



STAFF REPORT

Study of Restricted Parking on Ralston Avenue During Special Community Events

Honorable Mayor and Council Members

Summary

At the August 10, 2004 City Council Meeting, Council requested that staff re-examine the Ralston Avenue Parking Plan for the 2004 Belmont Art and Wine Festival and other similar community events. The previous parking plan was reviewed and a revised plan allowing limited parking on Ralston Avenue was developed. The plan for this year's festival incorporates a limited expansion of street parking and elimination of the "No Parking" barricades, which had been used in the past. No council action is necessary, unless changes are desired.

Background and Discussion

The Belmont Art and Wine Festival began in 1983. Over the next 21 years the traffic and parking plan for the event has evolved as the event has grown. Initially, no parking controls were put in place on Ralston Avenue and festival goers were allowed to park on both sides of Ralston Avenue from South Road to Chula Vista Avenue, and beyond. This resulted in multiple problems including congestion and traffic accidents. Eventually, parking was prohibited on both sides of Ralston Avenue from South Road to Chula Vista Avenue for safety reasons. In 1997 Ordinance 916 was enacted, authorizing the Chief of Police to erect signage altering the parking regulations during emergencies and times during which there is an eminent threat of emergence created by traffic congestion.

This year staff re-examined the parking and traffic plan with a goal of providing both traffic safety and a more customer friendly atmosphere for the festival. Allowing parking in the bicycle lane, which is on both sides of Ralston Avenue, presented a potential problem. Section 21211 of the California Vehicle Code prohibits stopping by vehicles in a designated bicycle lane. However, it was confirmed by the City Attorney that City Ordinance 916 allows the Chief of Police to authorize parking in the bicycle lane as needed during the time of the festival.

A number of options were considered by staff to increase parking and create a more inviting atmosphere, while still considering safety and circulation issues. The following plan had has been developed.

- Parking would continue to be prohibited on the south side (E/B direction) of Ralston Avenue,

from Chula Vista Avenue to the end of the curve opposite the driveway to Notre Dame de Namur University. Staff has concerns about the safety of allowing parking on that curved section of road.

- Parallel parking would be permitted on the south side (E/B direction) of Ralston Avenue beginning at the end of the curve opposite the driveway to Notre Dame de Namur University and extending to the no parking zone preceding South Road. Allowing parking in this area would create approximately 14 new spaces.
- Parking would be prohibited on the north side (W/B direction) of Ralston Avenue from South Road to Chula Vista Avenue, as is the case now. This area will remain a no stopping/parking zone due safety concerns related to reduced roadway width and the likelihood of uncontrolled pedestrian traffic across Ralston Avenue. In areas where parking would be prohibited, in-ground sleeves have been installed by the Department of Public Works on the far side of the sidewalk opposite the curb at 150' intervals. These sleeves would be inconspicuous and would allow for the placement of standard poles and signs indicating "No Stopping Any Time" and eliminate the need for barricades every 50 feet.
- Sign-board trailers would be placed on E/B Ralston Ave prior to Chula Vista and on W/B Ralston Avenue, prior to Old County Road directing motorists to utilize the CalTrain parking lot for festival parking.
- Public & vendor parking will be restricted on Friday night, as well as Saturday & Sunday morning, until 10:00AM. Vendors will be directed to park in a designated area on the Notre Dame High School campus.
- As in the past, the unpaved lot on O'Neill Street & Sixth Avenue will be open for public parking.
- On Saturday, timed parking will be enforced on Sixth Avenue between Ralston Avenue and Emmett Street & Ralston Avenue between the entrance to Twin Pine Park and Sixth Avenue, so local businesses are not unduly impacted.

This plan will be evaluated after the festival to assess how well it worked.

Fiscal Impact

None. All associated costs are covered by the normal operating budgets of the involved City departments.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Council accept this report, outlining parking plan for the 2004 Belmont Art & Wine Festival.

Alternatives

1. Provide alternative direction
2. Take no action at this time

Attachments

None

Respectfully submitted,

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Sergeant

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Chief of Police

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