

January 13, 2004

Honorable Chairman and Members of the
Public Works Commission

Regular Meeting of
January 21, 2004

PCH LEFT TURNS AT AVIATION BOULEVARD

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Public Works Commission consider options for improving capacity and safety of left turn movement from southbound Pacific Coast Highway to eastbound Aviation Boulevard.

Summary:

Staff has received an email from Mr. McCurdy dated January 8, 2004 (copy attached) discussing a safety concern at subject left turn pocket.

EXISTING CONDITION:

The existing lane striping for southbound Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) traffic between Pier Avenue and Aviation Boulevard has first a left turn pocket to enter the Ralphs Market parking lot, followed by a two-way median which allows left turns from northbound PCH to McDonalds (time restricted), and then a barrier line for the left turn pocket to eastbound Aviation Boulevard.

PROBLEM:

The left turn lane to eastbound Aviation Boulevard has the capacity for only about 7-8 cars. During heavy traffic periods, cars back up into the two-way median and often all the way back to before the left turn pocket into the Ralphs parking lot. The way the Aviation left turn lane is striped with a barrier line makes it illegal to cross these lines into the two-way median. Sometimes conflicts develop with southbound cars attempting to be legal and enter the turn lane correctly. Drivers then stop in the number one lane and block through traffic. Sgt. Thompson reports that there have not been any accidents regarding this issue, but there is certainly a lot of traffic congestion.

OPTIONS:

1. Eliminate barrier line in left turn pocket at Aviation Boulevard allowing traffic to legally line up in two way median and leave opening to Ralphs as an optional left turn lane.
2. Do option 1 but install plastic barrier posts at front of Ralphs turn opening preventing line from backing into that left turn lane.
3. Extend Aviation left turn lane as a barrier lane all the way to Ralphs left turn lane and install barrier posts as recommended by Mr. McCurdy. This option would preclude left turns into McDonald's.
4. Realign intersection of PCH and Aviation with 10' dedication of park property to provide a double left turn pocket. This is an ultimate fix that would allow existing turning movements and greatly increase capacity. Park dedication could require a public vote. Caltrans is interested in re-aligning this intersection to address other safety concerns of the northbound PCH right turn lane to Aviation Boulevard. The park dedication could help spur on this project.

Attachments: 1. Email from Mr. McCurdy
2. Aerial photo

Respectfully submitted,

Richard D. Morgan, P.E.
Director of Public Works/City Engineer