

**CITY OF SANTA CLARITA
AGENDA REPORT
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

DATE: September 30, 2008

SUBJECT: Removal of Benz Road/Alaminos Drive Traffic Diverter

DEPARTMENT: Public Works

RECOMMENDED ACTION

City Council receive public testimony and provide direction to staff regarding the traffic diverter currently in place at the intersection of Benz Road and Alaminos Drive.

BACKGROUND

At the August 26, 2008, City Council meeting, the City Council approved the installation of a temporary traffic diverter at the intersection of Benz Road and Alaminos Drive. The purpose of the diverter is to reduce the volume of traffic on Benz Road, particular traffic that is utilizing Benz Road as a cut-through route between Copper Hill Drive and Bouquet Canyon Road. Two weeks prior to the August 26, 2008 City Council meeting, a letter was sent to approximately 530 residents in the affected area to notify them of the upcoming Council meeting. The area that was notified is shown in Exhibit "A".

The City Council approval included a condition that the diverter was to remain in place for three months, during which time City staff would be performing an evaluation study to determine the impact of the diverter on traffic throughout the neighborhood. Upon completion of the evaluation period, the City Council would consider the traffic data provided by staff to determine if the diverter would become a permanent measure or if alternative measures should be considered.

During the week of September 22, 2008, approximately 530 letters were sent to residents in the affected area to notify them that the diverter would be installed that week. The area that was contacted is shown in Exhibit "A". Installation of the diverter occurred during the morning hours of Wednesday, September 24, 2008. The peak hour turn restrictions, that had been previously established to address Benz Road traffic issues, were removed since they were no longer necessary. The peak hour turn restrictions had been in place since Spring 2006 at the following intersections: Copper Hill Drive/Benz Road, Copper Hill Drive/Buckhorn Lane, Bouquet Canyon Road/Benz Road, Bouquet Canyon Road/Sue Drive.

Since installation of the diverter, City staff has received over 100 telephone calls and over 100 e-mails in opposition to the diverter. One of the primary reasons expressed is that the diverter has increased the time to take children to/from Bouquet Canyon Elementary School. Another often cited reason is the diversion of traffic onto adjacent streets in the neighborhood (e.g. Alaminos Drive), increasing traffic volumes on those streets. A minority of the response received has been in support of the diverter, particularly from residents along Benz Road.

At the request of the Mayor, it has been decided to bring this item back before the City Council prior to the original three month evaluation period, due to the significant public response received by the City. It is the desire of the Council to receive additional public testimony in order to make a decision that best meets the needs of all affected parties.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

1. Leave traffic diverter in place for original three-month evaluation period.
2. Remove traffic diverter and re-install peak hour turn restriction signage at Copper Hill Drive/Benz Road, Copper Hill Drive/Buckhorn Lane, Bouquet Canyon Road/Benz Road, Bouquet Canyon Road/Sue Drive.

FISCAL IMPACT

There would be minimal fiscal impact for any of the actions above.

ATTACHMENTS

Benz Road Chronological Summary
Exhibit "A"