

### REPORT TO COUNCIL

#### **SUBJECT**

Red Curb Requirements at Controlled Intersections (Information Only)

#### **BACKGROUND**

Recently staff received a question regarding the painting of red curbs at controlled intersections and previous Council actions from 2012. A concern was expressed that staff had not followed the Council direction. Staff reviewed the previous RTCs, the proposed changes to the Municipal Code, reviewed the Council videos, reviewed the Council minutes, coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, and reviewed the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD), to better understand the decisions made five years ago.

On December 6, 2011, Council discussed RTC No. 11-264, an update to the Corner Vision Triangle ordinance. Staff's Alternative 1 included a number of recommendations including that "signalized intersections shall provide no parking zones of 20 feet from curb return, consistent with the parking restriction standards of MUTCD". The Council approved staff's Alternative 1, but modified the language from "signalized" to "controlled." Signalized intersections involve only traffic signals, whereas controlled intersections encompass all forms of traffic controls including traffic signals and traffic signs. In addition, the Council had a significant discussion regarding the implementation of the Council action. The Council discussion acknowledged that there was no funding for implementation, which placed limits on the ability to implement the Council direction. Further, Council acknowledged that implementation would need to occur over a period of time as funding was identified.

On October 2, 2012, an Ordinance was introduced to amend the Sunnyvale Municipal Code to reflect the previous Council action. The Ordinance, as approved by Council, stated that "The city traffic engineer is authorized, consistent with the latest standards or guidelines established by Caltrans, to install appropriate markings or signage creating "no parking" zones extending 20 feet from curb returns at all intersections controlled by yield signs, stop signs, or traffic signals." The final ordinance did not require the no parking zones of 20 feet, but left the determination up to the discretion of the city traffic engineer following engineering standards.

#### **DISCUSSION**

After reviewing all the documentation related to this item staff has determined that the approved ordinance was very clear and incorporates appropriate engineering guidance and discretion, but did not necessarily follow the spirit of the discussion and modifications made during the Council process which mandated red curbs at all controlled intersections. Although the final Ordinance did not mandate red curbs at all controlled intersections as it does better reflect the typical requirements for red curb implementation and, also, better acknowledges the funding limitations at the time of approval.

Per the Council discussion a modification to the Municipal Code could be required to better reflect the previous Council direction. However, staff does not propose any changes to the current Ordinance for a number of reasons:

- Controlled intersections include signalized, stop, and yield intersections.
- Signalized intersections and stop/yield intersections are analyzed differently per CA MUTCD (Caltrans) requirements. The recommendation does not meet current MUTCD requirements for signalized intersections.
- The installation of red curbs and the length of red curbs is different for signalized and stop/yield intersections.
- Typically, the installation or need for red curbs at a specific location is dependent on several factors including street type, speed, volumes, design, and visibility. It is not a one-size-fits-all.
- Installation of red-curbs at all controlled intersections is not necessary for safe operations. The 2011 staff report states that “Staff reviewed a one-year detailed history of collisions...of 111 collisions reviewed, only one involved obscured vision.”
- Most jurisdictions do not enforce a minimum red curb requirement for controlled intersections but allow for professional engineering judgement, which is consistent with the CA MUTCD guidance.
- Staff has continued to install red-curbs per CA MUTCD requirements and has not identified any safety concerns.

However, if the Council would like to proceed with modifying the current Ordinance to require red-curbs at all controlled intersections staff could come forward at a later date with an item for Council’s consideration. The item would provide better specificity regarding how the red curb requirements differ for different types of controlled intersections and would also include a budget request to implement this approach. The City has approximately 900 controlled intersections and it is staff’s estimate that approximately 250 already have some red curbs. If the rest are required to implement red curbs an initial budget of approximate \$300,000 is necessary with a similar level of maintenance funding approximately every five years.

## **PUBLIC CONTACT**

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Senior Center, Community Center and Department of Public Safety; and by making the agenda and report available at the Sunnyvale Public Library, the Office of the City Clerk and on the City's website.

Prepared by: Manuel Pineda, Director, Public Works

Reviewed by: Kent Steffens, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager