



CITY OF COMMERCE AGENDA REPORT

Item No. _____

TO: Honorable City Council

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: Install “ONCOMING TRAFFIC DOES NOT STOP” Signs along the Median Island at Washington Boulevard & ARCO Gas Station / Bank of the West Driveway Locations

MEETING DATE: August 20, 2019

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Staff’s recommendation to install “ONCOMING TRAFFIC DOES NOT STOP” signs along the median island at Washington Boulevard and ARCO gas station / Bank of the West driveway locations in order to increase traffic and pedestrian safety and to promote the efficient flow of traffic.

BACKGROUND:

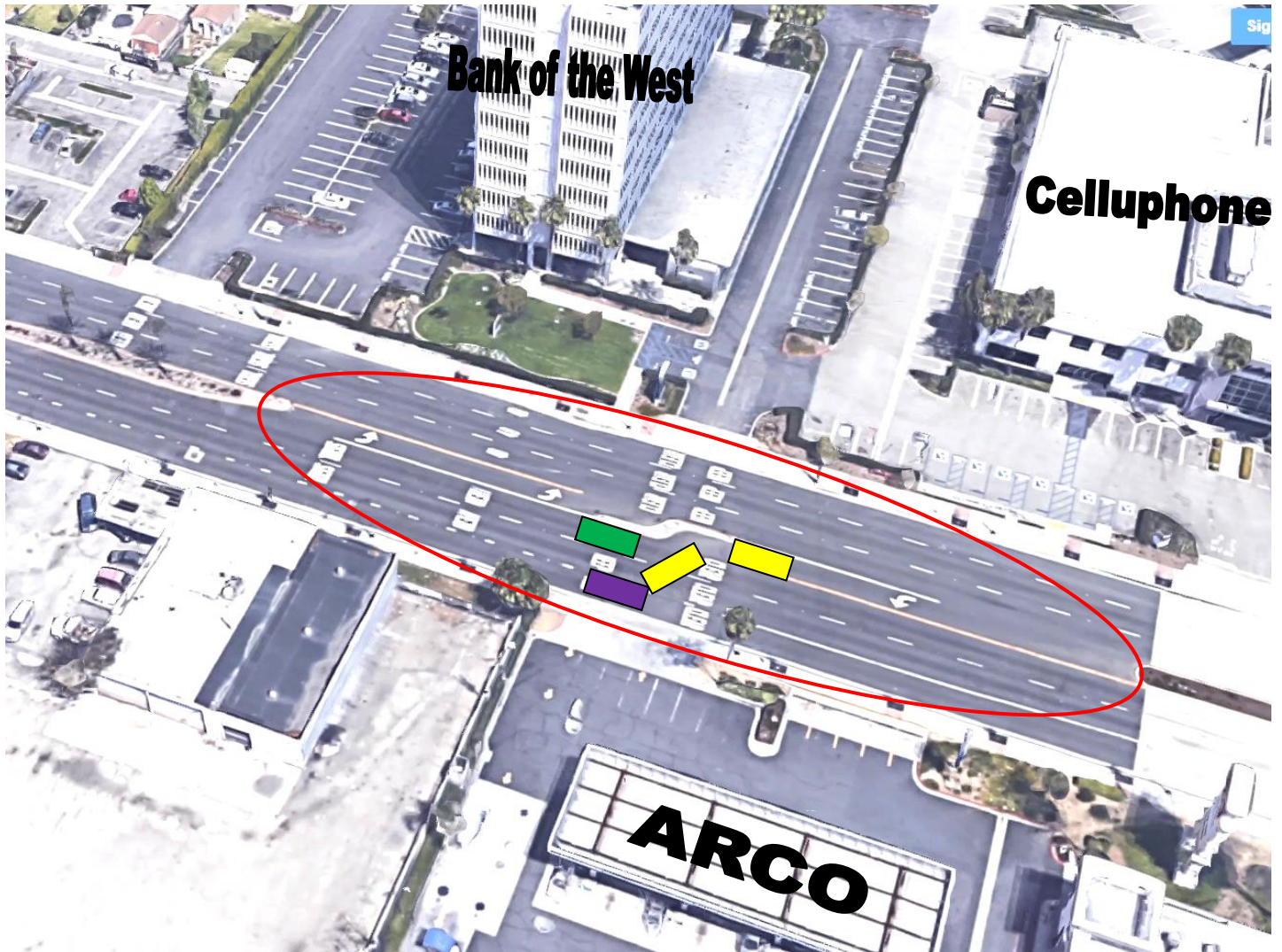
The City of Commerce (City) has embarked on the installation and operation of a fully equipped traffic signal at Washington Boulevard (near Fidelia Avenue) in front of the entrances of the ARCO gas station and the Bank of the West driveway locations. This traffic signal will enable protected left turn phasing, which will increase the safety of vehicles turning left into the driveways at the above-referenced establishments. Moreover, the installation of this traffic signal will enhance the overall traffic efficiency of vehicles that move through Washington Boulevard, and particular attention will be taken with respect to the traffic timing and synchronization of all the nearby traffic signals.

However, the current lack of a traffic signal at this location has made left turns in this area difficult. Dedicated left-turn lane pockets were installed during the Washington Boulevard street widening and improvement project to allow for left turns, but during times of high traffic, collisions have occurred as vehicles are making left turns without realizing the presence of oncoming traffic.

During its regularly scheduled meeting on August 14, 2019, the Traffic Commission recommended the installation of the “ONCOMING TRAFFIC DOES NOT STOP” Signs along the median island at Washington Boulevard & ARCO Gas Station / Bank of the West driveway locations.

ANALYSIS:

On July 2019, Public Works staff visited the site and has completed its analysis regarding the left turn situation at the vicinity of Washington Boulevard and the entrances to the ARCO gas station and Bank of the West. The current situation reflects dual dedicated left-turn lane pockets that allow for vehicles to make left turns and into the establishments located on opposite sides of Washington Boulevard. Please see diagram on the next page:



Existing Left-Turn Lane Pockets along Washington Boulevard between Fidelia Avenue and the I-5 Freeway and Potential Broadside Collisions

As vehicles make their left turns into their respective destinations, these vehicles must traverse through three (3) consecutive lanes of opposing traffic. During times of elevated traffic volumes, especially during the “rush hour,” certain vehicles in the opposing lanes would often yield to the vehicle intending to turn left. What often occurs is an awkward situation in which the left turning driver would need to “creep” forward carefully to make sure the opposing traffic in the other lanes is clear or if the opposing traffic yields and stops. There are situations in which the opposing traffic in the other lanes does not stop, and the left turning driver mistakenly assumes that the traffic will either stop or yield to him or her.

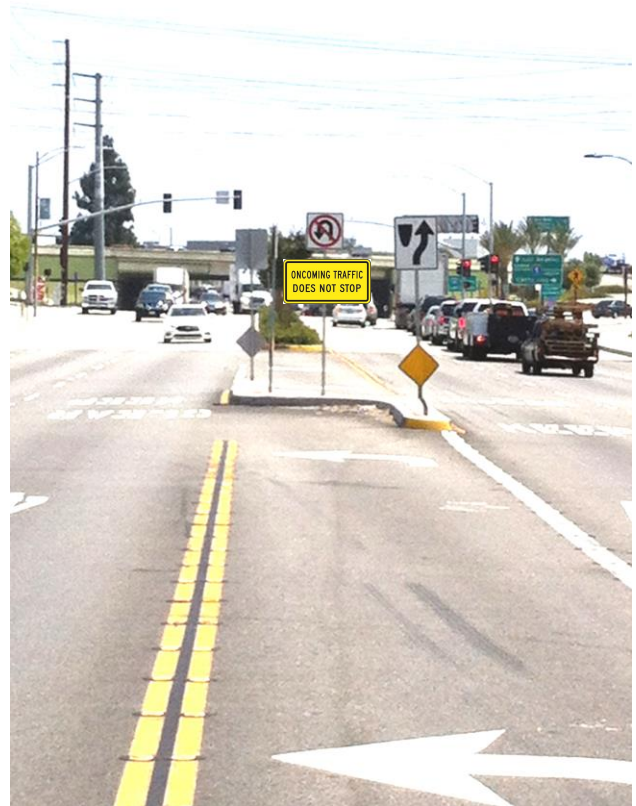
This mistaken assumption can sometimes lead to broadside collisions. The above diagram depicts this scenario.

Staff has determined that there are no sight distance or street geometry restrictions that may have contributed to such collisions. The majority of these vehicular accidents are largely due to driver unawareness of oncoming traffic.

Therefore, as a mitigating measure, staff is proposing that four (4) “ONCOMING TRAFFIC DOES NOT STOP” signs be posted at the ends of the median islands to warn drivers that opposing traffic does not stop in all lanes. A depiction of this sign is shown below:

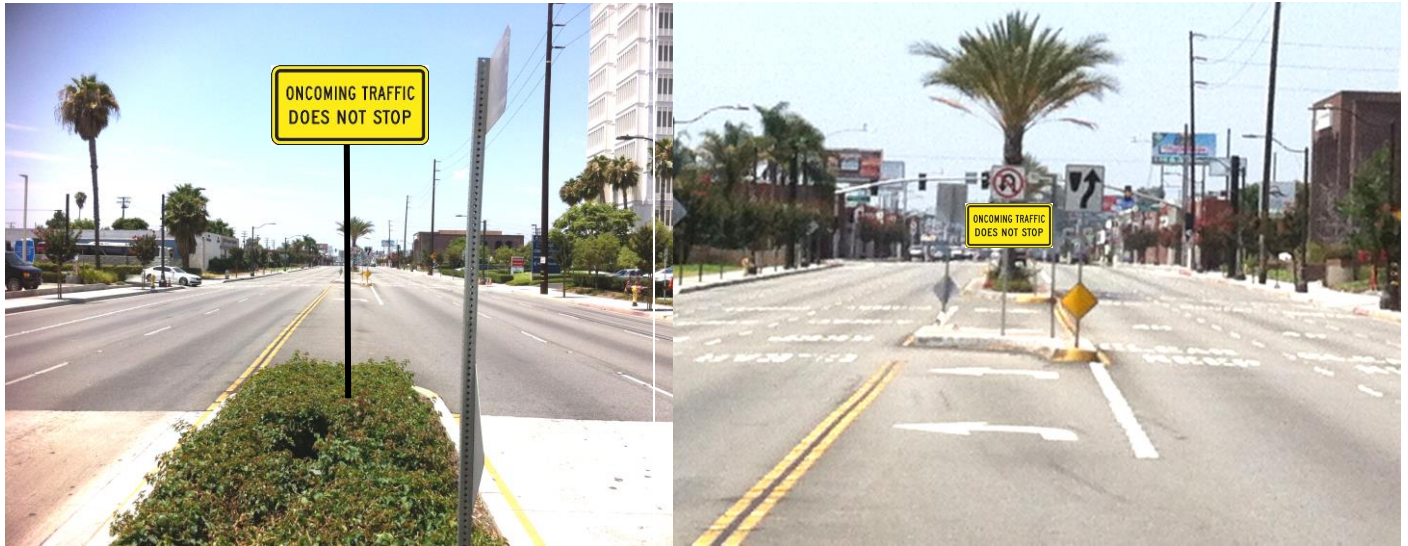


Staff is therefore proposing that these signs be posted at the locations shown in the following diagrams:



Eastbound Left-Turn Lane Pocket along Washington Boulevard

The posting of these “ONCOMING TRAFFIC DOES NOT STOP” signs for the left turn movements into the Bank of the West facility will assist drivers in informing them that opposing traffic does not necessarily stop as they make their left turn maneuvers. The dual installation of these signs will warn drivers *before* entering the left turn lane pocket and once more again when making the actual left turn. The signs will also be made to be retro-reflective so that they can effectively warn drivers during the night, as well as during the daylight hours.



Westbound Left-Turn Lane Pocket along Washington Boulevard

For the westbound direction, the posting of the above “ONCOMING TRAFFIC DOES NOT STOP” signs for the left turn movements into the ARCO gas station will assist drivers in informing them that opposing traffic does not necessarily stop as they make their left turn maneuvers. As previously described, the dual installation of these signs will warn drivers *before* entering the left turn lane pocket and once more again when making the actual left turn. Furthermore, the signs will also be made to be retro-reflective so that they can effectively warn drivers during the night, as well as during the daylight hours.

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The proposed installations of these signs are only temporary until the permanent installation of the fully equipped traffic signal with left turn phasing becomes operational. Once the traffic signal becomes operational, these “ONCOMING TRAFFIC DOES NOT STOP” signs will be removed.

By installing the proposed “ONCOMING TRAFFIC DOES NOT STOP” signs, the expectation is that the area for these left turning movements will be made safer without disrupting the natural flow of traffic. In addition, the existence of these signs will enhance awareness for those drivers who are not familiar with this area and will give ample warning to them to exercise great care as they make their left turn maneuvers.

Traffic regulatory and warning signs are guided by the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD), the California Vehicle Code (CVC), and the City of Commerce Municipal Code (CMC).

Specifically, per CVC Section 21351 and per CMC Section 10.20.010, the City is authorized to place and maintain regulatory and / or warning signs (i.e., traffic control devices) within the City, and also that the City Council by way of ordinance or resolution, through the authority of the City Administrator/Manager, City Engineer, or the Public Works & Development Services Director, may install parking restriction signs or paint regulatory curb markings.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve staff recommendation
2. Reject staff recommendation
3. Provide staff with further direction

FISCAL IMPACT:

Staff estimates that the lump sum cost of installing the four (4) “ONCOMING TRAFFIC DOES NOT STOP” signs will be approximately \$3,000, including time, labor, and material. The Public Works Operations fund can adequately cover the estimated \$3,000 expense.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC GOALS:

This item relates to Council's 2016 Strategic Action Plan's:

Community Quality of Life

- Guiding Principle 4 to “support and evaluate community services, programs and events that promote healthy and quality lifestyles for our residents. Enhance public safety and social services through innovative programs that meet the needs of the residential and business communities.”

ATTACHMENT:

- Resolution

Approved by: Vilko Domic, Acting Public Works & Development Services Director

Fiscal Impact reviewed by: Vilko Domic, Director of Finance

Approved as to form by: Noel Tapia, City Attorney

Respectfully submitted: Edgar P. Cisneros, City Manager