



Administrative Report

H.8., File # 24-1817

Meeting Date: 11/19/2024

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

TITLE

APPROVE THE TEMPORARY STREET CLOSURE OF AVENUE H AT DORIS WAY FROM NOVEMBER 29, 2024 THROUGH JANUARY 2, 2025, AND OTHER ASSOCIATED MEASURES, TO REDUCE TRAFFIC AND PARKING IMPACTS IN REDONDO BEACH RELATED TO THE SEASIDE RANCHO NEIGHBORHOOD HOLIDAY LIGHTS DISPLAY IN TORRANCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year as a part of the year-end holiday season, staff recommends closing Avenue H at Doris Way to vehicular through traffic. This year's closure is suggested to run from Friday, November 29, 2024, to Thursday, January 2, 2025, from 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM daily. This intersection demarks the City boundary between Redondo Beach and the City of Torrance.

After consultation with the Councilmember for District 1, local residents, Police and Fire Department leadership, and receiving input from the Public Works & Sustainability Commission (PWSC), staff is recommending a more robust traffic signage plan and additional trash cans to improve safety, cleanliness, and traffic operations in the neighborhood. Staff will continually monitor and adjust the operational portions of the plan, as necessary, to ensure optimal deployment during the holiday season. City Council approval is required to initiate the temporary street closure.

BACKGROUND

The annual street closure was initiated in 1993 following a petition from residents along Avenue H, Massena Avenue, and Circle Drive requesting that the City explore ways to address heavy traffic congestion due to the Seaside Rancho (Torrance) neighborhood's holiday season light displays. Subsequently, representatives from the cities of Torrance and Redondo Beach met and determined that temporary barricades installed by the City of Redondo Beach would resolve the issue. The practice includes the daily installation and removal of lockable in-street bollards during the closure period, as well as appropriate advance signage.

After recent holiday seasons, City staff observed an increase in visitor activity to the area, as well as increased complaints from Redondo Beach residents regarding traffic safety, access, and trash. Earlier this year, City staff started preparing for an updated traffic signage plan, additional trash cans, and met with the District 1 Councilmember and the Police Department to discuss other possible mitigation strategies.

The strategies developed in these discussions were presented at the October 28, 2024 PWSC

meeting. Neighborhood residents were invited to provide feedback, with residents advocating for more trash cans to be deployed than in previous years. Options for parking restrictions were discussed, including a preferential parking permit program, and temporary “no parking” zones on one or both sides of the street, along with other ways to reduce congestion. Limitations to emergency access due to the congestion was also brought forward as a concern. Staff contributed information about the limitations and impacts of a residential preferential permit parking ordinance as a method to address congestion.

The Redondo Beach Municipal Code (RBMC) is narrowly tailored to only allow preferential permit parking if specific conditions are met that occur at daily/weekly intervals for substantial periods of the year. Staff also considered general parking restrictions under RBMC 3-7.1314. This section allows parking restrictions arising from traffic congestion or hazards associated with events and public assembly. Based on feedback provided prior to the meeting, staff did not recommend a total parking restriction that would affect both residents and visitors. Residents at the meeting expressed divided, but largely negative, sentiments related to prohibiting parking in large parts of the neighborhood. Residents and Commissioners also discussed preferential entry into the neighborhood or directing traffic into Tulita Elementary School. Neither of these methods are allowed under State Vehicle Code, as the City must maintain reasonable and impartial public access to public streets. In addition, the City is not allowed to direct public traffic into private land for the purposes of facilitating public through traffic.

In the end, the PWSC voted to recommend additional traffic signage, a programmable message sign, at least four trash cans, continuous operational monitoring and adjustments throughout the holiday period, and requested that visibility analyses be completed at intersections in the area. The PWSC administrative report provides additional history and background surrounding the uptick in popularity of the holiday lights, measures conducted by the City of Torrance in recent years, and City staff’s proposed measures presented for consideration for the PWSC.

Following the PWSC meeting, Public Works staff met with Police and Fire Department leadership to develop additional operational improvements that can be implemented to improve circulation and redirect visitors to enter via Torrance roadways that will allow vehicular access to the Seaside Rancho neighborhood. As resources allow, RBPD will deploy enhanced parking enforcement and patrol to the neighborhood during the holiday season.

One major concern is decreased vehicle circulation caused by drivers trying to turn around to leave the neighborhood, which has no outlet beyond Avenue H, which is blocked nightly on the eastern end at the Torrance boundary. To address this, staff will deploy a temporary roundabout at Avenue H and Massena Avenue to facilitate vehicular U-turns at the intersection without requiring a three-point turn. This is expected to reduce congestion and enhance emergency access to the area. The Police and Public Works Departments will implement limited, temporary no parking zones (for all drivers) in key areas adjacent to the intersection, four spaces in total, to create the necessary space for the temporary roundabout and facilitate its temporary operation. As per RBMC 3-7.1314, staff is authorized to do so by direction of the City Manager, and this is recommended by both the Police and Fire Chiefs. Other limited, temporary no parking zones may be considered after weekly monitoring, but staff does not propose restricting large sections of on-street parking based on public feedback. The current staff recommendation reflects the recommendations of the PWSC and also incorporates additional operational strategies developed with the assistance of the City’s Police and Fire Departments. The attached signage/circulation and trash bin plan has been updated based on the

PWSC's recommendation and further input from the Fire and Police Departments.

COORDINATION

The Public Works Department coordinated this item with the Police and Fire Departments, the District 1 Councilmember, neighborhood residents, and the PWSC. Public Works will assign personnel to post signs, set up the temporary roundabout, and will, as in past seasons, install and remove the bollards daily from Friday, November 29, 2024, to Thursday, January 2, 2025. Public Works employees will be assigned to perform these tasks, as they have regular evening staffing shifts, seven days a week.

FISCAL IMPACT

The total cost for this task is included in the Public Works Department's annual operating budget. Placement of signs and street closure barricades is done during Public Works Maintenance staff's normal working hours. The signs and barricades are reused from year to year.

APPROVED BY:

Mike Witzansky, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

- Administrative Report - Public Works & Sustainability Commission, October 28, 2024
- Proposed Operational and Sign Plan