



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: John Ristow
Anthony Mata

SUBJECT: SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

DATE: May 30, 2023

Approved

Date: 5/31/2023

BACKGROUND

This Manager's Budget Addendum responds to the direction given at the October 19, 2022 Rules and Open Government Committee meeting based on the approval of a memorandum from then Mayor Liccardo, Vice Mayor Jones, and Councilmembers Cohen and Foley¹ regarding the expansion of traffic safety programs to prioritize Safe Routes to School with eight specific outcomes.

There are 19 public school districts in San José with 260 K–12 schools, including 184 public schools, 46 private schools, and 30 charter schools.

SUMMARY AND OUTCOME

This Manager's Budget Addendum provides a detailed response to the Rules Committee memorandum, including the estimated costs to implement a School Safety Traffic Program and a School Safety Speedhump Program. As the Department of Transportation (DOT) recently received information that additional funding from the Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA) Measure B would be available for the City of San José beginning in 2023-2024, staff anticipates returning to the City Council early in 2023-2024 – after VTA formally authorizes the additional funding – to recommend the allocation of approximately \$6.8 million of Measure B funding to begin implementation of the School Safety Traffic Program over the next five years.

ANALYSIS

This section provides DOT and San José Police Department (SJPD) staff's potential workplan and/or actions taken to date to achieve the outcomes in the Rules Committee memorandum.

¹ Rules and Open Government Committee memo from Vice Mayor Jones, Councilmember Cohen, Councilmember Foley and Mayor Sam Liccardo: <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11308823&GUID=B0B2E3E7-6480-4985-A72B-843236402FFD>

1. Direct the City Manager to expand traffic safety programs to prioritize Safe Routes to School to deliver the following outcomes:

- a. Request that the Vision Zero Task Force incorporate safe routes to school and safety near school sites into their work plan. As deemed appropriate, the Vision Zero Task Force may establish subcommittees or hold additional meetings for school safety.**

The April 27, 2023 Vision Zero Task Force meeting included a presentation of the results of an online survey that was distributed by DOT in late February to principals at all 260 K–12 schools in San José, including public, charter and private schools. This proactive survey requested each school to provide their top school safety concerns at and around their campus. In addition, it asked if they were currently a participating Walk n Roll school or if they were interested in joining the Walk n Roll Program. To date, 191 schools have provided responses, equating to nearly 75% of all San José schools. Survey results were shared with Vision Zero Task Force members. Below is a summary of key areas of concern raised by respondents of the School Safety Survey:

School Traffic	- School-related congestion – 64% of schools - Speeding around school – 61% of schools
Pedestrian Safety	- Adult Crossing Guard needs – 52% of schools - Crosswalk improvement needs – 39% of schools - Walk n Roll ² Program interest – 37% of schools
School Parking/Circulation	- Parking violations/congestion – 50% of schools

² 62 other schools currently participate in the Walk n Roll Program (25% of schools)

Based on the top priorities identified above from leadership at K–12 schools across San José, the following work plan would ensure every school zone is engaged and reviewed for safety improvement opportunity, documentation of improvement needs, and identification of a capital improvement funding strategy as needed. Should the City Council choose to reprioritize the 2023-2024 Proposed Traffic Capital Budget, depending on the funding level approved, the following work plan could be delivered as a 7-year program with the potential to provide safety enhancements to all 260 schools in San José. The staffing level requested would be able to perform crosswalk high visibility markings as well as comprehensive assessments for about 35 schools per year. Improvements that would be considered could include signs and marking improvements, daylighting (restricting parking at corners so pedestrians are more visible) and adding or modifying loading zones or parking restrictions to reduce pedestrian and vehicle conflicts. The cost to implement this workplan is described in Item 2 below.

- i. Engage all interested schools through Walk N Roll program.
- ii. Enhance school crosswalks to high visibility markings at 75 intersections per year, averaging 35 schools per year.
- iii. Perform comprehensive school access and circulation assessments, and complete signs and markings work orders at 35 schools per year. Priority

would be given to schools with the ability to engage with the City to establish a comprehensive safe route to school action plan.

- iv. Conduct monthly parking education and enforcement at 30 schools per month to ensure compliance of parking laws along school frontages to promote safe access to school grounds. Existing resources will be utilized.
- v. Further evaluate the Adult Crossing Guard (ACG) program by DOT and SJPD, to investigate alternatives to facilitate filling existing vacant positions.
- vi. Pursue Safe Routes to School grant funding.

b. Accelerate filling vacancies for budgeted school crossing guard positions by investigating hiring incentives and engaging school communities to find applicants.

The Police Department School Safety and Education Unit (SSEU), Adult Crossing Guard (ACG) serves 87 schools, with crossing guards staffed at approximately 99 intersections throughout the city. There are currently 22 intersections that meet ACG needs based on a safety index study, but these are temporarily not served by a crossing guard due to a shortage of crossing guards. The ACG Program only serves elementary and middle schools, with some intersections supporting two schools. The number of guards at an intersection varies between one and four, depending on the intersection complexity and size, safety enhancements, overall safety index, and staff availability. As staffing levels improve, priority is given to serving intersections that have not been staffed due to vacancies, and new requests to staff additional intersections are secondary.

When schools closed during the pandemic, the crossing guard program was suspended. As schools began to reopen, many guards chose not to return. The Police Department has since struggled to fill all crossing guard positions and currently has approximately 72 vacant crossing guard positions.

The Police Department's SSEU has ramped up recruiting efforts and is distributing new recruitment flyers, including a QR code that links directly to the job application website; building connections with groups that are able to spread the word about recruitment, such as senior groups, AARP, and school board organizations; coordinating with City partners to distribute electronic and hard copy recruitment flyers in their newsletters and events; and frequently conducting in-person visits to School District offices and schools. Additionally, the Police Department has promoted Crossing Guard Appreciation Week; began a newsletter for crossing guards to help with retention; and worked with news media outlets to conduct interviews and tell stories about crossing guards, spreading the word for the need for crossing guards. Finally, recruiting efforts have also included flyer distribution teams established to saturate targeted commercial and residential areas and tabling at community events, such as Senior Walks and Music in the Park. While all these efforts have allowed the Department to make progress in restoring the ACG program, there are still a large number of vacancies to be filled.

A large demographic of the crossing guard staff is retired. Attracting strong candidates who would be interested in working a part-time, split-shift position for a maximum of

two hours per day creates a challenge. Additionally, all crossing guards need to be able to clear a police background check, which a large number of applicants are not able to clear. The time for applicants to go through the hiring process takes a minimum of 3 months, which often causes the City to lose candidates during this process.

Since it is difficult to find qualified, strong crossing guards, it is vital to retain current staff. There are many different factors that impact retention, but the following factors tend to be the most significant: frequent contact with supervisors, support from the Police Department, providing adequate gear and training, and most of all, recognition. A crossing guard's day-to-day services of providing a safe passage for all children and pedestrians often go unrecognized. Their services are expected and sometimes criticized by drivers, residents, pedestrians, students, and parents. Crossing guards work in all weather conditions, during heat waves and storms; however, sometimes they are yelled at or threatened. To be able to recognize their services and thank the guards for their dedication and service sometimes makes the difference of a guard resigning versus staying multiple years. The value that crossing guards provide the communities within San José has a resounding impact.

If the City Council directed the reallocation of additional funding for recruiting and retaining crossing guards, the Department would consider the following:

- A specific recruiting referral incentive bonus for crossing guards of \$1,000 to fill current vacancies, at a cost of approximately \$72,000.
- Crossing guard hiring bonus of \$1,000, at a cost of approximately \$72,000.
- Marketing materials and professional advertisement, at a cost of approximately \$25,000.
- Passing the cost of uniforms for crossing guards back to the City, at a cost of approximately \$600 for each new hire, or approximately \$43,000. This would be an ongoing cost for new hires each year.
- Provide additional training for existing staff and increase employee appreciation events for crossing guards, at a cost of approximately \$30,000.

c. Provide quantitative and qualitative metrics that measure success of the program.

As part of the proposed School Safety Program, the following metrics will be established to gauge its effectiveness:

- Walk n Roll Program school participation rate;
- Number of school crosswalk enhancement projects completed;
- Crash reduction in school zones;
- Annual survey to school leadership to gather feedback regarding safety walking and bicycling to and from school, including how many students are walking and biking to school;
- Comprehensive school site access and circulation evaluations completed; and
- Crossing guard vacancy rate improvement.

d. Identify and pursue competitive grant programs at the regional, state, or federal level that can support expansion of the traffic safety programs – and ultimately sustain these efforts.

The following competitive grant programs at the regional, state, and federal level have been identified to support safety improvement work around school zones and will be pursued as part of this proposed Program:

- One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) – Federal, 5- to 6-year cycle
- Active Transportation Program (ATP) – Federal/State, 2-year cycle
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) – Federal, 1-year cycle
- Clean Mobility in Schools/Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (CMIS/STEP) – State, 2- to 3- year cycle
- Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities (AHSC) – State, 1-year cycle

e. Bring forward recommendations on how to streamline the process for implementing speed humps near schools, including evaluating opportunities to leverage the pavement program. Present the costs and anticipated impact of, as one option for consideration, an annual citywide deployment of dozens of speed humps near elementary and middle schools, starting with the most hazardous schools for walking or biking students.

In San José, traffic calming elements are installed in compliance with Traffic Calming Council Policy 5-6. Under that Policy, physical traffic calming features, including speed humps, are permitted to be installed on residential streets where the documented 85th percentile speeds exceed 33 MPH for a 25 MPH posted speed, and where the majority of the residents vote in favor of their installation through a petition process. There are currently 43 streets with speed humps citywide, with several located within or near school zones. The construction of speed humps generally costs \$20,000 to \$30,000 per street and are installed independent of the pavement program due to the differing nature of the work. Outreach and petition process required by the Traffic Calming Policy can take up to 12 months or more.

If petition requirements are waived through a policy amendment, staff can notify residents of the planned installation of speed humps on predetermined streets (based on roadway width and visibility and potential conflict against pedestrian crossings) and provide residents with an opportunity to contest the installation within 30 days. Speed humps could then be planned, designed, and constructed within 6 to 12 months. Installation would be prioritized based on measured 85th percentile speed, roadway geometry, crash history and equity consideration. If all 260 schools were to receive speed humps on one street, the construction cost is estimated to be \$7.8 million. At a rate of 35 street installations per year, this would take seven to eight years to complete installation citywide. The cost to implement the speed hump program is described in Item 2 below.

f. Provide the method and schedule by which to update City Council with status.

If the City Council directs the reallocation of funding within the 2023-2024 Proposed Traffic Capital Program, a school safety section will be added to the Vision Zero annual safety report to the Transportation & Environment Committee.

- 2. Direct the City Manager to prepare recommendations for budget actions that can be taken in the FY 23-24 budget process, and beyond, to make the systemic changes to the City's Traffic Safety Program that will increase the program's reach to be able to support every school district in San José. If there are immediate opportunities and/or critical needs to improve traffic safety near schools, staff should bring those forward for Council consideration at the mid-year budget review.**

The DOT workplan described in Section 1.a above would provide a near-term opportunity to address critical needs to improve traffic safety near schools. A possible strategy to fund the first five years of the workplan in Section 1.a is described in the Summary of Estimated Costs on the following page.

School Crosswalks

Estimated timeline to complete all school crosswalk enhancements as described in Section 1.a would be 7 years, at a total material cost of approximately \$525,000. A new maintenance truck would also be required to support crosswalk enhancement work (\$150,000 one-time; \$4,000 ongoing). In comparison, the use of contractors to implement the high visibility crosswalk installations would cost more than twice the in-house delivery cost, based on recent bid prices. This is largely because of an overall increase in workload for this type of work. Ongoing pavement maintenance impact will need to be considered. If current staffing is utilized to deliver these crosswalk enhancements, there would be a general reduction of approximately 30-50% in existing service delivery of safety-related projects, pavement projects, and preventative maintenance.

Parking Enforcement

Using the current resource level, the Parking and Traffic Compliance Unit can conduct a 30-minute education and enforcement of school parking regulations at up to 30 schools per month by request. This additional workload will impact the Parking and Traffic Compliance Unit's ability to perform proactive safety patrols in the neighborhoods by 20%.

Adult Crossing Guard

Changes to the Police Department's ACG Program will require additional analysis if the program was expanded to support every school district.

The Police Department's ACG Program currently serves elementary and middle schools. A deeper dive is needed to understand if a school may have a need for a crossing guard or other safety improvements. Any new intersection added to the program would need to be

evaluated for the number of crossing guards. The cost of each additional crossing guard is estimated to be approximately \$11,000, annually. In addition to crossing guards, supervision must be accounted for when expanding the program. To be able to effectively provide additional quality services, supervision of staff is extremely vital to ensure that all staff are receiving appropriate supervision, support, and training, and that response times are within a reasonable time. Without the proper supervision, the quality of services is directly negatively impacted. Ideally, every 50-70 additional crossing guards would require an additional supervisor.

Since there are a number of locations that will be assessed, the Police Department recommends analyzing the existing safety index study process to see if it is adequately capturing data, as times have changed. This will provide a solid foundation to reassess every staffed location as well as new requests.

To support all school districts and expand the program to include high schools would be a significant expansion of the current ACG program and require long-term strategic planning. Qualified locations would be placed on a waitlist to be opened based on funding levels and the ability to staff the intersections.

Summary of Estimated Costs

The work plan required to make the systemic changes to the DOT's Traffic Safety Program that will increase the program's reach to be able to support every school district in San José will require a significant level of investment as described above. The estimated costs and related position needs are detailed below. These costs are not included in the 2023-2024 Proposed Operating or Capital Budgets.

However, staff anticipates that a funding source will likely become available to implement the School Traffic Safety Program for the strategies outlined in section 1.a. The VTA recently forecasted an increase to Measure B funds over the next two years totaling \$8.3 million in the first year and \$6.3 million in the second year. This revised forecast and planned funding disbursement will go to the VTA Board of Directors for adoption in June 2023.

If a portion of the increased forecast were to be allocated to the School Traffic Safety Program, approximately \$6.8 million from the Measure B could provide for five years of the School Traffic Safety Program described below, which would leave time for staff to identify the additional \$2.8 million that would be required to provide for the final two years. Funding at least five years of the program would allow for 70% of schools to be assessed and for improvements to be made. Measure B funds are eligible to be used for the School Traffic Safety Program as an element of Measure B Complete Streets requirements.

If the City Council were to prefer that the additional Measure B funds be used for the Pavement Maintenance Program instead, the Pavement Maintenance Program could be accelerated by increasing the number of miles to be sealed or resurfaced in 2023-2024. As a rough estimate, \$6.8 million would fund about ten miles of street resurfacing. DOT expects to resurface 161

miles in the 2023 paving season with funding of about \$96 million. The total budget for pavement maintenance in 2023-2024 and included in the 2024-2028 Proposed Traffic CIP is approximately \$92 million, excluding rebudgets.

Subsequent to VTA’s formal notification of the additional funding, DOT preliminarily anticipates returning to the City Council early in 2023-2024 to recommend using the additional Measure B funds of \$6.8 million to implement the School Traffic Program as costed below.

School Traffic Safety Program – Estimated Costs:

(does not include speedhumps – see below)

Description	2023-2024 Cost	Ongoing Cost
Thermoplastic Crosswalk Material (100/year) (Total need \$550,000 across 5-7 years)	75,000	75,000
Maintenance Truck (ongoing O&M of \$4k/year)	154,000	4,000
Position Costs	909,337	992,003
Safety Improvements Non-Personal/ Equipment costs ¹	240,844	240,844
Grand TOTAL	1,379,181	1,311,847

Position Changes:

Position Job Code and Classification Name	2023-2024 FTE	2024-2025 FTE
Senior Engineer	211,310	230,520
Associate Engineer	186,364	203,306
Engineer I/II	148,418	161,911
Maintenance Worker I	114,439	124,842
Maintenance Worker II (2)	248,806	271,425
TOTAL	909,337	992,003

- One Senior Engineer to manage the DOT’s School Safety Program
- One Associate Engineer and one Engineer I/II to complete the following:
 - Establish a program of prioritized by school’s ability to engage with the City to establish a comprehensive safe route to school action plan
 - Coordinate and conduct comprehensive school access and circulation assessments and issue work orders for access/circulation improvements, at 35 schools per year

¹ Other improvements could include signs and marking improvements, daylighting, adding or modifying loading zones or parking restrictions.

- Coordinate school parking and traffic enforcement activities
- Create work orders to install enhanced crosswalk markings at existing school crosswalks (35 schools per year for up to 7 years)
- Oversee the expenditure material costs annually for 7 years, which would be reevaluated after 2 years to assess whether annual allocation is adequate for desired safety improvements for affected schools and communities.)
- Evaluate safety index used to determine crossing guard location needs
- Evaluate possible new crossing guard locations based on school requests
- Evaluate existing crossing guard locations once safety enhancements are made to determine if crossing guards are still warranted or can be reallocated to another location
- Two Maintenance Worker II and one Maintenance Worker I and a maintenance vehicle to complete the following:
 - install enhanced ladder crosswalk striping using thermoplastic along arterial streets and paint along residential streets around schools, average of 75 intersections per year (\$363,245 for staff and \$75,000 for crosswalk material).

School Safety Speedhump Program – Estimated Costs:

In addition to the above program, if City Council approved the expedited Speedhump program described above in section 1.e. two additional staff and \$1.0 million annually for 7 years would be required to deliver the School Traffic Safety Speedhump Program in addition to the program above.

Description	2023-2024 Cost	Ongoing Cost
Position Costs	334,782	365,217
Speed Hump Installation (35 streets/year)	1,000,000	1,000,000
TOTAL	1,334,782	1,365,217

Position Changes:

Position Job Code and Classification Name	2023-2024 Cost	Ongoing Cost
Associate Engineer	186,364	203,306
Engineer I/II	148,418	161,911
TOTAL	334,782	365,217

- One Associate Engineer and one Engineer I/II to establish a program of prioritized streets by equity and safety, conduct outreach to schools and neighborhoods affected, and to complete design of speed hump placements. Work with Finance to procure construction service contract within the first year of the program. This team would manage the delivery of the speed hump program at 35 schools per year for seven years, with construction beginning in the second year of the program.

3. *Direct the Police Chief in collaboration with the City Manager to investigate ways to increase enforcement and education of traffic regulations at schools.*

The Police Department's Traffic Enforcement Unit's (TEU) current primary focus is to conduct traffic enforcement along Vision Zero corridors, which was determined by the areas where the most traffic collisions occur throughout the city. This includes surrounding neighborhoods, which may include schools. Targeted enforcement is based on the top five primary collision factors: speeding, red light running, unsafe turning movement, pedestrian, yield to vehicle, and yield to pedestrian in a crosswalk. As resources are available, TEU responds to identified school areas of concern by conducting traffic enforcement, education and awareness operations, and deployment of speed radar trailers.

The Police Department is evaluating options for increasing traffic enforcement at schools through the Patrol Division and TEU. Due to staffing shortages in the Department, TEU currently has eleven vacancies. As new officers graduate from the Academy and complete Field Training, they will be placed in Field Patrol positions first. Once Field Patrol is filled, other units, like TEU, can be prioritized.

COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

/s/

JOHN RISTOW

Director, Department of Transportation

/s/

ANTHONY MATA

Chief of Police

For questions, please contact Lily Lim-Tsao, DOT Assistant Director, at lily.lim-tsao@sanjoseca.gov. or Captain Jaime Jimenez, SJPd, at jaime.jimenez@sanjoseca.gov.