



# Memorandum

**TO:** BUILDING BETTER  
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

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

**SUBJECT:** TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM  
AND STREET SMARTS CAMPAIGN

**DATE:** 02-17-04

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Approved

Date

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## **BACKGROUND**

This report provides an update on the City's Traffic Calming Program and the Street Smarts public education campaign. It will briefly describe the establishment of the program, the current focus and status of activities, the current program challenges, and the strategic direction the program is headed.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Program Inception**

The City Council approved its most recent Traffic Calming Policy in June 2001. The revised policy was developed with a goal to improve traffic conditions and livability within San José neighborhoods, plan and build traffic calming improvements with new developments or projects, and to be customer focused and results driven. Formation of the policy was a result of an extensive review of outside agency policies, revision of standards and guidelines, coordination with other City departments, and input from citizens and advocacy groups. The policy also incorporated timeliness goals.

The Street Smarts public education campaign was launched in November 2002 to address certain traffic safety violations at their root cause – with drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists. The campaign has been structured to target five key behaviors: red-light running, stop sign violations, speeding, school zone violations and crosswalk violations.

### **Current Status of Program**

The table below provides a summary of the traffic calming program activity for the first six (6) months of FY03-04.

| Traffic Calming Program Activity |       |         |         |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|
|                                  | Basic | Level 1 | Level 2 |
| Outstanding (as of 6/30/03)      | 153   | 15      | 1       |
| New Requests                     | 1024  | 3       | -       |
| Completed                        | 1016  | 6       | -       |
| Outstanding (as of 12/31/03)     | 161   | 12      | 1       |

As in FY02-03, the level of new requests (Basic) has remained at a high level throughout FY03-04. In FY02-03, a total of 2,060 basic level service requests were completed. Based on the activity in the first six months of FY03-04, the program is on track to again complete approximately 2,000 projects. Overall, staff has been able to keep up with the significant number of requests, completing 76% of projects for the first half of FY03-04 within the City Council approved timeline (five weeks to reach a decision and install appropriate devices). However, it is anticipated that the timeliness measure will decrease in the second half of the fiscal year as staff resources are redeployed to focus on other related traffic calming activities; as described later in this report.

The level of outstanding service requests (161 at the end of December 2003) has continued to remain high over the past year as compared to the number of outstanding requests at the end of FY01-02 (129). The primary reasons for the higher backlog at the current time is the continued high level of new service requests and the staffing challenges faced by the Neighborhood Traffic Management team. For the majority of FY03-04, the program has maintained four vacant positions, which has impacted the ability to address and resolve the outstanding service requests in a timely manner.

Approximately 10% of the completed basic level service requests were issues that were studied and required no corrective action. Examples of services requests that fell in this category included projects that were referred to other jurisdictions or departments for review, intersections that did not require stop sign installations, and items where only information was requested. The remaining completed projects were issues that were addressed with basic level traffic calming elements, which are primarily signs, markings, enforcement and education.

For the first half of FY03-04, a total of 6 Level 1 projects were completed. To reduce construction costs, while maintaining quality and project timelines, DOT constructed 5 of these projects with in-house crews. The combined savings realized by constructing these projects with City forces was approximately \$450,000. Customer feedback on all of these projects has been very favorable. Three (3) additional projects are scheduled for completion in FY03-04, and eight (8) are scheduled for completion if FY04-05. Where feasible, some of these projects will also be constructed by DOT in-house crews.

Approximately 55 of the above completed service requests were in direct response to concerns raised in various Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) plans or by the Neighborhood Advisory Committees. Although funding was on hold for implementation of most SNI priority items this

past year, staff continued the evaluation of concerns raised by many of the SNI neighborhoods and implemented basic traffic calming measures where necessary.

### Radar Speed Surveys

While not reflected in the above service request data, there are approximately 500 roadway segments in San José that require engineering and traffic surveys. These surveys need to be current in order for the Police Department to enforce speed limits with radar. There are currently 64 expired engineering and traffic surveys, representing approximately 13% of all roadway segments requiring surveys. As a result of the staffing vacancies and the focus on customer service requests, staff has been unable to reduce the level of expired surveys to a manageable level. The goal is that a minimum 90% of the engineering and traffic surveys are current. To reduce the level of expired surveys, staff resources are being redeployed to focus on engineering and traffic surveys in addition to customer service requests.

### Speed Display Signs

Over the summer of 2003, thirty-one (31) school radar speed display signs were installed near schools with posted speed limits of 30mph or greater. Locations were selected based upon a consideration of daily vehicular volume, posted speed limit, age of children attending the school(s), traffic controls in the area, ratio of children walking vs. being driven, and whether multiple schools would benefit with the placement of these devices. These signs were operational in the Fall of 2003 and are utilized during the school drop off and pick up periods, when the legal speed limit adjacent to the schools drops to 25mph. Twenty (20) of these signs were funded through a Safe Route to School grant. The remaining signs were funded through the Traffic Capital program.

### School Area Crosswalk Lighting Systems

Significant progress has also been made towards implementation of the Safe Route to School grant the City received for up to ten (10) pavement embedded crosswalk lighting systems to enhance pedestrian safety near schools. A memorandum recommending a construction contract award is scheduled for the March 2<sup>nd</sup> City Council meeting. It is anticipated that the design and construction of the lighted crosswalks will be completed by Fall 2004.

In the March 2003 report provided to the Building Better Transportation Committee on the Traffic Calming program, a variety of information was provided regarding activities DOT and its CSA partners were involved in. The following provides an update to some of these activities:

### Annual Crash Review

The 2003 Annual Crash Review was expanded to include an analysis of intersections with high crash totals caused by red light running and “failure to stop” violations, and intersections with high pedestrian or bicycle related crashes. The purpose of the review is to analyze the causes of the crashes and develop recommendations to enhance the safety at these intersections. DOT staff

is currently in the process of completing many of the short-term recommendations developed as a result of the review.

The primary factors contributing to crashes on a city-wide basis are related to speeding, red light running, and unsafe turning movements and lane changes. However, it should be noted that in 2003 the rate of injury and fatality crashes in San José dropped from 4.3 (2002) to 4.1 occurrences per 1,000 population. For FY03-04, the rate is projected to improve again. San José ranks favorably when compared nationally, where an average of 6.8 occurrences per 1,000 population have been experienced (2002 national average).

### Street Smarts Public Education Campaign

The Street Smarts Public Education program kicked off its second year with a Back-to-School Safety campaign. The campaign was developed in collaboration with the San José Police Department; San José Unified and Alum Rock school districts; Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services and the City/School Collaborative, CHP; AAA; Safe Moves; and DOT's School Safety Program. The goal of this committee was to identify the primary traffic safety issues related to the back-to-school timeframe; inventory existing programs or efforts that addressed these issues; and determine what additional efforts were needed to enhance the safety of San José children as they head back to school. Additionally, this effort explored ways for the City to 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.

In an effort to prevent unsafe driving, parking and walking habits from forming at the start of the school year, the following actions occurred:

- Press conference launch at Williams Elementary with Vice Mayor Dando, SJPD, CHP, San Jose Unified School District, AAA and Safe Moves
- 120,000 Back-to-School Safety fliers in three languages were distributed to San José students;
- 5,000 pedestrian safety posters were distributed to every elementary school classroom. The posters were developed in partnership with AAA;
- 8 Pedestrian Rodeos were held at schools citywide;
- Special enforcement was provided by SJPD at the beginning of the school year to remind motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists to obey the special school zone regulations;
- School safety banners were distributed to 20 Street Smart pilot schools.

Responding to numerous requests from principals, PTA presidents and parents, and the positive feedback received regarding the pilot school fence banners, the Street Smarts program produced an additional 152 school fence banners and distributed them to all elementary and middle schools, in partnership with SJPD.

Street Smarts continues to concentrate on the grass roots component of the public education campaign. To date, presentations have been made to 34 community groups and 18 schools and neighborhoods, with 10 neighborhoods adopting the program. Each neighborhood that adopts the program receives approximately three hours of interactive education relating to driver, pedestrian and bicycle safety. To date, community feedback about Street Smarts has been extremely positive.

On the regional front, the Contra Costa County Health Department has joined Street Smarts and is planning a rollout to East Bay cities. The City of Berkeley Transportation Commission recently approved a partnership with Street Smarts and DOT is working with their staff to complete this process. Last year, the City of Napa joined the program and began implementing it in their community.

Street Smarts partnerships are being actively explored by the City of Cupertino, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). The Florida State Department of Transportation recently contacted DOT to ask about the possibility of using Street Smarts as a model pedestrian and bicycle safety program for all of their law enforcement agencies in the state. Initial inquiries have recently been received by the cities of Mountain View, San Diego, Escondido and the Town of Danville. In addition, presentations have been made to 13 public agencies and are continuing to be scheduled, toward the goal of implementing Street Smarts on a regional basis.

Data collection related to the five target behaviors is continuing through year two. This information will be compared with baseline data collected last year to evaluate potential new areas of program focus. Typically, social marketing campaigns measure success over time. The traditional progression of such a campaign is to raise awareness in year one, change attitude in year two and start to see an actual shift in behavior by the end of year three.

Preliminary data from the 2003 Community Survey indicates that 35% of respondents recall seeing or hearing about the Street Smarts public education program, and of those, 58% believe it will be effective. The complete results of this survey will be provided to Council in a separate report in the near future.

To provide additional opportunities for San José neighborhoods to get information regarding the Street Smarts program, the City's Traffic Calming Tool Kit was revised to include education as a basic traffic calming service. The tool kit can be viewed on the City of San Jose website.

The contract with Safe Moves to provide safety education at elementary and middle schools has recently expired. DOT is working with the Police Department to develop alternate methods of providing this education with internal resources.

### Strategic Direction

The Policy on Traffic Calming is now three years old. The incorporation of the Street Smarts public education campaign as an integral part of the program has been beneficial in working with

neighborhood groups to address traffic concerns. Continued focus will be placed on expanding the grass roots effort to bring the education program to more neighborhoods and schools on a City-wide basis.

A major focus will be placed on implementing SNI Top 10 priority items that have been funded by the San Jose Redevelopment Agency. Several of these projects are programmed to begin implementation this fiscal year. Many others are programmed to be initiated in FY04-05.

Significant efforts will also be placed on reducing the level of expired engineering and traffic speed surveys through the remainder of FY03-04 and FY04-05. Given the vacancy level in the Neighborhood Traffic Management division, the impacts of reallocating staff resources will be a reduction in the timeliness of responding to new service requests. Every effort will be made to minimize any service level reductions equitably across Council Districts.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

Not applicable.

### **COORDINATION**

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

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