

March 14, 2002

Honorable Chairman and Members of
The Hermosa Beach Public Works Commission

Regular Meeting of
March 20, 2002

**TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF THE FIRST ALLEY SOUTH OF 21ST STREET
BETWEEN ARDMORE AVENUE AND AVA AVENUE**

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Commission send a recommendation to the City Council to permanently close the alley to vehicular traffic.

Background

The temporary closure of the alley located south of 21st Street between Ardmore Avenue and Ava Avenue was discussed by the Public Works Commission at the February 20, 2002 meeting. The Commission directed Staff to conduct further studies to provide additional information relative to circulation issues on the affected streets.

Discussion

Several issues were raised at the February 20 Public Works Commission meeting that have been further evaluated by Staff. One concern is that the closure of the alley would make Ava Avenue a dead-end street that is longer than desirable. According to the Institute of Transportation Engineers' publication titled *Residential Street Design and Traffic Control*, the maximum recommended length for a cul-de-sac is 1,000 feet. Ava Avenue, as measured from 21st Street, is approximately 800 feet in length, which is acceptable according to the guidelines. Furthermore, the drainage swale that is used as an alley between Ava Avenue and Springfield Avenue provides an intermediate outlet that reduces the effective length of the dead-end segment of Ava Avenue. The length of Ava Avenue is, therefore, within the acceptable guidelines of the planning and engineering professions.

Another issue is that the closure of the alley has created operational and safety problems for motorists. Observations in the area, however, indicate that the traffic volumes on Ava Avenue and 21st Street are well below the acceptable capacities of local residential streets. It was also observed that there were no apparent traffic problems associated with the movement of traffic through the Ava Avenue/21st Street and 21st Street/Ardmore Avenue intersections. While the alley closure may have resulted in a slight increase in traffic volumes at these two intersections and on these two streets, the traffic volumes and levels of service are within acceptable levels for local residential streets. In fact, it is Staff's opinion that the use of Ava Avenue and 21st Street as an access route into and out of the Ava Avenue neighborhood is a safer and more conventional alternative as compared to the use of the substandard alley/drainage swale.

Another issue is that parking is over-utilized on Ava Avenue and that the excessive numbers of parked vehicles create safety and operational problems. Observations confirm that the area is characterized by heavy use of the available on-street parking

spaces. This situation is not, however, caused by the alley closure issue and would occur regardless of whether the alley is opened or closed. The only related issue is that residents of the segment of Ava Avenue south of the alley could avoid driving on the segment of Ava Avenue between the alley and 21st Street, which is the segment that is most heavily utilized for on-street parking. It is Staff's opinion, however, that the traffic situation on this segment of Ava Avenue is typical of residential streets in Hermosa Beach and does not constitute a safety and/or operational problem.

Because of the visibility restrictions at the location where the alley intersects with Ardmore Avenue, because of the operational problems associated with the 10-foot width of the facility, and because no significant safety or operational problems were caused by the alley closure, the Staff recommendation is to permanently close the alley to vehicular traffic. It would continue to be used as a pedestrian access route.

Alternatives

1. That the Commission send a recommendation to the City Council to permanently close the alley to vehicular traffic.
2. That the Commission send a recommendation to the City Council to re-open the alley to vehicular traffic.
3. That the Commission send a recommendation to the City Council to open the alley to one-way traffic in the eastbound direction.

Attachments: 1. Location Map
2. Public Notice

Respectfully submitted,

Concur:

Richard Garland, P.E.
Traffic Engineer

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