



Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Tell and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: David N. Carmany, City Manager

FROM: Richard Thompson, Director of Community Development
Nhung Madrid, Management Analyst
Jack Rydell, City Traffic Engineer

DATE: February 7, 2012

SUBJECT: Review a Pilot Program for the El Porto Parking Lot Exit

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve making permanent the trial traffic measure allowing eastbound to southbound right turn movements from the El Porto Parking Lot exit on 40th Street at Ocean Drive.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

There are no fiscal impacts to maintaining the current traffic controls in place.

BACKGROUND:

The City Council's 2009-2010 Work Plan included an item to evaluate a modification to the then-existing turn restrictions on 40th Street at Ocean Drive for drivers exiting the El Porto Beach parking lot. Up until May 2011, vehicles exiting the El Porto Beach parking lot on 40th Street were required to make a left turn (northbound on Ocean Drive) between 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM on weekdays. At the November 16, 2010 Council Meeting, Council approved a pilot program to allow drivers to make right turns from eastbound 40th Street onto southbound Ocean Drive, a movement which was previously prohibited. During this pilot program, vehicles exiting the beach lot were now able to make right and left turns from 40th Street onto Ocean Drive, but were still prohibited from continuing eastbound on 40th Street to Highland Avenue. These modifications, which were installed in May 2011, are still in effect today.

Traffic Calming History

Through a series of actions taken by the Parking and Public Improvements Commission and the City Council from 1983 through 2000, neighborhood traffic calming measures were installed in the area formerly referred to as El Porto and now designated North Manhattan Beach. The neighborhood was built in a grid network that runs parallel to Highland Avenue, allowing non-resident intrusion on local residential streets. In particular, traffic intrusion was noted to occur on Ocean Drive during the PM peak hours, primarily in the southbound direction, as motorists

avoided the congestion on southbound Highland Avenue due to the lane reduction (from two to one) and the traffic signal at Rosecrans Avenue. Access to the El Porto Beach parking lot for the Manhattan County Beach is through neighborhood streets. The entrance is at the west end of 45th Street and the exit is at the west end of 40th Street.

Highland Avenue is classified as a Collector street between 45th Street and Rosecrans Avenue. Rosecrans Avenue is classified as a Major Local street between Highland Avenue and Manhattan Avenue and as a local residential street between Manhattan Avenue and The Strand. All other internal streets are local residential streets.

The City has implemented localized traffic calming measures in the neighborhood in the past. The primary purpose of the traffic calming measures were to reduce traffic and speeding on Ocean Drive without unduly impacting other neighborhood streets, particularly 40th Street west of Highland Avenue.

In February 2005, residents of Kelp Street submitting a petition expressing their concerns to the City regarding the diversion of traffic onto their street due to the turn restrictions at the intersection of Ocean Drive and 40th Street, and requested that the restrictions be removed. In response, on September 4, 2007, the City Council prioritized this neighborhood on the list of new Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan study areas. In 2008, other residents expressed concerns about speeding on Ocean Drive and requested additional speed humps.

In July 2008, the City initiated traffic counts and a speed survey to determine the extent of the problems reported by residents and to assess the current effectiveness of the previous traffic calming measures. The results of a traffic analysis based on the traffic data were presented to the Parking and Public Improvements Commission on October 23, 2008 at a public workshop to hear comments from the public. At the direction of the Commission, additional counts were conducted and staff returned to the Commission on January 22, 2009 with a list of optional traffic calming measures to be considered by neighborhood residents in a survey. The Commission again heard public comments and directed staff to prepare a survey of possible traffic calming measures, mail a survey to the neighborhood residents, and to return to the Commission with the results of the survey and a list of initial traffic calming measures.

On March 26, 2009, the Parking and Public Improvements Commission discussed the survey results and staff recommendations, and heard comments from neighborhood residents. Although the highest percentage of survey respondents were in favor of leaving the traffic restrictions at Ocean Drive and 40th Street as they were, nearly as many were in favor of removing the left-turn-only restriction on eastbound 40th Street at Ocean Drive. Residents of Kelp Street again expressed their concerns that the restriction forced traffic onto their steep, narrow street that was not meant to handle more than its own traffic, from a street that was intended to handle traffic from the beach parking lot. Others argued that beach traffic should be allowed to take the most direct route to Highland Avenue and that the diverter not only increased traffic and congestion in the neighborhood, but also increased air pollution and the use of fossil fuels. It should be noted that residents of 40th Street, who were well-represented at the January 22, 2009 Parking and Public Improvements Commission meeting, where they voiced strong concerns regarding removing the left-turn restriction on 40th Street, did not appear to attend the March meeting.

Following the extensive workshops, surveys, and public meetings, the Parking and Public Improvements Commission's recommendation was presented to City Council on April 21, 2009. At this meeting, Council carefully considered all of the proposed measures and decided to leave the then-existing turn restrictions requiring all vehicles exiting the beach parking lot at 40th Street to make a left turn onto Ocean Drive Monday through Friday from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

Then, through the 2009 - 2010 Work Plan, Council prioritized staff to evaluate a new proposal to change the traffic restrictions at the intersection of Ocean Drive and 40th Street to allow cars to turn right onto Ocean Drive while keeping in place the allowed left turn and the current time restrictions for advancement up 40th Street. This evaluation was presented to Council on November 16, 2010, and Council approved a pilot program allowing for the right and left turn from 40th Street onto Ocean Drive.

DISCUSSION:

Staff performed the pilot study at the El Porto Beach parking lot from May 2011 through November 2011. The pilot program was performed to determine the traffic volumes in the area, whether or not motorists were using the El Porto Beach parking lot to bypass Highland Avenue during peak PM hours, and how the traffic was distributed once the vehicles exited the beach parking lot. To determine the effects of the pilot program, traffic counts were taken at the following times:

- February 2011, to establish a current “before” baseline set of data;
- August 2011, to identify “after” data during the peak summer period; and,
- November 2011, to identify “after” data during the off-peak period.

The counts consisted of the following:

- 24-hour volume counts at 12 key locations taken on Thursday and Saturday. The locations were selected in order to determine how daily volumes changed along historical cut-through routes as well as on several of the local residential streets that could experience additional or diverted traffic due to changed restrictions at Ocean Drive and 40th Street. Two days of counts were taken to determine how volumes changed when turn restrictions are in effect (Thursday) versus when they were not in effect (Saturday).
- Turning movement counts at the intersection of Ocean Drive and 40th Street between the hours of 7:00-9:00 AM and 2:00-7:00 PM, taken on Thursday and Saturday. These counts were taken to determine what direction motorists travelled when they encountered the turning restrictions, both when exiting the El Porto Beach Parking Lot and when travelling south on Ocean Drive. These counts also allowed an evaluation of the degree that motorists obeyed the turn restrictions and what their movements were when the restrictions weren't in effect.
- A “license plate” survey was conducted on a weekday (Thursdays) in February, August and November at the entrance and exit points to the El Porto Beach Parking Lot in order to determine the number of motorists using the parking lot as a bypass alternative to

Highland Avenue. The surveys were taken between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM and identified when specific vehicles entered the parking lot at 45th Street and when they exited the lot at 40th Street. Vehicles that were observed entering and exiting with a short period of time (<10 minutes) were assumed to be cutting through the parking lot as opposed to using the lot for beach activities.

Based on a review of the available count data as identified above, the following key findings were noted.

1. **Daily Traffic Volumes** - 2011 weekday traffic volumes were lower in the “after” study (November 2011) compared to the “before” study (February 2011) at nine of the 12 count locations. The three locations with higher volumes were:
 - 41st St w/o Highland Avenue increased from 109 vehicles per day (vpd) to 217 vpd
 - Ocean Drive s/o 40th Street increase from 732 vpd to 805 vpd
 - Ocean Drive n/o Rosecrans Avenue increase from 854 vpd to 1,223 vpd

2. **Traffic Distribution on 40th Street at Ocean Drive** - Traffic volumes during the afternoon weekday periods when turning restrictions are in place (3:00-7:00 PM) changed as follows between February 2011 (before modifications to the turning restrictions) and November 2011 (after the modifications):
 - Southbound through traffic (prohibited movement) increased from 8 vehicles to 27 vehicles.
 - Southbound left-turn traffic (allowed movement) decreased from 67 vehicles to 27 vehicles.
 - Eastbound left-turn traffic (allowed movement) decreased from 163 vehicles to 24 vehicles.
 - Eastbound through traffic (prohibited movement) decreased from 93 vehicles to 59 vehicles.
 - Eastbound right-turn traffic (newly allowed movement) increased from 2 vehicles to 13 vehicles.

It should be noted that the November 2011 Thursday counts showed the two-way traffic volumes on the three key intersection legs (Ocean Drive north of 40th Street, Ocean Drive south of 40th Street and 40th Street east of Ocean Drive) had almost equal volumes between 3-7 pm, illustrating that the traffic has been equally split.

3. **Bypass Traffic** - The license plate survey, which was conducted on a Thursday, indicated that a significant number of the vehicles accessing the El Porto Beach parking lot had entering and exiting times that were only a few minutes apart. This is assumed to mean they used the lot as a bypass route to Highland Avenue between 45th Street and Rosecrans Avenue. The individual surveys revealed the following:
 - In February, approximately 39% of the matched vehicles entered the lot at 45th Street exited at 40th Street within a few minutes. During the period when turn restrictions

- are in effect at Ocean Drive and 40th Street, this number was 43%.
- In August, approximately 26% of the matched vehicles entered and exited within a few minutes. During the period when turn restrictions are in effect, the percentage was 27%.
 - In November, approximately 29% of the matched vehicles entered and exited within a few minutes. During the period when turn restrictions are in effect, this percentage was 35%.

24-hour daily volumes for the 12 locations are illustrated on the attached figures (Exhibit B) for the Thursday and Saturday counts in February, August and November 2011.

Enforcement

After Council approved the changes to allow for the right turn from 40th Street to Ocean Drive, the Traffic Engineer modified the signage to allow for this movement. The changes that were made merely added a right turn arrow symbol showing the allowed movements at the intersection. However, the Police Department experienced some challenges enforcing this new sign, even though it was very similar to what was previously posted. Common complaints from violators were that the signage was confusing and that they didn't understand it. Staff did not want to make any changes to the signs during the pilot program. However, the Traffic Engineer has been working with the Police Department on new signage ideas to clarify the turn movements if Council approves to make the turn movements permanent.

Noticing

All properties north of Rosecrans Avenue to the City limit were noticed of tonight's meeting by way of mailed postcards. A general notice was also published in The Beach Reporter (Exhibit C). Both notices invited the public to attend tonight's meeting and/or provide public comments (Exhibit D).

CONCLUSION:

Based on the more equitable split in outbound beach parking lot traffic through the neighborhood, the lack of substantial identifiable traffic volume increases on local neighborhood streets and the reduction in citizen complaints received by Staff since implementation of the turn restriction modifications, it is recommended to permanently approve the current traffic controls at 40th Street and Ocean Drive.

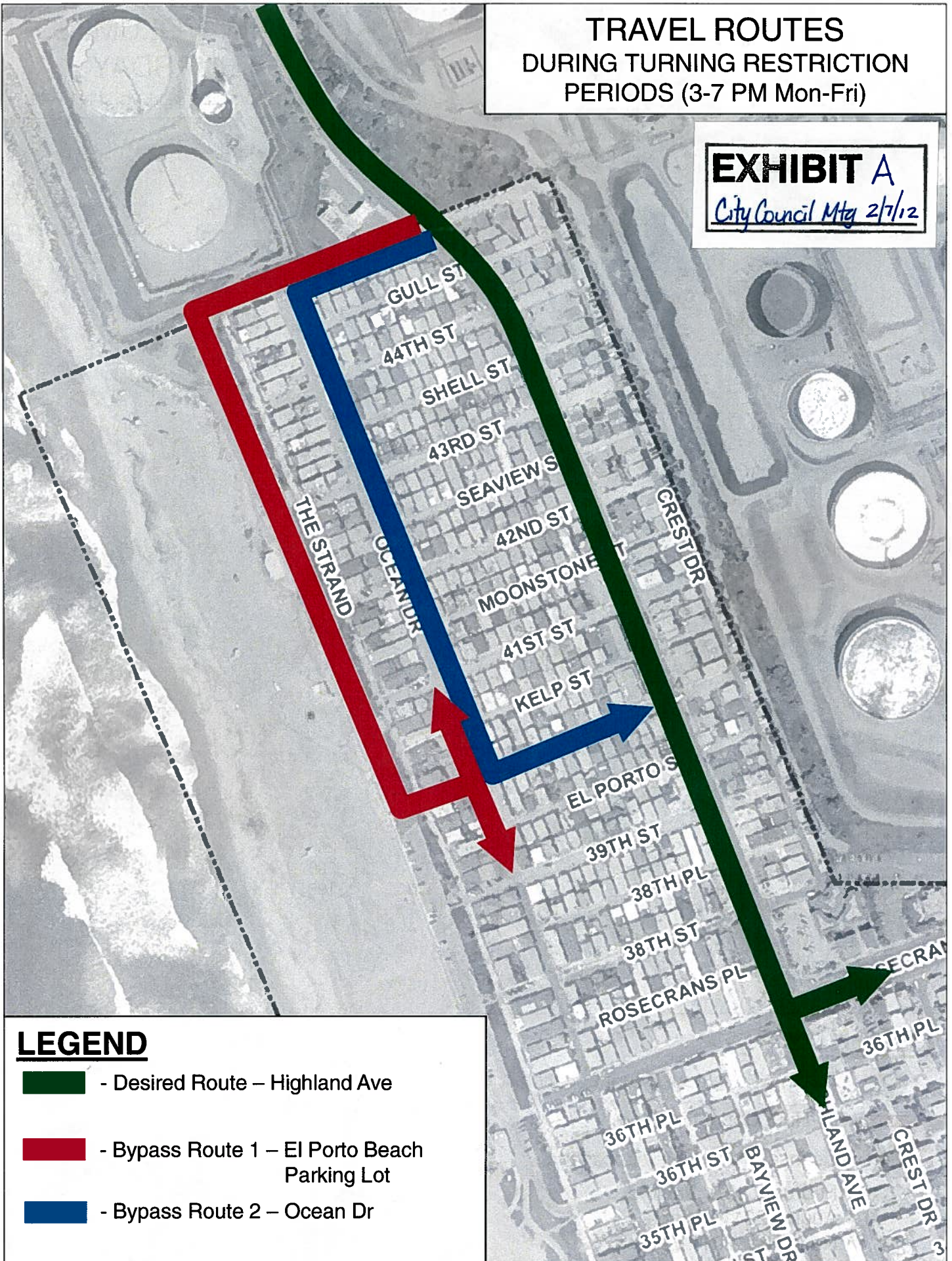
- Exhibit:
- A. Traffic Routes During Turning Restriction Periods
 - B. Daily Volumes at Count Locations
 - C. The Beach Reporter Notice and Mailed Postcard Notice
 - D. Public Comments (if any)

Cc. Jim Arndt, Director of Public Works




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**TRAVEL ROUTES
DURING TURNING RESTRICTION
PERIODS (3-7 PM Mon-Fri)**

EXHIBIT A
City Council Mtg 2/7/12



LEGEND

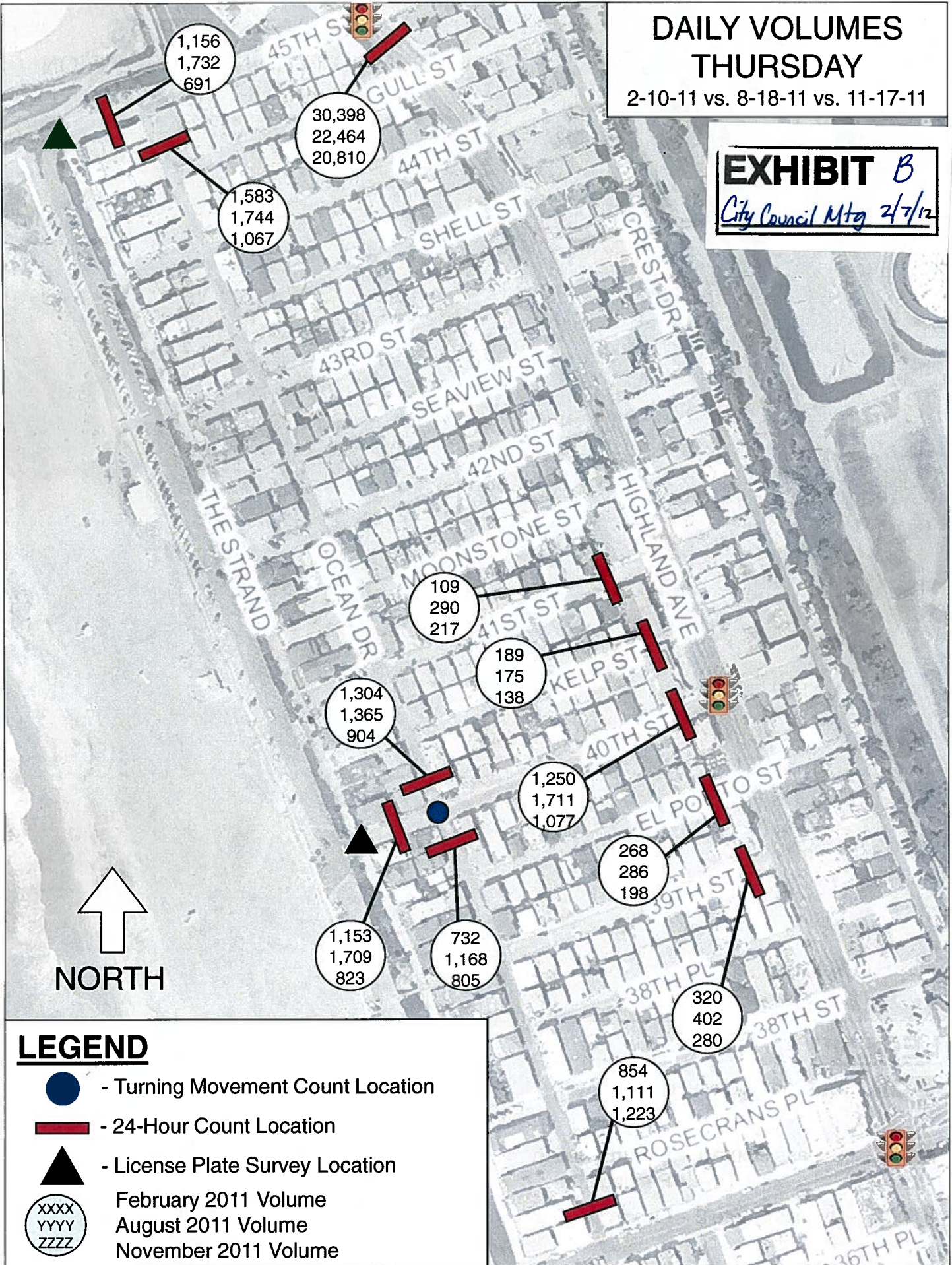
-  - Desired Route – Highland Ave
-  - Bypass Route 1 – El Porto Beach Parking Lot
-  - Bypass Route 2 – Ocean Dr

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DAILY VOLUMES THURSDAY

2-10-11 vs. 8-18-11 vs. 11-17-11

EXHIBIT B
City Council Mtg 2/7/12



LEGEND

- - Turning Movement Count Location
- ▬ - 24-Hour Count Location
- ▲ - License Plate Survey Location
- | |
|------|
| XXXX |
| YYYY |
| ZZZZ |

 - February 2011 Volume
 - August 2011 Volume
 - November 2011 Volume

DAILY VOLUMES SATURDAY

2-12-11 vs. 8-20-11 vs. 11-19-11

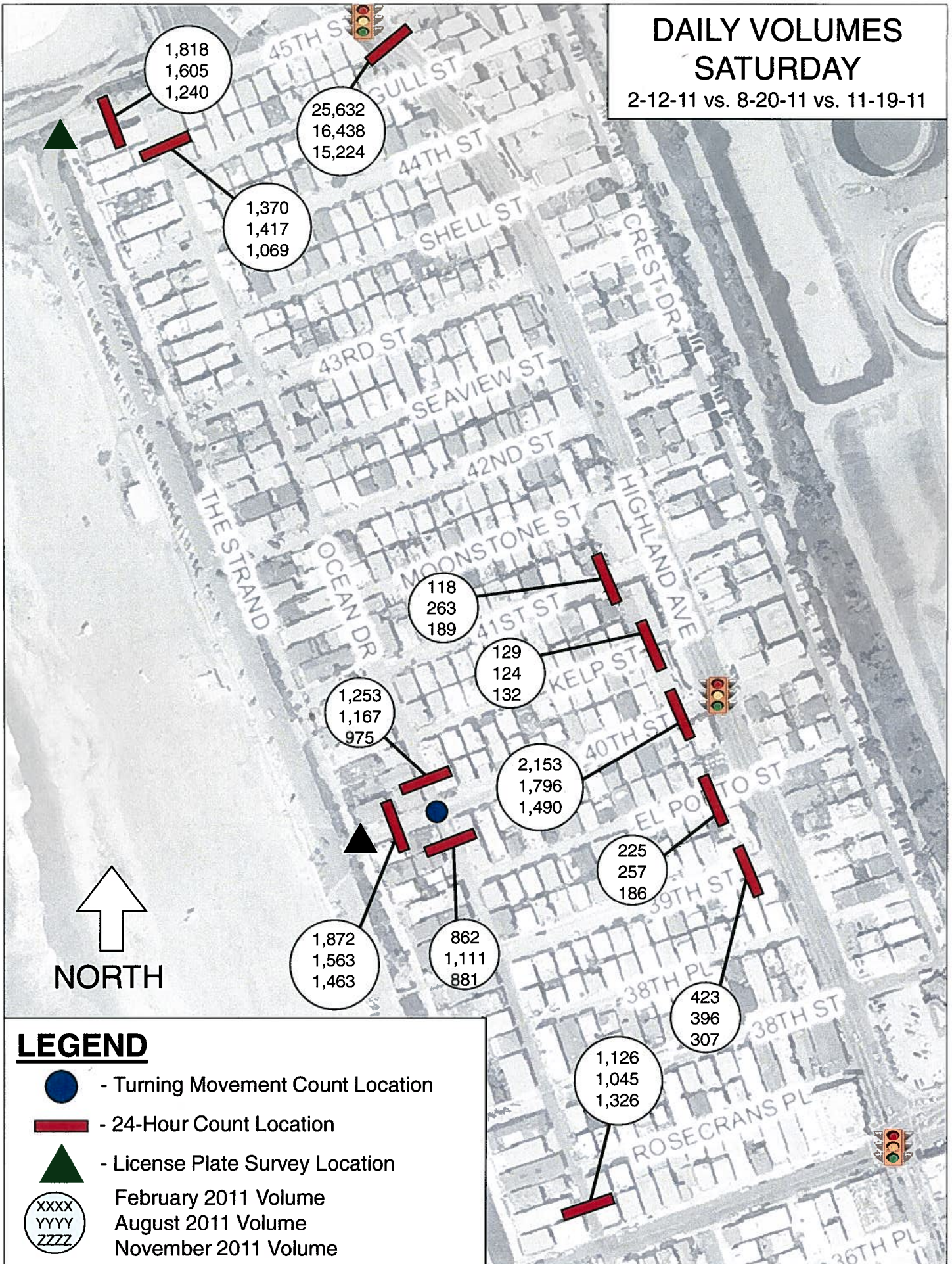


EXHIBIT C
City Council Mtg 2/7/12



EL PORTO PARKING LOT EXIT STUDY

As directed by City Council, staff performed a pilot program at the El Porto Parking Lot Exit to allow vehicles to make right and left turn movements from 40th St. to Ocean Dr. Monday through Friday from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

The pilot program has been completed and staff's findings and recommendation will be presented to Council at the following meeting:

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

WHEN: January 17, 2012 at 6:30 pm
WHERE: City Hall Council Chambers
1400 Highland Avenue, Manhattan Beach

Residents and interested parties are encouraged to attend and participate. The Staff Report will be available at www.citymb.info on January 13, 2012 after 5:00 PM.

To submit public comments or for additional information, please contact Nhung Madrid at (310) 802-5540 or email at nmadrid@citymb.info.

THE BEACH REPORTER AD
PUBLISHED JAN 6 & JAN 12

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CITY COUNCIL MEETING
January 17, 2012 at 6:30 pm
City Hall Council Chambers
1400 Highland Avenue, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

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MAILED POSTCARD NOTICES SENT JAN 3, 2012

EL PORTO PARKING LOT EXIT STUDY CONTINUED TO FEBRUARY 7, 2012



As directed by the City Council, staff performed a pilot program at the El Porto Parking Lot Exit to allow vehicles to make right and left turn movements from 40th St. to Ocean Dr. Monday through Friday from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

The pilot program has been completed and staff's findings and recommendation will be continued to February 7, 2012.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
February 7, 2012 at 6:30 pm
City Hall Council Chambers
1400 Highland Avenue, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

Residents and interested parties are encouraged to attend and participate. The Staff Report will be available at www.citymb.info on 01/13/12 after 5:00 PM. To submit public comments or for additional information, please contact Nhung Madrid at (310) 802-5540 or email at nmadrid@citymb.info.

MAILED POSTCARD NOTICES SENT JAN 11, 2012

Angela Soo

From: Nhung Madrid
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2012 9:35 AM
To: Angela Soo
Subject: FW: El Porto Lot: Please include in the 2/7/ Staff Report - Thank you

Can you please include under public comment for me?

Thanks
Nhung

Nhung Madrid
Community Development Management Analyst

P: (310) 802-5540
E: nmadrid@citymb.info



CITY OF
MANHATTAN BEACH
1400 HIGHLAND AVENUE, MANHATTAN BEACH, CA 90266
WWW.CITYMB.INFO
 PLEASE CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT BEFORE PRINTING THIS EMAIL.

From: Ed SKEBE (DHL US) [<mailto:Ed.Skebe@dhl.com>]
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2012 9:34 AM
To: Nhung Madrid
Subject: El Porto Lot: Please include in the 2/7/ Staff Report - Thank you

Nhung,

The pilot program allowing vehicles exiting the parking lot the option to turn right has worked. Surrounding streets now share an even flow. Small alley streets, such as Kelp, that were never designed to accommodate traffic, are now safe.

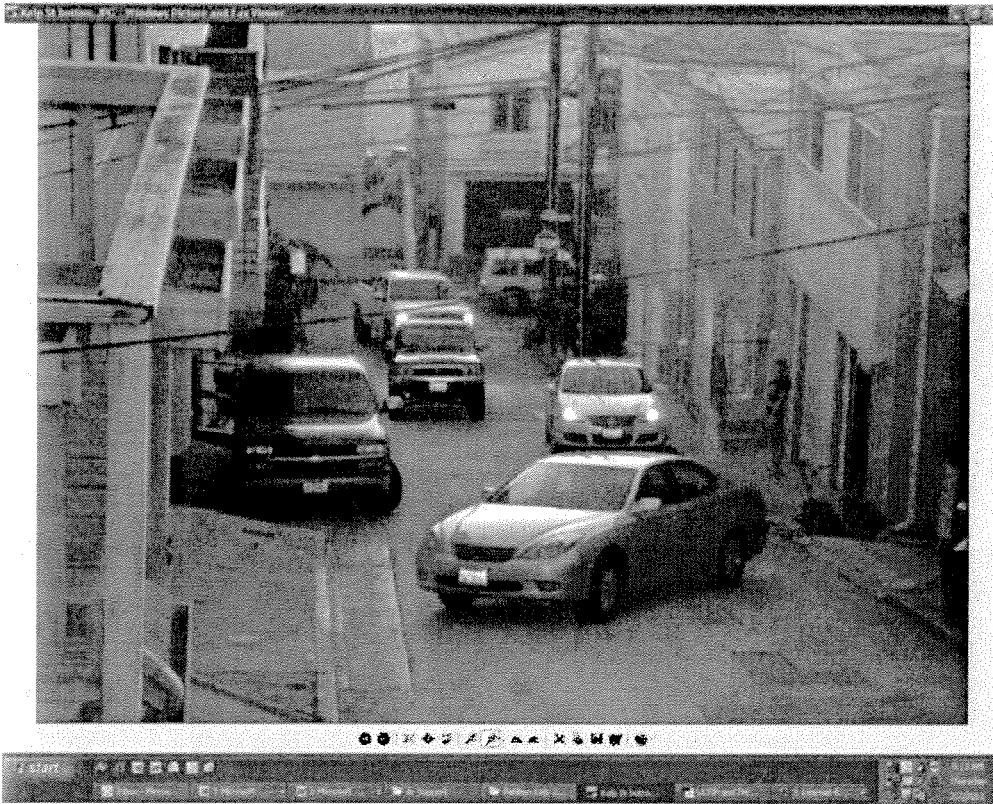
The diversion was initially established to stop rush hour traffic from using Ocean as a cut through. It was never intended to divert normal traffic flow, which is exactly what the parking lot traffic is. On behalf of residents on Kelp I urge the council to adopt the right turn exiting the lot onto Ocean as a permanent option.

Since the diversion is intended to dissuade rush hour traffic, I question why it starts at 3:00 pm. Traffic is very light at this time, and it would seem that starting at 4:00 pm would be more appropriate.

The pictures below exemplify some of the safety concerns:

Bottom of Kelp:

EXHIBIT D
CC MTG 2-7-12



Top of Kelp:



Thank you for the time and consideration,
Ed Skebe
210 Kelp Street