



Interoffice Memorandum

CITY OF SAN BRUNO

DATE: January 10, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Jovan D. Grogan, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Ryan Johansen, Chief of Police

SUBJECT: Update on the Parkside Intermediate School Traffic Safety and Crossing Guard

BACKGROUND:

At the City Council meeting on October 11, 2022, there was an inquiry and discussion regarding the relocation of a crossing guard from the intersection of Crystal Springs Road and Donner Avenue to the intersection of Crystal Springs Road and Oak Avenue. As was explained at that time, the impetus for this relocation was the closure of the rear entrance to Parkside Intermediate School ("Parkside"), which is located on Donner Avenue. This closure resulted in a rerouting of nearly all the pedestrian traffic that previously used the Donner intersection for travel to and from the school to the Oak intersection. This change was observed by Parkside staff, the assigned crossing guard, and San Bruno Police Traffic and School Officers. Subsequently, the City and school staff decided that relocating the crossing guard was appropriate for optimal student safety. During the discussion at the City Council meeting, the Council expressed concern over student pedestrian safety on Niles Avenue in the area immediately in front of Parkside. The Council requested that staff investigate the possibility of adding one or more crossing guards to work the crosswalks in this area.

Crossing guard locations are determined through collaboration between the Police Department and the San Bruno Park School District. The cost of crossing guard services is included in the Police Department budget. The FY 2022-23 budget included an appropriation in the Police Department budget of \$59,289.00 for crossing guard services, which are provided at three locations: Angus Avenue/El Camino Real, 3rd Avenue/San Bruno Avenue, and Crystal Springs Road/Oak Avenue.

During the discussion on October 11, 2022, the Council also expressed concerns regarding traffic congestion associated with the drop off and pick up times at Parkside Intermediate School. Police Chief Ryan Johansen explained that prior to the start of the current school year, Police Department Traffic and School Officers met with the administration at Parkside and shared an updated traffic plan aimed at improving the flow of traffic at drop off and pick up times, and the safety of pedestrians at and around the school. Chief Johansen explained that this was a standard annual practice, which had been successful in significantly improving conditions in years past. This year, the school administration indicated that they did not possess the staffing to implement the traffic plan. Chief Johansen indicated that based on recent conversations with the newly appointed Superintendent, he was confident that the school administration was open to implementing this plan now, and he agreed to have Police Department Staff reinitiate that discussion.

DISCUSSION:

Crossing guards are an effective means of enhancing student pedestrian safety along heavily trafficked routes to and from school grounds. However, it is not feasible to have crossing guards posted at all crosswalks. Therefore, it is incumbent upon school and City staff to assess needs and make the best possible use of available funds to maximize student safety. Traffic concerns associated with student drop off and pick up in the area around Parkside Intermediate School are longstanding and easily confirmed through field observation. That said, the Police Department has only three reported collisions in this area over the last eight years. Only one of those collisions involved a vehicle and a student pedestrian, and that incident was determined to be the fault of the pedestrian as the person ran into the side of a stopped vehicle while playing with other students. The remaining two incidents included a non-injury, low speed rear-end collision in the school roundabout, and a solo vehicle rollover due to a vehicle doing doughnuts in the parking lot in the late evening, outside of school hours. Police records do not indicate a significant pedestrian safety issue in this area.

As was reported in the Safe Routes to School Plan (SRTS Plan), parents or guardians of Parkside students do perceive traffic safety risks associated with their children walking or biking to school through this area. The plan identified this perception as a hindrance to increased walking and biking to Parkside, which would contribute to improved student health, and a reduction in vehicular traffic around the school. The plan includes recommendations for a variety of enhancements aimed at increasing pedestrian safety. Most of these recommendations pertain to crosswalk visibility improvements, but they also include consideration of an expanded crossing guard program.

An existing crossing guard location could be moved to the area in front of Parkside at no additional cost to the City but doing so would have a negative impact on safety at the vacated intersection. Existing contracted crossing guard services could also be expanded to add one or more crossing guards to the area around Parkside Intermediate School. Given the limited resources available to ensure student pedestrian safety throughout the city however, staff recommends that such a decision be supported by a competent needs assessment. As previously mentioned, collision data does not indicate a pressing need for the addition of crossing guard services in this area.

All of this said, there is a clear issue with traffic flow at drop off and pick up times at the school, which results in heavy traffic congestion, illegal parking, and reduced pedestrian safety. As has been demonstrated in years past, many of the causes of this traffic flow problem can be effectively mitigated with proper routing and direction provided by school staff at drop off and pick up times. The Police Department's Traffic Sergeant and Motor Officer have met with school staff to discuss these mitigating measures, and the staff is committed to their implementation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact from this update on the Parkside Intermediate School Traffic Safety and Crossing Guard. If Council directs staff to add an additional crossing guard at a specified intersection, the approximate cost is \$20,000 per year. This would require an amendment to the current budget to appropriate these funds.

COUNCIL CONSIDERATION:

During the study session on the SRTS Plan, the City Council may direct staff to utilize the SRTS Plan as the foundation of a competent needs assessment, and to work with the San Bruno Park School District to provide City Council in the future with competent recommendations regarding the potential relocation and/or expansion of existing crossing guard services prior to the start of next school year. Alternatively, the City Council may elect to:

1. Take no action; or
2. Direct staff to relocate one or more of the existing crossing guard serviced intersections;
or
3. Direct staff to expand existing crossing guard services to one or more crosswalks around Parkside Intermediate School.