



Legislation Text

File #: 19-0146, **Version:** 1

TO:

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH:

Bruce Moe, City Manager

FROM:

Stephanie Katsouleas, Public Works Director
Anne McIntosh, Director of Community Development
Erik Zandvliet, City Traffic Engineer
Prem Kumar, City Engineer
Anastasia Seims, Senior Civil Engineer

SUBJECT:

Request by Mayor Napolitano and Councilmember Lesser to Review Two Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Pedestrian Improvements: 1) Solar Powered Flashing Beacons, In-Road Warning Lights and a High Visibility Crosswalk at Blanche Road and 29th Street; and 2) a Solar Powered Radar Speed Awareness Sign Located 130 Feet North 29th Street on the West Side of Blanche Road (Public Works Director Katsouleas).

RECEIVE REPORT

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council receive this report regarding pedestrian improvements that were funded by two Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grants and the corresponding construction work undertaken at/near the intersection of Blanche Road and 29th Street. The pedestrian improvements include:

- 1) Installation of one high visibility crosswalk, along with two solar-powered flashing beacons and in-road warning lights adjacent to the crosswalk;
- 2) Installation of one solar-powered radar speed awareness sign facing southbound traffic on the west side of Blanche Road, located 130 feet north of 29th Street.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

Procurement and installation of the solar powered flashing beacons, in-road warning lights and high visibility crosswalk at the intersection of Blanche Road and 29th Street totals approximately \$49,850 and is funded by a SRTS Cycle 10 grant. Procurement and installation of the solar speed awareness sign totals approximately \$8,300 and is funded by a SRTS Cycle 3 grant.

BACKGROUND:

Starting in 2011, Manhattan Beach applied for and received three State and federal grants to improve pedestrian facilities, access and safety throughout the City. These grants included:

- A \$490,600 federal Cycle 3 Safe Routes to Schools grant (October 2011).
- A \$223,300 federal Cycle 5 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) grant with \$25,000 required in local matching funds (October 2011).
- A State \$447,700 Cycle 10 Safe Routes to Schools grant with \$49,800 required in local matching funds (June 2012).

The majority of the proposed pedestrian improvements funded by these grants are located next to schools or along pedestrian routes to those schools. All of the pedestrian enhancements identified in the design specifications also conform to industry standards as identified in the Manual on Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). All three grant applications were prepared in cooperation with representatives of the Manhattan Beach Unified School District and Manhattan Beach Police Department. The City conducted meetings with school administration and key school stakeholders to identify problem locations, high crossing location, and potential solutions prior to submitting the applications. Additionally, several meetings regarding the proposed improvements were held with Grand View Elementary personnel and parents, the Parking and Public Improvements Commission and City Council.

On February 7, 2017, staff presented to City Council a summary of the proposed improvement called for under the three grants, along with attachments depicting the locations and equipment specified for installation. The Attachment included with this staff report highlights those specific pedestrian improvements and equipment called for in the neighborhoods surrounding Grand View Elementary, inclusive of the high visibility crosswalk, two solar-powered flashing beacons, in-road warning lights and the solar-powered radar speed awareness sign at/near the intersection of Blanche Road and 29th Street. These improvements are part of both Cycle 3 and Cycle 10 grant scopes of work.

On September 19, 2018, and November 20, 2018, City Council awarded bids to two contractors for the Cycle 10 and Cycle 3 pedestrian improvements, respectively. In January, prior to the start of work, residents located within 500 feet of each location were notified of the upcoming construction projects. Simultaneously, each contractor began procuring all construction materials needed to complete the job, including long lead items such as steel poles. Since then, construction has progressed to the point of approximately 70% complete, with full completion anticipated by the end of March 2019.

On February 19, 2019, City Council requested that the SRTS proposed improvements at Blanche Road and 29th Street be brought back for discussion at the March 8, 2019, City Council meeting. This staff report represents that request.

DISCUSSION:

Blanche Road is inherently a busy local collector roadway, carrying over 4,000 vehicles per day between Rosecrans Blvd. and Valley Drive. Pedestrians and school children who live in the 500, 600 and 700 blocks of the Tree Section commonly use 27th and 29th Streets (crossing Blanche Road) as a route to school. While the intersection of Blanche Road and 27th Street is a four-way stop, there is no stop sign for vehicles traveling in the northbound and southbound directions on Blanche Road at 29th. Thus, the solar powered flashing beacons, in-road warning lights and high visibility crosswalk planned at this intersection to alert drivers to east-west pedestrian traffic, as well as the solar speed awareness sign, are expected to reduce the approach speed in both directions and improve the visual awareness of pedestrians to southbound drivers cresting Blanche Road between 33rd and 31st

Street. Actual speed studies indicate the 85th percentile (prevailing) speed is 31 miles per hour (mph) on a 25 mph signed roadway, showing that drivers are exceeding the posted speed limit. These improvements are designed to provide a significantly safer east-west pedestrian crossing condition over what exists today.

It is the Traffic Engineer's professional opinion that all of the design elements are needed in order to work together as a complete crossing system. These include:

- The high-visibility crosswalk designates the proper crossing path for pedestrians and helps alerts drivers via roadway markings.
- Rectangular rapid flashing beacons have the highest driver compliance rate of any flashing beacon type, pursuant to documented studies. They are mounted at eye-level to catch the motorist's attention.
- The in-pavement flashing crosswalk lights will provide enhanced driver awareness of a pedestrian in the crosswalk, especially at night, in foggy/inclement conditions.

The rapid flashing beacons and in-ground lighting are only activated when the controller is pushed, and flash for a short duration while pedestrians cross the street. Further, as mentioned above, all of the pedestrian enhancements identified in the design specifications for these projects conform to industry standards as identified in the CA-MUTCD and other State and federal design standards and specifications. They are proven countermeasures and thus "eligible projects" for grant funding pursuant to the Federal Grant application guidelines; they do not require additional warrants or justification to determine their potential effectiveness. Therefore, no additional analysis was conducted regarding accident history prior to submitting the grant.

Once the installations are complete, staff will observe them under daytime and nighttime conditions for both effectiveness and potential impacts to surrounding residents and properties. Then staff can make recommendations for, or directly undertake, modifications to minimize or eliminate the lighting impacts to adjacent residents.

Staff is committed to working with the affected residents toward a resolution, which may include supplemental equipment such as programmable functions, auto-dimming of flashing lights and speed displays, light shrouds, limited operation at night, and other equipment modifications.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST:

The grant project applications were presented to the Parking and Public Improvement Commission and City Council at public meetings in 2011 and 2012. The grant projects were also presented and discussed in detail, with accompanying design schematics and locations, at the February 7, 2017, City Council meeting and provided again when the contracts to complete the work were awarded in September 2018 and November 2018. Lastly, a summary of the planned work for all three grants was presented to the Manhattan Beach Unified School District Board on December 12, 2018, by City staff.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney has reviewed this report and determined that no additional legal analysis is necessary.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Location Map and Product Sheets