

May 6, 2002

Honorable Mayor and Members of  
The Hermosa Beach City Council

Regular Meeting of  
May 14, 2002

**REQUEST FOR SPEED HUMPS ON HILLCREST DRIVE BETWEEN  
18<sup>TH</sup> STREET AND 21<sup>ST</sup> STREET**

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the City Council provide direction to Staff.

**Summary:**

Residents on Hillcrest Drive between 18<sup>th</sup> Street and 21<sup>st</sup> Street have expressed concern for traffic safety in their neighborhood and have requested that speed humps be installed to address their concern. At its March meeting, the Public Works Commission received a report from Staff recommending that the Commission advise Council to deny the request. The Commission voted to table the item and directed Staff to do a survey of the affected neighbors.

At the April 9 Council meeting, Council, in effect, denied the approval of the installation of speed humps on a trial basis on Palm Drive between Pier Avenue and 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Further, Council indicated that it is not interested in installing speed humps on any street in the City. This is Staff's reason for bringing this issue to Council now.

**Background:**

A pavement reconstruction program for Hillcrest Drive is currently under review by the Public Works Department and input has been solicited from the residents of this street regarding their opinions about the program. Some of the input received indicated that there may be a speeding problem on this street segment and that speed humps should be considered for installation. Hillcrest Drive is a two-lane, two-way street with parking on both sides and a roadway width of 28 feet.

**Discussion:**

Hillcrest Drive was monitored on various occasions and speed surveys were conducted to measure the travel speeds on Hillcrest Drive between 18<sup>th</sup> Street and 21<sup>st</sup> Street. The observations indicate that there is a surge in traffic activity at the beginning and ending of the school day for the school on Prospect Avenue and that some motorists drive at excessive speeds along Hillcrest Drive. The speed profile is not, however, indicative of a significant speeding problem.

The speed limit on Hillcrest Drive is 25 miles per hour (mph). The speed surveys indicated that 17 percent of the vehicles were traveling at speeds of 15 mph or less, that 28 percent of the vehicles were traveling at speeds between 16 and 20 mph, that 47 percent of the vehicles were traveling between 21 and 25 mph, that 6 percent of the vehicles were traveling between 26 and 30 mph, and that 2 percent were traveling over 30 mph. The highest speed observed was 33 mph and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed was 24 mph. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85 percent of the vehicles are traveling. It is generally used in the traffic

engineering profession as the critical indicator of travel speeds (as opposed to the average speed).

The speed surveys were taken during the morning and afternoon drop-off and pick-up periods for the school. The distribution of travel speeds during these survey periods is not typically considered to be indicative of a speeding problem on a street with a 25 mph speed limit, as the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed (24 mph) is below the 25 mph speed limit.

As the speed characteristics that were observed are not representative of a speeding problem, Hillcrest Drive would not typically be considered as a candidate location for the installation of speed humps. However, if the street pavement were to be reconstructed, the average travel speeds may increase in the future. If the speeds were to increase substantially or if there were strong support for speed humps among the residents of the street (e.g., documented support by at least two-thirds of the total number of property owners) regardless of the results of the speed survey, then the City should pursue the possibility of installing speed humps. Based on the current information, however, the Staff recommendation is not to install speed humps on Hillcrest Drive. The current information is that the reported speeding problem is not supported by the results of the speed survey and that 7 out of 12 residents that responded to a questionnaire are in favor of installing speed humps on Hillcrest Drive.

As a point of clarification, speed humps are not the same as speed bumps. Speed bumps are typically installed in parking lots and on internal private streets and are typically 1 to 3 feet in width and 4 to 6 inches in height. Speed humps are 12 feet wide and 3 to 4 inches in height, thereby creating a gentler rolling motion for motorists instead of an abrupt jolt. Speed humps are acceptable for installation on public streets, while speed bumps are not.

The primary objective of speed humps is to reduce excessive travel speeds. Their use is often discouraged on public streets because they may affect emergency response times for fire, police, and paramedic vehicles and because many people consider them aesthetically undesirable.

**Alternatives:**

1. Send item back to Public Works Commission for further study.
2. Take no action.

Attachment: Location Map

Respectfully submitted,

Concur:

---

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

---

Stephen R. Burrell  
City Manager

Concur:

---

Michael Lavin  
Chief of Police

---

Russ Tingley  
Fire Chief

F:\B95\PWFILES\CCITEMS\request for speed humps 05-14-02.doc