



# Memorandum

**TO:** RULES AND OPEN  
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Vice Mayor Chappie Jones  
Councilmember David Cohen  
Councilmember Pam Foley  
Mayor Sam Liccardo

**SUBJECT:** SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

**DATE:** October 19, 2022

*David Cohen* *Sam Liccardo* *Chappie Jones* *Pam Foley*

Approved

Date 10/19/2022

## RECOMMENDATION

1. Direct the City Manager to expand traffic safety programs to prioritize Safe Routes to School to deliver the following outcomes:
  - a. Request that the Vision Zero Task Force incorporate safe routes to school and safety near school sites into their work plan. As deemed appropriate, the Vision Zero Task Force may establish subcommittees or hold additional meetings for school safety.
  - b. Accelerate filling vacancies for budgeted school crossing guard positions by investigating hiring incentives and engaging school communities to find applicants.
  - c. Provide quantitative and qualitative metrics that measure the success of the program.
  - d. Identify and pursue competitive grant programs at the regional, state or federal level that can support expansion of traffic safety programs - and ultimately sustain these efforts.
  - e. Bring forward recommendations on how to streamline the process for implementing speed humps near schools, including evaluating opportunities to leverage the pavement program. Present the costs and anticipated impact of, as one option for consideration, an annual citywide deployment of dozens of speed humps near elementary and middle schools, starting with the most hazardous schools for walking or biking students.
  - f. Provide the method and schedule by which to update the Council with status.
2. Direct the City Manager to prepare recommendations for budget actions that can be taken in the FY 23-24 budget process, and beyond, to make the systemic changes to the City's Traffic Safety Program that will increase the program's reach to be able to support every school district in San Jose. If there are immediate opportunities and or critical needs to improve traffic safety near schools, staff should bring those forward for Council consideration at the Mid-year budget review.
3. Direct the Police Chief in collaboration with the City Manager to investigate ways to increase enforcement and education of traffic regulations at schools.

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### **BACKGROUND**

The 2022-23 school year is shaping up to be a return to normal for schools throughout Santa Clara County. At this point in the school year, many requests have been received from residents and school leaders to enforce speed limits around schools and the routes students use to get to and from school.

The traffic fatality of a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader walking to Castlemont Elementary School on September 16<sup>th</sup> is a heartbreaking tragedy for our City. Though rare in the City of San José, this is not the first time our community has experienced this kind of devastating loss. We commend the efforts of our Police who have stepped up enforcement patrols around schools in the aftermath, as well as our Department of Transportation staff that have worked to improve the visibility of the crosswalks around Castlemont Elementary School. One loss of this magnitude is unacceptable. We must commit to taking a proactive and holistic approach to expand the reach of our School Safety program.

The authors of this memorandum appreciate the limitations of our lean city staff and the priorities that have already been established through committee and council direction. We do not intend to be prescriptive in direction in this memorandum, rather we ask that the subject matter experts who comprise the Vision Zero Taskforce commit to gathering as needed to:

- a) Generate solutions that will improve pedestrian safety for children and their parents/guardians as they travel to and from school, including but not limited to, road improvements near schools.
- b) Create a multi-phased workplan that will allow the implementation of these solutions and recommend the metrics by which we can monitor success.
- c) Define the budget and resource requirements that will be needed make the systemic changes to our programs.

Additionally, it is not the intention of the authors of this memorandum to shift focus away from Priority Safety Corridors and other priorities established under the Vision Zero Action Plan adopted in January 2020. However, we must acknowledge that schools can't do it alone, and neither can the City of San José. We need to break down the silos of local agencies and work in unity to deliver the improvements we seek.

To protect children from traffic accidents on their way to and from school will take a commitment from the City of San José to not just make short-term improvements, but to ongoing enforcement and monitoring which will likely require additional funding. We should begin the conversations and prioritization of the City's budget at the Mid-Year Budget Review and in the FY 23-24 budget process that begins in March with the Mayor's Budget message and prepare to continue these conversations in subsequent fiscal year budgets.