



Memorandum

TO: TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Hans F. Larsen

SUBJECT: TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM SAFETY REPORT

DATE: September 12, 2012

Approved

Date

9/21/12

RECOMMENDATION

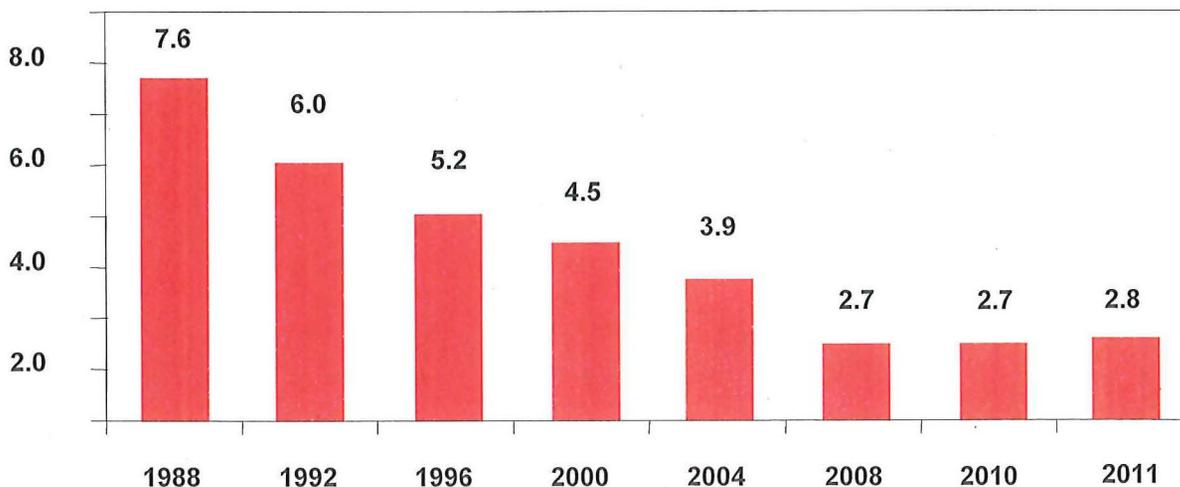
Accept the report and presentation on various transportation system safety programs and projects.

BACKGROUND

San José is one of the safest large cities in the nation for traffic operations, with an injury crash rate about half the national average. Over a 20-year period, San José's injury crash rate declined almost 65%, from 7.6 injury crashes per 1,000 residents in 1988 to 2.7 in 2008. Contributing to this significant improvement in traffic safety has been the strategic investment in capital projects that were largely based on analysis of crashes, enforcement at high crash locations, and delivery of traffic safety education to school children and seniors.

However, after nearly two decades of traffic safety improvements, San José's injury crash rate has flattened in recent years. With 10 consecutive years of budget reductions faced by the City, funds available for traffic safety investments declined significantly during this time period.

San José Injury Crash Rate (per 1,000 residents)



Additional funding has become available in the 2013-2017 Traffic Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for a variety of traffic safety programs, with a focus on encouraging alternate modes of travel through enhanced pedestrian crossings, and educating our youth and seniors on safe pedestrian and bicycling behaviors.

This report is being presented to the Transportation and Environment (T&E) Committee to highlight the new and expanded traffic safety programs and activities, summarize some of the core safety programs that continue to be provided by the Department of Transportation (DOT), and to obtain input from the T&E Committee on the direction the department is taking.

ANALYSIS

1. TRAFFIC SAFETY DATA

An important activity in DOT is the analysis of collision reports from the Police Department to determine trends and to address location specific concerns to reduce the incident of collisions. Results of this analysis have guided past traffic safety investments, and were instrumental in developing many of the new and expanded programs described in this report. At the T&E Committee meeting, staff will provide a presentation highlighting trends and issues related to traffic safety in San José.

2. SCHOOL FOCUS

The safety of children as they are going to and from school is very important to the City of San José, and is viewed by School Superintendents as one of the most important services the City provides for the schools. Highlighted below are some of the new programs and activities associated with the safety and mobility of school children.

Walk n' Roll San Jose! (new) – In 2011, San José was awarded a \$944,000 grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to increase mode shift at 35 elementary schools. Concurrently, San José received a companion grant of \$652,000 to install low-cost engineering measures to enhance safety along walking/biking routes at participating schools.



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In response to outreach conducted with School Districts and Council Offices in Spring 2012, 25 schools have signed up to participate in *Walk n' Roll SJ!* during the 2012-13 school year. DOT has been working with a team of parents and school officials to develop and implement a workplan specific to each school to achieve the program goal of 20% mode shift by either walking or biking. A kick-off of *Walk n' Roll SJ!* at many of the 25 schools will be participation in this year's International Walk to School Day occurring on October 3, 2012.

In addition to partnering with the school community, Lucille Packard Hospital is actively participating in the *Walk n' Roll SJ!* activities at each school with providing education on the health benefits associated with walking and biking.

DOT staff will conduct additional outreach through the Schools/City Collaborative and Council Offices in early 2013 to solicit an additional 10 schools, with a focus on increasing participation in the program across the entire City.

School Radar Speed Display Signs (*new*) – \$250,000 was allocated in the 2012-13 Adopted Budget to upgrade 20 signs in school zones that are old and malfunctioning. These signs are effective in slowing traffic by making drivers aware when they are driving faster than the posted speed limit. The new signs will allow for remote programming and assessment of sign operation, as well as collection of speed data, and will be installed in the Spring 2013.

15 MPH School Zones (*new*) – In response to City Council direction, DOT implemented 15 mph school zones at Booksin Elementary, Dorsa Elementary and Montgomery Elementary in Spring 2012. DOT will provide a report to the T & E Committee in Spring 2013 regarding the effectiveness of the reduced school zone speed limit at these three schools.



Traffic Safety Education (*renewed*) – Launched in 2005, San José's *Street Smarts Program* traffic safety messages have been delivered to over 125,000 school children. The 2012-13 budget reinstates a dedicated position in the Traffic Safety Education program to deliver education primarily to school children and seniors to reinforce positive driving, walking and bicycling behaviors. This year traffic safety education will be delivered to about 14,000 school children, and to about 500 seniors at various venues, such as community centers. DOT is collaborating with California Walks to assist with delivering pedestrian safety education to the senior population.

Parking Compliance (*ongoing*) – DOT has a team of 10 Parking and Traffic Control Officers to support safe school zone drop-off and pick-up activities. Generally, these officers seek to gain voluntary compliance of parents through warnings – however, if necessary parking citations are issued to motorists that negatively impact traffic safety by double parking, or parking in red zones, crosswalks, or other restricted areas.

Traffic Enforcement (*ongoing*) – The Police Department’s Traffic Enforcement Unit (TEU) also provides focused resources several times a year through the Countywide Operation Safe Passage efforts to target enforcement of traffic regulations in school zones. As resources permit, TEU also provides traffic enforcement in neighborhoods and school zones throughout the year.

Adult School Crossing Guards (ACG) (*ongoing*) – The Police Department’s School Safety and Education Unit manages the ACG program, providing 184 part-time crossing guards that staff 115 intersections in San José. This includes an additional 17 guards providing support to 12 schools that are funded by the additional \$75,000 allocated to this program in the 2012-13 Adopted Budget.

3. OTHER PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

Crosswalk Enhancements (*new*) – \$900,000 annually was allocated in the 2013-2017 Traffic CIP to enhance crossings on major roadways. Projects will be selected based on pedestrian activity, proximity to pedestrian generators, crash activity, unique roadway geometry, and input from Council Offices. Depending on the roadway and traffic conditions present at a given location, crosswalk enhancements may include some of the following: refuge islands, chokers, flashing beacons, and high-visibility signs and markings. After finalizing locations for 2012-13, staff will begin design activities, including procurement of flashing beacons. Construction of the enhanced crosswalks is scheduled to begin in the Spring 2013.

In addition to the above funding, the 2012-13 Adopted Budget allocates \$61,000 to improve pedestrian crossings in the Cambrian 36 annexed neighborhoods. In working with Councilmember Rocha’s office, two locations were identified that enhance pedestrian access to neighborhood schools, parks, and nearby transit



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stops: improvements at Woodard Road and Twilight Drive were completed this summer in time for the new school year at Farnham Elementary, and the improvements at Leigh Avenue and Potrero Drive will occur in the Spring 2013.

Radar Speed Display Signs (*new*) – The 2012-13 Adopted Budget includes \$100,000 for the installation of radar speed display signs in addition to the funding allocated for upgrading existing signs in school zones. DOT intends to identify locations on major roadways where the posted speed limit transitions from a higher speed to a lower speed, or where the roadway geometry or topography contributes to higher speeds, and the signs will provide a benefit in reminding motorists of the posted speed limit. Signs will be installed in Spring 2013.

Traffic Signal Installations/Modifications (*renewed*) – \$4.5 million was allocated in the 2013-2017 Traffic CIP to enhance traffic safety and mobility along major roadways. Projects will be selected based on Council Policy 2-2: *Criteria for Installation of Traffic Signals*, which is based on Caltrans Guidelines; with a focus on crash activity and improving mobility for all roadway users. The \$500,000 allocated in 2012-13 will be used to modify existing traffic signals, with improvements ranging from increasing signal head size to the current Caltrans standard of 12 inches to installing protected left turn phasing to provide improved pedestrian crossings and minimize vehicular conflicts. Implementation of minor signal modifications will occur throughout the year, with construction of any major modifications occurring early Summer 2013.

Core Safety Services (*ongoing*) – The DOT Neighborhood Traffic Management team will continue to focus on essential traffic safety concerns with a focus on schools, pedestrian crossings, intersections and driveways; and State mandated speed surveys to allow for speed limit enforcement.

COORDINATION

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

/s/

HANS F. LARSEN
Director of Transportation

For questions please contact Laura Wells, Deputy Director for Transportation and Parking Operations, at 975-3725.