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Staff Report

ITEM NO. 5

To: Lemoore City Council
From: Jeff Laws, Interim Chief of Police
Date: February 23, 2010
Subject: Opal Avenue Street Closure

Discussion:

As you are all aware, Mrs. Christine King submitted a petition for undulations back in May 2009. As a result of her request, a speed survey was conducted. The first one showed that undulations were not warranted on Opal Avenue. After a discussion with Mrs. King, it was agreed that another speed survey would be conducted while school was in session and the survey would be taken on the street by the park. The results of the second speed survey indicated that undulations were warranted on Opal Avenue.

It was determined that rubberized speed humps would be as effective as asphalt undulations on Opal Avenue. Rubberized speed humps are removable and can be removed when the neighborhood is built out. One rubberized speed hump, consisting of 22 sections and two end mounds, is approximately \$3,500. Mrs. King felt the City of Lemoore should pay the full cost of the rubberized speed hump.

Council discussed this item on January 5, 2010. After much discussion, Council decided to abide by the past undulations policy of requiring the residents to pay for half the cost of installing undulations. Council also decided to authorize the purchase of a sign to be installed in the middle of the roadway at no cost to the residents. All improvements required for the sign have been completed. (See Attachment #1 Slide #6)

Mrs. King was not in favor of the decision Council reached and made a presentation at the January 19, 2010 City Council Meeting during Public Comment in reference to her request for undulations on Opal Avenue. Public Comment items are not allowed to have action taken upon them. Mayor Murray directed that this item be placed on the February 2, 2010 agenda.

On January 27, 2010, Mrs. King presented the City with an additional concept. (See Attachment #1 Slide #5) She would like to close the street to thru traffic. As this new concept was offered at such a late date it was not evaluated by City Staff prior to the February 2, 2010 Council Meeting.

At the February 2, 2010 Council Meeting, it was recognized that the original concept of undulations was no longer desired by Mrs. King. She shared a new presentation of her street closure concept. As the street closure was different from undulations, City Council was not able to take action on that item. The Council directed the street closure be placed on the agenda for consideration.

To receive guidance from a public safety standpoint, I discussed the street closure concept with Officers from the Police Department and the Fire Department Chief. All agreed that the response time would increase if the street were closed. It is a fact that the Fire Department responds from one location but LPD Officers are not stationary. They may be on the north side of town near Hanford-Armona Road and need to respond to a call on the south side. The time it takes to go around Opal could be the difference between catching a criminal or letting them go free. For example, we recently had a Residential Burglary in progress on Keith and all Officers were required to respond. One Officer was in the vicinity of Heritage Park (on Hanford-Armona Road between 17th and 18th Avenues) and responded to the scene via Opal Avenue. This officers' response time would have been increased had he been required to go around. Due to the quick response time of the officers and witness statements, one of the suspects was apprehended and booked into the Kings County Jail for Residential Burglary.

I have discussed the proposed street closer idea with the Fire Chief and he is opposed to the idea of closing Opal Avenue. (See Attachment #2)

I have spoken to Frank Giannone the Director of Kings County Operations for American Ambulance and asked for his thought of the proposed street closure on Opal Avenue. Frank has told me that American Ambulance would be in opposition of this street closure because Opal Avenue allows for other paths of travel when responding to emergency calls for service on the north side of Lemoore.

Lemoore Elementary School Superintendent Rick Rayburn presented the concept to the LUESD Board on February 9, 2010. His presentation included photos of different school sites at dismissal times along with the proposed street closure concept at Opal Avenue. The LUESD Board discussed this issue and was in opposition to the street closure at Opal Avenue. A memo from the LUESD Board stating their position along with the presentation photos are attached for your review. (See Attachment #3)

Additionally, I have spoken to David Wlaschin Public Works Director, and he has expressed concerns regarding the trash pick-up in this area. Staff has located aerial photos of this area before Opal was a thru street. (See Attachment #1 Slide #3) These photos and a memo from David Wlaschin are attached. (See Attachment #4) He will be present Tuesday night to answer any questions regarding his concerns about this proposed street closure.

Additionally, the City Engineer's Office, Quad-Knopf, has prepared the attached report regarding the proposed street closure. (See Attachment #5) Please note that the City Engineer, Harry Tow states that closure of the road where proposed, between Mrs. King's home and the School Drop-Off lot, is not feasible. The City Engineer did evaluate closure at a location further to the north; and also provided some other traffic calming suggestions.

We are currently conducting a speed survey in order to determine if the effect of the sign has reduced the speed of traffic on Opal Avenue. Unfortunately, the results of the speed survey are not available at the time of this report. However, the results will be available at the Council Meeting.

The majority of the traffic that utilizes the Opal Avenue Cinnamon School Pick Up/Drop Off area comes from Hanford-Armona Road. If this pick up/drop off area were to be closed, it is anticipated that the traffic on Cinnamon Dr. would increase by about 25% during drop off and pick up times. As Council will likely recall, the Cinnamon Dr. drop off and especially pick up after school has been especially problematic for students, parents, and even nearby residents since the school first opened. Placing more traffic, and more parents picking up students, on Cinnamon Dr. will create added safety concerns at that location.

An additional alternative to the street closure would be undulations on both sides of the existing sign in the median of the road. (See Attachment #1 Slide #8) The cost of these removable

undulations would be approximately \$1,200.00. Each of these undulations would span 10 feet on each side of the sign and have a height of 2 inches. This can be considered assuming that warrants for undulations are still being met. We believe that since the median island/sign and removable undulations are temporary, in that they are only likely needed until the subdivision to the north of Cinnamon Elementary School is build out, and further that they are really a “study case” for Lemoore, that the Council can find that their installation, or even the installation of the other techniques advised by the City Engineer, can be installed at City expense without violating the long-standing policy concerning the installation of undulations.

Staff has created a door hanger noticing the possible Opal Avenue Street closure and has requested feedback from the residents. Staff anticipates placing door hangers on all the area homes from Venice Avenue all the way to Daphne Lane including Geneva Drive. This is approximately 214 homes. The door hanger requests a response from residents no later than 5pm on March 2, 2010 or to attend the City Council meeting. A copy of the door hanger is attached for your review. (See Attachment #6)

On February 25, 2010, I met with Mrs. King along with City Manager Jeff Britz. She would prefer to have the street closed, however, she understands the problems associated with the street closure. We suggested an additional alternative that everyone agreed upon. We can place the 10 feet undulations on each side of the existing sign. In addition, we can paint another segment similar to the existing striping to the south. It will be smaller in scale, have no signage and 10 feet undulations will also be placed on the sides of the striping (See Attachment #1 Slide #9). This too can be considered a “study case” and may be installed at the City expense without violating the long-standing policy concerning the installation of undulations.

Attachment #1 to this memo is a slide presentation that will be given at the Council Meeting. Staff will be available to answer questions.

Budget Impact:

Should the Council wish to close Opal Avenue to thru traffic, the cost would be approximately \$5,000 plus City labor costs for installation. Long-term, it is anticipated that there will be more street closure requests coming forward if the traffic conditions are not to the standard that the resident believes they should be.

Cost to place two sets of 10 feet undulations, next to the existing sign, and paint the striping would be approximately \$3,000.

Recommendation:

That the Lemoore City Council keeps Opal Avenue open to through traffic, and approve two sets of undulations along with the second segment similar to the existing striping for traffic calming measures at a cost of approximately \$3,000 plus City labor to install.