

CITY OF BELMONT
MEMORANDUM



TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Ray Davis, Public Works Director *[Signature]*
Karen Borrmann, Assistant Public Works Director *[Signature KB]*

VIA: Carlos DeMelo, Community Development Director *[Signature C]*

SUBJECT: June 17, 2008 Planning Commission Meeting – Agenda Item 5A
Discussion Regarding Street Name Signs at Signalized Intersections

Summary

The City of Belmont Public Works Department requests Planning Commission input on street name signs at signalized intersections. Specific considerations where input is suggested include the color, lettering font (bold or not), and on the design, use and location of the City logo on street name signs. Samples of two alternative color schemes, with City logos shown in color or all white, and with either bold and regular font print will be available at the meeting on June 17, 2008 for viewing. Photos of the signs are enclosed.

There are four alternative street name signs for signalized intersections that were prepared:

1. Green with White Lettering and Belmont Logo
2. Green with White Lettering and Belmont Logo (double width bold type)
3. White with Blue Lettering and Belmont Logo
4. White with Blue Lettering and Belmont Logo (double width bold type)

It is suggested that the Commissioners also view the signs installed at the intersection of Sixth Avenue and Ralston Avenue, to aid in visualizing any differences in how signage appears when viewed up close versus when it is mounted on a signal mast arm before the meeting.

Existing street name signs at intersections of Ralston Avenue and Sixth Avenue are the same as sign number three (White with Blue Lettering and Belmont Logo) noted above. Existing signs at the intersection of Ralston Avenue and Old County Road are similar to sign number 1 (Green with White Lettering and Belmont Logo) noted above, except that the City logo does not appear on the sign at Old County Road and the sign at Old County Road is mounted in a lit frame.

One key difference is how the sign looks up close, (appears larger) versus when mounted on the signal mast arm (appears smaller). Another difference is in how reflective the material looks up close (appears more reflective). Both of these factors contribute towards maintaining adequate visibility of the signs to the driver, especially at night. Street name signs on existing traffic signals throughout the City range between 5 feet in width (i.e. Ralston and El Camino Real) and 7-8 feet in width (Alameda de las Pulgas). The advance median mounted street name signs along Ralston Avenue east of Cipriani Boulevard are 5 to 6 feet.

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The size of the signs is important because the street name must be legible to a motorist who is moving, not just visible when one is stopped at the intersection. Street name and other roadway signs are made of a retro-reflective material so they may be bright and visible at night. The retro-reflective material used by the City is a high quality reflective material that has an extended maintenance life.

Best Practices

Maintaining minimum levels of traffic sign retro-reflectivity on the nation's roads is becoming increasingly important as the driving population ages. Older drivers have diminished visual capabilities that are most apparent under dark conditions. Currently, 26.2 million drivers are 65 or older and by 2010 an estimated 33.7 million drivers will be 65 or older. Traffic signs that are easier to see and read can help all drivers (not just the elderly) at night.

A 1990 study by the Illinois Department of Transportation of a test group of older drivers found need for improvement in street name signs, especially at major intersections where they were found to be too small, inconsistently located, and often too close to other devices or in spots that are hard to see at night.

The State of Florida recently implemented an older driver program that includes operational improvements such as larger lettering on overhead and street name signs. It is a common and accepted practice to have street name signage that is highly visible, especially on Arterial Roadways such as Ralston Avenue. Requirements for assessment of sign retro-reflectivity include nighttime assessment from a vehicle moving at normal operating speeds from a typical viewing distance to determine if the sign is may be read with time left for an adequate response by the driver.

It is considered a BEST PRACTICE to provide clear, visible, and easily readable street name signs at signalized intersections. The proposed signs will reduce driver confusion and will make traveling along Ralston Avenue safer for all users.

It is requested that the Commission discuss and provide input and a recommendation on the color, lettering font (bold or not), and design, use and location of the City logo and make a recommendation on the appearance of the street name signs at signalized intersections.

Public Contact

No other public contact beyond posting of the agenda was initiated by the City in preparation of tonight's item.

Attachments

A. Exhibit A (Photos) – Commission only