

# Agenda Report

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL

**DATE:** April 13, 1998

**FROM:** City Manager

**SUBJECT:** Southwest Traffic Plan One-Year Evaluation Report

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the City Council receive and file the Southwest Traffic Plan One-Year Evaluation Report.

Summary:

During the development of the Southwest Traffic Plan, the residential community expressed a desire to have the neighborhood traffic management measures implemented immediately. Implementation of the neighborhood measures including stop signs, striping, edge line improvements, painted chokers, and other signing and striping improvements has occurred over the first year. City staff has continuously analyzed the effects of the neighborhood traffic measures as they were being installed. This included numerous traffic counts along designated roadways, travel time measurements, and speed measurements. Overall, on those streets targeted for traffic calming strategies, there has been a downward trend in traffic volumes, and on those streets identified as mobility corridors traffic volumes have not significantly changed.

Staff and members of the District 6 and District 7 monitoring committees have received numerous comments from the community. Some residents have reported that along certain corridors driver behavior has substantially changed and become more calmed and controlled, while yet other residents have complained that driver behavior and the quality of life have deteriorated. Staff will continue to monitor the effects of the traffic plan and work with the monitoring committees and the community. The Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) at their March 6, 1998 meeting supported staff's recommendation to submit a report to City Council, adding all correspondence received relevant to the plan and a list of monitoring committee members. TAC will also submit a separate report with comments, specifically regarding the continued need to advance progress of the de-emphasizing of Los Robles Avenue.

Background:

In 1994 the City of Pasadena initiated a comprehensive study to examine the magnitude of traffic problems affecting the neighborhoods in the southwestern portion of the City and to develop

solutions through a consensus building process. During a two-year process, the consultant team and staff working directly with a community adhoc committee established by City Council developed a series of recommendations to manage traffic in this part of the City of Pasadena. The objective of these Southwest Pasadena Management Strategies was to provide a ten year traffic management plan which will de-emphasize auto traffic on certain streets as listed in the Mobility Element and encourage the use of the City designated mobility corridors. The ultimate goal of the plan is to prevent the degradation of the neighborhoods or the circulation system in southwest Pasadena caused by through traffic in the area.

The southwest Pasadena study area is generally defined as the southwestern quadrant of the City of Pasadena, which is south of the 134/210 Freeways and west of Lake Avenue. This area is comprised of a mixture of land uses with commercial, industrial, office, and residential uses. The majority of land use in the area and the primary focus of the study was the residential neighborhoods.

Typically, residential areas are located away from the primary mobility corridors identified in the General Plan Mobility Element. However, because of the availability of a grid system of parallel neighborhood streets that provide good circulation and capacity for vehicles, traffic intrusion into residential neighborhoods and cut through traffic have historically been a source of concern in the southwest Pasadena area.

On October 14, 1996 the City Council approved the elements that make up the Southwest Traffic Plan and directed staff to return to TAC and City Council with six-month and 12-month evaluation reports. Those elements included:

- 1) approval of traffic calming strategies in residential areas,
- 2) approval of traffic facilitation strategies on the mobility corridors,
- 3) the approval of St. John Avenue/Pasadena Avenue Corridor Traffic Management Strategies and the direction of staff to work with Caltrans to implement these improvements,
- 4) amendment of the FY '97 Capital Improvement Program to include the Southwest Traffic Study Implementation and appropriation of \$100,000 of unappropriated development fee (interest) to the project, and

- 5) the establishment of a staff and citizen's based monitoring committee to review and analyze the effects of the implementation of aforementioned strategies.

Implementation Plan:

During the development of the Southwest Traffic Plan, the residential community expressed a desire to have the neighborhood measures implemented immediately. Implementation of the neighborhood measures including stop signs, striping, edge line improvements, painted chokers, and other signing and striping improvements has occurred over the first year. The neighborhood improvement measures will be followed over the next several years by signal upgrades. These improvements will include such measures as rest in red operations, right turn overlap signal features, and other improvements that will direct and facilitate traffic onto the mobility corridor. The neighborhood and local signal improvements will be followed by regional smart corridor type improvements. These improvements will also be implemented over the next several years and will include traffic responsive improvements and closed circuit television cameras. Funding for these improvements is being pursued through local revenues and through grant applications. An allocation of \$260,000 to Southwest Traffic Improvements was requested through the CIP process, and approved by Council. Applications for grant funding have been submitted for some improvements through the Hazard Elimination Safety program and through the MTA Call for Projects as part of the Arroyo Verdugo Traffic Forum. A copy of the implementation plan has been provided for your review and outlines the measures that have been completed, measures we will be pursuing over the next several months, and a list of future projects. (See Attachment 1)

Measurable Results:

City staff has continuously measured the effectiveness of the neighborhood traffic measures as they were being installed. This analysis included numerous traffic counts, travel time measurements, speed measurements and a review of reported accidents in the southwest area.

The result of the traffic counts revealed that on those streets targeted for traffic calming strategies, there has been a downward trend in traffic volumes and speeds. These streets include Los Robles Avenue, La Loma Road, and Pasadena Avenue at the south city limit. On those streets identified as mobility corridors, such as Arroyo Parkway and Fair Oaks Avenue, traffic volumes have not changed significantly. Travel time along corridors such as Orange Grove Boulevard and Oak Knoll Avenue have increased making travel along these roadways less desirable (See Attachment 2).

A review of traffic volumes near the south City limit shows an overall decrease in total traffic, especially on the residential corridors. These measurements show a slight decrease in traffic on the mobility corridors (Fair Oaks, Raymond, and Arroyo Parkway), a large decrease on Pasadena, a slight increase on the Orange Grove\Arroyo\Avenue 64 corridor, and a decrease on the Marengo\Los Robles\ El Molino\Oak Knoll corridor (See Attachment 3).

A review of total traffic volumes between California and Del Mar Boulevards shows a decrease. There is a small increase in traffic on the mobility corridor. All the residential corridors experience reductions in traffic (See Attachment 4).

The traffic speeds were also measured in the Plan area. The base "before" speeds were measured during the Southwest Study data gathering process and the "after" speeds were measured in the earlier part of June 1997 and in early December 1997. The results show that traffic speeds initial decreased in the range of 5-10 mph throughout the residential corridors in the Southwest area, but has since leveled off. (See Attachments 5 and 6).

The traffic accident data was also analyzed at several key intersections. The accident data showed a slight increase in the number of reported collisions over the one-year review period. A portion of the increase is attributed to rear-end accidents occurring at intersections where stop signs have been installed (see Attachment 7).

#### Community Reaction:

During the implementation phase, staff and members of the monitoring committees have received numerous comments from the community. Monthly meetings have been conducted with the monitoring committees with specific emphasis on review of correspondence from the community. At these meetings, the monitoring committees have been provided with information related to the current status of the project implementation as well as traffic counts as the data becomes available.

The District 6 Monitoring Committee has supported the various traffic improvement measures as adopted by City Council but one area of concern has been the St. John/Pasadena Avenue corridor. The committee has developed an alternative strategy for the corridor, which includes the following:

- Close/remove the 710 off-ramp at California Boulevard
- Convert Pasadena Avenue from one-way northbound to two-way traffic two lanes each direction) from Bellefontaine Street to the 710 on-ramp near Waverly Drive
- Convert the northbound on-ramp near Waverly Drive to a southbound off-ramp
- Convert St. John Avenue from one-way southbound to two-way traffic one lane in each direction) from Bellefontaine Street to California Boulevard
- Remove the barrier where St. John Avenue intersects Congress and Markham Places

Staff is currently analyzing the impacts of these proposed changes.

The District 7 Monitoring Committee has also supported the Council adopted plan. They have however offered some additional area's of concern that staff is currently reviewing. The committee has asked staffs continual attention in reducing traffic volumes and speeds on:

- El Molino Avenue
- Los Robles Avenue
- Marengo Avenue between Glenarm Street and Los Robles Avenue

The residents have reported that along certain corridors driver behavior has substantially changed and become more calmed and controlled, while yet other residents have complained that driver behavior and the quality of life have deteriorated. Those corridors that have received generally positive comments include: Oak Knoll/Lake Avenues, Avenue 64, La Loma Road, Orange Grove Boulevard, Green Street, Fair Oaks Avenue and Arroyo Parkway. Those corridors that have experienced controversy in terms of the improvement strategies include: Los Robles Avenue, Marengo Avenue, El Molino Avenue and Glenarm Street. The all-way stop at Los Robles Avenue and Allendale Road has especially been an item of concern for the community.

Many of the strategies are designed to induce delay and congestion in an effort to re-route motorists out of residential neighborhoods and onto the mobility corridors. Some of the residents in the area have expressed concern with the traffic congestion that has been occurring along corridors such as Orange Grove Boulevard and Los Robles Avenue. This congestion, which occurs during the peak travel periods, will continue as additional measures are implemented. Reduced travel speed and congestion are two primary goals that will ultimately have motorists seek alternative travel paths on corridors that offer more mobility. Additional street by street issues are listed in Attachment 8.

#### Future Steps

Through the monitoring efforts during the first year of the Southwest Plan, several areas were identified that will require close evaluation over the next few months by staff and the monitoring committees. These areas of concern include:

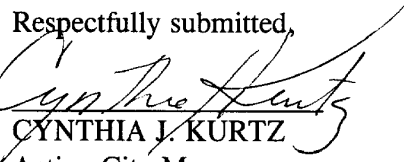
- Orange Grove Boulevard
- St. John Avenue
- Pasadena Avenue
- Glenarm Street (Arroyo Parkway to El Molino Avenue)
- El Molino Avenue
- Marengo Avenue
- Los Robles Avenue (at Allendale)

Potential strategies that will be evaluated include: 1) additional traffic calming measures along Orange Grove Boulevard; 2) more aggressive measures taken on St. John and Pasadena Avenues to calm or reduce traffic; 3) the installation of streetscape and traffic improvements along Glenarm Street to discourage motorists from entering the Madison Heights neighborhood; 4) the restriction of peak hour left turn restriction from northbound Los Robles Avenue onto Marengo Avenue; 5) and the potential removal of the north and southbound stop controls on Los Robles Avenue at Allendale Road along with the potential installation of a stop sign at Marengo Avenue and Los Robles Avenue and the introduction of alternative improvement strategies to discourage north/south traffic. Staff will also work to develop a public relations program that would include signage and various forms of media, which would inform the driving public of the appropriate travel routes in the Southwest Plan area.

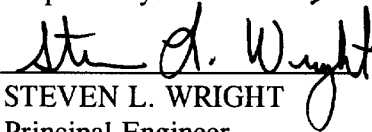
Staff has worked with the City of San Marino and developed a joint recommendation to install all-way stop control at the intersection of Los Robles and Marengo Avenues. A District 7 neighborhood meeting was held where approximately 160 residents attended and expressed support of the installation of a stop sign at this location. The residents of the City of San Marino also expressed support of a stop sign at this location. Staff from the two agencies are currently working on the design of the all-way stop control and it should be installed in late April.

### Conclusion


In general, the Southwest Area has shown an overall traffic reduction during this review period. Several important strategies have occurred in the residential neighborhoods and staff will focus improvements on the mobility corridors over the next several months. Staff will continue to monitor the effects of the traffic plan and work with the monitoring committees and the community.

Respectfully submitted,  
  
CYNTHIA J. KURTZ  
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