



Information Item

Date: July 26, 2010

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Eileen Fogarty, Director, Planning and Community Development

Subject: Parking Restrictions to Address Concerns Related to the Use of the Adelaide Drive Stairs

Introduction

The two sets of stairs connecting Adelaide Drive to Santa Monica Canyon continue to attract crowds of people for fitness training activities, creating impacts on the adjacent residential neighborhood. Of particular concern is the interaction of pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles along Adelaide Drive, where there is currently no sidewalk on the north side. As a means of addressing the high volume of pedestrian activity along Adelaide Drive starting this summer, staff will be implementing a restriction of all vehicle parking on the south side of Adelaide Drive between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM on Saturdays and Sundays. The new parking restrictions would effectively prohibit non-resident parking between 6:00 PM Fridays to 8:00 AM Mondays. This restriction will provide additional roadway width to better accommodate the legal use of the roadway by pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles. This report also provides information regarding the neighborhood's request for expanded preferential parking restrictions. However, staff is not instituting an expansion of current preferential parking restrictions at this time, given Coastal Commission policies.

Background

The area surrounding Adelaide Drive and 4th St. has always been a neighborhood with unusual attributes. These include the stellar views of Santa Monica Canyon and the ocean from Adelaide Drive, the exceptionally wide grassy median on 4th Street and the

two old, steep stairways connecting Adelaide Drive at the top of the bluff with Entrada Drive in Santa Monica Canyon below. One of the stairways is located near the intersection of Adelaide Drive and 4th Street in the Coastal Zone. The other is located about 700 feet to the east, outside the zone. These stairs have long been used for physical fitness training, and this use has impacted the Adelaide neighborhood.

In the mid 1990's, residents petitioned the City to establish a preferential parking zone to ease the parking problems created by a combination of the narrow characteristic of Adelaide Drive, which can only accommodate parking on one side, and the increasing numbers of persons flocking into the neighborhood for fitness training. On [March 26, 1996](#), the City Council adopted an ordinance establishing a 24-hour preferential parking zone. The Coastal Commission asserted jurisdiction and questioned the 24-hour restriction. In response, the City modified its parking restriction so that permits would only be required between 6:00 PM and 8:00 AM, and reserved its right to challenge the Commission's jurisdiction but filed an application for a Coastal Permit. That application was denied, and litigation followed. In that litigation, the City challenged the Commission's jurisdiction over preferential parking and neighbors intervened. Ultimately, the Coastal Commission issued the permit and the litigation was dismissed.

In recent years, use of the stairs and median for fitness training has increased. Commercial activities such as "boot camps" and other group fitness training have proliferated, particularly on the 4th Street median and the stairs. Neighbors again turned to the City for assistance. The Santa Monica Police Department began enforcing an older law that prohibits activities other than walking and jogging on medians, and legal challenges were threatened relating to the validity of that ordinance. The City surveyed residents of the neighborhood and conducted two well-attended community meetings.

On [April 7, 2009](#), Council approved the following recommendations made by staff:

1. Restricting commercial and/or group use of the median

2. Consolidating and updating signage to provide direction to the nearest public restrooms and parking
3. Providing regularly scheduled trash pickup
4. Exploring restricting access to the stairs and strengthening parking restrictions
5. Encouraging residents and stair users to form a working group, and
6. Assessing the feasibility of providing alternate recreational stairs, perhaps connecting Palisades Park with the Annenberg Community Beach House.

Following a Council meeting on [February 23, 2010](#), Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 4.20.010 was modified to include the following prohibitions: “(1) No person shall place or use any exercise, physical therapy or similar equipment on a median strip or parkway, and (2) No person shall use a median strip or parkway for any commercial or business purpose.”

Discussion

Staff has continued to evaluate concerns raised by residents along Adelaide Drive related to the high volumes of pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles using the street, as directed by Council. Several concepts were shared with the community at a meeting on May 18, 2010. The concepts included the provision of a sidewalk or walkway along the north side of Adelaide Drive, as well as variations that would provide one- or two-way traffic on Adelaide Drive between 4th and 7th Streets. Meeting attendees generally did not support the concepts. Meeting attendees expressed their desire to enact permanent residential preferential parking restrictions, as requested in 2009 and discussed below.

Preferential Parking Restrictions

Current Preferential Parking Zone HH Restrictions: The current restrictions on Adelaide Drive are in effect between 6:00 PM and 8:00 AM daily. During the daytime hours of 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM, parking is allowed on the south side.

Qualifying Petitions for Expanded Hours: In April 2009, the neighborhood submitted a qualifying petition to prohibit all on-street parking, except by permit. The petition was signed by more than two-thirds of the residential units on the 400-600 block of Adelaide Drive (between 4th and 7th Streets). Additionally, a qualifying petition was received from residents of the 700-800 block of Adelaide Place (between 7th Street and the cul-de-sac) to establish a new preferential parking zone with the same restrictions. At this time, no petitions have been submitted to implement 24-hour preferential parking restrictions on the 100-300 block of Adelaide Drive or the 100-200 block of 4th Street between Adelaide Drive and San Vicente Boulevard.

Current On-Street Utilization: Parking occupancy counts were conducted in early September 2009. The counts were conducted on one weekday and one Saturday at 7:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 3:00 PM, 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM. Additionally, license plate information was recorded for the vehicles on Adelaide Place. As illustrated by the table below, the counts indicate that on-street parking in the study area can be difficult to find during the peak periods. Parking occupancy reached a peak of 83 percent of all on-street spaces on Adelaide Place on Saturday at 7:00 AM and a peak of 85 percent of all on-street spaces on the 400-600 block of Adelaide Drive on Saturday at 10:00 AM. Average occupancies for the blocks of Adelaide Drive and Place are lower, ranging between 36 and 49 percent on the weekday and 36 and 56 on Saturday.

Table 1 - Observed Occupancies (% of on-street spaces occupied)

	100-300 block Adelaide Drive		400-600 block Adelaide Drive		700-800 block Adelaide Place	
	Thursday	Saturday	Thursday	Saturday	Thursday	Saturday
7 AM	33%	13%	13%	10%	60%	83%
10 AM	59%	41%	69%	85%	43%	67%
3 PM	59%	20%	40%	48%	30%	37%
5 PM	26%	46%	33%	29%	47%	33%
7 PM	20%	54%	15%	8%	63%	60%

At the community meeting May 18, 2010, staff informed the residents in attendance that their petitions to change the existing preferential parking regulations to “no parking except

by permit” were on file and the City could act on these petitions. If the City were to move forward with the residents’ request to establish new preferential parking restrictions, the next step would be to hold a public meeting with residents, stair users, and others in the area. Depending on the input from meeting attendees, staff could bring a recommendation to Council to implement the requested new 24 hour preferential parking restrictions.

Coastal Commission Review: The California Coastal Commission takes the position that the preferential parking restrictions would require its approval through a Coastal Development permit. The first preferential parking petition for Adelaide Drive was received in June 1995, with the City Council endorsing the subsequent recommendation to establish a “no parking except by permit” zone. However, the California Coastal Commission denied the City’s application, filed suit and subsequent negotiations resulted in the current “no parking 6:00 PM to 8:00 AM daily” regulations. The California Coastal Commission claimed that the two sets of stairs are vital to coastal access and there is no indication that the Commission’s position has changed over the years.

The Coastal Commission will likely take the position that its approval is required for any change in the current preferential parking restrictions. On the other hand, there continues to be a legal basis for challenging the Commission's jurisdiction based on the Vehicle Code provision that gives the City full authority to create preferential parking zones. Whether to pursue this possible option is a policy decision for Council. If the City Council were to approve the 24-hour preferential parking restrictions requested by the residents, the City Attorney would want to inform the Council of the potential legal challenges that may be brought forth by the California Coastal Commission.

Parking Restrictions on Summer Weekends

As a solution to address the legitimate concerns related to the shared use of Adelaide Drive by pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles, staff will be installing new parking

restrictions for all vehicles during the busy weekend hours. Since the highest volume of pedestrian activity associated with the stairs occurs on weekends, staff will install new signage designating “No Parking 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM Saturday and Sunday” on the south side of Adelaide Drive between 4th Street and 7th Street. This parking restriction will provide additional roadway width to better accommodate the legal use of the roadway by pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles. Although the new parking restrictions would effectively prohibit non-resident parking between 6:00 PM Fridays to 8:00 AM Mondays, it is staff’s opinion that the parking regulations would not impede coastal access and will enhance safety of coastal users. Substantial available on-street parking exists on the surrounding streets to accommodate weekend parking needs.

These signs will be installed on a trial basis for a period of six months. Staff will conduct “before” and “after” traffic and parking occupancy counts on Adelaide Drive and surrounding streets in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed new parking restrictions and any impacts on adjacent streets and/or residents. In addition, staff will install new signage alerting all roadway users to the provisions of the California Vehicle Code related to the legal use of the roadway by pedestrians and vehicles. These signs will be installed permanently. These measures will be covered within the current City budget.

Summary

Staff will be implementing the following measures:

- 1) Install new signage designating “No Parking 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM Saturday and Sunday” on the south side of Adelaide Drive between 4th Street and 7th Street. These signs will be installed on a trial basis for a period of six months.
- 2) Install new signage alerting all roadway users to the provisions of the California Vehicle Code related to the legal use of the roadway by pedestrians and vehicles. These signs will be installed permanently.

- 3) Conduct “before” and “after” traffic and parking occupancy counts for the trial period.
- 4) Following the six month trial installation, revisit the weekend daytime restrictions and assess whether to proceed with expanded residential preferential parking restrictions.

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