



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC SAFETY, FINANCE, AND
STRATEGIC SUPPORT COMMITTEE

FROM: Edgardo Garcia

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: May 3, 2019

Approved

Date

5-7-19

**SUBJECT: CITY COUNCIL POLICY PRIORITY #22 (FORMERLY #17): SCHOOL
CROSSING GUARD INNOVATIVE HIRING STRATEGIES**

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the follow-up report on the implementation of the City Council Policy Priority #22 (Formerly #17): Develop Innovative Strategies to Hire School Crossing Guards, with a focus on information regarding the alignment of School Crossing Guard Program staffing needs and the program's budgetary allocation, without a degradation in current service levels.

BACKGROUND

At the October 17, 2017 City Council priority setting session, the Council placed an item on the Council policy priority list directing staff to develop innovative hiring strategies for school crossing guards.¹ In October 2018, staff brought forward a memorandum² to the Public Safety, Finance, and Strategic Support Committee, which discussed the School Safety and Education Unit's (SSEU) progress in implementing this priority. The memorandum outlined a number of innovative hiring strategies that staff had implemented, and also identified a misalignment between the budgeted number of crossing guards and the number of crossing guards actually employed by the program. Staff had discovered this misalignment during their work on the priority. Staff proposed a work plan to correct the misalignment in the staff memorandum. The Committee directed staff to return to the Committee no later than May 2019 with a plan to align program staffing with budgeted staffing, without a degradation of current service levels.

¹ Link to City Council Agenda 10/17/2017 Item 3.6 Council Priority Setting Session:
<https://sanjose.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3181189&GUID=87E55A91-FE8C-450A-BA7B-3C8795997189&Options=&Search=>

² Link to PSFSS Agenda 10/18/2018 Item (d)1: <http://sanjose.legistar.com/gateway.aspx?M=F&ID=e28cd574-8d80-452d-ae75-0dcd74dc8ffd.pdf>

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At the March 5, 2019 City Council meeting, the Council established a new Council Policy Priority List. The Council retained School Crossing Guard Innovative Hiring Strategies on the priority list and ranked it as Priority #22. (On the previous list, established in October of 2017, this item was ranked as Priority #17.)

ANALYSIS

This report updates the Committee on staff's effort to align program staffing with budgeted staffing. It also outlines an ongoing plan to evaluate new requests to staff intersections with crossing guards and monitor changing factors that impact the staffing levels at staffed intersections.

Correcting the Budget Misalignment

At the time that the misalignment was discovered in Fall of 2018, the 2018-2019 Adopted Operating Budget included 35.17 crossing guard FTEs, which translates into 199 crossing guard positions. An FTE, or "full time equivalent," is a way of counting positions based on the number of hours worked by a full-time employee. The number of crossing guard positions is higher than the number of FTEs because crossing guards only work 2 hours per day on average. In October 2018, the program employed 244 crossing guards, which was above the budgeted amount, and staffed 121 intersections.

To ensure that the program was properly resourced in the short term, the Administration proposed a one-time increase of \$385,000 to the Police Department's personal services appropriation as part of the 2018-2019 Mid-Year Review Report.³ With the City Council's approval of the Mid-Year Budget on February 12, 2019, the program budget was brought into alignment with projected crossing guard staffing through the end of the current fiscal year, at a staffing level of 242 guards. This one-time action did not change the base budget, and thus did not set an ongoing staffing level that would permanently correct the misalignment.

In order to identify staffing needs for a permanent solution, the Police Department (PD) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) performed a two-part review to determine the appropriate staffing level for each of the currently-staffed intersections.

DOT conducted a traffic engineering assessment that considered school pedestrian volume, crossing distance, intersection layout and intersection control type (stop or signal control), and the number of vehicles turning against pedestrians. Where available, updated traffic data was used to recalculate the intersection Safety Index that originally supported the placement of a crossing guard, to confirm if a crossing guard placement was still warranted.

PD incorporated real time traffic and pedestrian behavior along with field assessments. PD's assessment took into account pedestrian counts of all intersections conducted in October 2018 and current pedestrian and traffic dynamics. PD considered factors such as number of lanes,

³ Link to 2018-2019 Mid-Year Budget Review: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/82263>

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speed limits, speed traveled regardless of posted speed limits, partner work required to assist pedestrians across varying legs of crosswalks, safety factors for crossing guards and pedestrians, substitute guards, unprotected left turns and rolling right turns.

PD and DOT's assessments together provides a strong staffing recommendation for each intersection based on varying safety needs and concerns at every intersection. Based on this analysis, it is recommended that ongoing crossing guard staffing be increased from 199 positions to 252 positions across the 121 staffed intersections. The number of staffed intersections will remain the same. This recommendation is reflected in the 2019-2020 Proposed Operating Budget⁴, which proposes the addition of 9.50 school crossing guard FTEs, bringing the total number of crossing guards to 44.67 FTEs (or 252 positions.) City Council approval of the 2019-2020 Proposed Operating Budget would bring the program into alignment. As needed, PD and DOT will further evaluate existing staffing levels in respects to changing traffic/safety conditions and may bring forward requests in future budget actions as needed.

Ongoing Program Management and Coordination

PD has established practices that will ensure that program staffing remains in alignment with the budget. The Department has worked with the City Manager's Budget Office to develop a methodology for converting crossing guard FTEs shown in the budget into an actual number of crossing guard positions (the position numbers quoted in the preceding section are the product of this methodology.) In order to more precisely manage the program's personnel budget, program staff will also better monitor the number of hours crossing guards work, in addition to the number of crossing guards employed by the program. There are a number of factors that make hours worked an important tool for managing the program. For example, although the program currently employs 236 crossing guards, only 229 guards worked hours the last pay period. There are also instances when a guard may work a double shift to backfill as a substitute for a guard that is on leave if the schedules allow. Use of sick leave can also affect the program budget. By monitoring hours worked and carefully managing the program budget, staff will ensure that staffing levels remain in alignment with the budget.

PD will also continuously monitor intersection staffing needs. Requests for new intersections to be staffed will continue through the existing process. The process begins when a school submits an intersection staffing request to SSEU. After the request is received, SSEU explains how the school can conduct an initial pedestrian count. After the school conducts the initial count, SSEU will conduct a field analysis and second pedestrian count. If the intersection meets minimum criteria, SSEU will notify DOT that the location should undergo a Safety Index Study. If the intersection meets a safety index score of 120 or greater, the intersection will be placed on a wait list based on Safety Index number.

Consistent with past practice, program staff will conduct pedestrian counts every October at staffed intersections to evaluate if any intersections are underutilized. If a given intersection does not meet the minimum criteria, then staffing resources may be reallocated to a new intersection

⁴ Link to 2019-2020 Proposed Operating Budget: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?nid=6338> ; School Crossing Guard proposal is on page VIII-332, item #5

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from the wait list described above. PD and DOT will meet on an annual basis, after PD conducts its October assessments, to review intersections that have closed and evaluate if there is a need to adjust staffing levels. Coordinating efforts between PD and DOT will ensure that both the field perspectives and the traffic engineering perspective are considered. The continued coordinated analysis can provide staffing level recommendations for current and ongoing needs.

Innovative Hiring Strategies

Currently, the program is operating with 236 part-time Crossing Guards. In order to get to 252 part-time guards (if those positions are approved as part of the 2019-2020 Budget Process) SSEU will open recruitment and focus on hiring throughout the summer to start the 2019-2020 school year off with higher staffing numbers and continue recruitment year-round. Due to the sizeable staff that SSEU employs, ongoing recruitment efforts are necessary to account for attrition. Recruitment strategies will include online job postings, flyers, signs posted in strategic locations where staffing is needed, community events and school functions, among others. All crossing guards are required to clear a police background, which requires more time than traditional part-time, unbenefited positions. SSEU will therefore resume recruitment efforts immediately, based on the Council's budget approval.

COUNCIL PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop new and innovative strategies to hire School Crossing Guards.

As mentioned above and described in detail in the staff memorandum for the October 2018 Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee meeting, SSEU staff has developed a diverse set of innovative hiring strategies that will assist the program in getting to full staffing. SSEU staff has also worked with the City Manager's Budget Office and DOT to develop a proposal as part of the 2019-2020 Proposed Operating Budget that, if adopted by the City Council, will bring program staffing into alignment with the budget on an ongoing basis. If the City Council approves the crossing guard budget proposal as part of the 2019-2020 Adopted Operating Budget, staff will consider Policy Priority #22 to be complete.

COORDINATION

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

/s/

EDGARDO GARCIA
Chief of Police

For questions, please contact Police Captain Mike Kihmm at (408) 537-1890.