

LA JOLLA TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Regular Meeting: September 16, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, LJT&T meetings are being held temporarily as online Zoom video/voice teleconferences.

Members Present: Dave Abrams (Chairperson) LJCPA, Brian Earley (Vice Chairperson) LJSA, Tom Brady LJCPA, Donna Aprea LJTC, Erik Gantzel BRCC, Patrick Ryan BRCC, Ross Rudolph LJSA

Members Absent: Nancy Warwick LJTC, Natalie Aguirre LJVMA, Max Shenk LJVMA.

Approve Minutes of: August 19, 2020 **Motion to Approve Minutes: Earley, Second: Gantzel 6-0-0**
(Brady not available to vote)

Public Comments on Non-Agenda LJT&T Matters:

Daniela Boassa- submitted a request to Dave for consideration of a pedestrian crossing on Gilman Dr by Evening Way near the Marriott Residents Inn. Because of the speed limit on the road in that area her request for an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing would not be allowed. The City is instead reviewing the area for a traffic signal or a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon. She just wanted to thank the Board for submitting it to the City and understands it may take several months for them to review it. Dave will follow up with her when he receives the results of their review and it may be placed on a future Agenda.

Ira Parker- La Jolla Pedestrian Safety Initiative subcommittee is ready to conduct two Zoom Community Comments Meetings on Oct 15-16. He will use traditional and social media as well as contact various community groups for market and advertising of these two Meetings for the public who would like to comment. After the Meetings the subcommittee will compile the comments and make recommendations to the full Board for action and subsequently determine ways to approach the City with the findings and recommendations.

Mike Cole- President of the Barber Tract Neighborhood Assn. The Barber Tract is experiencing very significant traffic congestion issues due to their undersize streets. It is a long- standing problem in the neighborhood but it has become particularly bad this year, especially this past summer. Members of their organization requested that they look into ways to resolve the traffic issues, alleviate some of the problems, and address the safety concerns. Ira (Parker) set up Zoom Meetings for them and they collected some input which they will be discussing at their Neighborhood Board Meeting. Once they have everything sorted out, they want to go on an LJT&T Agenda for the Board's guidance and down the line get some input from the City. Dave asked Mike to follow up with him on the results of their Board Meeting.

Agenda Item 1: Proposal to Place Warning Signs in Various Median Islands (Cont'd Item)- to discourage motorists from stopping for Solicitors (Chris Cott) **Action item**

Chris Cott is presenting a proposal to place signage in the Median Islands at the intersections of La Jolla Shores Drive and Torrey Pines Rd and Torrey Pines Rd at Hidden Valley to discourage motorists from

stopping for Solicitors/Panhandlers. Those who ask for money in the median islands create traffic hazards and personal safety concerns. He has witnessed some fender-benders and broken taillights when people cross traffic lanes to get drivers' offerings. He wants La Jolla to install signs in the median Islands similar to those installed by the City of El Cajon. Several years ago, the City of El Cajon began a city-wide initiative to discourage people from supporting panhandling. They installed city-wide signs: *"Please help. Don't support panhandling"* and included a website for people to donate to various charities instead. Chris wants to bring this idea to La Jolla.

Brian clarified that the, *"Please help. Don't support panhandling"*, signage is part of a city-wide sponsorship in El Cajon that is not sponsored in the City of San Diego. El Cajon installed these signs on city poles throughout their city. These signs can be made up for about \$35.00 and there is a company that makes them but the signage cannot be installed on city poles in San Diego.

Steve Hadley- says that in the City of San Diego, it is not illegal to be in the Median Islands. He advised there are constitutional issues surrounding the reason why the City Council refused to act on it back in 2014. There is the matter of free speech and legal protection of the law as well as social concerns. Steve noted their opinion is six years old and it may have changed since then. There is also a new Administration coming in January. He can look into it with the City Attorney Office.

Chris mentioned a problem that it is not always panhandlers in the medians. Once a year the Fire Fighters are in them for 'Pass the Boot' program and UT news carriers are there for fundraising, but the medians are just as dangerous for them to be in as it is for the panhandlers.

Catharine Douglass- knows from experience with Neighborhood Watch signage that there are certain City poles that signs cannot be installed on, but there are some poles that they can be installed on such as 2 hr. parking signs. She has contacted SDPD about people in the tiny median strip on Torrey Pines in front of Vons because that one is really dangerous and they have responded.

Donna is not supporting this proposal and this would not get past LJCPA. This is not a San Diego city-wide initiative. This is Mr. Cott targeting La Jolla. If it was a city-wide initiative that is one thing, Mr. Cott targeting just La Jolla is another thing, that La Jolla does not need right now.

Tom agrees with Donna. He appreciates Chris's concerns, but this will set a precedent that would be hard to follow. He would recommend getting some direction from the City Attorney's office as to whether or not we could do this in the City of San Diego or in La Jolla. That would be more efficient. There are constitutional rights involved and a lot of people like himself think we have too many signs.

Patrick agrees with Donna and Tom. What we would be doing as a Board is regulating people rather than traffic and transportation. It is an overreach of what we recommend even though it is a sign. It's a sign on a median telling people what they can and cannot do and he wouldn't support it based on that.

Dave asked Steve to look into the legal aspect of restricting access to people in the Median and if we cannot do that can we place signage there? Steve said he would request a legal opinion from the City Attorney and get back to the Board.

Cont'd pending information from City Attorney's Office.

Agenda Item 2: Request to Change Lane Directions at Pearl St/Girard Ave Intersection (Cont'd Item) -
To make middle lane southbound Girard right turn only. (Francine Ginsburg) **Action Item.**

At the August LJT&T Meeting Francine explained her Request to Change Lane directions. The far-right lane has the designated right turn arrow, the middle lane allows for the right turn or goes straight on Girard, and the left lane allows for straight on Girard or left turn onto eastbound Pearl. Very few drivers are in the left lane while the majority of the drivers are in the right lanes for westbound Pearl Street. Traffic congestion occurs when a driver stops in that middle lane intending to go straight on Girard. Drivers who want to turn right onto Pearl and then left at Fay Avenue are stuck waiting behind that one car wanting to go straight. If they are stuck behind that one car, they will often push into the far right turn lane traffic. There is a lot of jockeying within the lanes as drivers try to prepare to make the right turn onto Pearl and then the left turn onto Fay. If that middle lane could become a second designated right turn only lane Francine would like to see the change occur at the intersection of Torrey Pines and Girard where drivers could be in the lane they need when they make the turns onto Pearl. Motion to request the City conduct a traffic study at the Pearl St/Girard Ave intersection to determine traffic counts on various movements from various directions and accident history at the intersection:

The City Traffic Dept. provided a traffic analysis that was done in 2017 at 15-minute intervals from 7:00am to 4:00pm determining that 75-80% of drivers make the right turn from southbound Girard to Pearl Street and the remaining traffic either goes straight or makes the left turn. Francine asked why the hours of 4:00pm - 6:00pm was not included in the Study when traffic is at its heaviest and Girard becomes rough. Steve Celniker, City Traffic Engineer, responded a School probably requested the study and was only interested in the day time hours.

Francine asked Celniker about the timing of the green traffic light. Tom had suggested making it a longer green light for all to have time to move through the intersection vs a longer green arrow light for the traffic to turn right onto Pearl. Steve thought that could be a possibility that they would look into. The traffic lights on Pearl St from La Jolla Blvd to Girard are timed until 9pm to keep the intersections of side streets clear. If the traffic lights on Pearl are timed, that makes for a longer left turn green arrow light on Fay which in turn makes for a longer right turn green arrow light on Girard and it leaves very little time for through traffic to go straight on Girard. Francine advised there is very little traffic on Pearl at 9:00pm and Steve responded the time could be changed to 8:00pm. He advised her he would look into the timing of the traffic lights on Pearl Street. Francine asked where do we go from here and Dave advised perhaps holding off on proceeding until Celniker can look into changing the timing of the traffic lights.

Tom commented that he is in favor of making the two lanes right turn only provided that the left lane has an arrow light but **Patrick** noted that that would transfer the problem over to the left turn lane. Currently, drivers wanting to turn right onto Pearl are stuck in the middle lane behind drivers waiting to go straight on Girard, but drivers wanting to go straight on Girard would end up in the same situation in the left lane getting stuck behind drivers waiting to make the left turn.

Steve Hadley suggested dedicated traffic cycles at certain times of the day. Southbound traffic would have a dedicated traffic light for all of their movement, northbound traffic would have their dedicated

traffic light for all of their movement and Pearl would have one for their own movement. The Engineers might look at it that way.

Francine was asked to go back to Steve with some of the options the Board discussed: adjust timing of the traffic lights; a total green light for everyone to move on; a dedicated left turn arrow for the left turn lane; dedicated traffic lights for southbound and northbound lanes and for Pearl St. Francine will return to the Board with the results of her findings.

Cont'd pending additional information.

Agenda Item 3: Reporting on City Response to LJT&T Recommendations for 'The Throat' -1. Extend left turn pocket on LJ Pkwy @ Hidden Valley Rd, and 2. Cutback of bulb-out on Hidden Valley Rd @ Ardath Rd to create more lane stacking. **Discussion Item**

At the June 17, 2020 Meeting Agenda Item 3: Resident Carol Hernstadt presented several options to help alleviate traffic congestion at The Throat and Board Member Patrick Ryan added a fourth option.

- 1. FROM Hidden Valley Road: the right-hand lane that feeds Torrey Pines only accommodates TWO cars. If this was extended more cars could feed into that section of the road, helping the back log that occurs on Hidden Valley Road, not only during peak periods but throughout the day. Often cars turning right toward the freeway use this as access to La Jolla Parkway. The slip road lane is not used much; it's dangerous feeding onto the freeway. Moving the water drain would allow for more cars to sit in a holding pattern in this area. Potentially cutting the corner back would allow more traffic to fill into the slots. Potentially adding a separate turning lane would also be advisable.*
- 2. FROM Torrey Pines onto the Freeway access of La Jolla Parkway: if there were TWO lanes turning onto the La Jolla Parkway this would alleviate much back-log traffic coming down Torrey Pines towards the Village.*
- 3. FROM the Village turning onto Torrey Pines if there were more spaces just beyond the bridge, the dangerous congestion could not be so backed up. Three additional spots could easily be added. Carol noted that with some curb cuts and the foliage on all sides surrounding the Parkway and Torrey Pines Rd be trimmed back it would add more space for the additional lanes.*
- 4. Patrick- appreciated Carol's ideas for adding capacity without much expenditure and he would add to that a fourth idea. Westbound coming down the hill there is a wide median with two lane turn lanes eventually onto Hidden Valley. If you pull the left turn lanes much further east up the hill coming down, essentially cutting down the median, it would alleviate some of the congestion that spills over to the thru lane from the drivers waiting to enter the left turn lanes. Sometimes that spillover is 10 cars long and cutting the median to allow for 10 more cars would be another idea.*

City Staff researched all options and concluded that none of them are feasible:

“Our evaluation of the left turn lane proposal as described indicated that it is not feasible. It does not take into account the “KEEP CLEAR” zone for emergency vehicles for Fire Station #9 that would need to be retained. Also, the existing median proposed to be narrowed is only 16 feet wide which is not enough for two lanes. If the median were to be narrowed, only one lane could be provided, and because of the “KEEP CLEAR” zone, an additional queuing capacity of only about four vehicles is the most that could be provided. Considering the expected high cost of such a median narrowing project for a small benefit, the proposal is not recommended. Reconfiguring the northeast curb is not feasible due to a storm drain inlet.”

Patrick clarified that extending the left-turn pocket cannot be done because he had not noticed there is a large ‘keep clear’ area for the fire station on Ardath Lane that cannot be impinged upon. The median behind the left-turn lanes would have to be narrowed to extend the pocket and the width of the median is only 16 feet so you can only gain one lane in that spot which would add space for about four cars. *City Traffic Engineer Steve Celniker- considering the expected high cost of such a median- narrowing project for such a small benefit, the proposal is not recommended*

Dave clarified the reason the adjustment of the bulb-out isn’t feasible in their view is apparently there’s a major drainage inlet at that location that would be too expensive to adjust.

Dave reminded of the Board’s request for the Comprehensive Traffic Study that was requested at the *February 19, 2020 Meeting, Agenda Item 2: Motion to Request the City conduct a Comprehensive Traffic Study with all possible Solutions related to traffic congestion at The Throat and other abutting areas:*

Steve Hadley- his understanding is that there is some money that La Jolla has for that kind of study. They are going to strongly recommend that one of the capital improvement projects for 2021 is our comprehensive traffic study of The Throat.

Dave noted this is a community problem and that the comprehensive traffic study is universally desired.

Cont’d pending information from the City on status of Comprehensive Traffic Study at The Throat.

Agenda Item 4: Request for Valet Parking Zone at Marine Medical Building, 7300 Girard Ave.- Convert three parking spaces for weekday valet operations. (Brad Elsass) **Action Item**

Their purpose in asking for a Valet Zone in front of 7300 Girard is to provide a first-class valet operation in front of a newly designed medical office building, to prevent patients and visitors from parking on Girard and nearby streets, and a valet service will allow 7300 Girard to maximize on-site parking by stacking vehicles in the garage and driveway.

The building has been closed for the past two years while it has been under construction and they are taking a proactive approach to offset any traffic issues when the building reopens. The building is located in a congested part of Girard due to La Jolla Elementary School directly across the street and right now it does not seem to be congested due to Covid and the school schedules but they are taking the proactive approach for when the medical building reopens.

Valet Service offers additional parking usage for the garage that is available for the medical building as well as maximizes on street parking for the School and other users on the street. To encourage Valet, because Valet Service is expensive to operate, most of the fees will be offset by validation through the building tenants. Some of the Tenants in the Building will be paying for the service for their visitors which will encourage the use of Valet.

Ace Parking and the building owners are requesting a 60-foot 3-minute passenger loading zone. The Zone will allow patients to exit their vehicles safely at street/entrance level as opposed to the garage level and patients will not have to maneuver through the garage after undergoing anesthesia. The Zone will be used M-F 8:00am to 5:00pm and outside of those hours will remain open for public access. In order to enter the parking garage safely Ace will be circling around the block and then enter the garage driveway. Currently the parking garage can hold 40 cars. They believe visitation to this building will be in excess of 40, but with Ace stacking they can maximize those stalls up to 72 cars. If Valet is not approved for this site those 32 additional cars will be parking on the streets throughout the Village.

Dave asked Brad if patients would be precluded from self-parking or would the garage be cordoned off for valet vs patients who wanted to self-park. Brad responded that would depend on the occupancy of the garage and that will evolve over time. While the building is not occupied there will be self-parking, but at some point Ace will strongly encourage valet service. They recognize in this Covid environment not everyone is comfortable with valet service so there would be some options for self-parking in the garage.

Brian asked if there were going to be surgical procedures being done in the building. He was in this building previously and does not recall surgical procedures being done there. Are these surgical procedures driving the need for valet?

Brad responded that the building is not yet fully leased but because of the high quality of the building they expect to attract a high-quality tenant mix which would involve oral surgeons who will use general anesthesia.

Ross is a retired plastic surgeon. He remembers there was a plastic surgeon at one time in this building but he does not know how much surgery the surgeon did there. He asked if they will be piping in oxygen and vacuum lines. What are you going to do to promote outpatient surgery in this facility? Brad deferred to Jonathan Lipsky.

Jonathan Lipsky is part of the ownership group of the building. They acquired the building in 2016 and have been redeveloping it in stages. Rady's Children and a dentist have been occupying the building throughout the redevelopment. They have tried to make the building as flexible as possible to attract a mix of medical professionals from oral surgeons to pediatrics to geriatric medicine due to the number of adult living facilities in the area. He walked through the facility with an oral surgeon who told him he will need a drop off and pick up for his patients. They consulted with a medical brokerage firm to make sure they covered everything they need to make the building a multidisciplinary medical environment.

Patrick asked if there are more suites now than prior to 2016 and Jonathan responded yes more suites have been added. How much will patients be charged to valet? Brad responded that the market rate for

that area of Girard would be \$8.00. Patrick is concerned that three parking spaces are being taken off the street. He can do the math and they are actually netting more parking spaces but all the Schools will see is that three parking spaces are being removed during critical school drop off and pick up times. He asked if they would consider leaving it a loading zone for school drop off and pick up times and leaving it valet for the rest of the time, or reducing the number of spaces being requested.

Once the building is fully opened parking becomes all valet, patients may not want valet service at \$8.00 and they can no longer use the parking garage, so they will end up parking on the street and the valet numbers go down. Perhaps they can be flexible in the number of spaces they are requesting.

Ross – it sounds like you are asking for a white curb and we all remember the mess that occurred up north on Girard with extremely confusing signage for 3-minute parking. People were getting ticketed. You are saying its ok to park here after 5:00pm but not before 5:00pm. That signage has to be very clear. Brad responded the signage comes with the permitting process. They use City signage and it will clearly state it is 3-minute loading zone parking but there will also be clear signage stating they can be used after 5:00pm and on weekends.

Tom- in the past that building provided free self-parking. Now there will be paid valet parking. He suggests that doctors validate their patients parking and he wants it as a requirement in their Lease. Brad responded that in the UTC area, which has a lot more medical buildings than La Jolla has, there is an 80-90% validation rate so Doctors do it anyway as good business practice but stipulating that it be a requirement becomes a leasing issue.

Jonathan- responded they have not made that a requirement. Adding that stipulation becomes difficult because they want to fill the building up. Doctors are concerned about parking driving business away from them so they do validate for it but it is not included in their Lease that they do so.

Patrick- asked if they did any petitioning of the neighbors because three parking spaces are being removed from the street. He will support their request but he wants some feedback from the Schools. Brad responded the building has been closed so they have not done any community outreach. Jonathan has a child that just graduated from La Jolla Elementary school and he has colleagues with children at Gillespie so he has no problem with talking to the building's neighbors and getting feedback from them.

Cont'd pending community outreach from the neighbors.

Agenda Item 5: Request for Road Lumps on 2400-2500 Blocks of Azure Coast Dr- two lumps for traffic Calming by adjacent HOA's (Joe Melin) **Action Item**

Joe Melin is on the Board of Directors of the Azure Coast Dr HOA. The complex has twenty-two units and two houses that sit directly on Azure Coast Dr. The need for traffic calming is a result of traffic backing up on the Parkway. Drivers will use Azure Coast to fly down the street bypassing that traffic. Residents all enter and exit their complex from Azure Coast. Speed limit in that area is 25 but the average speed is 39 mph and it is difficult for residents to exit the complex onto Azure Coast safely. The HOA has been working on a traffic calming proposal for over 5 years as evidenced by a Letter submitted by the Fire Marshall dated July 7, 2015 stating a list of contingency factors to be met as a condition of their

Approval. Dave requested a more recent Letter and received acknowledgement that conditions have been met and nothing has been altered from 2015:

We have a request for road lumps on Azure Coast Drive. The Fire Department has approved 2 road lumps at this location. The petitions show support from 100% of fronting properties. The property owner at 2586 was opposed to the original location because he believed they would be ineffective due to the curve in the roadway. We relocated the lumps more than 200' from that location. He is no longer fronting the lump locations.

Mr. Melin is hopeful that once the road lumps are installed drivers will want to remain on the Parkway to avoid them.

Motion to Approve two Road Lumps as specified on 2400-2500 Blocks of Azure Coast Dr: Ryan, Second: Brady 7-0-0

Agenda Item 6: Request for Traffic Circle at Camino de la Costa/Vista de La Mesa/La Canada Intersection- by Bird Rock neighbors who consider it currently dangerous (Paul Ross) **Discussion Item**

Neighbors in the vicinity of the Camino de la Costa/Vista de la Mesa/La Canada intersection have retained Planning Consultant Paul Ross to advance the proposal for a traffic circle in that location. This is a Discussion Only as the group is still working on their City petition signature gathering.

Paul Ross presented the request for the traffic circle at the Intersections of Camino de la Costa, Vista de la Mesa and La Canada Street on behalf of neighbors concerned about traffic and safety issues. It is a very large and unusual intersection, where traffic from the north and south come to a stop and the through traffic down La Canada and up from the beach very often exceeds the speed limit. Mr. Ross described it as cars zinging through there pretty slippery. As drivers pull out of the side streets of an awkward intersection and other drivers are zinging through it, the results are a lot of skid marks and near misses. Residents want to organize that traffic with a traffic circle for traffic calming measures.

Because of the awkwardness of the Intersection the traffic circle would look more like an oval or ellipse and it would slow the traffic down as well as be a benefit to pedestrians. There would be 16' lanes surrounding the traffic circle which are the dimensions of the traffic circles in Bird Rock. He does not yet know what would be inside the traffic circle but neighbors want something that does not have to be irrigated that is low maintenance yet attractive.

Residents are working on their petition but they wanted to bring it to LJT&T for the Board's comments, insights and show of support for moving their proposal forward and advancing it to the City.

Dave asked Mr. Ross if the neighbors are hoping the City will fund the traffic circle or are they prepared to assist with it in some way. Mr. Ross responded they would be willing to discuss participation if they could get a break from permitting and other fees that are associated with departmental reviews.

Dave asked about the demonstrated accident history of the intersection or are they all near misses? Mr. Ross responded that according to neighbors there are frequent near misses. The number of actual collisions is unknown but he can find that out. Dave asked about the status of their petitions. Mr. Ross

responded they have started working on it, they have about 10 so far but will have a lot more by the time of the next meeting; they will have a larger representation from the residents who live in the immediate vicinity.

Trace Wilson lives in the area of that intersection and a traffic circle is long overdue, however, he wants something like what Bird Rock has and not just a pile of sand, pylons and flashing lights for their traffic circle. He wants it done right. Patrick noted that there are several low-profile roundabouts in the area of Forward St and Colima but Trace wants ambiance. It is a scenic route to Windnsea and ambiance becomes important.

Steve Hadley advised that the mechanism that the City recommends often in these cases is a general-purpose permit for private improvement of public property; it is an encroachment maintenance and removal agreement. This kind of permit would give residents more control not only over the design but maybe the construction. It does cut through some of the bureaucracy as long as residents are willing to pay for it. He used The Map in Kellogg Park and the Coast Walk Trail as examples. Residents on Ardath Road are thinking of using it for extending the Wall. Information on this is on the City website.

Dave advised Mr. Ross to keep him updated on their progress and let him know when they are ready to go on a future Agenda for possible action.

Adjournment: 5:45pm

Respectfully Submitted: Donna Aprea, Secretary

Next Meeting: October 21, 2020