

# Pincourt plans raised crosswalk, flashing lights near St. Patrick School



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Parents and students cross Shamrock St. during a busy student pick-up period, as they leave the St. Patrick Elementary School in Pincourt, west of Montreal, Friday January 13, 2017. *PHIL CARPENTER / THE MONTREAL GAZETTE*

Pincourt municipal officials have ongoing plans to improve pedestrian safety around St. Patrick School, which has a booming student population because of a recent building expansion.

Last month, the city, school administrators and parent representatives, as well as the Sûreté du Québec met to discuss traffic in front of St. Patrick's school, which is located on Shamrock St. near Bayview Ave.

"Due to the increased congestion in front and around the school, the school and the city are proactively reviewing options to alleviate safety concerns of children entering and exiting the school," said Carol Heffernan, assistant director general at the Lester B. Pearson School Board.

"The city has added a sidewalk for students walking to school and is looking at additional traffic mitigating methods to encourage drivers to respect the school zone speed limit and the no stopping zones. The Sûreté du Québec has had an increased presence at the school during the beginning and end of the school day and will continue to remind drivers of their responsibilities," she continued.

Last week, town council approved the \$8,800 purchase of some solar-powered pedestrian crossing lights that will be installed in front of the school, along with some accompanying signage. The flashing lights will be activated by a button to be pushed by pedestrians, said Yanick Bernier, Pincourt's director of emergency services and public security.

In the spring, the city also intends to install a raised crosswalk, which is a gradual asphalt incline on the street for pedestrians to walk over. This will be deployed next to the flashing lights, which could be installed sometime next month, Bernier said.

“The cars can cross over this (raised crosswalk), which is about four feet wide,” he said. “The kids will walk over this and the cars have to make a stop.”

The raised crosswalk, which will be about the same height of the adjacent sidewalk, will be a year-round device and won't be taken away during the winter months.

Much of the traffic activity during the morning rush hour period around St. Patrick's is a result of parents stopping to drop off their kids minutes before the school bell rings, Bernier said. New signs warning that double parking and U-turns are prohibited will be posted in the coming weeks. Motorists will also be discouraged from loitering after dropping off their children at the school, he added.

Overall, the city will be spend up to \$18,000 to improve pedestrian safety near St. Patrick's School, Bernier said, adding a contractor has yet to be hired to install the raised crosswalk, which will then have to be painted with yellow stripes.

St. Patrick students transported by school bus are let out near the backyard of the school.

In recent years, the city had extended or added sections of sidewalks in the area around the school.

St. Patrick principal Michael Rabinovitch said the school community appreciates the city's solutions and collaboration to ease traffic flow and improve pedestrian safety.

“We always look at traffic patterns and congestion. We just try to maximize all these things to ensure the safety of our students are

in check,” he said. “We are thrilled with some of things they are putting in place to keep things as safe as possible.”

About three years ago, the elementary school underwent a \$6.5 million expansion that increased its functional capacity to about 620 students. Its student population stands at about 500 students, which is up from about 350 pupils a few years ago.

“Our school is growing,” Rabinovitch noted. “An extension was built and (traffic) patterns change. The reality is that this a very normal growth for our community.”