

City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: JANUARY 27, 2026**
FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT **WARD: 5**
SUBJECT: MADISON STREET AND EMERALD STREET AND MADISON STREET AND FREDA AVENUE – TRAFFIC CIRCULATION 12-MONTH PILOT PROJECT

ISSUE:

Consider implementation of a twelve-month traffic circulation pilot project to prohibit through and left-turn movements at the eastbound and westbound approaches at the intersections of Madison Street and Emerald Street and Madison Street and Freda Avenue.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approve the temporary twelve-month traffic circulation pilot project to prohibit through and left-turn movements at the eastbound and westbound approaches at the intersections of Madison Street and Emerald Street and Madison Street and Freda Avenue.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

On December 3, 2025, the Transportation Board (Board) reviewed this matter; all eight members were present. Staff recommended installation of the twelve-month traffic circulation pilot project. Four individuals opposed city staff's recommendation. After a thorough discussion, the Board ultimately voted 6-2 in favor of staff's recommendation.

BACKGROUND:

The Public Works Department may utilize turn-restrictions to prohibit specific turning movements particularly during peak commute hours. Pilot projects using temporary improvements including flexible delineators and signage offer the ability to assess the impacts of traffic circulation changes prior to the consideration of more costly and permanent improvements.

In 2015, the Casa Blanca Community Action Group (CAG) submitted requests for additional pedestrian infrastructure due to safety concerns and high pedestrian traffic at Madison Street and Emerald Street. The Public Works Department applied for Highway Safety Improvement Program grant funds to remove the existing all-way stop at the intersection and construct a

High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) signal at Madison and Emerald Street.

In 2018, the Public Works Department applied for Active Transportation Program Cycle IV Grant funds to construct a HAWK signal at Madison and Freda. Members of CAG and local businesses expressed support for Public Works' pursuit of grant-funded pedestrian improvements.

In 2023, the HAWK signals were installed at the intersections of Madison Street and Emerald Street and Madison Street and Freda. While the signals were installed with support from the community, residents expressed concerns of indecisive driver behavior potentially due to unfamiliarity with HAWK signal operations. In response to community feedback, the City deployed signage and link to video instructions on how HAWK signals operate.



Figure 1: "How to Use the HAWK" Information Sign

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

On June 23, 2025, Traffic Engineering staff met with the Ward 5 Legislative Field Representative, members of the CAG, and other members of the community. The community requested staff to consider solutions to improve operations and safety at the intersections of Madison Street and Emerald Street and Madison Street and Freda Avenue.

On August 13, 2025, Traffic Engineering presented a conceptual version of the proposed traffic

circulation pilot project outlined in this report at the August CAG meeting. Some CAG members expressed concerns regarding lack of left-turn access to travel northbound on Madison. Other concerns were raised regarding diverting traffic toward the newly constructed Casa Blanca Elementary School. CAG voted unanimously to advance the project to the Transportation Board. City staff forwarded conceptual plans to CAG for distribution to the community for review.

At the December 3, 2025 Transportation Board meeting, members of CAG spoke in opposition to staff's recommendation to implement the twelve-month pilot project. Members of CAG expressed a desire for the City to evaluate restoring the intersections to prior conditions or converting the intersections to be signal controlled citing the unique intersection configuration due to the off-set minor street approaches and single pedestrian crosswalk.

DISCUSSION:

The Public Works Department is proposing a twelve-month pilot project to prohibit through and left-turn movements at the eastbound and westbound approaches to the intersections of Madison Street and Emerald Street and Madison Street and Freda Avenue. The restriction of through and left-turn movements on the side-streets is anticipated to reduce the number of potential conflict points at the intersections. This extended pilot period will allow for assessment of impacts to traffic and pedestrian crossing activity at the intersections utilizing the existing HAWK signal.

Installation of traffic diverters may also result in potential negative impacts to the community including the loss of on-street parking adjacent to the improvements, the shifting of area traffic to nearby streets, affects to local churches and public facilities due to changes in access, aesthetic effects, and potential effects to Public Works services and emergency vehicle operations.

Some residents at the August 13th CAG meeting expressed concern regarding the loss of ability to make eastbound left-turns onto northbound Madison Street to access State Route 91.

Residents accustomed to making a left-turn movement from eastbound Freda Avenue onto northbound Madison Street may utilize northbound S Cary Street and eastbound Fern Avenue for a maximum detour distance of 0.28 miles.

Residents accustomed to making a left-turn movement from eastbound Emerald Street onto northbound Madison Street may utilize northbound Grace Street and eastbound Peters Street for a maximum detour distance of 0.56 miles.

Figure 2 below depicts the existing and proposed movements allowed by the pilot project.

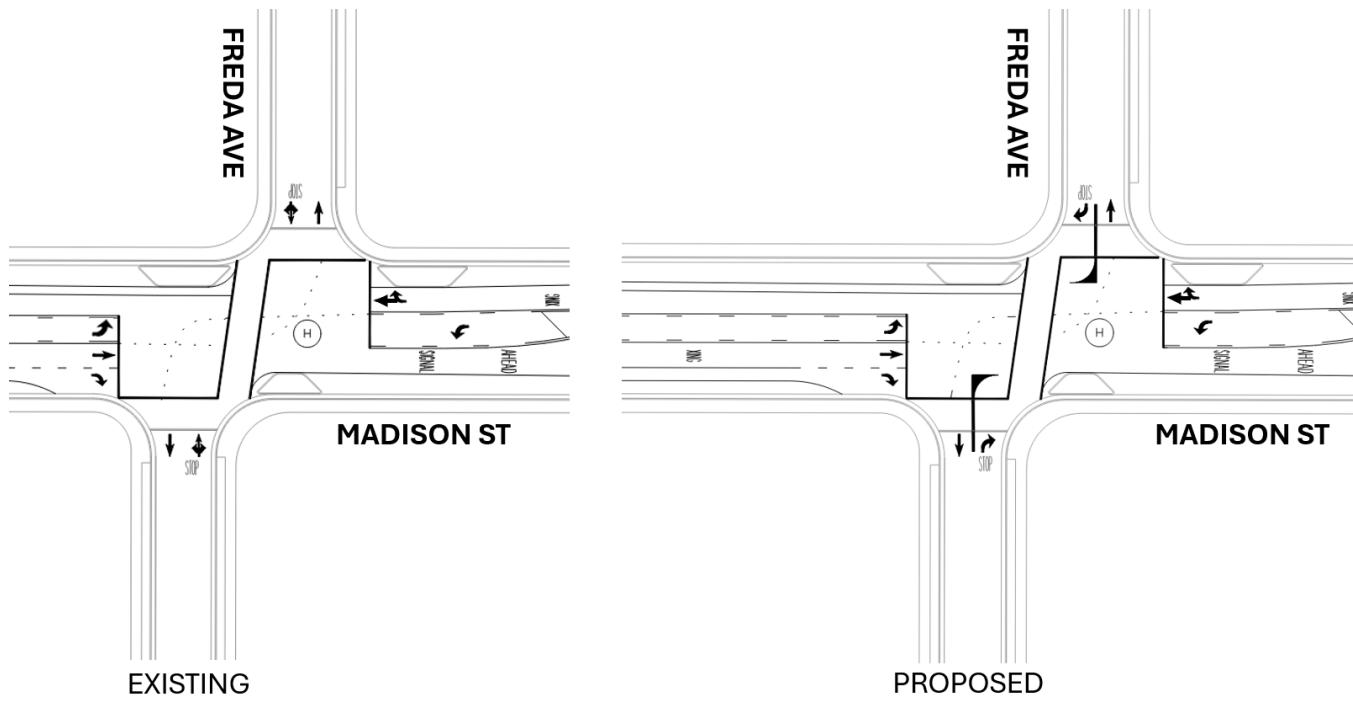
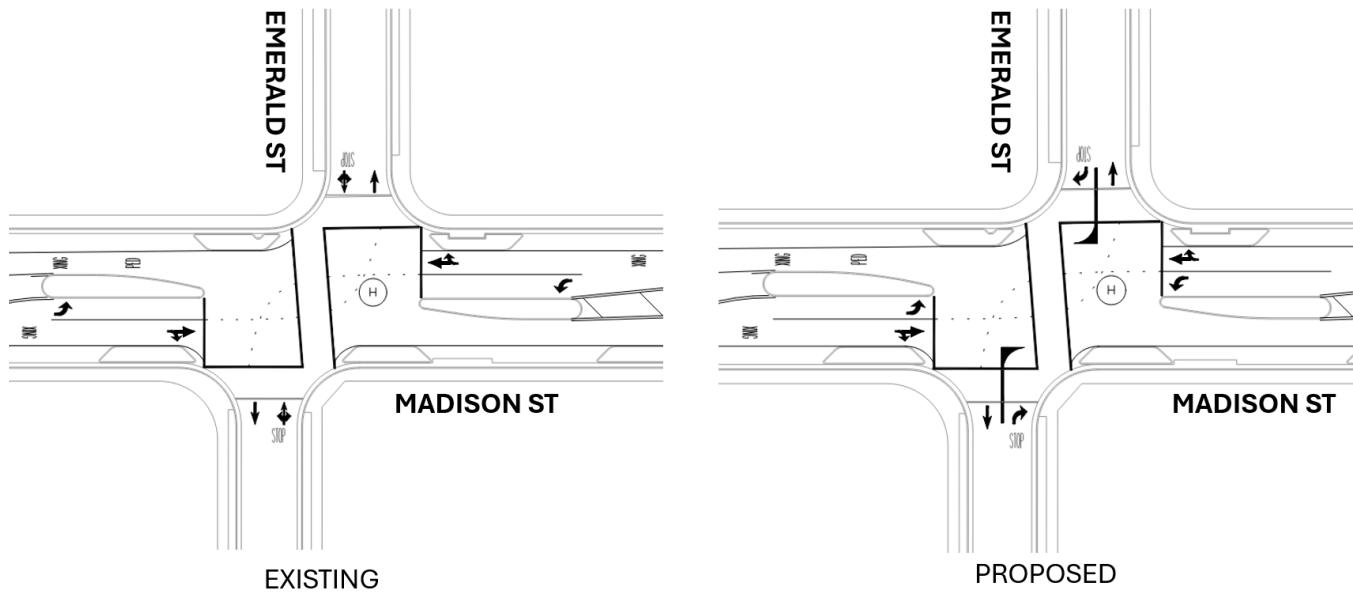


Figure 2: Existing & proposed traffic pattern modification for both Madison intersections



Figure 3: Proposed alternative routes for eastbound left-turn movements to northbound Madison Street

The pilot project materials will consist of temporary glue-down flexible delineators, signage, striping, and red curb. There will be a loss of on-street parking on both Emerald Street and Freda Avenue on both sides of Madison near the approaches to the intersections to accommodate the taper length to direct vehicles to turn right. Gaps were provided in the delineator layout to allow for pedestrian movement in the north-south direction. Delineators were placed to not interfere with vehicle or bicycle traffic on Madison Street. Additional lane line markings will be installed through the intersection to align bike lanes in the north-south directions.

To allow for evaluation of the traffic, pedestrian, and local business impacts of the temporary traffic pattern modification, the Public Works Department has conducted traffic studies before improvements and will conduct additional studies after the project is in place to assess traffic volumes on select area streets and determine if permanent improvements would be considered.

The following intersection operation studies will be evaluated and compared to existing conditions during the AM and PM peak hours:

1. Intersection Delay
2. Collisions
3. Intersection turning movement counts
4. Pedestrian volumes
5. Conduct multi-way stop warrant at Madison Street & Peters Street/Ysmael Villegas Street during Pilot Project

Figure 4 below depicts the proposed layout of the delineators intended to control the movements of side-street traffic approaching Madison Street.

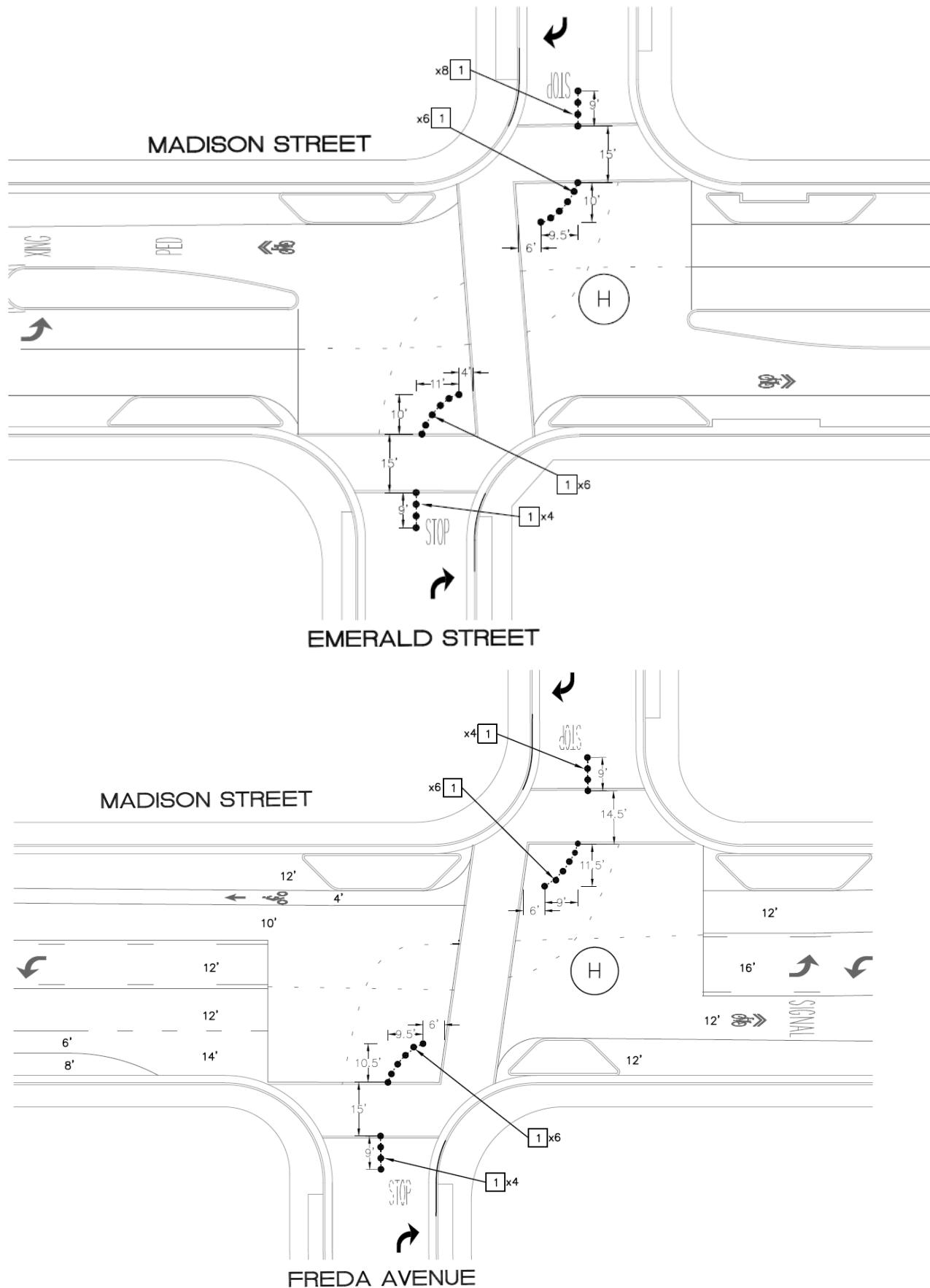


Figure 4: Channelizer Plan of the proposed pilot project

The intersection turning movement traffic counts for both intersections during the AM and PM peak hours show that there is only a range of 2-15 vehicles that will be impacted and will have to find an alternate route based on the proposed restriction of left turn and through movements from the side streets.

A similar pilot project to restrict left turns and through movements at an existing HAWK location on Market Street and Sixth Street was approved by City Council on April 22, 2025.

Evaluations for multi-way stop sign control and / or a full traffic signal warrant analysis will be evaluated, and recommendations will be presented at the conclusion of the pilot project.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal impact will be an estimated \$12,465 which includes the cost of sign fabrication and installation, channelizers and installation to implement the pilot project. Funding is budgeted and available in the General Fund, Streets Maintenance Division, Signing Supplies account number 4110100-424143, to cover this cost.

Prepared by: Philip Nitollama, City Traffic Engineer
Approved by: Nathan Mustafa, Interim Public Works Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Julie Nemes, Interim Finance Director
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Rebecca McKee-Reimhold, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Site Map
2. Aerial Map
3. Signing & Striping Plan
4. Intersection Turning Movement Counts
5. Street View Photos
6. Transportation Board Meeting Minutes (December 3, 2025)
7. Presentation