

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 4, 2019**

The meeting was held in Conference Room B at Public Works Headquarters.

1. Call to order

At 9:13 a.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Recited.

3. Roll Call

Present:                      Chairperson Thurston T. Reese  
                                    Commissioner Marvin Estey  
                                    Commissioner Guillermo Villalobos  
                                    Commissioner Vincent Rosario  
                                    Commissioner Robert A. Ringler

Absent, but excused: Commissioner Rhett Price

Also, in attendance were the following:

Staff:                         Emiko Thompson, Assistant Deputy Director  
                                    Bahman Hajialiakbar, Principal Engineer  
                                    James Chon, Senior Civil Engineer  
                                    Lee Miller, Civil Engineer  
                                    Jay Varma, Associate Civil Engineer  
                                    Irena Guilmette, Supervising Civil Engineering Assistant  
                                    Samantha Torres, Civil Engineering Assistant

Appellants:                 Jackie Teepen  
                                    Jared Teepen

4. Approval of July 3, 2019, Meeting Minutes

The Minutes of the July 3, 2019, Highway Safety Commission (HSC) meeting were approved.

5. Citizen Appeal of Denied Request by Public Works

There were no new citizen appeals.

6. Report on Business other than Appeals

Crossing Guard Update

Ms. Irena Guilmette reported that during the 2-month period since our July 3, 2019, Highway Safety Commission meeting, Public Works completed a total of 2 studies for crossing guard service. Crossing Guard Service was denied at both locations. There are 16 pending crossing guard studies. The total number of locations with crossing guard service is 234 for these 227 crossing guard locations. Some locations have more than one crossing guard.

7. Public Comment on Any Matter Not on the Agenda

None.

8. Special Orders

Election of new officers for the Highway Safety Commission

The HSC elected Commissioner Villalobos to be Chair.

The HSC elected Commissioner Rosario to serve as Vice-Chair.

9. Continuation of business from prior agenda

Staff Presentation:

Denial of midblock crosswalk and pedestrian traffic signal on Santa Gertrudes Avenue adjacent to the Seville Apartments

Mr. Lee Miller informed the HSC that the following motion was made at the July 3, 2019, HSC meeting:

Deny the request to install a midblock crosswalk, flashing beacons, and pedestrian traffic signal on Santa Gertrudes Avenue near the Seville apartments.

Instruct Public Works to:

- Further evaluate implementing a lane reduction on Santa Gertrudes Avenue between Leffingwell Road and Lemon Drive/Ocean Avenue.
- Study the feasibility of extending the transition lane beyond Los Angeles County Fire Department Station #15 (Station 15)

- Study the feasibility of installing flashing beacons at Station 15, located at 11460 Santa Gertrudes Avenue.

Mr. Miller informed the HSC that the results of these studies were as follows:

- The lane reduction transition can be carried beyond the Station 15 entrance.
- Flashing beacons and a traffic signal were not recommended from a safety standpoint due to warrants not being met.
- Flashing beacons could be installed to improve operationally with funding from the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

Mr. Miller informed the HSC that if the above-mentioned items are approved by the HSC, the following will be conducted:

- Final design and implementation of the lane reduction
- Community Outreach

Commission Discussion:

Commissioner Ringler asked if Fire Station 15 was a Los Angeles County Fire Station and Mr. Miller responded that it was.

Ms. Thompson informed the HSC that although the study indicated guidelines for installation of flashing beacons at the fire station were not met, there would be a safety benefit if they were installed. Ms. Thompson stated funding is an issue for Public Works and the Los Angeles County Fire Department would have to fund flashing beacons.

Commissioner Rosario stated he spoke with the Fire Captain from Station 15 and he stated that their fire engines have been struck 2 times in the last 5 years. He stated there is a blind curve approaching the fire station and he believes flashing beacons would help. Mr. James Chon stated that the line of sight would be improved with the lane reduction.

Public Comment:

Ms. Jackie Teepen stated she lives in the tract west of Santa Gertrudes Avenue at Lemon Drive. She stated she was involved in the petition process for obtaining street lighting on Santa Gertrudes Avenue in front of the Mediterranean and Seville Apartments and was thankful street lighting was going to be installed.

Ms. Teepen stated she believed a flashing beacon would be beneficial and that the Fire Captain was excited to hear about the street lighting along Santa Gertrudes Avenue. Ms. Teepen stated that it is very dark near the Seville Apartments as well. She stated that in addition to the fire engines needing to access the Station 15, there is sometimes a need for motorists and pedestrians to access Station 15 because it is also used as a polling station.

Ms. Teepen indicated that the proposed lane reduction on Santa Gertrudes Avenue was being discussed on the Next-Door Application. Ms. Teepen stated that Santa Gertrudes Avenue is a very busy roadway and is especially busy during school arrival and dismissal times. She indicated that motorists trying to access Granada Middle School and Scott Elementary School cause back-up on Santa Gertrudes Avenue already. She stated that with parking being allowed on the west side, there are already issues with motorists exiting parked vehicles causing vehicles to swerve. She mentioned there are issues with the dumpsters on the roadway also causing motorists to swerve. She stated that residents from the Seville and Mediterranean apartments are parking on Lemon Drive because there is insufficient parking at the apartments. She stated if marked crosswalks are installed midblock, there will be additional delays along Santa Gertrudes Avenue.

Mr. Jerry Teepen, Ms. Teepen's husband, stated that southbound Santa Gertrudes Avenue has a lot of traffic coming from the shopping areas north of Leffingwell Road.

Commissioner Villalobos asked if the area in front of the fire station had "KEEP CLEAR" on the pavement. Mr. Miller stated the markings were on the pavement.

Commissioner Villalobos asked Ms. Teepen if she was in favor of the lane reduction on Santa Gertrudes Avenue and Ms. Teepen stated she was adamantly opposed to the lane reduction. Commissioner Villalobos stated she is the first person to come forward and object to the lane reduction. He stated that the Commission is appointed by the Board of Supervisors to be an appeals board. He stated that Public Works is tasked to take in requests from the public and follow California State guidelines. He stated that at the last HSC meeting, they heard an appeal of a denial for a traffic signal and marked crosswalk on Santa Gertrudes that was requested due to the unfortunate fatality of Harley.

Commissioner Villalobos stated it was heartbreaking to hear about Harley. He informed Ms. Teepen that the Commission made a motion at the previous meeting to not install a crosswalk or traffic signal because they were not warranted. He stated that Public Works had proposed the lane reduction proposal as an alternative solution to slow traffic down along Santa Gertrudes Avenue. He thanked her for her time for coming to the meeting to express her concerns.

Commissioner Robert Ringler asked Ms. Teepen what her main concerns were regarding the lane reduction. Ms. Teepen stated that by allowing parking on both sides of the street, there will be an increase in the number of pedestrians crossing the street. Commissioner Ringler stated that midblock crossing should be discouraged completely. Ms. Teepen suggested installing a decorative median to prevent motorists from jaywalking across Santa Gertrudes Avenue. Ms. Teepen also suggested installation of additional speed limit signs on Santa Gertrudes Avenue. Mr. Teepen stated there is no enforcement on Santa Gertrudes Avenue.

Commissioner Estey asked where the closest arterial roadway was. Commissioner Vince Rosario stated that it is about three quarters of a mile from First Avenue and three quarters of a mile to La Mirada Boulevard. Commissioner Estey said Santa Gertrudes Avenue sounds more like a major than a minor arterial. Commissioner Rosario stated Santa Gertrudes Avenue is the route to the Whitwood Mall and that the roadway is heavily traveled. Mr. James Chon stated that a Level of Service calculation indicated there would not be a significant impact to the roadway and that capacity evaluations indicated the traffic signals would not be affected by the lane reduction.

Commissioner Ringler asked if parking was going to be added to the street with the lane reduction. Mr. Chon stated that additional parking was to be added as part of the lane reduction.

Chair Thurston Reese asked for a short recess at 10:25 a.m. The meeting resumed at 10:40 a.m.

Commissioner Rosario stated that Public Works has indicated there will be minor delays with the addition of the lane reduction.

Ms. Emiko Thompson stated that a traffic signal was installed at the intersection of First Avenue and Candlelight Drive because the location satisfied warrants. Supervisor Janice Hahn's motion expedited its installation. Ms. Thompson informed the Commission that a lane reduction is typically considered on roadways with traffic volumes of 12,000 to 20,000 vehicles per day.

Commissioner Ringler stated we couldn't control all pedestrians crossing back and forth across Santa Gertrudes Avenue. He agreed with Ms. Teeppen that they should consider installing a decorative barrier to prevent pedestrians from crossing Santa Gertrudes Avenue. He also agreed that the flashing beacon at the fire station was a good idea and that street lighting will be a good enhancement to the roadway. Commissioner Ringler stated that the Next-Door Application is a valuable tool, but a lot of misinformation can be on there as well.

Commissioner Villalobos stated they could place No Pedestrian Crossing signs by the apartments. Commissioner Ringler stated people will not adhere to those signs. Commissioner Price stated this is a jaywalking issue and enforcement is needed.

Mr. Chon informed the Commission that Public Works has received the petition for street lighting on Santa Gertrudes Avenue and that it will go through the legal proceedings to annex the territory to the County Lighting Districts to install street lights.

Ms. Thompson stated that Public Works' role is to provide technical advice. If a location doesn't meet warrants, the HSC has the discretion to make safety enhancement recommendations for the Board of Supervisors' final decision. Ms. Thompson suggested a community outreach meeting before any recommendations are made. Commissioner Villalobos suggested postponing a decision and going out to community first.

Commissioner Ringler stated that if a meeting was held in the community, it might be one-sided and that would not be fair to everyone. He stated the apartment owners may not show up to give their opinion.

Commissioner Rosario said both sides were heard with Ms. Sosa providing the input on behalf of the apartments at the prior HSC meeting.

After hearing the testimony of both staff and the public, the HSC made the following motion:

- It is recommended Public Works proceed with the lane reduction plan on Santa Gertrudes Avenue between Leffingwell Road and Lemon Drive/Ocean Avenue.
- It is recommended Public Works conduct a community outreach meeting to gather community input regarding a lane reduction on Santa Gertrudes Avenue between Leffingwell Road and Lemon Drive/Ocean Avenue.

After the motion was made, Commissioner Ringler asked how to go forward with these recommendations. Ms. Thompson said Public Works may have to reach out to Supervisor Hahn's office for assistance with the community outreach meeting.

10. New Business

Commissioner Villalobos stated he attended a meeting with Supervisor Solis, and she talked about the homeless and the use of County property.

11. Next Meeting Date to be determined

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for December 4, 2019.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

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