

September 13, 2006

Honorable Chairman and Members of the
Public Works Commission

Regular Meeting of
September 20, 2006

PIER AVENUE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Public Works Commission:

1. Receive public comment regarding the trial striping layout on Pier Avenue between Hermosa Avenue and Pacific Coast Highway;
2. Comment to staff regarding this issue;
3. Direct the Pier Avenue Subcommittee of the Public Works Commission to participate in the proposed "Downtown Enhancement Committee"; and
4. Direct staff to review all comments and prepare a report.

Summary:

Proposition C funding was secured for FY 06-07 (the current fiscal year) for CIP Project No. 04-116 Pier Avenue Street Improvements, which includes reconstruction of Pier Avenue between Pacific Coast Highway and Hermosa Avenue. Prior to beginning design of these improvements, staff implemented a trial striping project to test reducing the number of travel lanes from two lanes in each direction to one lane in each direction. This option was recommended by the Downtown Implementation Plan, which was the outcome of a long public process referred to as the R/UDAT process.

R/UDAT stands for the "Regional Urban Design Assistance Team", an interdisciplinary task force organized by the American Institute of Architects to help communities identify issues and develop action plans to implement a shared vision for the future. The R/UDAT process began in 1992 with an independent team comprised of urban designers, architects, planners, traffic and economic consultants from around the country coming to our community to look at the commercial district on Pier Avenue from PCH to the ocean. This team came for a week of intensive brain storming with representatives of the community. Following this effort, Council formed the "City Downtown Enhancement Commission" to hold public workshops and hired a design consultant all of which ultimately resulted in the preparation and approval of the Downtown Implementation Plan adopted in 1994.

The goal of the Implementation Plan was to implement traffic calming measures and to enhance pedestrian amenities thereby creating a comfortable shopping environment for the community and visitors. This would provide a design link between Upper and Lower Pier Avenue and enhance the character of the City's downtown. Reducing Pier Avenue to one lane in each direction was to help accomplish this goal.

This test project has been in place throughout the summer. Traffic counts are being taken and will be presented at this meeting. Observations have confirmed that reducing the number of travel lanes has slowed travel speeds on Pier Avenue and staff believes the crosswalks and diagonal parking have been made safer by the slowed speeds, shortened crosswalk lengths, and widened parking aisle. The question before the Commission is to consider whether these calming measures are acceptable to the community. Many communications, both written and verbal, have been received on both sides of the issue (see attached letters).

This is the beginning of the process, with either the two-lane option or four-lane option, this project will still include installation of street trees, street furniture, old fashioned street lights plus other improvements which will enhance the aesthetics of this downtown corridor as originally proposed through the R/UDAT process. It will be proposed to the City Council that a "Downtown Enhancement Committee" should be formed comprised of two members of the Public Works Commission, the Planning Commission, and the City Council, to review the findings from the R/UDAT process, then review all public comment, comments from the Public Works and Planning Commissions and then make recommendations to Council on the final lane striping as well as design features for this "Legacy" project.

Attachments: Correspondence

Respectfully submitted,



Richard D. Morgan, P.E.
Director of Public Works/City Engineer



City of Hermosa Beach

Civic Center, 1315 Valley Drive, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254-3885

IMPORTANT NOTICE

ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2006, THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION WILL BE CONSIDERING THE FOLLOWING ISSUE:

PIER AVENUE TRIAL LANE STRIPING

On Wednesday, June 7, 2006, Pier Avenue was re-striped from two lanes of travel in each direction to one lane in each direction with a center turning lane from Bard Avenue to Hermosa Avenue. Stop signs were also added at Bard Street. These changes were made on a trial basis in advance of beginning design to reconstruct Pier Avenue from PCH to Hermosa Avenue, in an effort to test the recommendations of the Downtown Implementation Plan adopted by City Council in 1994.

The basic reasoning of the 1994 proposal was to implement traffic calming measures and to enhance pedestrian amenities to create a comfortable shopping environment for the community and visitors and to provide a design link between Upper and Lower Pier Avenue and enhance the character of the City's "downtown".

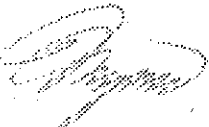
The lane striping, as it exists today, provides room for landscaping improvements such as Canary Island palms at intersection "knuckles" and canopy trees through the block along with new street lighting and benches, as recommended in the Implementation Plan. The crosswalks are considered much safer crossing only two lanes of traffic instead of four. The diagonal parking aisle has been widened from 14-feet to 22-feet which provides better sight distance.

This test has slowed vehicle speeds on Pier Avenue, while providing the above improvements. This slowing of traffic has been the most significant objection that staff has received from the community, along with concerns regarding diversion of traffic to other streets. Traffic counts will be performed once school is in session and will be presented at the meeting. **IF YOU ARE FOR OR AGAINST THESE CHANGES PLEASE PLAN ON ATTENDING THIS MEETING.**

This public meeting will be held at 7:00 PM, or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 1315 Valley Drive, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254.

ALL PERSONS interested are invited to participate and speak at this meeting at the above time and place. All written testimony by any interested party will be accepted prior to or at the scheduled time on the agenda for the matter. Written testimony received by September 13th will be included in the Commissioner's agenda packet for review prior to the meeting.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, contact Richard Morgan, Director of Public Works/City Engineer at (310) 318-0211 (or email rmorgan@hermosabch.org).



Richard D. Morgan, P.E.
Director of Public Works/City Engineer