



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Edward D. Reiskin
City Administrator

FROM: Ryan Russo
Director, Oakland
Department of
Transportation

SUBJECT: Informational Report on the School
Crossing Guard Program

DATE: November 1, 2021

City Administrator Approval

Date: Nov 16, 2021

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report On The School Crossing Guards Program, Including Information On Which Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) Schools Have Guards, And How Many At Each School, As Well As The Number Of Guards Hired To-Date And The Number Needed To Be Hired To Fill Authorized Budgeted Levels.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This informational report is in response to a request from Councilmember Gallo made at the Rules and Legislation Committee on October 7, 2021. The City Administrator was directed to provide a report to City Council on the School Crossing Guards Program, including information on which Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) schools have guards, and how many at each school, as well as the number of guards hired to-date and the number needed to be hired to fill authorized budgeted levels. It also includes history on the School Crossing Guard Program budget, staffing, and recent transition in early 2021 from the Oakland Police Department (OPD) to the Oakland Department Of Transportation (OakDOT).

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The OakDOT School Crossing Guard Program (formerly managed by OPD until early 2021) is comprised of part-time employees under the supervision of the School Traffic Safety Supervisor in the Safe Streets Division of OakDOT. These Crossing Guards work during school days in two, two-hour shifts during the AM and PM drop off periods.

The primary responsibility of the Crossing Guards is to safely guide and protect pedestrians, specifically younger age students, across the street at strategic intersections, predominantly serving OUSD Elementary Schools. They work two shifts a day, two hours in the morning when students are arriving to school, and two hours in the afternoon, when students depart from school. Crossing Guards are trained to stop vehicular traffic to allow pedestrians to safely cross the street

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at their assigned intersections. OakDOT Crossing Guards wear highly visible traffic safety uniforms and carry an official STOP sign paddle. Crossing Guards also carry a whistle that is used before stepping into the intersections to alert oncoming vehicles that pedestrians will be entering the crosswalk. They ensure that all vehicles have recognized their alerts and are slowing down and coming to a stop before signaling pedestrians to cross. Crossing Guards are not authorized to direct the flow of vehicular traffic.

Since 2016, the School Crossing Guard Program has received funding that increased funded staff from a baseline of approximately 50 crossing guards to 75 crossing guards. **Table 1** summarizes the School Crossing Guard Program staffing and budget increases allocated and approved by City Council starting with baseline number of positions in 2016.

Table 1. School Crossing Guard Positions and Funding, 2016-Present

Budget Cycle	Crossing Guard Positions Funded	Positions Added	Funding Source	Budget Increase
Baseline (2016)	50	NA	Traffic Safety Fund	NA
FY2017-2019	58-60	8-10	Increase from Measure BB	~\$200K
FY2018-2019	71-75	13-15	Increase from Measure BB	~\$300K
FY2019-2021	71-75	NA	~\$400K of Funding Transferred from Traffic Safety Fund to Measure B/BB (No Increase)	NA
FY2021-2023	75	NA	Funding Maintained in Measure BB + Traffic Safety Fund	NA

From 2017 to 2020, OPD was actively hiring to staff the program, and by March of 2020 – right before schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, had reached a staffing number of 69 Crossing Guards. Starting in March 2020, Crossing Guards were placed on inactive status due to school closures during the pandemic.

Through Oakland’s Reimagining Public Safety Task Force, the School Crossing Guard Program was moved from OPD to OakDOT in the FY20-21 Mid-Cycle Budget. Staff were formally transferred from OPD to OakDOT in January 2021 when schools were still closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The School Crossing Guard Program is now a Section in OakDOT’s Safe Streets Division, headquartered out of Oakland’s Municipal Services Center at 7101 Edgewater Drive.

ANALYSIS/POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Staffing the School Crossing Guard Program in FY 2021-22 has been challenged by factors similar to other industries directly serving the public during a global pandemic and include school closures due to COVID-19 for over a year, staff concerns regarding engaging with the public during a pandemic, as well as an aging workforce in a job that requires people to be on their feet and active, vaccination requirement concerns, and individual changing priorities, needs or demands during the pandemic. When OUSD schools re-opened for six weeks of part-time in-person learning on April 19, 2021, the 60+ Crossing Guards who remained on inactive status a year later were called back to work. At that time, 49 Crossing Guards chose to be reactivated for post assignments that were 4 days a week due to revised school schedules (twice daily, 4 hours a day); the remaining guards chose to remain on inactive status or voluntarily resigned. When schools re-opened for regular session in August 2021, 50 Crossing Guards returned, covering 40 OUSD schools, with an additional 7 Crossing Guards on Inactive Status and expected to return to work by January 2022. As of October 25, 2021, staffing has been further reduced to 46 active Crossing Guards due to additional resignations, health issues, and one crossing guard that passed away. This information is now also posted in map format on OakDOT's newly created interactive map of active crossing guard posts, available at the following link and updated monthly: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/the-oakdot-crossing-guard-program>.

Now that the Crossing Guards are back at schools, OakDOT is focused on a significant hiring effort to re-staff the program with the funded staffing target of 75 Crossing Guards. In addition to referrals from existing Crossing Guards, new Crossing Guards are being recruited through OakDOT's new Crossing Guard webpage (<https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/the-oakdot-crossing-guard-program>) that is being shared in OakDOT press releases and on social media, with Council Offices, community stakeholders and community-based organizations, as well as through the OakDOT and OPW staff text notification system. As more Crossing Guards are hired, OakDOT is developing a prioritization approach to assign them to school posts informed by factors such as: whether a crossing guard had been assigned to a post at that school previously; school requests; crash history and high injury network proximity; traffic volumes, speeds, and pedestrian volumes at intersections immediately adjacent to the school; traffic safety factors including controlled/uncontrolled crossings; and equity considerations including student eligibility for free meals and student race/ethnicity.

The integration of the School Crossing Guard Program into OakDOT's Safe Streets Division in 2021 allows for increased coordination to address the traffic safety needs of Oakland schools. The School Traffic Safety Supervisor that oversees the School Crossing Guard Program as well as Oakland's Safety Patrol Program – a grant-funded, volunteer program focused on student leadership and pick-up/drop-off protocols in partnership with the Alameda County Department of Public Health - regularly meets with the OakDOT Traffic Engineering staff focused on school safety to inform and evolve a more coordinated approach to school traffic safety in support of Oakland's [Safe Oakland Streets initiative](#), which was presented to City Council in March 2021.

School Crossing Guarding Staffing in 2021

Fall 2021 (August-Present): When schools re-opened for regular session in August 2021, 50 Crossing Guards returned, covering 40 OUSD schools, with an additional 7 Crossing Guards on Inactive Status and expected to return to work by January 2022. As of October 25, 2021, staffing

has been further reduced to 46 active Crossing Guards due to additional resignations, health issues, and one crossing guard that passed away.

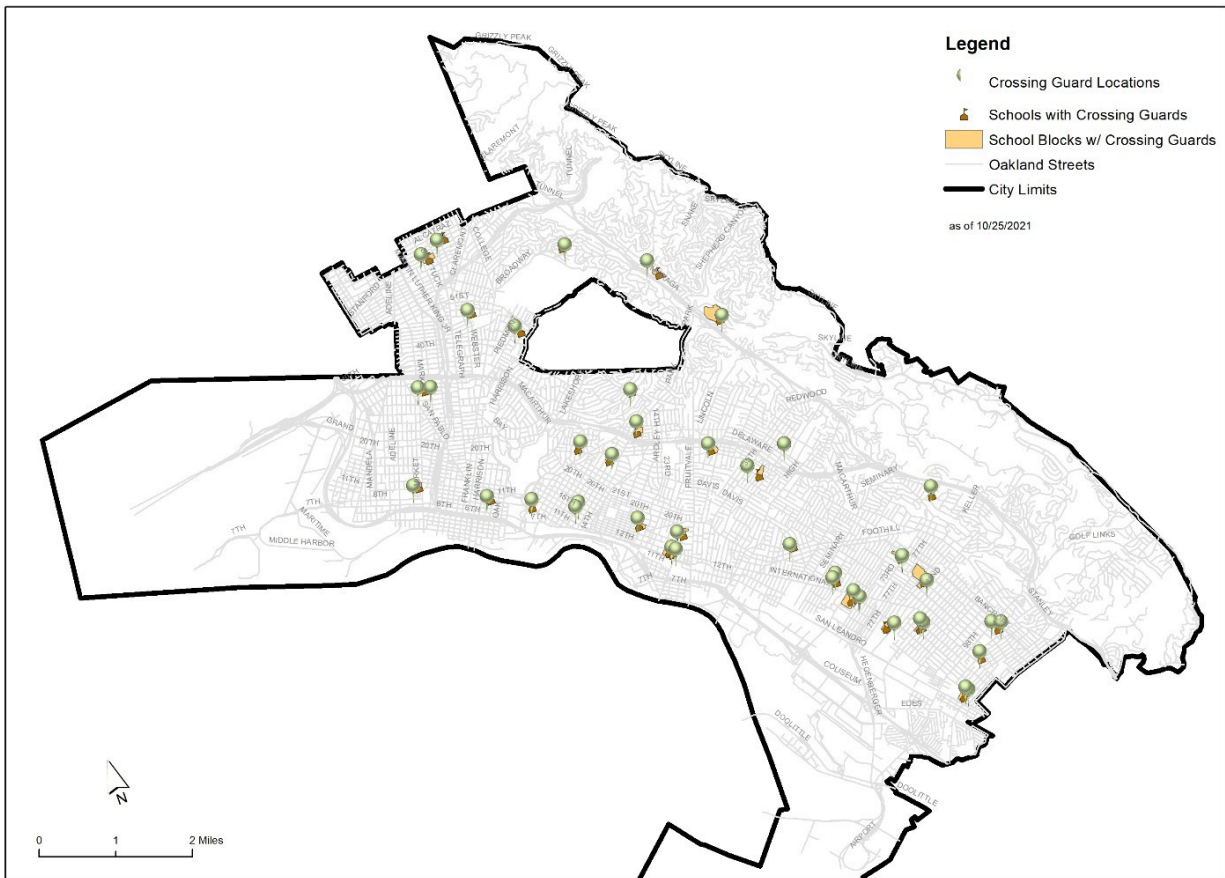
Table 2 below summarizes the 46 active Crossing Guard posts at 36 schools as of October 25, 2021, by school and post location, down from 69 active posts in March 2020.

School	Crossing Guard Location
Achieve (EFC)	28th Ave and E 17th
Acorn Woodland	81st Ave and Rudsdale
Allendale	Penniman (Allendale) and 35th
Aspire Monarch	100th Ave and Holly
Bella Vista	E 28th St and 11th Ave
Burkhalter	Sunnymere and Burckhalter
Cleveland	Cleveland and Montclair
Cox Academy (EFC) / REACH	98th and Sunnyside
Cox Academy (EFC) / REACH	98th and Sunnyside (2)
Cox Academy (EFC) / REACH	99th and Sunnyside
Crocker Highland	Herbert and Sunnyhill
East Oakland Pride (EOP)	81st Ave and Birch
Edna Brewer MS	Park Blvd and Park Blvd. Way
Edna Brewer MS	Park Blvd and Park Blvd. Way (2)
Emerson	Shafter and 48th
Esperanza / Korematsu Discovery Academy	104th and E St.
Esperanza / Korematsu Discovery Academy	103rd and E St.
Franklin	10th Ave and Foothill
Franklin	10th Ave and E 15th Street
Fruitvale	Boston and Pleasant
Garfield	22nd Ave and E 17th
Greenleaf	62nd Ave and Bromley
Greenleaf	62nd and E 17th
Hillcrest	Margurite and Hermosa
Hoover	West and Brockhurst
Hoover	Market and Brockhurst
Horace-Mann	Ygnacio and Vicksburg
International Community	28th Ave and International
Joaquin Miller	Ascot and Camino Lenada
La Escuelita	2nd Avenue and E 11th Street
Laurel	Patterson and Kansas
Lincoln	10th St and Alice
Lockwood (STEAM)	69th and Herbert Guice
Lockwood (STEAM)	69th and Herbert Guice (2)
Lockwood (STEAM)	67th Ave and Int'l
Markham	73rd and Krause
Markham	73rd and Krause (2)
Martin Luther King Jr.	10th St and Filbert
Montclair Elementary	Thornhill and Mountain
New Highland	86th and A Street
Peralta	63rd and Telegraph
Piedmont	Piedmont and Echo
Reach	Bancroft and Warner
Rise	85th and A Street
Sankofa	61st and Shattuck
Think College Now	29th Ave and International
EFC = Education For Change	

Please note that some post locations are represented more than once on the above table (as indicated with a (2) following the school name), as more than one crossing guard is assigned to the location based on transportation conditions to ensure the students' utmost safety.

The following map illustrates the schools and locations in Oakland with active Crossing Guard posts.

School Crossing Guard Locations, City of Oakland (2021-2022)



This information is also posted in map format on OakDOT's newly created interactive map of active crossing guard posts, available at the following link and updated monthly: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/the-oakdot-crossing-guard-program>.

2021 Crossing Guards Hiring Efforts: Now that OUSD is reopened and the Crossing Guards are back at schools, OakDOT is focused on a significant hiring effort to re-staff the program with the funded staffing target of 75 Crossing Guards. As of the writing of this report, seven people have completed applications for Crossing Guards and three more have been sent to interested applicants. Interviews for the first round of applicants are being scheduled for November/December 2021.

Crossing guards require background checks as they are working directly with children. OakDOT has been working with OPD and Human Resources to set up an account and obtain the authorized ability to conduct Level III background checks through the Department of Justice; this is a new step of the interview process for OakDOT employees.

In addition to referrals from existing Crossing Guards, new Crossing Guards are being recruited through OakDOT's new Crossing Guard webpage that is being shared in OakDOT press releases and on social media, with Council Offices, community stakeholders and community-based organizations, as well as in through the OakDOT and OPW staff text notification system.

Future Crossing Guard Assignments and Requests: The focus of the School Crossing Guard Program is OUSD Elementary Schools. There are currently approximately 80 OUSD Elementary Schools, including OUSD-approved charter schools. As more Crossing Guards are hired, OakDOT is developing a prioritization approach to assign them to school posts informed by factors such as: whether a crossing guard had been assigned to a post at that school previously; school requests; crash history and high injury network proximity; traffic volumes, speeds, and pedestrian volumes at intersections immediately adjacent to the school; traffic safety factors including controlled/uncontrolled crossings; and equity considerations including student eligibility for free meals and student race/ethnicity.

School staff who would like to request a Crossing Guard should submit the request along with their traffic safety concerns to OUSD Transportation Coordinator Kim Rainey, who works closely with OakDOT School Traffic Safety Supervisor Paul Cirolia to prioritize and respond to school transportation needs across the district. OakDOT and OUSD meet regularly to discuss school traffic safety concerns. The best way for a *parent, caregiver or resident* to elevate a traffic safety issue is to raise their concern with school officials, who will discuss them with OUSD transportation staff. As different parents may have different ideas about their school traffic needs, this process ensures that requests are consistent within and between schools and on the radar of school officials.

The integration of the School Crossing Guard Program into OakDOT's Safe Streets Division in 2021 allows for increased coordination to address the traffic safety needs of Oakland schools. The School Traffic Safety Supervisor that oversees the Crossing Guard program as well as Oakland's Safety Patrol Program – a grant-funded, volunteer program focused on student leadership and pick-up/drop-off protocols in partnership with the Alameda County Department of Public Health - regularly meets with the OakDOT Traffic Engineering staff focused on school safety to inform and evolve a more coordinated approach to school traffic safety in support of Oakland's [Safe Oakland Streets initiative](#), which was presented to City Council in March 2021. As OakDOT continues to implement targeted, permanent infrastructure improvements to slow speeds and increase safety citywide and including near schools, these improvements may reduce the need for crossing guards at some locations in the future.

FISCAL IMPACT

This item is for informational purposes only and does not have fiscal impacts.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

OakDOT staff are engaged with City Council Offices, the Mayor's Office, OUSD staff, parents and the public on an ongoing basis to respond to inquiries regarding the status of Crossing Guard program and requests for Crossing Guards. The City's webpage on the program, found here <https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/the-oakdot-crossing-guard-program>, was created to help with transparency regarding the program status as well as recruitment efforts.

COORDINATION

OakDOT coordinates with OUSD and individual schools regarding the location and safety of Crossing Guards.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The School Crossing Guard Program provides part-time employment for Oakland residents, employing adults, including seniors, who for a variety of reasons need and/or want part-time employment that allows them to engage with youth and support community safety.

Environmental: Crossing Guards support safe walking to schools, which is a sustainable alternative to driving with health and environmental benefits from increased physical activity and reduced air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from private vehicle trips.

Race & Equity: Crossing Guards promote safe access to schools for elementary students who rely on walking and public transit to access schools – including low-income students and students of color who in some cases are more reliant on those modes of travel. As described earlier in this report, OakDOT is working to develop a framework for Crossing Guard post assignment that will consider equity as a factor to ensure that the needs of low-income students and students of color are prioritized utilizing school-based data on student eligibility for free meals and race/ethnicity, in addition to other factors related to transportation safety conditions and school requests/crossing guard history. School Crossing Guard positions are part-time jobs that provide a stable income source and part-time employment to community members including seniors, caregivers who are only able to work during school hours, and other people looking to contribute to their community through ensuring safe passage by children to schools.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff recommends that the City Council Receive A Report On The School Crossing Guards Program, Including Information On Which OUSD Schools Have Guards, And How Many At Each School, As Well As The Number Of Guards Hired To Date And The Number Needed To Be Hired To Fill Authorized Budgeted Levels.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Megan Wier, Safe Streets Division Manager, at mwier@oaklandca.gov.

Respectfully submitted,



[Ryan Russo \(Nov 15, 2021 18:05 PST\)](#)

RYAN RUSSO
Director, Department of Transportation

Reviewed by: Department of Transportation
Fred Kelley, Assistant Director

Reviewed by: Department of Transportation
Paul Cirolia, School Traffic Safety Supervisor

Prepared by: Department of Transportation
Megan Wier, Safe Streets Division Manager

