

TO: James L. App, City Manager

FROM: Doug Monn, Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: Stop Control, 36th Street at Oak Street

DATE: November 16, 2010

NEEDS: For the City Council to consider placing stop sign control on 36th Street at Oak Street consistent with the recommendations of a traffic engineer and the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

- FACTS:**
1. On September 10, the City received a letter from Ms. Jennifer Abascal requesting stop signs on 36th Street at Oak Street.
 2. The intersection is proximate to, and serves students that attend, both Georgia Brown Elementary School and the newly established First Five Learning Resource Center.
 3. The California MUTCD indicates a “need to control vehicle-pedestrian conflicts near locations that generate high pedestrian volumes”.
 4. The one-way driveway exit from Georgia Brown School is located in close proximity to the intersection. Drivers on southbound Oak Street may not expect or see drivers entering Oak Street from this driveway. Stop signs on 36th Street will decrease the potential of conflicts at the driveway.
 5. New stop signs must be placed in accordance with criteria established in the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
 6. The Paso Robles School District supports the installation of stop signs on 36th Street.
 7. The City has received an evaluation of the intersection from W-Trans of Santa Rosa. W-Trans states there are compelling reasons to provide stop signs on 36th Street at Oak Street.

Analysis &

CONCLUSION: The City receives many requests for stop signs. The most common concern is neighborhood speeding. Stop signs are used to control right-of-way conflicts, not speed. Unwarranted stop signs, those not meeting criteria established in the California MUTCD, typically result in disobedience resulting in higher collision rates and a decline in overall safety. Council consideration of stop signs should be based on an analysis prepared by a Traffic Engineer of applicable MUTCD criteria (see attached description).

Pedestrian activity in/out of Georgia Brown Elementary School is very high in the intersection of 36th and Oak Streets. The development of the First Five pre-school/learning resource center will further increase pedestrian activity. MUTCD criteria include consideration of the presence of schools and high pedestrian activity. An evaluation of the intersection by W-Trans of Santa Rosa concludes that there are compelling reasons to establish all way stop controls at 36th and Oak Streets.

Cross walk improvements are needed for ADA compliance. These improvements are currently being designed with funding provided by CDBG. The construction costs are proposed to be included in the 2011 CDBG program.

POLICY

REFERENCE: California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices; Municipal Code Section 12.16.010

FISCAL

IMPACT: \$1,000 from General Fund reserves.

OPTIONS: a. Authorize the Director of Public Works to place stop signs on 36th Street at Oak Street

b. Amend, modify or reject the above option.

Prepared by: John Falkenstien, City Engineer

Attachments: Letter from Jennifer Abascal
Letter from Paso Robles School District
Stop Evaluation from W-Trans

RECEIVED

SEP 10 2010

Engineering Division

Jennifer Abascal
5050 Mustard Creek Rd.
Paso Robles, CA 93446

September 8, 2010

Streets & Utilities Committee at
1000 Spring Street,
Paso Robles, CA 93446.

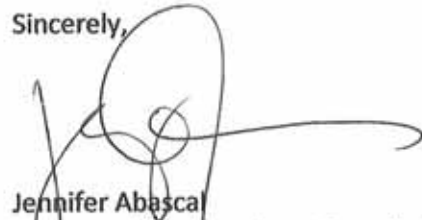
To Whom It May Concern:

Two corners adjacent to Georgia Brown Elementary need additional STOP SIGNS. At the intersection of Oak St. and 36th St. there is a stop sign on Oak but not on 36th. The cross walk alone is not enough to protect the children when the cars are speeding by with no stop sign in sight. For the safety of the students crossing 36th street, a 4-way stop is necessary.

The second area of concern is the intersection of Vine St. and 36th. Not only is there no stop sign at the intersection, there isn't even a cross walk. There is nothing protecting pedestrians. On more than one occasion I have seen cars speeding around the corner unaware of whether students or parents are crossing. On one occasion I actually witnessed a child's leg being brushed by a speeding car driving around the blind corner.

This area needs to be made safer for the pedestrians walking to their homes and parked cars.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jennifer Abascal', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jennifer Abascal
Concerned Parent of two Georgia Brown students



PASO ROBLES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

800 Niblick Road, P.O. Box 7010 • Paso Robles, CA 93447
Tel (805) 769-1000 • Fax (805) 237-3339 • www.pasoschools.org

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OCT 05 2010

City of Paso Robles
Public Works Dept.

October 1, 2010

Mr. Doug Monn
Director of Public Works
City of Paso Robles
1000 Spring Street
Paso Robles, CA 93446

RE: 36th and Oak Streets

Dear Mr. Monn,

We have received the letter from Ms. Abascal regarding, in part, the addition of stop signs at the intersection of 36th and Oak streets. Our staff has reviewed the letter and, after consideration of the situation, wholeheartedly supports the addition of stop signs at this intersection as outlined by Mr. John Falkenstien, City Engineer, in his response letter dated September 28, 2010.

We believe that these additional traffic control measures are vital to aid in the safe passage of students to and from school, especially in light of the opening of the new Paso Robles First 5 Early Education Center at this same intersection.

Sincerely,

Kathleen McNamara, Ed.D.
Superintendent



Whitlock & Weinberger
Transportation, Inc.

490 Mendocino Avenue
Suite 201
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

voice 707.542.9500
fax 707.542.9590
web www.w-trans.com

November 3, 2010

Mr. John Falkenstien, P.E.
City of Paso Robles
1000 Spring Street
Paso Robles, CA 93446

Evaluation of All-Way Stop Controls Warrants for 36th Street/Oak Street

Dear Mr. Falkenstien;

As requested, Whitlock & Weinberger Transportation, Inc. (W-Trans) has completed a focused review of the intersection of 36th Street/Oak Street in the City of Paso Robles. The purpose of our review was to consider the need for and appropriateness of installing all-way stop controls at the intersection. The installation of all-way stops must be considered carefully; jurisdictions often choose to install the devices as a speed control measure, which sometimes results in the opposite effect of higher midblock speeds and reduced safety as an unintended consequence. For this reason, it is important to establish a justifiable benefit to safety or operation prior to selecting all-way stops as a form of intersection control.

Setting

The intersection is located in a northern Paso Robles residential neighborhood. Stop controls currently exist only on the two Oak Street approaches. Georgia Brown Elementary School is on the southwest corner of the intersection, a new public preschool is located on the northeast corner, and an affordable apartment complex is on the northwest corner. The neighborhood experiences a substantial amount of pedestrian and bicyclist activity, which may be at least partially attributable to lower auto ownership rates associated with lower-income housing. The intersection is located one block west of Spring Street, the primary north-south arterial serving downtown and the west side of Paso Robles. The surrounding streets create a "grid" system that provides numerous travel routes and helps to disperse rather than concentrate traffic. Other than traffic associated with the two schools, the majority of drivers passing through the intersection are likely residents of the surrounding four blocks, since more direct routes exist to other neighborhoods and traffic generators to the south.

MUTCD Criteria

The 2003 *California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways* provides guidance on the installation of multi-way stop controls, indicating that the decision to install such controls should be based on an engineering study. The manual indicates that all-way stop controls can be useful as safety measure to benefit "pedestrians, bicyclists, and all road users expecting other road users to stop," and are typically used where the volume of traffic on intersecting roads is approximately equal. The MUTCD includes several criteria to be used when considering multi-way stop controls. In summary, they may be considered where:

1. the signs are used as an interim measure to control traffic prior to signalization
2. a crash problem exists, as indicated by five or more reported crashes in a 12-month period

3. minimum vehicular volumes exist on both streets
4. there is a need to control left-turn conflicts
5. there is a need to control vehicle/pedestrian conflicts near locations that generate high pedestrian volumes
6. sight distance constraints exist
7. installation of multi-way stop controls would improve traffic operational characteristics

The current configuration and setting of the intersection were considered in determining which, if any, of the MUTCD criteria are likely to be met. It is clear that volume-based criteria would be unmet, and that warrants for signalization of the intersection are unlikely to be met in the near or long term. A five-year collision history was obtained from the SWITRS statewide collision database, which revealed that no collisions have occurred directly at the intersection. Two collisions did occur 120-200 feet south on Oak Street, appearing to involve drivers making midblock u-turns possibly associated with school drop-off activity, though this type of collision would not be "correctable" by the installation of stop signs on 36th Street. There is no direct need to control left-turn conflicts at the intersection and sight distance is acceptable on both street corridors. After reviewing each of the MUTCD criteria, it was determined that only the fifth item relating to pedestrian activity would be directly relevant.

Evaluation

Based on the MUTCD criteria, the appropriateness of installing all-way stop controls at the intersection in order to control vehicle/pedestrian conflicts was considered further. Consideration was also given to the following site-specific characteristics possibly affecting both the potential for vehicle/pedestrian conflicts and vehicle/vehicle conflicts.

- There is a large amount of pedestrian activity all week, including on weekends when the school recreation fields are in use.
- Large numbers of school-age pedestrians are present before and after school.
- Visibility of pedestrians crossing 36th Street is likely diminished during school drop-off and pick-up times when numerous vehicles are parked on the street.
- The six percent downhill grade on eastbound 36th increases the likelihood for drivers to speed.
- The one-way driveway exit from Georgia Brown School onto Oak Street is extremely close to the intersection of 36th Street; vehicles exiting this school driveway and destined for 36th Street block southbound Oak Street at an unexpected location. A driver turning from eastbound 36th to southbound Oak Street may not expect or see a vehicle stopped in the travel lane before causing a collision. Installation of a stop sign on 36th Street would decrease this potential.


Negative aspects of installing all-way stop controls include driver inconvenience and environmental effects of creating additional vehicle stops. With respect to driver inconvenience, relatively few drivers would be affected since 36th Street extends only two blocks west of Spring Street and serves only a small residential district. The added delays would be incrementally minimal since travel speeds are already low. Regarding air quality and vehicle emissions, the added vehicle stops would be expected to have a negligible impact given the low traffic volumes. Additionally, many drivers passing through the intersection are destined for or departing from one of the two schools, and so are already decelerating and accelerating at or near the intersection.

Conclusion

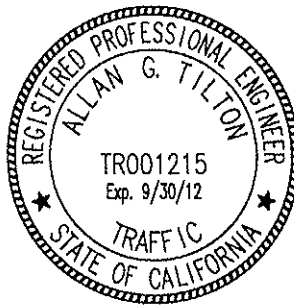
There are compelling reasons to install four-way stop controls at the intersection of 36th Street/Oak Street in order to enhance pedestrian safety. There may also be side benefits to vehicular circulation and safety related to the driveways at Georgia Brown School. Adverse impacts to driver convenience and air quality are expected to be negligible at this particular location given its neighborhood context and low traffic volumes.

We hope this information is useful to your staff and to the City's decision makers. Thank you for allowing W-Trans to perform these services and do not hesitate to contact with any questions.

Sincerely,


Zachary Matley, AICP
Associate


Allan Tilton, PE
Senior Associate



JZM/agt/PRO015.L1