

May 6, 2002

Honorable Mayor and Members of  
The Hermosa Beach City Council

Regular Meeting of  
May 14, 2002

**INSTALLATION OF SIGNS ON VALLEY PARK AVENUE SOUTH OF 20TH STREET TO  
WARN MOTORISTS ABOUT AN AUTISTIC CHILD**

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the City Council select one of the following options:

1. Approve the recommendation of the Public Works Commission to approve the installation of "Autistic Child" warning signs at Valley Park Avenue and 20<sup>th</sup> Street; or
2. Approve the recommendation of Staff to deny the request to install "Autistic Child" warning signs at Valley Park Avenue and 20<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Background:**

A request was received from the parent of an autistic child who lives on the west side of Valley Park Avenue south of 20<sup>th</sup> Street for the City to install signs that would warn drivers about the presence of the autistic child. As the request for a special sign was initially denied by Staff, the resident then requested that stop signs be installed on 20<sup>th</sup> Street at Valley Park Avenue to create a 3-way stop. The request for a 3-way stop was considered by the Public Works Commission at their November 14, 2001 meeting and the stop signs were not approved. The Commission instead directed Staff to conduct a more comprehensive study of the neighborhood to provide additional information relative to traffic patterns and circulation issues in the area. The issue was again considered at the April 17, 2002 PWC meeting. The Commission denied the installation of a 3-way stop or any other neighborhood traffic control measures, but recommended that signs be installed to warn motorists of the presence of an autistic child on Valley Park Avenue.

**Analysis:**

The attached minutes for the November 14, 2001 and April 17, 2002 Public Works Commission meetings present the traffic analysis for the stop sign request and the results of the neighborhood traffic study. The April 17 minutes indicate that the Commission recommends the installation of special signs to warn motorists of the presence of an autistic child. It should be noted, however, that Staff recommends against the use of such signs. Signs such as those recommended by the Commission are not typically installed by public agencies because they are non-standard and are not recognized by the public or the legal profession as accepted traffic control devices. Special signs can be deceptive, are generally ineffective toward improving safety, and could potentially result in a false sense of security for the affected residents. The installation of such signs would, therefore, be a departure from standard policy.

The Caltrans "Traffic Manual" and the California Vehicle Code state that "only those official traffic control devices that conform to the uniform standards and specifications promulgated by the Department of Transportation shall be placed upon a street or highway." As the type of sign requested by the resident and recommended by the Commission does not conform to the state-approved standards and specifications, the Staff recommendation is to deny the request and not install special signs warning of the presence of an autistic child.

**Alternatives:**

1. Approve the Public Works Commission's recommendation.
2. Approve the Staff recommendation and deny the request to install signs.
3. Direct Staff to install stop signs on 20<sup>th</sup> Street at Valley Park Avenue to create a 3-way stop.

**Fiscal Impact:**

None.

- Attachments: 1. Minutes from November 14, 2001 PWC Meeting  
2. Minutes from April 17, 2002 PWC meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Concur:

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Richard Garland, P.E.  
City Traffic Engineer

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

Concur:

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Stephen R. Burrell  
City Manager

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Michael Lavin  
Chief of Police