

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
GLENDALE TRANSPORTATION & PARKING COMMISSION
JANUARY 28, 2008

The regular meeting of the Glendale Transportation & Parking Commission (“TPC”) of Monday, January 28, 2008, was called to order at 6:08 p.m. by Chairperson Sahakian.

ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioner Gay
Commissioner Mehrabian
Commissioner Sulayan
Commissioner Welch
Chairperson Sahakian

STAFF PRESENT: Stephen M. Zurn, Director of Public Works
Jano Baghdanian, Traffic and Transportation Administrator
Tom Mitchell, Assistant Traffic and Transportation Administrator
Tommy Chow, Traffic Engineering Associate
Christina Sansone, General Counsel- Public Works

POSTING OF AGENDA

The agenda for the Monday, January 28, 2008, meeting of the Glendale Transportation & Parking Commission was posted on Friday, January 25, 2008, before 5:30 p.m. on the bulletin board outside City Hall.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3a. November 26, 2007 - Regular Meeting Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Gay moved and Commissioner Sulayan seconded to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 26, 2007, as presented. The vote was as follows:

Commissioner Gay	Aye
Commissioner Mehrabian	Aye
Commissioner Sulayan	Aye
Commissioner Welch	Abstain
Chairperson Sahakian	Aye

ORAL COMMUNICATION

Discussion is limited to items NOT a part of this agenda. Each speaker is allowed three minutes. The Commission may question the speaker but there will be no debate or decision.

There were no speakers for Oral Communication.

ACTION ITEMS

5a. Director of Public Works re: Report Regarding Street Improvements Prohibiting Left-Turn Movements at the Driveway at 3612 Linda Vista Road.

(1) Motion for Recommended Action

Tom Mitchell, Assistant Traffic and Transportation Administrator, presented this item to the Transportation & Parking Commission (“TPC”). Utilizing a power point presentation, Mr. Mitchell provided an historical overview (beginning in 2002) of the existing prohibition of left-turn movements to and from the residential driveway at 3612 Linda Vista Road (“driveway”). Mr. Mitchell began by presenting slides illustrating existing conditions along Linda Vista Road in the vicinity of the driveway, including photographs of the delineators, concrete wheel stops, and regulatory signage installed by the Public Works Department in September 2006 to prohibit left-turn movements at the driveway. Mr. Mitchell summarized the sight distance analysis conducted in June 2002 by the Traffic and Transportation Division (“staff”) which culminated in staff’s conclusion that inadequate sight distance existed east of the driveway and subsequent recommendation that in the interest of public safety, left-turn movements to and from the driveway should be prohibited (unless, of course, the sight-distance deficiency were otherwise mitigated). (Mr. Mitchell noted that in an attempt to avoid prohibiting left-turn movements at the driveway, staff investigated various design-related alternatives, but these were either rejected by the project applicant or deemed infeasible for various reasons.) Mr. Mitchell explained that the sight distance analysis was based upon staff’s field observations and application of engineering design policies and standards published by various respected public agencies and educational/scientific associations. Mr. Mitchell also noted that staff’s conclusion and recommendation were supported by the City Council in September 2002 during a public hearing appealing a Design Review Board decision concerning the then-proposed residence at 3612 Linda Vista Road. Mr. Mitchell explained that in order to affect the driveway’s left-turn prohibitions, the city’s intent was to condition the project during the plan check process to install a center barrier median on Linda Vista Road across the driveway; however, due to an inadvertent oversight, this did not occur in spite of the fact that the project applicant’s civil engineer had submitted street improvement plans which reflected the median to the Public Works Department, Engineering Division in September 2003. The construction of the residence began in October 2003, and it was completed in approximately September 2006. Because the center barrier median had not been constructed, the Public Works Department--in the interest of public safety--caused the prohibition of left-turn movements at the driveway by installing delineators, concrete wheel stops, and regulatory signage across the driveway. Mr. Mitchell then presented a series of alternative mitigation strategies developed by staff to minimize the significant and adverse impact upon travel safety resulting from the driveway’s sight-distance deficiency. These strategies varied in terms of technical feasibility, economic feasibility, likely effectiveness, and exposure of the city to potential liability. Mr. Mitchell concluded his presentation with staff’s recommendation to

continue to prohibit left-turn movements at the driveway at 3612 Linda Vista Road and, moreover, replace the existing delineators and concrete wheel stops with a center barrier median between Figueroa Street and the driveway when funding is available.

Lieutenant Carl Povilaitis of the Glendale Police Department Traffic Bureau expressed his thoughts concerning the driveway's potential impact upon travel safety if left-turn movements were to be allowed. (Exhibit A of the staff report contains his comments as well.) Lt. Povilaitis stated that based upon the current construction and engineering design, there are significant issues related to the ability of a driver in the driveway to look to the east and see a vehicle driving on westbound Linda Vista Road in time to avoid a collision. He concluded that the Police department does not recommend permitting left turns into or out of the driveway at 3612 Lind Vista Road.

Commissioner Sulayan inquired as to the height of the proposed center barrier median, as well as where a U-turn is legally possible on the area of Linda Vista Road in question. Mr. Mitchell, Assistant Traffic and Transportation Administrator, replied that per the California Vehicle Code, a U-turn can legally be made (except in business districts or where prohibited by signage) where a minimum of 200 feet of sight distance exists and U-turn movement can be safely made.

Commissioner Gay asked about installing a stop sign at the crest of the hill east of the driveway on westbound Linda Vista Road prior to the driveway at 3612 Linda Vista Road to slow traffic, or installing speed humps for the same purpose. Mr. Mitchell replied that because there is no intersection at the crest of Linda Vista Road, motorists would eventually disregard the stop sign because there would be no perceived reason for it. He also was unsure of the legality of a stop sign at that location. Jano Baghdanian, Traffic and Transportation Administrator, responded to the question of speed humps, stating that the installation would require some form of control prior to the speed humps and that a motorist encountering speed humps without said control would result in an unsafe condition.

Commissioner Sulayan inquired who would be liable if the delineators currently at the location caused an accident. Christina Sansone, General Counsel-Public Works, responded that the City of Glendale carries design immunity and the city would not be liable because it is a safety device such as a raised curb or a signal.

Commissioner Sulayan then asked if there were any instances when the Traffic & Transportation Division recommended against installing a stop sign at a location, but were directed to do so by the City Council. Chairperson Sahakian replied that there have been occurrences when stop signs have been installed under directive from the City Council (against the advice of the Traffic & Transportation Division).

Commissioner Sulayan questioned if stop signs at the 1400 block of Glenoaks Boulevard (on the crest) were warranted, which he perceived to be a similar situation. Mr. Mitchell replied that while there is no record of this installation, traffic accidents and traffic volume could have warranted the need for the stop signs. In addition, although private driveways benefit from these stop signs, it is staff's belief that sight-distance deficiencies at Glenoaks Boulevard's intersections with both Avonoak Terrace and Avonoak Glen (on either side of the crest) precipitated the stop sign installation. Mr. Baghdanian added that the sight distance warrants the need for stop signs.

Commissioner Sulayan questioned the liability if there was an unwarranted stop sign installed at the crest of Linda Vista Road. Ms. Sansone replied that depending on the circumstances, the City of Glendale carries design immunity provided that the designs are supported by the design engineer's judgment. Chairperson Sahakian added that the federal, state, and local guidelines will also assist in proving necessity in court.

Commissioner Sulayan said that in the cities of Santa Monica and Beverly Hills there seem to be stop signs across the board. Mr. Baghdanian replied that at the time the stop signs were installed in Beverly Hills, they were done so as speed-control device, but they were done so at intersections of streets, not private driveways.

Commissioner Sulayan again broached the issue of placing a stop sign at the crest of Linda Vista Road. Chairperson Sahakian responded that the majority of motorists will not stop at an unwarranted stop sign at the crest of Linda Vista Road, which at some point could contribute to an accident.

Commissioner Sulayan asked if we will wait until an accident does happen before the implementation of a stop sign. He stated the City of Glendale needs to be proactive to prevent such an incident. Mr. Mitchell replied that the Traffic & Transportation Division has indeed been proactive by installing the delineators, concrete wheel stops, and regulatory signage at the driveway of 3612 Linda Vista Road to prevent left-turn movements in order to prevent said accidents.

Commissioner Sulayan asked if the owner of the property had the opportunity to have the driveway exit onto Figueroa Street. Mr. Mitchell explained that in 2002 the City Engineer and the Traffic & Transportation Division recommended to the property owner that this option be investigated, but the owner showed no interest.

Commissioner Welch raised the question whether having an electronic system to warn oncoming traffic on Linda Vista Road of a vehicle exiting the driveway had been investigated. Mr. Baghdanian answered that such systems typically are designed to alert the driver in the driveway of oncoming traffic, not the oncoming traffic of a vehicle in a private driveway. Mr. Baghdanian continued by explaining that an electronic system would entail having detector loops in the pavement east of the crest of the curve in addition to having a pole-mounted camera for vehicle detection. These devices would be linked via a conduit to the driveway where a monitor would provide an indication of oncoming vehicles. Whereas the system should be feasible, it has not been designed.

Commissioner Welch also inquired that if some kind of mitigation strategy such as the CCTV system is not implemented, would the City be liable? Ms. Sansone responded that if the delineators currently installed were removed without an equivalent safety measure, such an action would diminish and possibly eliminate the City's design immunity.

Chairperson Sahakian opened the public hearing for this item. There were eleven (11) speakers that addressed the TPC to express their concerns and comments. The speakers were as follows:

1. Jim Beckenhauer, 3160 Dragonfly St., stated that the narrowing of the road could prevent evasive maneuvers in case of an emergency, such as an animal or a jogger. Also, he said that he had to veer around the tree extending over the road adjacent to the driveway and that the proposed center median barrier would make it very difficult to go around.
2. Jonathan Miasnik, 1019 Thornwood St., stated that it is a matter of convenience for the residents at 3612 Linda Vista Road to be able to turn left out of the driveway and an inconvenience to motorists traveling along Linda Vista Road to have to stop for a stop sign. Also, he stated that he and his wife have seen vehicles exiting the driveway and making illegal U-turns.
3. Yogi Krikorian, 1259 Elm Ave., stated that while there were some good cost-effective solutions presented, he asked for sympathy for the residents having to go out of their way everyday to make a U-turn.
4. Kathleen Marder, 3599 Pheasant St., a resident at the first house next to 3612 Linda Vista Road, stated that the residents of 3612 Linda Vista Road often ignore the delineators and go around them in front of oncoming traffic. She can hear the screeching of tires, honking, and yelling. She asked that the installation of a more permanent median would be long enough to prevent these residents from making these illegal maneuvers.
5. Hasmik Demirjian, 3612 Linda Vista Rd., provided a petition to staff opposing the delineators, as well as published sight distance guidelines. She claimed that the Traffic & Transportation Division is very selective about which policies it chooses to apply. She said she would be satisfied with signage near the crest indicating to motorists that a driveway (at 3612 Linda Vista Road) is ahead. She also raised an issue with the aesthetics of "No Stopping" signs across from her driveway.

Chairperson Sahakian inquired why the option of loops in the pavement and a CCTV system was not explored further. Mrs. Demirjian said the department gave no hope of working with the city of Pasadena to install such a system, and that her husband could explain more.

Commissioner Sulayan asked what the difference was between the published guidelines provided by Mrs. Demirjian and the guidelines used by the Traffic & Transportation Division. Mr. Mitchell responded that the information is the same, and Chairperson Sahakian and Commissioner Gay concurred. (Note: The differing conclusions pertain to the guidelines selected for design purposes.)

6. Harout Demirjian, 3612 Linda Vista Rd., the owner of the residence at 3612 Linda Vista Road, provided a slide presentation to provide photos of the area surrounding and including his driveway, as well as vehicles and cyclists using the street in an attempt to prove that there are no safety issues. He also provided photos of other driveways adjacent to curves and questioned why there were no prohibitions required.

Commissioner Sulayan asked why the traffic count conducted by the Traffic and Transportation Department for only a single day. Mr. Mitchell replied that traffic counts are rarely conducted on multiple days. Counts to record volume and/or speed typically are done on a Tuesday,

Wednesday, or Thursday, with minor variation occurring among these three days of the week. He added that the speed survey submitted that evening by the property owner (conducted in 2004 east of the driveway near the crest) indicated an 85th-percentile design speed of 31 MPH compared to 35 MPH reported in 2002 (conducted for staff at the same location by the same data-collection company), both of which indicate a sight distance deficiency between the driveway and the crest located about 260 feet east of the driveway.

Commissioner Welch inquired if there was knowledge of how the regulatory signs used in conjunction with the delineators and concrete wheel stops may have been knocked down. Mr. Mitchell answered that there were no reported accidents that may have involved the signage at that location.

Mr. Baghdanian asked if after all of the speakers were heard, a short recess could be taken to allow staff to prepare responses to questions raised during the public hearing. Chairperson Sahakian asked if the Traffic & Transportation Division needed additional time to review the traffic survey data submitted that evening by the homeowners. Mr. Baghdanian replied anytime a traffic count is conducted, there can be a small fluctuation in the volume and possibly the speed. This degree of variation depends greatly on the location. He stated that conducting a traffic volume-speed survey for a number of days would provide a better indication of this.

Commissioner Welch asked if a parabolic mirror at the driveway had been investigated.

Commissioner Sulayan inquired if the double yellow line was in place before the residence was built.

Mr. Baghdanian responded that he would comment on the mirror question and review information regarding the double yellow line.

7. Edwin Schreiber, 16501 Ventura Blvd. #401, the attorney for the residents at 3612 Linda Vista Road, stated that in his opinion the delineators actually made the situation more dangerous due to narrowing of the road, and during construction of the home no accidents occurred. He also stated that the CCTV option is not feasible due to the inability to work with the city of Pasadena. In conclusion, Mr. Schreiber said that allowing his clients to make left turns out of the driveway would be the safest and best thing to do.
8. Barry Allen of Vanguard stated that there is an uncoordinated speed limit going in the two directions of travel on Linda Vista Road near the property. He cited other cities that have similar driveway issues and said he isn't aware of problems there. He also claimed during construction of the home and the three years prior to the installation of the delineators there were no accidents involving vehicles.
9. Karen McDonald, 704 N. Verdugo Rd., said a lot of good suggestions were made. She also said she had the opposite problem near her residence on North Verdugo Road. She has asked for traffic controls to permit her to exit her driveway. She encouraged the installation of stop signs and/or speed humps approaching the driveway at 3612 Linda Vista Road.

10. Raffy Krikorian, 704 N. Verdugo Rd., questioned why the city and the TPC were repeatedly concerned with liability and that posted speed signs should direct liability to the driver.
11. Vatche Hagopian, 3280 Linda Vista Rd., stated that the larger issue is the narrow width of the Linda Vista Road near the property, a condition made worse by the delineators that decrease the width even more--and therefore should be removed. He also felt that a retaining wall on the north side of Linda Vista Road could be constructed less expensively than estimated by the City Engineer. Lastly, the road should be widened to make a safer environment.

A short recess was held to consider all the information presented during the public hearing.

Upon conclusion of the recess, Harout Demirjian asked that if there is to be another traffic count, it should be conducted on the east side of the property, not on the west side as was done previously by the city. Mr. Mitchell informed the TPC and Mr. Demirjian that staff's initial (2002) count was in fact conducted east of the then-proposed driveway at the crest. The count Mr. Demirjian was likely referring to was done for the city in 2006 as part of an all-way-stop analysis of the Linda Vista Road-Figueroa Street intersection in which case the data on Linda Vista Road were collected between Figueroa Street and the driveway.

Mr. Baghdanian concluded by suggesting to TPC that traffic volume-speed surveys be conducted both east and west of the crest over multiple days to obtain a comprehensive speed profile of Linda Vista Road east of the driveway. The results will be reported to TPC for review and further consideration of the driveway's left-turn prohibitions.

The Commission did not take any action on Motion 5a(1), and it will be revisited at a date to be determined.

COMMISSION/STAFF COMMENTS/UPDATES

No comments or updates were made

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Sahakian requested a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Gay moved and Commissioner Sulayan seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m. with no objection.