

REVISED

CITY COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: May 20, 2020

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

Cc: Jerene Watson, City Manager; Dawn Prince, Deputy City Manager;
Leadership Team

FROM: Kraig Fullen, Chief of Police; Alan Humphrey, PW Director;
Dave Swietanski, Deputy PW Director

SUBJECT: Commercial Truck Traffic Issues/Concerns

The following information is being provided in response to ongoing concerns presented by residents with regard to the semi-truck traffic throughout the City.

DISCUSSION:

As you are aware the City has experienced a substantial increase in semi-truck traffic with the start of the border wall project. The commercial traffic had initially been directed through N. Washington Avenue to 15th Street to access Airport Road and Geronimo Trail. However, the traffic had to be rerouted because of the sewer project in Bay Acres that is currently underway and scheduled to continue for the next 6-9 months. Traffic on Washington Avenue was restricted to a single lane because of the construction and has since been detoured into the Bay Acres neighborhood which is not conducive to heavy truck traffic. Unfortunately, this is the only established commercial route that provides access to the east side of town without crossing directly through town.

In looking at alternatives, the team considered the route's ability to handle the weight, existing conditions of the pavement/chip seal, account for turning radius and minimization of impacts to sensitive zones (residential, schools, clinics, etc.).

After considering a limited number of alternative routes, the team concluded that 10th Street provided the most direct route to the airport and is an established commercial truck route. The semi-traffic was moved to the 10th Street route which has resulted in added complaints from the residents along the route, particularly on the far east side near 10th and Airport Road. Concerns presented by residents include the volume of trucks, the wear and tear on the roadway, speeding, and the early/late hours they are operating usually starting around 4:30AM.

Maddux & Sons' operations have also been impacted as they have used the Washington route to travel between their yard on Leslie Canyon Road and their pit located on Geronimo Trail. With the rerouting of the semi-trucks, Maddux was asked to move their traffic to the 10th Street route

which they report has impacted their business by following a less direct route with multiple traffic signals as opposed to the Washington route with a few stop signs.

The team resumed the search for alternative routes and identified the following route as a possible solution: Highway 80 to A Avenue; south on A Avenue to 16th Street; 16th Street east to Bonita Avenue; Bonita Avenue south to 15th Street; and 15th Street east to Airport Road. The route circumvents the traffic signal at 15th Street and A Avenue due to the tight turning radius combined with the likelihood of westbound traffic on 15th Street presenting interference with the turning truck.

The team conducted an analysis of each route, scoring each route independently based on its attributes: 1 – Highly Undesirable 2 – Undesirable 3 – Neutral 4 – Desirable 5 – Highly Desirable

A Avenue to 15th Street to Airport Road TOTAL 333
15th Street is a designated truck route from Washington to Airport Road
Outlying route- avoids center of town
A Avenue is a collector/arterial and truck route from 80 to 10th Street
15th Street is a collector/arterial
Pavement is in poor shape (needs replaced anyway)
Good access for Maddux to pit
Route Length 15,000 ft
Easy right turn onto Airport from 15th (sweep turn, yield condition, no stop)
Nearly the entire route is only 2 lanes wide
Whole route has only one traffic signal
Route has residential development on at least one side of the road (10,600 feet)
Traffic light at A and 15th is an obstacle (narrow causing conflict w/vehicles at stop bar)
Need to detour 16th Street to Bonita due to light at 15th
5 turning movements along the route
Passes 3 schools, 1 school zone at high school
Pavement not designed for heavy truck traffic
Higher pedestrian traffic when school in session
Sidewalks lacking east of Washington (5200 feet)
15th Street is only 34 feet wide through a residential area east of Washington (5200 feet), houses on one side of road
15th Street is not a designated truck route from A Avenue to Washington

Pan American to 10th Street to Airport Road TOTAL 318
10th Street is a designated truck route from Pan American to Airport Road
Pan American Avenue is a designated truck route
Pavement is in fair shape

Only 2 turning movements - Pan American to 10th; 10th to Airport
Road is about 55 feet wide west of Van Buren
Easy route for truck drivers; minimal turning movements
Turning angle at 10th St/Pan Am might be improved through lane modification
Route has 3 lanes or more, except for 2500 feet from Van Buren to Airport
Turn angle is difficult at Pan American and 10th (less than 90 degrees)
Central route- conflicts with center of town
Route Length 21,600 ft
Road is very narrow (less than 33 feet) east of Van Buren
The right turn from 10th to Airport is quite difficult. Trucks regularly drive over curb on return
Indirect route for Maddux to pit
Route has 6 traffic signals and 1 stop sign
Route has residential development on at least one side of the road (13,000 feet)
Heavier traffic at Post Office (10th and F Avenue)
10th Street is only about 32 feet wide through a residential area is residential (2500 feet)
No sidewalks east of Harrison (2000 ft)

The result was marginal, meaning that neither route was determined to be ideal, but the alternative 15th Street route was favored by a combined score of 333 to 318.

On May 20, 2020, the City Team met with representatives from Southwest Valley Constructors (SWVC), leading the border wall project, Maddux & Sons' Trucking of Douglas and representatives from Cochise County (attending via teleconference) to share the information and solicit their input.

SWVC representatives shared concerns of having their traffic moved to 15th Street as they viewed the 10th Street route to be more durable in terms of the wear and tear to the roadway. Turns along the route induce greater damage and the 15th Street option had additional turns that the road surface was not designed to endure. SWVC also shared that the increase in their truck traffic was due to movement of materials to another job sight west of Douglas and the movement of material was nearly complete. SWVC estimated that there were seventy (70) trucks operating every two hours on moving materials, making about 3-4 trips throughout the day. This would total a range of 210 – 280 trucks per day. That has since been reduced to fifty (50) trucks as of this week with additional decreases in traffic anticipated in the next few weeks.

Maddux & Sons added that the issue was temporary and looked to be decreasing significantly in the next few weeks. It was asked that the team consider allowing the use of the 15th Street route for local traffic, such as theirs, which would segregate some of the traffic that the 10th Street route is experiencing and allow them a more direct route between their yard and their pit as previously noted.

As a result of the discussion it was determined to leave the SWVC traffic supporting the border wall project on the 10th Street route and to codify the 15th Street route for use by local commercial traffic until such time that commercial traffic can resume on Washington Avenue; with the earliest estimate to be Spring of 2021. SWVC mentioned that they were open to discussing funding

assistance for needed road repairs which will be addressed separately once those discussions are finalized.

The alternate route will be presented to Mayor and Council at the next opportunity in June for consideration to be added to the Douglas Municipal Code as a pilot commercial route. The recommendation is made with the acknowledgement that adding truck traffic to another area of town will end with the same result – additional complaints. The fact remains that the traffic is not going to be well received wherever it is directed and the amount of traffic has been substantial. The silver lining is that the situation is temporary, perhaps not to those residents who are experiencing it on a daily basis, but it is diminishing and will continue to diminish over the next few weeks. This traffic results in a considerable economic boost to our economy which has not been without its challenges, particularly in light of the pandemic.

If the motion is approved and the route accepted, Public Works will be erecting signage to mark both routes. Police will enforce the adherence to the routes as well as the speed limits along the routes.

RECOMMENDATION / CONCLUSION:

This report is for information only.

