ORANGE COUNTY TRAFFIC COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE REPORT OF: January 21, 2016

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT: 1

SUBJECT: Intersection Control

LOCATION: Jackson Street at Bishop Avenue
Midway City; TB 828-A4

INITIATED BY: Constituent Request through the City of Westminster

INVESTIGATOR: Deepthi Arabolu

REQUEST: Establish an all-way stop at the intersection of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue

DATA:

LOCATION MAP

[Map showing the intersection of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue]
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Jackson Street is a north-south 40-foot wide local street with one travel lane in each direction. Parking is allowed on both sides along Jackson Street except during street sweeping times. The posted speed limit on Jackson Street is 25 mph.

Bishop Avenue is an east-west 40-foot wide local street with one travel lane in each direction. Parking is allowed on both sides along Bishop Avenue except during street sweeping times. There is no posted speed limit on Bishop Avenue.

This intersection of Jackson Street at Bishop Avenue is currently a two-way stop controlled intersection. Vehicles on Bishop Avenue are required to stop before entering Jackson Street. The land use in the vicinity of this intersection is mixed development of residential and businesses.

Jurisdiction of Jackson Street at Bishop Avenue is shared by the County of Orange and the City of Westminster. The southwest quadrant of the intersection is in the City of Westminster’s jurisdiction.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES – (24 HOUR ADT: ENTERING INTERSECTION)

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SPEED ZONE FIELD DATA

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ACCIDENT DATA

The City of Westminster’s and OC Traffic Engineering’s collision records show no reported accidents in the past five years occurring at this intersection.

ANALYSIS

On December 15, 2015, the Board of Supervisors approved Orange County Public Works’ (OCPW) recommendation to return this item to the Committee for further review and discussion. Previously, at their October 15, 2015 meeting, the Traffic Committee heard and discussed this agenda item and voted in favor of the action recommended by staff, by a 3-1 majority vote, to maintain two-way stop control at the intersection of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue. See prior meeting minutes for public comments and Committee discussion on that agenda item.

The investigation and analysis of the all-way stop at the intersection of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue was initiated by request from the City of Westminster’s Traffic Engineering Department. Based on available records, this intersection of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue was previously evaluated for an all-way stop in 2004 and 2006. The results of those investigations concluded the intersection did not meet the minimum requirements for an all-way stop control.

In response to a recent request from the City of Westminster, OCPW Traffic Engineering conducted a new traffic investigation for the intersection of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue. Currently, the intersection is a two-way stop controlled intersection with Bishop Avenue traffic stopping at Jackson Street. Guidance for stop sign installations is based on criteria specified by the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD) published by the State of California, Department of Transportation, issued to adopt uniform standards and specifications for all official traffic control devices, in accordance with Section 21400 of the California Vehicle Code. The CA MUTCD policies include consideration of minimum traffic volumes and collision history when making a determination as to the appropriateness of all-way stop intersection control. The intersection of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue met neither the minimum volume nor the accident criteria necessary for an all-way stop control.

The CA MUTCD guidelines specify the vehicular volume entering the intersection from the major street approaches (total of both approaches) averages at least 300 vehicles per hour for any 8 hours of an average day and the combined vehicular volume entering the intersection from the minor street approaches (total of both approaches) averages at least 200 vehicles per
hour for the same 8 hours. Traffic volume measurements at this intersection showed the vehicular volume entering the intersection from the total of both approaches of the major street (Jackson Street) averaged 193 vehicles per hour for the eight peak traffic hours of a day and the combined traffic volume entering the intersection from the total of both approaches of the minor street (Bishop Avenue) averaged 113 vehicles per hour for the same eight hours. The CA MUTCD also considers collision history and requires at least five or more reported crashes in a 12 month period that are susceptible to correction by an all-way stop installation. This intersection had zero reported accidents over the past 12 month period or even over a 60 month period. The intersection meets sight distance requirements; intersection warning signs are in place on Jackson Street in advance of Bishop Avenue.

Based on the findings of this investigation, the installation of all-way stop control at this intersection of Jackson Street at Bishop Avenue is not recommended by OC Traffic Engineering.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND INPUT

The City of Westminster Traffic Engineer addressed the Committee. He noted that the City of Westminster follows a similar process as the Orange County Traffic Committee, at their City’s Traffic Commission and they put together the same type of studies; the difference here, he noted, is that they are dealing with a joint jurisdiction, the County of Orange. He said ideally they would like to have handled this item at the City Traffic Commission level, primarily because the request was initiated by a City representative but noted this item needed to be handled by the County since it is a shared jurisdiction; they supported the County’s process. He mentioned about the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD) being the engineering guidelines that hone them in to the types of solutions that they should be focusing on. He mentioned that a misconception they deal with is with people not in the traffic engineering industry that view the CA MUTCD as a set of rules and think that there would be major implications if these rules are not met. He emphasized that the CA MUTCD is a guideline and that other components that are considered besides the engineering policies from the CA MUTCD are enforcement and public participation. He said that one of the things he makes very clear to the community, when making similar recommendations as this one, is that he does not live there, so their study is their best attempt at explaining to the public at large what issues that portion of the community is dealing with so they rely heavily on the experiences of the community on a daily basis. He noted that this item’s staff report is excellent and that he is not there to contest any of it. He also added that they would have probably had the same analysis, had they done their study of this intersection. However, he said their conclusion would have varied based on their knowledge of the area, the input of their community, and working with their traffic bureau. He expressed that in today’s meeting he is speaking on behalf of the City’s elected officials, their City Traffic Commission, a business member (Elmore Toyota), and their police traffic bureau. He asked the Committee to look outside of the CA MUTCD guidelines. He said that CA MUTCD guidelines are written without knowledge of this specific intersection. As
an example, he said that most of South Orange County is a master planned community unlike the subject neighborhood which has a mixed land use of surface lots housing vehicles, service centers, mixed used apartments, a school, a fast food restaurant, and a state highway passing through the middle of their city. He also mentioned that Jackson Street is used as a cut through by drivers wanting to avoid the very busy intersection of Beach Boulevard at McFadden Avenue. He said all these conditions are not going to be reflected in the CA MUTCD which is one of the reasons one has to go out to the area to try to understand the experiences of the community on a daily basis. Elmore Toyota is their community member that feels there is a lot of confusion at this intersection because of the varied users on these roadways, which are unfamiliar to the surroundings and this is not captured by speed and vehicle count data. He urged the Committee to think beyond just the engineering component and take into account the community input. He noted he is very supportive of their city police department’s efforts in speed enforcement but due to their shortage of police staff resources, the city relies heavily on CHP’s assistance. He concluded that the community that is there all day, their city mayor and city council supports an all-way stop control at this intersection. In response to a question from the Committee whether speeding was his concern on Jackson Street, the City Traffic Engineer stated that speeding is not their issue and clarified that the real issue is the driving behavior from the mixed use of travelers, unfamiliar with the area, who are trying to locate the business they are visiting. For this reason, he stated an all-way stop control at this intersection would enhance safety. In response to another question from the Committee about whether there is a way at this point for this item to be handled at the city level instead of the County since it seems to be more of a city need although it is a shared intersection and the all-way stop warrant is far from being met, the City Traffic Engineer said that they remain open to handling this item in any of the different alternatives previously presented to OCPW; the Chairman of the Traffic Committee provided his input to this question by noting the County has jurisdiction over the majority of the intersection (County has 3 approaches and City has 1 approach) which is why this item is being handled at a County level; also County Counsel was consulted and they advised that the Board of Supervisors still has the authority to approve any modifications to the traffic control at this intersection. Furthermore, in response to another question from the Committee whether any other community members besides Elmore Toyota have provided feedback or concerns regarding this intersection, the City Traffic Engineer answered that the more vocal component and driving force has been Elmore Toyota but others in the past have been the school district, the post office, and the assisted living for disabled people community center but he has no correspondence to these members requests/concerns. He also added that at his meeting in April 2015, the city mayor, city council member, and Elmore Toyota expressed their disappointment it has taken long meaning it has come to the Board of Supervisors twice before and this will be the third time in their request for an all-way stop control at this intersection. He said that this issue has existed for over a decade in which the intersection has never quite met the engineering Guidelines for an all-way stop control.

A City of Westminster staff member who is also the City Traffic Commission’s Secretary addressed the Committee. She read two letters from the City of Westminster Mayor addressed
to the Committee and the Orange County Board of Supervisors respectively. The first letter, which was previously read at the October Traffic Committee meeting, stated the Mayor’s full support of a City Council member’s efforts in supporting local business and that the Mayor supports Elmore Toyota’s efforts to enhance safety on their frontage streets with the installation of an all-way stop control at the intersection of Jackson Street at Bishop Avenue. The second letter was sent to the Board of Supervisors prior to their December 15, 2015, Board hearing when the Traffic Committee’s October meeting recommendation was due to be discussed in that meeting’s agenda. The letter stated the Mayor’s disappointment that the request for an all-way stop control was denied by the Traffic Committee during the October 2015 meeting. The Mayor stated he fully supports the efforts of their local businesses to make their frontage streets safer and believes the all-way stop control at this intersection would enhance the safety in the area. The Mayor also noted the City Traffic Engineer and two City Traffic Commissioners were present at the October Traffic Committee meeting and spoke in favor of an all-way stop control. The Mayor noted the requestor Elmore Toyota was also at the October meeting and discussed the safety issues they face on a daily basis. The Mayor’s letter said that the most compelling testimony at that October meeting was provided by the CHP officer who has patrolled the area for the past three years, and noted the CHP officer supports an all-way stop control at this intersection. The Mayor asks the Board to support their request for an all-way stop control at the subject intersection.

A California Highway Patrol officer addressed the Committee and noted he spoke at the October Traffic Committee meeting. He wanted to add there was a recent traffic collision that occurred on October 24, 2015 at the subject intersection; he specified that the collision was a two car, non-injury type of collision. He noted that this collision was not in the system yet when staff did their research for the last Traffic Committee meeting. Furthermore, he said that there was a single story apartment complex at address of 15349 (Jackson Street) that was demolished and rebuilt as a three-story apartment complex. The officer believes this new complex is going to generate more traffic to the area. He said that if the Committee decides not to recommend an all-way stop at the intersection at this time, he recommends reconsidering the all-way stop in the future with the higher traffic volumes once the new complex is completely built and fully occupied. In response to a question from the Committee about the traffic collision mentioned earlier, the officer explained that the traffic collision was a broadside type that was due to a west bound vehicle on Bishop Avenue failing to yield the right of way to a south bound vehicle on Jackson Street.

**TRAFFIC COMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

The Chairman of the Traffic Committee re-stated staff’s recommendation and based on staff’s presentation and the testimonies, encouraged Committee members to make a motion with a recommendation different from staff’s recommended action if they felt it was necessary, or if Committee vote on the original item were to result in voting down staff’s recommended action.
COMMITTEE REPORT OF: January 21, 2016

A Committee member made a motion to maintain the two-way stop control at the intersection of Jackson Street at Bishop Avenue and re-study this intersection subsequent to the construction completion of the apartment complex. The final vote by the Committee was four in favor and two against. The motion was approved by majority vote.

RECOMMENDATION

Maintain two-way stop control at the intersection of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue and re-study this intersection subsequent to the construction completion of the apartment complex.

BOARD ACTION NECESSARY TO ENACT THIS RECOMMENDATION

1. Approve this report.
ORANGE COUNTY TRAFFIC COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE REPORT OF: October 15, 2015

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT: 1

SUBJECT: Intersection Control

LOCATION: Jackson Street at Bishop Avenue
            Midway City; TB 828-A4

INITIATED BY: Constituent Request through the City of Westminster

INVESTIGATOR: Deepthi Arabolu

REQUEST: Establish an all-way stop at the intersection of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue

DATA:

LOCATION MAP

[Diagram showing the location of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue]
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Jackson Street is a north-south 40-foot wide local street with one travel lane in each direction. Parking is allowed on both sides along Jackson Street except during street sweeping times. The posted speed limit on Jackson Street is 25 mph.

Bishop Avenue is an east-west 40-foot wide local street with one travel lane in each direction. Parking is allowed on both sides along Bishop Avenue except during street sweeping times. There is no posted speed limit on Bishop Avenue.

This intersection of Jackson Street at Bishop Avenue is currently a two-way stop controlled intersection. Vehicles on Bishop Avenue are required to stop before entering Jackson Street. The land use in the vicinity of this intersection is mixed development of residential and businesses.

Jurisdiction of Jackson Street at Bishop Avenue is shared by the County of Orange and the City of Westminster. The southwest quadrant of the intersection is in the City of Westminster’s jurisdiction.

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ANALYSIS

The investigation and analysis of the all-way stop at the intersection of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue was initiated by request from the City of Westminster’s Traffic Engineering Department. Based on available records, this intersection of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue was previously evaluated for an all-way stop in 2004 and 2006. The results of those investigations concluded the intersection did not meet the minimum requirements for an all-way stop control.

In response to the recent request from the City of Westminster, Orange County Public Works (OCPW) Traffic Engineering conducted a new traffic investigation for the intersection of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue. Currently, the intersection is a two-way stop controlled intersection with Bishop Avenue stopping at Jackson Street. Guidance for stop sign installations is based on criteria specified by the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD) published by the State of California, Department of Transportation, issued to adopt uniform standards and specifications for all official traffic control devices, in accordance with Section 21400 of the California Vehicle Code. The CA MUTCD policies include consideration of traffic volumes and accident history when determining that a full stop is required on an approach to an intersection. Due to the study intersection’s low traffic volumes and the absence of accidents, the minimum criteria for an all-way stop control at this intersection are not satisfied.

Traffic volume measurements at this intersection showed that the current average hourly volume of the total vehicles entering the intersection during the eight highest traffic hours is 306 vehicles (193 for the major street approaches; 113 for the minor street approaches). Vehicle volumes during the eight peak traffic hours are below the average hourly vehicular volume of 500 vehicles specified in the guidelines (300 for the major street approaches; 200 for the minor street approaches). The minor street, Bishop Avenue, generated 37% of the total traffic entering the intersection from all directions. The CA MUTCD guidelines specify that the traffic volume entering the intersection from the minor street approaches must be at least 40% of the total volume entering the intersection from all directions. The CA MUTCD accident criteria requires a minimum of 5 accidents susceptible to correction by an all-way stop installation in a 1 year period at the intersection; this intersection has no reported accidents in the past 5 years. The intersection has sufficient sight distance and intersection warning signs are posted on Jackson Street in advance of Bishop Avenue.

Based on the results of this investigation, the installation of an all-way stop control at this
intersection of Jackson Street at Bishop Avenue is not recommended by OC Traffic Engineering.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND INPUT

The City of Westminster Traffic Engineer addressed the Committee. He concurred with the County’s study methodology for all-way stop warrant analysis and noted the City follows the exact same method; the methodology follows the policies of the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD) used by traffic engineers throughout California and is based on the Federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). He noted the goal of the CA MUTCD is to provide uniformity for the use and application of traffic control devices throughout California to assist road users in recognizing and understanding the devices regardless of the jurisdiction. He further stated the CA MUTCD takes statistical data from the entire state to arrive to the guidelines and these guidelines determine the likelihood of a successful stop sign installation. However, he claimed the challenge for individuals like him is that some communities differ from block to block and the CA MUTCD does not differentiate between a residential street in one city from one of another. He stated there is a very different feeling a driver has when driving through this intersection versus another intersection in another city. He noted that in many cases for a residential neighborhood, the residents are most accustomed and familiar to the signs. However, he stated that one of the City’s most prominent and reputable businesses, Elmore Toyota, is having problems that affect their business and the safety of the public caused by the behavior of vehicles adjacent to their property. He stated that this is essentially the reason why the City initiated the request for an all-way stop sign installation at this intersection of Jackson Street at Bishop Avenue. He mentioned that this intersection is different from other intersections in that it is adjacent to Beach Boulevard which has one of the busiest intersections in Orange County nearby, Beach Boulevard at McFadden Avenue. He mentioned that a lot of westbound vehicles on McFadden Avenue turn right onto Jackson Street to avoid the traffic congestion on Beach Boulevard, due to its close proximity to the freeway ramps while elaborating that the problem with Jackson Street is that drivers unfamiliar with this street find it difficult to become familiarized with the land use; he added that Jackson Street has a regional post office, a car dealer, Elmore Toyota’s offsite vehicle storage facility which is frequently accessed by vehicles, small shops, school pedestrian traffic from a local school in the neighborhood, multi-family homes/apartments, and group living units for the mentally ill. He also noted that parking was restricted near the intersection to enhance visibility but that removal of additional parking would be difficult due to the high parking demand in this area. He asked the Committee to focus on the mentioned driver behavior, first time visitors to the businesses being unfamiliar with the area, and all the activity occurring at the intersection; although consideration of these factors does not follow CA MUTCD policy guidelines. He believes the variety of users and not the regular users that come through this intersection is what warrants the installation of an all-way stop intersection control and that if an all-way stop is installed, it would allow parking to be restored since sight distance would no longer be an issue as every vehicle would be expected to stop. Finally, based
on his professional experience, he acknowledged that a City of Westminster report for this situation would be the same as the County’s staff report that indicates the intersection does not meet the warrant for an all-way stop per the CA MUTCD. But based on his engineering judgment and comments received from the community, he thinks an all-way stop would be a successful installation although it does not meet CA MUTCD policy warrants. In response to a question from the Committee, the City Traffic Engineer noted there is some pedestrian activity but not enough to warrant a marked crosswalk or the use of a crossing guard. In response to another question from the Committee, he noted there is speed differential where vehicles are stopping, slowing down, or cutting through which is cause for concerns.

The Attorney representing Elmore Toyota addressed the Committee. He mentioned that Elmore Toyota in addition to their property on the southwest corner of the intersection also owns the property on the northwest corner where they wash and store vehicles. He said there is frequent pedestrian activity across Bishop Avenue as a result of Elmore Toyota’s day to day operations from these two properties. He also mentioned there are a lot of homeless people who frequent the area which is a concern to them due to the high speed of traffic. He said there are cars racing at high speeds during the evening and at night time. He mentioned that Elmore Toyota has been working for years to get an all-way stop sign installed at this intersection because of high speed traffic and also for traffic safety concerns for their customers and employees.

A City of Westminster staff member who is also the City Traffic Commission’s Secretary addressed the Committee. She read a letter from the City of Westminster Mayor addressed to the Committee which stated the Mayor’s full support of a City Council member’s efforts in supporting local business. The Mayor supports Elmore Toyota’s efforts to enhance safety on their frontage streets with the installation of an all-way stop control at the intersection of Jackson Street at Bishop Avenue.

A City of Westminster Council member addressed the Committee. He mentioned that he lives in the vicinity of the intersection and commutes through this area often. He said that, although the speed limit on Jackson Street is 25 mph, it is not always the speed observed by drivers and the City does not have the resources to enforce the speed limit. He said he has witnessed instances of vehicles racing down Jackson Street without stopping or slowing down as they cross the Bishop Avenue intersection and that he has concerns that an inattentive driver on Bishop Avenue may not exercise caution and cause an accident when entering the intersection. He noted that he asked Elmore Toyota of any accidents at this intersection and the feedback he received was that there have been close calls but no accidents; they feel that something needs to be done before a serious accident occurs. He further mentioned that due to the high on-street parking demand, sometimes people park in the restricted areas of Jackson Street near
the intersection making it difficult for drivers on Bishop Avenue to see oncoming traffic on Jackson Street. He requested the Committee to approve the installation of an all-way stop sign at this intersection.

Two City of Westminster Traffic Commissioners addressed the Committee to state their support for the installation of an all-way stop sign at this intersection. One of the commissioners mentioned that he lives in the neighborhood and has witnessed cars speeding along the intersection.

A California Highway Patrol officer addressed the Committee. He stated that he is currently assigned to this unincorporated area and mentioned he has been responsible for patrolling this area for about 2 1/2 years and is very familiar with the intersection. He said that he issues a lot of speeding tickets on Jackson Street and that there is cut-through traffic northbound from McFadden Avenue and southbound from Bolsa Avenue. He mentioned it is an area that has a lot of pedestrian traffic. He also mentioned about the apartment complexes at the southeast corner of the intersection that create a blind spot for westbound pedestrian traffic crossing the intersection. For these reasons, he personally supported the installation of an all-way stop sign at the intersection even though the data does not support it.

TRAFFIC COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

In response to a question from the Committee, staff noted there are sufficient parking restrictions on Jackson Street for sight distance; the Chairman of the Traffic Committee noted that enforcement of these parking restriction areas is needed to achieve the optimum sight distance. The Chairman reminded the Committee that all-way stop sign installations are not intended to be traffic calming devices; they are intended for the purpose of assigning right of way at an intersection and that OCPW abstains from using them as traffic calming devices; OCPW’s decisions are based on guidelines from the CA MUTCD which are based on factual data of the behavior of the intersection not on perceptions which may differ from one person to another. In response to another question from the Committee, staff noted that based on staff’s field observations there has been minimal pedestrian traffic activity crossing Jackson Street at this intersection. The Chairman added that the current data, including historical data, does not support the installation of an all-way stop control sign at the intersection. The problems heard by the Committee are perception, and that it becomes perception when the statements are not supported by data.

A motion was made to maintain a two-way stop control at the intersection of Jackson Street at Bishop Avenue as recommended by staff. The final vote by the Committee was three in favor,
COMMITTEE REPORT OF: October 15, 2015

one against and one abstention. The motion was approved by majority vote.

RECOMMENDATION

Maintain a two-way stop control at the intersection of Jackson Street and Bishop Avenue.

BOARD ACTION NECESSARY TO ENACT THIS RECOMMENDATION

1. Approve this report.