

January 14, 2002

Honorable Mayor and Members of
The Hermosa Beach City Council

Regular Meeting of
January 22, 2002

**REQUEST FOR STOP SIGNS ON HERMOSA AVENUE AT 19TH STREET
TO CREATE A 3-WAY STOP**

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the City Council uphold the Public Works Commission decision to deny the request to install stop signs on Hermosa Avenue at 19th Street to create a 3-way stop.

Summary:

A request was submitted at the October 9, 2001 City Council meeting by Mayor Pro Tem Dunbabin for the Public Works Commission to review and provide a recommendation to the City Council regarding the installation of stop signs on Hermosa Avenue at 19th Street to create a 3-way stop. This is a "T" intersection that currently has a stop sign only on the 19th Street approach. West of Hermosa Avenue, 19th Street is a walk-street and a pedestrian crosswalk is in place across Hermosa Avenue at this intersection.

The Public Works Commission heard this matter on December 19, 2001. The Commission denied the request for the following reason: The warrant criteria for a 3-way stop are not satisfied and there are no unique circumstances indicating that a 3-way stop is needed.

Background:

In response to the request for a 3-way stop, Staff monitored the intersection and conducted a technical analysis to determine if a 3-way stop is warranted according to the standard Caltrans criteria. The analysis involves an assessment of traffic volumes, accident statistics, vehicle delay, and pedestrian activity. The Caltrans guidelines suggest certain threshold values that should be used in the decision-making process in order to provide consistency throughout a community and throughout the state. The warrant criteria and the actual measured values for the intersection of Hermosa Avenue and 19th Street are shown below.

Warrant Criteria	Threshold Value	Measured Value	Threshold Exceeded
Accidents per Year	5/year	1	No
Total Traffic at Intersection	500 vehicles/hour	AM Peak Hour = 598 PM Peak Hour = 862	Yes Yes
Minor Street Vehicle & Pedestrian Volume	200 vehicles & pedestrians/hour	28 veh + 6 peds = 34 AM 12 veh + 11 peds = 23 PM	No No
Delay (during peak hour)	30 sec/veh (average)	8 sec in AM Peak Hour 10 sec in PM Peak Hour	No No

As shown in the table, the traffic volumes are above the state-recommended thresholds for the total volume of traffic passing through the intersection during the AM and PM peak hours. The combined traffic and pedestrian volumes entering the intersection from the minor street (19th Street) are well below the thresholds for both the AM and PM peak hours. According to the guidelines, the values for the total traffic and the minor street traffic should both be above the thresholds to justify the installation of a 3-way stop. Furthermore, the state guidelines indicate that the thresholds should be exceeded for eight hours of the day. At this intersection, the thresholds are not exceeded even for the peak hours of traffic activity. A 3-way stop would not, therefore, be warranted based on the state guidelines.

It should be noted that the Caltrans criteria and thresholds are not hard-and-fast rules but are guidelines that should be used in the decision-making process. It is sometimes acceptable to install a 3-way stop if there are unique circumstances that clearly indicate that a 3-way stop would be advantageous. At the intersection of Hermosa Avenue and 19th Street there are some visibility constraints associated with vehicles parked on the east side of Hermosa Avenue and in the median of Hermosa Avenue. Motorists stopped at the stop sign on 19th Street cannot readily see the oncoming traffic on Hermosa Avenue. This was not observed to result in a safety problem, however, because the drivers can usually maneuver into a position to observe the oncoming traffic prior to proceeding onto Hermosa Avenue and they can stop in the median area to view the oncoming southbound traffic prior to turning left. This situation is typical of intersections along Hermosa Avenue and for divided roadways in general. Similarly, motorists turning left or making U-turns from southbound Hermosa Avenue cannot readily see the oncoming traffic in the northbound direction. They can, however, stop in the median area to view the oncoming northbound traffic prior to turning left or completing the U-turn.

The situation is similar with regard to pedestrians crossing Hermosa Avenue. They cannot easily see the traffic in both directions simultaneously; however, they can cross the first set of lanes with good visibility, cross the median area without conflict, then cross the second set of lanes with good visibility. This situation is typical of a divided street that has parking or other visibility restrictions in the median, and it is not indicative of a safety hazard.

While stop signs would make it easier for motorists to turn from 19th Street onto Hermosa Avenue and for pedestrians to cross Hermosa Avenue, the additional stop signs would also require all motorists to stop at this location throughout the day and night, thereby resulting in additional delays for thousands of motorists, increased emissions, increased noise levels, increased fuel consumption, and an additional nuisance for motorists on Hermosa Avenue.

In summary, the conclusion of the analysis is that it would not be warranted to install stop signs on Hermosa Avenue at 19th Street to create a 3-way stop. The warrant criteria for a 3-way stop are not satisfied and there are no unique circumstances indicating that a 3-way stop is needed. The Staff recommendation, therefore, is for the Commission to deny the request to install stop signs on Hermosa Avenue at 19th Street to create a 3-way stop.

Alternatives:

1. Approve Staff's recommendation.
2. Approve the request to install the stop signs and adopt the attached resolution entitled "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HERMOSA BEACH, CALIFORNIA DESIGNATING THE INTERSECTION OF HERMOSA AVENUE AND 19TH STREET AS A THREE-WAY STOP CONTROL INTERSECTION".
3. Take no action.

Attachments:

1. Public Works Commission Meeting Minutes Excerpt
2. Site Location Map
3. Draft Resolution

Respectfully submitted,

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Harold C. Williams, P.E.
Director of Public Works/City Engineer

Concur:

Michael Lavin
Chief of Police

Stephen R. Burrell
City Manager