



Administrative Report

H.11., File # 26-0422

Meeting Date: 5/5/2026

To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
From: ANDREW WINJE, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

TITLE

APPROVE REMOVAL OF THE NORTHBOUND STOP SIGN ON S IRENA AVENUE AT OPAL STREET

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City received a traffic calming request for the closely spaced intersections of Torrance Boulevard at S. Irena Avenue (Torrance/Irena) and S. Irena Avenue at Opal Street (Irena/Opal). Engineers from the City analyzed and proposed potential solutions, which were presented to the Public Works, Safety, and Sustainability Commission (PWSSC) meeting on March 23, 2026. Notice of that meeting was provided to area residents. The PWSSC voted in favor of staff's proposed left-turn calming measures, which are currently in procurement. In addition, the PWSSC voted in favor of removing the northbound stop sign on S. Irena at Opal. If approved by the City Council, this would improve a highly unusual condition where one of the through street approaches of a T-intersection is stop-controlled while the other is not.

Staff and the PWSSC recommends removing the northbound Irena stop-controlled approach to make this intersection more consistent with what drivers encounter at similar locations.

BACKGROUND

At the March 23, 2026 PWSSC meeting, staff presented potential traffic calming measures to improve vehicular travel at Torrance/Irena and Irena/Opal. Residents' comments were generally in favor of the proposed traffic calming measures; however, residents expressed a hesitation to change a traffic condition that has been existing for decades. Additional research was conducted after the meeting to understand the origin of the current configuration of the intersections. Staff was not able to find specific prior Council action that installed the northbound stop on Irena and Opal. Staff does note that, in the past, Opal, Irena, and Torrance were one large intersection with Opal connecting directly with Torrance. Opal Street was most likely through-running at Irena before the section west of Irena was vacated to become today's auto service parcels. Since Opal now terminates at Irena, the conditions that may have warranted a northbound stop on Irena at that time no longer exist.

Per the vehicle code, the terminating street is required to stop/yield at T-intersections to through traffic. However, at Irena/Opal, only the northbound Irena approach and westbound Opal terminating approach are stop-controlled, giving highest priority to southbound Irena traffic making through or left-turns. This contributes to driver confusion because the stop control is inconsistent with a typical T-intersection. The removal of the northbound stop control on Irena reduces confusion by returning the

intersection to typical right-of-way operation and conventional rules of the road.

Staff does not expect unintended speed increases if the northbound stop is removed. Drivers on northbound Irena already need to slow down for a cross gutter 150 feet to the south, and again for a stop sign at Torrance Boulevard 100 feet to the north. The lack of a stop control for southbound traffic, while the northbound lanes are obliged to stop, also lends to the traffic speed/safety issues residents expressed concerns about. A primary fear is the propensity of some drivers to use a high rate of speed to transition from eastbound Torrance Blvd to eastbound Opal Street, ignoring proper lane use, speed reduction, and cautionary driving on southbound Irena. Removal of the northbound stop sign, along with the traffic calming measures, will signal southbound drivers to slow down and proceed with the left turn onto Opal only after clearing opposing traffic.

The full PWSSC administrative report, existing conditions, and proposed traffic calming measures address the northbound Irena stop removal at Opal and are included with this report for reference.

If approved by the City Council, the City will engage its striping contractor to remove the northbound stop approach on Irena at Opal, including the stop sign, stop pavement legend, stop bar, and accompanying yellow centerline. Temporary signs with flags would be placed at all approaches to warn drivers of the traffic pattern change during the adjustment period.

COORDINATION

Coordination of this report took place within the Public Works Department.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost to remove the northbound Irena stop control at Opal is approximately \$500 and will be funded as part of the City's Traffic Calming Project in the Capital Improvement Program.

APPROVED BY:

Mike Witzansky, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

- Administrative Report - Public Works, Safety, and Sustainability Commission, March 23, 2026