street and Mr. Johnson responded that it was mostly evenly split, with a lot of collisions occurring in the median area. Mr. Maurer thinks the southbound lane is harder to get across and if the crosswalk was on the south side as opposed to the north, it would give more sight distance

for southbound vehicles to see a pedestrian in the crosswalk. His big concern is that if a vehicle stops, particularly a truck, the person in the right lane can't see.

From Mr. Lawton's experience, he believes the accidents are equally distributed between the north and southbound lanes. They're generally, in almost every case, related to eastbound Seventh Street traffic. Either they're coming from Seventh Street or they're in the median eastbound, pulling out into the northbound lane. There are virtually no accidents that he's aware of coming westbound on Seventh Street.

Mr. Johnson said the City would be required to get an encroachment permit to install the enhancements.

Mr. Ritter moved to approve the staff recommendation; Mr. Newton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.