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Planning & Transportation Commission Staff Report

From: Planning and Development Services Director
Lead Department: Office of Transportation

Meeting Date: April 9, 2025
Report #: 2503-4344

TITLE

Review of the Final Concept Design for the Permanent Installation of the Crescent Park Traffic Calming Project.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) review the final concept design for the permanent installation of the Crescent Park Traffic Calming Project, pursuant to City Council direction.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018, residents of the Crescent Park neighborhood raised concerns about cut-through traffic, congestion, and speeding through the neighborhood. In response, the Office of Transportation initiated the Crescent Park Traffic Calming Project to evaluate and address these issues. The report for the pilot project with temporary traffic calming measures was reviewed by the PTC on September 9, 2020,¹ and approved by the City Council on November 9, 2020,² and the temporary measures were implemented in 2021 for a one-year trial period.

Data collected before and after the pilot project demonstrated improvements in reducing cut-through traffic and vehicle speeds. Community feedback was gathered through a neighborhood survey, with the majority of residents supporting the permanent installation. The project proceeded through various stages, incorporating input from public hearings, field meetings, and neighborhood outreach.

Staff worked with the City's on-call consultant, Fehr & Peers, to refine the concept design in response to the community input. Following community hearings in 2023, the PTC reviewed the project and the City Council approved the transition to permanent installations, directing staff

¹ Planning & Transportation Commission, September 9, 2020; Item 2, Action Item, SR# 11517

<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=22042&repo=r-704298fc>

² City Council, November 9, 2020; Item 5, Consent Item, SR# 11603

<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=896&repo=r-704298fc>

to seek further feedback on the traffic calming elements. Community engagement continued into 2024, culminating in a final review of the conceptual designs.

Staff now presents the final conceptual designs, which integrates neighborhood feedback while maintaining the project's initial goals: reducing cut-through traffic, congestion, and speeding.

BACKGROUND

In January 2018, residents of the Crescent Park neighborhood raised traffic concerns with the Office of Transportation. They cited persistent issues with cut-through traffic, peak-hour congestion, and off-peak hour speeding. In response, the Office of Transportation initiated the Crescent Park Traffic Calming Project to study the area and evaluate potential traffic-calming measures. Staff retained Fehr & Peers to assist with the project study and evaluation.

Following this request, staff collected comprehensive traffic speed and volume data in the neighborhood. Based on resident feedback obtained through neighborhood outreach and meetings, the consultant developed conceptual layouts and proposed the following traffic-calming measures:

1. Curb extension improvements and roadway realignment with three-way stop signs at Southwood Avenue and East Crescent Drive.
2. An oval-shaped traffic circle at the intersection of Hamilton Avenue, Center Drive, and Southwood Drive.
3. A 50-foot protected bikeway on University Avenue eastbound at West Crescent Avenue.

On September 9, 2020, the PTC recommended implementing the pilot traffic-calming project. The City Council approved the design and installation of temporary improvements on November 9, 2020, directing staff to return after one year to evaluate the pilot and determine whether to make the improvements permanent or consider modifications.

The pilot project was implemented in Summer 2021. In October 2022, staff collected post-pilot data to assess the effectiveness of the temporary measures. The analysis showed significant improvements in cut-through traffic and vehicle speeds, successfully achieving the project's goals:

- Traffic volume reduced by an average of 35%
- Cut-through traffic reduced by an average of 25%

- Vehicle speeds reduced by an average of 11%

Following this analysis, staff conducted a neighborhood survey to gather community feedback on the pilot program. Over 70% of residents supported the permanent installation of the traffic-calming measures, as outlined in the June 14, 2023 PTC staff report.³

Staff worked with the City's consultant to develop the permanent concept designs. The project was presented to the PTC on June 14, 2023, where the PTC recommended moving forward with permanent installations while continuing to seek community feedback on the proposed traffic calming elements, including the oval-shaped traffic circle and curb extension/roadway realignment options. The City Council approved this recommendation on November 6, 2023.^[OBJ]

Following PTC guidance and City Council approval of the initial concept designs, staff updated the conceptual designs in October 2023 in order to advance the permanent design process.

DISCUSSION

On October 29, 2024, staff held a community meeting at City Hall for all residents in the Crescent Park neighborhood to review and provide feedback on the revised concept design based on the comments received to date. The meeting was well attended with approximately 11 residents in attendance. The comments received and staff responses to each of the traffic calming elements are discussed in more detail in the sections below.

A. Southwood Drive, Center Drive, and Hamilton Avenue: Five-Legged Intersection (Traffic Circle/Oval)

The temporary traffic circle/oval at the intersection of Southwood Drive, Center Drive, and Hamilton Avenue has effectively reduced cut-through traffic and speeding. Some of the comments received at the October 2024 meeting were regarding the current aesthetics and size of the traffic circle, as well as the dividers placed on Hamilton Avenue. In response, staff has made further refinements in the updated conceptual design to better align with community preferences, while maintaining engineering integrity.

During the October 2024 community meeting, additional crosswalks were requested at all five legs of the intersection. Residents also reported observing drivers not complying with

³ Planning & Transportation Commission, June 14, 2023; Item 3, Action Item, SR# 2301-1381
<https://portal.lasercfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=66548&repo=r-704298fc>

the roundabout circulation regulations. They also requested improvements to sightlines at Hamilton Avenue and Center Drive.

Revisions made to traffic circle concept design in response to community feedback:

In response to the comments received from the community, City staff has refined the design to further enhance safety, visibility, and traffic flow. The outline of the traffic circle has been extended northward toward Center Drive and Southwood Drive, to improve circulation and discourage improper turning movements. Raised median islands have been added before each of the crosswalks at each of the intersection approaches, to guide drivers in the direction of the traffic flow of the circle and all of the curbs ramps in the intersection have been brought to ADA-compliant curb ramps. The stop sign location on Center Drive has also been slightly adjusted in accordance with Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards to maximize visibility. Improved signage and pavement markings within the traffic circle area will further clarify navigation, reinforce proper circulation and discourage improper left turns.

The traffic circle/oval will also be landscaped with various plant species specifically chosen by City's Landscape Architect in cooperation with the landscape consultants to ensure that the plants meet the aesthetics of the neighborhood and are drought tolerant once established

All of these refinements ensure the intersection remains both functional and safe while incorporating community input. The revised concept design is included in Attachment A of this report.

B. Southwood Drive and East Crescent Drive: Three-Legged Intersection Roadway Realignment

The temporary traffic calming measure at this location consisted of the installation of temporary curb extensions in the northwest corner of Southwood Drive and East Crescent Drive to reduce the size and realign the intersection. The curb extension reconfigures East Crescent drive to make it perpendicular to Southwood Drive, therefore realigning the three-legged intersection into a T-shaped intersection with the addition of a three-way stop signs at Southwood Avenue and East Crescent Drive. This roadway realignment has shown to

effectively reduce cut-through traffic and unsafe speeds of vehicles making right and left turns to/ from East Crescent Drive.

Residents living at this corner have expressed concerns about the aesthetics and size of the bulb-out, as well as its impact on parking in front of an existing grandfathered non-standard curb ramp. On February 7, 2024, City staff conducted a field meeting with residents fronting improvements at the corner of East Crescent Drive and Southwood Drive to gather specific feedback on the proposed curb realignment. The residents raised concerns regarding the temporary bulb-out's aesthetics, the proposed curb footprint, and the impact on parking—particularly the loss of parking near the existing curb ramp, which affects their ride-share pick-up and drop-off accessibility. The residents also expressed their concerns that the plants species be chosen to ensure a visually cohesive streetscape to match the aesthetics of the neighborhood.

Following the completion of 40% conceptual design plans, staff held another neighborhood-wide community meeting at City Hall on October 29, 2024, to gather additional feedback from the community. Residents at 590 East Crescent reiterated their concerns regarding parking, aesthetics, and accessibility.

Recent letters sent to PTC, dated January 24, 2025, and January 27, 2025 (Attachment B), the residents at 590 East Crescent Drive reiterated their concerns about the bulb-out's visual impact, their loss of parking and obstruction of property access. They referenced the June 14, 2023, PTC meeting, where several commissioners expressed reservations about the bulb-out's size and aesthetics. The residents contended that the latest revision had not adequately addressed their concerns, and they cited California's new "Daylighting" law (Assembly Bill (AB 413), which prohibits parking within 15 feet of a bulb-out and 20 feet of an intersection, further restricting available parking near their home. The residents asserted that the Office of Transportation staff did not fully account for this regulation and incorrectly assumed that pick-up and drop-off access would remain viable. They also requested the immediate removal of the temporary bulb-out and new stop sign. They formally requested that PTC require a redesign to restore parking and improve accessibility.

In review of the requirements of AB 413, staff determined that if the proposed roadway realignment option were removed from the project, the existing curb ramp in question, which currently acts as a pedestrian crossing, would result in an even stricter parking restrictions, compared to the proposed intersection realignment.

In addition, the California Vehicle Code, Section 22500 restricts parking within an intersection unless permitted by local ordinance. Parking on a curve, including along the curve in front of this residence, could be considered obstructing traffic flow and is therefore not allowed. It also states that a person cannot stop, park, or leave a vehicle standing in various locations, including where it would obstruct traffic flow, which could include parking on a curve considered part of the intersection. Therefore, staff believes that this proposed project will not impede any existing parking restrictions for the residents at this corner

Revisions made to intersection realignment concept design in response to community feedback:

In response to community feedback, City staff has refined the design at this intersection to enhance safety, visibility, and traffic flow while maintaining engineering standards. The final concept design has been revised to reduce the width/surface area of the curb extension footprint by approximately five feet to provide wider lanes on East Crescent Drive, while ensuring improvements to pedestrian safety, cut-through traffic, and speeding concerns. In addition, the temporary curbing materials will be replaced with aesthetically appealing concrete, and the landscaping plan has been updated to include drought-tolerant plants that will remain under 3.5 feet in height to comply with visibility requirements. The plant species were chosen by City's Landscape Architect in cooperation with the landscape consultants. The plants meet the aesthetics of the neighborhood and are drought tolerant once established.

In cooperation with the resident's request to keep the non-standard curb ramp located in front of their house, the current revised concept design converts the existing ramp into a concrete path, where it will no longer be considered a ramp/pedestrian crossing, and therefore AB 413 law will no longer apply at this location. Residents will now be able to have access, for drop offs and pickups and will be able to park behind the concrete path, away from the new crosswalk, and will be in compliance with AB 413 regulation as needed. Staff also observed that the existing driveway at the property also provides access to the residence.

Additionally, given California's "Daylighting" law (AB 413), which prohibits parking within 15 feet of a bulb-out's approach, the design has been modified by realigning the crosswalk to provide more distance, in order to potentially allow parking or stopping behind the concrete path, which may satisfy the resident's request.

The updated concept design for this intersection is included in Attachment A of this report.

Conclusion

The modifications incorporated into the final concept design reflects a collaborative effort between the City and the Crescent Park community, to balance traffic calming objectives with resident concerns. Key issues regarding parking, aesthetics, landscaping, pedestrian accessibility, and overall traffic flow have been addressed. By refining the bulb-out design to minimize parking impacts while preserving safety benefits and improving the oval roundabout shape and size for enhanced circulation and pedestrian access, the final plans represent a well-balanced response to community feedback.

NEXT STEPS

Following PTC review and recommendation, the Office of Transportation staff will prepare the final construction drawings and initiate the construction phase for permanent installation, including Council review and approval of the construction contract.

RESOURCE IMPACT

The project will be funded through the existing Transportation and Parking Improvement Capital Improvement Project (PL-12000), which supports neighborhood traffic calming projects.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed modifications involve minor upgrades to an existing residential street right-of-way and will not introduce any new environmental impacts. This project qualifies as a minor alteration to the existing street system and is therefore categorically exempt under Class 1 Exemption, Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION, OUTREACH, AND COMMENTS

All households within the project area were notified by mail regarding the PTC meeting and the availability of this staff report.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Final Conceptual Design Plans

Attachment B: Letters sent to PTC

AUTHOR/TITLE:

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