



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 3, 2006

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: INSTALLATION OF STOP SIGNS ON BELFAST AVENUE AT FERNHEATH LANE

DATE: OCTOBER 21, 2006

FROM: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT/TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIVISION

PRESENTATION BY: PETER NAGHAVI, MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

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

RECOMMENDATION:

Deny the request for installation of three-way stop controls at the intersection of Belfast Avenue and Fernheath Lane.

BACKGROUND:

At the March 7, 2006 City Council meeting Mr. Mike Brumbaugh, representing the Halecrest Hall of Fame Homeowners Association, requested that stop signs be placed at the intersection of Belfast Avenue and Fernheath Lane.

History

In response to previous residents concerns the Transportation Services Division, in 2002, undertook an extensive study of traffic conditions within the Halecrest Hall of Fame neighborhood. This area is bounded by Fairview Road on the east, Baker Street on the south, Harbor Boulevard on the west, and the I-405 Freeway on the north. Two neighborhood workshops were conducted in July and October 2002. At the workshops resident input was received and summaries of vehicle speed, volume surveys, and license plate surveys to evaluate potential "cut through" traffic patterns within the neighborhood, were presented. At that time, traffic data collected on streets within the neighborhood did not reveal any unusual conditions that required significant changes in traffic controls.

As a result of this process, a number of traffic control measures were identified as immediately addressable and were completed (Attachment 1). These measures included a number of new speed limit postings, additional pavement legends, and centerline striping modifications. Additional traffic analysis determined that a four-way stop control could be installed at the intersection of Killybrook Lane and Watson Avenue. The new stop signs were, therefore, installed in December 2002.

One significant item reflected in the workshops was the major concern by residents regarding difficulties entering and exiting the neighborhood at the intersection of Fairview Road and McCormack Lane. Residents cited frequent traffic collision occurrences at this intersection due to sight distance constraints as well as high vehicular speeds on Fairview Road. Following a thorough evaluation of traffic signal warrants, the City Council, in

February 2003 directed staff to proceed with the installation of a traffic signal at this location.

In May 2004, the City received a request from the President of the Halecrest Hall of Fame Homeowners Association for the installation of three-way stop signs at the intersection of Loren Lane and Dorset Lane. Following the collection and analysis of the applicable traffic data, staff concluded that this intersection did not meet the minimum State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) warrants for the stop sign installation. However, the installation of speed limit signs on Loren Lane was recommended and completed.

In February 2005, the City received a request from the President of the homeowners association for the installation of speed humps on Loren Lane. Staff again conducted a volume survey and concluded that the traffic conditions were well below the minimum threshold identified in the Council adopted speed hump guidelines where speed humps could be considered. As a result of that request, staff however, authorized the installation of additional "25" miles per hour pavement legends on Loren Lane to provide further warning to drivers.

In May 2005, again at the request of the President of the Homeowners Association, a request was made for installation of speed limit signs on Killybrook Lane. Following a review of traffic conditions, staff authorized the installation speed limit signs and "25" miles per hour pavement legends on Killybrook Lane.

Current petition: In March 2006 residents of the Halecrest Community submitted a petition expressing concern for speeding motorists within the neighborhood and specifically requested the installation of a stop sign on Belfast Avenue at its intersection with Fernheath Lane. The petition was submitted by Mr. Mike Brumbaugh, President of the Halecrest Hall of Fame Homeowners Association, and represents 57 households within the neighborhood.

In response to this latest request, staff subsequently met with Mr. Brumbaugh and Council Member Foley to discuss the petition and other resident concerns for traffic safety in the Halecrest neighborhood. In addition to the petitioned stop sign request, Mr. Brumbaugh also expressed concern for safety at the intersections of Belfast Avenue and Killybrook Lane and at Killybrook Lane and Stonefield Street and for speeding on Belfast.

ANALYSIS:

The purpose of stop signs is to prevent conflicts at intersections where the volume of intersecting vehicles are approximately equal and assignment of right-of-way is necessary to prevent accidents. When properly placed, stop signs can provide increased safety where frequent vehicle conflicts are evident. Installation of stop signs at locations where traffic conditions do not meet the minimum state standards may, in fact, result in potential safety hazards.

The Transportation Services Division completed another evaluation of traffic conditions in May 2006 at the intersection of Belfast Avenue and Fernheath Lane to determine if the installation of multi-way stop controls may be warranted at this location. The determination of the need for multi-way stop controls is based upon criteria established by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and includes an evaluation of approaching traffic volume from all directions, the balance of the approach volumes

between the major and minor streets, a review of traffic accidents over the past 12 months, and a field review for any unusual conditions that may exist.

As a part of the field review process the Transportation Services staff has assessed the available visibility in the vicinity and notes no unusual or unique features to affect overall safety at this intersection.

The result of staff analysis shows that the level of traffic volume falls well below the minimum State standards for installation of stop signs. Traffic volume on Belfast Avenue in the vicinity of Fernheath Lane is approximately 1,476 vehicles per day while traffic volume on Fernheath Lane approaching Belfast Avenue is approximately 57 vehicles per day. An imbalance of approaching traffic of this magnitude may cause impatience by drivers on Belfast Avenue when required to come to a stop when cross traffic is rarely present.

A review of traffic accident records for the past three (3) years reveals no reported accidents at this intersection or within the nearby vicinity. Overall, there are no unusual conditions affecting traffic flow or visibility. The existing traffic conditions and physical features are not unusual and, in fact, are quite similar to or better than many locations within the City. Based upon staffs' findings the existing traffic controls have proven to be effective under these conditions.

As a result of this investigation, staff finds the traffic data falls well below the minimum warrant threshold established by Caltrans and, therefore, does not recommend the installation of stop signs at the intersection of Belfast Avenue and Fernheath Lane at this time.

However, since receiving the petition and meeting to discuss resident concerns, Transportation Services staff has taken the following additional actions in the area:

- Installed crosswalks at the existing three-way stop at the intersection of Belfast Avenue and Killybrook Lane. Staff supported the requested installation of crosswalks as the intersection is already a multi-way stop where all approaching traffic is controlled by stop signs.
- Installed a stop sign on Stonefield Street at its "tee" intersection with Killybrook Lane. The installation of a stop sign at the "tee" intersection is in compliance with Caltrans regulations with regards to assignment of right-of-way at uncontrolled intersections.
- Installed additional "25" miles per hour speed limit pavement legends on Belfast Avenue.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

One alternative is to approve the installation of the stop sign. However, this action will not meet the minimum State requirements for stop installation warrants.

Another alternative is to direct staff to continue monitoring this intersection for future developments that may result in meeting the State warrants for stop signs.

FISCAL REVIEW:

Other than material and staff time, estimated at \$650 and four hours respectively, no fiscal impact to the City will result from the installation of multi-way stop controls at the intersection of Belfast Avenue and Fernheath Lane.

LEGAL REVIEW:

No legal review is required on this report. However, installation of “unwarranted” traffic controls may present a certain increased liability for the City.

CONCLUSION:

Following a thorough analysis, the Transportation Services Division finds that existing traffic conditions at the intersection of Belfast Avenue and Fernheath Lane fall well below the minimum state warrant thresholds for multi-way stop signs. Staff, therefore, does not recommend the installation of multi-way stop controls at this intersection.

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ATTACHMENTS: 1 [Existing Traffic Control Measures](#)