



City of Woodland

REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

**TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL**

DATE: October 16, 2007

SUBJECT: Public Hearing on Median Access at 18430 County Road 102 (Chevron)

Report in Brief

Currently there is an existing raised median with a northbound left turn access into 18430 County Road 102 (Chevron station). The I-5/CR 102 interchange project will modify the median at this location. Staff is recommending closing the median access location. At the July 16, 2007 Traffic Safety Commission (TSC) meeting, the Commission voted 3-0 to support staff's recommendation (see attached meeting minutes and TSC agenda item). Chevron appealed this decision and requested a hearing before the City Council (see attached request). Subsequently, Chevron presented a technical memorandum in favor of maintaining the opening (see attached memorandum). Staff prepared a response to their technical memorandum (see attached response). Because of the technical nature of the issue, it was decided to return to the TSC to present the technical issues to the Commission at their meeting on September 17, 2007. After reviewing the information, the Commission voted 2-2 on a motion to support the staff recommendation (see attached draft meeting minutes and TSC agenda item). As a result, the Commission recommendation in favor of closing the median from the July 16, 2007 remains their official position.

Staff recommends that the City Council uphold the Traffic Safety Commission recommendation and approve the closure of the median access at 18430 County Road 102 (Chevron) in order to facilitate the I-5/CR 102 project as well as potential future development projects.

Background

The City of Woodland is working on the I-5/CR 102 interchange improvement project that will widen County Road 102 to 6 lanes between Maxwell Ave and the I-5 southbound ramp, widen County Road 102 to 4 lanes from the southbound ramp to the northbound ramp and install a southbound on ramp from northbound CR 102 to southbound I-5. When CR 102 is widened south of the interchange, the median will need to be reconstructed. This will likely be the last capital improvement project that modifies this median. The existing median opening is not considered a

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property right and as such, the property owner is not entitled to compensation as a result of this action. Technically, this access could be decided at the staff level. However, due to the contentious nature of the issue, staff decided to take this issue to the Traffic Safety Commission (and it was subsequently appealed to the City Council).

At the July 16, 2007 TSC meeting, staff stated the need to close the median access based on the following issues:

1) Inadequate gaps in the flow of traffic -

Traffic modeling numbers show that it will be difficult to find gaps in traffic to make a left turn movement into this driveway during the peak hour. When the I-5/102 interchange is completed, it is estimated that there will be an average of one car heading southbound every three seconds. The traffic modeling shows there will be an average of one car every two seconds in 2020. It will also be difficult for drivers to cross 3 lanes of traffic instead of the current one lane of traffic.

2) Numerous maintenance issues and accidents -

There has been one reported accident at this location. This accident involved one vehicle losing control and going over the left turn median island leaving tire marks on the median. In addition, maintenance records have shown a significant amount of other unreported vehicle accidents. City maintenance crews have frequently repaired pavement markers that have been hit on the left turn median opening, replaced the no U-turn sign inside the left turn pocket and the yellow tip on the left turn median has been frequently repainted due to the tip being hit. Also, the left turn median island light poles have been replaced twice because of unreported accidents.

3) Left turn access used to make U-Turns -

The future opening for Wintun Drive on the east side of CR 102 has no left turn access. It is anticipated that vehicles will attempt to use this turn lane as a u-turn. We do not want to encourage this movement by maintaining the left turn access.

4) Comments from Caltrans -

Staff discussed this opening with Caltrans. Because the opening mostly affected the movement of northbound traffic prior to arriving at the interchange, they did not require that the opening be taken away. However, they did support the concept of taking this access away as it is typical to have restricted access this close to an interchange.

On August 16, 2007, Chevron presented a technical memorandum prepared by Dalene Whitlock of W-Trans. The memo concluded that the average delays encountered by drivers would not change perceptibly and the maximum projected queue could be accommodated with the turn pocket. Their report also noted that there were three reported collisions within a five-year period and that these collisions were likely associated with the northbound lane merge from two lanes to one lane.

In response to Chevron's memorandum, staff prepared a response dated September 6, 2007. The main points presented by staff are as follows:

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- 1) Based on maintenance records, there have been additional collisions that have not been summarized in accident reports (as noted in #2 above).
- 2) While the traffic analysis from W-Trans showed that the intersection performs acceptably from an operational perspective, there were a number of factors that their analysis did not take into account:
 - The traffic memo did not consider the likely chance of increased traffic volumes due to proposed development that is not currently reflected in the current traffic model. There is currently a proposal for annexation of approximately 150 acres on the east side of CR 102 just south of this location.
 - The traffic memo does not take into account the possibility of increased left turning volumes due to u-turns as mentioned in the Traffic Safety Commission staff report.
 - The traffic memo uses standard values for the acceptable gap in traffic based on the Highway Capacity Manual (which sets standard values for how much time is needed to find an appropriate gap in traffic to make a left turn). This analysis did not take into account the affect of crossing three lanes of traffic with a speed of 45 mph. It is likely that drivers will be cautious and require a larger gap to cross the three lanes of higher speed traffic.
- 3) In discussion with Sacramento County and Caltrans, staff has found that it is uncommon for this type of access to be provided this close to an interchange.

Discussion

The closure of this median access will serve as a proactive traffic improvement that will facilitate the I-5/CR 102 on ramp improvement project and future development projects. Data considered by staff and the Traffic Safety Commission as described herein supports the closure of the median based on the need to accommodate future traffic and congestion. In addition, staff believes that the closure is a prudent and proactive safety measure when considering the needs to accommodate future traffic and congestion.

If this median access restriction is approved, there would be a decreased need for maintenance at this location. Also, the cost for the closure would be funded by the I-5/CR 102 interchange project. If this access opening is provided in the median and it is later desired to close this access, then a funding source for the future cost (\$100k plus range) would need to be found.

Fiscal Impact

This project has a minimal impact to the I-5/CR 102 project expenditures since the median island will already be relocated as a part of this project. If the median closure is taken away after the I-5/CR in 102 project is constructed, it will cost in the order of \$100k. The current annual maintenance cost is approximately \$500.

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Posting of the City Council agenda and the Traffic Safety Commission meeting of July 16, and September 17, 2007.

Commission Recommendation

At their meeting on September 17, 2007 meeting, the Traffic Safety Commission failed to pass a motion in favor of closing the median access. As a result, the Commission vote of 3-0 (in favor of the closure of this median) from the July 16, 2007 meeting stands as the Commission recommendation.

Alternative Courses of Action

1. Uphold the Traffic Safety Commission recommendation and approve the closure of the median access at 18430 County Road 102 (Chevron) in order to facilitate the I-5/CR 102 project as well as potential future development projects.
2. Allow the median access at 18430 County Road 102 (Chevron) to remain

Recommendation for Action

Staff recommends that the City Council approve Alternative No. 1

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Reviewed by: Gary Wegener, Public Works Director

Mark G. Deven
City Manager

- Encl. Schematic showing the median with and without the left turn access (p. 1-2)
7/16/07 Traffic Safety Commission Agenda Item A (with attachments) (p. 3-7)
7/16/07 Traffic Safety Commission Meeting Minutes (p. 8-13)
7/24/07 Bob Abbott's Letter of Appeal (p. 14-15)
8/16/07 W-trans Memorandum (p. 16-21)
9/6/07 City's Memo Response Letter (p. 22-25)
9/17/07 Traffic Safety Commission Agenda Item A (without attachments) (p. 26-27)
9/17/07 Excerpt of the Traffic Safety Commission Draft Meeting Minutes For Agenda Item A (p. 28-35)
10/1/07 Email from Bruce Jacks to Mayor & Council (p. 36-37)