

Legislation Text

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CC MEETING: December 1, 2015

DATE: November 19, 2015

TO: Leonard Martin, City Manager

FROM: Cesar J. Molina, Jr., P.E., Director of Engineering

Discuss **Newman Smith High School Crosswalk Enhancements.**

BACKGROUND:

This item has been presented at the request of Councilman Babick to discuss enhanced warning of the north crosswalk at Newman Smith High School on Josey Lane.

History:

Newman Smith High School was built in 1975. By 1992 its enrollment had reached 2,400. Due to insufficient on-site parking, sophomores and juniors were required to park in the parking lot of the First Baptist Church. At that time, the high school had about 750 on-campus parking spaces with 190 spaces reserved for teachers and staff and the balance available for students. About 300 students parked at the First Baptist Church and walked across Josey Lane.

In response to driver complaints over uncontrolled students crossing Josey Lane, especially during the morning rush hour, the school district and city developed a plan. The school district built additional parking spaces under the Oncor power lines and paid the city to place two off-duty police officers to staff the marked crosswalk in the morning and afternoon of school days.

From about 1993 to 2004, CFBISD paid a fee to the city equivalent to the cost of placing two off-duty police officers for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon in an effort to better manage students crossing at this location. In 2004, the school district approached the city asking to allow CFBISD security personnel to staff the crosswalk instead of off-duty police officers. The city was receptive to this idea and in May 2004 the City Council modified the city code to allow this. From the fall of 2004 until the spring of 2013 CFBISD security personnel staffed this location.

Starting in the spring of 2013, the school district piloted an idea of leaving the crosswalk unmanned. After a successful pilot, the school district determined that the crossing was not unsafe and that a crossing guard was unwarranted. The school district formally removed the security personnel at this crosswalk starting in the fall of 2014.

Newman Smith enrollment continued to increase in the 1990's until it reached a peak enrollment of about 3,000 in 1996 prior to the opening of Creekview High School. With the opening of Creekview, enrollment has been steadily declining. In the fall of 2015, Newman Smith reports a student enrollment of 1,980.

Current Issue:

The northernmost crosswalk on Josey Lane is located at the one-way entrance into the high school campus. The crosswalk is marked with 2-foot wide by 6-foot long white cross bars spaced every 2 feet across Josey Lane. State law requires a vehicle to yield to a pedestrian crossing a roadway in a marked crosswalk. There is another crosswalk at the signalized intersection of Sunridge approximately 470 feet to the south. Staff has observed pedestrians using this location during the morning arrival.

Options and Financial Implications:

If Council desires to add additional warning enhancements to this crosswalk, staff offers a range of options, as follows.

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons. This is a system that would include adding three flashing beacons mounted on poles which would be activated similar to the pedestrian crossing signal at most signalized intersections. The flashing beacons would alert drivers that pedestrians are about to enter the crosswalk. However, pedestrians need to be educated to not step into the crosswalk until it is safe to do so (i.e. observing vehicles slowing down). The cost of this system, including installation, is approximately \$16,000.

LED illuminated in-pavement beacons. This option would embed markers in the crosswalk pavement that have LED lights which would be activated with a push button similar to those used at signalized intersections. Pedestrians would likewise need to be educated to not step into the crosswalk until it is safe to do so. The cost of this system, including installation, is approximately \$17,000. Public Works does not recommend this option, however, due to the nature of the city's shifting soils and the likelihood of ongoing maintenance and repair of the embedded circuitry.

Solid crosswalk markings. Under this option, thermoplastic pavement markers can be installed across the entire crosswalk area (not just the existing 2-foot wide bars). Various color options are available depending on Council preference. Total cost is approximately \$10,000.

Contrasting crosswalk markings. A second variation to the above option is to use a two-tone color on the standard 2-foot wide pavement markings. The standard contrasting color is black, which would make the white markings more prominent. The cost for this option is approximately \$1,000.

Standard crosswalk markings with board stripe. A third marking variation is to use the standard 2-foot wide pavement markings and add a one-foot wide stripe as a board on either side of the crosswalk. The color of the bar could be any color Council desires, such as a green stripe on one side and a gold stripe on the other side to resemble the Newman Smith school colors. The cost for this option is approximately \$1,000.