



CITY OF OAKLAND

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# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Sabrina B. Landreth  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Ryan Russo  
Director, OakDOT

**SUBJECT:** School Pedestrian Safety  
Programs and Strategies

**DATE:** October 9, 2017

City Administrator Approval

Date:

11/2/17

## RECOMMENDATION

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive A Supplemental Informational Report On City Efforts To Improve Pedestrian Safety Around Schools.**

## REASON FOR SUPPLEMENTAL

This supplemental informational report is prepared in response to a request made by the Public Works Committee at the June 13, 2017 committee meeting regarding the City's programs, strategies, resources, partnerships, and needs for improving pedestrian safety around schools.

The Committee specifically requested information about: 1) schools that have not participated in the ongoing school site assessments; 2) funding sources/opportunities for schools that have had site assessments; 3) schools that have had site assessments that have not been funded; and 4) overall funding needs for school safety improvements. In addition to providing the requested information, this report will describe the City's overall strategy for improving pedestrian safety around schools.

## BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The informational report presented to the Public Works Committee on June 13, 2017 focused on the award history and the future application strategies for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS)/Active Transportation Program (ATP) grants for capital improvements. The report noted that an important part of the SRTS/ATP application process is the school site assessment. A school site assessment is a "walk audit" for a school or a cluster of schools that occurs during student arrival times in the morning. The assessment notes the conditions of the sidewalks, roadways, drop off zones, signs, crosswalks, driving behavior, and other elements that combine to help make school areas safer for pedestrians. The assessments are funded and managed by the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) and attended by the Department of Transportation (OakDOT), parents and students, advocacy organizations, the Police Department (OPD), the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), and elected officials. The assessments are most effective when joint solutions are developed in partnership with members of these groups. Safety improvements recommended by the site assessment team are further

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evaluated by City engineers and planners for specific applicability to the site and for cost effectiveness. These recommendations are then considered for competitive grant applications and inclusion in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget.

From 2008 to 2017, 37 Oakland schools have been assessed out of a total of 123 public schools. Of the 37 schools assessed, 18 have received grant funding for the construction of improvements, eight have received Measure KK allocation, seven are pending final recommendations of improvements, and four did not require additional funding for improvements.

## **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

### *The Current School Safety Program*

The City's ongoing work to improve pedestrian safety around schools consists of two core components: 1) coordinating with County-led site assessments and 2) responding to individual school requests for improvements.

1) OakDOT participates in a countywide program by attending site assessments led by the ACTC. These site assessments engage interested and concerned parties to provide input on solutions. OakDOT builds from this input to plan, design and construct physical improvements. To date, site assessments have been conducted for 37 Oakland schools as a part of ACTC's Safe Routes to Schools Program. The program is open to any school in Alameda County that can identify a Safe Routes to School Champion (a parent or staff volunteer to lead encouragement events and coordinate with countywide efforts) and completes the registration form, available at [alamedacountysr2s.org](http://alamedacountysr2s.org). To date, 40 Oakland schools are enrolled in the program and 29 have had site assessments to identify preliminary improvements (an additional eight schools that are not enrolled in the program have received site assessments). Until now, ACTC selects schools for the site assessments and OakDOT participates in identifying solutions and takes over the design and the construction of the improvements. Going forward, ACTC plans to engage OakDOT more actively in the selection of schools for the site assessments.

The 40 Oakland schools below are enrolled in ACTC's SRTS's Program. Site assessments have been conducted for 29 of these schools; the 11 that have not are highlighted in bold.

1. Achieve Academy
2. **Alliance Academy (scheduled for the 2017-18 school year)**
3. ASCEND
4. Bella Vista Elementary
5. Bret Harte Middle
6. Bridges Academy
7. **Castlemont High School**
8. **Community United Elementary**
9. East Oakland PRIDE Elementary
10. Edna Brewer Middle School
11. Emerson Elementary

12. EnCompass Academy
13. Esperanza Elementary
14. Garfield Elementary
15. Glenview Elementary
16. Global Family Elementary School
17. International Community Elementary
18. Fred Korematsu Discovery Academy
19. Learning Without Limits/Jefferson Elementary
20. Lincoln Elementary School
21. Manzanita Community School
22. Manzanita Seed Elementary
23. Markham Elementary
24. Martin Luther King Jr., Elementary
- 25. McClymonds High**
26. Montclair Elementary
27. New Highland Academy
28. Oakland International High School
- 29. Oakland School for the Arts (scheduled for the 2017-18 school year)**
30. Oakland Technical High
- 31. Peralta Elementary**
- 32. Place@Prescott Elementary**
33. Reach Academy
- 34. Redwood Heights Elementary**
35. RISE Community School
- 36. Sankofa Academy**
37. Think College Now
38. United For Success Academy
- 39. Westlake Middle**
- 40. Yu Ming Charter School**

In addition, site assessments were conducted for the eight schools listed below which are not enrolled in the ACTC SRTS program. The total number of Oakland schools that have received a site assessment is 37.

1. Chabot Elementary
2. Fruitvale Elementary
3. Futures at Lockwood Elementary/Roots International Academy
4. Hillcrest Elementary
5. Laurel Elementary
6. Parker Elementary
7. Piedmont Elementary
8. Sobrante Park/Madison Park Academy

All 37 schools that have been site assessed have received safety recommendations. Low-cost improvements such as signing/striping or loading zone upgrades have been implemented by OakDOT staff; higher-cost improvements such as sidewalk extensions, traffic circles, raised median islands, and pedestrian crossing lights require grant or CIP funding. With the passage



of last November's Infrastructure Bond (Measure KK), \$2M has been allocated in FY 2017-19 to fund the higher-costs improvements. Combined with the recent SRTS/ATP award for Edna Brewer Middle School, all the recommended improvements from the 37 site assessments have been constructed or funded for construction.

The 11 schools that are enrolled in ACTC's SRTS program but have not received a site assessment are eligible for future assessments. Two from that list—Alliance Academy and Oakland School for the Arts—have been scheduled for the current school year. In the broader perspective, out of the 123 schools in Oakland (public and approved charter), 37 have received site assessments and 86 have not.

2) OakDOT responds to school needs. When a school representative, a parent, or an area resident makes a request to OakDOT for a safety investigation or improvement, the request is added to a list of previous requests. On average, a staff of one-half engineering full-time employee (FTE) works with 15 to 20 schools at a time, which results in a response time of several months. If the results of the investigation call for low-cost solutions such as crosswalks, traffic signs, loading zones, etc., they can be designed by the one-half engineering FTE and installed by in-house OakDOT crews. If the solution reaches a scope that requires further design and additional budget, it is set aside for upcoming funding opportunities such as grants or the CIP.

As part of this service, OakDOT also meets with OUSD's transportation coordinator and OPD's traffic division to coordinate on requests from schools. OUSD's role is primarily to assist OakDOT with communication and prioritization. OPD's role is primarily to provide enforcement and crossing guards.

#### *The Future School Safety Program*

OakDOT will continue to respond to individual requests from schools, parents, and residents to improve school pedestrian safety by coordinating with OPD and OUSD. As OakDOT builds its staff capacity, it will give school requests priority over other traffic safety requests by assigning one full-time engineer to respond to all school requests. Low-cost improvements will be completed by in-house staff and within the operating budget. High-cost improvements will be placed on the school priority list described below.

OakDOT will continue to participate in ACTC's SRTS site assessment program. However, the program is limited in its scope and breadth and the current school selection process is limited to schools that have the resources and dedication to participate proactively. OakDOT is developing a new prioritization model that works across divisions and with community partners to develop a more strategic approach to school transportation improvements. OakDOT will take a Vision Zero approach by prioritizing schools with the highest rates of severe and fatal crashes in their vicinity and an equity and health approach by prioritizing schools with the greatest needs and poorest health outcomes.

The prioritization model will rank all Oakland schools based on school zone crash history, equity (locations and conditions identified in Oakland's Communities of Concern<sup>1</sup>), and student health data. These factors will be weighted based on further discussions with inter-departmental and community partners. The resulting school priority list will recommend the order in which OakDOT funds identified high-cost treatments, conducts its own site assessments, and reaches out to other partners and programs such as the violence prevention strategies around schools launched by the Mayor's Director of Public Safety and the "Paint the Town" program which encourages community involvement and sense of ownership through designing and painting intersection murals. Combining these efforts can provide a better approach to solving safety and access issues for each school.

Additional City partners in improving school area safety include "Be Active Oakland Be Active", or BOBA. BOBA is a collaborative that includes multiple agencies and community-based organizations to advance school safety and support healthy, sustainable transportation to and from schools in Oakland. Participants include the following partners with the following roles:

- **Alameda County Public Health Department:** ACPHD manages the collaborative.
- **TransForm:** Transform is a non-profit based in Oakland, funded by ACTC, that has a SRTS team working with 40 schools in Oakland to do monthly encouragement events and annual events like Walk and Roll to School Day, bike rodeos, etc.
- **Oakland Police Department:** OPD spends (overtime) enforcement hours to conduct traffic enforcement around schools and manages the school crossing guard program.
- **American Automobile Association, ACPHD and OPD:** These partners support and fund a student safety patrol program.
- **Oakland Unified School District:** OUSD funds a Wellness Program that gives annual stipends of \$600 to \$700 to wellness champions for schools (can be a parent or a school staff). Walking safety is one of the areas a wellness champion may focus on for a school year.
- **Oakland DOT:** The newly formed OakDOT, as it builds staff capacity, is starting to get involved with BOBA.

Funding and resources for school safety improvements will continue to be managed by OakDOT through grant applications, CIP allocations (Infrastructure Bond and County Sales Tax fund assignments), partnerships in the BOBA collaborative, and joint efforts with other City work such as street paving, sidewalk repair, and streetscape improvements.

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<sup>1</sup> Identified by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission as communities in the Bay Area that face particular transportation challenges either because of affordability, disability, or age-related mobility limitations.

### **FISCAL / POLICY ALIGNMENT**

There are no direct fiscal impact or policy alignment issues from this informational report.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

There was no public outreach in the making of this informational report other than the posting on the City's website.

### **COORDINATION**

This informational report was prepared by the Department of Transportation.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

***Economic:*** There are no economic opportunities associated with this report.

***Environmental:*** There are no environmental opportunities associated with this report.

***Social Equity:*** The proposed prioritization of schools which takes into account socio-economic and health factors will enable schools that have not received attention in the past due to low crash statistics or advocacy to be more likely to receive the funding they need for significant safety improvements.

### **CEQA**


This information report is exempt from the environmental analysis requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because it has no potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff Recommends that the City Council:

Receive this informational report on Improving Pedestrian Safety Around Schools  
For questions regarding this report, please contact Joe Wang, Safe Streets Division, at (510) 238-6107.

Respectfully submitted,



Ryan Russo, Director  
Department of Transportation

Reviewed by:  
Wladimir Wlassowsky, P.E.  
Interim Assistant Director

Prepared by:  
Joe Wang, P.E.  
Supervising Transportation Engineer  
Safe Streets Division

Nicole Ferrara  
Vision Zero Program  
Great Streets Division