


CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

Date: December 12, 2011

To: Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395, City Hall
Attention: Honorable Bill Rosendahl, Chair, Transportation Committee

From: Jaime de la Vega, General Manager
Department of Transportation 

Subject: **SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN & CITYWIDE
SCHOOL SAFETY ASSESSMENT STUDY (C.F. 08-1751-S1, 11-0333,
and 11-1872)**

SUMMARY

This report recommends hiring a full-time pedestrian coordinator and assistant coordinator at the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT).

The report also presents a draft Safe Routes to School strategic plan that will be finalized by the proposed pedestrian coordinator.

A follow-up report will recommend priority public schools for pedestrian safety improvements.

RECOMMENDATION

1. DIRECT and AUTHORIZE the Los Angeles Department of Transportation to hire a full-time pedestrian coordinator and a full-time assistant coordinator on contract at a combined cost not-to-exceed \$250,000 annually utilizing funds previously appropriated into Measure R LR Fund No. 51Q/94, "Safe Routes to School Study" account in FY 2010-2011.
2. AUTHORIZE the City Administrative Officer and Controller to make technical adjustments as needed to implement the intent of this report.

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CITY CLERK

DISCUSSION**Collision Risks & Youth Safety**

In the City of Los Angeles, the school age population suffers the highest number of pedestrian collisions and collision rates. Children ages 5 to 9 and adults ages 20 to 49 are most frequently involved in pedestrian-related collisions. Children ages 9 and younger accounted for the largest group of pedestrians involved in collisions, about 18% of all collisions. The younger, school age pedestrians (5 to 14) experienced the highest collision rates: a rate of 114 collisions per 100,000 capita for the 5 to 9 age group, and 112 collisions per 100,000 capita for the 10 to 14 age group.

Pedestrian Coordinator

To effectively improve pedestrian safety, a dedicated, full-time pedestrian coordinator is needed. However, given the city's current budget situation, it is recommended that the pedestrian coordinator be hired on a contract basis through a competitive selection process. This approach also is recommended because the position requires specialized expertise that does not exist among current LADOT staff. The City Council previously used this approach when launching the bicycle coordinator position, which later was converted to a permanent city staff position at LADOT.

A variety of expertise in planning, engineering, design, networking, outreach, geographic information system (GIS) data mapping and analysis, etc. is required for the development of the strategic plan. The proposed pedestrian coordinator position would be responsible for developing the plan. He or she also would be responsible for pedestrian facilities planning and implementation.

LADOT envisions executing a three-year contract with the selected pedestrian coordinator, with two one-year extensions. This term is recommended to demonstrate the city's commitment to pedestrian safety and because plan development and implementation will take more than one year.

Safe Routes to School Funding

The pedestrian coordinator will help develop a data-driven methodology for school project selection because state and federal agencies are emphasizing this approach when approving discretionary safety funding. This approach will make the city more competitive when seeking future state and federal funds.

To date, the city has received \$23.7 million (5.5%) of all Safe Routes to School (SRS) funds.

SRS Funding	Total Statewide Funding	City of Los Angeles Funding	Percent of Statewide Total
State - Cycles 1 to 9	\$266.0 million	\$17.43 million	6.6%
Federal - Cycles 1 to 3	\$162.4 million	\$6.29 million	3.9%
Total	\$428.4 million	\$23.72 million	5.5%

Caltrans is expected to announce in December the call for projects for two grant programs—Cycle 5 of the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and the Cycle 10 of the state's Safe Routes to School program. The expected deadline to submit applications is possibly as early as March, 2012.

Road Map to School Safety

The pedestrian coordinator will finalize the attached "Road Map to School Safety" (Exhibit A) which describes the draft strategic plan for the city's Safe Routes to School work. The overarching goal is to make walking and bicycling to school safer for students in the City of Los Angeles.

FISCAL IMPACT

Measure R Local Return funds allocated in Fiscal Year 2010-2011 for the preparation of the Safe Routes to School Assessment Study in the amount of \$1,261,000 (C.F. 11-0333) is available to fund the pedestrian coordinator and assistant coordinator and to reimburse the General Fund for other city staff time spent on this project. There will be no impact to the General Fund and no additional funds need to be appropriated at this time.

BACKGROUND

On June 30, 2010, the City Council (C.F. No. 08-1751-S1) directed LADOT and the Bureau of Street Services to report on how to develop a comprehensive citywide approach for future state and federal SRS grant funds. Such funds allow the city to strategically focus on projects at schools with the greatest needs.

On April 1, 2011, the City Council (C.F. No. 11-0333) adopted several recommendations concerning the preparation of a SRS study. The Council authorized an appropriation of \$1,261,000 in Measure R Local Return funds for conducting a SRS assessment study (study). The City Council instructed the Chief Legislative Analyst to establish a working group that includes LADOT, Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles Unified School District, and non-profit and advocacy groups to provide input on the city's study as it progresses, and to include socio-economic factors in addition to collision data in the study. The City Council also instructed LADOT to coordinate its efforts relative to the preparation of the city's Safe Routes to School Assessment Study with Council offices.

On November 1, 2011, a Council motion (C.F. No. 11-1872) was introduced which proposed to authorize the establishment of a pedestrian coordinator position in LADOT to oversee and lead the development of a SRS strategic plan and serve as the point person for all pedestrian infrastructure and program development efforts in the city.

JTV:PC

Attachments

Exhibit A: Road Map to School Safety

EXHIBIT A

ROAD MAP TO SCHOOL SAFETY ***Preliminary Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan for Los Angeles***

December 12, 2011

INTRODUCTION

With the approval of new Measure R transportation funds in 2008, Los Angeles is poised to make a positive, lasting impact to the Los Angeles transportation network. Although much work has been done in the realm of rail and vehicular improvements, no comprehensive plan exists to prioritize and recommend improvements for Measure R funds set aside for pedestrian improvements.

The purpose of developing a "Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan" (plan) is to create an overall program to enhance school safety--specifically for school children walking and bicycling to school. This includes strategies and recommendations for how to transform the pedestrian infrastructure in Los Angeles. Implementation will require coordination among various city departments and non-city agencies as well as with stakeholders.

The plan must be data driven and have specific goals and outcomes identified, both for infrastructure and non-infrastructure measures. The capital improvements and non-capital programs both must be implemented to ensure success of the overall program.

PEDESTRIAN COLLISIONS

As noted in LADOT's report, *Pedestrian Collisions In Los Angeles 1994 through 2000*, the school age population in the City suffers the highest number of pedestrian collisions and collision rates:

- Children ages 5 to 9 and adults ages 20 to 49 are most frequently involved in pedestrian-related collisions.
- Children ages 9 and younger accounted for the largest group of pedestrians involved in collisions, about 18% of all collisions.
- The younger, school age pedestrians (5 to 14) experienced the highest collision rates: a rate of 114 collisions per 100,000 capita for the 5 to 9 age group, and 112 collisions per 100,000 capita for the 10 to 14 age group.

Age Groups (Years)	Population (L.A. 2000)	Pedestrians involved in a collision	Collision Rate (per 100,000)
0-4	285,976	192	67.1
5-9	297,837	339	113.8
10-14	255,604	285	111.5
15-19	251,632	240	95.4
20-29	638,949	501	78.4
30-39	644,779	498	77.2
40-49	508,091	460	90.5
50-59	339,160	319	94.1
60-69	213,145	193	90.6
70-79	166,066	166	100.0
80-89	78,214	77	98.5
90-99	14,704	10	68.01
100-109	643	1	155.52
>110	20	0	0
Unknown	0	39	0
Total	3,694,820	3,320	--

Source: "Pedestrian Collisions In Los Angeles 1994 through 2000" report, LADOT, page 28, Table 28.

FUNDING HISTORY

To date, the city has received \$23.7 million (5.5%) of all Safe Routes to School (SRS) funds.

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OPPORTUNITY

By focusing on schools with the most collisions, the city is aligning its strategic priorities with the evaluation criteria being used by state and federal agencies that award funds. This should result in the city securing more funding in future funding cycles. It also is a rational, needs-based approach to deploying limited city staff resources.

GOALS

In all of its policymaking, planning, and implementation actions, the city should strive toward two overarching principles regarding the safety and quality of life of school children: (1) no child shall be injured or killed by a vehicle while walking or bicycling to school; and (2) increase the number of students walking and bicycling to school.

The citywide Safe Routes to School program should include the following strategic goals:

- Goal 1 Create a strategic and comprehensive Safe Routes to School plan for the City of Los Angeles that is data driven.
- Goal 2 Increase communication and build strong partnerships between city agencies, LAUSD, and stakeholders for Safe Routes to School projects and programs.
- Goal 3 Align, dedicate, and organize the City of Los Angeles workforce to increase its efficiency and effectiveness in developing, funding, and implementing Safe Routes to School projects.
- Goal 4 Formulate a strategy to fund and implement the Safe Routes to School plan, taking advantage of all potential transportation or non-transportation funding sources and opportunities for implementation by related projects.

Goal 1: Create a strategic Safe Routes to School Plan for the City of Los Angeles that is data-driven.

Objectives:

- 1A. Establish a prioritized list of schools citywide—"Safe Routes to School Ranked List of Schools"—based on traffic safety needs at public schools. Also prepare an informational prioritized listing of schools in each Council District using the same criteria. The first phase shall consist of establishing a prioritized list of the top 100 public schools with the greatest safety needs. Additional phases will follow, subject to availability of funding and staffing. Prioritize need based primarily on collisions and other safety data, and consider further screening using walking/biking student population, socio-economic factors, etc.
- 1B. Prepare a safety countermeasures tool box and a report for each school identified in the Safe Routes to School Ranked List of Schools. The first phase shall include reports for schools in the list of top 100 public schools with the greatest safety needs. The reports shall consider and incorporate the objectives of existing city plans and policies (e.g., Bicycle Plan, Community Plans, and other General Plan elements, etc.) and innovations supported by studies. The final school reports will contain (1) specific recommendations and cost estimates for

Road Map to School Safety

infrastructure and non-infrastructure needs and be ready to build to the degree possible; (2) baseline data and measurements for future evaluations; (3) documentation of prior safety improvements and grants awarded; and (4) documentation of community engagement and outreach; (5) an updated GIS-based Pedestrian Routes to School Map for each of the 100 schools.

- 1C. Prepare GIS-based data and tool for easy matching of the schools and proposed countermeasures with projects, programs, and other opportunities.
- 1D. Develop a template for non-infrastructure Safe Routes to School educational / engagement and encouragement programs that can be utilized by parents, teachers, school administration, and community groups to initiate education and encouragement programs at their local schools. Review and update the format and content of the Pedestrian Routes to School Maps, to enhance usage and readability for parents and students.
- 1E. Develop a policy framework for a Safe Route to School Program. The framework should take into consideration existing city plans, existing or potential legislation, joint policies with LAUSD, etc. The policy framework should include goals, objectives, and programs.

Goal 2: Establish cooperative partnerships with and improve communication between City agencies, LAUSD, community based organizations, and stakeholders, to support a successful Safe Routes to School Program and projects.

Objectives:

- 2A. Establish a citywide Safe Routes to School task force that includes key partners, including city agencies (e.g., LADOT, Planning, BSS, BOE, BSL, Police, CRA), LAUSD, School Police, PTA groups, community-based organizations, representatives of Neighborhood Councils, elected officials, etc.), and other interested persons/stakeholders. LADOT will serve as the lead agency for the task force, and will collaborate with existing partners (Safe Routes to School National Partnership and other non-profit community based organizations) on outreach and facilitation of the task force. Establish smaller working groups as needed to help address the five E's: education, encouragement, evaluation, enforcement, and engineering. Utilize the task force to maximize resources, discover what projects/groups are being worked on by various agencies or groups, and to coalesce support for grant applications.
- 2B. Develop a Safe Routes to School website, which will serve as a depository of public information on the Safe Routes to School Program and projects for all stakeholders.

Goal 3: Evaluate and improve on city staff resources and work procedures to ensure successful funding applications and cost-effective and timely delivery of projects.

Objectives:

- 3A. Hire a dedicated Safe Routes to School / Pedestrian Coordinator to foremost work on the Safe Routes to School Plan (Goal 1) and the outreach/coordination objectives (Goal 2), and to also serve as the point person for Safe Routes to School / pedestrian efforts within the city.
- 3B. Align, dedicate, and organize the City of Los Angeles workforce to increase efficiency and effectiveness in developing, funding, and implementing Safe Routes to School projects, especially in the larger context of Complete Streets policies for the city as they are developed. Concentrate pedestrian, bikeways, and transit related staffing in the same work unit for better collaboration on planning, grant applications, and implementation. Ensure that future budget and staffing proposals give utmost consideration for maintaining and/or increasing the average staff capacity to at least that specified for major cities.
- 3C. Evaluate and make recommendations for integration of Complete Streets concepts into city standards for street design and pedestrian/bicycle facilities, to achieve greater safety conditions, effectiveness, cost efficiency, innovation, user-friendliness, etc. Standardize cost estimating procedures used by City agencies.
- 3D. Develop a GIS-based citywide Safe Routes to School project tracking tool for easy integration with other GIS tools used by the city, including Navigate LA.

STAFFING NEEDS

In order to fulfill the above objectives, expertise from the areas of engineering, planning, community outreach, and GIS is needed. While engineering tasks may be performed by existing staff, it is clear that additional support and expertise is needed, which should be provided through a full-time pedestrian coordinator.

Also, retaining a dedicated pedestrian coordinator for the long term (beyond the immediate objective to develop the Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan) is a critical step in supporting the mobility and accessibility goals for all users, and would be viewed as a solid commitment to pedestrian safety from the perspective of the public and the State/Federal agencies that are awarding grants.

CURRENT EFFORTS

With the availability of designated Measure R funds for this purpose, LADOT is proceeding with the first phase of the Safe Routes to School assessment study, identifying 100 top priority schools based on collisions and other safety data, and consider further screening using walking/biking student population at the school, as well as socio-economic factors. Additional phases will follow, subject to availability of funding and staffing.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

The following is a preliminary schedule for the critical tasks and significant event dates ahead, based on estimated dates (subject to change):

Task	Start Date	Completion Date
Caltrans announces State Safe Routes to School Cycle 10 Call for Projects.	---	December 2011
Caltrans announces Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program Cycle 5 Call for Projects.	---	December 2011
Establish a recommended Safe Routes to School Ranked List of Schools—Phase 1 Top 100 Schools.	January 2012	January 2012
Hire pedestrian coordinator.	January 2012	March 2012
Hire assistant pedestrian coordinator.	January 2012	March 2012
Develop and submit applications for state Safe Routes to School Cycle 10 Call for Projects (estimated due date--March 2012).	January 2012	March 2012
Develop and submit applications for federal Highway Safety Improvement Program Cycle 5 Call for Projects (estimated due date--April 2012).	January 2012	April 2012
International Walk to School Day	---	October 3, 2012
Prepare school reports for each of 100 school identified in the Safe Routes to School Ranked List of Schools—Phase 1 Top 100 Schools.	March 2012	March 2013
Prepare a non-infrastructure Safe Routes to School education strategy and program.	March 2012	March 2013