City Council Report

Item: 8.
Category: New Business
Meeting Date: January 25, 2010

TITLE: **Harriet Avenue/McCoy Avenue Pedestrian Safety Recommendations (Resolution/Roll Call Vote)**

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council adopt the attached resolution approving the design and installation of an enhanced pedestrian crossing at the Harriet Avenue/McCoy Avenue intersection.

BACKGROUND

On October 27, 2009, two pedestrians were struck by a vehicle in the Harriet/McCoy school crosswalk. At the following City Council meeting on November 3, 2009, Mayor Kennedy stated that the City Manager had directed staff to bring a report back to the City Council in early 2010 addressing possible safety enhancements to the intersection. Members of the public appeared before the City Council during oral requests to express their safety concerns for the Harriet/McCoy intersection; several residents referred to an online petition; and one member of the public submitted a signed petition asking for stop signs or traffic lights at this intersection.

For nearly ten years, City staff has looked at options for improving pedestrian and vehicular safety at the Harriet/McCoy Intersection. In January, 2001, the City was awarded a federal Hazard Elimination Safety (HES) grant for installation of a traffic signal at this location. However, following initial design, traffic studies and a public input process, the City Council approved a revised project scope in September 2002 for the Harriet/McCoy intersection. The revised project scope was 1) to include the installation of median improvements; 2) install other roadway enhancements such as bike lanes on Harriet Avenue; and, 3) eliminate the installation of a traffic signal from consideration at that time.

In the ensuing years, staff designed and constructed bike lanes on Harriet and enhancements to the Harriet/McCoy intersection, including fluorescent yellow-green school warning signs, a ladder-type crosswalk, and a six-foot-wide striped median.

On April 7, 2009, the City Council authorized staff to submit a State Safe Routes to School (SR2S) grant application for the Harriet Avenue/McCoy Avenue Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Project that would have installed radar speed feedback signs and in-pavement lights at Harriet/McCoy. In August, 2009, staff learned that Caltrans had not awarded an SR2S grant to Campbell.

DISCUSSION

Coordination with Forest Hill Elementary School

On November 9, 2009, the Public Works Director and Police Chief met with Ms. Lani Potts, School Principal of Forest Hill Elementary School to discuss options for addressing issues and community concerns at the Harriet/McCoy intersection. Principal Potts updated City staff on the school's initiation of an effort to establish a program where parent volunteers would serve as adult crossing guards. Police Chief Finch indicated that the Campbell Police Department would assign an officer to conduct training and provide vests, rain gear, and stop sign paddles as needed for the volunteers. Principal Potts also advised that the school has identified a parent-liaison for this effort. To date, the call for volunteers has not generated enough interest to warrant proceeding with the program.

Contact with City of San Jose

Staff contacted the San Jose Police Department regarding the potential re-deployment of one of the two San Jose crossing guards currently working the all-way stop-controlled McCoy Avenue/Meta Drive intersection to the Harriet/McCoy intersection. However, San Jose Police indicated that their policy is not to deploy crossing guards in other jurisdictions.

Evaluation of Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing

Staff investigated a wide range of options for an enhanced pedestrian crossing at this location. Based on this investigation, staff recommends a combination of pedestrian-activated flashing beacons potentially paired (depending on costs) with LED enhanced street signs. Similar flashing beacons are installed on Westmont Avenue in front of Westmont High School (in San Jose), and the LED enhanced street signs are a component of the recently installed Pollard Road/Abbott Avenue pedestrian crossing constructed by the Town of Los Gatos. In addition, staff is recommending a spot median island on the south leg of Harriet Avenue to provide a refuge for pedestrians and protection for a median-mounted beacon.

The estimated cost for an enhanced pedestrian crossing, including design, equipment and construction is between $60,000-$70,000. Should Council authorize staff to proceed with this option, it is anticipated that the improvements could be in place prior to the August, 2010 start of the school year.

All-Way Stop Control

The Harriet/McCoy intersection was also evaluated as a potential candidate for an all-way stop. Staff conducted a preliminary analysis to determine whether installing stop signs on Harriet Avenue was warranted. The analysis showed that stop signs facing

Harriet Avenue are not warranted based on the *California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) methodology. Traffic volumes entering the intersection are not high enough throughout an average weekday to warrant stopping traffic on Harriet Avenue.

Staff also used an alternative stop sign warrant analysis methodology used by the City of Mountain View. This method is less stringent in that it uses lower volume thresholds for residential streets. Based on the City of Mountain View method, stop signs facing Harriet Avenue would be warranted.

To determine future queuing, staff compared the traffic volumes at Harriet/McCoy with other Campbell intersections of two collector streets similar to Harriet Avenue and McCoy Avenue. The Hacienda Avenue/Virginia Avenue intersection has traffic volumes similar to those at Harriet/McCoy. Hence, the queuing currently experienced at Hacienda/Virginia may indicate future all-way stop control conditions at Harriet/McCoy. Based on this comparison, future traffic queues were anticipated to be 15 vehicles long on southbound Harriet Avenue and ten vehicles long on eastbound McCoy Avenue during the AM peak hour. Because of the significant queuing, it is very likely that there would be a substantial increase in neighborhood cut-through traffic. Of particular concern would be southbound Harriet to westbound McCoy traffic, which would likely divert to Keith and Parkhurst to avoid peak hour queues.

Due to the impact of queuing on adjacent residents and the strong potential for cut-through traffic onto adjacent residential streets, staff is not recommending installation of an all-way stop.

Traffic Signal

The Harriet/McCoy intersection would operate well as a signalized intersection in terms of intersection level of service (LOS) and queuing for the AM, after school, and PM peak hours. Future traffic queues are anticipated to be ten vehicles long on southbound Harriet Avenue and seven vehicles long on eastbound McCoy Avenue during the AM peak hour, less than with an all-way stop. However, some increase in cut through traffic would still be a concern.

Staff conducted a traffic signal warrant analysis based on the *California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) methodology using November, 2009 traffic counts. Interestingly, and perhaps mirroring lower traffic volumes that have been documented Countywide due to the lingering economic recession, traffic counts for the Harriet/McCoy intersection showed lower traffic volumes than those measured in 2000. As a result, the analysis indicated that a traffic signal was no longer warranted based on the current traffic volumes. To confirm that traffic volumes had decreased (and that there was no data collection error), the traffic volumes were recounted in January after school was back in session and a subsequent traffic signal warrant analysis conducted.

Based on the most recent data and analysis, the intersection still would minimally meet signal warrant analysis (due to AM peak hour conditions).

The estimated cost of designing and installing a traffic signal at this location is $360,000. Funding is not available at this time for a project of this magnitude. Staff is recommending that conditions be monitored following installation of the enhanced pedestrian crossing, and that grant funds continue to be pursued for a traffic signal installation at this location.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Parent Volunteer Crossing Assistants Program would have negligible fiscal impact to the City. Staff would provide crossing guard training, equipment, and vests. This program, if implemented, would continue through the remainder of this school year and be re-evaluated following installation of the enhanced pedestrian crossing.

The preliminary engineer's estimate for the preferred enhanced pedestrian crossing (pedestrian-activated flashing beacons, LED signs, and a spot median island) is estimated to be between $60,000 and $70,000. Funds would be provided via this year's Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 3 guaranteed grant fund allocation (anticipated to be about $25,000) and the City's existing Pedestrian/Bike Traffic Safety Improvement Project funds. However, it should be noted that should this project be approved, available funds in the City's Pedestrian/Bike Safety Improvement project would be virtually depleted.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Do not approve the proposed pedestrian-activated flashing beacon, LED signs, and spot median island project.

2. Authorize staff to do further analysis on a selected option.

Prepared by: _____
Matthew Jue, Traffic Engineer

Reviewed by: _____
Robert Kass, Public Works Director

Reviewed by: _____
Greg Finch, Police Chief

Approved by: _____
Daniel Rich, City Manager

Attachment: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CAMPBELL AUTHORIZING THE PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR TO CONSTRUCT THE HARRIET AVENUE/MCCOY AVENUE ENHANCED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING PROJECT

WHEREAS, pedestrian traffic safety is of particular concern at the Harriet Avenue/McCoy Avenue intersection; and

WHEREAS, the recommended near-term Harriet Avenue/McCoy Avenue Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Project would design and construct an enhanced pedestrian crossing consisting of pedestrian-activated flashing beacons and LED street signs; and

WHEREAS, the preliminary construction cost estimate for the enhanced pedestrian crossing is $60,000-$70,000; and

WHEREAS, the tentative completion date for installing the enhanced pedestrian crossing is August, 2010.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Campbell that the Public Works Director is hereby authorized to construct the Harriet Avenue/McCoy Avenue Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing Project.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 25th day of January, 2010, by the following roll call vote:

AYES: COUNCILMEMBERS:

NOES: COUNCILMEMBERS

ABSENT: COUNCILMEMBERS:

APPROVED:

_____
Evan D. Low, Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
Anne Bybee, City Clerk