

Analysis of Stakeholder Request to Reverse Direction of Tabor Court

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Background:

Mr. Jim Murez submitted an Agenda Request to reverse the direction of S. Irving Tabor Court from southbound onto Venice Boulevard to northbound onto Palms Boulevard. The Request mentions that this change was "being requested by property owners, neighboring neighbors and business shoppers" apparently through conversations at the Friday Venice Farmers' Market. The problem the Agenda Request is intended to solve likewise was not clearly stated.

Nevertheless, vehicles exiting Tabor Court onto Venice Boulevard do experience difficulty. Venice Boulevard traffic backs up with each red light often blocking the Tabor Court exit. On the other hand, vehicles leaving Tabor Court often try to reach the left turn lane in order either to U-turn onto eastbound Venice Boulevard or to turn southbound onto Abbot Kinney Boulevard (see Figure 1). This requires them to cross three lanes of Venice Boulevard; that can block through traffic when the light turns green.

What might be done to either solve or lessen the problem?

The Existing Condition:

Tabor Court is about 540 feet long between Palms Boulevard to the north and Venice Boulevard to the south. Its width is about 43 feet of which 18 feet is primarily taken up by 51 parking spaces, 14.5 feet by a one-lane southbound roadway, a 3-foot concrete (drainage?) strip, and an additional 7.5 feet often used by the waste bins of businesses along Abbot Kinney Boulevard. In essence, the effective travel roadway is 17.5 feet wide, too narrow for two-way traffic. The parking spaces are angled slightly southbound (75 degrees) and each one is metered. Finally, two perpendicular driveways feed into Tabor Court: one from a gated development to the east, another from the Erewhon grocery store.

Figure 1 depicts the existing direction of traffic flow into and out of Tabor Court. The black circle indicates where exiting Tabor Court traffic interacts with westbound Venice Boulevard traffic.

Figure 1: Existing Condition



Alternative 1: Reversing the Flow of Tabor Court Traffic

Figure 2 shows the resulting flow pattern if the direction of Tabor Court is reversed. Physical changes necessary to effect this change includes redoing pavement arrows and direction (“one way”) signage. The parking angle striping will probably have to change as well from slightly southbound to slightly northbound, but the meter locations would remain.

The problem at Venice Boulevard is solved. However, cars existing at Palms and wanting either to get back to Venice Boulevard or continue south on Abbot Kinney will have to navigate through both directions of Abbot Kinney traffic and two pedestrian crossings at the same unsignalized location. The safety risks – to pedestrians and vehicles – are therefore higher at this intersection than the existing condition with cars exiting at Venice Boulevard.

Figure 2: Reversing Traffic Flow



It is not clear from the request how many of the property owners along Tabor Court would support the change. A majority of them would have to agree. Moreover, an informal check on the feasibility of such a change from LADOT staff is that the change would be difficult given the City’s budget, its focus on Olympic-oriented tasks, and the labor time involved.

Alternative 2: Existing Condition with “Keep Clear” Zone Added

Too often, as noted above, westbound Venice Boulevard vehicles queuing for the red light at the Abbot Kinney intersection leave no space for vehicles exiting Tabor Court. Alternative 2 addresses this problem by adding “keep clear” pavement signage in the first three lanes just prior to Tabor Court. However, existing Tabor Court vehicles often try to cross over to the left turn lane. This often causes lane blockages when the light turns green. To preclude this, Alternative 2 also adds plastic bollards along the left turn lane. These improvements are shown in Figure 3 in red, although they would be white if implemented.

Will motorists observe the “Keep Clear” zone? Experience with “keep clear” zones on Washington Boulevard approaching Lincoln Boulevard (at Carter, Yale, Stanford, and Thatcher Avenues) is frankly mixed. This may be because few cars actually exit these streets. When one is seen wanting to exit one of these streets, they are generally let in. The same will

probably happen at Tabor Court: when exiting vehicles are seen, especially knowing they cannot cross to the left turn lane, the “keep clear” zone will be generally observed.

Figure 3: Adding a “Keep Clear” Zone on Venice Boulevard at Tabor Court



LADOT staff are willing to add the “Keep Clear” pavement markings, but not the bollards. The main reason is that there is no room for them to be installed and they would be an on-going maintenance problem. There is also no budget for the bollards now. There is a concern that access to the left turn lane from Tabor Court cannot be restricted 24/7.

Alternative 3: Do Nothing

Tabor Court is unfortunately quite close to the Abbot Kinney Boulevard and Venice Boulevard intersection. This makes exiting onto Venice Boulevard problematic for much of the day. Adding “Keep Clear” pavement markings often are not respected and could be a wasted effort at a partial solution. Therefore an alternative approach is simply to do nothing.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

The Agenda Request asked that the Committee, and subsequently the VNC, support the reversal of the direction of travel on Tabor Court. Entry to the street would be from Venice Boulevard, existing would be on Palms Boulevard. Making this change would require a majority of property owners to agree, and require labor and material costs the City cannot

now afford. More importantly, this alternative would increase pedestrian and vehicle interactions at Palms and Abbot Kinney. These are significant as exiting vehicles from Tabor Court most probably will turn left at Abbot Kinney across northbound and southbound traffic as well as across two pedestrian crossings. For these reasons, this alternative is not recommended.

What is recommended is to implement "Keep Clear" zones on Venice Boulevard to allow easier egress from Tabor Court. Unfortunately, LADOT staff will not approve the bollards to keep vehicles from using Venice Boulevard's left turn lanes. Experience with "Keep Clear" zones on Washington Avenue is mixed, but appears to work when cars wishing to exit from or enter the local streets are present. Nevertheless, the recommendation is to add "Keep Clear" pavement markings on all four lanes as a partial solution to the problem raised.