

MINUTES OF TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING OF THE CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS

REGULAR MEETING – NOVEMBER 12, 2015

1. CALL TO ORDER

A Regular meeting of the Traffic Commission was called to order at 7:05 PM on November 12, 2015, in the Council Chambers, 3191 Katella Avenue, Los Alamitos, California, Vice Chair Biri presiding.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners:

Vice-Chair Gina Biri
Commissioner Dave Emerson
Commissioner Daniel Patz
Commissioner James Wilhelm

Absent:

Chair Javier Mejia
Commissioner Jason Seaman

Present: Staff:

Steven Mendoza, Development Services Director
Ruth Smith, Traffic Engineer
Bruce McAlpine, Police Captain
Dawn Sallade, Department Secretary

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Emerson.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Vice Chair Biri opened the meeting for Oral Communications.

There being no speakers, Vice Chair Biri closed Oral Communications.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approve the Minutes for the Regular Meeting of September 9, 2015.

Motion/Second: Patz/Wilhelm

Carried 4/0/0: The Traffic Commission approved the minutes of the Regular meeting of September 9, 2015.

6. STAFF REPORTS

A. KATELLA AVENUE AND WALNUT STREET/WALLINGSFORD ROAD INTERSECTION OPERATION

This report recommends modifications to the intersection of Katella Avenue and Walnut Street/Wallingsford Road in response to Rossmoor Homeowners Association concerns about the intersection's operation and school pedestrian safety, particularly during the morning peak hour.

Traffic Engineer Ruth Smith summarized the Staff report, referring to the information therein. She indicated that Mr. Ralph Vartabedian from the Rossmoor Homeowner's Association Board and the Chair of their traffic committee is the person who brought this suggestion to the forefront. She indicated Mr. Vartabedian proposed three possible solutions to improve the situation; they are as follows:

- 1) Move the painted crosswalk from the east side of the intersection to the west side to eliminate pedestrian conflicts with northbound right-turning traffic.
- 2) Keep the crosswalk on the east side of the intersection and modify the northbound traffic lanes on Wallingsford Road to convert the shared left/through/right turn lane into a right turn only lane and convert the left turn only lane to a shared left turn/through lane. This would also eliminate pedestrian conflicts with northbound right-turning traffic.
- 3) Create a third lane on northbound Wallingsford to provide one left turn lane, one through lane and one right turn lane, to eliminate the conflict with the crosswalk.

In response, Staff went out and observed the traffic in the field and evaluated the feasibility of each proposed action.

Regarding moving the crosswalk, it was determined that currently, the pedestrians cross concurrently with the northbound traffic. Also, both the northbound traffic and the pedestrians require a majority of the green time available for Wallingsford/Walnut. If the crosswalk is moved to the west leg, the pedestrian movement would go concurrently with the southbound traffic. The amount of green time needed for the pedestrians to cross Katella would be significantly longer than the time needed/currently provided to the southbound traffic, about 15 seconds. The additional 15 seconds of green would have to be taken from another movement, none of which can afford to be shortened.

Staff can only conclude that moving the crosswalk is not a feasible option. Two more-promising options are to provide a third northbound lane, that would separate the left turn movements from the right turn movements, and to implement a Leading Pedestrian Interval. The Leading Pedestrian Interval would allow pedestrians to start across Katella a few seconds before the northbound traffic gets the green. It would require added green time, but much less than moving the crosswalk. It has also been successful in other places.

The Commission approved Staff's recommendation to:

1. Modify the signal timing, as follows:
 - a. Implement a different operation during the school peak(s) to better accommodate the school traffic/pedestrians.
 - b. Implement a Leading Pedestrian interval for the pedestrians in the crosswalk on the east leg.
2. Further evaluate the feasibility of adding a third northbound lane on Wallingsford (in cooperation with Rossmoor HOA and the County).

Staff will begin discussions with the County regarding the third northbound lane and follow up with the modifications to the signal timing.

7. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

None.

8. TRAFFIC COMMISSION INITIATED BUSINESS

Commissioner Patz:

- Now that Laurel High is no longer a high school and is now a district office, the two signs on Bloomfield that notify drivers of a school being present need to be removed.

Commissioner Emerson:

- Indicated that one of the Commission's great successes was adding a lane at Los Alamitos Blvd. at Farquhar and when this was done, traffic stopped backing up but we still have a limit line and "Keep Clear" sign on the corner of Farquhar and Reagan. To avoid car's rear ending each other, he feels that the signs should be sandblasted or painted over as soon as possible.
- With regard to Commission elections in January, he felt that because the elections occur so quickly, there isn't time for discussion before electing a new Chair and he would like to be able to informally act on the issue without going against the Brown Act before making an informed decision for electing a Chair person.

Mr. Mendoza informed the Commission that they could agendaize the discussion of the protocol for choosing a new Chair for the next meeting and, if needed, continue the meeting so as to elect their new Chair.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The Traffic Commission adjourned at 7:49 PM.