



## *Memorandum*

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Toni J. Taber, MMC  
City Clerk

**SUBJECT: SEE BELOW**

**DATE:** August 12, 2025

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**SUBJECT: Access to and Use of the City's Traffic Safety Programs by Traditionally Marginalized Communities Audit Report**

### **Recommendation**

As recommended by the Transportation and Environment Committee on August 11, 2025, accept the audit report on the access to and use of the City's traffic safety programs by traditionally marginalized communities.

CEQA: Not a Project, File No. PP17-009, Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City action. (City Auditor)  
[Transportation and Environment Committee referral 8/11/2025 Item (d)1]



**Office of the City Auditor**

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**Report to the City Council  
City of San José**

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**ACCESS AND USE OF  
TRAFFIC SAFETY SERVICES:  
TARGETED OUTREACH  
AND OTHER  
IMPROVEMENTS CAN  
ENHANCE EQUITY IN  
SERVICES**

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**Report 25-02  
August 2025**

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August 4, 2025

Honorable Mayor and Members  
Of the City Council  
200 East Santa Clara Street  
San José, CA 95113

**Access and Use of Traffic Safety Services: Targeted Outreach and Other Improvements Can Enhance Equity in Services**

The Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Police Department (Police) provide key traffic safety programs and services in the City of San José. These include aiming to respond to over 1,200 traffic safety service requests annually and implementing a variety of safety projects and measures, such as traffic calming projects in neighborhoods, pedestrian safety enhancements, quick build projects, school traffic safety education, crossing guards, and traffic enforcement. Residents can access these services in different ways, such as through e-mail, phone, or online requests. The objective of this audit was to assess access to and use of traffic safety programs by traditionally marginalized communities, with a primary focus on services within the Increasing Community Safety City Council Focus Area.

**Finding 1: Equity Priority Communities Received the Same or a Higher Level of Services in Some Traffic Safety Programs.** Equity priority communities, which typically include traditionally marginalized communities, received the same or a higher level of traffic safety services for quick build projects and basic neighborhood traffic service requests. We found:

- Equity priority communities received a greater number of quick build safety projects in comparison to other communities. This is in part because Vision Zero quick build projects are generally targeted in Priority Safety Corridors, many of which are in equity priority communities.
- In general, requests for basic neighborhood traffic safety services were equally distributed across the city. In addition, DOT was more timely in closing out basic traffic safety requests for equity priority communities.

**Finding 2: School Traffic Safety Programs Can Be More Proactive in Their Outreach to Engage More Schools.** DOT and Police school traffic safety services are typically accessed by request. We found:

- Both DOT and Police have faced challenges in reaching all elementary and middle schools across the city, with about a third of the schools being active in the Walk N' Roll program or having crossing guards.
- Slightly fewer schools in equity priority communities were involved with the Walk N' Roll program than would be expected if participating schools were equally distributed. This was also the case for schools with crossing guards.
- There are opportunities for better outreach and cross departmental coordination to improve access and use of school traffic safety services.

**Recommendations:** To expand access and use of school traffic safety programs, Police and DOT should:

- Expand and coordinate on proactive targeted outreach.
- Develop a process to better track and facilitate crossing guard requests between the departments.

**Finding 3: Translated and Updated Resources Could Enhance Access to Traffic Safety Services.** Language accessibility is limited in some key traffic safety access points. We found:

- Police's online traffic enforcement request form, which members of the public can use to submit requests for traffic enforcement, is only in English.
- DOT's Traffic Calming Toolkit, a resource intended to provide information to the public on how to access traffic calming improvements for their neighborhoods, is outdated and only in English.
- Phone trees that residents are directed to for traffic safety or enforcement services are not always translated.

**Recommendations:** To expand access and use of traffic safety services:

- Police should translate the online traffic enforcement request form.
- DOT should update and translate its traffic safety resources, including the Traffic Calming Toolkit.
- DOT and Police should translate phone trees for accessing traffic safety services.

This report has eight recommendations. We plan to present this report at the August 11, 2025, meeting of the Transportation and Environment Committee of the City Council. We would like to thank the Department of Transportation and the Police Department for their time and insight during the audit process. The Administration has reviewed the information in this report, and their response is shown on the yellow pages.

Respectfully submitted,



Joe Rois  
City Auditor

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|                      |             |                           |                  |
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This report is also available online at [www.sanjoseca.gov/audits](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/audits)

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# Background

In his 2023 March Budget Message, the Mayor provided the following direction:

*To ensure we continue to make progress toward a more just and equitable future, the City Auditor is directed to prepare and publish an Information Memo that explores the scope and costs associated with conducting an audit of access to and use of our most critical city services in traditionally marginalized communities [...]*

Subsequently, the City Auditor proposed a series of audits to address the breadth of critical services that the City provides. The first of the series was the audit Access and Use of Neighborhood Blight Reduction Programs: BeautifySJ Can Continue and Expand Its Equity Efforts,<sup>1</sup> which was published in December 2024.

Also included in the 2023 March Budget Message, the Mayor gave direction for the City Manager to bring greater organizational focus, staff resources, and governance-level goals to a small number of foundational goals or focus areas. Increasing Community Safety was one of the focus areas<sup>2</sup> and includes traffic safety programs in the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Police Department (Police). According to DOT, there were 237 fatal and severe injury crashes on city roads in 2024, of which there were 49 traffic fatalities.

This is the second audit to assess access to and use of critical services by traditionally marginalized communities—with a focus on traffic safety programs and services in the Increasing Community Safety City Council Focus Area. The audit did not include street-related capital programs or projects.

## **The City Has Been Working to Integrate Equity Into Its Programs and Services**

In 2022, San José voters approved an amendment to the City Charter requiring the Mayor and Council adopt and maintain:

*[...] a statement of values, as permitted by law, promoting racial and social equity, inclusion, and racial and social justice, which shall provide guidance to City officers and employees in their conduct while discharging their public responsibilities [...]*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showdocument?id=116723>

<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the City Council Focus Areas is to hold the City accountable to driving positive outcomes and performance on a limited number of priorities impacting the community and to generate actionable and measurable solutions to address these priorities. The 2024-2025 City Council Focus Areas were Increasing Community Safety, Reducing Unsheltered Homelessness, Cleaning Up Our Neighborhoods, and Attracting Investment in Jobs and Housing.

In 2024, the City Council adopted the **Equity Values and Standards Policy** (Council Policy 0-22). This policy establishes an implementation framework and expectations of City departments to advance racial and social equity. Further, the City's **Language Equity Policy and Guidelines** (6.1.10 of the City's Administrative Policy Manual) outlines requirements and guidance for departments to make information available into other languages when appropriate. It identifies Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese (including Cantonese and Mandarin) as the top three languages spoken at home by at least 5 percent of San José residents, outside of English.

### **Equity Lenses Can Help to Provide Understanding Where Areas of Greater Need Are**

Equity lenses that incorporate various demographic factors can shed light on identifying locations where there is greater need. The City Manager's Office of Racial and Social Equity emphasizes that in addition to race, intersectionality requires systems to consider other social identities and how they are related.

- The **San José Equity Atlas (SJ Equity Atlas)**<sup>3</sup> is a tool created by the City to help departments inform equity work. Considering racial and income data, census tracts are assigned a score of 1-5 for each. The combined score can range from 2-10, with higher scores signifying higher proportions of people of color and lower household income. See Appendix B.
- The **Equity Priority Communities by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)**<sup>4</sup> are census tracts within the Bay Area with significant concentrations of underserved populations incorporating demographic factors such as race, income, English proficiency, disability status, and age. Census tracts can be classified into one of the following groups: High, Higher, Highest, or not an MTC Equity Priority Community (None). See Appendix C.

For the purposes of the report, we used each of these lenses to identify equity priority communities and understand how they may be receiving services. We identified "equity priority communities" as communities assigned the High, Higher, or Highest groups by the MTC, or scored 7-10 in the San José Equity Atlas.

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<sup>3</sup> The San José Equity Atlas can be found online at <https://gis.sanjoseca.gov/maps/equityatlas/>. This tool is based on the 2020 census tract boundaries.

<sup>4</sup> Information on these equity priority communities can be found online at <https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/access-equity-mobility/equity-priority-communities>. At the time of the audit the MTC Equity Priority Communities were based on the 2010 census tract boundaries.

## The 2025 Vision Zero Action Plan Prioritizes Equity

The Vision Zero Action Plan, updated in February 2025, provides a roadmap for eliminating fatal and severe injuries on city streets by 2040.<sup>5</sup> The City first committed to the Vision Zero initiative to improve street safety in 2015.

The 2025 Vision Zero Action Plan is guided by the principles of the Safe System Approach, as defined by the U.S. Department of Transportation. This approach anticipates human error and designs transportation systems to accommodate for this to prevent fatalities and severe injuries. The first priority action area in the 2025 Vision Zero Action Plan is to prioritize equity and protect the most vulnerable users of the street network, stating:

*Prioritize resources to areas with high fatal and severe injuries for project planning and delivery, and grant applications, especially in areas with the highest equity scores of San José Equity Atlas.*

Another action area identifies community engagement and education as key to building awareness and fostering a culture of safety.

### *Priority Safety Corridors*

The Vision Zero Action Plan factors in Priority Safety Corridors (PSCs), also known as the High Injury Network, as part of its prioritization for safety improvements. These corridors represent streets with the highest concentrations of fatal and severe injury crashes. See Appendices B and C.

### *Decision Support System (DSS) for Project Prioritization*

DOT uses a custom-built software solution called the Decision Support System (DSS) to analyze and prioritize some projects for their potential to meet its mobility, equity, climate change, and safety goals, among others.<sup>6</sup> Staff expect to use the DSS to evaluate the projects and strategies in the 2025 Vision Zero Action Plan. The DSS incorporates equity by including the MTC Equity Priority Communities and plans to add other capabilities.

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<sup>5</sup> Vision Zero is a global initiative focused on eliminating all traffic fatalities and severe injuries.

<sup>6</sup> At the time of the audit, DOT staff were working on upgrading the DSS. Under the upgraded DSS, DOT expects to be able to fully track planned projects, monitor performance of key indicators, and forecast outcomes of a project or strategy.

## Traffic Safety Programs or Services in the City and Pathways to Access

The Increasing Community Safety City Council Focus Area seeks to enhance public safety through responsive services, preventative measures, and community engagement.

Key traffic safety programs in the City include:

1. DOT Neighborhood Traffic
2. DOT Traffic Safety (including school safety)
3. Police School Safety
4. Police Traffic Enforcement

The combined Adopted Operating Budget for these programs in FY 2024-25 was \$21.1 million.

### *1. DOT Neighborhood Traffic*

The **neighborhood traffic** program addresses neighborhood traffic concerns and responds to traffic safety service requests. The FY 2024-25 Adopted Operating Budget for the program was \$2.5 million. Services include traffic studies, which may result in the installation of traffic control devices, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, or physical roadway features.

### **Exhibit I: Neighborhood Traffic Comprehensive Project – Road Hump**



Source: Department of Transportation.

- **Basic projects** under this program are traffic calming projects for residential neighborhoods, such as curb markings, high-visibility crosswalks, and stop signs. The program aims to complete and implement 1,200 traffic studies annually. In FY 2023–24, DOT received about 1,400 new basic traffic calming service requests. Over that fiscal year, staff closed out around 1,300 service requests, which were a combination of previous and new requests.
- **Comprehensive projects** are also traffic calming projects for residential neighborhoods; however, they are more complex than the basic projects. They include projects such as road humps, curb extensions, and traffic circles. In FY 2023–24, 17 comprehensive projects were completed.

Basic and comprehensive projects are initiated primarily through complaints. Residents submit requests for services through avenues such as email or phone (per staff most requests come through e-mail) or through Council offices. According to staff, Councilmembers have the ability to provide input on the comprehensive projects selected for their district.

## 2. DOT Traffic Safety (Including School Safety)

DOT's Traffic Safety program constructs traffic safety improvement projects for pedestrian safety and traffic calming, provides traffic safety education, and implements the Vision Zero Action Plan. The FY 2024-25 Adopted Operating Budget for the program was \$5.3 million.

**Quick Builds** are intended to redesign streets, and are one of DOT's strategies to reduce fatal and severe injury crashes. Quick build is a project delivery model that uses paint and simple physical objects like plastic to rapidly implement changes to streets. Improvements include pavement markings, roadway signs, plastic bollards, streetlight upgrades, minor traffic signal hardware enhancements, and traffic signal timing changes.

### Exhibit 2: Quick Build Project on an Intersection



Source: Department of Transportation.

Four teams in DOT work on quick build projects and the path to access varies.

- **Vision Zero:** This team's quick build projects generally target Priority Safety Corridors. Residents can request services through email or phone, or through Council offices.<sup>7</sup> DOT also evaluates fatality and crash locations and Priority Safety Corridors for potential projects. Eighteen projects were completed by this team between July 2021 and June 2024—seven of which were completed in FY 2023-24.
- **Corridor Improvements:** The quick build projects for this team are in areas where DOT expects to see growth based on transportation improvement plans. Staff plan corridor projects to meet goals of each sub-area of the transportation improvement plan. Implementation is dependent on coordination with DOT's pavement plan and grant funding availability. Two projects were completed by this team between July 2021 and June 2024<sup>8</sup>
- **Bikeways:** This team's quick build projects are primarily focused on improvements for bicycles. Staff identify corridors from the City's pavement maintenance program, then prioritize those in City plans (e.g., Better Bike Plan 2025, Climate Smart San José, and the Vision Zero Program). Sixteen projects were completed by this team between July 2021 and June 2024—ten of which were completed in FY 2023-24.

<sup>7</sup> The public does not typically request this type of project directly; instead, it is classified as a quick build request through staff assessment.

<sup>8</sup> In FY 2024-25, the group completed an additional seven projects as part of a grant.

- **Comprehensive Traffic Safety:** This team's quick build projects are primarily minor improvements such as high-visibility crosswalks, hardened centerline and curb extensions using paint and plastic materials to address traffic safety and sideshow activity at major intersections. According to staff, Councilmembers have the ability to provide input on the projects selected in this program for their district. Twenty-two projects were completed by this team between July 2021 and June 2024—twelve of which were completed in FY 2023–24.

**Pedestrian Safety Enhancements (PSEs)** are minor infrastructure improvements at marked crosswalks, such as pedestrian refuge islands (as shown in Exhibit 3) and rectangular rapid flashing beacons to make them safer for pedestrians to cross. Like other DOT projects, to access these services the public sends a request by email or phone, or a Council office will send requests to DOT.<sup>9</sup> Staff reviews projects and evaluates high-crash and high-risk locations for projects. According to staff, Councilmembers have the ability to provide input on the PSE projects selected for their district. In FY 2023-24, about 20 PSEs were completed.

### Exhibit 3: Pedestrian Safety Enhancement (PSE) Project



Source: Department of Transportation.

### Exhibit 4: Bike Rodeo



Source: Department of Transportation.

**The DOT Walk N' Roll program** has a primary goal to develop and provide safety education to students in San José.<sup>10</sup> Walk N' Roll hosts events at schools during the school year. This includes presentations and providing other educational resources. Through “bike rodeos,” staff instruct students on how to ride safely on the road and use a bike helmet. Staff also give

<sup>9</sup> The public does not typically request this type of project directly; instead, it is classified as a PSE request through staff assessment.

<sup>10</sup> The Walk N' Roll team also conducts outreach to the unhoused, reaching about 500 to 1,000 individuals each year by visiting resource hubs for this population. Staff provide education and reflective gear.

helmets to students who need them. In FY 2023-24, 50 schools hosted Walk N' Roll events.

DOT has also begun a new program that focuses on school safety projects. There are two main goals of this work. Access and circulation studies are conducted at schools to streamline the drop-off and pick-up process. Additionally, the team is working on upgrading all crosswalks near schools to a high visibility ladder striped pattern to increase visibility of pedestrians.

#### **Exhibit 5: High Visibility Crosswalk Improvement**



Source: Department of Transportation's May 2025 Vision Zero Traffic Safety Status Report.

#### *Other DOT Programs Related to Traffic Safety Are Currently Underway*

DOT staff are currently working on developing a speed camera pilot. California State Assembly Bill (AB) 645 authorized the City of San José to install up to 33 speed cameras; designated safety corridors are one of the permitted areas for installation. The bill requires that the City incorporates community engagement and equity. In addition, a Red Light Running Camera System pilot project aims to use automated technology to capture photos of vehicles that run red lights, so that citations can be issued to the owners of those vehicles. Four intersections were selected to pilot the program.

### *3. Police School Safety*

Police's **School Safety and Education Unit (SSEU)** helps keep children safe as they travel to and from school. The FY 2024-25 Adopted Operating Budget for the Unit was \$3.3 million. The Unit is also responsible for the Adult Crossing Guard Program and the School Safety Patrol Program.

There are over 200 part-time crossing guards. As of March 20, 2025, there were about 100 intersections staffed with crossing guards for San José schools.

Schools submit a request to SSEU for crossing guards to staff an intersection. The intersection must meet certain thresholds to be added to the crossing guard waitlist. Schools qualify if they meet a pedestrian count threshold of 20 (conducted by SSEU), and a safety index score of at least 120 (conducted

#### **Exhibit 6: Crossing Guard**



Source: Police Department.

by DOT).<sup>11</sup> When there is an opening or funding available, SSEU will approve recruiting and hiring of crossing guards for schools from the waitlist.

In the **Student Safety Patrol Program**, SSEU staff provide training to 5<sup>th</sup> graders and their adult advisors. Student patrollers under adult supervision are trained to replace crossing guards at intersections close to schools. The **Student Valet Program** takes place on school property and is aimed at helping with traffic congestion around campuses to reduce accidents. Fifth-grade student patrollers under adult supervision help provide safe exits from and entry into vehicles so that students can avoid crossing streets. Both programs help enhance pedestrian safety near schools. SSEU provides training, gear, incentives, guidance, and oversight for these programs.

SSEU has also re-launched efforts to provide educational **traffic safety presentations** proactively to schools. For instance, staff performed outreach in 2024 to inform schools about SSEU's Safety Through Education, Encouragement, and Respect (STEER) campaign.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. Police Traffic Enforcement

The **Traffic Enforcement Unit** enforces traffic laws to reduce traffic collisions and their resulting injuries and facilitates the safe and expedient flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The FY 2024-25 Adopted Operating Budget for the Unit was \$10 million.

According to Police staff, officers target enforcement based on Vision Zero Priority Safety Corridors, areas where crashes are happening (they receive a monthly collision report from the Crime Analysis Unit), and requests for traffic enforcement.<sup>13</sup> TEU officers also have latitude in where they enforce in the city.

Speed radar trailers are rotated around the city and are primarily deployed in response to online speed-related requests for traffic enforcement. TEU performed 147 speed

**Exhibit 7: Speed Radar Trailer**



Source: Police Department.

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<sup>11</sup> The pedestrian count consists of counting a minimum of 20 school children at the requested intersection in the morning before school begins and afternoon after school is let out. The school performs an initial pedestrian count and SSEU performs a secondary pedestrian count to verify results. The traffic safety index is calculated through an engineering study. The study measures information such as the speeds, turns, type of traffic control, and number of pedestrians and vehicles at the intersection.

<sup>12</sup> STEER is an SSEU campaign that aims to promote pedestrian safety through presentations, signage for enhanced visibility, traffic enforcement, and other services.

<sup>13</sup> At the time of the audit, TEU was using the old Vision Zero Priority Safety Corridors for guiding enforcement, but according to staff they have since started using the new corridors.

radar trailer deployments in FY 2023-24. As of March 2025, there were six speed radar trailers that were deployable according to staff.

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## **Finding I      Equity      Priority      Communities Received the Same or a Higher Level of Services in Some Traffic Safety Programs**

### **Summary**

Equity priority communities received the same or a higher level of services compared to other communities for quick build projects and basic neighborhood traffic service requests. Many quick build projects were in an equity priority community—39 percent using the MTC Equity Priority Communities lens and 75 percent using the San José Equity Atlas. This is in part because Vision Zero quick build projects are generally targeted in Priority Safety Corridors, many of which are in equity priority communities. In general, requests for basic neighborhood traffic safety services were equally distributed across the city. While overall timeliness in closing out requests did not meet DOT's target, performance was more timely in equity priority communities.

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### **Transportation's Quick Build and Neighborhood Traffic Basic Projects Did Not Appear to Have Barriers to Access**

Generally, DOT's quick build and neighborhood traffic basic projects provided equal or greater levels of service to equity priority communities within the city.

### **Equity Priority Communities Received a Greater Number of Quick Build Projects**

Out of the 36 quick build projects completed from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24:<sup>14</sup>

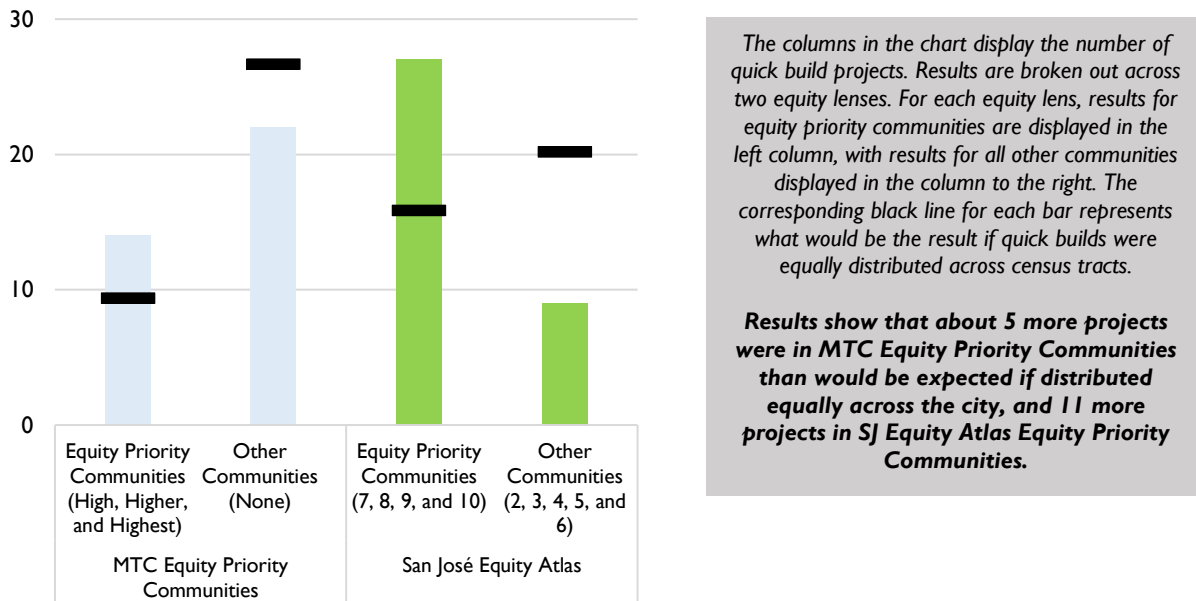
- 39 percent (14 of the 36 projects) were in MTC Equity Priority Communities, while those communities accounted for 26 percent of census tracts.
- 75 percent (27 of the 36 projects) were in SJ Equity Atlas Equity Priority Communities, while those communities accounted for 44 percent of overall census tracts.

In each case, this is more than what would be expected if projects were equally distributed across the city. This is in part because Vision Zero quick build projects are generally targeted in Priority Safety Corridors, many of which are in equity priority communities (see Appendices B and C).

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<sup>14</sup> This does not include comprehensive traffic safety team data as Councilmembers have the ability to provide input on the projects selected for their district according to staff.

### Exhibit 8: More Quick Build Projects Were Located in Equity Priority Communities Between FY 2021-22 and FY 2023-24



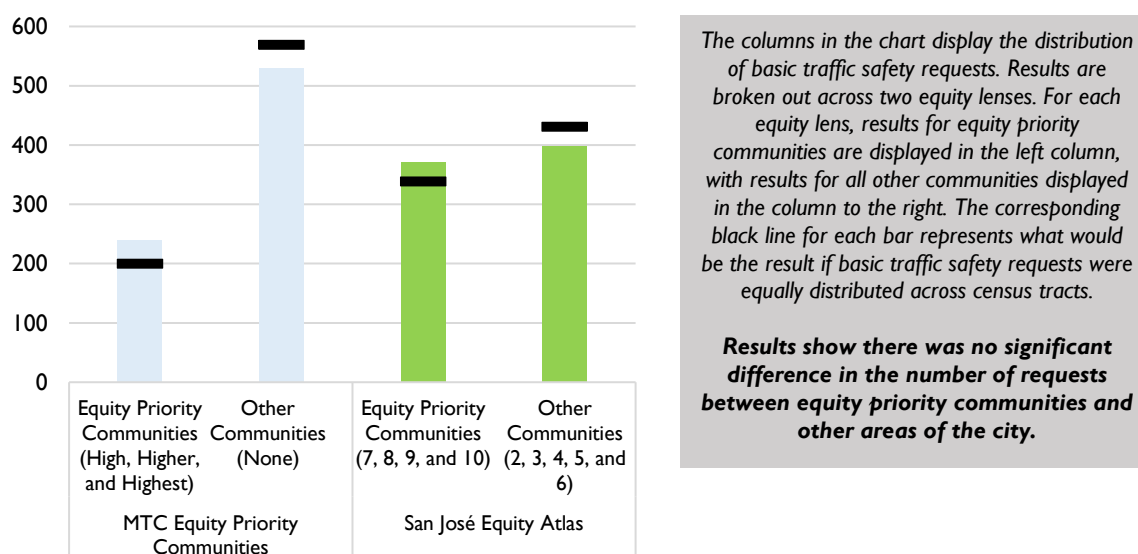
Source: Auditor analysis of the Department of Transportation's FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24 quick build projects from Vision Zero, Corridor Improvements, and Bikeways teams disaggregated by equity lenses. See Appendix A for information around the time frame selected for the analysis.

### Basic Traffic Safety Service Requests Are Relatively Equally Distributed Across the City

Between July to December 2024, DOT received 769 basic traffic safety service requests for its neighborhood traffic program. Equity priority communities had about the same number of requests than would have been expected if requests were equally distributed across the city.

- 31 percent (239 of the 769 requests) were in MTC Equity Priority Communities, while those communities accounted for 26 percent of census tracts.
- 48 percent (371 of the 769 requests) were in SJ Equity Atlas Equity Priority Communities, while those communities accounted for 44 percent of overall census tracts.

### Exhibit 9: Basic Traffic Safety Service Requests Were Generally Distributed Proportionally Across Equity Priority Communities, July through December 2024



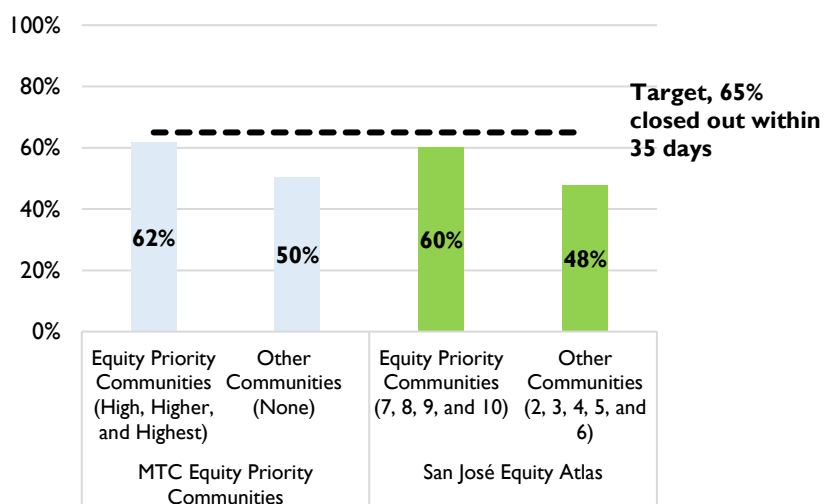
Source: Auditor analysis of the Department of Transportation's basic traffic safety service requests received from July to December 2024 disaggregated by equity lenses. See Appendix A for information around the time frame selected for the analysis.

### Timeliness Performance for Closing Out Basic Traffic Safety Service Requests Was Closer to DOT's Target for Equity Priority Communities

Between July to December 2024, DOT closed out over 700 basic traffic safety service requests in its neighborhood traffic program. Overall, DOT did not meet its timeliness goal during that period. However, DOT was more timely in closing out basic traffic safety service requests for equity priority communities compared to other communities.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Closing out a service request does not always result in implementation. Closing out a service request may include assessment, implementation, and/or referral to another team as appropriate.

**Exhibit 10: Basic Traffic Safety Service Requests Were Closed Out More Timely for Equity Priority Communities, July through December 2024**



Source: Auditor analysis of the Department of Transportation's basic traffic safety service requests closed out for July-December 2024 disaggregated by equity lenses. See Appendix A for information around the time frame selected for the analysis.

### **Equity Is Factored in Pedestrian Safety Enhancements and Neighborhood Traffic Comprehensive Projects**

In other program areas, DOT explicitly factors equity into project prioritization. For pedestrian safety enhancements (PSEs), DOT uses a prioritization point system to rank projects when the number of candidate projects exceeds the available allocated funding. The system assigns a maximum of 2.5 points for the equity combined score from the SJ Equity Atlas. According to staff, the list of the projects with their rankings is used for recommending projects to Councilmembers.

The priority ranking system for neighborhood traffic comprehensive projects also incorporates equity. The City's Traffic Calming Policy for Residential Neighborhoods (Council Policy 5-6), updated in June 2024, assigns up to 5 points based on the MTC Combined Equity Score.

## **Finding 2      School Traffic Safety Programs Can Be More Proactive in Their Outreach to Engage More Schools**

### **Summary**

Both DOT and Police have faced challenges in reaching all schools across the city for their traffic safety programs. These programs are typically accessed by request. There were slightly fewer schools located in equity priority communities receiving traffic safety and education services than would be expected if participating schools were equally distributed across the city. This was the case for schools active and hosting events through DOT's Walk N' Roll program and staffing for crossing guards through Police's School Safety and Education Unit. There are opportunities for better outreach and cross departmental coordination to expand access to these services.

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### **DOT and Police's School Traffic Safety Programs Could Incorporate More Proactive Outreach to Involve More Schools**

At the time of the audit, there were about 240 elementary and middle schools in San José.<sup>16</sup> Both DOT and Police's school traffic safety programming rely on schools to request services and report challenges in reaching all schools across the city. Although both departments are trying to increase outreach to schools about their services, slightly fewer schools in equity priority communities received these services than would be expected if services were equally distributed across the city. While it may not be possible to host programs at all 200-plus schools due to limited resources, there are opportunities to expand the programs' reach.

### **Slightly Fewer Schools in Equity Priority Communities Were Involved With DOT's Walk N' Roll Program**

Of the about 240 elementary and middle schools, only 86 had opted-in to receive materials about Walk N' Roll at the time of the audit (referred to as the "active" schools list), and just 50 schools hosted an event in FY 2023-24. Among these, there was slightly lower participation from schools in equity priority communities within San José (see Appendices D and E).

- 17 percent (15 of 86) of schools that were active in Walk N' Roll and 22 percent (11 of 50) that hosted an event were in MTC Equity Priority Communities. In comparison, 26 percent of elementary and middle

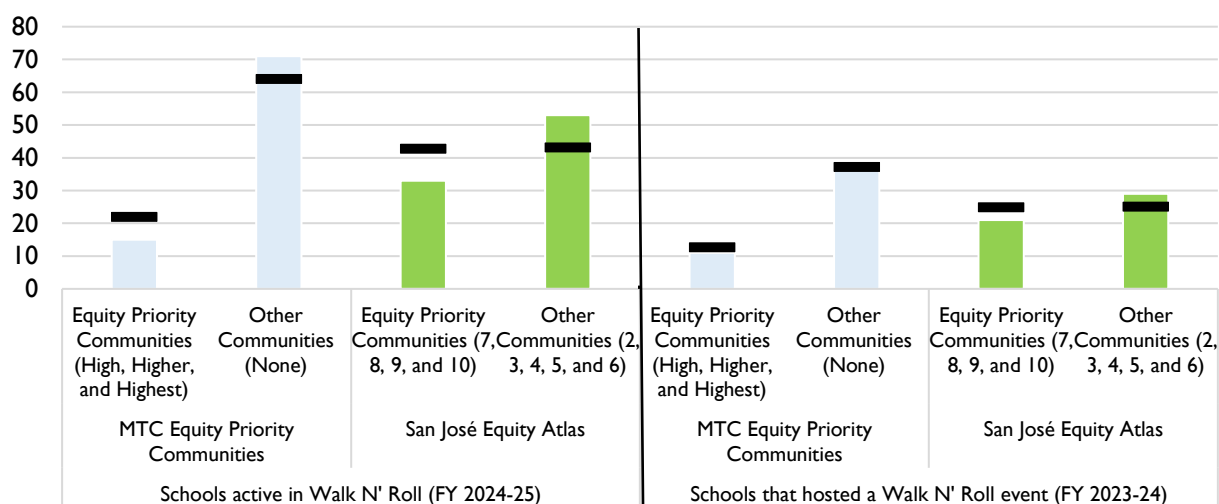
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<sup>16</sup> Several elementary and middle schools in San José closed at the end of the 2024–2025 school year. As students transfer to new schools, increased congestion during drop-off and pick-up may require crossing guards, traffic safety education, and school safety measures.

schools in San José are in these communities. This translates to about seven fewer “active” schools and two fewer schools that hosted an event than would be expected if they were distributed equally across the city.

- 38 percent (33 of 86) of schools that were active in Walk N’ Roll and 42 percent (21 of 50) that hosted an event were in SJ Equity Atlas Equity Priority Communities. In comparison, 50 percent of elementary and middle schools in San José are located in these areas.<sup>17</sup> This translates to about 10 fewer “active” schools and four fewer schools that hosted an event than would be expected if they were distributed equally across the city.

**Exhibit I I: School Participation in Walk N’ Roll Against SJ Equity Atlas and MTC Equity Priority Communities**



The columns in the chart display the results of school participation in Walk N’ Roll. Results are broken out across two equity lenses. For each equity lens, results for equity priority communities are displayed in the left column, with results for all other communities displayed in the column to the right. The corresponding black line for each bar represents what would be the result if participation was equally distributed across census tracts.

**Results show that there was slightly less participation in equity priority communities in the Walk N’ Roll program than would be expected. There were seven fewer “active” schools and two fewer schools that hosted an event than would be expected in MTC Equity Priority Communities, and 10 fewer “active” schools and about four fewer schools that hosted an event in SJ Equity Atlas Equity Priority Communities.**

Source: Auditor analysis of elementary and middle schools in San José from the City of San José Open Data platform, the Department of Transportation’s Walk N’ Roll active schools for FY 2024-25, and the Department of Transportation’s Walk N’ Roll events from FY 2023-24 disaggregated by equity lenses. See Appendix A for information around the time frame selected for the analysis.

DOT maintains a list of elementary and middle schools who have opted in to receive information about the Walk N’ Roll program, referred to as the “active” schools list as noted above. DOT uses this list to schedule programming at schools wishing to host an event. According to staff, because schools need to request Walk

<sup>17</sup> Some schools did not receive any programming in a year while some received more than one.

N' Roll programming, lack of knowledge about the program can impact participation levels. Additionally, DOT reports other school priorities may take precedent over their participation in the Walk N' Roll program.

According to DOT staff, they have been re-evaluating their approach to outreach, service delivery, and prioritization to reach new schools. For example, they are considering visiting schools about every three years to ensure they impact more students and schools.

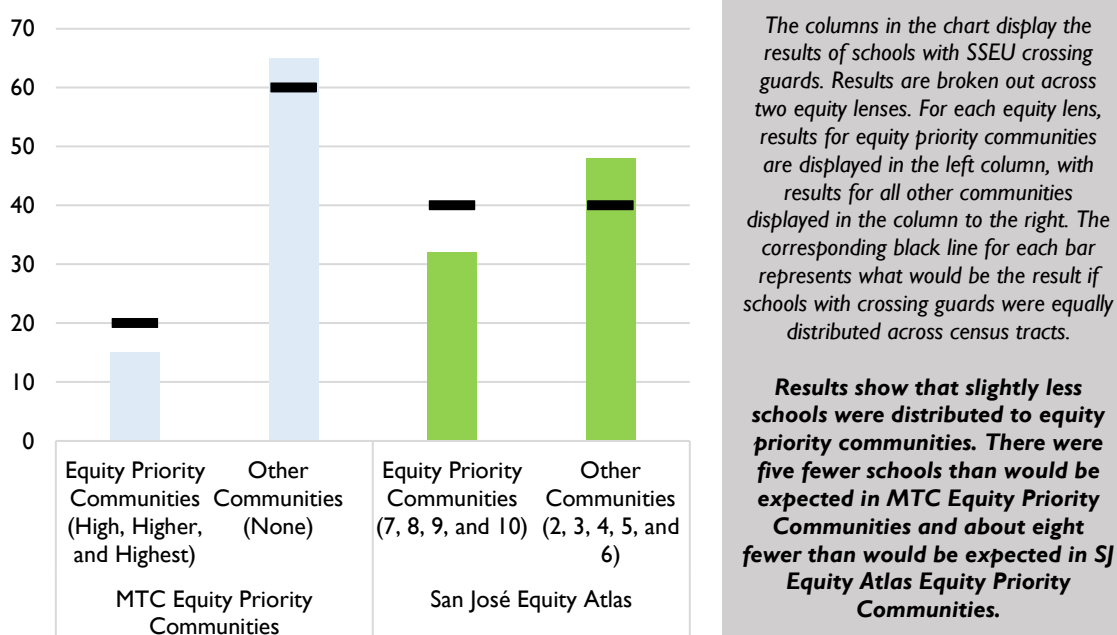
### **Slightly Fewer Schools in Equity Priority Communities Have Crossing Guards**

At the time of the audit, there were slightly fewer schools located in equity priority communities with SSEU crossing guards than would be expected if crossing guards were equally distributed in the city (see Appendices F and G). Of the about 240 elementary and middle schools in San José, 80 had SSEU crossing guards.

- 19 percent (15 of 80) of schools with SSEU crossing guards were in MTC Equity Priority Communities. In comparison, 26 percent of elementary and middle schools in San José are in these areas. This translates to five fewer schools than would be expected if crossing guards were distributed equally across the city.
- 40 percent (32 of 80) of schools with SSEU crossing guards were in SJ Equity Atlas Equity Priority Communities. In comparison, 50 percent of elementary and middle schools in San José are in these areas. This translates to about eight fewer schools than would be expected.

It should be noted that because the need for crossing guards depends upon meeting certain criteria, an equal distribution of crossing guards may not be expected. However, because of the nature of how schools request services as described below, the current distribution among equity priority communities and other parts of the community indicates that SSEU should further review its approach to school participation.

**Exhibit 12: Schools with SSEU Crossing Guards Against SJ Equity Atlas and MTC Equity Priority Communities as of March 2025**



Source: Auditor analysis of elementary and middle schools in San José from the City of San José Open Data platform and the Police Department's FY 2024-25 staffed crossing guard intersection list as of March 2025 disaggregated by equity lenses. See Appendix A for information around the time frame selected for the analysis.

Note: Some schools have more than one staffed intersection affiliated with them. There were four schools from the list without a crossing guard due to staffing at the time of the analysis that were excluded.

### Crossing Guard Staffing Is Driven by School Requests

Staffing an intersection with a crossing guard is a multi-step process:

- Schools submit a request for a staffed intersection to SSEU to begin the process.<sup>18</sup>
- Pedestrian count and safety index score thresholds typically must be met before a school can then be put on a waitlist for a crossing guard.<sup>19</sup>
- When there is an opening or funding available, SSEU removes schools off the waitlist and approves recruitment and hiring of crossing guard staff.

<sup>18</sup> Requests may sometimes come through Councilmembers.

<sup>19</sup> The school performs an initial pedestrian count before SSEU performs a secondary pedestrian count to verify. The school's pedestrian count is done using school staff resources. According to SSEU staff, this is frequently a point in the process where schools do not progress. However, SSEU staff report they do allow for schools to use a trusted school volunteer if this presents a burden.

The waitlist is used for informing potential budget decisions and determining what crossing location should open next in case a crossing closes. As of January 2025, there were four logged intersection requests for FY 2024-25.<sup>20</sup>

At the time of the audit, there was no information on SSEU's webpage on how to request a crossing guard. Making information publicly available about requesting crossing guards will help to ensure schools have easy access to information about the process. During the audit, SSEU staff began reaching out to schools in MTC Equity Priority Communities to inform them about SSEU services. Staff report there was not a strong follow-up response from the schools for services.

### **Some Schools Have Received Enhanced Crosswalks and Access and Circulation Studies Through DOT's School Safety Program**

There were slightly fewer schools in equity priority communities within San José receiving access and circulation studies and high visibility crosswalks through DOT's school safety program at the time of the audit; however, the difference was not significant. At the time of the audit there were about 290 elementary, middle, and high schools in San José.<sup>21</sup> Of these schools, 81 received at least one high visibility ladder striped pattern crosswalk through DOT's school safety program.<sup>22</sup> For 38 schools, DOT conducted an access and circulation study between November 2023 and March 2025. However, there are other factors that contribute to the prioritization and completion of crosswalk enhancements. For example, if a crosswalk was paved recently or if the school is currently active in other DOT programming.

According to DOT, the access and circulation studies are driven by requests from schools, Council offices, and members of the public. DOT staff also report using school engagement with DOT for prioritization for these studies and for crosswalk enhancements. In addition, staff report they coordinate with DOT's pavement program on crosswalk enhancements, as the pavement plan is one of the factors that impacts the prioritization.

### **Police's SSEU and DOT Can Increase Coordination to Expand Access to School Traffic Safety Services**

As noted, both DOT and SSEU have experienced challenges in reaching all schools across the city for their traffic safety programs. Both departments have reported that responsiveness from schools can be difficult. DOT and SSEU target the same schools to provide traffic safety education, however they do not coordinate with each other for outreach. Examples of outreach efforts have included:

<sup>20</sup> SSEU does not track crossing guard requests from schools that do not conduct a school pedestrian count.

<sup>21</sup> DOT's list includes fewer schools because, in some instances, multiple schools are represented by one entry if they share a campus.

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix A for information around the time frame selected for the analysis.

- DOT has found being a part of the Schools-City Collaborative as a helpful channel to reach more schools. This Collaborative is a partnership between the schools and the City to align resources that serve children. At the time of the audit, SSEU was not aware of the Collaborative; however, a separate Police unit was active with the group.
- In 2023, DOT surveyed schools on their traffic safety concerns. As a result, DOT staff reported they recruited more schools into its Walk N' Roll Program.
- In 2024, SSEU conducted its Safety Through Education, Encouragement, and Respect (STEER) campaign, and in March 2025, it started a Drive Safely with School Safety initiative.<sup>23</sup> In addition, in May 2025, Police established a Community Engagement Team to improve and enhance department community engagement and coordination.

Because DOT and SSEU both target the same populations, better coordination can expand the reach of each department. The Schools-City Collaborative is an example of an avenue that DOT and SSEU can use to conduct proactive or joint outreach. Further, staff have reported that school contacts can change and that timing can impact success of outreach. DOT and SSEU should incorporate such factors as they plan and carry out proactive or joint outreach efforts.

### *SSEU and DOT Should Improve the Process for Tracking School Requests for Crossing Guards*

Staff have reported delays in having a safety index assessment, which is an assessment that determines whether an intersection qualifies for a crossing guard. In one example, SSEU sent a request to DOT in September 2022, but DOT did not provide the safety index score until May 2024—over a year and a half later. In another example, a request from August 2023 did not receive a safety index score until February 2025. According to DOT, part of the delay for each was due to staff transitions.

However, there also is no shared, central tracking list of schools with a pending safety index study and their corresponding results. Currently, SSEU sends DOT the list of schools that need a safety index assessment, and then DOT emails its list with the assessment results. Staff have reported that sometimes the DOT and SSEU lists are not aligned, and that staff transitions can impact the process. Better coordination can ensure that DOT and SSEU address school requests for crossing guards timely.

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<sup>23</sup> Through this initiative, staff engage with the public about traffic safety issue trends before or after school hours.

**Recommendations:**

- 1: To ensure more schools receive traffic safety services, including Walk N' Roll programming and other services, the Department of Transportation should develop an outreach plan to expand outreach to all schools in San José and target schools in equity priority communities.**
- 2: To ensure more schools in equity priority communities receive the Police Department's school traffic safety services, the Department should:**
  - a. Update the School Safety and Education webpage to include information about the process to request crossing guards,**
  - b. Develop an outreach plan that includes focusing on schools in equity priority communities, and**
  - c. Consider using the Schools-City Collaborative as a channel for disseminating outreach materials for the School Safety and Education Unit's programs.**
- 3: The Department of Transportation and the Police Department's School Safety and Education Unit should coordinate proactive outreach to increase the number of schools participating in traffic safety educational programs. This could include having a consolidated contact list, performing joint outreach, or other options.**
- 4: To promote efficiency and timeliness of review of school requests for crossing guards, the Police Department's School Safety and Education Unit and the Department of Transportation should establish a process to better track and facilitate crossing guard requests and develop timeliness standards for department reviews.**

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## Finding 3 Translated and Updated Resources Could Enhance Access to Traffic Safety Services

### Summary

Language accessibility is limited in some key traffic safety access points. For example, Police's online traffic enforcement request form is only in English. DOT's Traffic Calming Toolkit, a resource intended to provide information to the public about how to access traffic calming improvements for their neighborhoods is outdated and is also only available in English. Translating these documents would enhance accessibility of traffic safety services. Other access points could also be enhanced, such as making DOT's Traffic Safety phone tree and the Police Department's non-emergency phone tree more accessible to non-English speakers in accordance with the City's Language Equity Policy and Guidelines (6.1.10 of the City's Administrative Policy Manual).

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### Pathways to Access DOT and Police Traffic Safety Services Can Be Enhanced Through Translations and Updated Resources

Several access points to DOT and Police traffic safety services can be enhanced by translating documents into multiple languages and updating traffic safety resources.

- Members of the public submit traffic enforcement requests online through a **Traffic Enforcement Request Form**.<sup>24</sup> Currently, the form is only in English and there does not appear to be regular, targeted outreach to the community about this service. Between October and December 2024, most online speed-related requests for traffic enforcement in San José were from areas not designated as an equity priority community.<sup>25</sup> Out of the 116 online speed-related requests, 96 were from areas not designated as SJ Equity Atlas Equity Priority Communities, and 106 were from areas not designated as MTC Equity Priority Communities. In addition, most (105) requests did not fall on a Vision Zero Priority Safety Corridor.
- DOT created the **Traffic Calming Toolkit**, which is intended to provide information to the public about the City Council's Traffic Calming Policy for Residential Neighborhoods. It also is intended to be an avenue for residents to access various resources for traffic safety education, enforcement, and traffic calming improvements for their neighborhoods. The Toolkit has not been updated to reflect updates to the Council Policy

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<sup>24</sup> TEU assesses requests to determine whether they should deploy TEU officers and/or a speed radar trailer. Not all requests result in an action.

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix A for information around the time frame selected for the analysis.

that were made in 2024. It is also only in English. In addition, it references other outdated traffic safety program information and includes links navigating to webpages no longer affiliated with the City.

- **Phone trees**<sup>26</sup> are not translated for some services:
  - DOT's Traffic Safety website directs users to a phone number to request traffic engineering services. The resulting phone tree does not have a translated message, nor an option to press for a translation.
  - The DOT Traffic Safety website directs individuals seeking to make a traffic enforcement service request to the Police Department's non-emergency phone line. The resulting phone tree has options for English, Spanish, and Vietnamese translations but not for Chinese. Chinese was added to the City's Language Equity Policy and Guidelines when it was updated in October 2022.
- DOT's **Walk N' Roll** newsletter is available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, but not in Chinese. The newsletter covers traffic safety education information and program updates geared to parents, students, and the community.

As described in the background, the City's Language Equity Policy and Guidelines (6.1.10 of the City's Administrative Policy Manual) outlines requirements for departments to make information, such as vital documents, available into other languages when appropriate.<sup>27</sup> The Policy also states that departments using phone trees shall ensure that instructions are available in these languages. Further translations of resources around traffic safety services in DOT and Police would enhance access for these services across the city.

As noted in Finding 2, Police recently established a Community Engagement Team to improve and enhance department community engagement and coordination. This group could be a channel to increase outreach about Police's traffic enforcement services.

### **Recommendations:**

- 5: To increase access to traffic enforcement services, the Police Department should:**
- a. Translate the online traffic enforcement request form into the languages identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10), and**

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<sup>26</sup> Translations of phone trees is a common area for improvement across the City as noted in the City Auditor's 2024 audit [Language Accessibility: The City Can Strengthen Efforts to Address Language Equity Across Its Services](#).

<sup>27</sup> These languages include Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese (including Cantonese and Mandarin). The Policy states that departments have discretion to prioritize translations of vital documents to these three languages.

- b. Provide targeted outreach to equity priority communities about requesting traffic enforcement services.
- 6: To ensure access to educational resources around traffic safety services, the Department of Transportation should update the Traffic Calming Toolkit to:
  - a. Align information with current traffic safety programs, resources, and access points, including information from the Traffic Calming Policy for Residential Neighborhoods (Council Policy 5-6), and
  - b. Translate the toolkit to the languages identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10).
- 7: The Department of Transportation should translate the Walk N' Roll newsletter into the remaining language(s) identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10).
- 8: To improve language accessibility, the Department of Transportation and the Police Department should translate telephone tree instructions of phone numbers for accessing traffic safety services, such as the phone number for traffic engineering services and the Police Department's non-emergency phone number, into all languages identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10).

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# Conclusion

The Department of Transportation (DOT) and Police Department (Police) provide key traffic safety programs and services in the City of San José. These include traffic calming projects in neighborhoods, pedestrian safety enhancements, quick build projects, school traffic safety education, crossing guards, and traffic enforcement.

Equity priority communities received the same or a higher level of services for some traffic safety programs. This includes quick builds, which is in part due to some of these projects being targeted in Priority Safety Corridors, many of which are in equity priority communities. Additionally, neighborhood traffic basic service requests were generally distributed proportionally across communities, and DOT was more timely in closing out requests in equity priority communities.

Both DOT and Police have faced challenges in reaching all schools across the city for their traffic safety services. These programs are typically provided upon request. School-based traffic safety programs, such as DOT's Walk N' Roll and Police's crossing guard program, could improve their reach in schools in equity priority communities. There are also opportunities for better outreach and cross departmental coordination in these programs. Lastly, DOT and Police can enhance language accessibility in their programs to ensure the public can access traffic safety services and educational materials.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Finding 1: Equity Priority Communities Received the Same or a Higher Level of Services in Some Traffic Safety Programs**

No Recommendations

### **Finding 2: School Traffic Safety Programs Can Be More Proactive in Their Outreach to Engage More Schools**

Recommendation #1: To ensure more schools receive traffic safety services, including Walk N' Roll programming and other services, the Department of Transportation should develop an outreach plan to expand outreach to all schools in San José and target schools in equity priority communities.

Recommendation #2: To ensure more schools in equity priority communities receive the Police Department's school traffic safety services, the Department should:

- a. Update the School Safety and Education webpage to include information about the process to request crossing guards,
- b. Develop an outreach plan that includes focusing on schools in equity priority communities, and
- c. Consider using the Schools-City Collaborative as a channel for disseminating outreach materials for the School Safety and Education Unit's programs.

Recommendation #3: The Department of Transportation and the Police Department's School Safety and Education Unit should coordinate proactive outreach to increase the number of schools participating in traffic safety educational programs. This could include having a consolidated contact list, performing joint outreach, or other options.

Recommendation #4: To promote efficiency and timeliness of review of school requests for crossing guards, the Police Department's School Safety and Education Unit and the Department of Transportation should establish a process to better track and facilitate crossing guard requests and develop timeliness standards for department reviews.

### **Finding 3: Translated and Updated Resources Could Enhance Access to Traffic Safety Services**

Recommendation #5: To increase access to traffic enforcement services, the Police Department should:

- a. Translate the online traffic enforcement request form into the languages identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10), and
- b. Provide targeted outreach to equity priority communities about requesting traffic enforcement services.

Recommendation #6: To ensure access to educational resources around traffic safety services, the Department of Transportation should update the Traffic Calming Toolkit to:

- a. Align information with current traffic safety programs, resources, and access points, including information from the Traffic Calming Policy for Residential Neighborhoods (Council Policy 5-6), and
- b. Translate the toolkit to the languages identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10).

Recommendation #7: The Department of Transportation should translate the Walk N' Roll newsletter into the remaining language(s) identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10).

Recommendation #8: To improve language accessibility, the Department of Transportation and the Police Department should translate telephone tree instructions of phone numbers for accessing traffic safety services, such as the phone number for traffic engineering services and the Police Department's non-emergency phone number, into all languages identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10).

# **APPENDIX A**

## **Audit Objective, Scope, and Methodology**

The mission of the City Auditor's Office is to identify ways to increase the economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and accountability of City government by independently assessing and reporting on City operations and services. The audit function is an essential element of San José's public accountability and our audits provide the City Council, City management, and the public with independent analysis, reliable information, and recommendations for improvement of City operations and services. In accordance with the City Auditor's Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 Audit Work Plan, we have completed an audit of access to and use of critical services by traditionally marginalized communities – traffic safety programs. The audit was conducted in response to direction from the Mayor in the March 2023 Budget Message.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The objective of this audit was to assess access to and use of traffic safety programs by traditionally marginalized communities, with a primary focus on services within the Increasing Community Safety City Council Focus Area. We sought to understand the relevant internal controls around access to and use of traffic safety programs and services for neighborhood traffic, quick builds, pedestrian safety enhancements (PSEs), Walk N' Roll, and school safety programs or services within the Department of Transportation (DOT), as well as the school safety and traffic enforcement programs within the Police Department (Police). We did not review all internal controls over all DOT and Police traffic safety operations. We have performed the following to achieve the audit objective:

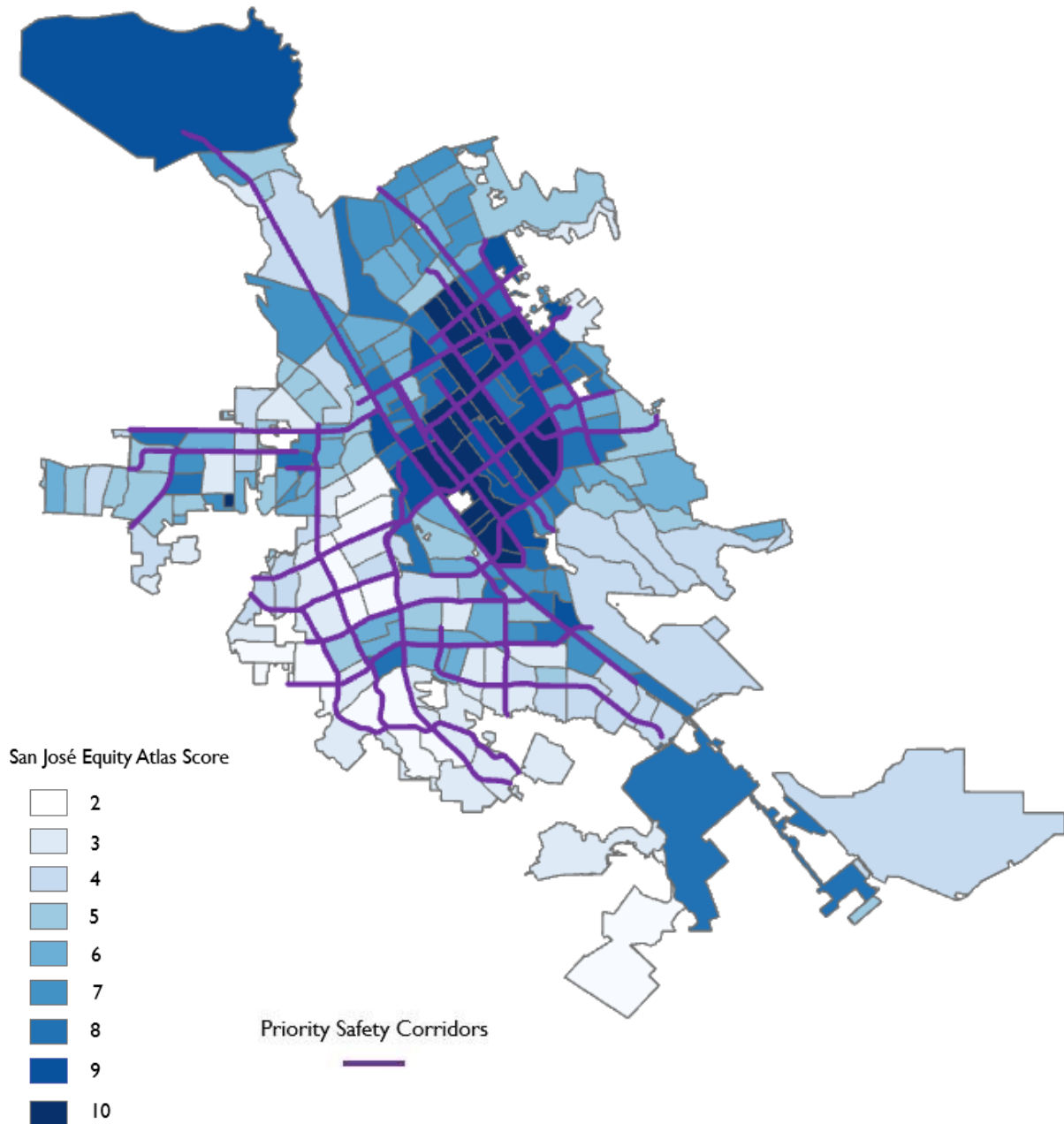
- To understand City policies and procedures pertaining to language accessibility and equity, we reviewed the following Citywide policies:
  - Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (City Administrative Policy Manual 6.1.10),
  - Equity Values and Standards Policy (Council Policy 0-22), and
  - Traffic Calming Policy for Residential Neighborhoods (Council Policy 5-6).
- To understand how the public can access and use traffic safety services and programs:
  - Interviewed staff from:
    - Department of Transportation
    - Police Department, and
    - City Manager's Office.
  - Reviewed the Traffic Calming Toolkit, departmental web pages, and applicable phone lines for traffic safety services.
- To identify equity priority communities that potentially contain traditionally marginalized communities, we reviewed:

- The City of San José Equity Atlas, and
- Equity Priority Communities identified by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.
- To assess how services are accessed by residents in identified equity priority communities, we reviewed and compared data across each program. Different timeframes were used to provide a sufficient number of projects to assess performance.
  - Completed quick build projects across equity priority communities and other parts of San José for FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24 (36 projects).
  - Basic traffic safety service requests and timeliness across equity priority communities and other parts of San José for July to December 2024 (769 requests received and 721 completed).
  - School participation in the Walk N' Roll program across equity priority communities and other parts of San José by active schools for FY 2024-25 and events for FY 2023-24 (86 active schools and 50 schools that hosted an event).
  - School participation in the crossing guard program across equity priority communities and other parts of San José for FY 2024-25 as of March 2025 (80 participating schools).
  - Online speed-related traffic enforcements requests across equity priority communities and other parts of San José for October to December 2024 (116 requests).
  - High visibility crosswalk enhancements (for 81 schools) completed between July 2023 to May 2025 and access and circulation studies (for 38 schools) completed between November 2023 to March 2025.

We would like to thank the Department of Transportation and the Police Department for their time and insight during the audit process.

## APPENDIX B

### San José Equity Atlas Scores for Census Tracts in San José and Vision Zero Priority Safety Corridors



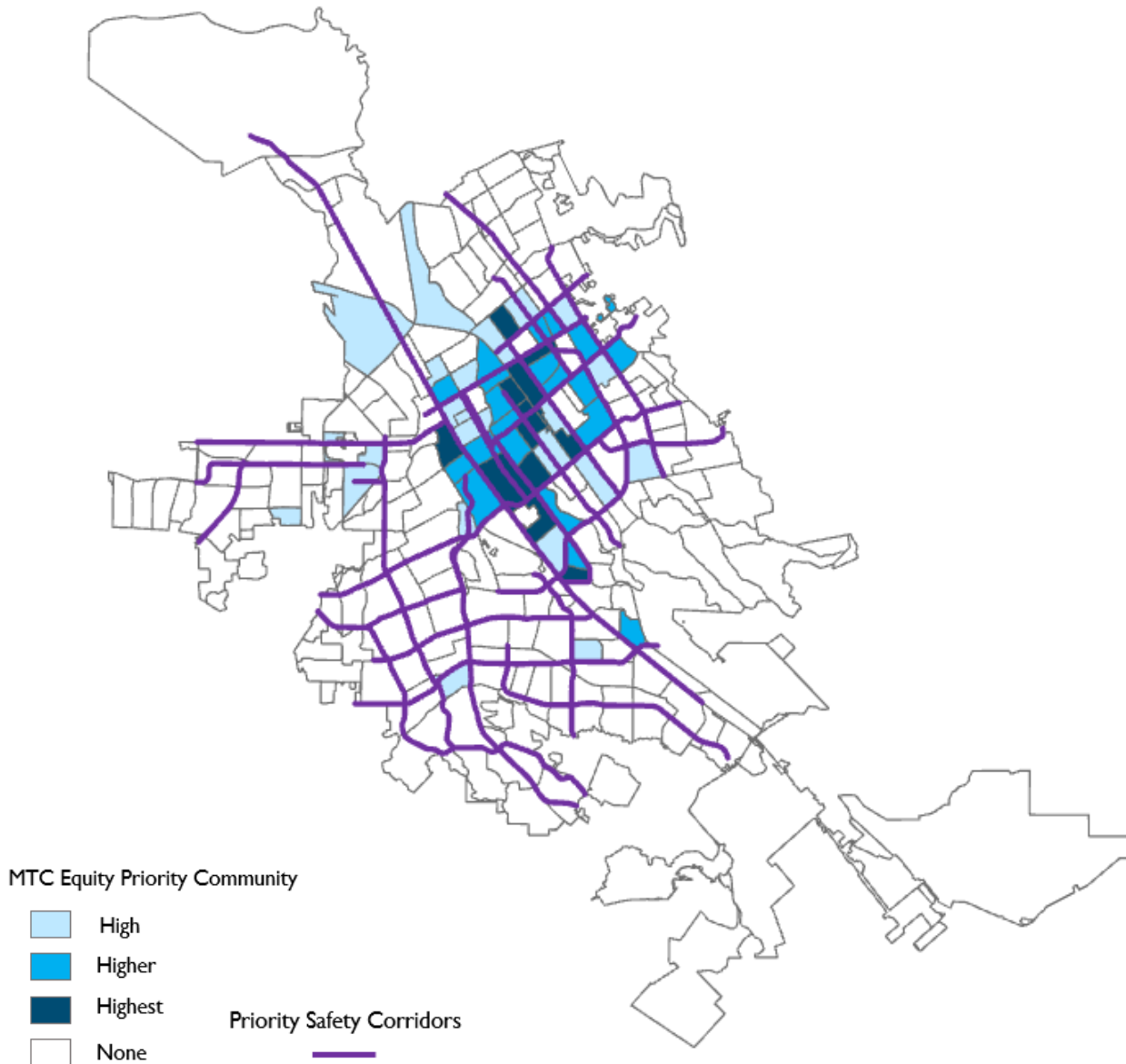
Source: Auditor created map based on data from the San José Equity Atlas. The San José Equity Atlas can be found online at <https://gis.sanjoseca.gov/maps/equityatlas/>. Auditor depiction of Vision Zero Priority Safety Corridors from the City's GIS database.

Note: The San José's Equity Atlas considers racial and income data. Census tracts are assigned a score of 1-5 for each. The combined score can range from 2-10, with higher scores signifying higher proportions of people of color and lower household income. The Vision Zero Priority Safety Corridors represent streets with the highest concentrations of fatal and severe injury crashes.

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## APPENDIX C

### Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Equity Priority Communities in San José and Vision Zero Priority Safety Corridors



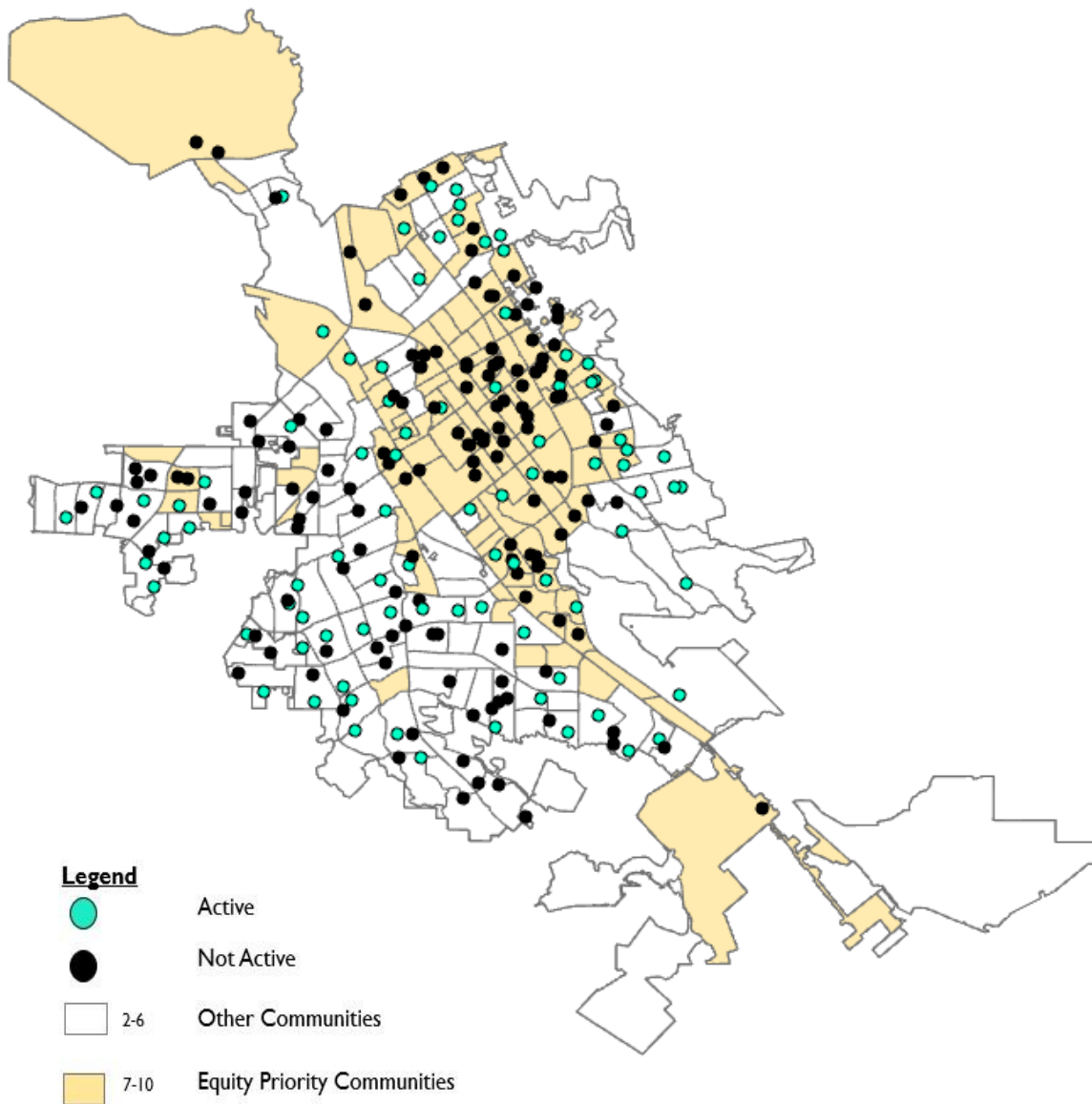
Source: Auditor created map based on data from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). Information on these equity priority communities can be found online at <https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/access-equity-mobility/equity-priority-communities>. Auditor depiction of Vision Zero Priority Safety Corridors from the City's GIS database.

Note: The MTC Equity Priority Communities are census tracts within the Bay Area with significant concentrations of underserved populations incorporating demographic factors such as race, income, English proficiency, disability status, and age. Census tracts can be classified into one of the following groups: High, Higher, Highest, or not an MTC Equity Priority Community (None). The Vision Zero Priority Safety Corridors represent streets with the highest concentrations of fatal and severe injury crashes.

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## APPENDIX D

### Schools Active in the Walk N' Roll Program (San José Equity Atlas)

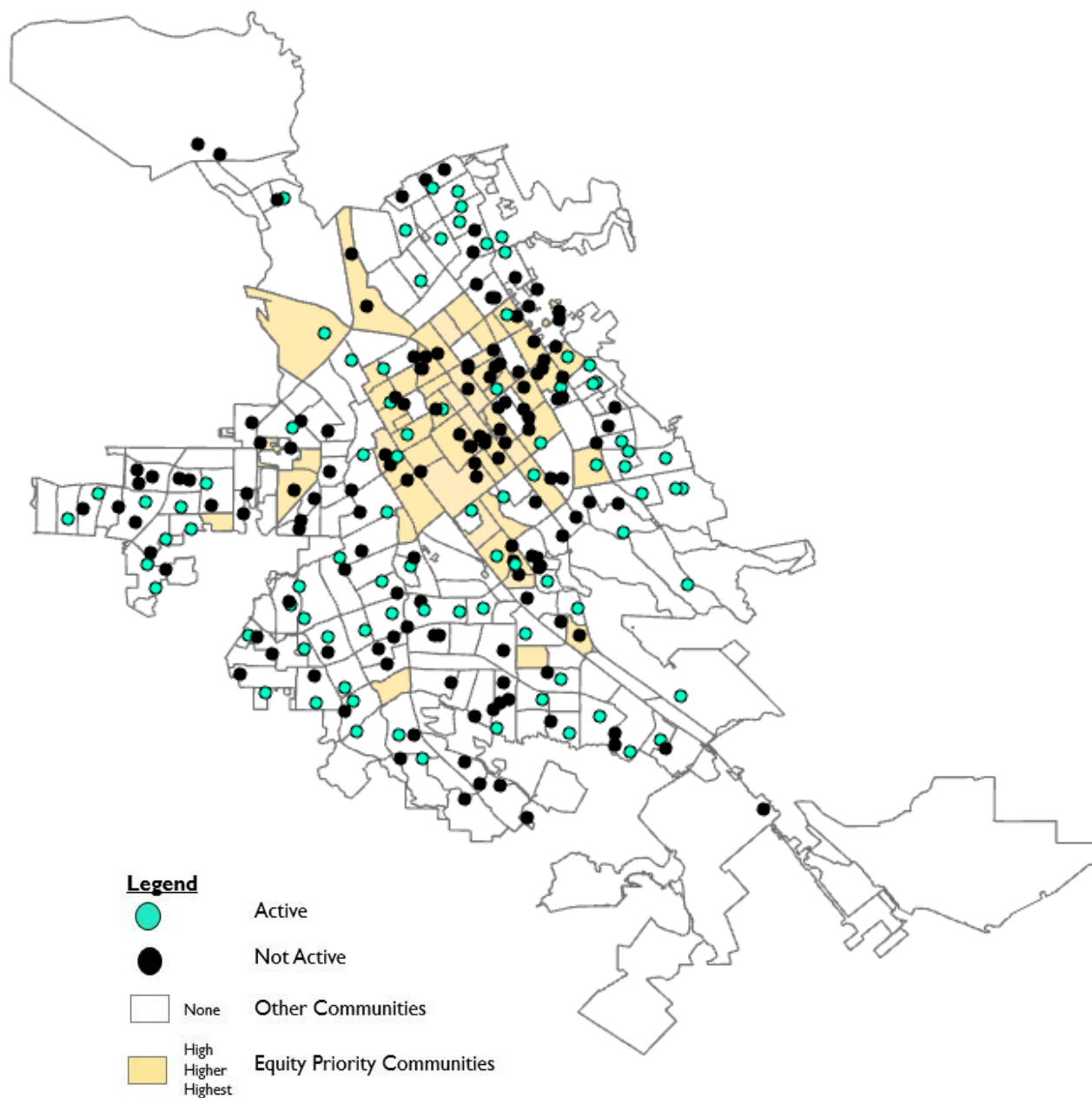


Source: Auditor analysis of elementary and middle schools from the City of San José Open Data platform and the Department of Transportation's Walk N' Roll active schools for FY 2024-25 disaggregated by equity lens.

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## APPENDIX E

### Schools Active in the Walk N' Roll Program (Metropolitan Transportation Commission [MTC] Equity Priority Communities)

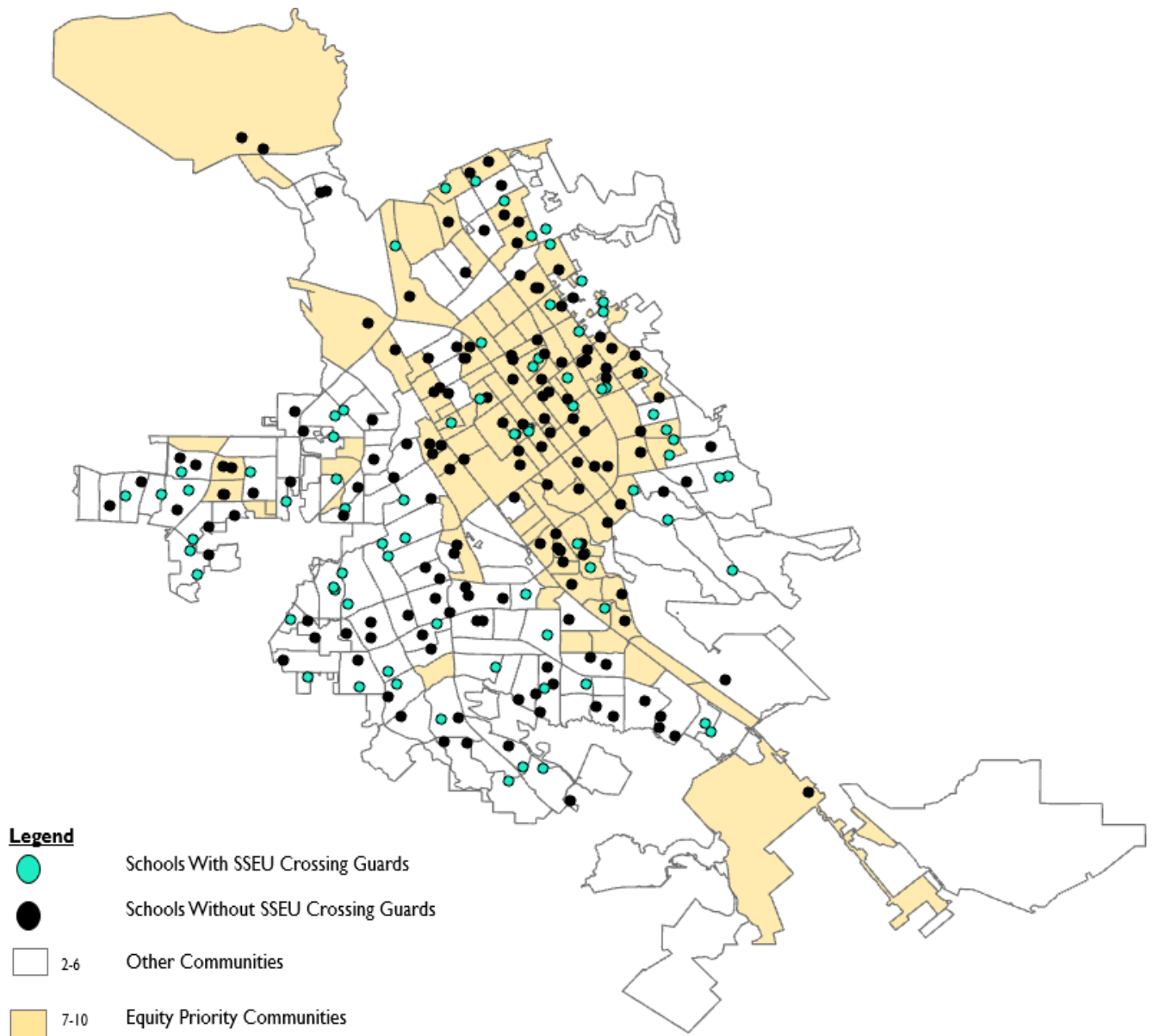


Source: Auditor analysis of elementary and middle schools in San José from the City of San José Open Data platform and the Department of Transportation's Walk N' Roll active schools for FY 2024-25 disaggregated by equity lens.

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## APPENDIX F

### School Safety and Education Unit (SSEU) Crossing Guards (San José Equity Atlas)



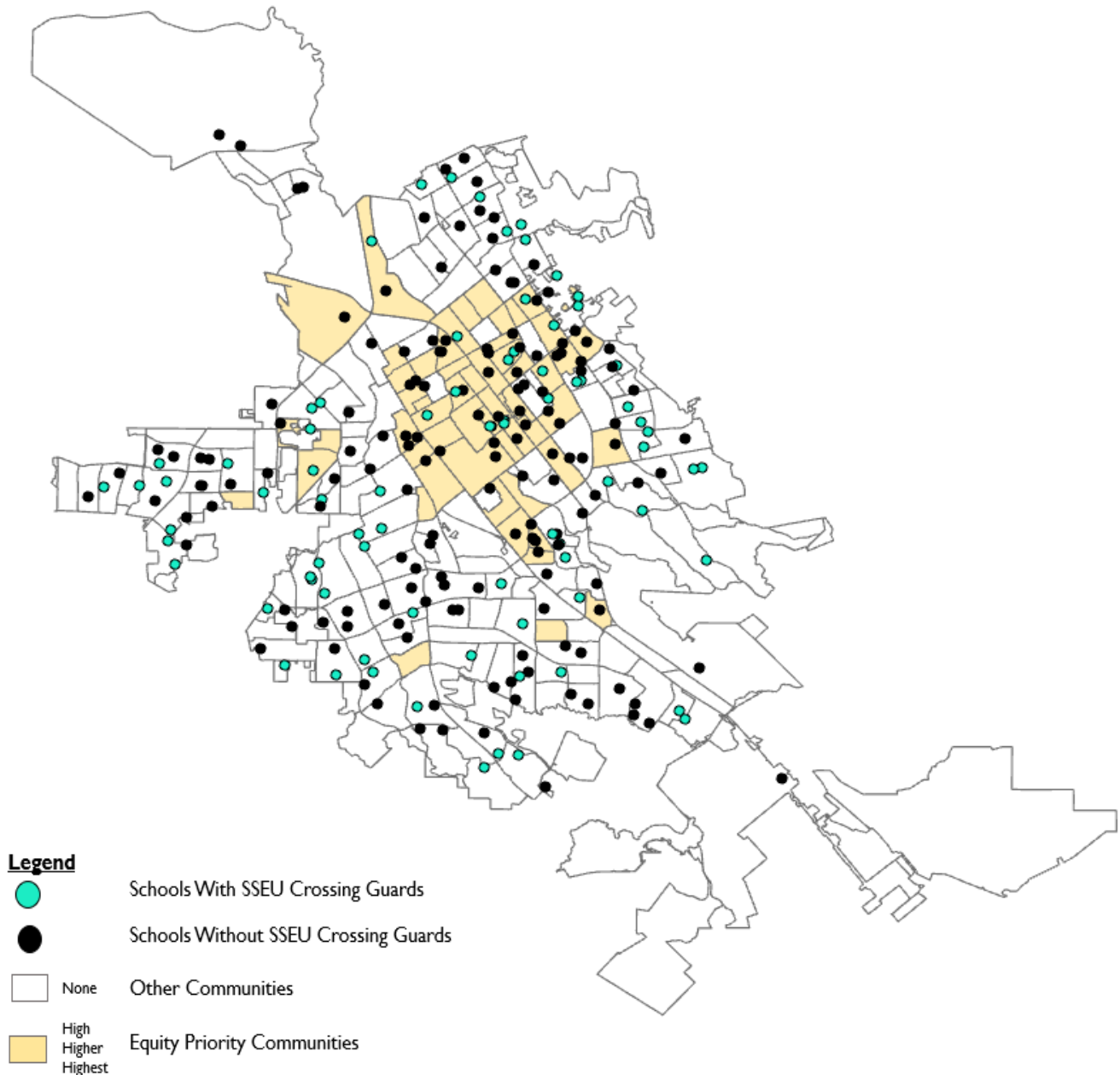
Source: Auditor analysis of elementary and middle schools in San José from the City of San José Open Data platform and the Police Department's FY 2024-25 staffed crossing guard intersection list as of March 2025 disaggregated by equity lens.

Note: Some schools have more than one staffed intersection affiliated with them. There were four schools from the list without a crossing guard due to staffing at the time of the analysis that were excluded.

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## APPENDIX G

### Schools With School Safety and Education Unit (SSEU) Crossing Guards (Metropolitan Transportation Commission [MTC] Equity Priority Communities)



Source: Auditor analysis of elementary and middle schools in San José from the City of San José Open Data platform and the Police Department's FY 2024-25 staffed crossing guard intersection list as of March 2025 disaggregated by equity lens.

Note: Some schools have more than one staffed intersection affiliated with them. There were four schools from the list without a crossing guard due to staffing at the time of the analysis that were excluded.

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# Memorandum

**TO:** Joseph Rois  
City Auditor

**FROM:** John Ristow, Dir. DOT  
Paul Joseph, Chief PD

**SUBJECT: SEE BELOW**

**DATE:** July 31, 2025

Approved



Date

07/23/2025

**SUBJECT: ACCESS AND USE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY SERVICES: TARGETED OUTREACH AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS CAN ENHANCE EQUITY IN SERVICES**

## **BACKGROUND**

In his 2023 March Budget Message, the Mayor provided the following direction:

*To ensure we continue to make progress toward a more just and equitable future, the City Auditor is directed to prepare and publish an Information Memo that explores the scope and costs associated with conducting an audit of access to and use of our most critical city services in traditionally marginalized communities [...]*

The message also gave direction to the City Manager to bring attention, resources, and governance-level goals to a small number of focus areas, including Increasing Community Safety. Traffic safety programs in the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Police Department (Police) are critical elements in this focus area.

DOT and the Police Department deliver a broad range of traffic safety programs and services throughout the City of San José. These services include responding to more than 1,200 annual traffic safety requests and implementing safety projects such as neighborhood traffic calming, pedestrian enhancements, Vision Zero quick build projects, school traffic safety education, crossing guard deployment, and traffic enforcement. In February of 2025, the City Council adopted the updated Vision Zero Action Plan which emphasizes that nearly 70% of updated Priority Safety Corridors intersect with Equity Priority Communities in the City, so this audit is both timely and necessary to improve traffic safety in the City.

The Administration has reviewed the audit and agrees with the three (3) findings and eight (8) recommendations identified in the report. This memorandum captures the Administration response to each recommendation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION RESPONSES**

**Finding 1: Equity Priority Communities Received the Same or a Higher Level of Services in Some Traffic Safety Programs.** Equity priority communities, which typically include traditionally marginalized communities, received the same or higher level of traffic safety services for quick build projects and basic neighborhood traffic service requests. We found:

- Equity priority communities received a greater number of quick build safety improvements in comparison to other communities. This is in part because Vision Zero quick build projects are generally targeted in Priority Safety Corridors, many of which are in equity priority communities. Grant funding may also provide direction for where projects are located.
- In general, requests for basic neighborhood traffic safety services were equally distributed across the city. In addition, DOT was timelier in closing out basic traffic safety requests for equity priority communities.

**Administration Response to Finding #1:** The administration is pleased with the finding which reflects the City's commitment to data-informed and equitable service delivery. The administration is committed to building on this momentum to make streets safer for everyone in the City of San José.

**Finding 2: School Traffic Safety Programs Can Be More Proactive in Their Outreach to Engage More Schools.**

**Recommendation #1:** To ensure more schools receive traffic safety services, including Walk N' Roll programming and other services, the Department of Transportation should develop an outreach plan to expand outreach to all schools in San José and target schools in equity priority communities.

**Administration Response to Recommendation #1:** The Administration agrees with this recommendation.

**Green -** As part of the outreach strategy, the Department of Transportation will identify schools located in equity priority areas and review data from previous surveys to determine which schools have engaged with Traffic Safety programs and which have not. To improve participation, the City will collaborate with school district leadership through the Schools/City Collaborative to re-engage non-responsive schools and explore opportunities to bring Walk N' Roll programming to those campuses. This may include offering safety assemblies, bike rodeos, and other educational activities tailored to the needs of each school community.

**Target Completion Date:** December 31, 2025

**Recommendation #2: To ensure more schools in equity priority communities receive the Police Department's school traffic safety services, the Department should:**

- a. Update the School Safety and Education webpage to include information about the process to request crossing guards,**
- b. Develop an outreach plan that includes focusing on schools in equity priority communities, and**
- c. Consider using the Schools-City Collaborative as a channel for disseminating outreach materials for the School Safety and Education Unit's programs.**

**Administration Response:** The Administration agrees with this recommendation.

**Green**

- a. The Police Department will include updates to the School Safety & Education Unit's (SSEU) webpage to make information, services and contact information more accessible.
- b. SSEU has contacted every elementary and middle school identified as a traditionally marginalized school (TMS) in San Jose to ensure all are aware of SSEU services and programs. Police will continue annual outreach to TMS in addition to the current outreach in place. SSEU will formulate a plan to continue the most efficient and effective forms of contact on an ongoing basis.
- c. Police will participate in the Schools-City Collaborative.

**Target Completion Date:** December 31, 2025

**Recommendation #3: The Department of Transportation and the Police Department's School Safety and Education Unit should coordinate proactive outreach to increase the number of schools participating in traffic safety educational programs. This could include having a consolidated contact list, performing joint outreach, or other options.**

**Administration Response:** The Administration agrees with this recommendation.

**Green -** The Department of Transportation and the Police Department will align efforts on school-based activities, such as safety assemblies and bike rodeos. The departments will share and consolidate contact lists of school administrators and relevant staff to streamline communication and coordination. Where appropriate, the departments will partner to jointly deliver programs at schools, and in cases of scheduling or capacity constraints, the departments will strategically divide responsibilities to ensure broader coverage and avoid duplication. This collaborative approach will help maximize program reach and ensure that more schools benefit from traffic safety education.

**Target Completion Date:** December 31, 2025

**Recommendation #4:** To promote efficiency and timeliness of review of school requests for crossing guards, the Police Department's School Safety and Education Unit and the Department of Transportation should establish a process to better track and facilitate crossing guard requests and develop timeliness standards for department reviews.

**Administration Response:** The Administration agrees with this recommendation.

**Green** - DOT and PD will collaborate to develop a standard operating procedure for the intake and review of school crossing guard requests. This SOP will outline clear roles and responsibilities, establish a centralized process to track incoming requests, and ensure consistent documentation and communication. As part of this effort, both departments will work together to define a reasonable and transparent timeline for reviewing requests and communicating decisions back to schools. This will help improve efficiency, set clear expectations for requestors, and ensure timely consideration of school safety needs.

**Target Completion Date:** June 30, 2026

**Finding 3: Translated and Updated Resources Could Enhance Access to Traffic Safety Services.**

**Recommendation #5:** To increase access to traffic enforcement services, the Police Department should:

- a.** Translate the online traffic enforcement request form into the languages identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10), and
- b.** Provide targeted outreach to equity priority communities about requesting traffic enforcement services.

**Administration Response:** The Administration agrees with this recommendation.

**Green**

- a.** The Police Department's contracted translation provider will translate the traffic enforcement request form into Spanish, Vietnamese, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese. The Department will begin working on a plan to translate received request forms using currently employed multi-lingual personnel.
- b.** The Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit will create an information card containing instructions on how to file a traffic complaint and/or request traffic-related services. The card will include the Department's website URL and the Traffic Enforcement Unit's phone number. The card will be translated into the five specified languages and will

be disseminated by patrol captains and lieutenants attending community meetings, by Crime Prevention personnel conducting safety presentations, and by Department personnel at all community outreach events (e.g., Coffee with a Cop, National Night Out, events involving the Department's ice cream truck, etc.).

**Target Completion Date:** June 30, 2026

**Recommendation #6: To ensure access to educational resources around traffic safety services, the Department of Transportation should update the Traffic Calming Toolkit to:**

- a. Align information with current traffic safety programs, resources, and access points, including information from the Traffic Calming Policy for Residential Neighborhoods (Council Policy 5-6), and**
- b. Translate the toolkit to the languages identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10).**

**Administration Response:** The Administration agrees with this recommendation.

**Green**

**a.** DOT will update the toolkit to align its content with current traffic safety programs, resources, best practices, and policies, including relevant information from the newly updated Traffic Calming Policy for Residential Neighborhoods (Council Policy 5-6) Criteria for Installation of Stop Signs (Council Policy 8-1). Given that the existing toolkit is outdated, this process will involve a comprehensive revamp to incorporate current standards, guidelines, and best practice.

**b.** Once the toolkit is updated, the toolkit will be translated into the languages identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10) to ensure accessibility for all community members.

**Target Completion Date:** December 31, 2026

**Recommendation #7: The Department of Transportation should translate the Walk N' Roll newsletter into the remaining language(s) identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10).**

**Administration Response:** The Administration agrees with this recommendation.

**Green** - DOT currently translates the newsletter into English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. To comply with the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10), the department will begin translating the newsletter into Chinese. This will help ensure that program

information is accessible to all communities and supports the City's commitment to language equity and inclusive engagement.

**Target Completion Date:** September 30, 2025

**Recommendation #8:** To improve language accessibility, the Department of Transportation and the Police Department should translate telephone tree instructions of phone numbers for accessing traffic safety services, such as the phone number for traffic engineering services and the Police Department's non-emergency phone number, into all languages identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10).

**Administration Response:** The Administration agrees with this recommendation.

**Green** – DOT and PD will translate the telephone tree instructions for accessing traffic safety services—including the phone number for traffic engineering services and the Police Department's non-emergency line—into all languages identified in the City's Language Equity Policy & Guidelines (6.1.10). This effort will enhance language accessibility and ensure that all community members can effectively access critical traffic safety resources.

**Target Completion Date:** June 30, 2026

## **COORDINATION**

This memorandum has been coordinated with the Attorney's Office, City Manager's Budget Office, and the Information Technology Department.

## **CONCLUSION**

We thank the City Auditor and his staff for the recent audit of the Traffic Safety Program. The audit report contains 8 recommendations that are intended to improve accessibility to citywide traffic safety services and the Administration will take action to deliver them.

/s/  
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Director of Transportation

/s/  
PAUL JOSEPH  
Chief of Police

For questions, please contact Rick Scott, Assistant Director, Department of Transportation at [rick.scott@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:rick.scott@sanjoseca.gov), or Lt. Paul Hamblin, Police Department at [paul.hamblin@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:paul.hamblin@sanjoseca.gov).