

# INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

## July 02, 2025



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**To:** City Council  
**From:** Public Works Department  
**Prepared by:** Ken Seumalo, Public Works Director  
**Subject:** **Stop Sign Warrant Study**

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **RECEIVES** and **FILES** the findings of the stop warrant studies conducted as part of the Safer Streets community discussions; and

**FINDS** the action exempt from CEQA review under CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3).

### BACKGROUND:

Over the past few years, the City of Indian Wells has been developing the Safer Streets Program, which was identified to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, seek opportunities to reduce speeding in the community, and address unsafe vehicular activities in the residential areas. The project is a result of residents expressing concerns about traffic issues in this area of the City, specifically along Fairway Drive, Eldorado Drive, Rancho Palmeras, and Cook Street. These concerns were also reiterated during the community engagement process for the City-Wide Traffic Safety Study and the Safer Streets outreach.

During the Safer Streets public engagement process, the public expressed an interest in adding stop signs to assist in reducing speeds and improving safety along the corridors. Staff recommended each uncontrolled intersection within the four streets be studied for the potential need for additional stop signs. As such, a traffic engineer conducted a Stop Warrant Study to determine if additional stop signs were "warranted" under the conditions established under state traffic laws. Based on the preliminary results of the study, none of the 18 intersections qualified for additional stop signs. These results were shared with the Community at the June 10, 2025, City Council meeting. At the meeting, the Stop Warrant Study was not in its final form. It has since been finalized and is also available on the Safer Streets project website <https://www.cityofindianwells.org/city-hall/departments/public-works/safer-streets-indian-wells>. The report is not attached to this report due to it being voluminous.

## **DISCUSSION:**

As part of the Safer Streets discussion by the City Council, Mayor Whitman requested to provide a copy of the finalized Stop Warrant Study to the community and to have a public discussion on the Stop Warrant Study process and a better understanding of the role community desire for a stop sign is considered in the review.

### Stop Warrant Study

When evaluating traffic control devices, the City follows State guidelines described in the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CAMUTCD). The process described in the CAMUTCD uses minimum guidelines with respect to traffic volumes, number of collisions, traffic speed, visibility, sight distance, and other considerations as requirements to recommend, in this case, stop sign control at the intersections.

The Stop Warrant Study evaluated data collected for collisions over a 12-month period; vehicle and pedestrian volumes, speeds, and delay; and sight distances available for drivers to make safe driving decisions. The decision to recommend a stop-controlled intersection or not is determined by each of these metrics meeting a specific criterion. For example, the CAMUTCD requires a minimum of five (5) collisions occurring in a 12-month period. Details of each metric for each intersection on the four corridors can be found in the actual Stop Warrant Study on file with the City Clerk.

Each of the seventeen (17) intersections were evaluated with the following criteria:

1. Is the stop sign necessary as an interim measure where traffic control signals are justified?
2. Reported crashes- five or more in a 12-month period?
3. Does the intersection meet minimum traffic and pedestrian volumes, speeds and delays?
4. Is there a combination of the above criteria that reaches 80%?

None of the 17 intersections met these criteria, and as a result the installation of an unwarranted multi-way stop sign was not recommended.

Also requested was a review of the recommendation from the traffic engineer with the additional topic of community desire. The overarching criteria for substantiating the need for a stop-controlled intersection is Engineering Judgement. Engineering Judgement refers to the entirety of the data collection process and the aforementioned MUTCD guidelines and does not include the desires or opinions of the road users to have a stop sign installed. A review by the City's City Engineer concurs with the findings of the report and subsequent outreach to the contracted traffic engineer did not support the risk of installing unwarranted stop signs. The traffic engineer is not willing to grant the City design immunity if the stop signs are not warranted.

Staff has informed the City Council that a City can install a stop sign that is not supported by a Stop Warrant Study. However, staff does not recommend the City Council consider this option, as it is against professional standards and doing so will place liability for an incident or accident at intersections with an unsubstantiated stop sign fully upon the City. A follow-up discussion with the City's insurance agency, California Joint Powers Insurance Agency, has concluded that they will not insure the City for any incidents that are at an intersection with an unsubstantiated stop sign.

### **OPTIONS:**

The City Council has the following options:

1. Receive and File this informational report;
2. Instruct staff to seek out proposals to conduct another Stop Warrant Study by another traffic engineering firm; or
3. Provide alternative direction.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The fee to conduct the Stop Warrant Study by the City's on-call traffic engineering firm, Hertzog & Crabill, Inc. for the 17 intersections along the corridor was \$50,820. Sufficient funds were available in the Safer Streets Capital fund.

### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):**

This action has been reviewed per the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State and local CEQA Guidelines, and the City's environmental regulations. The City, acting as the Lead Agency, determined that the ordinance is not subject to CEQA pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2), 15060(c)(3), and 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, because it will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change to the environment as there is no possibility that the action would result in a significant environmental impact, and because it does not constitute a "project" as defined in Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3.