



# Memorandum

**TO:** ALL CHILDREN ACHIEVE  
COMMITTEE

**FROM:** James R. Helmer  
Thomas R. Wheatley

**SUBJECT:** SCHOOL TRAFFIC SAFETY  
PROGRAM

**DATE:** 07-29-03

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Approved

Date

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## **BACKGROUND**

The All Children Achieve Committee Workplan, which was approved at the June 18<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting, contained an agenda item for its August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, Item #3, School Traffic Safety Program. This memorandum is in response to this item.

## **ANALYSIS**

The San José Police Department (SJPD), and the Department of Transportation (DOT) are continually working together with schools and residents to promote traffic safety in school areas. A list of on-going safety programs for both DOT and SJPD is listed in Attachment A.

This memorandum will address changes and additions to programs addressed in recent reports to this committee, the Building Better Transportation Committee and to the full Council.

## **SCHOOL SPEED DISPLAY SIGNS**

The City of San José has purchased 32 radar speed display signs. These signs will be installed at school locations throughout the city. Twenty of these signs were purchased through a Safe Route To Schools Grant, administered by Caltrans.

As a condition of the grant funding, Caltrans required the City to apply for permission to install the signs experimentally, as the signs are not yet an approved traffic control device in California. At its meeting of June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the California Traffic Control Devices Committee (CTCDC) granted San José and other cities permission to install these signs as part of a continued study of the signs' effectiveness. A necessary component of this study will be the collection of baseline data. This data can only be collected when school is in session, but must be collected before activation of the signs. DOT is on track for installing the signs in time for this data to be collected at the beginning of the school year, and the signs will be activated within the first 60

days of school, as data collection is completed at each of the sign locations. A list of the locations for the school radar signs is shown on Attachment B.

### PAVEMENT-EMBEDDED CROSSWALK LIGHTS

DOT is currently evaluating contract options, and is on track to have pavement-embedded crosswalk lights installed in 10 locations by the end of the 2003-2004 school year. The locations of these motion-activated flashing light system crosswalk enhancements are identified in Attachment B.

### SCHOOL ACCESS ENHANCEMENT

The first phase of the School Access Study has been implemented and many of the City improvements that can be handled with basic signage and striping are scheduled to be completed by the beginning of the school year. DOT is continuing to work with school districts to encourage completion of the on-site recommendations, for which the schools are responsible, during 2003-2004 school year. DOT will meet with each school district by mid-September to determine the status of recommendations related to on-site improvements at each school.

### STREET SMARTS/BACK-TO-SCHOOL TRAFFIC SAFETY CAMPAIGN

The Street Smarts program kicked off its second year by initiating a collaborative effort with SJPd, the City's School Safety Program, San José school districts, Safe Moves, the Northern California Offices of AAA, PRNS and the City/School Collaborative, and CHP to design a "Best Practices" back-to-school traffic safety campaign. The purpose of the campaign is to work with all of the above mentioned partners to identify the primary traffic safety issues related to the back-to-school timeframe; to inventory existing programs or efforts that currently address these issues; and to perform a gap analysis to determine what additional efforts are needed to enhance the safety of San José children as they head back to school.

Additionally, this effort is exploring ways that the City can better coordinate resources by leveraging existing efforts, and utilizing the Street Smarts public education campaign to plan and implement a comprehensive back-to-school safety campaign. Although this effort is still in the early planning stages at the time this report is being written, highlights, to date, of the Back-to-School safety campaign are:

- A press conference is being planned with the Mayor's Office to announce the launch of a major Back-to-School Traffic Safety Campaign by the City of San José to keep San José kids safe as they return to school. This event will focus on improved traffic safety in school zones and will emphasize the need for driver, pedestrian and bicyclist behavior change. Additionally, it will outline for the media, components of the campaign that will be implemented beginning with the kick-off of the school year (see components listed below). This event will be coordinated by the Street Smarts program and will involve participation by the Mayor and City Council, SJPd, SJFD, AAA, Safe Moves, CHP and San José school districts. Dramatic visuals are being planned for this event to convey the

need for improved safety around schools to both kids and parents alike. These props, being provided by AAA, CHP and SJPD, should serve as a viable draw for media coverage, which will help the City to better disseminate to the public its key messages for back-to-school safety.

- Back-To-School Safety Fliers, detailing tips to keep kids safe and to train parents in traffic safety, will be distributed to over 90,000 students in cooperation with 17 elementary and middle school districts. Additionally, Street Smarts is exploring co-marketing opportunities with local merchants such as Safeway and Target stores, to distribute these fliers to all customers purchasing items at these stores.
- SJPD will be conducting stepped-up enforcement around San José schools beginning with the first week of school. SJPD currently participates in the countywide OPERATION SAFE PASSAGE, conducted in early October, January, and May. However, it was decided that San José parents, students, and commuters could develop unsafe habits that would be difficult to break by the time the Safe Passage effort is conducted in October. Therefore, SJPD has agreed to conduct a special enforcement effort at the beginning of the school year to remind motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists to obey the special school zone requirements, in an effort to prevent unsafe driving, parking and walking habits from forming at the start of the school year.
- Street Smarts Safety Education Program presentations will be made at approximately 86, or about ½ of San José schools. In addition, special Bicycle Rodeos will be conducted at 10 (one in each Council District) of the 20 schools that were identified as Street Smarts performance measurement locations, listed in Attachment C. These presentations have proven highly effective in teaching children about traffic safety. Date selection of these presentations will be coordinated with each Council office to allow councilmember participation in these presentations, if so desired. The final list of these schools with the dates for these presentations will be provided to the media at the Back to School press conference to encourage coverage of these events.
- Fence banners will be distributed to all Street Smarts schools to promote greater awareness of school zones. These vinyl banners are 15 feet by 4 feet and are designed to hang on perimeter fences at the beginning of school zones, to encourage drivers to slow down. Banners are designed with the traditional Street Smarts design architecture and are both colorful and attractive. The message: “If you see kids, slow down,” is available in both English and Spanish.
- Classroom safety posters are being distributed to all San José elementary and middle schools in time for the start of school. These posters, underwritten by AAA in partnership with Street Smarts, educate children about the proper behaviors to use when crossing a street.
- Public service announcements (PSAs) will be distributed to both local radio and television stations beginning in July, to coincide with back-to-school. A video PSA

educating parents about “driving do’s and don’ts in school zones” was produced last year with Chief Lansdowne by CivicCenter TV and will be distributed again this year by Liquid Agency to the media. Additionally, radio PSA scripts are in production for use by councilmembers for use on local radio. Street Smarts will be coordinating this effort with each Council office to encourage more media coverage of the City’s back-to-school safety messages to the community.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

Not applicable.

### **COORDINATION**

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

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Attachments