

City of Lafayette
Circulation Commission Regular Meeting
Minutes

Lafayette Community Center
Lafayette, CA

June 20, 2005
7:00 PM

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8 1. **Call to Order:** Chair Poling called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.
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10 2. **Roll Call:**
11 Present: Chair Poling, Vice-Chair Hughes, Commissioners Hiden, Holit, Walker, and
12 Wood
13
14 Absent: None
15
16 BPAC: Ms. Cher LeCompte (Arrived 7:15 PM)
17
18 Staff: Ms. Leah Greenblat, Transportation Planner, Mr. Chuck DeLeuw,
19 Consulting Traffic Engineer, Ms. Marie Pettersen, Contract Minutes Taker
20

21 3. **Adoption of the Agenda:**

22 Chair Poling called for adoption of the agenda.

23
24
25 Commissioner Holit moved and Commissioner Walker seconded adoption of the agenda as submitted.
26 The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.
27

28 4. **Public Comments:**

29
30 There was no public comment on any item not on the agenda.
31

32 5. **New Business**

33
34 a. **Request to Address Limited Sight Distance at the Intersection of Reliez Station
35 Road at Las Trampas Road and Richelle Court**
36

37 The Commission was handed out a letter from Lori Fowler on this item.
38

39 Ms. Greenblat said that the City has received several requests from citizens to look at the site of Reliez
40 Station Road at Las Trampas Road and Richelle Court regarding sight distance issues. This intersection
41 was first looked at 15 years ago. The City has received a grant from MTC for consultant services to
42 conduct a limited scope traffic operations and safety evaluation. The report from the consultant is
43 included in the staff report. Staff's recommendation is to consider forwarding a recommendation to
44 Council to install advance warning signs with flashing beacons on Reliez Station Road to be activated
45 when vehicles and/or pedestrians are detected on the side streets. Staff feels this is the best option to
46 address the sight distance issues at this intersection.
47

48 Commissioner Hiden asked if it were possible to accompany the flashers with flashing signs that say
49 "Side street action - Prepare to stop".
50

51 Ms. Greenblat said it was her understanding that the Vehicle Code states that side street actions are to
52 yield, not to stop.
53

54 Vice Chair Hughes asked if the signal would be set back from the intersection.

1 Ms. Greenblat replied that it would be speed based on speed and estimated the locations to be 250 feet
2 on either side of the intersection.

3
4 Vice Chair Hughes asked if the flashers would flash constantly or only with side street action to Reliez
5 Station Road.

6
7 Ms. Greenblat said they would only flash when activated by side street traffic or pedestrian traffic.
8 Pedestrians on the east side could go through bollards, which would detect the pedestrians. On the west
9 side it would be more difficult because of the existing driveway so some other technology would be
10 required at that location.

11
12 Commissioner Holit asked if staff has considered using 4-way flashers with a red signal to stop all traffic
13 so that all would have equal right-of-way when there was side street traffic.

14
15 Ms. Greenblat said that option was not considered as the City was concerned about stop signals
16 activated sometimes and not all the time.

17
18 Commissioner Holit said the intersection was a dangerous place compounded by trucks picking up
19 reuseable stuff. Traffic is totally blind to see what is coming up the hill. There is vegetation along the
20 path, which curtails the view of Las Trampas and this should be trimmed.

21
22 Chair Poling opened the meeting to public comment on this item.

23
24 Jonathan Dixon, 875 Las Trampas, Lafayette, said this was an extremely dangerous 4-way intersection
25 and he has seen several near misses. Flashing lights could be helpful. He feels police radar signs scare
26 people. He suggested placing a speed bump coming one-seventh of the way down Olympic. He feels
27 anything at all is worth doing.

28
29 Jackie Zayac, 3280 Phillips Road, Lafayette, has lived there 21 years. Underground electrical wiring has
30 been placed at the intersection for a signal. She agrees with Commissioner Holit that just a yellow
31 beacon will not be enough. She would prefer stop signs. She would like to see raised pavement
32 markers to slow people down. She said there was not enough visibility and wants more than a yellow
33 beacon. There is a private road and she suggested the City take over that road.

34
35 Rae Eckholm, 3285 Phillips Road, Lafayette, has lived there 8 years. On a good day, she can use the
36 mirror but on a bad day the mirror can be fogged or there may be sun reflection. It is difficult to approach
37 the intersection at rush hour in an attempt to get out.

38
39 Lori Fowler, 837 Las Trampas, has lived there 9 years. She said the intersection gets worse every year.
40 She appreciates the City taking measures to investigate the issue. She is concerned that a light
41 activated when pedestrians/cars enter the intersection will not be enough and that people will not
42 respond to the light. She would recommend some enforcement with cameras for violations.

43
44 Greg Williams, 856 Las Trampas Road, has lived there 11 years. He spoke to the Commission 5 or 6
45 years ago on this issue and is frustrated that no action has taken place. He has to deal with this every
46 day and the situation needs to be resolved with a traffic light. The street is wired for one and urges the
47 Commission to install a traffic light because he doesn't think the other options are viable.

48
49 Avon Wilson yielded to George Wilson, 14 Richelle Court, who said they have waited for 35 years for
50 something to be done at the intersection. He encouraged the Commission to follow Commissioner
51 Holit's suggestion. He feels that would be one step with further warning signs regarding pedestrian and
52 cars attempting to cross. He would be in favor of a red light that went on and said, "Stop".

1 Avon Wilson, 14 Richelle Court, has lived there for 35 years. Reliez Station Road and Richelle Court are
2 the reasons she became a citizen activist in Lafayette. She feels a yellow blinking light will do little for
3 safety in the area. She feels the light should be red and yield when the light is flashing. It should not be
4 an option to yield to pedestrians and side traffic. Enforcement is always an issue. This is an official
5 sanctioned trail crossing. They have to deal with the reality of drivers and have been most fortunate that
6 there have been no fatalities yet.

7
8 Tom Judson, 825 Reliez Station Road, lives two doors down from the intersection of Las Trampas and
9 Reliez Station and has lived there for 29 years. There have been 6 accidents in the last 2 years and two
10 people were taken to the hospital by ambulance. If the road is slippery, cars going south to Moraga tend
11 to spin out when they get to the intersection. Something needs to be done such as improving/grooving
12 the road for wet weather conditions and anything else that will slow people down.

13
14 Scott Sommer, 832 Las Trampas, bought his house in 1980. He could speak to how many close calls he
15 has seen. He feels cars go at faster speeds than the representation in the staff report says. The speeds
16 in the report were taken at 1PM when there is not heavy traffic. The street was not designed to carry
17 14,000 vehicles per day. This is an unsafe situation. He is not opposed to flashing lights but feels they
18 need something more appropriate.

19
20 Coleman Munch, 32 Richelle Court, has lived there since 1985. Traffic over the years has increased.
21 This intersection is a problem. He feels the yellow lights are not good because they give a false sense of
22 security. He would like to preserve the residential character of the neighborhood. One option could be a
23 4-way stop and 4-way flashing. They require the best drastic measure that would also preserve the
24 nature of the neighborhood.

25
26 Jim Gibney, 31 Richelle Court, complimented the Commission for putting this on their agenda. He was
27 here in 1990 on this issue and the room was filled with people. He is furious with any kind of obstruction
28 blocking their way. It is a dangerous intersection. He agrees with his neighbors especially the Wilson's.
29 They need to put teeth in it and yellow flashers will not do it.

30
31 Brian Zemina, 778 Las Trampas Road, has lived there since 1967. This is a winding road with most of
32 the traffic coming from Moraga. He feels a yellow flashing light will not do any good as no one does 15
33 mph. He cannot get out in the morning or for a short time in the afternoon.

34
35 Sherry Quinn, 847 Las Trampas Road, feels there is some progress in talking to the Commission. She is
36 most concerned when guests come over. She feels a blinking yellow light will not be enough, as it will
37 give a false sense of security. They need more like raised bumps or stop lights.

38
39 Val Davidson, 826 Las Trampas Road, lives on the public end that gets paved by the City. He has lived
40 there since '92 and there is no school bus service to their neighborhood. She has difficulty making left
41 turns during the PM school hours. She can't see and people are racing up the street. She hopes the
42 Commission will do something about this.

43
44 Chair Poling closed the public comment period on this item.

45
46 Commissioner Wood said she uses that road every day and appreciates the problems. You can't see
47 the side street and know when it is safe to come out with a flashing yellow light.

48
49 Ms. Greenblat said the light would be activated when there is a queue on the side street and would slow
50 down Reliez Station Road. It would not give the cars on Las Trampas any additional information but
51 would alert traffic further downstream on Reliez Station Road.

52
53 Commissioner Wood said she has seen one signal in the middle of an intersection that covered the four
54 sides.

1 Ms. Greenblat said she spoke with Mr. Coe regarding the wiring of hanging signals and there is some
2 issue with the aesthetics. Because of the sight distance this location could not have hanging signals at
3 the intersection without advance warning lights and additional poles so that people coming north or south
4 bound would be advised they were approaching a signal.

5
6 Commissioner Wood said she feels a 4-way signal would be the most appropriate thing to do.

7
8 Chair Poling asked Mr. DeLeuw about the pros and cons of a traffic control signal with regards to visibility
9 problems/speed and if this could produce a less than safe condition.

10
11 Mr. DeLeuw replied that approaching traffic couldn't see from afar. Any traffic signal does not have
12 advancements and rear end collisions might still occur. They could put in advance flashers/signs. If cars
13 could see the light as they approached then it could possibly work. Some advancements at the
14 intersection might help especially downhill from Richelle Court.

15
16 In response to Chair Poling's question, Mr. DeLeuw said that they would have to do much more for a full
17 warrant analysis.

18
19 Commissioner Holit asked why they needed to do that. If flashing lights are turned on when they detect
20 pedestrians or cars, why can't they have signs at the bottom of the hill that would say, "Be prepared to
21 stop".

22
23 Mr. DeLeuw said that a flashing signal works like a signal and is pedestrian activated. People get used
24 to going through it. They had a similar signal in Berkeley and it is no longer there. He feels they need
25 yellow flashers all-ways on the side streets, as nothing at times would not be good.

26
27 Ms. Greenblat sought clarification as to why they couldn't have green lights at all times unless activated
28 by the side streets.

29
30 Commissioner Wood said they needed green, yellow and red lights.

31
32 Ms. Greenblat asked if it would be an advantage for the signal them to be all red and then nothing.

33
34 Commissioner Hiden said she sympathizes with the others' concepts. A full signal was approved by
35 Council years ago, but was persuaded not to install it. If the neighborhood didn't mind the appearance,
36 she would like a traffic signal.

37
38 Commissioner Walker suggested two lights with a timed signal to prepare people to stop as they
39 approach the intersection at Richelle and Reliez Station. She is in favor of a red light rather than a
40 yellow. She appreciates the aesthetics but would go for something more serious like flashing red lights
41 when activated by the side streets.

42
43 Vice Chair Hughes said that based on what the community has said, he would support a yellow flashing
44 and red stop and would have it stop people at the appropriate time. He doesn't think the City would like
45 4 poles for stoplights.

46
47 Ms. LeCompte said she was in favor of something with a solid red. The Lafayette Moraga Trail links at
48 Olympic and people do not look for pedestrians in the trail.

49
50 Chair Poling said it seemed there was some interest in a full stop/signal that indicated at the intersection
51 that would either turn red or yellow when triggered. She is concerned people won't do anything with a
52 yellow flasher. If the Commission recommends the yellow flasher then she would include advance
53 warning. If a full stop is recommended then they should do a full warrant analysis.

1 Commissioner Hiden said she favored an all-way flashing red at the main arterial stop when activated by
2 the side street.

3
4 Commissioner Holit said he favored a red flashing light on all four sides for a 4-way stop when activated.

5
6 Chair Poling said she would support staff's recommendation with warning flashers and appropriate signs.

7
8 Commissioner Walker said a full traffic analysis would have to come back for another meeting and they
9 need to move on something now.

10
11 Commissioner Holit said he could not agree to just yellow lights, as they need a more reliable way to stop
12 traffic.

13
14 Commissioner Wood said it would require full stops at the intersection sooner rather than later. There
15 used to be green posts which would be more in character with the neighborhood than silver poles and
16 thinks people might like that.

17
18 Commissioner Walker said they needed a 4-way stop sign now and would have to wait to do a traffic
19 analysis to prepare the rest of the community on that effort.

20
21 Mr. DeLeuw said they would have to do the study.

22
23 The Commission agreed by consensus that the main thoroughfare should come to a stop.

24
25 Commissioner Hiden moved and Commissioner Walker seconded to direct staff to come back with
26 alternatives that would result in stoppage of traffic on the main thoroughfare to allow vehicle and
27 pedestrian traffic from the side street to proceed.

28
29 Commissioner Hiden moved and Vice Chair Hughes seconded to direct staff to further study the
30 intersection and come back to the Commission with other creative ideas/alternatives to make the main
31 street stop for side street traffic and table the staff recommendation. The motion was approved 5-1 with
32 Chair Poling against.

33
34 Vice Chair Hughes said that whatever alternatives staff comes back with they should be stopping traffic
35 on Reliez Station and allow for side street pedestrian and vehicle traffic to cross.

36
37 Ms. Greenblat said she did not recommend closing off options because they did not know what the
38 results would be from further study of the issue. The City does not re-notice so she recommended
39 neighbors contact her to keep them advised when staff will update the Commission. This would probably
40 not happen until the fall.

41
42 Mr. DeLeuw suggested 3-25 mph signs (2-downhill and 1-uphill) tripped by advisory signs. They should
43 remove and replace the arrow signs, which emphasize the curve. He recommends some pruning, which
44 would improve sight distance somewhat. The mirrors themselves are frosted and could possibly be
45 replaced and then might work better.

46
47 Commissioner Hiden moved and Commissioner Wood seconded to develop interim changes as
48 described by Mr. DeLeuw.

49
50 Commissioner Holit asked if the City could trim the vegetation from Richelle Court looking down to Las
51 Trampas.

52
53 Ms. Greenblat said the City would do some pruning. She could submit a work order for that as well as
54 the suggestions from Mr. DeLeuw.

1 Mr. DeLeuw also recommended putting out signs for daylight sections where cars have to turn on their
2 lights.

3
4 George Wilson, 13 Richelle Court, spoke from the audience that the street needed to be completely
5 repaved and not just a layer of slurry seal.

6
7 **6. Consent Calendar**

8
9 a. **Minutes of May 16, 2005**

10
11 b. **Minutes of June 6, 2005**

12
13 Commissioner Walker moved and Vice Chair Hughes seconded approval of the Consent Calendar as
14 submitted. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

15
16 **7. Staff Reports**

17
18 a. **Update on Recent Council Actions**

19
20 Ms. Greenblat reported that the last two Council meetings dealt with budget items and no transportation
21 related items. The police department is hiring another sergeant to supervise officers for the late shift.

22
23 Commissioner Wood stated that she would not be at the July 5th meeting.

24
25 Ms. Greenblat reported that there was support for another vote on the Moraga Study and staff will come
26 back to the Commission in July to formalize their traffic calming program.

27
28 **8. Adjournment**

29
30 Commissioner Wood moved and Vice Chair Hughes seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM to the
31 next Circulation Commission meeting on July 5, 2005. The motion was approved by unanimous voice
32 vote.

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34
35 ATTEST:

36 

37 Marie Pettersen
38 Contract Minutes Taker
39
40

APPROVED:



Ellen Poling
Chair