



Memorandum

TO: BUILDING BETTER
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

FROM: James R. Helmer
Robert L. Davis

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON TRAFFIC CALMING AND SCHOOL SAFETY PROGRAMS
DATE: 09-19-06

Approved

Date

RECOMMENDATION

Accept this status report on the Traffic Calming and School Safety Programs.

BACKGROUND

This report provides an update on the Traffic Calming and School Safety Programs. The prior annual updates on the Traffic Calming program and School Safety program were provided to the Building Better Transportation (BBT) Committee at the June 5, 2005 and April 3, 2006 meetings, respectively.

ANALYSIS

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, and to plan and build traffic calming improvements with new developments or projects.

The table below provides a summary of traffic calming program activity for FY05-06.

Traffic Calming Program Activity			
	Basic	Level 1	Level 2
Outstanding (as of 6/30/05)	145	9	0
New Requests	1475	2	0
Completed	1410	5	0
Outstanding (as of 6/30/06)	210	6	0

Basic Projects

Basic level service requests include projects that involve the installation of signs, markings or other basic device, and/or the provision of enforcement or education to address a particular concern. Overall, staff was able to keep up with the number of requests received. There were more projects outstanding at the end of the fiscal year, due to an increase in the number of requests received in the latter part of the year. Specifically, 177 new requests were received in June 2006 that were not completely evaluated and/or implemented at the end of the year.

Additionally, 53% of projects were completed within the City Council approved timeline (five weeks to reach a decision and install appropriate devices). While this meets the 50% target for FY05-06, it is substantially lower than the 82% achieved in FY02-03. It is anticipated that the level of projects completed within timelines will remain at 50% in FY06-07 for the following reasons:

- Staffing reductions in Neighborhood Traffic Management in prior years
- Staffing reductions in Infrastructure Maintenance in prior years, impacting installations of basic traffic calming devices
- Maintaining current state-mandated engineering and traffic speed surveys
- Number of requests will likely increase in FY06-07 as the economy continues to improve

Level I and Level II Projects

Level I projects generally involve the construction of physical features in the roadway, such as small median islands or chokers, to address traffic concerns. The new projects involved addressing speeding on Silver Leaf Road and cut-through traffic on Cherry Avenue. The five completed projects include:

- Median island on Anthony Drive to reduce speeding
- Road bumps on Silver Leaf Road to reduce speeding
- Corner bulb-outs and flashing pedestrian beacons on 10th and 11th Streets at Martha Street to enhance pedestrian safety.
- Median island on Cherry Avenue to reduce neighborhood cut-through traffic
- Median island on Keesling Avenue to channelize traffic flow

There were no requests for Level II improvements during the fiscal year.

Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) Areas

In FY05-06, traffic calming projects identified as a Top 10 priority in the following SNI neighborhoods were completed:

- Edenvale-Great Oaks: school radar speed display signs
- Spartan-Keys: Corner bulb-outs and pedestrian flashing beacons at 10th and 11th at Martha

- Tully-Senter: two small median islands to help channelize the flow of traffic through the intersections of Clemence Avenue and Owsley Avenue, and Audubon Drive and McLaughlin Avenue; and the installation of 16 ADA curb ramps
- West Evergreen: pedestrian flashing beacons, street light, 2 ADA curb ramps and median island modification on Aborn Road

Safe Street Initiative

For the past several years, the City has experienced one of the lowest injury and fatality crash rates of any large City in America. To continue to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety at the most critical locations in the City, the FY2005-06 Capital budget allocated \$500,000 for implementation of the Safe Street Initiative for the following improvements which are now completed:

- 200 red light running indicators to enable police officers to efficiently enforce red light running violations
- 64 intersections upgraded with pedestrian countdown signals to provide pedestrians with information on the amount of time that remains to complete crossing a street before the opposing direction gets a green signal
- 14 crosswalks enhanced with flashing beacon signs to provide additional notice to motorists when a pedestrian is crossing or beginning to cross a street

Traffic Safety Education

Traffic safety education through the Street Smarts program was presented to community organizations, including service clubs, senior groups, unions and retirees' associations. There are currently 24 San José neighborhoods that have adopted the program and are committed to addressing driver, pedestrian and bicyclist behavior through presentations, videos and neighborhood and family activities. On the regional front, 20 other communities in California have adopted the Street Smarts program, including all 11 cities in Marin County, along with the County of Marin.

School Safety Education Program

Public outreach and education is a key component of San José's traffic safety strategy, with a particular emphasis on educating school children. In FY2005-06, traffic safety education and outreach efforts included the following:

- Traffic safety education was provided to approximately 27,100 elementary and middle school students at 49 schools, and 27 community events such as the Children's Faire.
- Approximately 790 bicycle helmets were distributed at schools and various community events, along with inspections of the proper fit of the helmet on children.
- Parent education seminars were conducted at 12 schools to address driver behavior in school zones. Presentations were customized to address prevailing traffic safety issues at each school.

In addition, DOT's School Safety Program conducted traffic studies to improve safety in school zones at an estimated 60 schools in FY 2005-06. Outcomes of these traffic studies included operational changes with school drop-off and pick-up activities at many of these schools, as well as modifications to parking restrictions in the area, such as the installation of new passenger loading zones or relocation of school bus zones.

Crossing Guard Program

The Police Department's School Safety and Education Unit promotes school safety for students by staffing warranted locations with Crossing Guards with the goal to prevent pedestrian accidents involving students.

In Fall 2005, the formula for determining the need for a crossing guard was revised, making it easier for a location to qualify for a crossing guard(s). Since then, 18 new locations have qualified for crossing guards. None of these newly authorized locations have been staffed.

As part of the FY2006-07 budget process, two of the four Coordinator positions in the School Safety and Education Unit were eliminated. With the decrease in Coordinator positions, challenges being faced by the School Safety Unit include:

- Reduced ability to respond to all requests for safety education. Many requests are being referred to DOT's Street Smarts program.
- Delayed training of approximately 45 School Safety Patrols at the beginning of the school year.
- Inability to adequately conduct routine monitoring of all School Safety Patrols during the school year.
- Inability to actively monitor all crossing guards. Each of the Coordinator positions currently supervises 86 crossing guards.

Enforcement Activities

The Traffic Enforcement Unit (TEU) of the Police Department will participate in the Safe Passage program at the end of September. This is a statewide program that promotes student pedestrian safety through high visibility of marked police vehicles. In addition, the TEU works to support the Traffic Calming efforts in many neighborhoods through periodic enforcement in areas experiencing chronic traffic violations.

JAMES R. HELMER
Director of Transportation

ROBERT L. DAVIS
Chief of Police