



Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Fahey and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager

FROM: Richard Thompson, Director of Community Development
Rob Osborne, Management Analyst

DATE: May 17, 2005

SUBJECT: Uphold the Parking and Public Improvements Commission Recommendation to Approve Installation of a Painted Crosswalk and Utilization of a Crossing Guard at the Intersection of Peck Avenue and 1st Street (Pennekamp School)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Council pass a motion to approve the Parking and Public Improvements Commission recommendation to:

1. Install a yellow school crosswalk on the south leg of Peck Avenue at 1st Street with 25 feet of red curb in advance of the crosswalk on each side of Peck Avenue.
2. Provide an adult crossing guard at the intersection of Peck Avenue at 1st Street.
3. Relocate the existing flashing beacon on the west side of Peck Avenue closer to the school entrance to serve as a flashing crosswalk beacon.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

Implementation of the proposed physical modifications could be accomplished through existing Public Works programs and budgets. Relocating the flashing beacons would cost approximately \$1,000 each. Permanently deploying a crossing guard at Peck Avenue/1st Street would cost approximately \$5,000 per year, which can be accomplished through the Police Department's proposed budget for the next fiscal year.

BACKGROUND:

The City was recently asked to consider providing an adult crossing guard at the entrance to Pennekamp School at the corner of Peck Avenue and 1st Street. A school parent expressed concern about pedestrian safety as a number of students and parents cross Peck Avenue at this intersection, which currently has no traffic controls. The request was reviewed by the Parking and Public Improvements Commission at a public meeting on April 28, 2005.

DISCUSSION:

As described in the attached staff report, the Traffic Engineer feels the situation at the school entrance is not ideal and that steps should be taken to improve pedestrian safety at the intersection. He does not support installing stop signs on Peck Avenue because of low traffic volumes on 1st Street and the close proximity of existing stop signs at adjacent intersections. He suggested the following course of action:

- Installation of a yellow school crosswalk on the south leg of the intersection
- Installation of 25 feet of red curb in advance of the new crosswalk to enhance visibility
- Utilization of a crossing guard at the intersection
- Relocating the existing flashing yellow beacons on Peck Avenue closer to the school entrance to serve as flashing crosswalk beacons

At the Commission meeting testimony was provided by the Principal of Pennekamp School, two City crossing guards and the school's Safety Officer. All four agreed with the Traffic Engineer's findings and recommendations. The Commission concurred that the measures proposed represent an appropriate solution to the problems observed. They voted unanimously (Ackland absent) to recommend approval of the staff recommendation.

Staff was subsequently contacted by the owners of the property on the southeast corner of Peck/1st Street. They are concerned that relocating the flashing beacon on the east side of Peck Avenue would necessitate removal of some existing street trees. There is a series of trees in the parkway to the north of the beacon's current location. If the beacon was moved to the north to be closer to the school entrance, it would likely be necessary to remove one or more of the trees to ensure that it remains visible for northbound drivers. As relocating the beacons is not a critical part of the proposal to enhance pedestrian safety, the Traffic Engineer recommends that the one on the east side of Peck not be moved at this time.

If approved, the recommended measures would be implemented in time for the new school year in September.

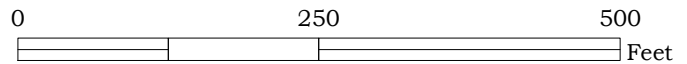
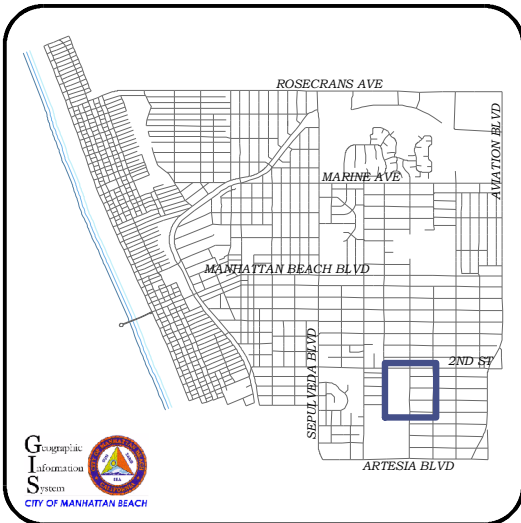
Meeting notices were sent to all properties within 500 feet of the subject intersection.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. **APPROVE** the recommendation of the Parking and Public Improvements Commission, as modified by staff.
2. **REMOVE** this item from the Consent Calendar and provide staff with direction.

- Attachments:
- A. Area map
 - B. Photos
 - C. Excerpt from PPIC minutes of 4/28/05
 - D. PPIC report dated 4/28/05, with attachments
 - E. Meeting notice, 5/3/05

Peck Ave / 1st St Pedestrian Safety Analysis





Flashing Beacon on East Side of Peck Avenue





Flashing Beacon on West Side of Peck Avenue



**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
PARKING AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 28, 2005**

G. GENERAL

1. Request for Pedestrian Crossing Controls - Peck Avenue at 1st Street

Noting the absence of Traffic Engineer Erik Zandvliet, Management Analyst Rob Osborne summarized the staff report relative to this request. He explained that the City received a request from a Pennekamp Elementary School parent and the school principal for a crossing guard at the intersection of Peck Avenue and 1st Street. The letter states that many students cross at this intersection each day and must compete against high traffic volumes on Peck Avenue.

He reviewed staff analysis of the request and stated that based on the side street volumes, three-way stop controls are not recommended at the intersection of Peck Avenue and 1st Street at this time. However, due to the high pedestrian crossing volumes and location of the exit gates, staff is recommending implementation of the following measures:

1. Install a yellow school crosswalk on the south leg of Peck Avenue at 1st Street with 25 feet of red curb in advance of the crosswalk on each side of Peck Avenue.
2. Provide an adult crossing guard at the intersection of Peck Avenue at 1st Street.
3. Reconfigure/relocate the existing flashing beacons on Peck Avenue near the school to serve as a flashing crosswalk beacon at 1st Street.

Commissioner Lesser inquired if Gates Avenue, which has an existing crosswalk, was considered as an alternative location. He also inquired if the Commission should be concerned with the availability of funds for an additional crossing guard.

Management Analyst Osborne responded that Gates Avenue could be a possibility, but the 1st location would still need to be addressed as students will continue to cross at this location. He added that funding a crossing guard should not be a significant problem.

Audience Participation

Susan Jones, Manhattan Beach resident, shared that she is a long time resident and crossing guard. She talked of the terrible traffic that exists on Peck Avenue at 1st Street and the desperate need for these measures, adding that it is unsafe for a crossing guard to cross students at an unmarked location.

In response to a question from Commission Lesser, Ms. Jones questioned if students would in fact use Gates Avenue to cross as there is also a marked crosswalk on 2nd Street, but that the majority of students still use 1st Street.

Commissioner Lang arrived at 7:00 p.m.

Linda Anderson, crossing guard at 2nd Street, talked of the heavy traffic generated by Pennekamp Elementary School, Montessori and Mira Costa High School and the urgent need for a crosswalk at the 1st Street location. She added that parents and students will not use Gates Avenue to cross.

Dale Keldrauk, Principal of Pennekamp Elementary School, thanked staff and the Commission for their consideration of this request. He stated that traffic has greatly increased in this area due to an adjustment in starting times at Mira Costa. Principal Keldrauk shared that this is the third time a request for measures that has been made to the City, noting that the placement of flashing beacons has had “mixed results. He further stated that Peck Avenue/1st Street carries the most foot traffic and believes parents will continue using this location even if a crossing guard was present on Gates Avenue.

Walter Young, Manhattan Beach resident, Safety Officer at Pennekamp Elementary School, commented that crossing guard Linda Anderson does an outstanding job, but an additional crosswalk and guard is desperately needed. He stated that stop sign won't help the situation as motorists continually ignore signs.

Discussion

Commissioner Osterhout thanked the crossing guards for the extraordinary job they do and the wonderful service they provide for our children. He questioned why the City, rather than the School District is responsible for supplying crossing guards and whether staff ever explored the idea of instituting some type of valet service at City schools.

Management Analyst Osborne responded that the State provides for the City to hire crossing guards. He stated that a valet type service has not been considered and that the City makes every effort to work with schools on providing ample and efficient pick up and drop off locations.

Commissioner Lesser indicated his support of staff's recommendations and understands why Gates Avenue would not a suitable alternative.

Commissioner Lang thanked the crossing guards for their great work and appreciates the support of the City in funding an additional crossing guard. He shared that he hopes this support is present when addressing the budget needs for more police officers.

Chairman Saunders also thanked the crossing guards for their invaluable work. He commended staff on their thorough report and indicated he is prepared to move forward.

Action

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Lesser/Osterhout) to approve staff's recommendation to:

1. Install a yellow school crosswalk on the south leg of Peck Avenue at 1st Street with 25 feet of red curb in advance of the crosswalk on each side of Peck Avenue.
2. Provide an adult crossing guard at the intersection of Peck Avenue at 1st Street.
3. Reconfigure/relocate the existing flashing beacons on Peck Avenue near the school to serve as a flashing crosswalk beacon at 1st Street.

AYES: Lang, Lesser, Osterhout, Chairman Saunders

NOES: None

ABSENT: Ackland

ABSTAIN: None

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

TO: Parking and Public Improvements Commission

FROM: Richard Thompson, Director of Community Development
Rob Osborne, Management Analyst

BY: Erik Zandvliet, Traffic Engineer

DATE: April 28, 2005

SUBJECT: Request for Pedestrian Crossing Controls
Peck Avenue at 1st Street

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Commission pass a motion to approve staff's recommendation to:

1. Install a yellow school crosswalk on the south leg of Peck Avenue at 1st Street with 25 feet of red curb in advance of the crosswalk on each side of Peck Avenue.
2. Provide an adult crossing guard at the intersection of Peck Avenue at 1st Street.
3. Reconfigure/relocate the existing flashing beacons on Peck Avenue near the school to serve as a flashing crosswalk beacon at 1st Street.

BACKGROUND:

In March 2004, the City received a request from a Pennekamp Elementary School parent and the school principal for a crossing guard at the intersection of Peck Avenue and 1st Street. The letter states that many students cross at this intersection each day and must compete against high traffic volumes on Peck Avenue. Many close calls have been witnessed. There is no crossing guard to assist students living south of the school.

DISCUSSION:

Peck Avenue is a two-lane major local street that carries approximately 4,200 vehicles per day and is stopped one block north at 2nd Street and one block south at Gates Avenue. Peck Avenue has a slight vertical curve that crests at Gates Street. Peck Avenue is 42 feet wide and is divided by a double yellow centerline that provides 12 feet wide travel lanes and 9 feet wide curb parking lanes. The speed limit on Peck Avenue is 25 MPH. Parking is allowed on the both sides of the street. Some of the curb on the west side has limited time parking.

1st Street is a local street that “tees” into Peck Avenue at a stop sign. 1st Street is 30 feet wide and carries approximately 340 vehicles per day. Parking is allowed on both sides of 1st Street. The speed limit on Peck Avenue is 25 MPH.

The intersection of Peck Avenue and 1st Street is located in a residential area with Pennekamp Elementary School along the west side. Mira Costa High School and a Montessori private school are located on Peck Avenue south of Pennekamp School.

There are existing painted crosswalks on Peck Avenue at 2nd Street and Gates Avenue. An adult crossing guard is assigned to assist school pedestrians at Peck Avenue and 2nd Street. There are solar powered flashing school beacons on Peck Avenue that warn drivers of the proximity of Pennekamp School zone.

A vehicle and pedestrian volume count was conducted during the week of April 18, 2005 while school was in session. A summary of the peak hour and daily volumes are provided below:

VEHICLES DIRECTION	AM PEAK HOUR	PM PEAK HOUR	DAILY
Northbound (Peck Avenue)	268	195	2,292
Southbound (Peck Avenue)	<u>285</u>	<u>212</u>	<u>2,509</u>
Subtotal	553	407	4,801
Westbound (1 st Street)	27	19	222
Intersection Total	580	426	5,023

PEDESTRIANS LOCATION	MORNING			AFTERNOON		
	Students	Adults	Total	Students	Adults	Total
North Leg (Peck Avenue)	1	1	2	2	5	7
South Leg (Peck Avenue)	22	31	53	57	58	115
Intersection Total	23	32	55	59	63	122

The traffic collision history between January 1, 2002 and September 31, 2004 was analyzed for the intersection. According to City records, there have been no collisions reported near the intersection during this 2 ¾ year period.

Field Observations

Field observations were made along the east frontage of Pennekamp School during peak student arrival and dismissal periods. Field observations confirm the traffic count data and high pedestrian activity. A large number of students cross at the intersection of Peck Avenue and 2nd

Street with the assistance of the crossing guard. As noted above, a large number of students also cross at 1st Street. It should be noted that the majority of students crossing at 1st Street are accompanied by parents/guardians who then walk to parked vehicles along Peck Avenue and 1st Street. A much smaller percentage of students cross at Gates Avenue, many also walking to parked cars. The school provides several loading areas, both on-campus and on-street that help distribute traffic during pick-up/drop-off times.

1st Street is narrow and provides only one travel lane if vehicles are parked on either side of the street. The intersection has adequate sight distance for motorists exiting 1st Street looking northward which is enhanced by the uphill grade looking southward. However, any vehicles parked on Peck Avenue just south of the intersection may partially block the view of approaching northbound traffic. Also, pedestrians may not be seen waiting on the southeast corner due to parked cars.

School Routes and Established School Crossings

The State of California (Caltrans) has established guidelines to help determine Suggested Routes to School. Some of the factors to consider include:

1. The availability of adequate sidewalks or off-roadway sidewalk areas to and from the location of the existing control;
2. The number of students using the crossing;
3. The age levels of the students using the crossing; and
4. The total extra walking distance.

The number of gaps in traffic and delay between gaps also plays a role in school crossing criteria. While students need to wait for a sufficient gap in traffic, excessive delay may make some students impatient and endanger themselves by attempting to cross during an inadequate gap.

In general, crosswalk markings provide guidance for pedestrians who are crossing roadways by defining and delineating preferred paths. Crosswalk markings also serve to warn motorists of a pedestrian crossing point not controlled by stop signs or signals. Crosswalks should be marked at all intersections on established routes to school where there is substantial conflict with motorists, at locations where students are encouraged to cross, or where students would not otherwise recognize the proper place to cross.

By applying the suggested guidelines to possible crossings along Peck Avenue in comparison to the school boundary (bounded by Manhattan Beach Boulevard, Aviation Boulevard, Artesia Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, 9th Street and Peck Avenue), it becomes apparent that two primary crossings should be maintained across Peck Avenue, one to the north and one to the south of the school.

These existing school crossings on Peck Avenue are at 2nd Street and Gates Avenue. Due to the high number of student pedestrians crossing at 2nd Street, this location has justified an adult crossing guard. The crosswalk at Gates Avenue is at a stop-controlled intersection.

Pennekamp School has two main access streets, Rowell Avenue and Peck Avenue. There are two pedestrian access points along Peck Avenue. The northerly gate aligns with 1st Street, and the southerly pedestrian access runs along the teacher parking lot and joins the sidewalk at Gates Avenue. Since the majority of classrooms are concentrated along the northerly gate, most students enter/exit Peck Avenue from the northerly gate. This condition results in a high concentration of students at the northerly gate in the morning and afternoon. This also places students near the loading zone entrance in the teacher parking lot who then must cross two driveways before crossing at Gates Avenue.

Many students and guardians were observed crossing Peck Avenue at different locations near or south of 1st Street. A marked crosswalk at 1st Street would encourage those students/guardians to cross at one location only. This would improve safety by limiting pedestrian exposure and provide positive guidance to both the student and driver. The addition of a marked crosswalk at 1st Street may be unexpected to some motorists, therefore, should not be placed without supplemental warning or control.

Multi-way Stop Signs: The State of California has established guidelines for the installation of stop signs. These criteria have been widely accepted and are used by the City of Manhattan Beach. Multi-way or all-way stop controls are generally recommended when one or more of the criteria are satisfied.

A stop sign warrant checklist is attached to this report that indicates that multi-way stop signs are not warranted at this intersection due to the very low traffic volume on 1st Street. While a high number of pedestrians cross at the intersection, the impacted time is a very small percentage of the entire day. Therefore, motorists approaching a stop sign placed on Peck Avenue after school hours will have a tendency violate the stop sign. A stop sign at an intersection with low side street traffic volumes often causes unnecessary delay and noise, increased rear-end collision potential and disregard for stop signs on other streets at locations where there is no apparent reason to stop. An unwarranted stop sign would likely be ignored by many drivers, which would actually decrease pedestrian safety. Corner sight visibility is sufficient if vehicles are not parked right at the corner, so stop signs would not be necessary for visibility reasons.

A stop sign would not be expected to improve congestion during school hours. In fact, additional stop signs along Peck Avenue would substantially increase delay to motorists along Peck Avenue. This, in turn, may also encourage some drivers to use other residential streets instead of Peck Avenue. A stop sign at 1st Street could also slightly increase traffic volume on 1st Street.

Relocation of the existing stop sign at Peck Avenue and Gates Avenue is not recommended, due to the reduced sight distance caused by the crest of a hill on Peck Avenue. Without a stop sign on Peck Avenue, drivers waiting on Gates Avenue might not have sufficient time to determine if a northbound vehicle is approaching.

Adult Crossing Guard

The State guidelines for the installation of crossing guards were reviewed at this intersection. These guidelines state that adult crossing guards are desirable at an uncontrolled crossing where there is no alternately controlled crossing within 600 feet, and where the traffic volume exceeds 350 vehicles during each of any two hours in which 40 school pedestrians cross daily. However, adult crossing guards may also be considered if special problems exist which make it necessary to assist elementary school pedestrians in crossing the street, such as at an unusually complicated intersection with frequent turning movements and high vehicular speeds.

The uncontrolled crossing on Peck Avenue at 1st Street meets both the minimum pedestrian crossing volume and crossing vehicular volume thresholds for adult crossing guards, but the existing crossing and crossing guard at 2nd Street are less than 600 feet to the north. However, it should be noted that it would be unreasonable for students living south of the school to walk several hundred feet out of the way to a crossing north of the school. Therefore, an adult crossing guard south of the school is justified at this time. The Police Department Traffic Bureau also indicated their support for an adult crossing guard at this location.

An alternative to a crossing guard at 1st Street is to establish an adult crossing guard at Gates Avenue and require all students to cross at either 2nd Street or Gates Avenue by installing “NO PEDESTRIAN XING” signs at 1st Street. While this would reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflicts near 1st Street, it might encourage more mid-block crossing and relocation of some parent pick-up activity from 1st Street to Gates Avenue.

Flashing School Crossing Beacons

The State of California has established guidelines for the installation of flashing beacons and school crossing traffic signals at uncontrolled intersections. The criteria for each of these traffic control measures were reviewed against the existing conditions at Peck Avenue and 1st Street. In each case, the minimum traffic or pedestrian guidelines are not currently met.

It was noted that the southbound flashing beacon is located outside the sidewalk and is partly obstructed by trees. The flashing beacons were not operational during several field reviews at school dismissal. These existing flashing beacons could be relocated/reconfigured to serve as flashing crosswalk beacons at 1st Street.

Other Measures

Additional signs could be placed on Peck Avenue to warn drivers of a school crossing at 1st Street. It was noted in the field observations that the school flashing beacon in the southbound direction was partially obscured by trees on the west side of the street and should be relocated. High visibility ladder style crosswalk markings could also be painted at 2nd Street, 1st Street or Gates Avenue to raise driver awareness of crosswalks along Peck Avenue.

Certain traffic calming measures, such as regular use of the speed monitoring trailer and concentrated school area enforcement, have been implemented pursuant to the Southeast Area

Neighborhood Traffic Management Program. Installation of a paddle-style “Yield to Pedestrians” sign in the center of the roadway could also be considered.

CONCLUSION:

Based on side street volumes, three-way stop controls are not recommended at the intersection of Peck Avenue and 1st Street at this time. However, due to the high pedestrian crossing volume and location of the exit gates, staff recommends the following:

1. Install a yellow school crosswalk on the south leg of Peck Avenue at 1st Street with 25 feet of red curb in advance of the crosswalk on each side of Peck Avenue.
2. Provide an adult crossing guard at the intersection of Peck Avenue at 1st Street.
3. Reconfigure/relocate the existing flashing beacons on Peck Avenue near the school to serve as a flashing crosswalk beacon at 1st Street.

Meeting notices were sent to all properties within 500 feet of the Peck/1st Street intersection.

Attachments: Location map
Pennekamp School Campus Map
Stop Sign Worksheet
Flashing Beacon/School Crossing Signal Worksheet
Letter from Joyce Fahey
Meeting notice, 4/14/05

EHZ
C:\My Documents\Projects\JN 13458-Manhattan Beach TE\PPIC\PPIC-15 deegan.doc



City Hall 1400 Highland Avenue Manhattan Beach, CA 90266-4795
Telephone (310) 802-5000 FAX (310) 802-5001

May 3, 2005

***** PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE *****

Re: Peck Avenue/1st Street Pedestrian Safety

Dear Resident/Property Owner:

On April 28, 2005, the Parking and Public Improvements Commission reviewed a request for installation of pedestrian safety measures at the intersection of Peck Avenue and 1st Street. The Commission voted to recommend the following:

- Installation of a yellow school crosswalk on the south leg of the intersection, with 25 feet of red curb in advance of the crosswalk on each side of Peck Avenue.
- Utilization of an adult crossing guard at the intersection.
- Relocation of the existing flashing yellow beacons on Peck Avenue closer to the intersection.

The City Council will review these recommendations at a public meeting on Tuesday, May 17, 2005. The meeting will be held in the City Council Chamber, 1400 Highland Avenue, and will begin at 6:30 p.m. Any comments you might like to make at the meeting would be welcomed.

The issue will be on the portion of the agenda known as the "Consent Calendar", meaning that it will not automatically be discussed. If it is not requested to be discussed by either a member of the audience, a City staff person or a Councilmember, the recommended action will be approved without discussion. At a point at the beginning of the meeting the Mayor will ask the audience if they would like any items to be removed from the Consent Calendar. If you do not agree with the recommended action for this item, be sure to request that it be removed at that time. It will then be discussed during the portion of the agenda entitled "Items Removed from the Consent Calendar", toward the end of the meeting.

If you have any questions or would like any additional information, please call me at 802-5540.

Sincerely,

Rob Osborne
Management Analyst
Community Development Department