



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

October 25, 2005

To: Honorable Mayor and  
Members of the City Council

From: *PK* Phil Kamlarz, City Manager

Submitted by: Claudette Ford, Acting Director, Public Works

Subject: Transportation Commission: Comments on the Gilman at Curtis Intersection (*CF 14-05*)

RECOMMENDATION

Concur with Transportation Commission recommendation supporting improvements made by staff in 2005 to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety by highlighting the crosswalks at the Gilman Street and Curtis Street intersection.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

There are none. The improvements discussed below have already been made.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

This intersection is unusually small. Both intersecting streets are narrow (Curtis being very narrow at this point) and the traffic flow on Gilman is fairly heavy and constant. The area seems congested for these reasons and the result is relatively slow moving traffic throughout the day. There have been four intersection-related collisions reported in the past five years. The low collision rate is a reflection of this geometric constraint and the traffic operation characteristics. However, the fact that there have been injury collisions is noteworthy, as detailed below.

Staff found record of one bicycle collision over the past five years, and it seems to have occurred a short distance from the intersection and was not intersection-related. Considering this is a trail crossing, it is surprising that bicyclists have not been involved in collisions within the intersection, until you factor in the elements discussed at the start.

The one motor vehicle/motor vehicle collision which was reported at the intersection in the past five years was an eastbound rear-end collision. We would likely see more of this type of collision if the approach speeds were higher. Given the short distance of Curtis from the stop-controlled Santa Fe intersection, the eastbound speeds will typically be slow.

There have been three pedestrian-related collisions at the intersection over the past five years. One of the pedestrian injuries was sustained when a northbound motorist on Curtis hit a person in the crosswalk on the south leg of the intersection (starting from a stopped position). Another occurred on the same southside crosswalk, this time involving a school bus turning left from Gilman on to Curtis.

The other pedestrian injury was the latest incident. On March 15, 2005, an eastbound motorist stopped at the west side of the intersection, and proceeded through to hit the people crossing on the east side of the intersection. The driver claimed to have his vision obscured because of the morning sun, which does not relieve the driver from the responsibility to exercise more caution. (There is also a possibility that the driver was just completing a cell phone call, which could have been a distraction as well.)

There is no pattern to the collisions, and the stop signs seem to be operating as they should. But the general sense is that there may be too many distractions to motorists at this all-way stop. Thus, it was prudent to attempt to highlight the crosswalks more by repainting them, adding lateral (zebra) markings to the crosswalks on Curtis, adding white reflectors on the road to highlight all four crosswalks, and repainting the red zones on Curtis to be sure that vehicles do not park too close to the intersection, which may interfere with motorists identifying the presence of pedestrians.

These improvements were completed in April 2005.

#### BACKGROUND

At the April 12, 2005 Council meeting, Councilmember Linda Maio referred the issue of traffic safety at the Gilman and Curtis intersection to staff and the Transportation Commission. Staff assessed the situation and moved forward with some immediate improvements, described above in the Current Situation section.

The matter was placed on the agendas of both the Pedestrian and Bicycle Subcommittees of the Transportation Commission. Both subcommittees seemed appreciative of the improvements already undertaken and did not suggest any other actions for the immediate future.

At their September 15, 2005 meeting, the full Transportation Commission passed the following motion:

The Transportation Commission supports the improvements made by staff in 2005 at the Gilman Street and Curtis Street intersection to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety by highlighting the crosswalks.

#### ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

The all-way stop control is handling the steady flow of traffic well. Traffic signals would be expensive (approximately \$150,000) and are not required at the present time.

This section of Gilman Street will be repaved by the Public Works Department next year. The transition of sidewalk ramp and road surface will be reviewed in the context of the larger construction project, as will the possibility of creating diagonal bike lanes across the intersection in the alignment of the Ohlone Greenway.

#### CONTACT PERSON

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