



# Memorandum

**TO:** ALL CHILDREN ACHIEVE  
COMMITTEE

**FROM:** James R. Helmer  
Robert L. Davis

**SUBJECT:** UPDATE ON TRAFFIC SAFETY  
PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS

**DATE:** 05-26-05

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Approved

Date

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

Accept report on school-related safety programs conducted by the San José Police (SJPD) and Transportation (DOT) departments.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **UPDATE ON INTER-CSA COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS FOR TRAFFIC SAFETY**

The traffic safety programs for schools, referenced in the “One Voice” inter-CSA strategy presented during the June 2004 Budget Hearings, were launched in January 2005. Using the Blueprint Youth Master Plan as a guide, the proposal outlined a CSA partnership that focused on priorities for youth programs, while addressing service delivery challenges resulting from potential budget cuts. The Youth Safety budget proposal outlined a strategy for inter-departmental coordination that would allow continued service using alternate, yet pre-existing, delivery options. These strategies better utilize existing resources, while providing strategic coordination of program goals and enhanced opportunities for service delivery.

Specifically relating to traffic safety, January was declared “School Safety Month” in San José by Council proclamation. Activities that focused specifically around traffic safety were the kick-off of the new Street Smarts School Safety Program; the Traffic Safety Poster Contest; Operation Safe Passage; and various videos that address pedestrian safety and teen DUI, now available at the Library and which were also shown at After School Programs. Continuing with plans conceived last year, the Street Smarts program will conduct Pedestrian and Bicycle “Rodeos” in collaboration with PRNS, at various Summer Day Camps, using the Street Smarts City, to teach children about safe behaviors when walking or biking to school.

## **UPDATE ON OTHER TRAFFIC SAFETY PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS**

### Adult Crossing Guard Program

There are currently eight intersections that are not staffed at this time due to budgetary, and recruitment challenges. Three of the four Coordinator positions are staffed; however, the fourth position has been frozen. To date, there have been no traffic accidents at staffed locations this calendar year.

### Audit of the Adult Crossing Guard Program

Revisions to the Adult Crossing Guard Safety Index Formula will provide greater opportunities for an intersection to qualify for an adult crossing guard. At the direction of the Building Better Transportation Committee, DOT re-studied 39 intersections that originally did not qualify for a guard and found that seven of the 39 intersections now qualify for a guard using the new formula. These seven new intersections could require up to 11 new guards. DOT studies approximately 15 - 20 intersections annually. If the new Safety Index is used, it is anticipated that 8 - 11 intersections per year will qualify annually for a crossing guard. Using the 1.5 guard per intersection rate, the total demand for new guards is estimated to increase by 9-13 guards per year.

### Cost Implications of the new Safety Index Formula

The approximate annual cost of one guard is \$7,500. To hire 10 new guards (to fill locations that now qualify under the revised Safety Index) and 10 more during the year as locations are identified which qualify, would require a budgetary increase of approximately \$150,000.

### Volunteer Crossing Guards

SJPD has trained 30 volunteers at five elementary schools since January 2005.

### School Safety Patrol Programs

Coordination and visits with School Safety Patrol students have decreased this quarter due to one of the three coordinator positions being vacant.

### Safety Presentations

Thirty one presentations on school safety were made by SJPD's School Safety Coordinators at area schools since November 2004.

### Street Smarts

As the Street Smarts Program has evolved, perhaps the greatest benefit has been how education has helped to enhance coordination between all of the tools available – engineering, enforcement and education - to more effectively calm traffic. Education is now included as a “Basic” tool, and is often used as the first approach to resolving neighborhood traffic concerns, prior to employing more costly engineering solutions. To date, there are 170 schools and 18 neighborhoods participating in the program. Of the 18 neighborhoods that have adopted Street Smarts, 87 percent of residents in those neighborhoods rated the value of the overall program as “Good” or “Excellent.” Street Smarts was also designed as a regional program and the cities of Cupertino, Danville, San Ramon and Napa,

Salinas and El Monte, along with Contra Costa County Health Department have adopted Street Smarts.

#### School Safety Education Program

A new component of Street Smarts, the School Safety Education Program, launched in January 2005 with a \$230,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety. This program teaches children in grades K-8, age-appropriate safety principles, such as how to cross the street safely and the proper way to wear a bike helmet and ride a bike. Once a school is scheduled for the program, the instructor reviews the pick up and drop off patterns of each school prior to teaching the course and customizes the presentation to address specific safety issues and challenges at that school.

The program is taught to classes and through assemblies and is expected to serve an estimated 50,000 students each year. It is anticipated to reach all San José elementary and middle school students over the course of two years. To date, the program has served 32 schools, reaching an estimated 15,227 students.

In order to gauge the effectiveness of this and other school safety programs, a new performance measure has been created to track accidents involving school children (ages 5 – 14) in school areas. The data from this measure will enable staff to target schools that may need focused education, enforcement or engineering measures.

#### School Area Traffic Management

Construction on the Safe Route to School pavement embedded crosswalk lights project was completed this past fiscal year. This project provided for the installation of ten enhanced crosswalks near schools to enhance pedestrian safety.

The traffic calming Level I project near Lowell Elementary School was completed. This project represented a Top 10 priority item in the University Strong Neighborhood Initiative area, and provided for bulb-outs and textured crosswalks to enhance pedestrian safety, and streetscape improvements.

DOT is working closely with San José Unified School District to mitigate negative traffic impacts as a result of school closures within that district. Examples of negative impacts that the district and DOT have been addressing are increased vehicle traffic at those schools remaining open and modification of existing signs and markings to handle different traffic patterns at schools.

DOT continues to work with schools and districts to improve traffic flow for all roadway users in and around San José schools, on a case-by-case basis. DOT coordinates with SJPD and provides recommendations for roadway signage, striping and markings that may increase pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle safety.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

Not applicable.

All Children Achieve Committee

06-09-05

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**COORDINATION**

This report has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

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