

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION
MINUTES OF APRIL 2, 2014**

The meeting was held in Conference Room A at the Department of Public Works Headquarters.

1. Call to order

The meeting of April 2, 2014, was called to order at 9:15 a.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Roll call

Present: Commissioner John Watkins
 Commissioner Guillermo Villalobos
 Commissioner Marvin Estey
 Commissioner Rhett Price
 Commissioner Greg Knapp

Absent but excused: Chairperson Robert A. Ringler
 Vice Chair Thurston Reese

Also in attendance were the following:

Dean Lehman, Assistant Deputy Director; Guita Sheik, Principal Engineer; Mary Reyes, Senior Engineer; Bonitto Housen, Associate Civil Engineer; Julia Weissman, County Counsel and Irena Guilmette, Supervising Civil Engineering Assistant.

4. Election of Temporary Chairperson for April 2, 2014

Ms. Guilmette informed the Highway Safety Commission (HSC) that due to the fact that Chairperson Robert A. Ringler and Vice-Chairperson Reese were absent, but excused, a temporary chairperson needed to be elected to run this meeting. At that time, Commissioner Watkins made a motion for Commissioner Villalobos to be the temporary Chairperson for the day.

The motion was carried unanimously and Commissioner Villalobos conducted the meeting from that point on.

5. Approval of February 5, 2014, meeting Minutes

The Minutes of the February 5, 2014, HSC meeting were approved.

6. Citizen appeal of denied request by Public Works

Denial of Traffic Signal on Vermont Avenue at 245th Street

Appellant: Dave Evans, President of Palo Del Amo Woods Homeowners Association

Commissioner Villalobos introduced himself to Mr. Evans and the members of the Palo Del Amo Woods Homeowners Association. He explained to them that Public Works was going to make their presentation first with a follow-up time for questions from the Commissioners. He explained that they would have their opportunity to make their presentation immediately after. He explained that after hearing both sides, the HSC would attempt to render a decision on their appeal.

Ms. Guilmette introduced Mr. Housen to the HSC and community members and informed them that Mr. Housen would be representing Public Works and providing them with the presentation for this appeal.

Mr. Housen informed the HSC that Mr. Dave Evans requested the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and 245th Street in the unincorporated Harbor City area. Mr. Housen informed the HSC that Public Works did the following:

- Conducted 12-hour hand counts of pedestrians and vehicles at the intersection (Thursday, October 10, 2013, and on Tuesday, October 15, 2013).
- Conducted radar speed checks (Monday, October 7, 2013).
- Analyzed 5-year intersection collision history.
- Conducted field observations.
- Assess stopping sight distance, warning signs and pavement markings at the intersection.
- Conducted a traffic signal warrant analysis.

Mr. Housen informed the HSC that the following guidelines were used to determine the need for a traffic signal:

- Eight Hour Vehicular Volume (Warrant 1)
- Four Hour Vehicular Volume (Warrant 2)
- Peak Hour (Warrant 3)
- Pedestrian Volume (Warrant 4)
- Coordinated Signal System (Warrant 6)

- Crash Experience (Warrant 7)
- Roadway Network (Warrant 8)
- Intersection Near a Grade Crossing (Warrant 9)

Mr. Housen stated that Vermont Avenue has the following characteristics:

- North/south major roadway
- 76 feet in width
- Two travel lanes in each direction separated by a raised center median with parking and bike lanes on both sides
- Posted speed limit – 40 mph
- 85th percentile speed (measured using radar) - 51 mph
- Average daily traffic – 16,179 vehicles per day

Mr. Housen informed the HSC that 245th Street had the following characteristics:

- East/west local roadway
- 30 feet in width
- One travel lane in each direction with no centerline striping, parking is permitted on both sides of the street
- Speed limit – posted speed limit of 25 mph
- Average daily traffic – 749 vehicles per day
- 245th Street is stop-controlled at Vermont Avenue

Mr. Housen provided the following table that summarized the results of the traffic signal analysis at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and 245th Street.

Warrant	Not Applicable	Satisfied	Not Satisfied
1. Seven Hour Vehicular Volume			
Part A: (25% satisfied)			x
Part B: (49% satisfied)			x
2. Four-hour Vehicular Volume			x
3. Peak-hour		x	
4. Pedestrian Volume			x
5. School Crossing	x		
6. Coordinated Signal System		x	
7. Collision Warrant			x
8. Roadway Network			x

Mr. Housen informed the HSC that in the 12-month period from May 1, 2012, through April 30, 2012, there were two right-angle collisions, one left-turn collision and no pedestrian collisions. This would be a total of three collisions. Mr. Housen stated Warrant 7 would have been met if there had been five of these types of

collisions in that 12-month period. Mr. Housen informed the HSC that in the 24-month period from October 10, 2011, through October 15, 2013, there were two right-angle collisions, one left-turn collision and no pedestrian collisions. This would be a total of three collisions. Mr. Housen stated Warrant 7 would have been met if there had been five of these type collisions in that 12-month period.

Mr. Housen informed the HSC that based on the 51 mph 85th percentile speed, the available stopping sight distance measured for southbound traffic on Vermont Avenue approaching 245th Street was 583 feet, which was greater than the minimum stopping sight distance of 430 feet for the prevailing traffic conditions (Table 201.1, May 7, 2012, Highway Design Manual).

Mr. Housen informed the HSC that due to the 85th percentile speed of 51 mph, a Watch Downhill Sign sign was posted for southbound traffic on Vermont Avenue at a point 500 feet north of 245th Street. Mr. Housen also informed the HSC that an engineering and traffic survey had been initiated for Vermont Avenue so that the California Highway Patrol (CHP) will be able to use radar for speed enforcement.

Mr. Housen concluded his presentation by informing the HSC that a traffic signal was not recommended at the intersection of Vermont Avenue at 245th Street.

Commissioner Knapp asked if their stopping sight distance calculations took into consideration the crest and/or sag of the road. Mr. Housen indicated that their calculations did take this into account and that he followed guidelines in the California Highway Design Manual. Commissioner Price stated that when a driver is going 51 mph, a driver will be 350 feet away from the intersection before he is able to start braking. Commissioner Price mentioned that at nighttime, driver's visibility is impaired. Commissioner Price asked Public Works' staff at what time of the day or night did the collisions occur and did any occur at dusk. Ms. Reyes stated that only one accident occurred during what might be considered dusk. She stated that the other four collisions occurred in the daytime.

Commissioner Price asked if the views in the photos were taken from the driver's seat. Mr. Housen indicated that the views were taken from the driver's seat. Commissioner Price asked Public Works' staff if any flyers were sent to the community asking for their input in regards to improvements that were made to the median landscaping along Vermont Avenue. Ms. Sheik stated that flyers are usually handed out, but this would not have been something that Traffic and Lighting Division would have been involved with.

Commissioner Estey asked whether Public Works has had any discussions with the CHP regarding speeding. He stated that it must be difficult to enforce the speed limit when the Engineering and Traffic Survey is expired. Mr. Lehman stated that if anything of note comes out of the Engineering and Traffic Survey, Public Works will

share that information with the community. Commissioner Price added that the CHP can only enforce with whatever the prevailing speeds are in the area, which could make it difficult, because the prevailing speeds might already be at 50 mph.

Commissioner Knapp asked if there were any other traffic signals or multi-way stop controls along Vermont Avenue between Sepulveda Boulevard and Lomita Boulevard. Mr. Housen indicated there was not. Commissioner Knapp asked Public Works' staff if bus stops were normally installed on the near side as opposed to the far side of an intersection because the southbound bus stop on Vermont Avenue at 245th Street was installed on the near side. Mr. Housen indicated that bus stop locations are typically chosen by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority of Los Angeles (METRO). Commissioner Knapp asked if that southbound bus stop could be relocated. Commissioner Price stated that they could probably relocate the bus stop if needed.

Commissioner Villalobos stated that the wall height at the northwest corner seemed a little high, but that was probably because the homeowner raised it for privacy. Commissioner Knapp indicated that the northwest corner was not a residential property and that it was an oil field and that the raised fence was probably installed to hide the oil field. Commissioner Villalobos also indicated that there appeared to be a business with about 300 employees exiting the driveway at the east approach. Ms. Reyes indicated that traffic counts taken in October 2013 indicated that 63 vehicles exited the east approach driveway between 6 a.m. and 12 noon, while 135 vehicles exited the driveway between 12 noon and 6 p.m.

At 9:40 a.m., the HSC questioning of Public Works' Staff ended and Commissioner Villalobos stated they would take a 5 minute recess while HSC Staff assisted Mr. Evans with loading his powerpoint presentation into the computer. The meeting resumed at 9:50 am.

After hearing the responses from Public Works, Commissioner Villalobos asked Mr. Evans to begin his presentation. Mr. Evans stated that he is President of the Palo Del Amo Woods Homeowners Association (HOA). He stated that his HOA is unique in that it is a voluntary association with dues paid voluntarily. Mr. Evans stated that the mission of his HOA is to "...advance the social and economic interests of our community, including the protection of our property and property rights." He stated that his HOA has been in existence since the homes were originally built in 1966.

Mr. Evans indicated that in 2013, his HOA made a request to Public Works for a traffic signal to be installed at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and 245th Street. He stated that their request was denied and that is why he and some members of his HOA are here to appeal that request.

Mr. Evans stated that they requested the traffic signal at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and 245th Street for the following reasons:

- This is a major entrance to their residential community.
- Vermont Avenue is a major traffic thoroughfare with truck traffic as well as passenger vehicles, many traveling at high speeds.
- There have been numerous accidents at this location over the years, seemingly with increasing frequency.
- His community feels unsafe under the existing conditions.

Mr. Evans also stated that Public Works' denial was based on a traffic study which may not have considered the following:

- Types of vehicles that use Vermont Avenue.
- Road contour of Vermont Avenue.
- Inadequate street lighting on Vermont Avenue.
- The confusing configuration of Vermont Avenue in this location.
- Poor location of speed recorders.
- Variance in speed across time of day.

Mr. Evans stated that some additional justification for this traffic signal includes the following:

- Vermont Avenue's sidewalk is used as an exercise walking path by youth and senior citizens
- Bike lane on Vermont Avenue in both directions makes more congestion and confusion.
- Cornerstone Church driveway and playground directly across from 245th Street is dangerous for pedestrians attempting to cross Vermont Avenue.
- Traffic will continue to increase on Vermont Avenue with the continuing build out of the Kaiser South Bay Medical Center at Vermont Avenue and Pacific Coast Highway.

Mr. Evans stated that approximately 20 years ago, the Palo Del Amo Woods Homeowners Association requested a traffic signal at the intersection of Normandie Avenue and 245th Street, just to the west of the intersection they are discussing this morning. Mr. Evans stated that the situation at that intersection was similar to this situation, also involving an uncontrolled T intersection into a community with a history of traffic accidents. Mr. Evans stated that the County approved their request for the traffic signal at Normandie Avenue at 245th Street and that he and his HOA would like the County to also install a traffic signal at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and 245th Street. Mr. Evans indicated that Cornerstone Church has submitted a petition in favor of a traffic signal at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and 245th Street.

The next presenter was Ms. Trudy Kelly. Ms. Kelly informed the HSC that she has been a member of the Palo Del Amo Woods community for 38 years and a former Disaster Coordinator for the area. Ms. Kelly stated her concerns are the emergency disaster needs of over 800 homes in a community with the following problems:

- There are only seven evacuation exits around the entire perimeter and only two for each section. She stated that by looking at the small map she provided, that just getting to the exit is a problem in itself, especially on 245th Street.
- Getting out onto Vermont Avenue and Normandie Avenue is quite a problem because people avoid the close, quite slow freeway and use excessive speed on Vermont Avenue and Normandie Avenue. Both of these streets have high volumes both directions making it practically impossible to make left turns from any of their streets.
- On Vermont Avenue, in order to go north to Sepulveda Avenue to access the freeway, they quite often have to turn right onto Vermont Avenue and make a U-turn around the center divider to get back on Vermont Avenue northbound.
- Many years ago, a young boy was hit and killed on Normandie Avenue and there have been numerous accidents along these roads.
- If they have a major earthquake, train derailment, oil-well site explosion, how can the community evacuate quickly and efficiently?

Ms. Kelly informed the HSC that they should start with a traffic signal at the intersection of Vermont Avenue at 245th Street and eventually install traffic signals at all seven exits to their community. Ms. Kelly indicated that Palo Del Amo Woods residents thanked the HSC for their concern and consideration for their safety.

Next, Mr. Jose Chavez, a community member, spoke and stated there is no stop control or traffic signals on Vermont Avenue between Sepulveda Boulevard and Lomita Boulevard. Mr. Chavez stated there is a lot of traffic attempting to get to the freeway. He stated there is no way for the pedestrian at the northbound bus stop to cross Vermont Avenue from the east to the west side of the roadway. He stated that when Cornerstone Church is in service it is even busier.

Next, Mr. Floro Tiangco, a community member, stated that when someone attempts to exit northbound onto Vermont Avenue from the west approach at 245th Street, it is difficult to see due to the hill and the fact that southbound motorists on Vermont Avenue are attempting to turn left into the driveway to access the Cornerstone Church driveway.

Next, Ms. Malvin Hempstead, a community member, stated that Mr. Evans always makes requests to Public Works on their HOA's behalf because the community asks him to make the requests. She stated that there is a lot of delay turning in and out of 245th Street due to the number of vehicles on Vermont Avenue and the number of motorists turning into the Cornerstone Church driveway. Ms. Kelly interjected and stated that they especially need the traffic signal in the event of a train derailment. Ms. Hempstead continued by stating that installation of a stop control would not be good enough. Ms. Kelly suggested that another study be conducted. Mr. Evans interjected and stated that another study is not needed because the results would probably turn out the same. Mr. Evans stated they needed a traffic signal that only cycles when there is traffic on 245th Street, the Cornerstone Church driveway or when a pedestrian is attempting to cross Vermont Avenue.

Commissioner Knapp stated their request for a traffic signal is reasonable, but he asked why they asked for the traffic signal on Vermont Avenue at 245th Street instead of Vermont Avenue at Ashbridge Lane. Mr. Evans indicated that Ashbridge Lane has other options for an exit and that 245th Street was more centrally located between Sepulveda Boulevard and Lomita Boulevard. Commissioner Knapp informed the community members that installation of a traffic signal can cause backups too. He stated there are 16,000 vehicles per day on Vermont Avenue and that 20 cars on 245th Street could get backed up at a traffic signal. Commissioner Knapp stated that there could be increased acceleration and deceleration noise at the intersection if a traffic signal were installed. Commissioner Price informed the community members that Public Works must follow state guidelines when conducting their traffic signal analysis. He stated the HSC is here to consider those state guidelines as well as the testimony of the community members. Commissioner Estey mentioned there were two traffic signal studies conducted and that the volumes were different for each one. Mr. Housen explained there was a difference in the volumes because the first study was conducted during a road construction project while the second study was conducted after all the work had been completed. Ms. Reyes indicated that regarding Warrant 1 in the October 2013 study, Part A of Warrant 1 was only 25 percent satisfied and Part B of Warrant 1 was only 49 percent satisfied. Ms. Sheik indicated that regarding Warrant 8 in the October 2013 study, Part B of Warrant 8 was satisfied but Part A of Warrant 8 was not satisfied.

Commissioner Price asked Mr. Evans how many homes does the intersection of Vermont Avenue at 245th Street serve. Mr. Evans replied that the intersection serves 300 homes.

Commissioner Price informed the community that the bike lanes that were installed along Vermont Avenue were likely installed to enhance traffic safety. Mr. Evans stated that bike lanes attracted bike use and that makes traffic safety

more of an issue. Commissioner Price stated that traffic signals are not usually placed on a downgrade. Commissioner Price asked Public Works' Staff what were some traffic calming options that might be available at this location. Ms. Sheik stated that traffic calming measures are typically applied to local roadways, not used on major highways. Mr. Lehman stated there is a possibility of considering driver feedback signs along Vermont Avenue if speeding was their main concern. Ms. Sheik indicated there are usually gaps available to enter Vermont Avenue from 245th Street when using normal caution. Commissioner Price stated he remembers a collision on Normandie Avenue at 245th Street where a left turning motorist was broadsided and he believed this location was similar. Commissioner Price stated that a traffic actuated signal could be installed that would allow motorists to exit onto Vermont Avenue from 245th Street only when there were motorists at 245th Street or the driveway. Commissioner Price stated that all intersections have crosswalks whether they are marked or unmarked. He stated uncontrolled marked crosswalks at an intersection give pedestrians a false sense of security. Ms. Sheik stated that the California Vehicle Code states that the pedestrian has the right of way whether the intersection is marked or not at an intersection. Ms. Sheik also stated that if the unmarked crosswalk does not intersect the roadway at a 90-degree angle, it doesn't exist. Commissioner Watkins stated he liked Commissioner Price's idea of having a traffic actuated signal that only came up when there was traffic on the side street. Commissioner Watkins stated that a traffic signal would make the driver feel more comfortable about exiting from 245th Street onto Vermont Avenue. Commissioner Watkins also stated that a pedestrian push button would also be helpful for pedestrians crossing Vermont Avenue. Ms. Sheik stated that today's traffic signals are all fully traffic actuated and that timing and coordination are typically designed to flush the traffic out of the minor leg of an intersection.

Commissioner Villalobos asked why Warrant 9 was not shown in the summary sheet. Ms. Sheik stated that since this warrant is only relevant if there is a grade crossing at grade level, they did not include the warrant in the summary table in the power point presentation, although it was considered in the traffic signal warrant analysis. Ms. Reyes indicated that Warrant 9 is a relatively newer warrant and that in the future, they will add this warrant to the summary page of the traffic signal warrant studies.

Commissioner Price stated this intersection was unique due to the construction over the summer. Commissioner Price stated there were no concessions made for the residents and an acceleration turnout wasn't provided for eastbound motorists on 245th Street attempting to turn left or northbound onto Vermont Avenue. Commissioner Price stated that he believes the Crash Warrant is probably closer to being met than what is shown in the Warrant sheet because not all collisions are reported and that the ones that are reported usually involve an injury. Commissioner Knapp stated that a traffic signal could cause more issues

than it is worth. Commissioner Knapp stated that speed humps have been installed in the past and residents have come back and asked for them to be removed because of other problems they were causing and that the same could happen with a traffic signal at this location. Commissioner Price stated that if a traffic signal were installed on Vermont Avenue at 245th Street, many large oversized trucks traveling along Vermont Avenue will need to suddenly use their Jake brakes to stop and the sound of those types of brakes could be very noisy for residents. Commissioner Knapp asked Public Works' staff if this item would need to be tabled so they could hear more about the type of traffic signal that would be installed at this location. Ms. Sheik stated that would not be necessary.

Commissioner Villalobos asked if anybody was ready to make a motion on this item. Commissioner Estey stated a motion couldn't be made until discussion was completed. Commissioner Villalobos then clarified that discussion was complete and asked for a motion. Commissioner Price made the following motion:

Move to approve appellant's appeal to install traffic signal on Vermont Avenue at 245th Street.

Commissioner Knapp began discussion on this motion by asking Public Works' staff if a protected left-turn lane would be installed for northbound Vermont Avenue turning left or westbound onto 245th Street. Ms. Sheik responded that likely not and that a permissive type signal would likely be installed for that left-turn movement. Commissioner Knapp stated that he still believed the bus stop location should be reevaluated. Commissioner Price disagreed and stated he didn't believe the bus stop would be an issue because the traffic signal would be controlling the motorists at the intersection. The discussion was ended and Ms. Guilmette took a roll call for the vote and the vote went as follows:

Commissioner Villalobos: Aye
Commissioner Watkins: Aye
Commissioner Estey: Aye
Commissioner Price: Aye
Commissioner Knapp: Aye

Commissioner Villalobos stated the motion carries. Commissioner Villalobos asked if the following friendly amendment could be added:

Public Works' staff is to take into account the northbound left turning movements as part of their design of the traffic signal at the intersection of Vermont Avenue at 245th Street.

The Commissioners unanimously approved this friendly amendment.

Commissioner Estey asked Public Works' staff how long before this item could be placed on the Board's agenda. Ms. Sheik stated that it could be placed on an agenda within the next 6 to 8 weeks.

Mr. Evans asked if a flashing beacon could be installed on the Watch Downhill Speed sign for southbound Vermont Avenue approaching 245th Street. Commissioner Price informed Mr. Evans that he could make that request separate from this hearing to Public Works' staff. Ms. Kelly stated she would be happy to offer a ride-a-long to any member of the Board of Supervisors so they could see the issues at the intersection firsthand. Commissioner Price informed Ms. Kelly that the best person to offer this ride-a-long to would be the Field Deputy for the area. Commissioner Villalobos thanked all the members of the community for attending the meeting and providing their valuable input.

7. Report on business other than appeals

Crossing Guard Update

Ms. Guilmette reported that during the 2 month period since our February 5, 2014, HSC meeting, Public Works did not add or remove locations for crossing guard service. Also, Public Works is currently evaluating two new locations for crossing guard service. Ms. Guilmette stated the total number of locations with crossing guard service is 206. Please note that the total number of crossing guards employed by the Los Angeles County Office of Education for these 206 locations is 213, which is due to some locations being served by more than one crossing guard. Ms. Guilmette stated that on March 4, 2014, the Board of Supervisors approved the revised policy to formally include middle schools in the Adult Crossing Guard Program.

Commissioner Villalobos stated that ABC News presented a story regarding crossing guards for the middle schools in Los Angeles County. Ms. Sheik stated that Supervisor Antonovich directed Public Works to implement a crossing guard for the first middle school location at La Crescenta Boulevard and Rosemont Avenue. Commissioner Price asked Public Works' staff how much of a budget was going to be needed for implementation of these additional crossing guards. Mr. Lehman indicated that the addition of the middle school crossing guards could increase the total cost of the program to 3.2 million dollars.

8. Public comments on any matter not on the agenda

There were no comments on any matters not on the agenda.

9. Reports from special committees

Sunset Review Presentation

Ms. Guilmette informed the HSC that staff had incorporated their comments from the February 5, 2014, HSC meeting into the Sunset Review Evaluation Forms and submitted the finalized version to the Executive Office for them to forward to the Auditor-Controller for their review. Ms. Guilmette stated that Public Works has been working closely with the Auditor-Controller in answering any questions they have regarding the forms. Commissioner Villalobos stated he believed the HSC has been doing a fine job and that the HSC will likely be recommended to continue their service. Commissioner Watkins stated that he had a lunch meeting with Supervisor Antonovich and that Supervisor Antonovich stated to keep up the good work on the HSC.

10. Special orders

There were no special orders.

11. Unfinished business and general notes

Ms. Guilmette stated there was no unfinished business to report.

Commissioner Estey asked if Public Works' staff could provide an update about the intersection of Pearblossom Highway at 82nd Street East. Ms. Guilmette informed Commissioner Estey that she would provide an update on this location at the next scheduled HSC meeting.

12. New Business

Ms. Guilmette informed the HSC that they are overdue for Commissioner Elections. Therefore, the date of May 7, 2014, was tentatively scheduled as the day to elect new officers for the HSC.

Commissioner Villalobos stated that he had seen a newsletter regarding the Union Pacific improvements to the roadway and wondered if any of those improvements were a result of their recommendations at the HSC meeting. Ms. Guilmette stated that an update for the Union Pacific roadway improvements would be presented at the May 7, 2014, HSC meeting.

Commissioner Knapp asked Public Works' staff why it takes a year to have a traffic signal installed. Mr. Lehman stated that the design and acquisition of materials process takes time.

13. Date for next meeting announced and adjournment

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for May 7, 2014. The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Irena Guilmette". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

IRENA GUILMETTE
Executive Officer
Highway Safety Commission

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