



Administrative Report

J.2., File # PWC23-5433

Meeting Date: 1/23/2023

To: PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION
From: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

TITLE

CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS ON THE 500 BLOCK OF N. HELBERTA AVE.

RECOMMENDATION

Consider results of survey sent to residents in the vicinity of the 500 block of N. Helberta Avenue and make a recommendation for vehicle circulation improvements to that block.

SUMMARY

In response to a request from the council member from District 2, staff reviewed the circulation challenges on the 500 block of N. Helberta Avenue and identified five possible solutions to improve driving conditions on this block. The need for improvements stems from the heavy use of this narrow residential street that is adjacent to Redondo Union High School. Parking is allowed on both sides of the street, which often forces oncoming vehicles into conflicting paths. When use is heavy this creates considerable difficulty navigating the block.

As potential solutions staff proposed three concepts, with two of the three having two secondary alternatives, resulting in five distinct possibilities in the survey. The survey was distributed to 293 addresses that are within 300 feet of the block. Staff received back 43 responses, 37 of which could be identified to an address. One option, converting to one-way travel on the block, was preferred by about 63% of those who returned the survey. Surveys returned from those on the block also favored (10 of 14 or 71%) the one-way conversion.

Staff is bringing the item forward to the Public Works Commission as an opportunity to gather more public input and to seek a recommendation from the Commission regarding taking this forward to the City Council. Residents who were sent the survey were notified by US Mail that this item would be discussed at this meeting. Staff has also sent it to the Council Member for District 2 for further circulation.

BACKGROUND

Staff received an inquiry from Councilmember Lowenstein in October 2022 regarding the possibility of making this block of N. Helberta Avenue a one-way street to help alleviate some of the existing challenges for motorists. Staff developed a simple survey and mailed it to residents within 300 feet of the block, with a request to return the survey by mail, email or hand delivery to City Hall. Surveys were returned as recently as December 2, 2022 but most came within a few weeks of the October 24, 2022 date of mailing. The survey asked for resident's preferences to address the tight conditions

on the road. A copy of the survey is attached.

DISCUSSION

The 500 block of N. Helberta Avenue is a residential road way with a primarily north to south alignment. It is part of the original street layout for the City and can be seen in its current alignment in maps dating as far back as 1887. It connects to the lower left side of the “lamp of learning” that was represented in the street layout designed by the City’s local Chautauqua Assembly. As a part of that more artistic than practical street layout, this block of roadway curvature intersects awkwardly with Carnelian Street on the north side. The intersection with Diamond Street on the south side is a little more routine. Diamond Street, which has a functional classification as a collector street, is adjacent to Redondo Union High School and N. Helberta Avenue is heavily impacted at times by both parking and traffic from high school activities.

The 500 block of N Helberta Avenue roadway is narrow, approximately 30 feet wide from curb to curb. Parking is allowed on both sides and there is a traffic lane in each direction separated by a dashed center line. After allowing 7 feet on each side for parking, only 16 feet of roadway width remains available for travel lanes. Since the two-way travel is divided by a centerline, the resulting north and south travel lanes are only at most eight feet in width, which is well below the City’s standard lane width of 10.5 to 12 feet. The substandard street width is the primary reason some engineering modification must be made.

Staff developed three possible concepts. The first would be to remove parking on one side of the street. The second is to convert two-way travel to one way. Each of these have two permutations dealing with which side should parking be eliminated and which direction of travel should remain, respectively. The final concept is to simply remove the centerline and otherwise keep everything the same. This last option does not necessarily eliminate the traffic challenge, it does eliminate the conflict implicit with the centerline.

Staff sent out a single page survey to 293 addresses in the vicinity of the block in October 2022 and collected responses through mid-January 2023. A copy of the survey, the boundaries of the survey area, and the mapped results of the survey are included in an attachment.

Forty-three surveys were returned (14.7% of surveys sent) and preferences were indicated with the following results:

- Option 1 - Eliminate Parking (5, 11.6%)
- Option 2 - Create one-way travel (27, 62.8%)
- Option 3 - Status Quo and remove centerline (11, 25.6%)

Among those responding for Option 1, four of five preferred to eliminate parking on the west side. Among those responding to Option 2, 20 of 27 preferred to retain north bound traffic.

Thirty-seven of the forty-three surveys that were returned could be tied to an address. Preferences for surveys returned with an address are totaled as follows:

- Option 1 - Eliminate Parking (5, 13.5%)
- Option 2 - Create one-way travel (23, 62.2%)
- Option 3 - Status Quo and remove centerline (9, 24.3%)

Among those responding for Option 1, four of five preferred to eliminate parking on the west side. Among those responding to Option 2, 17 of 23 preferred to retain north bound traffic.

Fourteen of the forty-three surveys that were returned could be tied to an address on the 500 block of N Helberta Avenue. There are 39 addresses on this block, so the response rate for the block (14/39) is 35.9%. Preferences for surveys returned with an address on this block are totaled as follows:

- Option 1 - Eliminate Parking (1, 7.1%)
- Option 2 - Create one-way travel (10, 71.5%)
- Option 3 - Status Quo and remove centerline (3, 21.4%)

The one responding for Option 1 preferred to eliminate parking on the west side. Among those responding to Option 2, all preferred to retain north bound traffic.

Staff recommendations that one of the three identified Options for the 500 block of N. Helberta Avenue be recommended to the City Council so the roadway, as currently marked and operated, is no longer in conflict.

ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE

1. Eliminate parking on one side of the street, please specify, and shift the centerline striping to a minimum of 18 feet from the curb for the side allowing parking
2. Maintain parking on both sides and convert to one-way circulation, please specify direction.
3. Remove centerline and otherwise maintain status quo.
4. Other actions as determined by the Public Works Commission.

COORDINATION

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

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