



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## LAND USE AGENDA ITEM

### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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**DATE:** August 17, 2022

**02**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

### **SUBJECT**

**ADVERTISE AND AWARD A CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT FOR THREE TRAFFIC SIGNALS IN THE UNINCORPORATED COUNTY AREAS (DISTRICTS: 4 & 5)**

### **OVERVIEW**

The Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC) is part of the Department of Public Works (DPW) traffic engineering program. TAC was established by the Board of Supervisors (Board) in the 1960s to provide traffic regulations and recommendations within the unincorporated areas of the county. Upon receipt of a request or recommendation for a traffic regulation in unincorporated areas of the county, the TAC reviews and investigates the requested item, including engineering and traffic condition studies. TAC recommendations are provided to the Board for consideration. The Board then makes the final decision as to what action will be taken, such as traffic signals.

County staff conducts an annual review of road segments and intersections that do not currently have traffic signals. The TAC evaluates the intersections and provides recommendations to the Board based on increased traffic volumes and traffic accident data, input from DPW staff, and the support of the associated Community Planning and Sponsor Groups. If the Board approves recommendations, intersections are added to the Department of Public Works (DPW) Traffic Signal Priority List (Priority List). The Priority List is reevaluated annually, and projects are implemented as funding is identified. The following three intersections were approved by the Board on the dates shown below.

1. Discovery Street & San Pablo Drive, Lake San Marcos (District 5) - August 8, 2012 (14)
2. Brabham Street & Hillsdale Middle School, Valle de Oro (District 4) - August 2, 2017 (02)
3. Valley Center Road & Ridge Ranch Road, Valley Center (District 5) - June 6, 2020 (09)

The three intersections were identified by DPW staff based on community concerns and service requests from constituents, along with input from neighboring schools and Community Planning and Sponsor Groups. The prioritization method for traffic signals considers collision severity, collision frequency, traffic volumes, pedestrian activity, data from CalEnviroScreen 3.0 and the Healthy Places Index, which includes numerous socioeconomic factors to ensure that underserved communities receive equitable consideration.

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Discovery Street & San Pablo Drive is directly adjacent to Valley Christian School and Brabham Street intersects with Hillsdale Middle School. The safety of the school crossings would be improved by the installation of these traffic signals. These traffic signals were prioritized based on traffic volumes, correctable collisions, the presence of pedestrians, and close proximity to schools and school bus stops.

Funding for the three intersections has been identified through the current Road Fund fund balance for roadway construction projects. The Project designs for the three intersections are complete, and the Project is now ready to be advertised for construction. The three identified intersections being considered today are collectively referred to as the 2022 Three Traffic Signals Project (Project) and all are on the Priority List.

This is a request to approve the advertisement and subsequent award of a construction contract to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder for the Project. If approved, construction would be scheduled to begin in early 2023 and be complete by the end of 2023. The construction cost for the three intersections is estimated at \$3,020,000, which includes a 20% contingency, based on risk evaluations for unforeseen conditions during construction. The funding source is the existing prior year available General Fund fund balance (\$1,060,000) and Road Fund fund balance (\$1,960,000).

**RECOMMENDATION(S)  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

1. Find that the 2022 Three Traffic Signals Project is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines because it involves the minor alteration of existing public roads involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.
2. Authorize the Director of Purchasing and Contracting to advertise and award a construction contract and to take any action authorized by Section 401, et seq. of the Administrative Code, with respect to contracting for the 2022 Three Traffic Signals Project.
3. Designate the Director, Department of Public Works, as County Officer responsible for administering the construction contract, in accordance with Board Policy F-41, Public Works Construction Projects.
4. Adopt the following resolution: **RESOLUTION AMENDING TRAFFIC RESOLUTION NO. 303 RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SIGNALIZED INTERSECTIONS IN THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO.**

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

DPW conducts routine inspections of facilities and roadways and relies on various community engagement methods such as the Tell Us Now! mobile app and toll-free hotlines to intake reports of safety concerns. To ensure that underserved populations are prioritized, DPW evaluates and

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identifies vulnerable populations, using data from the Healthy Places Index (HPI), CalEnviroScreen, San Diego Live Well communities, Environmental Justice Communities, and other County data sources during the review of traffic signals, roadways, and street crossings. The review of traffic signals, roadways, and street crossings supports vehicle and pedestrian safety on all County-maintained roads.

Constructing of the traffic signals located across the school driveways will create a safer environment for residents, school students, and pedestrian traffic. The traffic signals and related improvements such as crosswalks and pedestrian ramps improve access for a variety of residents, including persons with disabilities and children.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Operational Plan in the Department of Public Works Road Fund Detailed Work Program. If approved, construction costs are estimated at \$3,020,000 for the 2022 Three Traffic Signals Project, including a 20% contingency for unforeseen conditions that may arise during construction. The funding source is the existing prior year available General Fund fund balance (\$1,060,000) and Road Fund fund balance (\$1,960,000). There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

County construction contracts are competitively and publicly bid and help stimulate the local economy by creating primarily construction related employment opportunities. All workers employed on public works projects must be paid prevailing wages determined by the California Department of Industrial Relations, according to the type of work and location of the project. The prevailing wage rates are usually based on rates specified in collective bargaining agreements.

**ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

1. The Discovery Street and San Pablo Drive traffic signal is located within the North County Metro Sub-Regional Planning Area and was not represented by a planning group when the traffic signal was reviewed by the TAC. At the TAC (TAC 2012-06-15) meeting, several Lake San Marcos Community Association representatives in attendance stated the Association's strong support for signalization at Discovery Street and San Pablo Drive. Staff contacted the Association on May 19, 2022, and received written support for signalization.
2. The Valle de Oro Community Planning Group (CPG) was provided an opportunity to review the Brabham Street and Hillsdale Middle School Pedestrian-activated Hybrid Beacon (HAWK) traffic signal but did not comment on the TAC (TAC 2017-06-09). In addition, Valle de Oro CPG and the Hillsdale Middle School administration were contacted on June 2, 2022, and both provided written support for the High Intensity Activated CrossWalk (HAWK).
3. The Valley Center Community Planning Group was provided the opportunity to review the Valley Center Road and Ridge Ranch Road traffic signal project and the CPG Mobility Chair provided comments to the TAC (TAC 2020-03-13). Public testimony in support of the traffic signal was provided at the TAC meeting from Valley Center residents and public

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representatives. Staff recently contacted the Chair of the Group on June 2, 2022, and received support for the traffic signal.

**BACKGROUND**

The County of San Diego's (County) Department of Public Works (DPW) operates a traffic engineering program that includes services such as establishing all traffic regulations, operating, and maintaining traffic signals and streetlights, issuing traffic control and special event permits, and addressing traffic-related customer service concerns. Within the traffic engineering program, members of the public and other agencies can make requests or recommendations for transportation needs within the unincorporated areas of the county. Requests or recommendations such as changes to traffic control, speed limits, stop signs, traffic signals, or parking regulations require the Board of Supervisors (Board) direction.

The Board established the Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC) in the 1960s as an aid in providing uniform traffic regulations throughout the unincorporated region. The goal of the TAC is to provide the unincorporated communities of the county with a road system that strives to enhance safety and reduce congestion. To accomplish this, traffic policies are established to provide persons using the road system with consistent and uniform regulations. To be effective, these policies are designed to be legally enforceable so that the motorists will comply.

The TAC is composed of 17 representatives from different agencies including five members-at-large appointed by the Board, one representing each supervisorial district. The members-at-large typically have an interest in transportation planning or engineering issues. Represented agencies also include the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), California Highway Patrol, Insurance Brokers and Agents of San Diego, Pacific Safety Center, County Office of Education, San Diego Bicycle Coalition, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, the San Diego County Fire Authority, and DPW. Agenda items are posted online, emailed through an interested persons distribution list, and sent to Community Planning and Sponsor Groups prior to the scheduled meeting.

The TAC meets every six weeks to review traffic control requests, such as speed limits, stop signs, traffic signals, and parking regulations, submitted by any member of the community, Community Planning and Sponsor Groups, County staff, or other agencies. Upon receipt of a request for a traffic regulation, the TAC reviews and investigates the requested item by gathering and analyzing information such as photographs, prevailing speeds, traffic volume, collision reports, and public testimony. The TAC investigates the request from the perspective of traffic engineers, motorists, bicyclists, law enforcement, school officials, auto insurance representatives, and the general public. After reviewing the data and discussing alternatives, the TAC submits a recommendation to the Board based upon traffic engineering principles, the California Vehicle Code, and driver expectations. The Board then makes the final decision as to what action will be taken.

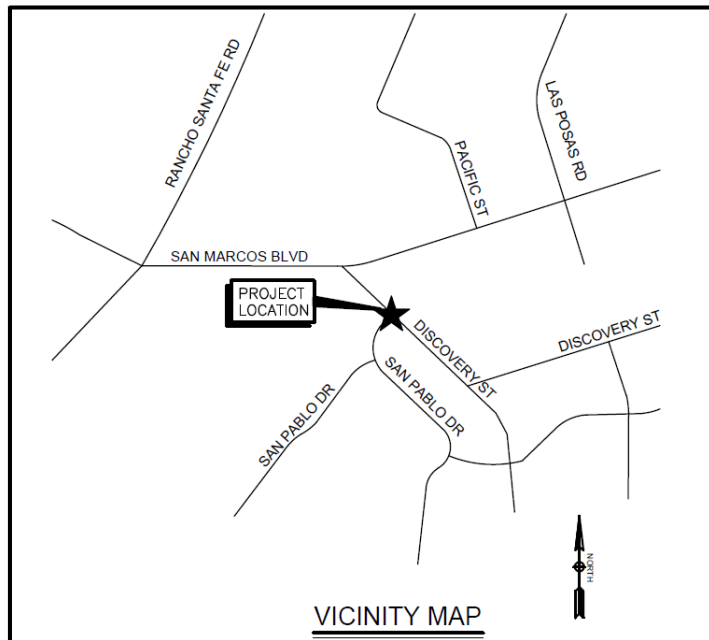
When reviewing intersections for potential traffic signal installation, the TAC considers several factors, including traffic volumes, correctable collisions, proximity to schools, and the presence of pedestrians. Following a review of TAC recommendations, the Board approved the placement of the following three intersections onto the Traffic Signal Priority List (Priority List). The three

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intersections, collectively referred to as the 2022 Three Traffic Signals Project (Project), are as follows:

**1. Discovery Street and San Pablo Drive (Lake San Marcos – District 5)**

The TAC has reviewed the existing traffic conditions at the intersection of Discovery Street and San Pablo Drive and recommended that the Board add this location to the Priority List. In making the recommendation, the TAC considered the proximity of the intersection to the adjacent private elementary school (Valley Christian School) in the Lake San Marcos community and San Marcos High School in the City of San Marcos. The intersection presently has a stop sign only on San Pablo Drive, while Discovery Street is not stop controlled. During peak travel hours and school drop-off times, vehicles have a tough time making left-turns into and out of San Pablo Drive and the Valley Christian School driveways onto Discovery Street. In conjunction with the existing 25 mph speed limit sign when school children are present, the traffic signal will provide safer and more efficient intersection operations. Staff also conducted community outreach with the Lake San Marcos Community Association (LSCMA). The LSMCA is supportive of the traffic signal. The TAC concluded that a traffic signal will benefit the intersection’s existing operating conditions.

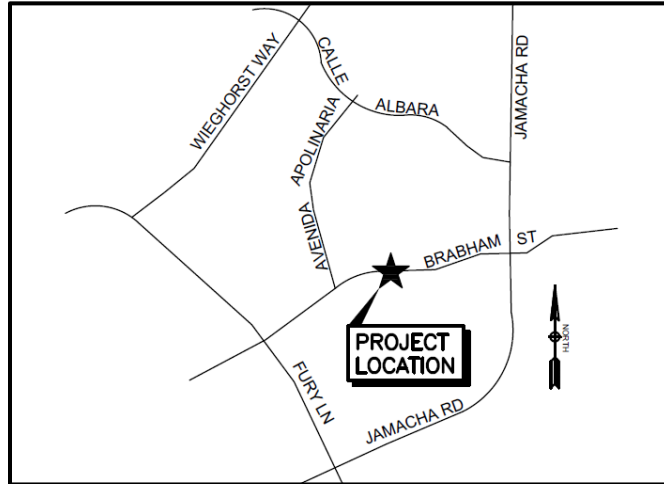


**2. Brabham Street and Hillsdale Middle School (Valle de Oro – District 4)**

The TAC recommended a Pedestrian-activated Hybrid Beacon traffic signal, also known as a HAWK, at the Brabham Street and Hillsdale Middle School intersection based on the proximity of the Hillsdale Middle School. Concerned residents and Hillsdale Middle School administrators support the proposed project as it increases the visibility and safety measures for the students and their families and the pedestrians who use the intersection in Valle de Oro. Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon signals are traffic signals that allow pedestrians to cross the road safely. Unlike regular traffic signals, the HAWK only operates when a pedestrian pushes the crossing button. It has an alternating flashing red light that instructs drivers to stop and proceed when clear. It is not intended

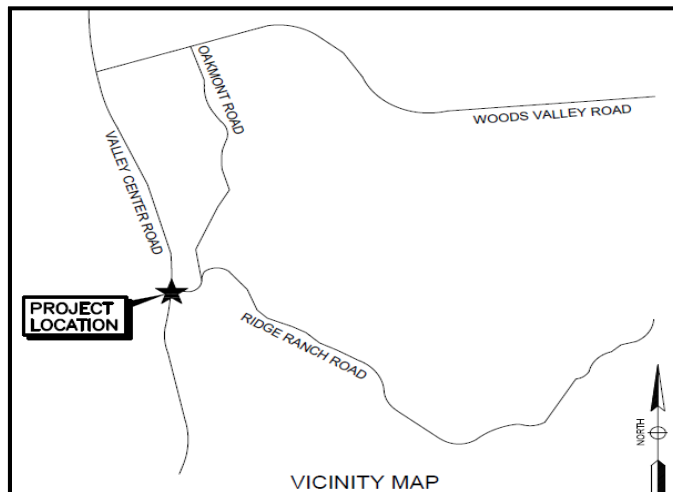
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to be treated as stop and stay by drivers. Before construction, staff will reach out to the School and offer to meet with students and staff to provide information about how the project was developed and how the HAWK signal operates.



**3. Valley Center Road and Ridge Ranch Road (Valley Center – District 5)**

The TAC has reviewed the existing traffic conditions at the intersection of Valley Center Road and Ridge Ranch Road and recommended that the Board add this location to the Priority List. The TAC’s recommendation considered existing stop-controlled conditions, reported collisions and injuries, and community support which included public testimony from multiple area residents who expressed concern for safety and significant delays at the intersection. The intersection presently has a stop sign only on Ridge Ranch Road, while Valley Center Road is not stop controlled. With the 60 MPH posted speed limit on Valley Center Road south of this intersection, it is difficult for southbound motorists on Valley Center Road to make left turns onto Ridge Ranch Road and westbound motorists on Ridge Ranch Road to enter traffic on Valley Center Road. Based on State guidelines, a signal is warranted, and the TAC concluded that a traffic signal will improve roadway operations by providing motorists a controlled movement through this intersection.



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Following the TAC's recommendation and the Board's approval, DPW added the three intersections to the Priority List. The Priority List is reevaluated annually, and projects are implemented as funding is identified. Funding for these intersections has been identified through the current Road Fund fund balance for roadway construction projects. These three intersections were selected based on safety criteria, high pedestrian activity, and because the traffic signals could correct identified collisions; require no right-of-way acquisitions, which decreases the design process.

Adding traffic signals will create a safer environment for San Marcos, Valle de Oro and Valley Center residents, students, and other pedestrian traffic. Other pedestrian and traffic improvements at each of the three intersections will include the installation of new traffic striping, raised pavement markers, signage, and Americans with Disability Act (ADA) improvements, and crosswalks.

The Project's engineering design plans are complete, and the Project is ready to be advertised for construction bidding and award. If approved and appropriated for by today's actions, the construction is scheduled to begin in early 2023, with construction completion anticipated by late 2023. Prior to construction, road work signs will be placed notifying the public of the locations and the approximate dates of construction. Staff will also coordinate with the key stakeholders, such as the San Marcos High School and Hillsdale Middle School to minimize impact to the school's operation. In addition, notifications such as mailers will be provided in the primary spoken languages, English and Spanish, to surrounding residences, and businesses, and project information will be posted on DPW's social media accounts such as Facebook, Nextdoor, and Twitter for the public. The Project will be constructed within the public right-of-way. During construction, temporary traffic control measures such as signage and delineations will be in place to limit impacts to the community and traveling public, and access to private property will be provided.

This is a request to approve the advertisement and subsequent award of a construction contract to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder for the Project. The total construction cost for the three intersections is estimated at \$3,020,000, which includes a 20% contingency based on risk evaluations for unforeseen conditions during construction. The funding source is the existing prior year available General Fund fund balance (\$1,060,000) and Road Fund fund balance (\$1,960,000).

**ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT**

Section 15301 of the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines exempts from CEQA review the "operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use." The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of use. The proposed improvements at the three intersections would consist of replacement and/or installation of new traffic signals, pedestrian ramps, continental crosswalks, and traffic operational improvements along the existing County-maintained roadways. The goal of the project is to increase vehicular and pedestrian safety by facilitating existing vehicle and pedestrian movement through the intersections and roadway segments. Therefore, the project is categorically exempt in accordance

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with Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines because it involves the minor alteration of existing public roadways involving negligible or no expansion of an existing use.

**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Today's recommendations support the Sustainability, Community, and Equity initiatives in the County of San Diego's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan by providing funding for infrastructure that provides improvements to ensure safe and livable communities for all residents.

Respectfully submitted,



SARAH E. AGHASSI  
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

- A. Vicinity Maps
- B. Site Maps
- C. Resolution Amending Traffic Resolution No. 303 Relating to the Establishment of Signalized Intersections in the County of San Diego.
- D. Traffic Signal Priority List and Timelines