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To:	Paul Woodard, P.E. – Director of Public Works/City Engineer
From:	Ahnaray Bizjak, P.E. – Transportation Project Engineer
Date:	October 13, 2011
Subject:	Leopold Way/Post Road intersection

In response to concerns posed by Leopold School staff and residents regarding pedestrian safety at the Leopold Way and Post Road intersection, I conducted a field visit at the subject intersection on Tuesday, October 11, 2011, from 7:20-8 am, to observe the traffic behavior of drivers and pedestrians. The start time for Leopold Elementary is 7:45 am.

The subject intersection is stop controlled for Leopold Way and provides 2 marked crosswalks; one to cross Leopold Way (south leg) and one to cross Post Road (west leg). It should be noted that a legal crosswalk exists on the east leg of the intersection, although it is unmarked and handicap ramps have not been provided. It should also be noted that there is a Metro Transit supplemental bus service stop located on the north side of Post Road, just east of the intersection with Leopold Way. This is the pick-up location for students who are headed to the middle and high school.

The focus of my observation was to count the number of pedestrians who crossed Leopold or Post Road at this intersection, as well as observe the behavior of motorists and their compliance with the requirement to yield to pedestrians who are in the crosswalk. I was also monitoring the queue (or back-up) of cars on Leopold Way during this time and the overall nature of the traffic operating on Post Road during the school arrival time.

Field Observations

7:20 – 8 am, Tuesday, October 11, 2011

- 56 pedestrian crossings were counted at the marked crosswalk on the west leg of Post Road. This count included crossings in both directions (families crossing to bring children to the school and then coming back after dropping them off). It also included each pedestrian walking across the street. Often times it was a family crossing the street at the same time, consisting of perhaps 2 adults and 2 children. This would count as 4 pedestrians.
 - The predominant use of this crosswalk consisted of parents escorting elementary students to the school and middle school students crossing the street to get to the supplementary school bus service that is provided by Metro Transit.
 - Typically the people who used this crosswalk approached the intersection on the west side of Leopold Way. There were a few parents, escorting elementary students, who were located on the east side of Leopold Way that would cross Leopold in the marked

- crosswalk and cross Post Road on the west leg (in the marked crosswalk), rather than cross Post Road on the east leg or continue east to the crossing guard location.
 - There was, surprisingly, very good compliance with motorists yielding to pedestrians in the marked crosswalk (west leg). Some drivers would continue through the crosswalk if the pedestrians were standing in the ramp, waiting to cross. But once the pedestrian was in the marked crosswalk, there was 100% compliance with yielding to the pedestrian.
- 19 pedestrian crossings were counted at the unmarked crosswalk on the east leg of Post Road.
 - The predominant use of this crosswalk consisted of middle school students crossing the street to get to the supplementary school bus service.
 - Typically, these students would approach the intersection on the east side of Leopold Way and cross the street on the east leg because that is the most direct path to the supplemental bus service stop. It would require a small amount of back-tracking to cross in the marked crosswalks (south and west legs).
 - Generally speaking, pedestrians waited for a gap in traffic to cross the street. If a pedestrian was crossing and a vehicle approached during that time, typically the driver would yield to the pedestrian and allow them to continue crossing.
- Although I did not do an actual count, I did notice a number of pedestrians who continued east on the south side of Post Road to, I assume, cross where the crossing guard is located.
- Arriving on site, the queue on Leopold Way would range between 5-7 cars in length. The longest queue consisted of 15-20 cars (approx. 7:25), which lasted for approximately 8 minutes.
- Travel speeds seemed reasonable, traffic congestion and pedestrian activity forced slower travel on Post Road.
- By 7:49 am the street was quiet; essentially no traffic, no kids, and no pedestrians.

Recommendations

- Maintain the existing traffic control with a stop sign on Leopold Way. My observations do not suggest the need to add stop control on Post Road. A more detailed analysis would need to be done to justify an all-way stop controlled intersection, including traffic counts and a turning movement count. However, I do not believe that an all-way stop control at this intersection would be warranted.
- Maintain the 2 marked crosswalks in their current locations. Based on the pedestrian counts, there is a need to maintain a marked crosswalk at this intersection. Pedestrians are likely crossing the street at all times of the day, so the marked crosswalk is intended to serve more than just the school arrival and departure times. Given the location of the supplementary Metro Transit pick-up location, there is a need to provide a convenient, well-marked location for the middle school students to cross Post Road.
- With regards to the supplemental Metro Transit pick-up location, my recommendation would be to work with Metro Transit to shift that stop westerly such that it would be located on the far-side of the intersection. This would provide 2 benefits:
 - It will relocate this activity to a less congested area of Post Road and open up better visibility at the intersection itself.
 - It will promote the use of the 2 marked crosswalks (south and west legs) for those students who are approaching the intersection on the east side of Leopold Way, and perhaps even eliminate the need, or desire, for pedestrians to cross Post Road on the east leg of the intersection (in the unmarked crosswalk).
- Leopold Elementary School staff should continue to educate, encourage, and request parents and students to cross Post Road where the existing crossing guard is located. A mid-block crossing is a preferred location for a pedestrian crossing because of the reduced number of conflict points. The existing location makes sense that it is located mid-block between Traceway and Leopold, allowing students from both directions the opportunity to cross Post Road at a controlled location. This is also accomplished with the use of one crossing guard, maximizing the efficiency of staff and resources given current budget constraints.