

DATE ISSUED: January 18, 2002

REPORT NO. 02-021

ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee  
Agenda of January 23, 2002

SUBJECT: City of San Diego Street Design Manual

#### SUMMARY

Issue - Should the City pursue further review of proposed changes to its existing Street Design Manual to include design guidelines that place more emphasis on the link between land use and street design, mobility and safety of all street users, walkability, and MTDB's transit first policy?

Manager's Recommendation - Direct staff to distribute the draft Street Design Manual to affected City departments and interested groups/organizations. Coordinate comments received, modify the manual as appropriate, and take forward to the Planning Commission for recommendation. Report back to the Land Use and Housing Committee for recommendation to City Council within 60 days.

Other Recommendations - None

Fiscal Impact - None

#### BACKGROUND

In 1992, the City Council directed the City Engineer to update the City of San Diego's 1987 Street Design Manual. This task aimed to create a document that would provide updated street design guidelines, expanded street design options, and be consistent with other city, state and federal requirements.

Several draft reviews and revisions were made from 1993 to 2001. Comments from the Planning Commission, City staff, Cal Trans, MTDB, private utility companies and private design community professionals were collected at meetings and workshops. Modifications to address many of the issues were incorporated into the draft revisions to the Street Design Manual in

2001. The Manual was anticipated to be brought before the Land Use and Housing Committee in June 2001. However, there was a great deal of interest expressed by community groups and the design professionals community to revisit the Manual. Also, the City's Planning Department has a desire to coordinate revisions to the Manual with the department's urban design and Strategic Framework efforts.

In light of the above, the effort to revise the Street Design Manual was reassigned from the Engineering and Capital Projects Department to the Planning Department in June 2001.

## DISCUSSION

As part of the Planning Department's efforts to revise the manual, we developed a work program that provided broad opportunity for review and involvement by interested organizations and individuals. To guide us in making revisions to the manual, representatives from the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB), Cal Trans, Community Planners Advisory Committee on Transportation (COMPACT), Community Planning Chairs (CPC), Parking Management Districts (PMD), San Diego County Bicycle Coalition, builders, landscape architects and design professionals, San Diego Coalition for Transportation Choices, California Trucking Association, Air Pollution Control District (APCD), Walk San Diego, disabled community, and Tree Advisory Board were invited to participate on an ad-hoc committee to explore options for revisions to the Street Design Manual. Attachment A is a listing of all invited participants.

An ad-hoc committee was formed that had a total of thirteen workshops from August to December 2001. Staff members from Council Districts One and Three also participated in many of these workshops. The workshops covered the following topics:

- ☺ Street width and right-of-way requirements
- ☺ Intersections and curb return radius
- ☺ Street classifications
- ☺ Bicycle facilities & provisions
- ☺ Parkway standards (sidewalk, planting area, street trees, street furniture)
- ☺ Pedestrian provisions
- ☺ Street lighting policy and standards
- ☺ Traffic calming

The thirteen workshops culminated in several recommendations and the following are highlights of the proposed changes.

**Highlights of the Proposed Changes**

*Street Width* – The ad-hoc committee recommended reducing the curb-to-curb width of low volume residential local streets from 34 feet to 28 feet where block lengths are less than 600 feet long, the street is greater than 600 feet from a canyon rim, and there are two access points to the street for emergency vehicles. The Committee also recommended that the right-of-way should be maintained at the current requirement of 54 feet.

*Lane Width* – The ad-hoc committee recommended that travel lane width for streets classified as major or higher should be reduced from 12 feet to 11 feet.

*Street Classifications* – The ad-hoc committee recommended deleting the street classifications of “Two-Lane Collector with no Fronting Property,” “Four-Lane Collector with Two-way Left Turn Lane,” and “Six-Lane Major” streets. The Committee recommended introducing a “Six-Lane Urban Major” street classification.

*Parkway* – The ad-hoc committee recommended a minimum parkway planting area to be six (6) feet in width to accommodate a broader range of street tree species. The Committee also recommended a minimum sidewalk width of five (5) feet. These recommendations result in a minimum parkway width (curb to property line) of 11 ½ feet (6 inches curb width, 6 feet planting area, and 5 feet sidewalk). The Committee also recommended that five (5) foot contiguous sidewalks be permitted only along local streets that are adjacent to open space.

*Street Lighting* – At the request of Councilmember Atkins, the ad-hoc committee visited the current Council Policy on street lighting (Policy 200-18, Mid-block Street Light Policy for Developed Areas). The committee proposed changes to provide an additional type of street lighting that addresses the needs of pedestrians. The current street lighting guidelines address roadway safety. Attachment B is the proposed changes to the street lighting policy. The design guidelines included in the Street Design Manual were modified accordingly to reflect the changes to the street lighting policy. Attachment C is the modified design guidelines for street lighting.

*Pedestrian Design Guidelines* – The ad-hoc committee recommended adding a section in the Street Design Manual that includes design guidelines for pedestrian friendly facilities and treatments. These guidelines will be taken from a study currently under development by a consultant team under contract to SANDAG. The study is expected to be complete in March 2002.

*Traffic Calming* - The ad-hoc committee recommended five categories of traffic calming measures. These measures include horizontal deflections (mini traffic circles, median slow points, and chicanes), vertical deflections (road humps, speed tables, and raised crosswalks), intersection pop-outs, traffic diverters (semi-diverters and diagonal diverters), and channelization. A summary of these traffic calming measures, their applicability, advantages

and disadvantages along with the proposed traffic calming section of the Street Design Manual are included as attachment D.

### Next Steps

The Planning Department is currently working with a consultant team to produce a manual with illustrations that reflects the ad-hoc committee's recommendations. In accordance with our schedule, a draft manual is anticipated to be produced in February 2002.

As part of the work program, we recommend distributing the draft manual to City departments as well as utility companies for comments for a review period of three to four weeks. This step is important, since it provides an opportunity for staff to resolve any conflicts with existing policies, requirements, or regulations that the revised manual may pose. Subsequently, the manual will be presented for feedback to the Subcommittee for Removal of Architectural Barriers (SCRAB), Community Planning Chairs (CPC), Building Industry Association (BIA), Association of General Contractors (AGC), and other organizations as needed. Upon completion of these meetings, the manual will be revised as a final draft for recommendation by the Planning Commission and Land Use and Housing Committee for adoption by the Council.

Respectfully submitted,

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S. Gail Goldberg A.I.C.P.  
Planning Director

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Approved: P. Lamont Ewell  
Assistant City Manager

GOLDBERG/GWH

Note: Attachment Nos. 2 and 3 are not available in electronic format. A copy is available for review in the Office of the City Clerk.

Attachments: [1. List of invited participants](#)  
2 Proposed changes to street lighting policy  
3. Proposed design guidelines for street lighting  
[4. Proposed traffic calming measures](#)