



Staff Report

File #: REPORT 20-0689, Version: 1

**Honorable Mayor and Members of the Hermosa Beach City Council
Regular Meeting of October 27, 2020**

**NORTH SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOOD
TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**
(Environmental Analyst Leeanne Singleton)

Recommended Action:

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Adopt a Resolution (**Attachment 1**) adopting the North School Neighborhood Transportation Management Plan; and
2. Determine that the adoption of the NTMP is exempt from CEQA based on the CEQA Addendum.

Executive Summary:

The passage of the Measure S school bond in June 2016 created the Measure S School Facilities Project, which includes the reconstruction of North School and revitalization/modernization of the School District's two current schools. To comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the School District prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the North School Reconstruction Project and took action to certify the Final EIR and approve the project on January 9, 2019.

Following certification of the Final EIR by the School Board, the City and School District representatives met as a team to collaborate on the conditions to be included in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). On February 27, 2019, the Memorandum of Understanding was approved by both the City Council and School Board memorializing the commitment of both parties to work together collaboratively to safely manage transportation, traffic, and student loading and unloading activities, primarily through the development of a Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP) for the streets and neighborhood surrounding North School.

As part of the MOU, the City and District agreed to form a stakeholder group that would share information and gather public input on relevant topics to be included in the NTMP. Over the last twelve months staff and the consulting team have collaborated in the evaluation of the study area and facilitation of a stakeholder working group and community workshops to inform the development of the NTMP.

A draft of the NTMP was released in January 2020 and was presented to the City Council, School Board, and the community for initial feedback and discussion ahead of formal action by the City Council and School Board. Community feedback on the January 2020 Draft NTMP was solicited through February 28, 2020.

A revised draft NTMP was presented to the City's Public Works Commission in July 2020 and in August and September additional analysis was conducted on the revised draft NTMP by City and School District Staff. The additional analysis resulted in minor changes to the NTMP documented in the October 2020 NTMP (**Attachment 2**) and the preparation of an Addendum to the North School Reconstruction Project Final EIR (**Attachment 3**) to confirm that the minor revisions to the traffic and circulation measures studied in the EIR would not create new or increased environmental impacts than what was already identified in the project EIR. As explained in the EIR and as anticipated through the working group, any changes proposed through the final NTMP should result in improvements to the circulation compared to what was originally studied for the project. Most near-term recommendations identified in the NTMP were either considered in the Approved Project design or are part of the Final EIR Mitigation Measures. Through the design and implementation of required mitigation measures and development of the NTMP, some minor modifications have been proposed, which were not previously considered and therefore an Addendum to the North School Final EIR has been prepared, pursuant to the CEQA guidelines to determine whether the implementation of the NTMP would introduce new significant impacts that were not identified in the Final EIR.

NTMP Goals:

The City of Hermosa Beach and the Hermosa Beach City School District sought the development of the Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan for the neighborhood surrounding North Elementary School to achieve the following goals:

1. Identify solutions that will enhance public safety and traffic flow at North School without causing delays in the school's construction, which may include additional offsite loading and unloading zones on public property.
2. Maximize the efficient use of limited funds of the City and School District and leverages outside funding opportunities.
3. Utilize a collaborative process to incorporate City, School District, and community input on the design and operation of transportation facilities and traffic concerns.
4. Comply with the conditions set forth in the MOU and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the North School EIR.
5. Complete by March 31, 2020, including adoption of plan by both the School Board and City Council.*

* Note that while adoption was initially anticipated in March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and extraordinary demands on School District and City, revisions to the draft based on public feedback were not finalized until October 2020.

Analysis:

The Draft North School NTMP was released for public review in January 2020 and presented during a Joint Study Session of the Hermosa Beach City School Board and City Council on February 3, 2020. Public comments on the recommendations contained within the Draft NTMP were accepted through the month of February.

During the month of February, 41 written comments were received on the Draft NTMP that resulted in

some changes to the plan. Additional comments submitted and discussion from the July 2020 Public Works Commission review have generated some additional minor changes to the NTMP. Below is a brief summary of the comments submitted and the subsequent changes made to the October 2020 Draft NTMP (**Attachment 2**) in comparison the January 2020 NTMP.

- **24th Place and 25th Street (one-way and sidewalks):** The majority of comments submitted (27) were specific to long-term recommendations to convert 24th Place and 25th Street into one-way streets and provide space to accommodate sidewalks on these streets.
Changes made: These recommendations have been removed from the July 2020 draft based on community feedback and the no left-turn on 24th Place from Valley Drive has been removed/shifted to 24th Street since 24th Place is a stop-controlled intersection and will now allow two-way traffic.
- **26th Street (one-way conversion):** Seven of the comments submitted provided feedback about the near-term recommendation to convert 26th Street from a two-way street into a one-way street due to the narrow street width and current allowance of parking on both sides of the street. In order to maintain safety, preserve parking on both sides of the street, and deter 26th Street from being used as an informal student drop-off, the recommendation included in the January 2020 draft identified the conversion of 26th Street to allow vehicular travel to move one-way eastbound between Manhattan Ave and Morningside Drive.
Changes made: The October 2020 draft has been modified to recommend the one-way conversion of 26th Street to have vehicles travel westbound only between Morningside Drive and Manhattan Avenue. This change to one-way westbound would minimize potential conflicts at the intersection of Morningside and 26th Street and has been reviewed and analyzed by the City's Traffic Engineer which supports the recommendation.
- **Rotary/Kiwanis Club Parking Dropoff and ADA Path:** Eight of the comments referenced a desire for this recommendation to be moved from a long-term recommendation to a near-term project.
Changes made: None. Due to the complexity of this recommendation and level of funding needed to create a formal drop-off at this location that meets safety, accessibility, and environmental review standards, this recommendation remains in the long-term category. The City and School District may evaluate options and funding available to implement this project in the future and as necessary as part of the iterative Adaptive Management process to enhance the measures as necessary.
- **Raised Mid-Block Crosswalk at School Entrance:** The January and July 2020 Draft NTMP included a recommendation to install a raised crosswalk at a mid-block location on 25th Street near the main entrance to the school between Silverstrand Ave and Myrtle Dr. Some comments and questions have been submitted seeking the removal of this recommendation or concerns over the operation/management of that crosswalk between the school drop-off and parking lot driveway.
Changes made: This recommendation has been moved from near-term to long-term recommendation. Staff recommends that further review of this recommendation be considered once the school is operating and student travel patterns can be directly observed. Moving this item to a long-term recommendation would allow more effective study of how this recommendation may affect traffic safety and vehicle delay based on actual rather than modeled travel behaviors.
- **Adaptive Management Program and Monitoring Locations:** A few comments identified specific streets or intersections where they would like to see additional changes or have concerns. This

includes Ozone Court, 27th Court, and the intersection of Monterey and Park.

Changes made: These locations have been added to the list for ongoing monitoring. The need for additional measures will be evaluated through the Adaptive Management Program.

- **Other Comments:** other comments or ideas submitted on the draft NTMP include:
 - requested use of buses to reduce trips (already included as a long-term recommendation),
 - a desire for long-term communication from school to neighborhood (School District will follow practices at other Hermosa schools),
 - request to use technology for efficient school arrival and dismissal (will be considered by District)
 - additional crossing guards requested at certain intersections (priority locations for crossing guards have been identified and can be adjusted once school operations begin)
 - posting of lower speed limits throughout the neighborhood (lowering beyond 25 MPH requires posted speeds to be evaluated following vehicle code regulations to be enforceable)

CEQA Addendum

While most of the near-term recommendations identified in the NTMP were either considered in the Approved Project design or are part of the Final EIR Mitigation Measures, the design and implementation of required mitigation measures and development of the NTMP has resulted in some minor modifications proposed which were not previously considered. This includes:

- Approved Project: Passenger Loading Designation on Myrtle Avenue, and restriction of on-street parking as identified in TRAF-3 for Myrtle Avenue
- NTMP Implementation: On-Site Student Loading and Unloading within the School Parking Lot
- Approved Project: Restriction of on-street parking as identified in TRAF-3 for 26th Street
- NTMP Implementation: One-Way Street Designation on 26th Street heading westbound from Morningside Drive to Manhattan Avenue.

The California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and CEQA Guidelines establish the type of environmental documentation that is required when changes to a project occur after an EIR is certified.

“The lead agency or responsible agency shall prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if some changes or additions are necessary but none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR have occurred.”

Therefore, an Addendum to the North School Final EIR (**Attachment 3**) has been prepared, pursuant to the CEQA guidelines to determine whether the implementation of the NTMP would introduce new significant impacts that were not identified in the Final EIR. The Addendum includes:

- The CEQA Authority for an Addendum
- A Description of how the project has changed in comparison to the Approved Project
- Analysis of each Transportation and Traffic Impact in the context of the NTMP Implementation in comparison to the Approved Project
- A Determination that the revised mitigation and NTMP Implementation would not result in any additional significant impacts or increase in the severity of previously identified significant impacts.

As demonstrated by the analysis included in the Addendum and noted in the table below, the NTMP Implementation would not result in any additional significant impacts nor would it substantially increase the severity of previously identified significant impacts in comparison to the Approved Project. In several impact areas, the NTMP Implementation would reduce the severity of transportation and traffic related impacts, although they would not be reduced to a less than significant level.

**Comparison of Transportation and Traffic Impacts
between Approved Project and NTMP Implementation**

Impact Analysis	Approved Project	NTMP Implementation
5.121a: One Hour Peak Traffic	Less than Significant	Less than Significant
5.121b: Half Hour Peak Traffic	Significant and Unavoidable	Significant and Unavoidable
5.122: Congestion Management Program	Less than Significant	Less than Significant
5.123: Roadway Hazards	Significant and Unavoidable	Significant and Unavoidable
5.124: Emergency Access	Less than Significant	Less than Significant
5.125: Alternative Transportation	Less than Significant	Less than Significant
5.126: Parking	Significant and Unavoidable	Significant and Unavoidable
5.127: Vehicle Miles Traveled	Less than Significant	Less than Significant
Cumulative Impacts	Less than Cumulatively Considerable	Less than Cumulatively Considerable

The NTMP Implementation would be required to implement the same mitigation measures as the Approved Project as set forth in the Final EIR with minor changes to the mitigation measures noted in Addendum to reflect the NTMP Implementation.

The City of Hermosa Beach plays a unique role in this document in that the City was not designated as a lead or responsible agency when the EIR was prepared and certified, as it is not approving or constructing the underlying school project. The NTMP is a CEQA mitigation measure of the school project aimed at eliminating or reducing environmental impacts to the extent feasible. Nevertheless, the NTMP was created in partnership with the School District (lead agency) and accordingly, the City Council should memorialize its approval of the NTMP. The addendum demonstrates that the NTMP implementation

(mitigation measure) will not result in any additional significant impacts nor would it substantially increase the severity of previously identified significant impacts in comparison to the Approved Project. Thus, the School District as lead agency relies on the Addendum in deciding to approve the NTMP. While the City is not required by law to be an approval body of the NTMP, the City is a partner with the District in the NTMP and for that reason approves the plan. CEQA does not squarely address this unique role. Accordingly, the City relies on the Addendum and the record as a whole in its approval of the NTMP. The addendum provides evidence that NTMP implementation will not create new or more severe impacts than those already identified in the EIR for the underlying project. To the extent that the City's decision to approve the NTMP mitigation measure is a discretionary decision that requires a CEQA finding separate and apart from reliance on the Addendum, this action is also exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guideline 15061(b)(3). There is no evidence in the record that adoption and implementation of the NTMP (a mitigation measure of the underlying project) will create a significant impact to the environment. The record as a whole shows that the measures in the NTMP enhance public safety and traffic flow at North School and by its nature as a mitigation measure, is intended to reduce impacts to the extent feasible.

Next Steps and Implementation

As a joint effort between the School District and the City, following consideration by the School Board the NTMP is being forwarded to the Hermosa Beach City Council for review and adoption. Upon adoption by both bodies, staff will begin work on the implementation of the near-term recommendations so that they are in place prior to the opening of North School for in-person student instruction.

It should be noted that the response to COVID-19 has significantly impacted school operations and it is anticipated that adjustments will continue through the majority of the 2020-21 school year. Specifically, the Hermosa Beach City School District is currently planning for the following:

- Grades 2-4 located at school site during View construction
- Hybrid model opening only allows 50% student capacity
- Staggered drop-off and pick-up times
- Midday pick-up schedule: 11:20-11:30AM

General Plan Consistency

PLAN Hermosa, the City's General Plan, was adopted by the City Council in August 2017. The development of the NTMP related to North School would help implement our collective community vision to provide exceptional local schools to the Hermosa Beach community and support several goals of the Governance Element, Land Use Element, and Mobility Element.

Governance Element

Goal 1 - A high degree of transparency and integrity in the decision-making process.

- *1.6 Long-term considerations.* Prioritize decisions that provide long-term community benefit and discourage decisions that provide short-term community benefit but reduce long-term opportunities.

Goal 2 - The community is active and engaged in decision-making process.

- *2.7 Major planning efforts.* Require major planning efforts, policies, or projects to include a public

engagement effort.

Land Use Element

Goal 7 - Adequate space and appropriate integration of community and school facilities that support physical activity, civic life and social connections for residents of all ages and interests.

- *7.2 Joint use with schools.* Where appropriate, maintain and enhance joint use agreements with Hermosa Beach City School District to maximize community use of school facilities and expand school use of City park facilities and community space to expand opportunities for physical activity.
- *7.3 School modernization upgrades.* Support Hermosa Beach City School District plans to renovate and modernize school facilities to meet evolving educational needs in a manner that minimizes burdens to adjacent neighborhoods.

Mobility Element

Goal 2 - A public realm that is safe, comfortable, and convenient for travel via foot, bicycle, public transit, and automobile and creates vibrant, people-oriented public spaces that encourage active living.

- *2.1 Prioritize public right-of-ways.* Prioritize improvements of public right-of-ways that provide heightened levels of safe, comfortable and attractive public spaces for all non-motorized travelers while balancing the needs of efficient vehicular circulation.
- *2.2 Encourage traffic calming.* Encourage traffic calming policies and techniques to improve the safety and efficient movement of people and vehicles along residential areas and highly trafficked corridors.

Goal 3 - Public right-of-ways supporting a multimodal and people-oriented transportation system that provides diversity and flexibility on how users choose to be mobile.

- *3.3 Active transportation.* Require commercial development or redevelopment projects and residential projects with four or more units to accommodate active transportation by providing on-site amenities, necessary connections to adjacent existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle networks, and incorporate people-oriented design practices.
- *3.9 Access for emergency vehicles.* Ensure that emergency vehicles have secure and convenient access to the city's street network.
- *3.10 Require ADA standards.* Require that all public right-of-ways be designed per Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards by incorporating crosswalks, curb ramps, pedestrian signals, and other components to provide ease of access for disabled persons.

Goal 7 - A transportation system that results in zero transportation-related fatalities and which minimizes injuries.

- *7.1 Safe public right-of-ways.* Encourage that all public right-of-ways are safe for all users at all times of day where users of all ages and ability feel comfortable participating in both motorized and non-motorized travel.
- *7.2 Manage speeds.* Monitor vehicle speeds through traffic controls, speed limits, and design features with the intended purpose of minimizing vehicle accidents, creating a pedestrian and bicycle environment, and discouraging cut-through traffic.
- *7.4 Traffic safety programs.* Prioritize traffic safety programs oriented towards safe access to schools and community facilities that focus on walking, biking, and driving in school zones.

Fiscal Impact

The implementation of near-term actions within the NTMP are estimated at approximately \$190,000 in construction costs, with the costs apportioned between the City and School District. The City has appropriated \$100,000 in Fiscal Year 2020-21 from the Capital Improvement Fund to implement the near-term construction related recommendations and an additional \$5,000 to support safe routes to school programming/implementation.

Attachments:

1. Resolution - North School NTMP Adoption
2. October 2020 Revised Draft - North School Neighborhood Transportation Management Plan
3. North School Reconstruction Project - Addendum to Final EIR
4. NTMP Presentation Slides

Respectfully Submitted by: LEEANNE SINGLETON, Environmental Analyst

Noted for Fiscal Impact: VIKI COPELAND, Finance Director

Legal Review: LAUREN LANGER, Assistant City Attorney

Approved: SUJA LOWENTHAL, City Manager