



# Administrative Report

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N.6., File # 21-2208

Meeting Date: 4/13/2021

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**To:** MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
**From:** TED SEMAAN, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

## **TITLE**

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION DIRECTING STAFF TO SEEK FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING STATE RELINQUISHMENT OF HAWTHORNE BOULEVARD, STATE ROUTE 107, WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CITY OF REDONDO BEACH

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

City staff has been approached by staff from the City of Torrance (Torrance) regarding partnership with them in their application for the relinquishment of Hawthorne Blvd. from its classification as a state highway (State Route 107 or SR 107). Torrance obtained legislative approval for the state's Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to relinquish ownership and control of the SR 107 right of way within Torrance city limits in 2008 and are currently pursuing consummation of the relinquishment from the local Caltrans district office.

State Route 107 runs along the eastern city limit of Redondo Beach as Hawthorne Blvd. from Redondo Beach Blvd. to its intersection with Pacific Coast Highway. (See attached map 1.) Most of that real estate is in the City of Torrance. However, certain portions of the Hawthorne Blvd. right of way are located within the City between Redondo Beach Blvd. and 182nd Street. The City boundary with Torrance runs roughly down the middle of the right of way in this portion of the route. (See attached map 2.) There is also a small section of SR 107 within the City boundary just north of 190th Street, also adjacent to the City boundary with Torrance. (See attached map 3.)

In order for Caltrans to move forward with the relinquishment request from Torrance, Caltrans is insisting that these small portions of right of way in the City of Redondo Beach also be relinquished so that they do not remain as small islands of state controlled right of way. Staff is requesting direction from the City Council as to whether to pursue the process of relinquishment for the portions of SR 107 within the city limits of Redondo Beach. The process will include obtaining legislative approval and assuming ownership and maintenance responsibility of these portions of the roadway along Hawthorne Blvd.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City of Redondo Beach, like the City of Torrance is crossed by state highways that are controlled and maintained by Caltrans. In Redondo Beach, SR 1 (Pacific Coast Highway) and SR 107 (Hawthorne Blvd.) are the two such highways. When a city needs to make improvements to the roadways under Caltrans control there is a long permitting process that significantly slows city

responsiveness. Additionally, the state is in control of traffic operations and making changes for these arterials that seem appropriate at the community level do not always get Caltrans approval. For these reasons, Torrance has applied for relinquishment of SR 107 throughout its city limits. This process by Torrance began years ago and legislative approval, which is required, was obtained by an act of the California Legislature in 2008. Recently, Torrance requested that the local (District 7) office of Caltrans begin its study to determine if and how relinquishment is to be done.

In performing their study, Caltrans staff determined that relinquishment of SR 107 to the City of Torrance would leave two remaining "islands" of state controlled right of way in Redondo Beach along Hawthorne Blvd. This is not a circumstance that is conducive to good stewardship, as maintenance and operations of these islands will not be efficient for Caltrans, and may be neglected. Therefore, Caltrans now requires that these portions must also be relinquished to the city in which they are located, that is, Redondo Beach.

The first of these portions includes the medians and south bound lanes of Hawthorne Blvd for about six tenths (0.6) of a mile between Redondo Beach Blvd. and 182nd Street. The second portion includes about 7,500 square feet along the south bound side of Hawthorne just north of 190th Street. The section between Redondo Beach Blvd. and 182nd Street also contains four signalized intersections, located at Redondo Beach Blvd., Artesia Blvd., 177th Street and 182nd Street. Maintenance responsibility of the roadway would fall to the underlying city. Signalized intersections that share a jurisdiction are typically maintained by only one of the agencies by mutual consent due to the interconnected nature of traffic signal components, while payment for such maintenance is proportionately shared by the jurisdictions. The cities of Redondo Beach and Torrance currently pay Caltrans for their respective share of traffic signal maintenance.

There are pros and cons to accepting a relinquishment. The advantages of the City receiving the relinquished roadways are the elimination of the burdensome permitting process through Caltrans and the opportunity to control traffic in these areas. For such a small section, the traffic control argument is only mildly compelling, but elimination of the Caltrans permitting requirement for any needed improvements along Hawthorne Blvd. is sure to shorten project timelines for any conceivable project in the right of way. Disadvantages of accepting the right of way in this case include an increased maintenance cost for the increased City street square footage, liability exposure and the uncertain "as is" condition of the current improvements.

Staff is not yet sure of the time required to complete the process as it involves action on the part of the State Legislature and Caltrans. However, with Torrance already pursuing the relinquishment and the Caltrans recommendation to add to it the areas in the City, there would be no better time to pursue it if the City is interested. Therefore, staff is seeking direction from the Council on whether to pursue reaching out to legislative representatives, Caltrans and Torrance to better understand the processes, costs, timelines and possibilities of a relinquishment of SR 107 in the City of Redondo Beach.

The City completed a similar process in 2001 when Artesia Blvd., formerly SR 91, was relinquished by Caltrans to the City. At that time, about \$4.7M was granted to the City by the State to place the "highway in a state of good repair for the purpose of relinquishment." A staff report from the time

indicates negotiations considering relinquishment of both Artesia Blvd. and Hawthorne Blvd. began in 1988, but did not state why negotiations took so long nor why Hawthorne Blvd. was eventually dropped from consideration.

#### **COORDINATION**

City staff has coordinated this report with information provided by the City of Torrance and Caltrans District 7 office.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no anticipated direct fiscal impact to the City to pursue information about the process, cost and timeline of relinquishment. Staff will return to City Council prior to expending anything more than staff time.

#### **APPROVED BY:**

*Joe Hoefgen, City Manager*

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Maps of SR 107 in the City of Redondo Beach