



Memorandum

To: Town Council
From: Thomas Dansie, Director of Community Development
Date: August 7, 2020
Re: August 12, 2020 Town Council Meeting
Council Direction on Winderland Lane Traffic Issues and Solutions

Executive Summary

The section of Winderland Lane from SR9 to Foothill Lane is congested with traffic, parking, pedestrians, and deliveries. The congestion and activity on the street create safety hazards for vehicles and pedestrians. Staff requests direction from the Council on developing a strategy to address the congestion issues on the street.

Background

Winderland Lane from SR9 to Foothill Lane is one of the most active sections of the Town’s commercial district. There are two restaurants, two retail stores, and a guide service on this street. The area is in close proximity to other commercial uses in the downtown area. This commercial activity generates a considerable amount of vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Most on-site parking for the businesses on this street is located immediately adjacent to the road—vehicles must back directly into the street to exit a parking space. One business has off-site parking on the opposite side of the street of the business itself. This results in a significant amount of pedestrian traffic crossing the street to access the business.

The businesses in this area do not have on-site delivery zones. There is no on-street parking or shoulder area to accommodate delivery vehicles. Delivery vehicles typically stop in the street to make deliveries to these businesses. This creates traffic issues, and is in violation of Town policy.

The intersection of Winderland Lane and SR9 is one of the busiest intersections in the Town with vehicles making turns off SR9 onto Winderland, and vice-versa. There is a center turn lane on the west side of the intersection, but not on the east side. There is a heavily used pedestrian crosswalk on the east side of the intersection. Pedestrians also regularly cross SR9 outside the crosswalk.

Residential development is located immediately north of this congested commercial area. Between the homes on Foothill Lane, the Red Hawk homes, and the Red Hawk Apartments, the area is one of the highest density residential areas in the Town. These residences are negatively impacted by, and also add to, traffic congestion in the area.

The Town recently improved Winderland Lane by reconstructing the road, adding curb and gutter, and installing a sidewalk on the east side of the road. These improvements have had some positive impact. But the underlying traffic, congestion, and delivery issues persist.

Potential Solution

When Winderland Lane was reconstructed earlier this year the Town brainstormed the possibility of designating the road a one-way street. The one-way designation could extend from SR9 to Foothill Lane,

or possibly all the way to Paradise Road. Staff believes a one-way designation on Winderland Lane could reduce or eliminate many of the traffic issues in the area. Turning movements at the intersection would be cut in half. There would be room to install a sidewalk on the west side of the road. An on-street delivery zone could be established on the road. And conflicts between vehicles backing out of parking spaces at businesses into the road would be reduced because all vehicles would be headed the same direction.

However, designating the road as a one-way street will also have negative impacts on the surrounding residential areas, and on other streets in the area (particularly Paradise Road which is not well-equipped to handle large amounts of additional traffic—especially at the intersection with SR9).

Recognizing the potential for traffic impacts on surrounding areas and the possibility of unintended consequences, staff recommended including money in the current year budget to hire a transportation consultant to study the issue and to analyze the benefits and impacts of a one-way street designation. That money was removed from the budget in consequence of projected COVID 19 revenue reductions.

Requested Council Direction

The traffic issues on Winderland Lane continue to present real safety and traffic problems, even with reduced tourist visitation this season. Staff suggests the need to resolve these problems is urgent and should be addressed as soon as possible.

Staff requests direction from the Council on finding a solution to the Winderland Lane traffic congestion issue. Options for the Council to consider include:

- 1- ***Hire a transportation consultant as originally intended.*** Staff had originally proposed \$40,000 to \$50,000 in the current year budget to fund this consultant. That figure was based on preliminary discussions with transportation planners regarding their fee to complete a comprehensive study, inclusive of public outreach, traffic counts, traffic modeling, analysis of alternatives, preliminary engineering, etc. The Council could decide fund a study at this level, and could alternatively fund a more streamlined study with a correspondingly lower cost. Of course, any funding added to the budget must be justified with either cuts in other areas, or revisions in revenue.
- 2- ***Direct staff to investigate the issue in-house and prepare alternatives.*** Staff has already begun preliminary discussions with residents and businesses in the area regarding the potential benefits and impacts of a one-way designation. The Council could direct staff to continue this research, and to develop a proposal based on staff's research and analysis.
- 3- ***Employ a hybrid consultant/staff study solution.*** The Town could use consultants in a limited fashion to support a staff led study and analysis. For example, a transportation firm could provide traffic counts and traffic modeling. Staff would take the lead in developing alternatives and facilitating public outreach. This would reduce the financial impact on the Town, but would require some budget amendment. It would also take staff resources away from other planning efforts.
- 4- ***Do nothing.*** The Council could decide to make do with the current traffic congestion on Winderland Lane. The Council could wait for more certainty on post-pandemic Town finances before hiring a transportation expert to provide analysis and recommendations.

Note: The Council does NOT need to solve the Winderland Lane traffic issue in this meeting. The Council does not need to make a final decision on designating Winderland Lane a one-way street at this point.

Staff is merely requesting direction from the Council on how to proceed with addressing the issue. However, if the Council wishes to share initial thoughts and perspectives on the issue, a limited discussion on ideas and opinions could be appropriate.