



Legislation Text

File #: 19-0152, **Version:** 1

TO:

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH:

Bruce Moe, City Manager

FROM:

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

SUBJECT:

Request by City Council to Discuss the Relocation of Signage and Solar Powered Flashing Beacon Appurtenances That Were Recently Installed on the West Side of Highland Avenue at the 18th Street Intersection (Public Works Director Katsouleas).

DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council discuss and provide direction regarding City Council's request to remove or relocate certain signage and solar powered flashing beacon appurtenances on the west side of Highland Avenue at 18th Street to an adjacent existing streetlight pole approximately 4 feet closer to the street.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The cost associated with the flashing beacon appurtenances relocation is not completely known at this time and will require a structural analysis of the existing streetlight pole to determine if it can safely withstand the additional loading of the appurtenances, inclusive of the signage, actuator, flashing beacon, a solar panel, controller and battery storage (see photo in the attachment). The total relocation costs incurred will depend on City Council direction, and could include new conduit from the pole to the pull box, rewiring the connection, repairing the sidewalk, and possible installation of a new streetlight pole. Estimates for this work range from a low of "no-cost" (sign relocation only) to a high of \$15,000 for complete pole replacement and sign appurtenances relocation. Available contingency funds are available to partially or fully cover the associated costs depending on the extent of the work completed.

BACKGROUND:

In October 2011, Manhattan Beach received a \$223,300 competitive federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) grant to construct pedestrian safety enhancements at 22 different locations throughout the City for non-motorized roadway users (pedestrians and bicyclists). Those

planned safety improvements included installation of:

- Pedestrian signage;
- Crosswalk limit lines;
- High visibility crosswalks;
- Flashing beacons and in-road warning lights; and
- Pedestrian countdown timers

Prior to receiving the award in 2011, the grant applications were presented to the Parking and Public Improvement Commission and City Council at public meetings in 2011, and reviewed again by City Council in early 2017. Although funding became available in 2012, work to initiate the Cycle 5 project did not commence until early 2017 due to staffing limitations and a backlog of projects in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Once the project was initiated, plans and specifications were developed and subsequently bid for construction in early 2018. The project was rebid in mid-2018 due to the high bid cost received. Following the second bid process, on August 7, 2018, City Council awarded a construction contract to PTM General Engineering Services Inc. for \$491,000 for the Cycle 5 Pedestrian Safety Improvement Project. Shortly thereafter, the contractor began procuring all construction materials needed to complete the project, including long lead items such as steel poles, and then initiated the work.

The overwhelming majority of Cycle 5 work, which includes installation of flashing beacons and in-road warning lights at the intersections of Highland Avenue and 17th Street, 18th Street and 19th Street, has now been completed. Subsequently, on February 5, 2019, City Council requested that the improvements installed at the intersection of Highland Avenue and 18th Street be placed on the agenda for review and further discussion.

DISCUSSION:

Several Cycle 5 improvements were specifically designed to enhance the safety of pedestrians crossing Highland Avenue at the 17th, 18th and 19th intersecting walk streets due to the high traffic volume on Highland Ave. These crossings are frequently used by pedestrians day and night, and because they are located mid-way between two signalized intersections, they sometimes experience higher traffic speeds than those intersections closer to signals.

The solar powered flashing beacons, enhanced signage, in-road warning lights, and high visibility crosswalk help increase driver awareness of pedestrians entering the intersection-drivers whose line of sight to see pedestrians crossing the street may be obscured due to parked cars near the curb and sidewalk. These improvements, along with the supporting pedestrian push button, solar panel, controller and battery cabinet, were all mounted on a dedicated steel pole.

At the time of the design, bidding and installations, Manhattan Beach did not own the adjacent streetlights, thus negating consideration to install the appurtenances directly onto the streetlight poles. In all three locations on the west side of 17th Street, 18th Street and 19th Street, the steel pole foundations had to be located approximately 5 feet away from the street curb face due to existing conflicting underground appurtenances (see attached photos). Although these three locations are not ideal, the existing infrastructure and Americans with Disability (ADA) ramps limited where the foundations could physically be placed. As installed, they are the closest available location next to the crosswalks and fully within the public right-of-way. These physical limitations were not present on

the east side of Highland Avenue.

City Council has requested that consideration be given to relocating or removing the flashing beacons and other appurtenances (solar panel, battery, controller, push button) on the west side of Highland Avenue once the City owns the adjacent streetlights. Modification options include:

1. Leave the installation as-is, but limit the time of day the flashing beacon is operational to daytime flashing only (minimal programming cost only).
2. Leave the installation as-is, but completely remove the flashing beacon (no cost).
3. Relocate the pedestrian sign and beacon to the streetlight and leave all other appurtenances on the steel pole in its current location. If the solar panel and controller unit remain on the newly installed steel pole and the flashing beacon is relocated to the streetlight, it's wiring will need to be connected back to the steel pole, which will require demolition of the existing sidewalk, placing of new conduits, and reinstallation of the affected sidewalk panels (\$5,000 - \$8,000).
4. Relocate the pedestrian sign to the streetlight, remove the flashing beacon completely, and leave all other appurtenances on the steel pole in its current location (no cost).
5. Relocate the pedestrian signage and push button, with or without the beacon, to the streetlight, and relocate the steel pole and its solar panel, battery and controller closer to the curb, south of the streetlight (cost ranging from \$10,000 - \$15,000 for demolition, rewiring, new conduit, new foundation and sidewalk restoration).
6. Relocate the pedestrian signage and all appurtenances, with or without the beacon, to the streetlight. The cost for this option is unknown and would depend on whether the existing streetlight could support the weight of the appurtenances or would need to be replaced with a stronger pole. A structural analysis would need to be performed.

Lastly, due to space constraints on the streetlight itself, another stand-alone pole would need to be erected to display the signage currently located on the streetlight (bus routes, street sweeping, and street signage)

In addition to City Council direction regarding the modification options listed above, staff also seeks direction from City Council on whether to proceed with similar field revisions at 17th Street and 19th Street.

Please note that all of the pedestrian enhancements identified in the design specifications for these projects conform to industry standards as identified in the California Manual on Traffic Control Devices (CA-MUTCD) and other State and federal design standards and specifications. These improvements provide a significantly safer pedestrian crossing condition over what exists today. Likewise, it is the Traffic Engineer's opinion that all of the design elements are needed to work together as a complete crossing system. The high-visibility crosswalk designates the proper crossing path. 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. Finally, the in-pavement flashing crosswalk lights provide enhanced driver awareness of a pedestrian in the crosswalk, in particular at night, in foggy or inclement conditions, and if a parked car blocks the view of the approaching driver.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

The grant project application was prepared in consultation with representatives of the School District. The grant project was presented to the Parking and Public Improvement Commission and City Council at public meetings in 2011 and 2012. The projects in these grants were discussed in detail with accompanying design improvement specific location maps at the February 7, 2017, City Council meeting. These projects have also been part of the CIP Budget that has been approved or amended annual through a public vetting process. The latest presentation was made on December 12, 2018, to the School Board by City staff.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

On June 2018 staff filed a Notice of Exemption with the County of Los Angeles Clerk Office after determining the HSIP project qualify for a Categorical Exemption (improvements to existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities).

LEGAL REVIEW:

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

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Map - HSIP Cycle 5 Project
2. Photos of New Installations