
INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AGENDA

A Committee of the Chico City Council: Councilmembers Holcombe, Walker, and Nickell, Chair

Meeting of February 9, 2010 – 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Council Chamber Building, 421 Main Street, Conference Room 1

REGULAR AGENDA

- A. **Chico Avenues Neighborhood Association Corner Bulbing Projects:** City staff has monitored both the West First Avenue/Magnolia Avenue and East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue corner bulbing installations for the past two months. As a result of that monitoring effort combined with significant citizen comments, the City will complete the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue data collection process by the end of February, at which time temporary corner bulbing at West First Avenue/Magnolia Avenue and East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue intersections will be removed. Following this removal, permanent corner bulbing will be installed at the West First Avenue/Arcadian Avenue intersection. (*Report - Fritz McKinley, Building & Development Services Director*)
- Recommendation:** The Building & Development Service Director recommends that City staff provide a report detailing the results of the corner bulbing at the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue intersection to the Internal Affairs Committee at a future meeting and continue to work with the Avenues Circulation Action Group to identify projects aimed towards implementation of The Avenues Neighborhood Improvement Plan.
- B. **Business from the Floor.** Members of the public may address the Committee at this time on any matter not already listed on the agenda, with comments being limited to three minutes. The Committee cannot take any action at this meeting on requests made under this section of the agenda.
- C. **Adjournment and Next Meeting.** The Committee will adjourn no later than 10:00 a.m. to its next regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 9, 2010, at 8:00 a.m. in Conference Room No. 1.

Distribution available in the office of the City Clerk

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Internal Affairs Agenda Report

Meeting Date: February 9, 2010

TO: Internal Affairs Committee

FROM: Fritz McKinley (879-6901)
Building & Development Service Director

RE: CHICO AVENUES NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION CORNER BULBING PROJECTS

REPORT IN BRIEF:

City staff has monitored both the West First Avenue/Magnolia Avenue and East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue corner bulbing installations for the past two months. As a result of that monitoring effort combined with significant citizen comments the City will complete the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue data collection process by the end of February at which time temporary corner bulbing at West First Avenue/Magnolia Avenue and East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue intersections will be removed. Following this removal, permanent corner bulbing will be installed at the West First Avenue/Arcadian Avenue intersection. In addition, the Building & Development Service Director recommends the following action:

Recommendation:

That City staff provide a report detailing the results of the corner bulbing at the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue intersection to the Internal Affairs Committee at a future meeting and continue to work with the Avenues Circulation Action Group to identify projects aimed towards implementation of The Avenues Neighborhood Improvement Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Recommendations are funded from the capital project for the Avenues Neighborhood Improvements (JL 17301) which has a current balance of \$988,717.00 for the 2009/10 fiscal year. Estimated costs for removal of the temporary corner bulbing at both the West First Avenue/Magnolia Avenue and East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue intersection total \$8,000.00 and the installation of permanent bulbing at the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue intersection is estimated at up to \$80,000.00.

BACKGROUND:

2001 Internal Affairs Committee Action

In 2000 and 2001, the Internal Affairs Committee and City Council conducted a series of public hearings to consider the installation of a number of traffic calming/safety measures along East First Avenue between Esplanade and Mangrove Avenue, including pedestrian signals, traffic signals, corner bulbing, and pedestrian refuges. Specifically, the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue intersection was the primary focus of these discussions. While the Internal Affairs Committee/City Council decided against the installation of either a pedestrian signal or a fully traffic-actuated traffic signal at the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue intersection, they did direct staff to install a pedestrian refuge with a left-turn prohibition on East First Avenue at Laburnum Avenue. These decisions were ultimately based on balancing a number of varying benefits and impacts to the community as well as the surrounding local residential neighborhood streets.

Neighborhood Planning

With a goal of providing opportunities for a greater number of citizens to participate in future planning of their neighborhoods, the City of Chico in partnership with neighborhood associations and community members undertook formalized planning efforts to create "area specific" neighborhood plans. The Avenues Neighborhood Improvement Plan was formally adopted by the City Council on 4/15/08. An Avenues Circulation Action Group was formed to further discuss, refine, and prioritize suggested plan traffic calming measures for City consideration and action.

2/10/09 Internal Affairs Committee Meeting

Acting upon the Avenues Circulation Action Groups request, the Internal Affairs Committee recommended approval of:

1. Install temporary corner bulbing at West First Avenue/Magnolia Avenue.
2. Install temporary corner bulbing at the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue intersection and adopt a supporting traffic regulation establishing "Prohibiting Left Turns on Weekdays from 6 AM to 6 PM."
3. That City staff monitor the installations for six months and provide a report detailing the results to the Internal Affairs Committee.

This type of Internal Affairs Committee action does not require Council action.

Corner Bulbing Project

Project design was initiated upon the Internal Affairs Committee recommendations culminating in a bid opening date of August 10, 2009. The contractor substantially completed the project work over a five day period ending on December 10, 2009.

DISCUSSION:

Citizen Comments

Since the installation of corner bulbing at the two locations, the City has received an outpouring of citizen comments related to the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue location, while the West First Avenue/Magnolia Avenue location has drawn little, if any, comment.

Neighborhood Meeting

At the request of area residents in the vicinity of the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue intersection, the City facilitated a neighborhood meeting (approximate 80 attendees) on January 14, 2010 at the First Christian Church located at 295 East Washington Avenue, with the intention of providing a brief explanation of the projects history, but mainly to listen to citizen comments and answer questions. As expected, the discussions focused on the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue location. Primary topics of discussion included:

The Avenues Neighborhood Improvement Plan

City staff provided an overview of the plans evolution and final adoption by the City Council.

Circulation Action Group Participation/Actions

City staff provided an overview as to how this action group was formed and the process the group used to recommend the project to the City for implementation.

Area Wide Notification

Citizens expressed concerns with the effectiveness of the City's noticing procedures for both inclusion/participation in the CANA action groups as well as the process the bulbing project followed to reach the point of implementation.

Project Impacts

Affected neighbors described in detail a number of negative impacts resulting from the corner bulbing at the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue intersection.

B Line Transit Route

The issue of diverted B Line Transit buses was by far the single most negative impact to the neighborhood. Affected neighborhood described in detail the impacts related to the sheer size of the buses, number of diverted trips, noise, and speed.

Alternate Solutions

Citizens suggested a number of alternate solutions that they deemed more appropriate for the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue location. Many of these alternate solutions were discussed both in the earlier 2000/2001 City considerations as well as the current 2009 actions by the Internal Affairs Committee. Issues

concerning consideration of alternate solutions can best be addressed at the Circulation Action Group level where discussions can fully explore the delicate balance of a number of varying benefits and impacts to the community as well as the surrounding local residential neighborhood streets associated with implementation of any specific project.

In summation, the City clearly heard and understands the negative impacts resulting from the corner bulbing at the East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue intersection.

ANALYSIS:

Neighborhood Intent/Goal

The installation of temporary corner bulbing at the intersections of West First Avenue/Magnolia Avenue and East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue were intended to:

1. Continue steps towards implementing the goals of The Avenues Neighborhood Improvement Plan.
2. Reduce the crossing distance/width which would in turn decrease pedestrian and bicyclist exposure to traffic and slow through traffic by creating a visual narrowing or restriction.
3. Allow City staff to observe and monitor motorists behavior resulting from the temporary installations. These locations present a wonderful example as to how traffic calming measures, in this case bulbouts, work where arterials interface with local residential streets.

First Avenue Corridor

The City of Chico General Plan designates the First Avenue corridor between Warner Street and SR 99 as a "Minor Arterial - 2 lanes" and a "Truck Route." It should be noted the General Plan further states "... the primary function of arterials is to move through traffic." Traffic characteristics of the east and west ends of the corridor differ greatly with respect to the nature and volumes. Given these similarities and differences, it is important to describe and evaluate the results of the West First/Magnolia and East First/Oleander corner bulbing separately.

West First/Magnolia Intersection

The West First Avenue/Magnolia Avenue location was chosen for a trial primarily because weekday daily traffic volumes decrease from approximately 11,000 vehicles per day at the Esplanade to approximately 9,000 vehicles per day at Warner Street. This location would then represent a "worst-case" scenario with respect to traffic capacity and/or operations and ultimately be a good indicator of the success of a corner bulbing project on the west side of the Esplanade.

Expected Results

As expected any changes in traffic capacity and/or operations due to the installation of corner bulbing were less than significant, resulting in no negative impact to the City's circulation system.

Citizen Comments

As expected, the West First Avenue/Magnolia Avenue location drew little if any comments. It should be noted that the lack of comments does not negate any of the positive benefits associated with corner bulbing in improving pedestrian safety and lowering traffic speeds.

Removal

Although this location was chosen for trial as a "worst-case" scenario, the City has not received negative comments and/or unforeseen consequences from the installation. As such, the positive results from the trial location may be transferred to a more strategic first permanent location along the West First Avenue corridor.

West First/Arcadian Intersection

As has been noted many times by the CANA neighborhood, college housing seems to be the primary land use in the areas surrounding the West First Avenue corridor between the Esplanade and Warner Street. While West First Avenue and West Sacramento Avenue provide good circulation to the north sides of CSUC/Chico High School, onstreet parking opportunities are limited due to the number of competing interests (commuting high school students, commuting college students, and higher residential densities).

Bicycle/Pedestrian Usage

Limited on-street parking coupled with the desire of area residents for southerly destinations leads to numerous crossings of West First Avenue by both bicycles and pedestrians.

Bicycle Route

While the segment of West First Avenue between Warner Street and the Esplanade has no specific bicycle designation, Arcadian Avenue which crosses this section of West First Avenue is designated as a "Bike Route (Class III).

The Arcadian Avenue location not only provides a route that would be adjacent to Citrus Elementary, but also enhances its designation as a designated "Bike Route (Class III)." Given that the distance between the Esplanade and Warner Street is approximately 2,400 lineal feet, the Arcadian Avenue location would provide a "mid-point" traffic calming measure as well as a good centrally located bicycle/pedestrian crossing that would serve to benefit the entire area.

Modifications to the East First/Oleander Corner Bulbing

There have been some discussions related to either modifications to or partial removal of the temporary corner bulbing. Staff reviewed some of the suggested changes and has determined the proposals are not supportable from a traffic engineering perspective. As recommended, City staff will continue to work with the Circulation Action Group to further identify and evaluate projects aimed towards implementation of The Avenues Neighborhood Improvement Plan.

East First/Oleander Intersection

In considering corner bulbing, the Internal Affairs Committee carefully weighed a number of competing benefits and impacts which lead to the temporary installation on a trial basis.

Expected Results

As expected, corner bulbing at this location has had significant impacts in a number of areas including intersection capacity and operational issues, impacts to the City's circulation system, rerouting of the B-Line Bus Route 4, diversion of traffic from an arterial roadway onto the parallel local residential street network.

Citizen Comments

The City has received significant citizens comment regarding both the direct and indirect impacts associated with the diversion of traffic from an arterial roadway onto the parallel local residential street network.

Data Collection

Prior to installation of the corner bulbing, City staff was able to collect traffic count data on a number of local residential streets south of East First Avenue. City staff once again will collect traffic count data during the first part of February to use as the basis for a comparative analysis to be presented to the Internal Affairs Committee at a future meeting.

Safety

As has been previously noted, the issue of safety, whether "real" or "perceived," has been the major topic of discussion in the 2000/01 and 2008/09 Neighborhood Plan, Circulation Action Group, and Internal Affairs Committee consideration and actions.

While the number of reported versus unreported accidents at the East First/Oleander intersection has always been a neighborhood concern, the true measure of safety with respect to a roadway segment or intersection is the accident rate. The accident rate utilizes both the number of accidents as well as the number of vehicles traveling through a specific location, which in this case shows existing weekday and weekend traffic volumes to be approximately 4.5 million (4,500,000) vehicles through the intersection a year. Therefore it stands to reason that larger daily traffic volumes equate to a higher number of accidents without a change in the accident rate, which the City has noted is not substantially different than in other locations in Chico. To date, the temporary installation has not resulted in collisions of any type.

In summary, the accident rate at the East First/Oleander intersection is not substantially different than in other locations in Chico and it must also be remembered that all accidents are not caused by unsafe conditions; a fair number of accidents are caused simply by unsafe drivers.

Diversion of Traffic

As expected, the installation of corner bulbing diverted traffic onto adjacent residential streets south of East First Avenue. This result is not consistent with the goals of the City's Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan in that any traffic calming measures on collector/arterial roadways are intended to slow traffic speeds and not divert traffic onto adjacent residential streets.

These negative impacts were clear to all those in attendance at the January 14, 2010 neighborhood meeting.

SUMMARY:

The trial period has resulted in significant citizen comments which in turn has given staff clear direction as to concluding the initial steps aimed at implementing The Avenues Neighborhood Improvement Plan along the First Avenue corridor. Additionally, the trial period has given rise to a greater number of area neighbors expressing an interest to participate as members of the Circulation Action Group.

West First/Magnolia Intersection

The positive results from the West First/Magnolia intersection trial may be transferred to a more strategic first location for corner bulbing along the West First Street corridor.

West First/Arcadian Intersection

The Arcadian Avenue location would provide a "mid-point" traffic calming measure as well as a good centrally located bicycle/pedestrian crossing that would serve to benefit the entire area.

Modifications to First/Arcadian Intersection

Suggested changes and/or proposals are not supportable from a traffic engineering perspective.

East First/Oleander Intersection

Corner bulbing at this location has had significant impacts on traffic operations as well as the surrounding local residential street network. After having carefully considered both the benefits and impacts during the trial period, it is clear that the negative impacts associated with the corner bulbing clearly exceed the benefits.

Future CANA Projects

City staff will continue to work with the Circulation Action Group of the Chico Avenues Neighborhood Association (CANA) to identify projects aimed towards implementation of The Avenues Neighborhood Improvement Plan.

Report Detailing Results From The Corner Bulbing Trial

City staff will complete the data gathering process for East First Avenue/Oleander Avenue and provide a report detailing the results along with staff observations to the Internal Affairs Committee at a future meeting.

PUBLIC CONTACT:

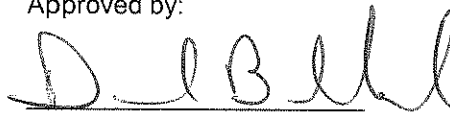
January 14, 2010 Neighborhood meeting.

Reviewed by:



Fritz McKinley
Bldg. & Development Services Director

Approved by:



David Burkland
City Manager