

# ✓ Stop sign is ordered by board

12-9-87  
Live Oak neighbors'  
campaign successful

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SANTA CRUZ — Stop signs will be installed at the Live Oak intersection where a 6-year-old girl was killed by a suspected drunken driver last month, the County Board of Supervisors directed Tuesday.

The signs will go in at the intersection of 30th Avenue and Portola Drive, despite a report by the county Public Works Department that the intersection does not meet state standards for a three-way stop.

They also will be put up with the realization they may have little effect on the true cause of the tragedy that killed Tanyanica Lopez of Live Oak — drunken driving, according to the California Highway Patrol.

Highway Patrol Captain Steve Ellis told the board that the issue of making the intersections of 30th and 32nd avenues, Portola Drive, and 30th Avenue on the ocean side of Portola, safer is "complicated, sensitive and emotional."

He said that drunken driving, not speeding or a lack of stop signs, was the "critical factor" in Lopez's death, and said that the posted 35-mile-an-hour speed limit for that section of Portola is the proper one.

Ellis pointed out that a sobriety checkpoint held near the offending intersection, six nights after Nica Lopez was killed, produced 11 drunken driving arrests. Ellis said that 2,133 drunken driving arrests have been made in the county to date in 1987, with 12 fatalities and 373 injuries attributable so far this year to driving under the influence.

Ellis said that another county recommendation — that the Highway Patrol begin radar enforcement along Portola — might not fall within established criteria allowing the use of radar. But, he said, the Highway Patrol will "press" for approval of radar enforcement, anyway.

The supervisors also voted to recommend that the Highway Patrol use radar in the area.

In addition, they directed an additional crosswalk be installed at the westerly intersection of 30th and

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## Stop sign

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Portola, including a pedestrian refuge in the middle of the road. The supervisors also said they want a street light installed in the intersection and for Public Works to report back on installing a sidewalk on the ocean side of Portola, where none currently exists.

The board was facing a sticky political issue. In October, it had agreed with a Public Works recommendation that a four-way stop not be installed at the easterly intersection of 32nd, Portola, and 30th. Instead, it has now directed that the westerly intersection get stop signs and other improvements.

A group of Live Oak residents had emotionally and forcefully pressed the case for a safer intersection and for improved services in Live Oak at a board meeting two weeks ago.

At this meeting, only a few people showed up. One was Nica Lopez's uncle, Daniel Alejandre, who said afterward he was "satisfied" with Tuesday's board actions.

Alejandre said the board's directives prove that "something can be done ... by concerned citizens."

Then he added, "Of course, stop signs are not going to bring Nica back. ..."

The board directed that Public Works return at next week's meeting with an ordinance specifying the intersection improvements and that the ordinance be considered for "emergency adoption," using existing funds to do the work. If the ordinance is passed next week, Public Works Director Don Porath said that the intersection will get stop signs and a new crosswalk as soon as weather and scheduling permits.