

April 9, 2002

Honorable Chairman and Members of  
The Hermosa Beach Public Works Commission

Regular Meeting of  
April 17, 2002

### **VALLEY PARK AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC STUDY**

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Commission receive input from the public and provide direction to Staff.

#### **Background**

At the November 14, 2001 meeting, the Public Works Commission considered a request to install stop signs on 20<sup>th</sup> Street at Valley Park Avenue to create a 3way stop. The stop sign request was not approved at that time; however, the Commission directed Staff to conduct a more comprehensive study of the neighborhood to provide additional information relative to traffic patterns and circulation issues in this area. The study area is bordered by Valley Drive on the east, Valley Park Avenue and Power Street on the west, 24<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, and Hermosa Valley School on the south.

#### **Discussion**

To evaluate the existing conditions in the study area, a field reconnaissance was conducted to identify the locations of the stop signs in the area, and the streets were monitored at various times of the day to quantify the traffic and pedestrian volumes on each street. The layout of the street network and the locations of the existing stop signs are shown on Attachment 1 titled "Stop Sign Locations."

As shown on the figure, there are nine intersections in the study area, including five intersections along Valley Drive and four intersections internal to the neighborhood. The intersections along Valley Drive are at 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets. The Valley Drive/18<sup>th</sup> Street and Valley Drive/21<sup>st</sup> Street intersections have 3-way stop signs, while the other three intersections have stop signs only on the side street (i.e., on 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets). The internal intersections are Valley Park Avenue at 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Valley Park Avenue at 20<sup>th</sup> Street, Power Street at 21<sup>st</sup> Street, and Power Street at 24<sup>th</sup> Street. The Valley Park Avenue/18<sup>th</sup> Street and Power Street/24<sup>th</sup> Street intersections have three-way stop signs, the Valley Park Avenue/20<sup>th</sup> Street intersection has a stop sign only on the Valley Park Avenue approach, and the Power Street/21<sup>st</sup> Street intersection has stop signs only on the east-west 21<sup>st</sup> Street approaches.

To quantify the traffic volumes on the streets in the study area, traffic counts were taken during the morning peak period, the afternoon peak period at the end of the school day, and the late afternoon commuter peak period. The counts were taken in March, 2002. The peak hour traffic volumes on each internal street are shown on Attachment 2 titled "Existing Traffic Volumes – Peak Hours."

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The AM peak hour traffic volumes shown on the figure represent the one-hour period from 7:45 to 8:45 on a school day and the PM peak hour traffic volumes represent the one-hour period from 2:15 to 3:15. The early afternoon peak hour volumes at the end of the school day are shown instead of the late afternoon commuter peak period because the traffic volumes on the internal neighborhood streets were higher during this time period. The figure indicates that Valley Park Avenue south of 20<sup>th</sup> Street, for example, has a traffic volume of 44 vehicles per hour during the morning peak hour (22 northbound and 22 southbound) and 34 vehicles per hour during the afternoon peak hour (16 northbound and 18 southbound). Overall, the traffic volumes on these neighborhood residential streets are relatively low, as there are less than 50 vehicles per hour during the busiest times of the day.

With regard to pedestrians, the most prominent pedestrian activity involves children walking to and from the school. It was observed that approximately 20 children walk to and from the school via the pedestrian access gate at the south end of Valley Park Avenue. They walk primarily along Valley Park Avenue, 20<sup>th</sup> Street, and Power Street. In addition, about 15 vehicles drop off and pick up students along Valley Park Avenue and 18<sup>th</sup> Street, with the students entering and exiting the school grounds through the pedestrian gate at the end of Valley Park Avenue. These drop-off/pick-up activities were not observed to create any operational or safety problems, although the U-turns on Valley Park Avenue require multiple back-and-forth maneuvers and/or the use of private residential driveways.

With regard to travel speeds in the neighborhood, speed surveys indicated that most of the vehicles were traveling well below the legal speed limit of 25 miles per hour. The internal streets in this neighborhood are all narrow two-way streets with parking along both sides of the street, which encourages motorists to drive at relatively low speeds. Occasional vehicles were observed to travel between 25 and 30 mph, particularly when a student was late for school; however, this was not representative of the typical driver. Most of the drivers appeared to be very cautious, particularly when school-age pedestrians were walking along the streets.

In general, there did not appear to be any extreme traffic safety or operational problems in the neighborhood. If, however, the Commission wishes to pursue any neighborhood traffic control measures, examples of the types of measures that could potentially be explored are as follows:

- Install additional stop signs to create all-way stops; i.e., on 20<sup>th</sup> Street at Valley Park Avenue and/or on Power Street at 21<sup>st</sup> Street.
- Install speed humps on a trial basis on one or more of the neighborhood streets.
- Apply the findings and strategies of the ongoing citywide traffic safety education campaign to this neighborhood at such time that the program becomes more defined.

It should be noted that the use of diverters, barricades, chokers, or other physical traffic control features were not deemed by Staff to be appropriate for this neighborhood

because there did not appear to be a commuter cut-through problem on the study area streets.

Attachments:

1. Stop Sign Locations
2. Existing Traffic Volumes – Peak Hours
3. Minutes, PWC Meeting, 11/14/01

Respectfully submitted,

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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

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