

# MINUTES OF TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING OF THE CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS

REGULAR MEETING – MARCH 11, 2015

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

A Regular meeting of the Traffic Commission was called to order at 7:03 p.m. on March 11, 2015, in the Council Chambers, 3191 Katella Avenue, Los Alamitos, California, Chair Mejia presiding.

## 2. ROLL CALL

**Present:** Commissioners:

Gina Biri (Arrived: 7:06 p.m.)  
Dave Emerson  
Javier Mejia  
Daniel Patz  
Jason Seaman  
James Wilhelm

**Absent:** Commissioner:

Thomas Lindsey

**Present:** Staff:

Dave Hunt, City Engineer  
Community Development/Public Works Director  
Steven Mendoza  
Bruce McAlpine, Police Captain  
Dawn Sallade, Department Secretary

## 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Seaman.

## 4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Mejia opened the meeting for Oral Communications.

Tom Balutis, CEO of Trend Offset, indicated he appreciates that the City has moved on the traffic study issue but he would like to suggest that the City look at Catalina & Cherry Streets with regard to safety. He indicated cars do not slow down when they go through the crosswalk and proposed a three-way stop sign be installed at that intersection.

*Commissioner Biri arrived at 7:06 p.m. and took her seat at the dais.*

Following discussion, the Commission asked Mr. Hunt if Hartzog & Crabill, Inc. could do a traffic study just on that intersection and bring the results back to next month's Commission meeting. Mr. Hunt said this could be done.

There being no further speakers, Chair Mejia closed Oral Communications.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Consider the Approval of the February 11, 2015 Regular meeting Minutes.

Motion/Second: Emerson/Patz

Carried: 6/0/0: The Traffic Commission approved the corrected Minutes of the Regular meeting of February 11, 2015.

*The correction was on Page 2, paragraph 8, second line: Delete one "from".*

**6. STAFF REPORTS**

**A. CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT TRAFFIC SCHOOL STUDY**

Continuation of the discussion of the traffic circulation around the four schools north of Katella Avenue. Staff has been having open discussions with the school district about how to improve the traffic flow around the schools.

City Engineer, Dave Hunt, gave a brief summary of the Staff report and the information contained therein. Mr. Hunt then turned the presentation over to Mr. Stock of Hartzog & Crabill.

Jerry Stock from Hartzog & Crabill, Traffic Engineers, introduced himself to the Commission once again and, as a brief refresher, he said they gave a PowerPoint last month and provided the Commission with handouts of that presentation. He indicated that all the Commission's suggestions and comments thus far were incorporated into the Draft Traffic Study.

Mr. Stock said that where they left off at the February 11<sup>th</sup> meeting was looking at the alternatives to the modifications to the Los Alamitos High School signalized drive approach at Cerritos Ave. It was the recommendation of the Commission to break this into three pieces; Alternative A (which is modifying the existing pavement striping to provide dual left's into the high school - \$5K). Alternative B (which is continuing the dual left's with U-turns being allowed - \$92K). Alternative C (would continue this northbound entrance into the larger parking field at the northeasterly portion of the school property but would require widening by relocating the bungalows - \$130K per building). Based on the above, he would recommend moving forward with Alternative B at such time that it could be handled financially with Alternative C being placed on the back burner for the future long term study.

Comments voiced by the Commission:

- Make the two existing lanes, one-way north. Advantages: If there is no southbound lane, then two exit lanes onto Cerritos are not needed. Therefore, an additional entry lane would not require the main entryway to be widened. Also, since the lanes do not merge into a

single northbound lane, most of the internal reconfiguration would become unnecessary.

- Long term, possibility of a 4-lane road, the solution is to have most if not all of the parking adjacent to Cerritos instead of in the back of the campus where a person needs to drive through the campus to get to it. Master Plan for the future would be to build a parking structure.
- Shifting start times of classes.
- Due to teenagers not paying attention to traffic at the Los Alamitos Blvd. intersection, protected right turn arrows or overlaps in north, south and east directions only because of the concern with the preclusion of the U-turn.
- A two lane left turn from westbound Cerritos to southbound Los Alamitos Blvd.

Mr. Stock then went over the next new item which is the signal that fronts Los Alamitos Blvd. He said one of the questions that was raised in the Commission's analysis last year was the feasibility of putting a signal in at this location. He said after conducting an analysis, they concluded a traffic signal is warranted based on delays associated with the large number of vehicles exiting the property. The cost would be about \$460K including design, construction, construction engineering, timing and the inclusion of the coordination along that corridor.

Mr. Stock then spoke about the signs that are located on the curb on the west side of the high school (Los Alamitos Blvd.) which is where the students are dropped off and picked up currently. He said their recommendation is to improve those signs; making them current and more readily visible.

In addition to that, a recommendation from the Commission was made about the feasibility of creating a drop off and pick up in that area. After researching this recommendation, they concluded that there is sufficient area to accomplish this. The estimated cost for this is \$2,450.

Mr. Stock then brought up the vacant piece of land that at one time was a gas station. He indicated that this piece of land could in theory hold 47 parking spaces but after speaking with the school district who indicated they cannot buy or lease the property as school property because of potential ground contamination and toxicity.

Mr. Stock indicated that with regards to McAuliffe Middle School, some of the concerns were that drivers make left-turns from the school driveway onto Cerritos Avenue, which crosses a left-turn pocket on Cerritos Avenue. Mr. Stock said that this action is not illegal; it can be done. The easy way to address the concern is to replace this existing left turn lane and extend this painted two-way left turn lane all the way to the

intersection. If the City desires to re-stripe, the estimated cost will be \$2,550.

The next idea/concern was putting in a protective right-turn arrow in the northbound direction for the existing traffic signal at Bloomfield Street and Cerritos Avenue. Their conclusion was this installation is feasible and is recommended but Bloomfield Street first needs to be restriped to include a northbound right turn lane. It was determined that restriping can be accomplished within the existing right-of-way and the estimated cost is \$31K. This is something that could be added to the City's capital improvement program and pulled off the shelf when the opportunity presents itself for grant funding.

Another comment/idea was enhancing the Cerritos Avenue drop-off capacity as well as creating a newer drop-off / pick-up route inside the school's parking lot off of Bloomfield Street. Also, it was suggested replacing older parking lot signs and markings in both lots.

The existing configuration off of Cerritos Avenue right now is in-bound only. Currently, there is a drop-off there and there is a designated marked disabled access path. The intent of this is to be able to direct the disabled from a sidewalk into the school property. There are also signs within the school parking area that say "Stop for Pedestrians". This drop-off is currently within school district policy in that the drop-off is occurring adjacent to a sidewalk. Mr. Stock spoke about a Commissioner's suggestion about perhaps restricting parking to certain times of the day which is potentially a candidate for doing this. The other school drop-off area is occurring to the south off of Bloomfield. Currently, we've got vehicles entering northbound Bloomfield and they're using this area for dropping off but is occupied by disabled parking spaces in which they are being used more for this than for parking. If there were an alternative for the disabled parking spaces that would be in compliance with all ADA issues, then that could be made into a formal or compliant school drop-off and pick-up area but that needs to be explored a bit more. It does, however, have merit for further consideration. The recommendation, if feasible, would be to relocate the disabled parking spaces, paint a little refuge island between the two flows and make that a drop-off area. The estimated cost would be \$4,600.

Mr. Eclevia pointed out that should they decide to move the accessible stalls, that potentially would have to be brought back to the Division of State Architects for plan review and when this is done, they just don't look at the revised parking stalls. He said the ADA requirements are a moving target and this could potentially be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

With regard to Oak Middle School, Mr. Stock said the question was what effect angled parking would have on traffic around the school. The existing on-street parking would be replaced with angled on-street parking which would have a net gain of 10 parking spaces. There is adequate roadway width to accommodate these angled spaces. They feel that this is a great idea and would recommend it; the estimated cost would be \$5,750 which includes everything. The school district is supportive but suggested eliminating certain spaces and then stripe to provide a thorough lane in the southbound direction as well as a left turn in the southbound direction which could be done. By doing this, however, five parking spaces would be lost; net gain is reduced down to five. He said he is supportive of either recommendation. The same holds true with cars heading northbound on Wallingsford Road at Katella Avenue and the cost above also includes these streets as well.

Mr. Hunt interjected that this came up with the fact that the property next door to the school has been in escrow a few times and anybody that is going to buy it is most likely not to let people park there on Friday Night Lights so Staff was trying to look at how to get more parking spaces on Oak Street.

Responding to Mr. Hunt's question as to angled parking having safety concerns, Mr. Stock responded that that's always a concern to reverse but regardless of angled or parallel, at some point in that process, putting a car in reverse is required.

The next comments/ideas were with regard to Los Alamitos Elementary School. Mr. Stock said parents make left-turns into the school driveway from southbound Bloomfield Avenue and the street traffic is crossing double yellow lines. Mr. Stock said that if the school or City desire to prohibit southbound left-turns into the southerly school driveway permanently, a solid double-yellow painted center median is recommended so that it will be an illegal maneuver and enforceable. The cost is estimated to be \$2,100. As a side note, the existing parking lot lay out and drop-off has a very significant capacity and is in total compliance.

Mr. Stock indicated that this is the end of the recommendations and his presentation and felt that there was great discussion between the Commission and Staff and thanked the Commission for their patience. He said he gets the sense that they are fine tuning as to what is really viable and what can be discarded. What they are going to do is take their report and make it into their Final Draft. With respect to the final product, Mr. Stock indicated that once they've submitted the final draft to the City, as far as the document design, where an exhibit is located, they can adjust those easily once they get some feedback on that because what they want

to deliver to the Commission is a product that we can all be very proud of and has value.

In response to the Commission's question, Mr. Eclevia indicated his purpose is to go through the report and give his recommendations and then discussions between the City and the district can occur and the fiscal ramifications can be decided upon.

Chair Mejia thanked Mr. Stock for his work on the Traffic Study.

In response to Mr. Hunt's question, Mr. Stock indicated they can have a final draft by the next Traffic Commission in April.

## **7. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

### **A. Traffic Commission Status Log**

Mr. Hunt said the Council had a workshop on March 23<sup>rd</sup> with regard to the Boulevard Project. He said he's not sure that the City is starting design on it; they have \$200,000 for the project and he spoke to them about applying for funds through the OCTA through the Measure M program. He told them that he has already committed the next two years funds on projects for the City. Council indicated there is money reserved in the General Fund that the City could use as the City's share. Sometimes there is a fund sharing grant and we could use that money to help fund it and pay our share. One thing he pushed for at the meeting was the Council has to get off the "straight" versus "curve" reach for the Blvd. They in turn voted and all voted on the straight reach. It was actually a very good meeting; he'll have to get together with the City Manager and Steven Mendoza to line up the schedule. Mr. Hunt reported that Mr. Mendoza wants to discuss the proper width of a median island on the Blvd. so that it's very nice looking. It was requested that they take photographs of different median islands in different cities that look nice and bring it forward to discuss among Staff.

Mr. Hunt also indicated that he will be bringing back the seven year CIP plan at the next Commission meeting for the Commission's input.

Also, Mr. Hunt reported that the Parking Meter project is going slowly and now it is being pushed to finish it. He said he'll bring it before the Commission in the next few months.

## 8. TRAFFIC COMMISSION INITIATED BUSINESS

### Commissioner Wilhelm

- Farquhar Ave. - "No left turn" sign across from the alley: He thought it wouldn't cost anything to put up two "No left turns" signs; one just with the ordinary text and one with the iconic sign with a circle with a slash through it indicating "No left turn". The logic to that would be it would double the visual impact of the sign.

Mr. Hunt said that they will put up two signs as suggested.

### Commissioner Emerson

- With regard to his request for an officer to speak to the crossing guards at Katella and Bloomfield about the curb being painted as it is a safety issue, Captain McAlpine indicated he would have an officer go out and speak with the crossing guards.

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

The Traffic Commission adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
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David L. Hunt, City Engineer