



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: MAY 16, 2006

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: BROADWAY AND EASTSIDE TRAFFIC CONCERNS

DATE: MAY 3, 2006

FROM: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT - TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIVISION

PRESENTATION BY: WILLIAM J. MORRIS, PUBLIC SERVICES DIRECTOR

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: PETER NAGHAVI, MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION SERVICES, (714) 754-5182

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive staff report.

BACKGROUND:

Eastside Area Traffic Studies

In 1997, the City Council authorized formation of an Ad-Hoc Committee of local businesses and residents to assist with an east side neighborhood traffic study. The comprehensive Eastside Residential Traffic Management Study included analysis of traffic conditions in the area bounded by East 17th Street to the south, Newport Boulevard to the west, Mesa Drive to the north and Irvine Avenue to the east. The study was prompted by traffic concerns expressed over the years by some residents in the east side neighborhood regarding speed and volume of vehicles and non-local, cut-through traffic within the residential environment. The Eastside Residential Traffic Management Study included the evaluation of the prevailing speed and volume of traffic, and a determination of the level of outside traffic passing through the area. A copy of a June 2005 memo summarizing the 1997 Eastside Residential Traffic Management Study is attached (Attachment 1).

The study examined a variety of different alternatives designed with the potential to address concerns of area residents. These measures included speed humps, four way stop controls, and physical diversion of traffic from selected residential streets by the use of diverters or barriers to through movement. While effective at discouraging non-local cut-through traffic, physical restrictions, such as diverters or barriers, can also severely impact local residents' circulation patterns. Following an extensive public involvement and review process extending over a twelve-month period and including the participation and oversight of an Ad-Hoc Committee, the overwhelming consensus of the participants was to **not** implement any **drastic** measures such as diverters, barriers, one ways, etc., but instead implement low level measures such as increased police visibility and enforcement of existing traffic regulations. The installation of diverters, barriers, speed humps or other significant traffic control measures were not supported by the Ad-Hoc Committee or the majority of residents attending the workshop sessions.

Following a public meeting held before the City Council on September 2, 1997, the Council adopted only a few measures recommended by the committee, and supported by a majority of the residents. The specific action taken by the Council is as follows:

- School Slow Points: Consisting of enhanced pavement striping at selected school zone crosswalks.
- Missing Link Sidewalks: Prioritize construction of sidewalks to complete missing link segments on streets where sidewalks are only partially constructed.
- Increased Police Enforcement: Assignment of a traffic patrol officer to the Eastside residential area on a full time basis.
- Elden Avenue Closure: The closure of the half-width section of Elden Avenue south of 22nd Street.
- Magnolia Street Closure: The closure of Magnolia Street at the west end of the 100 block where it joins the city owned public parking lot adjacent to businesses on Newport Boulevard.
- East 17th Street: Directed staff to proceed with investigation of funding sources and to make plans for the widening of East 17th Street.

All of the above items approved by City Council were implemented with the exception of the Magnolia Street closure. This street closure was strongly protested by local businesses on Newport Boulevard due to impacts on circulation for customers and delivery purposes to and from the parking lot on the back of these businesses at the west end of Magnolia Street. Following an appeal by local merchants, the Planning Commission, at their meeting of April 13, 1998, took action to delete the closure of Magnolia Street from the previously approved Eastside traffic control measures.

In addition to the above measures, the City Council approved the installation of special residential warning signs stating, "**Slow Down - You Are Entering a Residential Area**". These signs have been installed around the perimeter of the east side area. The signs have been well received and have since been utilized in other residential areas of the City when requested by residents.

Biennial Traffic Monitoring and Reporting

Following the east side study, staff has undertaken many projects on a wide range of traffic issues/solutions that have the potential to significantly improve conditions in the commercial downtown and therefore reduce traffic issues including cut thru traffic with the smaller residential streets. In May 2001, staff presented a comprehensive analysis to provide improvement options to East 17th Street and Newport Boulevard. On May 21, 2001 the City Council directed staff to proceed with the design of a combination of street improvements and traffic control strategies on East 17th Street and Newport Boulevard, between 17th Street and 19th Street. The Council also directed staff to develop a traffic monitoring program for the east side **residential** area on a biennial basis (once every two years) to assess conditions and present findings to the City council starting with a report in 2002.

The Year 2002 Eastside Biennial Traffic Monitoring Report was presented during the regular City Council meeting on July 15, 2002. A similar traffic monitoring report for Year 2004 was presented to City Council at their regular meeting of July 19, 2004. A copy of the most recent 2004 staff report is attached (Attachment 2). Each of these reports documented little or no significant changes in traffic conditions on east side area streets as compared to the 1997 Eastside Residential Traffic Management Study. Therefore, at the July 19, 2004 meeting, the City Council reconsidered the merits of frequent monitoring of

such a large area on a regular biennial basis and subsequently approved a motion to discontinue the requirement for an Eastside Biennial Monitoring Report. A partial summary of the data collection from past Eastside Biennial Traffic Monitoring Reports is attached (Attachment 3). This summary also includes additional traffic data collected in 2006 specifically for this report in order to compare current conditions with those of past surveys.

Broadway Traffic Conditions

July 2005 City Council Study Session:

In January 2005 a tragic accident occurred on Broadway at the intersection of Westminster Avenue. Shortly after the accident the City received requests from residents to install 4-way stop signs at this intersection. As a result of a thorough analysis of traffic conditions on Broadway, both prior to and following the January 2005 accident, staff determined that the installation of stop signs on Broadway at Westminster Avenue did not meet state or federal standards, and would, therefore, not be as beneficial to overall traffic safety. Also, following a thorough investigation of the above accident by the Costa Mesa Police Department, the driver of the vehicle involved was not cited.

Continued concern by some residents of traffic conditions on Broadway resulted in Transportation Services Division staff conducting additional traffic studies on this street. The results of this review of traffic conditions on Broadway were presented to City Council at their July 12, 2005 Study Session.

This study concluded that conditions on Broadway are similar to those found on most “**through**” streets in the residential areas east of Newport Boulevard. Broadway, however, differs from the typical residential street due to its’ larger street width. Generally, residential streets in the City are constructed at a 40-foot curb-to-curb street width. Some older streets are as narrow as 36 feet curb to curb. Broadway, however, was constructed at a 50-foot curb to curb street width between Newport Boulevard and Tustin Avenue and 42-foot street width between Tustin Avenue and Irvine Avenue. The increased width between Newport Boulevard and Tustin Avenue provides drivers with a clear view of conditions, due to a greater distance between the traveled way and parked vehicles. The extra width provides sufficient space for bicycle lanes which also enhances traffic channelization by creating narrower traffic lanes.

Over the years the City has implemented other measures to address traffic concerns within the east side area. These measures include signing, narrowing travel lanes on East 19th Street and Broadway, installation of additional speed limit postings at each intersection on Broadway, installation of additional stop signs on East 16th Street and East 19th Street, installation of speed humps on East 16th Street and installation of bike lanes on Broadway and Santa Ana Avenue.

Based on residents concerns for traffic conditions following the January 2005 accident, staff included various alternative traffic channelization schemes to address traffic conditions on Broadway. These alternatives included “chokers” at intersections, various center median island designs at intersections, and reduced street width by reconstructing curbs. At this meeting, in addition to concern for vehicle speeds, many residents also voiced their concern for lack of sidewalks on Broadway and the need for increased pedestrian safety.

Following the July 2005 Study Session, Transportation Services staff initiated a meeting with residents along Broadway to define and quantify the specific nature of their concerns for both vehicle speed and pedestrian safety. On August 18, 2005 staff met

with approximately 12 residents at a home on Broadway. At this meeting a variety of issues, including the construction of sidewalks, were discussed. While some residents were more concerned with pedestrian safety issues and supported completion of "missing link" sidewalks, others were more supportive of slowing down traffic by the installation of traffic diverters, speed humps, or other traffic control measures. Accordingly, to more carefully consider the specific concerns of residents, block-by-block meetings were agreed to be scheduled.

At the August 18th residents meeting, some residents volunteered to be "block captains" and agreed to organize the future block-by-block meetings with city staff. Staff was later informed by residents that the block meetings were postponed, as the residents preferred to meet among themselves first before meeting with City staff again. Further contact by city staff continued to result in no desire by residents to reschedule a meeting, therefore, no further meetings have taken place.

March 2006 City Council Study Session:

On January 9, 2006, correspondence from a resident of Broadway was received indicating residents in the 350 through 400 block of Broadway support the completion of the "missing link" sidewalks on both sides of Broadway between Raymond Avenue and Irvine Avenue (Attachment 4).

At the March 14, 2006 City Council Study Session staff again presented an overview of traffic conditions on Broadway and reviewed the various traffic control measures discussed at the July 2005 Study Session. Staff also presented estimates of costs and impacts regarding construction of sidewalks throughout Broadway from Fullerton Avenue to Irvine Avenue.

ANALYSIS:

At the March Study Session, Council expressed an interest in considering sidewalk installation on Broadway, and in further reviewing traffic conditions within the east side area with consideration for possible implementation of other measures to reduce vehicle speeds.

In response to City Council direction on the Broadway sidewalks, staff has included this as a part of the proposed Capital Improvement Program budget. The completion of sidewalks is proposed in three phases; Phase 1 between Raymond Avenue and Irvine Avenue in FY 06-07; Phase 2, between Raymond Avenue and Westminster Avenue in FY 07-08; and Phase 3, between Westminster Avenue and Fullerton Avenue in FY 08-09. City Council will have the opportunity to approve the installation of sidewalks on Broadway with approval of the FY 06-07 budget.

In response to further reviewing east side traffic conditions, and in order to place current traffic conditions in perspective with those from previous surveys, Transportation Services Division staff has conducted additional traffic surveys on selected east side area streets. This data provides a brief comparative analysis to identify any significant changes in traffic conditions over past years. The analysis provides similar information on traffic conditions as reported in previous East Side Biennial Monitoring Reports.

The streets selected for this comparative analysis represent those streets where there is a greater likelihood of cut-through traffic due to connectivity and potentially higher speeds. The volumes and speeds experienced on the majority of streets in the east

side area are generally less than the streets chosen for this survey. The attached Table I (Attachment 3) depicts the average daily traffic (ADT) volume on the selected east side area streets since completion of the 1997 Eastside Residential Traffic Management Study. The results of the most recent survey indicate that, over the years, there have been no significant changes in the range of traffic volume measured on most streets.

Speed surveys were also conducted to better assess any changes over past surveys. Historically, speed data is not collected on such a routine basis as ADT data; therefore, past data is not available for all locations in each year. The attached Table II (Attachment 3) shows that the prevailing 85 percentile speeds are in a range generally between 30 and 35 miles per hour. Again, no significant changes are noted in the survey data from previous years. The overall indication is that speeds on east side streets remain generally within the expected range on a consistent basis.

The 85th percentile speed is the speed at which 85 percent of the drivers drive safely and comfortably and is the **legal basis to determine speed limits in accordance with the State of California regulations**. As a result of many residential neighborhood traffic studies, staff has found that the 25 miles per hour prima facie speed limit is frequently exceeded by as much as 5 to 10 miles per hour. Speeds in this range, while not desirable, are not uncommon and represent typical conditions in many residential neighborhoods throughout Costa Mesa and the region.

Overall, this brief analysis of traffic conditions reveals no significant changes or increases in traffic volume or speeds on east side area streets that would indicate a need for more in depth analysis at this time.

Additional Traffic Studies

Should the City Council desire a more extensive review of traffic conditions within east side Costa Mesa, the retention of an experienced traffic management consultant is recommended. An experienced traffic consultant team would have the capabilities to conduct an extensive review of traffic conditions and work with neighborhood residents with the goal of recommending more restrictive traffic control measures that would be supported by residents to positively affect existing conditions. Such a study would be similar to the 1997 Eastside Traffic Management Study. Staff has reviewed the tasks that would be associated with a comprehensive neighborhood traffic study for the east side area. While the actual size and overall scope of such a study may vary dependent upon City Council direction, staff has considered the possibilities and estimates the cost of a comprehensive traffic management study over a large portion of the east side Costa Mesa area to be approximately \$100,000. The estimated costs include consultant fees and staff time to administer the contract and coordinate public involvement by neighborhood residents.

Other major street improvements

Two major street improvement projects currently in progress have the potential to ease traffic concerns within the east side area: East 17th Street, between Newport Boulevard and Raymond Avenue, and Newport Boulevard. Between 17th Street and 19th Street. Completion of arterial street improvements on both East 17th Street and Newport Boulevard will significantly improve traffic flow on those arterials, thereby, reducing potential traffic diversion to east side area streets.

East 17th Street improvements include:

- Construction of bus turnouts at Orange Avenue and Santa Ana Avenue

- Addition of left turn signal phasing at the intersections of Orange Avenue and Santa Ana Avenue
- A new traffic signal at Westminster Avenue
- A new flashing pedestrian crosswalk at Raymond Avenue
- Aesthetic improvements including raised medians, landscaping, street lighting and sidewalk features

Newport Boulevard improvements include:

- A new north bound through lane from south of 17th Street to 19th Street
- A new south bound through lane from 19th Street to north of Broadway
- Construction of north bound and south bound bus turnouts at 17th Street
- Aesthetic improvements including raised medians, landscaping, street lighting and sidewalk features

Construction of improvements on East 17th Street are scheduled to begin in Summer 2006. Construction of improvements on Newport Boulevard are scheduled to begin in Spring 2007.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Possible alternatives include:

1. Retain the current priorities for completion of “missing link” sidewalks, thereby, Broadway sidewalks cannot be constructed within this or next year.
2. Direct staff on the need for a comprehensive traffic management study and securing an experienced traffic management consultant to assess traffic conditions within the east side area with a targeted goal of implementing traffic calming measures suitable for conditions and supported by residents. Approximately \$100,000 will need to be budgeted for this analysis. Note that no budget source has been identified for funding of this activity.
3. Continue current process whereby staff routinely monitors traffic conditions throughout the City and conducts evaluations of residential traffic concerns on a case by case basis as requested by residents.
4. Direct staff to perform an additional traffic volume and speed survey on the eastside within 6 months of completion of the upcoming East 17th Street improvements, and report back to City Council in an informational memo any finding.

FISCAL REVIEW:

Construction of sidewalks on Broadway is proposed as part of the FY 06-07 budget to be constructed in three phases. Phase 1 in FY 06-07 in the amount of \$202,000, with successive phases estimated at \$175,000 and \$180,000 respectively in subsequent years.

Should Council desire to proceed with a comprehensive east side traffic management study, a budget allocation of up to \$100,000 will need to be approved. No provisions have been made in the upcoming FY 06-07 budget for this study.

LEGAL REVIEW:

There is no legal review required on this item.

CONCLUSION:

At the March 2006 City Council Study Session a number of residents on Broadway requested the installation of sidewalks on Broadway, and particularly between Raymond Avenue and Irvine Avenue. A capital improvement project has, therefore, been proposed in the FY 06-07 budget to completed sidewalks on Broadway in three phases over three successive years beginning with the segment between Raymond and Irvine Avenue.

Additionally, City Council may be interested in further review of traffic conditions within the east side area. Since completion of the East Side Residential Traffic Management Study in 1997, and further monitoring in 2002 and 2004 East Side Biennial Monitoring Reports, staff has not observed any significant changes in traffic conditions in the east side area. In order to assess any significant changes that may have occurred since the 2004 survey, staff has conducted additional "limited" traffic surveys. This data demonstrates that there have been no significant changes in traffic conditions in recent years. Staff estimates the cost of a comprehensive east side traffic management study as approximately \$100,000. The above possible alternatives are presented for City Council consideration and further direction.

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. [June 2005 Memo Summarizing the 1997 Eastside Residential Traffic Management Study](#)
2. [2004 Eastside Biennial Traffic Monitoring Report](#)
3. [Summary of traffic data for selected east side area streets](#)
4. [Resident correspondence requesting sidewalks on Broadway](#)