

HILLSIDE RECREATION NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION PLAN

Prepared by
Hillside Recreation Neighborhood Protection Plan Citizen Advisory Committee
May 25, 2000

BACKGROUND

In March of 1999, the City Council appointed 15 residents to a Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) for the purpose of formulating a Neighborhood Protection Plan for the residential area impacted by traffic leaving the Castaway Restaurant and other hillside recreational facilities (Exhibit A). The study area for the Plan is bounded by Cambridge Avenue on the north, Bel Aire Drive and Sunset Canyon Drive on the east, Olive Avenue on the south, and Glenoaks Boulevard on the west (see Exhibit B). The City Council approved the hiring of a traffic-consulting firm to assist the Committee in preparing the Neighborhood Protection Plan. Mr. David Tallichet, owner of the Castaway Restaurant, agreed to pay for the consultant services in an effort to mitigate traffic impacts from his restaurant on the residential area below.

The City contracted with Willdan to perform a traffic analysis and to work with the CAC in formulating the Plan. A series of automatic and manual traffic counts were conducted throughout the study area in August 1998. Traffic counts were taken in August because it represented the busiest time for hillside recreational activities as identified by the event calendars for the various attractions in the area. (Exhibit C contains a summary of the traffic counts and a map depicting the traffic volumes in the study area.) These counts enabled the CAC to determine which streets had the greatest traffic volumes. The Burbank Police Department provided the CAC with speed studies taken in the study area using the City's radar trailer. These speed studies established baseline data for traffic speeds in the area.

Since April 1999, the Committee has met twelve times to analyze the traffic impacts and arrive at a consensus regarding which problems need to be addressed by the Neighborhood Protection Plan and the most appropriate measures to mitigate the identified problems.

The Committee identified the following problems to be addressed by the Plan:

- Certain residential streets carry a disproportionate amount of the traffic, specifically Harvard Road and Walnut Avenue;
- Traffic leaving the hillside area was considered a more serious problem than that entering; specifically, Castaway Restaurant traffic was identified due to the late hour of activities at the site, intoxicated drivers, and concentrated departure times;
- Commercial vehicular traffic (trucks and buses) going through the residential neighborhood;
- Poor directional signage; and

- Vehicles speeding down the hill.

The following points were agreed upon as parameters for a Plan:

- The intent of the Plan is to reduce the average daily volume of traffic on Harvard Road and Walnut Avenue, between Kenneth Road and Sunset Canyon Drive, by 10 percent, and to reduce the evening peak period traffic on these streets (8:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.) by 20 percent.
- A conservative initial Plan would be implemented with more aggressive back-up measures proposed only if the intended traffic and speed reductions of the initial Plan are not met. Physical changes to the street system, such as speed humps, bulb-outs, or traffic circles would not be part of the initial Plan.
- Olive Avenue, would be the preferred route to enter the hillside recreation area from northbound I-5 Freeway. While not ideal because of its residential character, it is the widest street that goes up the hill and it has directional signage from the I-5 Freeway. From southbound I-5, the preferred route would be to exit the freeway at Burbank Boulevard east to Third Street. The route would turn right on Third Street and proceed to Olive Avenue, turning left on Olive Avenue to join the northbound route.

THE PLAN

The Draft Hillside Residential Neighborhood Protection Plan consists of the following steps to be implemented incrementally:

- Step I – Directions/Signs and Roadway Improvements - Visitor guidance and signage to address traffic volume and speed.
- Step II – Public Education and Awareness - Radar speed trailer. Use of cable television public awareness message.
- Step III – Monitoring/Plan Evaluation. - Traffic counts to measure volume
- Radar speed checks to see if speed is within reasonable compliance with posted limits.

The following Steps IV and V are OPTIONAL and are necessary only if the initial steps I through III do not achieve the desired mitigation

- Step IV- Reevaluate Directional Signage and Implement Targeted Police Enforcement (Optional)
 - Reevaluate and revise directional signs and routes as necessary to meet traffic volume goals of Plan.
 - Aggressive Police Enforcement, ONLY if traffic volumes are found to exceed established goals or if traffic speeds are found to be excessive.
- Step V – Monitoring/Plan Evaluation (Optional)
 - Traffic counts to measure volume.
 - Radar speed checks to see if speed is within reasonable compliance to speed limits.

If the goals of the Plan are not met by the initial steps I to III and the optional steps IV and V, the Committee would then propose secondary measures that could include additional police enforcement and/or physical changes to the roads.

The specific implementation measures for each step of the Hillside Recreation Neighborhood Protection Plan are detailed below.

Step I – Directions, Signs and Roadway Improvements

1. Change the name of both Harvard Road and Walnut Avenue east of Sunset Canyon Drive. (Exhibit D.)

The CAC recommends changing Harvard Road to a name to be decided (either by contest or by the City's street naming committee) and Walnut Avenue to Nature Center Road. It was recommended by the consultant that the names of specific commercial establishments not be used in the street names. The Castaway Restaurant's address would change to the new street name for Harvard Road.

The advantage of these street name changes would be the absence of either residential street name on directional maps or other location references to the Castaway Restaurant or the other recreational facilities in the hillside area. This would make it easier to direct incoming traffic over other designated routes.

The disadvantage of this measure is that it would require changing street signs and maps, and would necessitate that businesses in the hillside area make changes to stationary and promotional material. The hillside recreational facilities that would be affected include the Castaway Restaurant, the Starlight Bowl, DeBell Golf Course, Wildwood Canyon Park, and the new nature center.

2. Encourage the Castaway Restaurant, and other hillside recreational facilities, to use maps and directional materials that direct customers and visitors to use the

preferred routes, as shown in Exhibit E, for both inbound and outbound trips.

3. Direct delivery vehicles to use the following service route to access the various hillside recreational facilities. (Exhibit F.)

- ♦ East on Olive Avenue to Sunset Canyon Drive, turn north on Sunset Canyon Drive.

Delivery vehicles should be directed by each hillside facility to make their deliveries between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

4. The Park, Recreation and Community Services Department will designate a 24-hour Help Line for use by the public to report any problems in the Hillside Recreation area. The Castaway Restaurant will respond immediately to problems involving delivery vehicles or busses on non-preferred routes or deliveries outside of acceptable hours.
5. Realign the traffic lanes on Sunset Canyon Drive between Magnolia Boulevard and Olive Avenue for improved guidance and delineation. This can be accomplished within the existing roadway with changes to striping and pavement markings. (Exhibit G).

Recommend resurfacing Sunset Canyon Drive between Olive Avenue and Walnut Avenue.

These roadway changes will result in improved driver understanding and use of the roadway. The costs should be relatively low compared with a total realignment of the roadway.

6. Recommend to the Public Service Department that they explore the possibility of installing street lights on Sunset Canyon Drive to improve the visibility of pedestrians using that street. In order to further improve pedestrian safety on Sunset Canyon Drive, it is recommended that the Public Works Department explore the feasibility of installing a sidewalk between Magnolia Blvd. and Olive Ave.

7. Improve inbound signage to the Hillside Recreation Area.

- a. Post directional signs to the various Hillside Recreation Area attractions, such as the golf course, Castaway Restaurant, and nature center, in simple, easy to read legends and arrows on the landscaped point at the intersection of Sunset Canyon Drive and Orange Grove Avenue.

- b. Post a new directional sign reading "Olive Avenue" with a left arrow to direct eastbound traffic on Angeleno Avenue approaching Glenoaks Boulevard. This sign would reinforce the maps and directional information distributed by the hillside recreation attractions that guide inbound visitor traffic exiting the I-5 Freeway north onto Olive Avenue. (Exhibit H.)
- c. Other locations for the inbound guide signs include the following: (See Exhibit H.)
 - (1) Replace existing guide sign at Olive Avenue and Sunset Canyon Drive directing traffic left with a larger, more reflective sign identifying the Castaway Restaurant, the golf course, Wildwood Canyon, etc.
 - (2) Replace existing guide sign at Sunset Canyon Drive and Orange Grove Terrace with follow-up directions to the same facilities.
 - (3) Post a new guide sign on the east side of Sunset Canyon Drive approaching Harvard Road with directions to the same facilities.
 - (4) Post a new guide sign on the east side of Sunset Canyon Drive approaching Walnut Avenue (the new nature Center Road) with directions to DeBell Golf Course, Stough Park, the Nature Center and Starlight Bowl.
 - (5) Improve the effectiveness of the existing monument sign on the northeast corner of Sunset Canyon Drive and Harvard Road by creating greater contrast between the legend and the background, lighting the sign and maintaining the foliage surrounding the monument.
 - (6) Provide similar improvements to the monument sign on the southeast corner of Walnut Avenue and Sunset Canyon Drive.

8. Improve outbound signage from the Hillside Recreation Area.

- a. Post a large sign reading "Entering Residential Area/25 mph/Radar Enforced" on the east side of both Harvard Road and Walnut Avenue approaching Sunset Canyon Drive leaving the hillside recreation area. The sign would be approximately 6' across and 4' high. It would be constructed with black lettering on a highly-reflective white background. (See Exhibit J.)
- b. Post a series of simple, conventional Interstate 5 Route marker signs at specific locations in the study area, in an effort to direct outbound visitor traffic away from those streets considered to be most seriously impacted by traffic from the hillside area. The following signs would guide traffic destined for the southbound I-5 Freeway to Olive Avenue with follow-up signage as appropriate to direct traffic to the southbound I-5 Freeway. The specific sign type and locations are shown in Exhibit K and identified below.

- (1) I-5 South, north side of Harvard Road and Nature Center Road¹ and destined for the southbound I-5 Freeway about 200' east of Sunset Canyon Drive for westbound traffic. A left arrow would be used.
- (2) I-5 South, west side Sunset Canyon Drive north of Harvard Road with vertical arrow.
- (3) I-5 South, at the southwest corner of Sunset Canyon Drive at Harvard Road and on the northwest corner of Sunset Canyon Drive at Walnut Avenue with a left arrow. Both sign installations would face westbound traffic.
- (4) I-5 South, on the west side of Sunset Canyon Drive immediately south (or north) of Magnolia Boulevard with a vertical arrow.
- (5) I-5 South, on the west side of Sunset Canyon Drive about 200' north of Olive Avenue with a right arrow.
- (6) I-5 South, on the northeast corner of Olive Ave. and Glenoaks with a vertical arrow (to reinforce the directions given several blocks before).

c. The signs listed below would guide traffic destined for the northbound I-5 Freeway. These signs are also depicted on Exhibit K. Exhibit K also shows the two (southbound and northbound) routes in color with southbound in green and northbound in red.

- (1) I-5 North, north side Nature Center Road¹ and Harvard Road about 200' east of Sunset Canyon Road for westbound traffic. A vertical arrow would be used.
- (2) I-5 North, north side of Harvard Road and Walnut Avenue, about 200' east of Glenoaks Boulevard for westbound traffic. A right arrow would be used.
- (3) I-5 North, east side Glenoaks Boulevard south of Delaware Avenue for northbound traffic. A vertical arrow would be used.
- (4) I-5 North, east side Glenoaks Boulevard south of Amherst Avenue for northbound traffic. A left arrow would be used.
- (5) I-5 North, north side Amherst Avenue east of San Fernando Road for westbound traffic. A right arrow would be used.

From San Fernando Road and Amherst Avenue, sufficient I-5 route markers exist to guide traffic to the northbound freeway.

d. Truck Route signage would direct all outbound commercial vehicles to use Olive Avenue to access both the north and south-bound I-5 freeway.

¹ Proposed street name

The advantages of Implementation Measures 2 to 7 include the redirecting of both visitor and commercial traffic off the most impacted streets and onto a less impacted preferred route. In addition, these measures are intended to reduce traffic impacts during early morning and late night hours.

The primary disadvantage of these measures is that they may not be completely effective because they are voluntary measures and not enforceable. There will be a minor inconvenience to the Castaway Restaurant in implementing some of these measures, however the Castaway management has agreed to carry out these measures.

Step II – Public Education and Awareness

This step of the Plan is intended to address the issue of speeding in the area, and would be implemented after Step I.

1. Use the City's Radar Trailers to create an awareness of and call attention to the actual speeds at which motorists are traveling through the residential study area. The new speed limit signs referred to in 8a, above, coupled with the speed trailer readouts, are intended to make motorists in the area watch their speed and slow down as they enter the residential area.

Step III – Monitoring/Plan Evaluation

In an attempt to evaluate the success of Measures 1 to 7, above, the traffic volume and speed on Harvard Road and Walnut Avenue, below Sunset Canyon Road, will be measured.

1. Take traffic counts in August of 2000 and/or May of 2001 and compare with comparable baseline data collected in August 1998 and/or May of 2000 (prior to implementation of the Plan). The success of the Plan in mitigating traffic volume on the most impacted streets will be measured against the original target of reducing the average daily traffic volume on Harvard Road and Walnut Avenue by 10 percent, and the evening peak-hour traffic (8:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.) by 20 percent.
2. Conduct radar speed surveys and use results of the speed trailer to determine the extent of compliance with posted speed limits in the area.
3. The Committee will reconvene after (1) the Plan has been implemented and in place for at least 2 months and, (2) new traffic counts have been taken to evaluate the success of the implementation measures in meeting the targeted traffic volume reduction of the Plan.

If Steps I through III of the Plan prove successful, as is expected, no further measures are needed. Should there still be problems with excessive speed or traffic volume, Step IV and Step V would be initiated.

Step IV – Reevaluate Directional Signs and/or Targeted Police Enforcement (Optional)

If traffic volumes exceed the stated goals, directional signage will be reevaluated to direct traffic away from the impacted streets.

Should the results of the speed survey show that traffic in the area is substantially violating the posted speed limits, a program of targeted police enforcement of all traffic regulations in the area will be initiated. This measure will include enforcement of excessive speeding and violations of stop controls using radar or other means necessary to gain compliance.

Step V – Monitoring/Plan Evaluation (Optional)

To evaluate the effectiveness of Step IV, traffic volumes and speeds will once again be measured on the impacted streets.

In the event that the goals of the Plan are not met, and that traffic from the hillside recreational activities continues to pose a problem for residents on local residential streets, more aggressive measures are recommended. This could include continued aggressive police enforcement and/or physical changes to the roadway. Physical changes might include:

- Reconfiguration of Sunset Canyon Drive;
- Specialized attention devices such as rumble strips or warning lights on the outbound signs near the residential neighborhood;
- Bulb-outs at select intersections at entry points to the residential area;
- Landscaped medians at selected intersections along the preferred route;
- Speed humps on streets with 5 percent grade or less; and
- Traffic circles at intersections that are not already being controlled in all directions by "Stop" signs.

Each of these strategies, while potentially effective in controlling traffic volume and/or speed has certain characteristics that are problematic for the neighborhood. For example, rumble strips can be noisy, particularly in quiet residential neighborhoods, and strobe lights can be a serious distraction to impaired drivers. Whereas bulb-outs and medians, which limit street parking, can discourage through traffic by outsiders; they generally will not discourage those drivers familiar with the area; in addition, they have little impact on mid-block traffic speeds. Speed humps can divert some unwanted traffic to nearby parallel streets, but may be considered undesirable because they can affect the response time of emergency vehicles and disturb the ambulance patient. Speed humps are not

recommended on street slopes more than 5 percent, which rules out most of the impacted streets in the study area. The potential benefits of each of these traffic-calming strategies must be carefully weighed against the drawbacks.

FISCAL IMPACT

The majority of the measures included in this Plan involve costs that can be absorbed by existing City programs and budget. These fairly minor absorbable costs include street striping, installing signs, and reprinting maps. There will be an estimated cost of approximately \$2,000 to \$3,000 for traffic counts to be taken in August 2000 to evaluate the Plan. Should optional steps IV and V be necessary, then additional costs for a second set of traffic counts would be necessary in 2001.

LIST OF EXHIBITS

- Exhibit A Hillside Recreational Facilities
- Exhibit B Study Area
- Exhibit C Traffic Counts Summary
- Exhibit D Street Name Changes
- Exhibit E Preferred Route
- Exhibit F Service Routes
- Exhibit G Sunset Canyon Striping
- Exhibit H Inbound Signage
- Exhibit J Speed Limit Signage
- Exhibit K Outbound Signage