



CITY OF HEMET
Traffic and Parking Commission Minutes
Wednesday, February 11, 2004
8:00 AM

City Council Chambers
450 E. Latham Avenue
Hemet, CA 92543

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 AM by Chairman Berry.

1. **ROLL CALL:** Commissioner Don Berry, Chair; Commissioner Dan Walters, Chair pro tem; Commissioner Tom Covington; Commissioner Patrick Searl; Commissioner Gareth Modica; Council Member Roger Meadows - all present.
Absent: Planning Commissioner James Calkins.
(Commissioner Calkins arrived at 8:18 AM.)
Staff Present: Deputy Public Works Director Mike Gow; Streets Superintendent Richard Broos; Planning Consultant Ron Running; Police Captain Rudy Cabrera; Police Corporal Jeff Pinney; Management Assistant Julee Heckermann; Engineering Aide Carly Johansen; Administrative Assistant/Commission Secretary Marilyn Hampton.
2. **FLAG SALUTE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Chairman Berry
3. **Approval of Minutes of January 14th.**
Motion was made by Commissioner Walters to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Covington and carried 5-0.
4. **Report of Council Action - January 27th - on Recommendations of January 14th.**
Mr. Gow stated all were approved and are in the process of being implemented.
5. **Report on One-Way Streets.**
Report from the Police Department is included in the packet.
6. **Left Turn Signal Phasing Survey.**
Mr. Gow commended Engineering Staff member Carly Johansen for her help in putting together exhibits, GIS and mapping products, working behind the scenes with Andrew Melton.

Traffic & Parking Commission

February 11, 2004

Page 2

At Council's direction, staff prepared an inventory of left-turn phasing and traffic signals in the city. The inventory includes an aerial picture with green arrows showing protected left turns, blue arrows indicating unprotected turns. A City-wide map shows all signals and all four-way stop signs.

There are 46 traffic signals in the city; 22 are owned by Cal-Trans; 21 are on Florida, one is on San Jacinto and Latham; one is a pedestrian crossing signal at the hospital on Latham. Ten more signals are currently in design and planned for construction: five on Florida; one at California; one at Warren and Esplanade; one at Cawston and California; two at Page Plaza.

An inventory of left-turn phases and ranking of intersections having the highest traffic counts were discussed.

7. Red Curb - Rosalia, Valencia and Oakland between Hamilton/Elk. Mr. Gow reported that, in the past, community mailboxes had been placed and the curb painted red. The mailboxes have since been removed and new boxes installed in different locations. There is a conflict with the remaining red curb no longer meeting its original objectives. Staff recommends removing the red paint and not installing red curb in front of the new mailboxes.

Motion was made by Commissioner Searl to accept staff recommendation, seconded by Commissioner Covington, and carried 5-0.

8. Thornton Between Cawston and Sanderson Traffic Concerns

- **Speed Limit**
- **Signage**
- **Sanderson Project**

Mr. Gow stated that residents living in the Mayberry development were present at the January 27th Council meeting to raise concerns surrounding Page Plaza, currently under construction. The City is seeking to improve traffic impacts. The residents live along Thornton and to the south on the west side of Sanderson. Some homes actually front on Thornton, facing Page Plaza Center. They questioned the lack of a posted speed limit and asked whether Sanderson would ever be four lanes. They were concerned about access in and out of the commercial center and whether there would be a signal. Mr. Gow stated that Sanderson will become 5 lanes with turn lanes. The 5th is a center turn lane which will aid with allowing traffic to get into the center turn lane and merge into the traffic. The project from Stetson to Domenigoni is up for construction bids soon, with construction projected for late spring. WalMart Super Center is scheduled to open in August. Gow stated that there are seven access points into Page Plaza, one off Thornton, 3 off Sanderson, and 3 off Stetson. There will be a signalized

Traffic & Parking Commission

February 11, 2004

Page 3

access on Sanderson and Stetson. A signal is planned at Mustang Way to replace the four-way stop.

Planned improvements which will help the situation are actually underway now: A signal at Mustang Way and at Page Plaza will create gaps in traffic flow to facilitate traffic at Thornton. Thornton is not scheduled for a stop sign or signal at this point in time. Sanderson Lakes has a signal at Mustang Way as a condition of development, but there is no way to guarantee its timing.

Other methods for improvement include placing a speed trailer again for a week to obtain preliminary speed data. An official radar survey is required before posting the speed limit. When that is completed, the City is compelled to act, but if speeds are higher, the speed limit may actually have to be posted at a higher speed than what people want. Place speed trailers on Thornton and Sanderson and do speed survey to see if we want to post 40 mph or leave 25 mph. If changes occur, speed limit signs can be posted. Commit to monitoring traffic counts at Thornton and Sanderson every 3-6 months to see if they meet warrants for stop sign or traffic signal, and bring the traffic counts back to the Commission. When doing construction for Sanderson, staff recommends installing wiring conduits and piping now across the street on Thornton at both intersections, to power future potential signals. This will reduce costs and eliminate the need to cut pavement later. Farther west on Thornton where the street enters into Mayberry, look at warrants for placement of a stop sign. There was discussion of making Thornton a dead end street before it reaches Sanderson. Mr. Gow stated that, if supported, that can be done. The Circulation Element shows it all the way through.

Sue Fox, 3800 W. Thornton Ave., requested that a task force be done on this area. She asked if the driveway on Thornton in the residential area can be done away with, since there are already three going in on Stetson and one on Sanderson. If a driveway has to be there, she asked if it could dead end on Manasses and Thornton. She expressed concerns for the safety of 1200 children living and playing in the area and reported that an autistic child was nearly run over recently by a speeding vehicle. She asked the Commission for help. She stated the area is residential and said Page Plaza should have been placed in a commercial area instead.

Gary Koelker, 3449 W. Thornton Ave., stated his residence faces the new development. Because of traffic concerns, he built a fence around his front yard to keep his kids from going into the street. He stated it is difficult to back out of his driveway due to the heavy traffic. He requested the Commission to look at the traffic conditions in the neighborhood and do a traffic study.

Rebecca Mathis, 1200 Manasses Drive, said she lives in the Morningside development just west of the Mayberry development and agreed with the other remarks made. She said that traffic is heavy, stating it takes her 15 minutes to get

Traffic & Parking Commission

February 11, 2004

Page 4

onto Thornton. She would like to see Thornton dead end.

Commissioner Searl asked the residents how long they had lived in the area, ranging from 1 to 2-1/2 years, and whether they were told that the plaza was going to be built there. Ms. Mathis said she was told that something of a commercial nature or grocery store would be built. Mathis and Fox said that Developer Cooper told them it was going to be a department store or food store. Koelker was told it was going to be residential.

Commissioner Walters asked if there is any problem making Thornton a cul-de-sac. Fox felt that if the driveway remains at Thornton, vehicles will still come down to get to it. She said she would like Thornton to dead end. Mathis saw no problem. Koelker stated the majority of vehicles go to Cawston to go into town. Fox said they go the long way around, because it is difficult to pull out onto Sanderson in the busy traffic.

Police Captain Cabrera stated that the Police Department and Fire Department will still need access to homes on the eastern side of that development. Closing off Thornton and Sanderson would necessitate going through private property for Code 3, and he was concerned about having to use private property for emergencies. He stated that in an emergency, the closest route is the best route. A breakaway gate for access is a possibility and it is easier if traveling eastbound; if driving westbound, you would have to sit and wait. He did not know how this would impact time. Fox asked what private property would be used, and Captain Cabrera clarified that if Thornton and Sanderson is closed off, they would have to go through Page Plaza parking lot. Mathis felt that the Fire Department would do that anyway. Captain Cabrera stated that if the Fire Department is on an emergency call from that station, the next call would come from the Stetson station, and they have to come from other parts of city. He stated that using private property to get through is not good policy, and they would be slowed down if there were a lot of parked vehicles in the area. Mathis felt that Cawston and Mustang Way could be used to enter that residential area. Captain Cabrera said that route would force the Police to go the long way around rather than the shortest in an emergency. Council Member Meadows stated that neighbors reported that the Police Volunteer Department told them it took 14 minutes to respond into that area. He has asked for full report on Police and Fire response. He stated that if the area is blocked off, they may actually take 14 minutes to arrive. He felt that access can be blocked with crash gate. He believed that stop signs at all three intersections would slow traffic. He stated that medians were discussed, and he felt there will be proper breaks with signal lights. Mathis believed that stop signs are not good and stated the teenagers will go straight through them. Council Member Meadows felt that 14 minutes may grow to 20 minutes with detours. He stated that there are two fire stations within less than half a mile. He said that the Super WalMart will contribute greatly into the City's General Fund, which supports the Police and Fire Departments. Fox and

Traffic & Parking Commission

February 11, 2004

Page 5

Mathis stated the place to build the store is not in a residential area.

Commissioner Searl asked if one of the Sanderson Lakes access streets lines up with Thornton and stated that if Thornton was blocked off, it would force traffic to go to Sanderson. Mr. Gow said one access is aligned with Thornton. If Thornton is blocked, Sanderson Lakes would not have access to Cawston. Commissioner Calkins felt that if Thornton is closed off, it would put more traffic near Harmony Elementary. Mathis stated there will be lots of traffic with 3,000 new homes and all those cars will come down to the shopping center.

Mr. Gow stated a phased approach could be used, based on what we see actually happening. The direction from the Commission is to place a speed trailer out there for at least a week right now, early morning to late evening, and obtain that data to prepare to adjust speed limits; commit to monitor traffic before and after construction, make recommendations for further changes after the center opens; and install the conduits for future signals at Thornton. The future sequence of events is to do a speed survey and, if beneficial, post speed limits; do warrant checks; place stop signs and signals at Thornton and farther west; and install an emergency crash gate. He felt that a last approach and drastic measure is to close off Thornton and a lot of data would need to be collected before staff would recommend that. Council Member Meadows asked for clarification that the intersection goes straight across. Mr. Gow stated that, at one time, we were trying to get the Thornton access to line up with the Page Plaza signal, but it was not a possibility at the time with Stowe-Pasco. Based on studies, there would not be the need for a stop sign at Thornton. As it stands now, it will feed into the Stowe-Pasco project. Commissioner Walters asked if fees will be collected for the Thornton signal. Gow stated that the Thornton signal is not in the City's DIF, but it will be included in the next development impact study update. He stated it is a condition for Stowe-Pasco to install a traffic signal at Mustang Way.

Commissioner Searl stated that it is important for residents to realize that the Page Ranch Tract Map was approved nearly 20 years ago, and it is very difficult to change the map. He stated that if the City were planning today, things would be done differently.

Motion was made by Commissioner Walters to place a speed trailer on Thornton, continue monitoring traffic in that area, and install conduit at both Thornton and Mustang Way. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Covington and carried 5-0.

9. Access Review for TPM No. 31668 at Southeast Corner Sanderson/Devonshire.

Mr. Gow presented information concerning new development at the SE corner of Sanderson and Devonshire and proposed access onto Sanderson and Devonshire near a signalized intersection. Three accesses are planned on Devonshire and two on Sanderson. Council Member Meadows saw a problem with Rafferty Road

Traffic & Parking Commission

February 11, 2004

Page 6

access into this project, stating that most of that traffic will go through to Sanderson and there may be need for traffic control. Commissioner Searl was concerned about truck traffic. There was discussion about using raised medians on Sanderson as traffic control and to help with illegal turns. The possibility of making landscaped medians part of the L&LMD will be addressed with the Park Commission. The possibility of using drought-tolerant, low maintenance landscaping in the medians was brought up, using care to avoid sight distance issues. Stamped, colored concrete was also discussed as an option.

Motion was made by Commissioner Walters to accept staff recommendation to eliminate the westerly Devonshire access; make sure there is a reciprocal access agreement between Social Security and the remaining parcel; prohibit truck traffic on Rafferty Road and monitor for future traffic problems; create cul-de-sac knuckle on site; make sure there is no Rafferty Road street name sign; recommend raised median with optional landscaping and the caveat that landscaping should not create any sight distance concerns. Additional direction is to put together an entire plan for raised medians on Sanderson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Searl and carried 5-0.

10. Discussion and Possible Action on Increasing Monthly Meetings from One per Month to Two per Month.

After discussion, it was decided that the one meeting per month will suffice and an extra meeting can be called for an issue needing special attention, or if the work load increases.

11. Riverside County TIP update. No discussion.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Anissa Vincent, 3193 Avon Place, Whittier Elementary PTO President, reported the problem with traffic congestion before and after school on Whittier, Gilbert, and Carol Way. She proposed changing the 10-Minute Parking signs to "10- Minute Parking, Mon.-Fri., 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM" and painting the curb green, as at the Post Office. Many parents stop in the traffic lane to drop off kids, creating a hazard, or leave their vehicles on Carol Way, both around the cul-de-sac and directly in the middle of it. Officers have cited offenders.

The item will be placed on the March 10th Agenda.

12.a EMERGENCY ITEM:

Mr. Gow stated a speed survey is required to be done every 5 years. It has been done and, in order to enforce speed limits, now has to go before Council.

Motion was made by Commissioner Searl to add this item as an Emergency Item, seconded by Commissioner Walters, and carried 5-0.

Traffic & Parking Commission

February 11, 2004

Page 7

Mr. Gow stated this is a maintenance type of function. An option of looking at special considerations may result in an downward adjustment of an additional 5 mph. Two street segments would decrease, Devonshire to State and Esplanade to Kirby. Council Member Meadows stated there could be a conflict at Seven Hills and Stetson because of golf carts. Mr. Gow said the speed will be kept at 25 mph as it is.

Motion was made by Commissioner Searl to accept staff recommendation and to look at each increase on an individual basis, seconded by Commissioner Walters, and carried 5-0.

Commissioner Walters reported that the NW corner of Fisher and Mustang Way needs a street sign. Mr. Gow stated that staff can do that. Commissioner Walters stated that northbound State at Chambers, the right-turn lane sign located just north of the stop sign is partially blocking the stop sign on the NW corner and needs to be moved more northward. He also indicated that southbound on State from Stetson approaching Chambers on the west side of the street, the Right Turn Only sign blocks the stop sign.

These items will be placed on the Action Items List.

Commissioner Walters brought up the subject of Fruitvale and State eastbound where Fruitvale dead ends past the courthouse and the possibility of continuing Fruitvale to connect. He was interested in Public Work's comments on addressing the below grade railroad tracks. Mr. Gow stated that Commission's direction to staff at a previous meeting was to work with the Planning Commission and the developer of Lot 37.

This item will be placed on the Action Items List.

In response to Commissioner Walters' inquiry concerning extending Fruitvale to Olney Way, Mr. Gow stated a curb will be there and the developer has taken the initiative to obtain right-of-way.

Staff is to report back to Commission on Fruitvale and Whittier.

13. Future Agenda Items.

14. ADJOURNMENT:

At 10:16 AM, motion was made by Commissioner Searl to adjourn the meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for 8:00 AM, Wednesday, March 10th, at City Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Hampton, Commission Secretary