

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION
MINUTES OF AUGUST 3, 2011**

The meeting was held in Conference Room C at the Department of Public Works (Public Works) Headquarters.

1) Call to Order

The meeting of August 3, 2011, was called to order at 9:14 a.m.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3) Roll Call

Present: Chair Robert A. Ringler
 Vice-Chair Thurston Reese
 Commissioner Marvin Estey
 Commissioner John Watkins
 Commissioner Guillermo Villalobos
 Commissioner Greg Knapp

Absent: Commissioner Rhett Price (excused)

Also in attendance were the following:

Scott Schales, Assistant Division Engineer; James Chon, Senior Civil Engineer; Bonitto Housen, Associate Civil Engineer; Irena Guilmette, Supervising Civil Engineering Assistant; and Jacques Gilbert, Senior Civil Engineering Assistant.

4) Approval of July 6, 2011, Meeting Minutes

The Minutes of the July 6, 2011, Highway Safety Commission (HSC) meeting were approved.

5) Citizen Appeal of denied request by Public Works

a) Appeal to retain crosswalk on Overhill Drive at 58th Place

Appellant: Mr. Noel Korten

Mr. Housen provided a power point presentation to the HSC in regards to eliminating the crosswalk at the south approach of Overhill Drive at 58th Place.

Mr. Housen informed the HSC that the Countywide highway improvement plan recommends Public Works evaluate all marked uncontrolled crosswalks that are affected by an ongoing highway improvement project. Public Works reviewed this intersection as part of the Slauson Avenue improvement project.

Mr. Housen informed the HSC that this intersection is located within the unincorporated Windsor Hills Area of the County, and Overhill Drive at 55th Place had the following characteristics:

- ◆ 74 feet wide north/south major roadway
- ◆ Two travel lanes and parking in each direction separated by a two-way left-turn lane.
- ◆ Posted Speed Limit – 35 miles per hour (mph)
- ◆ Prevailing Speed – 40 mph
- ◆ Average Daily Traffic – 11,490 vehicles per day (vpd)

Mr. Housen informed the HSC that Public Works conducted a traffic signal analysis at the subject intersection and none of the nationally accepted warrants for traffic signalization were met. Mr. Housen informed the HSC that marked crosswalks are typically recommended at intersections that meet requirements for all-way stop control or traffic signal or at intersections in designated school zones with crossing guards. Mr. Housen informed the HSC that marked crosswalks are not typically recommended on roadways with speeds greater than 35 mph, on major highways with four or more lanes, or roadways with 9,000 vpd or more.

Mr. Housen informed the HSC that studies have shown that it may be safer to cross at an unmarked crosswalk compared to a marked crosswalk. He also stated that a marked crosswalk may give people a false sense of security. Mr. Housen concluded his presentation with the following staff recommendation:

Remove the marked crosswalk on Overhill Drive at 55th Place and recommend pedestrians cross at the signal on Overhill Drive at Slauson Avenue located 250 feet north of the intersection.

Commissioner Estey asked Public Works staff where the nearest traffic signal was located south of the intersection.

Mr. Gilbert stated that the next signal southerly is at 62nd Street, which is approximately 1,500 feet away. Commissioner Estey also asked if there was a school in the immediate vicinity of the intersection. Mr. Gilbert stated there were no schools in the immediate vicinity of the intersection.

Commissioner Villalobos asked Mr. Housen what prompted Public Works to evaluate this crosswalk in the first place. Mr. Housen reminded him that it was evaluated due to a recent highway improvement project along Overhill Drive. Mr. Villalobos asked why Public Works had not established a Countywide policy to eliminate uncontrolled marked crosswalks. Mr. Chon informed him that the locations are looked at on a case-by-case basis and that in the future Public Works plans to find ways to be more pro-active regarding evaluating crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections.

Commissioner Knapp asked Mr. Housen why this crosswalk was installed in the first place. Mr. Housen stated that County records do not identify why the crosswalk was initially installed but that the ladder and sign enhancements were installed after a pedestrian collision in 2007. Mr. Housen stated there used to be two schools in the vicinity of the intersection but those schools were no longer there and that residents at a recent community meeting informed him that not many people use this crosswalk anymore.

Commissioner Estey asked Mr. Housen whether the pedestrian crossing signs would be removed if the crosswalk were removed. Mr. Housen informed him that the signs would be removed if the crosswalk were removed.

Mr. Housen mentioned that No Vehicles Over 6 Feet High signs would be posted on Overhill Drive at 55th Place to enhance visibility at the intersection. Commissioner Villalobos asked Mr. Housen if this intersection was along a suggested route to school. Commissioner Villalobos mentioned that requirements for disabled persons per the American Disability Act usually require that a disabled person needs a curb cut at the corners of an intersection. Mr. Housen informed the HSC, stating that it would be better for a disabled person to cross at a signalized intersection.

Mr. Korten provided the HSC with a copy of a petition signed by citizens in the area who would like to retain the marked ladder crosswalk on Overhill Drive at 55th Place. Mr. Korten agreed that the crosswalk was not heavily used but he emphasized that motorists are speeding downhill on Overhill Drive when approaching this crosswalk. He also mentioned that many patrons who cannot park in the parking lot at La Lousianne, a restaurant/jazz club located at the northeast corner of the intersection, will park across the street and use the crosswalk to access the restaurant/jazz club. He also mentioned that an insurance company on the southwest corner uses the crosswalk to deposit mail in the mailbox located at the southeast corner of the subject intersection. Mr. Korten stated that due to the hilly nature of the area, many local residents like to walk in the area as a form of exercise and they cross the street as part of their exercise.

Commissioner Villalobos asked Mr. Korten how long has he lived in the area and Mr. Korten responded that he lived in the area for over 20 years. Mr. Korten indicated that if he recalls, this crosswalk used to only have two longitudinal lines and was not a ladder crosswalk. Mr. Gilbert informed the HSC that the ladder enhancement was added after a pedestrian collision occurred in 2007. Commissioner Reese asked Mr. Korten where do the people live that are crossing at this crosswalk. Mr. Korten stated there was a residential neighborhood nearby.

After hearing the presentation by Public Works staff and the appellant's testimony, Commissioner Knapp made the following motion:

- Move to approve appellant's appeal to retain crosswalk on the south approach of Overhill Drive at the intersection of 58th Place.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Villalobos and Chair Ringler made a statement after the motion was made that this decision was based on traffic safety, not on monetary issues.

- 6) Report on business other than appeals
 - a. Crossing Guard Update

Ms. Guilmette informed the HSC that during the 1-month period since the July 6, 2011, HSC meeting, Public Works has no new request or update on the crossing guard program. The total number of locations with crossing guard service is 208. Please note that the total number of crossing guards employed by the Los Angeles County Office of Education for these 208 locations is 213, which is due to some locations being served by more than one crossing guard.

The HSC received and filed this information.

7) Public comments on any matter not on the agenda

There were no comments on matters not on the agenda.

8) Reports from special committees

There were no special committee announcements.

9) Special orders

There were no special orders.

10) Unfinished business and general notes

Ms. Guilmette informed the HSC that those scheduled for their Ethics Training class would be receiving confirmation of parking arrangements via email.

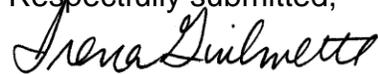
11) New Business

Ms. Guilmette informed the HSC that there were no new items scheduled at this time.

12) Date for next meeting announced and adjournment

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for September 7, 2011. The meeting was adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



IRENA GUILMETTE
Executive Officer
Highway Safety Commission

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