

DATE ISSUED: September 23, 2002 REPORT NO. 02-216

ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
Agenda of

SUBJECT: School Pedestrian Safety Guidelines Manual and Council Policy Update

REFERENCE: Manager's Report No. 80-217, Dated May 12, 1980; PS&NS Hearing of
September 26, 2001

SUMMARY

Issues - Should the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services (PS&NS) Committee:

1. Recommend that staff continue work on the School Pedestrian Safety Guidelines Manual and Council Policy?
2. Recommend that staff to seek input from the Community Planning Groups, the Community Planners Committee (CPC), Community Planners Advisory Committee on Transportation (COMPACT), and the Committee for the Removal of Architectural Barriers (SCRAB) on the proposed update to the School Pedestrian Safety Guidelines Manual and Council Policy?
3. Recommend that staff to return to PS&NS in 6 months with a final draft of the School Pedestrian Safety Guidelines Manual and Council Policy?

Staff Recommendation – Recommend that staff continue work on the School Pedestrian Safety Guidelines Manual and Council Policy.

In addition, direct staff to seek input from Community Planning Groups, the CPC, COMPACT, and SCRAB on the proposed Manual and Policy. Finally, recommend that staff return to PS&NS in six months with the final draft of the School Pedestrian Safety Guidelines Manual and Council Policy for consideration and recommendation to the City Council.

Fiscal Impact – Measures proposed in the Policy could be implemented over a 10-year period and would require an increase to the Transportation Department's budget. Additionally, funding would be needed on an annual basis to install street improvements aimed at improving school traffic safety.

BACKGROUND

On September 26, 2001, the PS&NS Committee directed the City Manager to update the School Pedestrian Safety Guidelines Manual that was last updated in 1980 (Attachment 1). The Committee also recommended developing a new Council Policy based on the Manual, to provide comprehensive guidelines for maintaining and improving school pedestrian safety and improved vehicular access and pedestrian and bicycle mobility around schools (Attachment 2). As part of the strategy, staff was directed to consider key issues such as revisions to the vehicle code, new school siting criteria along with traffic calming measures.

PS&NS further recommended that a task force with representatives from the Police, Transportation and Planning Departments along with members of the Safe Routes Coalition, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and local school district representatives be developed to update both the Pedestrian Safety Guidelines Manual and develop the new Council Policy. The task force was formed in October 2001, and worked together to evaluate school pedestrian and traffic safety measures embodied in the draft Pedestrian Safety Guidelines Manual and Council Policy.

DISCUSSION

The Pedestrian Safety Guidelines Manual would serve as a companion guide and a reference to the proposed Council Policy and is a technical document based on federal and state guidelines and legislation. The Manual was created to consolidate under one cover all policies, warrants, and practices for better reference and coordination between affected departments and agencies. It also addresses the responsibilities of the affected school, parents, Police and Transportation Departments. The Manual is based on proven methods and recommendations for traffic safety improvements that stem from a combination of education, enforcement, engineering and community planning principles.

Education techniques include "defensive walking" instructions for both school children and parents. It also covers educational activities at the beginning of the school year and the training and supervision of children who volunteer to serve in the School Safety Patrol. The education techniques continue the Police Department's role in coordinating a School Safety Patrol Program throughout the City. This safety program involves coordination of school traffic safety activities with all the school districts and authorities within City boundaries.

Enforcement techniques are effective in reaching chronic traffic violators among motorists and pedestrians. Engineering techniques provide a number of strategies and countermeasures to improve pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorist safety and mobility. Community planning techniques involve appropriate siting of new schools in neighborhoods as well as the placement of key facilities, such as student drop-off and pick-up zones and school entrances.

The purpose of the proposed **Council Policy** is to provide a comprehensive set of guidelines for maintaining and improving school pedestrian safety and improved vehicular access and mobility around schools. The three main elements of the proposed Council Policy include Planning and Design, Traffic Operations, Education and Advocacy.

The Planning and Design section of the Council Policy addresses new school site planning and design that focuses primarily on the linkages between schools, the neighborhood and its facilities and activity centers. Further, recommendations embodied in the Policy include a discussion on the development of pedestrian and bicycle routes to determine the location of the school entrance as well as bus drop-off and on-site parking areas. Further, the planning portion of the Policy recommends that improvements to infrastructure, such as sidewalks, curb and gutter, curb ramps as well as bicycle lanes and striping be analyzed to determine if improvements would be necessary to improve the safety of school children, bicyclists and other pedestrians

The Traffic Operations portion of the Policy delegates to the Police and Transportation Departments the joint responsibility of evaluating, coordinating and implementing traffic control devices, signs and markings, and sufficient level of physical facilities along the school walking routes and adjacent to school. These traffic measures are intended to address the needs of pedestrian and bicycle safety, school walking routes, crossings along school walking routes, school traffic circulation, and student drop-off and pick up zones.

A strategy for School Safety Advocacy was developed with assistance from Children's Hospital Center for Healthier Communities and is reflected in both the Guidelines and Council Policy. This strategy is based on the successful model for Euclid Elementary School in City Heights. The model will be used to form parent and teacher advocacy groups at schools with the purpose of providing a forum to discuss pedestrian safety issues related to each specific school site, and facilitating a process for communication with the most appropriate City or School District agencies.

CONCLUSION

The proposed Council Policy and Guidelines Manual would outline broad principles for the City to follow when managing and enforcing traffic regulations around schools and would also be for the siting, planning and design of new school sites within the City. The strategies for improving planning and siting, traffic management, and advocacy will result in a comprehensive approach to pedestrian and traffic safety. The proposed Guidelines and Policy will also allow the City in partnership with the affected school districts to face the challenges of safe access to and from new schools in the future.

Staff should also continue working with the agencies and institutions and distribute the proposed draft Manual and Council Policy to the community planning groups and all other interested parties for review and recommendation and return in 6 months to the PS&NS Committee.

To effectively implement this Policy, staff recommends establishing an annual allocation in the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) program where funds can be used to install identified street

improvements aimed at improving school traffic safety. The level of funding is at the discretion of the City Manager. Under this CIP fund, school districts may submit projects for consideration by the Advocacy Group to compete with other projects based on merit, matching fund commitments, and available funding.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Modify the recommendation proposed by staff for the School Pedestrian Safety Guidelines Manual and Council Policy.
2. Do not recommend that staff continue work on the School Pedestrian Safety Guidelines Manual and Council Policy.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments: 1. [Draft Council Policy](#)
2. [Draft School Pedestrian Safety Guidelines Manual](#)