BZA Application No. 16970
National Child Research Center

Submitted by Jon Thoren
On behalf of The Friends of NCRC

NCRC TRAFFIC OBSERVATIONS AND COUNTS
HIGHLAND PLACE MORNING DROP-OFF: 8:30 – 8:55 A.M.

Objective

After hearing various traffic complaints raised at public meetings by certain NCRC neighbors, I decided to observe NCRC traffic for myself. My objective was to see NCRC traffic at its worst. I chose the morning drop-off period on Highland Place because this is the busiest traffic period at NCRC. The vast majority of a total of 103 morning and all day students arrive during a 15 to 20 minute period beginning at around 8:30.

The supplement to NCRC's traffic report determined that the Highland Place trip activity was 48 vehicles during the period from 8:25 to 8:50 a.m. (See Supplemental Statement of the Applicant, Exhibit E). I decided to observe between 8:30 and 8:55, so that I could see what occurred from 5 minutes before the start of the official 8:35 drop-off period until 5 minutes after it ended at 8:50. (Note: With the beginning of the new school year in September 2003, the start of the morning drop-off period was moved up 5 minutes to 8:30.)

Methods

I watched the Highland Place morning drop-off on 16 occasions between late January and October of this year. On 14 of these, I obtained traffic counts. Various photographs were taken during these observations and a 25-minute unedited videotape of the complete drop-off was taken on Thursday, February 6. The traffic counts include all vehicles that passed in front of the school during the 25-minute period. With respect to the traffic that passed the school but did not stop to use the drop-off lane, no attempt was made to determine whether or not that traffic was related to NCRC.

Conclusions

The average number of vehicles I saw passing the school on Highland Place during the 25-minute span (including those using the drop-off lane) was **46.8**, or slightly **less than 2 per minute**. The drop-off lane on average was used by 32 cars, and 15 vehicles on average passed in front of the school without stopping to use the drop-off lane. (The 2/6 videotape is close to this average showing 45 cars, comprised of 34 using the drop-off, and 11 others passing by the school.)

Note: In calculating this average, the three counts that were taken since the start of the new school year were omitted (9/9, 9/15, and 10/2) because their inclusion would understate the nature of the school's Highland Place traffic. Early in the school year, some parents opt to park on Ordway and walk their children to the school, instead of

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using the Highland Place drop-off. If these dates were included the daily average would drop to 43.6 (with about 30 cars using the drop-off and 14 passing by the school).

Over the 16 mornings I observed Highland Place traffic, I saw a total of about 700 vehicles pass by the school (including those using the drop-off). As a whole, the school's traffic was orderly, efficient, and safely managed. Virtually all traffic was well under the 25-mile per hour speed limit (most was under 10 mph), and virtually all drivers obeyed the school's rules.

The specific dates of my observations and daily counts are set forth below, with a few notes of significance.

Details of Highland Place Morning Drop-Off: 8:30 – 8:55 a.m.

1. Thursday, January 30, 2003
    a. Various photographs taken

2. Friday, January 31, 2003 (light rain)
    a. Present with David Montgomery, Washington Post reporter
    b. Various photographs taken

3. Thursday, February 6, 2003
    a. Videotape taken
    b. 34 using drop-off lane
    c. 11 others passing school on Highland
    d. 45 vehicle total

4. Wednesday, May 7, 2003 (4 in queue maximum)
    a. 34 using drop-off lane
    b. 16 others passing school on Highland
    c. 50 vehicle total

5. Friday, May 9, 2003
    a. 24 using drop-off lane (3 in queue maximum)
    b. 15 others passing school on Highland
    c. 39 vehicle total

6. Monday, May 12, 2003
    a. 32 using drop-off lane (3 in queue maximum)
    b. 13 others passing school on Highland
    c. 45 vehicle total

7. Wednesday, May 14, 2003
    a. 36 using drop-off lane (5 in queue maximum)
    b. 26 others passing school on Highland (Washington Gas dig occupied at least 12 parking spots on Ordway sending more traffic to Highland).
    c. 62 vehicle total

8. Thursday, May 15, 2003
    a. 37 using drop-off lane (4 in queue maximum)
    b. 15 others passing school on Highland
    c. 52 vehicle total

9. Tuesday, May 20, 2003
    a. 36 using drop-off lane
    b. 15 others passing school on Highland
    c. 51 vehicle total

10. Thursday, May 22, 2003
    a. 37 using drop-off lane
    b. 12 others passing school on Highland
    c. 49 vehicle total

11. Friday, May 23, 2003
    a. 30 using drop-off (5 in queue maximum)
    b. 15 others passing school on Highland
    c. 45 total

12. Wednesday, May 28, 2003
    a. 26 using drop-off (1 in queue maximum)
    b. 9 others passing school on Highland
    c. 35 total

13. Tuesday, June 3, 2003
    a. Present with Stephen Marcus – Ordway Street resident
    b. 28 using drop-off (no queue)
    c. 14 others passing school on Highland
    d. 42 vehicle total

14. Tuesday September, 9, 2003 (Bunny and Beehive orientation day)
    a. Drop-off begins at 8:30; new school year procedures are in place
    b. 18 using drop-off (no queue)
    c. 16 others passing school on Highland
    d. 34 vehicle total

15. Monday, September 15, 2003 (all classes back in session)
    a. 26 using drop-off (no queue)
    b. 8 others passing school on Highland
    c. 34 vehicle total

16. Thursday, October 2, 2003
    a. Second day carpool reopened after Isabel tree damage to Highland
    b. 18 using drop-off (no queue)
    b. 9 others passing school on Highland
    d. 27 vehicle total