

LA JOLLA TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Regular Meeting: December 17, 2024
The Riford Library – Seminar Room - 7555 Draper Avenue

Members Present:

Erik Gantzel BRCC,
Bill Podway LJVMA
John Bauer LJTC
Ross Rudolph LJSA,
Jason Peasely, LJMA
Mary Soriano, LJTC
Tom Brady LJCPA
Mike McCormack, LJSA

Members Absent:

Dave Abrams, LJCPA
Patrick Ryan, BRCC

Approve Minutes of October 15, 2024:

First: Bill Podway

Second: Tom Brady

Vote: Approved 5-0-2-1

Abstain: Mary Soriano, Jason Peasley: Mike McCormack arrived late and not present for vote.

Chairperson Report:

Welcome our new Board member Mary Soriano who is filling the vacant seat left by Nancy Warrick – Mary will be representing the LJTC.

I want to just repeat that the purpose of the board and how the flow works as far as things that we hear, we consider proposals affecting La Jolla streets, traffic calming, stop signs, striping, and parking, curb colors, time limits, valet, also special events involving street closures or parking restrictions. We make recommendations that we vote on.

If we have action items, we vote on those, and then those go to the La Jolla Community Planning Association for their consent agenda for an up or down vote. And then from there, they go to the city as a recommendation.

So today we have a fairly short agenda that's just made up of discussion items.

Public Comment:

Kathleen Neil – Torrey Pines Road-Coast Walk Guardrail

My name is Kathleen Neil. In June of 2023, a community-based working group got together with the city regarding the K-rail on Torrey Pines Road, which is a temporary boundary put up there for safety. I realize that's on the agenda for next month, because the city will be doing a presentation.

So for the board members, I do have the full project book with me of what I have. But for the board members, I thought it might be helpful to go ahead and give you the fact sheet, the CIP updated from December sheet, and also the minutes from the June working group.

The sheet on top is a data sheet. It's a good, helpful sheet, but it was from the June 2023 presentation.

Mary Soriano – T&T invitation to a new organization

I'd like to invite Traffic and Transportation to an association that we're forming from a SANDAG meeting that was recently held, that we came together, those who were in attendance, UCSD, SANDAG, Council, and others to form a Transportation Management Association, a TMA. La Jolla doesn't have one, and other cities and other towns do, so I think T&T may want to go ahead and also join that organization. We're specifically having our first meeting January 21st.

Erik: So what will it actually do?

Mary: it's a matter of addressing transportation, air quality, commuter issues within the La Jolla geographic area. But I think it's not just to 92037, because UCSD is also, for their transportation and activation department, will also be participating in this organization.

Mike McCormick – riding your bike commentary

As a board member, I ride a bike and it's always good to make comments. I ask and I'm also online and advocate.

Cyclists, I want people here to understand that there's some really stupid practices that bikers undertake. And I know you're expecting me to say vehicle drivers. I'm a vehicle driver.

Bikers don't use visors. So, when we start advocating for traffic and transportation, we've got to start taking them to task for not having a visor. There were so many intersections I came

through. With a blinding light, my attempt to go like this, put my hand up, bicycle safety. We're spending a lot of money on bicycle safety.

The other thing is this. It's a mirror. I'm going down the bike path, road. I see what's going on behind me. When you see the back of my head, driving a bike, as a driver, you think that guy is out of touch. He doesn't know what's going on behind him. You've got to know what's going on behind you. Bikers don't use mirrors. We have got to demand that of bikers. The money we're throwing away on bikers right now, the city, bikers need to step up.

Mirror, visors, they're not doing it. There's a pride thing with the Tour de France that they associate with, that the mirrors are sissy. They're extremely valuable for you and I as vehicle drivers because you might get rid of the rage that drivers exhibit to cyclists.

But cyclists need to do something too.

Erik Gantzel– cost of a roundabout and request process

I reached out to the Traffic Engineering Department and was told that they vary depending on the roundabout, as you would expect.

Roundabouts that are built in-house by the city tend to be a million to a million and a half. If it's contracted to an outside contractor, up to two, 2.5 million, depending on, of course, the size and the location, the features. I was told that there's a push to make much simpler, scaled-down roundabouts that cost about \$500,000.

Public - So how can we request something like this?

Erik - This is the city's website where you submit a traffic service request. Put the street location, the closest cross street, and the request, and you can provide up to 2,000 characters of explanation of what you're asking for. And the city's advised me, Gary Pence specifically, that this is the means by which they want people to submit requests for roundabouts.

Even before they come to us here, they should be submitting this to the city. And this also applies to crosswalks and stop signs, a variety of things. There's a drop-down menu you can see with the drop-down.

Curb paint, traffic signals, signage, pavement markings and striping, sidewalk, bicycle, guardrails, traffic homing, street lights, and other. So you have lots of options here. So if anyone wants to get this link, I'd be happy to send it to you, but it's pretty easy if you just know how to use Google.

John Bauer – Full list of all SD City traffic and transportation related works happening in La Jolla

How do we get our hands on the full list of T&T actions for LJ that are approved but not funded or are going to be done in the coming years?

Discussion Item: Request for crosswalk paint and curb bulb-outs –

Proposal to add crosswalk paint and curb bulb-outs (aka curb extensions) at the intersection of Prospect Street and Fay Avenue as well as other intersections in the village.

Presented by: Samuel Love

Sam is unable to attend so Erik is providing the following summary:

He requested curb bulb outs, which essentially are curb extensions where you take the sidewalk and the curb and you push it out into the street so that you lose a parking spot potentially, but it provides a much shorter distance for a pedestrian to walk from one side of the street to the other at Fay and Prospect.

So, the idea is to run the curb out to about where that car would be parked, where the parking spot would be, and then pull it around like that. With the desire... And also on the other side to pull the curb out so that no traffic lanes are taken away, but you have the curb coming out.

The city, Gary Pence responded to Mr. Love's request by saying, yes, we do these, but they're expensive, and so we'd like you to see if you can put together a list of priorities. There may be intersections that are more suitable for this sort of bulb-out based on pedestrian volumes. And I thought that was a good response because it seems to me that this is, it makes sense to me to put crosswalk paint here, but this is not as heavily used as intersection as, say, at Girard and Silverado.

Erik - We have the request. The city's open to it, so I thought if there are intersections where you think it would be useful to have this, I think that Fay and Prospect is probably not... It's heavily trafficked, and if it's put in, great, but I think it's a lot of money, and there are probably other intersections that are more worthy.

John - So there's two requests. One is to paint a new crossing, and the other is for bulb outs. Are we addressing both here? Yes. Because in an ideal world, it would be nice if we could get the city to come through and repaint all the pedestrian crossing areas that we have today.

Erik - I'm going to let the requester know that we really, we didn't identify any need for the bulb outs. But that I will certainly follow up and request repairs to degraded crosswalk paint and additional crosswalk paint. I think those are things that can be done through that portal that the city has.

It doesn't even need to come through us as an action item, I don't believe. But I'll certainly suggest he submit that to the city.

Next: Erik to respond back to discussion requester to submit requests through City portal.

Discussion Item: Request to open gates on Upper Hillside Drive –

Proposal to improve access to Country Club neighborhood by permanently opening the gates on Upper Hillside Drive between Encelia Drive and Caminito Bassano.

Presented by: Tom Fetter

Tom: Summary - I moved up to the top of Country Club Drive 62 years ago. We had to pave the last 100 feet in there.

The road was dirt. And we put in the curb and paved it and created two lots. We've lived there all this time.

And 60 years ago, there weren't so many people there. And this issue came up as a result of the Fox Hill discussion and building those five houses. The concern I have is that there are roughly, I figure roughly somewhere in the order of 600 people that are spending the night in that area from Lower Hillside Drive up to the very top.

There are about 220 houses. And the houses are bigger than they were 50 years ago. And the roads were built, other than Fairway Drive, the roads were built in the 20s.

And they're 20 feet wide. And one thing I've gotten on part of Country Club Drive is the fire department has blocked parking on one side of the street. Because if there were two cars parked, you couldn't get through.

The problem that I brought up 30 or 40 years ago was the fact that Upper Hillside Drive, which is at the top of Encelia, offered a second exit. And it also offered traffic mitigation, because if you were going to get down to Pacific Beach or to La Jolla Shores, you could go out that way and you didn't have to come down to Torrey Pines. And that was blocked by Doug Manchester and Dr. Seuss, Ted Geisel, with a gate. And I raised some money, and we tried to get an adverse possession ruling on it that would cause it to remain open. And they had more muscle than we had at the time. So, it's gated.

The fire department does have a key. And bicyclists and pedestrians can walk through, but driving is not allowed.

Ross- Is that a city street, or is it private property?

Tom Fetter- I believe that it's private property, but I believe it also could be subject either to adverse possession, because it was open and paved and used for many years from, I think, right after World War II. And paved, and it's on the map. It's on the Google map.

It's Upper Hillside Drive. But I think the thing to do today would be to initiate it in the main and have the city buy the property. But it would do two things.

It would provide an escape route if those 600 people, and there's that large green area on this side, and then down at the bottom, there's a reserve - about 12 acre. That has to remain in its natural condition in perpetuity. And the two of those things, when the insurance companies do an aerial photo, it looks like there are two areas of vegetation that could cause a fire.

And there's basically a very limited way out. So, I just recommend that this ought to go out in the city agenda as something that should be done for the safety. It's not one of the typical issues for the local planning group with somebody building a garage or building a second house.

And this affects over 250 houses, probably, and a lot of people.

Tom Brady - I'd like to make a comment, which is that as things dry out and get hotter, that La Jolla Heights Natural Park is a fire waiting to happen. And I think that opening this up is a great idea because if there's a massive fire in that area, all of these people are going to get trapped because there's only one way out at present.

Tom Fetter - The second problem, which maybe is the easiest and the first to solve, is the lower interest-dependent kind of thing. And it's...There's no sidewalk. The street is 20 feet wide. There's some encroachment from vegetation and people walk and bicycle and cars pass. And a very... One minor thing I would suggest is there ought to be signage.

They reduce that to, like, 10 miles an hour and some painted signs on the street to be cautious.

Mike - I had a question for you. So, I ride my bike there. I don't think I've ever driven my car up there. But I really enjoy the fact that it's not a through road. And so, as residents, you know, the road is not as used, because with an outlet, you're going to get a lot of people going through for whatever reason.

It's a wonderful connection for bikers and pedestrians, and for cars, I assume, would be the same. So, what do you guys think about how it would change the circulation pattern for people that don't live in the neighborhood?

There's going to be a lot more cars going through just to connect over onto that part of Soledad. There's going to be people not even part of your neighborhood that are going to use that road. That's an unintended consequence of it being open. I was wondering what you thought of that?

Tom Fetter - I can't imagine somebody intentionally driving up that road.

Tom - Eric, I think if there was a street allowing a gate to be put up, clearly the city probably protected itself by having an easement to reopen. And we can check that by just having a friend in the real estate business do a title report on that. And I think it's an excellent suggestion from a safety standpoint to get people...

I think Ross has got the right idea. We need to have that gate removed. And we'll find out soon enough from the residents on Upper Hillside how visible it is to have more traffic on that street.

But I really think from a safety standpoint it needs to be opened up.

Next: Who owns the street?, is there an easement?. Erik and Tom Fetter to determine.

Discussion Item: Blocked driveways on Park Row – Request to extend red paint further from driveway aprons discourage drivers from blocking driveways. Additional discussion regarding the use of “L” and “T” markings on pavement for the same purpose.

Presented by: Ray Weiss

Well, I guess this got inflated to the point where there were a bunch of emails going back and forth with Gary Pence. As some of you know, I serve on the Community Planning Association, so I'm a little bit of a community activist. And I've lived on Park Row since the 70s and now my wife, had to deal with the gate.

Also, so we have two houses on Park Row and there's a continual problem. It seems to me that the red zones don't do their job, partly because they're faded and partly for an obvious reason, which is that they're on the passenger side of cars that are driven by single drivers trying to park and go to work, whether it's daytime in the village or at night at the restaurants where there's fully parked cars all the time, kind of emptied out at 1 or 6 in the morning. And it occurred to me, because I've seen this done on other city roads, particularly near the San Diego Yacht Club, they have put T's and L's.

The city has done this. Eric has since told me, informed me about citizens having done it, that when you get out of your car, if you're into the red and there's a stripe next to you that clearly shows 6 feet of your car in the red, people might notice that. And most importantly, parking patrols will notice that because they don't see the red either if the car is blocking the red.

So, it occurred to me that the city could make people behave better if there were these L's and T's painted in the street, as there often are, particularly in places where there are parking meters. So, my preference would be that they just did the L's, not the T's.

The city does it in white down near the San Diego Yacht Club. Gary Pence says that's an area controlled by the Port District. So maybe they're the ones who did it.

But I still think it makes sense, and I'd like some advocacy in favor of doing it. It doesn't do anything more than simply make clear where the red begins. And then, you know, Gary has raised the point that cars are of different length, and it's true.

The space in front of my house can be occupied by two small cars or one big truck. But you can't have a big truck and a small car because all one of them will be in the red.

But the way I'm envisioning it, when you get out of your car, if you were in the red, it would be pretty obvious. And as I said before, it would be also obvious to the parking enforcement people who can't see the curb when it's blocked by cars.

Unknown Board member - How many parking enforcements do you get through there?

Ray – They come through occasionally. Maybe, I don't know, I don't stand there with a stopwatch or anything, but I'd say they come through once or twice a day. And if you call the non-emergency San Diego Police Department, they will send parking enforcement out.

John - Do you think this would be mitigated if the red was painted, repainted?

Ray - It would be easier to notice that it was red if it was repainted. And in fact, many residents, I suspect, have added their own red paint.

John - knowing that the city's judicious with its funds in the coming year, is there an opportunity for the city to provide guidance as to how we should paint these things? And if we privately funded it, would the city be okay with that?

There's a million things that people want to do in La Jolla from a T&T perspective. The problem is, there's not enough resources, not enough funds, and we're down at 22 on the list or whatever.

There is a desire and will within La Jolla to make change. The city's response is, no, only we can do it. But if the city said, here are the guidelines for the color of paint you use, how you should paint it, here are some private contractors that you can go out to.... we would like to do this.

It's funded by the citizens of La Jolla. Is there a possibility that the city can flex a little bit to say, we can, how about this? Why don't they use this as an experiment to see if it can work?

Enhance La Jolla. They can go out and paint it but we will give them the funds to do it.

Emily - I do want to speak about this because there is a method to go about this that does exist - through applying for a Right of Entry Permit. It is how the Coastal Trail is about to do their work.

Councilman LaCava is trying change the process, so it is easier – it is part of the public/private partnership process that he's trying to make easier, more streamlined both from the public side and from the private side. So, it is something that exists right now, but it definitely needs to be improved a little bit.

Next: Erik to determine when we bring this up as an action item in a future meeting

Adjournment: 5:22pm

Next Meeting – January 21, 2025

Respectfully Submitted: John Bauer, Secretary