

April 6, 2015

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE TRAFFIC COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Traffic Commission convened in a regular meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 6, 2015 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Sargent led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Bajaj, Habel, Sargent, Siani, Thomas, and Chairperson Rudolph.

Absent: Commissioner Furey.

Also Present: Engineering Manager Semaan, Associate Engineer Sedadi, Assistant Civil Engineer Gruezo, Torrance Police Captain Irvine, and Torrance Police Lieutenant Underwood.

MOTION: Commissioner Sargent moved to grant Commissioner Furey an excused absence for the April 6, 2015 Commission meeting. Commissioner Siani seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

MOTION: Commissioner Siani moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5a. MINUTES OF MARCH 2, 2015

MOTION: Commissioner Thomas moved to approve the March 2, 2015 Commission meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Sargent seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Furey).

6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1

Chairperson Rudolph explained the policies and procedures of the Traffic Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to City Council.

7. ITEMS UNDER CONSIDERATION

7a. **REVIEW OF CROSSING GUARDS PROGRAM AND PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS**

Engineering Manager Semaan provided background on the Crossing Guards Program, continued from the February 2 Commission meeting. He introduced staff members and representatives from Torrance Police Department. He reported that staff has completed data collection and field investigations; however, some residents have expressed concern that they were not given enough notice about this meeting. He requested that the Commission hear the presentation and provide input, but to take no action and continue the item to the May 4 Commission meeting. He noted that, if the Commission, Employee Relations and Public Safety Committee, and City Council all concur with the recommendations, staff would consider coming back to the Commission recommending removal of marked crosswalks where there is no longer a Crossing Guard, with the objective to remove them before the start of the school year.

Lieutenant Underwood reported that there are 17 TUSD elementary schools and 29 crossing guard locations, noting that there is little historical data explaining why those locations were selected. He stated that there is a 500 foot radius around each of the elementary schools that is considered a safety zone. He stated that Police Department and Public Works staff conducted a survey of the number of children crossing at each of the existing Crossing Guard locations, at existing crosswalks located within the 500 foot safety zone, and of existing school area signage and markings. Upon review of the data, he recommended continuing Crossing Guard coverage at 21 of the locations and relocating the remaining eight Crossing Guards.

He noted that an overview map showing TUSD schools as well as existing and proposed Crossing Guard locations is included in Attachment A. He explained Attachment B that summarizes the Crossing Guard posts to remain, those proposed to be relocated, proposed new posts, and justifications. He stated that Attachment C shows the elementary school area zone maps with the results of the signage survey and school-age pedestrian counts for these locations.

In response to Chairperson Rudolph's inquiry, he stated that pedestrian counts were taken one time at each location in both the morning and the afternoon.

Referring to Attachment B, Lieutenant Underwood described each of the eight Crossing Guard locations that are being recommended for relocation. He explained the justifications for relocation that include low school-age pedestrian volume, crosswalk is greater than 500 feet from the school, ratio of adults to children crossing is greater than one, and children can cross at nearby fully signalized traffic signals.

Responding to Chairperson Rudolph's inquiry about safety levels, Engineering Manager Semaan stated that most are controlled intersections and have Crossing Guards. He noted that the objective is to determine where Crossing Guards can best be utilized in the most needed locations and that none of the locations have been flagged as a safety problem.

Referring to existing post #10, Lomita & Kent, Lieutenant Underwood noted that there is a mid-block, uncontrolled crosswalk that is being considered for removal. He stated that children can be directed to cross at Lomita/Anza or Lomita/Ocean which both have fully signalized traffic signals.

Commissioner Sargent received clarification from staff that there is no public opening from Kent out to Lomita Boulevard and that it is all private property. He explained that when youth cross at Kent they can only go east to Ocean or west to Ladeene to reach Arnold Elementary.

In response to Chairperson Rudolph's inquiry, Lieutenant Underwood stated the lowest pedestrian volume that was looked at to add a Crossing Guard was the high 30s in the morning and afternoon.

Referring to post #27, Manager Semaan stated that there is a mid-block crosswalk on Madison just north of Newton and that it is unclear why it is there except as a convenience for parents to drop off their students. He advised that children can cross at 244th/Madison or Newton/Madison that are fully stop controlled intersections and are being proposed for Crossing Guards. He noted that, if they relocate the Crossing Guard and remove the crosswalk, it would improve traffic flow and ease congestion.

Commissioner Sargent thanked staff for providing the data and stated that he concurs with all recommended relocations but Lomita & Kent. He expressed concern that children would run across the street at Ladeene rather than walk further to Anza.

Lieutenant Underwood described each of the eight recommended new Crossing Guard posts, noting that high pedestrian volume is the primary justification. He noted that a second Crossing Guard is being proposed for Anza & Spencer and Newton & Madison to assist with high pedestrian volume.

Commissioner Siani noted that Garnet & Victor has high pedestrian volume and Lieutenant Underwood explained that the intersection would be #30 if they could add another Crossing Guard.

Commissioner Bajaj expressed his appreciation to staff and stated that this is a good snapshot of what is going on. In response to his inquiry, Lieutenant Underwood stated that they are expecting the most resistance from Walteria Elementary parents but possibly from any school that is losing a Crossing Guard.

Engineering Manager Semaan stated that students are being redirected to cross at signalized intersections; however, it is still legal to cross at any crosswalk but hopefully pedestrians would be more cautious. He added that, if City Council decides to add more Crossing Guards, the collected data shows where they are the most needed.

Commissioner Thomas stated that he appreciates all the work that has been done and that he is in full support of all recommendations. In response to his inquiry, Lieutenant Underwood stated that letters and fliers would be sent to each school about any Crossing Guard relocations.

Chairperson Rudolph inquired about a Crossing Guard budget and Engineering Manager Semaan advised that the purview of the Commission is to consider locations for Crossing Guards and not the budget element. Chairperson Rudolph stated that the numbers speak for themselves and that he would like to see five or six more Crossing Guards added. He noted that he is trying to be an advocate for those being affected and is pleased that the item is being continued to allow for public input. He and

Commissioner Siani stated that they would prefer to reserve judgment until they have an opportunity to hear from parents.

Engineering Manager Semaan pointed out that in many cases a large number of parents are crossing intersections with children.

Commissioner Sargent inquired about accidents or close calls in Crossing Guard locations, and staff explained why accident data is not a driving force in determining where Crossing Guards are needed.

Lieutenant Underwood stated that he could compile a list of accidents involving pedestrians but not close calls.

Commissioner Habel stated that he appreciates the data that is easy to read and understand. He expressed support for adding the second Crossing Guard at Anza and Spencer due to the high volume of pedestrians.

Commissioner Thomas's inquired about last month's concern about Palos Verdes Boulevard and Catalina Avenue/Monte D'Oro and Manager Semaan explained that Riviera Hall is a private school and concerns were about lunch times and after school.

Chairperson Rudolph expressed concern that staff is only looking at pedestrian volume and not other criteria such as speed of traffic. He stated that additional information would help Commissioners to make a decision.

MOTION: Commissioner Siani moved to concur with staff's recommendation to continue the item to the May 4, 2015 Traffic Commission meeting. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Furey).

8. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

8a. Commissioner Siani stated that the stop sign on the northeast corner of Cabrillo at Plaza Del Amo is obscured by tree branches.

8b. In response to Commissioner Sargent's inquiry regarding Palos Verdes Boulevard and Catalina Avenue, Manager Semaan stated that the contractor has been asked to upgrade the poles and controllers to accommodate potential left turn phasing.

8c. Commissioner Sargent requested excused absences for the May and June Traffic Commission meetings.

8d. Commissioner Thomas stated that he enjoyed attending the March 14 City Traffic Engineers workshop.

8e. Chairperson Rudolph related a case of an ambulance and paramedics being unable to turn left onto Lomita Boulevard from Hawthorne Boulevard.

Captain Irvine explained that drivers are supposed to merge to the right but sometimes are unable to, and Engineering Manager Semaan described how the emergency vehicle signal preemptors work.

9. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:27 p.m., Chairperson Rudolph adjourned the meeting to May 4, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room, Torrance City Hall and, hearing no objection, so ordered.

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Approved as submitted May 4, 2015 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
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