



Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council **From:** Councilmember Pete Constant

Subject: SEE BELOW **Date:** August 13, 2010

Approved: 

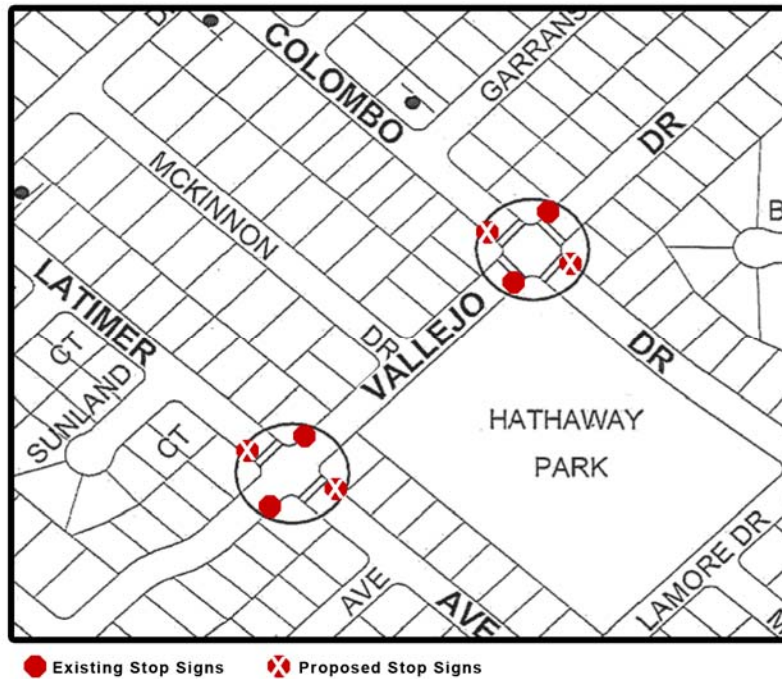
SUBJECT: APPEAL OF THE TRAFFIC APPEALS COMMISSION DENIAL OF STOP SIGN INSTALLATION AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF VALLEJO DRIVE AND COLOMBO DRIVE, AND VALLEJO DRIVE AND LATIMER AVENUE

Recommendations

1. I recommend that the City Council approve the appeal and reverse the denial of the Hathaway Park Neighborhood Association's request for an upgrade of all-way stop signs from two-way stop signs at the intersections of Vallejo Drive and Colombo Drive, and Vallejo Drive and Latimer Avenue.
2. I recommend that the City Council direct the City Manager to have the all-way stop signs installed as soon as possible.
3. I recommend that the City Council Direct the City Manager to evaluate whether the existing pedestrian warning signs can be changed to "Stop Ahead" signs.

Background

In 2007, neighbors reported the dangerous pedestrian situation created by high-speed traffic on Colombo Drive and Latimer Avenue as pedestrians attempt to cross at Vallejo Drive to access Hathaway Park. Many neighbors reported near-misses with speeding cars as they walked with their children or pets. I helped them follow the process of requesting the installation of all-way stop signs at those two intersections. Currently, the intersections are controlled in two directions along Vallejo.



The request before the City Council would upgrade the intersection controls to all-ways. Almost three years later, the residents of the Hathaway Park Neighborhood have persevered through a very long process and are now appealing to the City Council.

Colombo Drive and Latimer Avenue serve as cut-through streets from Saratoga Avenue to San Tomas Aquino and Hamilton Avenue respectively. Traffic traveling along Latimer and Colombo regularly reaches speeds well above the posted speed limit.

This alone would not necessarily warrant all-way stop signs at the two aforementioned intersections. However, Colombo Drive, Vallejo Drive and Latimer Avenue form three of the four borders of Hathaway Park, which is located in the middle of the Hathaway Park Neighborhood. Pedestrians and children riding bicycles from the neighborhood must cross Colombo Drive and Latimer Avenue at Vallejo Drive, due to the fact that the children's play lots, picnic areas, bathrooms and softball diamond are all located near Vallejo Drive.

Analysis

According to the Stop Study conducted by the Department of Transportation neither of the intersections received the requisite 20 points to qualify for all-way stop signs. However, the study did recognize that Hathaway Park is an "unusual condition" that results in high pedestrian and bicycle activity. The stop study provides a vehicle traffic count, but does not provide a pedestrian traffic count. It also states that there were no crashes reported for these intersections. The neighborhood should not have to wait for an injury accident between a motorist and pedestrian before qualifying for this simple measure that will provide for safer pedestrian access to the park and potentially reduce cut-through traffic and speeds in the neighborhood.

The staff report states that all-way stop signs will not reduce speeding through the neighborhood along Colombo Drive and Latimer Avenue due to the fact that drivers often

speed up between stop signs. That maybe true, but stop signs will reduce speed at the intersections where pedestrians are crossing to access the park. Stop signs require drivers to stop at intersections and look around, thus increasing their awareness of pedestrians. Furthermore, the additional stop signs will increase the time it takes to travel down Colombo and Latimer and may act as a deterrent to cut-through traffic.

The staff report details the 5 traffic safety measures taken to date. These measures include increased signage, striping, red curbs and trimming of bushes to improve sight distance visibility. All of these are positive improvements, but do not result in a requirement for drivers to stop at the two intersections. In fact, it can be argued that improved sight distance visibility may actually increase speed. In addition, they all require greater maintenance than stop signs. Paint fades and bushes grow back. The staff report states that installation of the all-way stop signs would cost \$3,600 per intersection or \$7,200 total, which is a small price to improve pedestrian safety. It also pales in comparison to the cost the City has already incurred in staff time working to deny this reasonable neighborhood request. The staff report also states that the existing pedestrian signage warning motorists of the crosswalks would be removed if the Council votes to install the all-ways stop signs. This unnecessary removal provides spurious rationale for continuing to deny the neighbors reasonable request for this relatively inexpensive mitigation. I do not agree that signs alerting motorists to crosswalks are unnecessary simply because a stop sign is installed.

Conclusion

Pedestrian safety in neighborhoods and around parks is a top priority. The neighborhood request for all-way stop signs at the intersections of Vallejo Drive and Colombo Drive, and Vallejo Drive and Latimer Avenue is reasonable and will reduce the speed of traffic at those intersections. The resulting speed reduction at these intersections will improve pedestrian safety for residents accessing the primary amenities at Hathaway Park. Furthermore, it is likely that the installation of all-way stop signs at these intersections will reduce high-speed cut-through traffic. Due to budget cuts, there is no longer funding available for larger, more comprehensive traffic calming plans. The minor cost to install these stop signs is well-worth the benefit that they will provide to patrons of the park and the overall community.