



Legislation Text

File #: 25-0032, **Version:** 1

TO:

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH:

Talyn Mirzakhanian, City Manager

FROM:

Ryan Heise, Acting Community Development Director
Erik Zandvliet, T.E., City Traffic Engineer

SUBJECT:

Consideration of the Parking and Public Improvements Commission's Recommendation to Approve Initial Traffic Calming Measures for Valley Drive and Ardmore Avenue Between 1st Street and 10th Place (Partially Budgeted) (Acting Community Development Director Heise).

(Estimated Time: 1 Hr.)

APPROVE

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council consider the Parking and Public Improvements Commission's (PPIC) recommendation to approve the following traffic calming measures, which would supplement continued enforcement of speeding and stop sign violations on Valley Drive between 1st Street and 10th Place:

1. Install a speed limit sign on Valley Drive south of 10th Place;
2. Install a solar-powered flashing stop sign on Valley Drive at 6th Place;
3. Initiate a capital project to construct sidewalks and crosswalks on the north side of 6th Street between Valley Drive and Ardmore Avenue;
4. Initiate a capital project to construct crosswalks and accessible ramps on Valley Drive and Ardmore Avenue at 10th Street to connect the neighborhoods to Veterans Parkway;
5. Install a solar-powered speed awareness sign on Valley Drive between 6th Place and 1st Street;
6. Paint a white parking edgeline along the west side of Valley Drive between 2nd Street and 10th Place; and
7. Install a solar-powered flashing stop sign on Ardmore Avenue at 6th Street.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The PPIC recommendation includes the initiation of a capital project to construct sidewalks and crosswalks on Valley Drive and Ardmore Avenue at 6th Street and at 10th Street (Recommendations 3 and 4). The initial cost estimate for this project is approximately \$500,000. If approved, the project would utilize Gas Tax, Measure M, Measure R, or Prop C Funds. The City Council will review and

approve the future funding and priority for this capital project as part of the overall Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) update in May. Sufficient funds in the amount of \$20,000 for the remaining recommendations are available in the Public Works Street Maintenance budget for the current fiscal year within the General Fund.

BACKGROUND:

On November 19, 2002, the City Council approved the City-Wide Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP). The NTMP established a set of procedures to evaluate neighborhoods in an effort to improve livability of neighborhood streets. The NTMP Program has been followed in conducting this study and related public outreach efforts. This report summarizes the current traffic conditions and the Traffic Engineer's analysis of potential traffic calming measures to address resident concerns along Valley Drive.

On May 16, 2017, the City Council approved a number of traffic calming measures pursuant to the Valley Drive Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan initiated by resident petitions and as recommended by the Parking and Public Improvements Commission, including:

1. Restrict traffic to one-way westbound on 4th Street between Valley Drive and Ingleside Drive;
2. Install three 15 mph speed limit signs on Ingleside Drive between 1st Street and 6th Place;
3. Install two 15 mph speed limit signs on 6th Place east and west of Ingleside Drive;
4. Install high-visibility crosswalk signs and markings on Ingleside Drive at 5th Street and 6th Street walkstreet crossings;
5. Install a stop sign for northbound Ingleside Drive at 6th Place; and
6. Increase enforcement of speeding and other moving violations on a regular basis.

These measures were implemented in 2017, and City Council voted to continue the measures on February 20, 2018.

Beginning in 2022, City staff has been in correspondence with several residents who have requested additional traffic safety measures on Valley Drive between 1st Street and 10th Place. Residents are concerned about speeding and drivers failing to stop at the 6th Place intersection. One resident has kept a video record of recurring violations that support their request. The City has taken a "Three E's" approach - Engineering, Enforcement and Education - to address the recurrent stop sign violations, as described below:

1. Painted new STOP legends and enlarged the stop bar on Valley Drive for greater stop sign awareness. (Engineering Measure)
2. Installed a larger stop sign in the southbound direction. (Engineering Measure)
3. Conducted ongoing enforcement efforts and issued citations during a variety of hours. (Enforcement Measure)
4. Deployed a changeable message board at the intersection with warnings such as "STOP STOP" and "STOP SIGN AHEAD" to educate drivers. (Education Measure)

On December 5, 2024, the PPIC considered the Traffic Engineer's analysis of the study area findings and recommendations for initial traffic calming measures at a public meeting attended by the study area's residents. After hearing public testimony from eight residents, reviewing written correspondence and discussing the matter, the Commission voted unanimously to support staff's recommended traffic calming measures and recommended installation of an additional flashing stop

sign on Ardmore Avenue at 6th Street.

DISCUSSION

Valley Drive is a 32-foot wide, two-lane Residential Collector Street that connects with Manhattan Beach Boulevard to the north and 1st Street to the south. Valley Avenue is a southbound only roadway that parallels northbound only Ardmore Avenue to the east. Valley Drive is controlled by a traffic signal at Manhattan Beach Boulevard and has stop controls at 6th Street/6th Place and 1st Street to the south. The speed limit on Valley drive is 30 miles per hour (MPH). Valley Drive has curbs and gutters on both sides, and sidewalks on the west side only.

Pursuant to the City’s Mobility Plan, “Residential Collector Streets intended are intended to serve an area or neighborhood by collecting or distributing traffic from the Local and Major Local streets to the Collector, Minor Arterial, Major Arterial, or Regional Arterial system. Curbside parking is generally allowed, and adjacent land uses often have direct driveway access.”

6th Place is a 20-foot wide, two-way alley between Valley Drive and Ingleside Drive with a speed limit of 15 MPH. 6th Street is a 30-foot-wide, two-way local street between Valley Drive and Poinsettia Avenue with a speed limit of 25 MPH. 6th Street has all-way stop controls at Ardmore Avenue. 6th Place is constructed as an alley, while 6th Street has curbs and gutters only.

The intersection of Valley Drive and 6th Place is located in a single-family residential area. It is controlled with stop signs on all approaches. Stop signs are posted on both sides of Valley Drive approaching 6th Street/6th Place. There is a slight downhill slope on 6th Street in the westerly direction approaching Valley Drive. Parking is allowed on the west side of Valley Drive. The intersection is painted with stop legends and stop bars on all approaches. Veterans Parkway is located between Valley Drive and Ardmore Avenue.

Volumes and Speeds

A traffic volume count was conducted in June 2022 on typical school days. A summary of the peak hour and daily traffic volume is provided below:

DIRECTION	AM PEAK HOUR	PM PEAK HOUR	DAILY
Southbound	474	603	5,940

Between 2013 and 2022, daily traffic volume on Valley Drive decreased by about 4 percent, from 6,220 to 5,940 vehicles per day.

Several speed surveys were conducted in June 2022 and November 2024 using a calibrated RADAR speed measuring device during free-flow traffic conditions. A statistical summary of the recorded speeds shown below confirms that prevailing speeds on Valley Drive are higher than expected for this street classification in a residential area.

DATE	LOCATION	AVERAGE SPEED (MPH)	85TH PERCENTILE	PACE SPEED (MPH)
6/29/2022	4th Street	31	36	29-38
11/25/2024	5th Street	34	39	30-39

11/25/2024 10th Street 33 38 30-39
VALLEY DRIVE SPEED SURVEYS (SOUTHBOUND)

Collision History

The traffic collision history between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2023 was analyzed for Valley Drive between 1st Street and Manhattan Beach Boulevard. According to City records, there were four reported collisions on this street segment during the eight-year period. A collision at Valley Drive and 1st Street in 2021 involved a southbound driver hitting an object on the side of the road. A collision at Valley Drive and 3rd Street in 2023 involved an eastbound right turning driver failing to yield to a southbound vehicle. The remaining two collisions occurred north of 10th Place outside of the study area. It should be noted that most minor collisions are not reported to the Police Department but are known to occur through anecdotal reports and physical evidence.

Field observations were made at the intersection during various days and times on typical school weekdays. Staff confirmed the empirical traffic count data and speed data. Valley Drive carries moderate traffic volumes appropriate for its designation as a Local Collector street. 6th Street/6th Place carries local traffic to/from the neighborhood west of Valley Drive. No significant delays were observed at any intersections. Existing red curbs on Valley Drive provide adequate driver sight distance from the side streets, but curb parking may somewhat impede the view of vehicles approaching at very high speeds. Also, it was observed some drivers on Valley Drive purposely slow down, but do not come to a complete stop if there are no other vehicles at the stop-controlled intersections.

Existing traffic safety and calming measures on Valley Drive include the following:

- “Speed Limit” sign at 6th Street
- “Stop Ahead” signs and legends in advance of 6th Place and 1st Street
- Double wide stop limit line at 6th Street/6th Place
- Double stop signs at 6th Street/6th Place
- Pedestrian warning signs at 4th Street
- Bicycle “Sharrow” markings

Potential Traffic Calming Measures

The NTMP includes a toolbox of traffic calming measures that can be deployed to address specific neighborhood traffic issues. Each toolbox measure has different advantages, disadvantages, costs and limitations. Level One and Two tools are intended to be implemented as initial trial measures, with Level Three tools considered only if initial measures fail to meet the intended outcome. Level One and Two tools are listed below and described more fully in the NTMP Handbook attached to this report:

Level One Tools

- Enhanced Police Enforcement

- Speed Monitoring Trailer
- Neighborhood Traffic Watch Program
- Higher Visibility Crosswalk
- Pedestrian Crossing Signs
- Electronic Speed Limit Signs/Larger Static Speed Limit Signs

Level Two Tools

- Traffic Signal Adjustments to Discourage Cut-Through Traffic
- Turn Restrictions Via Signage
- Rumble Strips/Dots
- Speed Awareness and Electronic Signs
- Crosswalk Warning System
- Raised Median Island
- Entry Island (Neighborhood Identification Island)
- Mid-Block Narrowing
- Chokers at Intersections
- Lane Reduction/Lane Narrowing (Restriping)
- Stop Sign as Traffic Control Measure
- Parking Restrictions

In addition to the NTMP toolbox, the City Traffic Engineer referred to the City's Pedestrian Crossing Enhancement Policy and Mobility Plan for guidance and appropriateness of certain measures. After fully evaluating the advantages, disadvantages, physical conditions, and potential for various toolbox measures, the City Traffic Engineer recommends the following specific traffic calming measures to address speeding, stop violation, and pedestrian crossing concerns:

Enhanced Police Enforcement

Targeted police enforcement has been employed since 2023 and is recommended to continue on Valley Drive between 1st Street and Manhattan Beach Boulevard. In addition, stop sign violations at 6th Street/6th Place should be targeted for enhanced enforcement on a recurring basis.

Electronic Speed Awareness Sign

A solar-powered electronic speed awareness sign or speed activated flashing speed limit sign could be installed on Valley Drive south of 10th Place and/or south of 6th Place to remind drivers of the speed limit. These types of signs are effective because they start flashing only if drivers exceed the posted speed limit. This measure could be implemented separately or in combination with other measures.

Speed Limit Sign

Speed limit signs should generally be posted on all streets entering residential neighborhood from arterial streets to remind drivers of the change in speed limit. Therefore, a 30 MPH speed limit sign should be posted on Valley Drive south of 10th Place.

Lane Narrowing

A painted parking edgeline could be painted to reduce the lane width and provide a buffer between the travel lane and parked cars along the west side of Valley Drive. This measure has been

implemented successfully along other sections of Valley Drive and has been shown to reduce speeding and collisions in those areas.

Sidewalks and Crosswalks

The City has included two future sidewalks in its upcoming Capital Improvements Program (CIP). First, a sidewalk is proposed on the north side of 6th Street between Valley Drive and Ardmore Avenue. At 10th Street, the Traffic Engineer has proposed a sidewalk and crosswalks to access the exercise station and cross over between Valley Drive and Ardmore Avenue. At both locations, it should be noted that an accessible sidewalk is required before a crosswalk can be painted at the intersection by law. Similarly, a painted crosswalk at the staircase to the Veterans Parkway at 4th Place is not permitted until an accessible path is provided on the Veterans Parkway side of the street.

LED Enhanced Flashing Stop Signs

The US Department of Transportation (USDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have published a variety of studies that show significant reductions in both speeding and stop violations through the use of LED enhanced stop signs, also known as flashing stop signs. (See attachment) Flashing stop signs are regular stop signs outfitted with red LED lights at the corners that are powered by a small solar panel and battery and operate continuously. The LEDs are designed to be seen only by the approaching driver, and the brightness is automatically dimmed at night with a light sensor to minimize light spillover to adjacent properties.

The FHWA study results indicate a 41% reduction in right-angle collisions and a 2.7% reduction in approach speeds. The number of drivers coming to a full stop improved by almost 29%. These devices are approved by the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Devices (CA-MUTCD) for locations with limited visibility, pedestrian crossing concerns or low driver compliance. The Traffic Engineer has evaluated the intersection at Valley Drive and 6th Place and determined that this safety measure would be the most effective device to address the citizens' concerns at this intersection.

Besides the recommended initial measures above, the City Traffic Engineer also considered other Level Two traffic calming measures, such as multi-way stop signs, road narrowing and raised center medians, but there are no candidate locations that would be appropriate or would not adversely impact street parking.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

Residents and property owners in the study area were notified by mail and invited to the PPIC meeting on December 5, 2024, to provide public testimony. The same residents were notified by mail of this agenda item and were invited to attend the City Council meeting or provide public input. The general public has been informed of this agenda item as part of the City's standard meeting notice practices via public bulletin boards and the website calendar. All written or voicemail correspondence related to this matter received prior to posting the agenda for this item has been attached to the staff report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The City has reviewed the proposed project for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that the project qualifies for a Class 1(c) categorical exemption pursuant to Section 15301(c) Existing Facilities of the State CEQA Guidelines, as the project involves a change in traffic regulations on an existing street that would not significantly increase or decrease the amount of traffic on either street. Furthermore, there are no features that distinguish this project

from others in the exempt class; therefore, there are no unusual circumstances. Accordingly, no further environmental review is necessary.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney has reviewed this report and determined that no additional legal analysis is necessary.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. PPIC Staff Report with Exhibits - December 5, 2024
2. PPIC Draft Minutes - December 5, 2024
3. Recommended Initial Traffic Calming Measures Map
4. Correspondence Received After Posting for December 5, 2024 PPIC Meeting