

TO: Andrew P. Powers, City Manager

FROM: Nader Heydari, Public Works Director

DATE: May 20, 2025

SUBJECT: 2025 Crossing Guard Program Update

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Receive report of upcoming changes for the 2025/2026 School Year.
2. If desired, authorize staff to engage with the Conejo Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) on options for future program oversight, including possible transfer of the program to CVUSD.
3. Find that this action is not a project as defined under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

LEVINE ACT ITEM: No

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

No Additional Funding Requested. Minimal staff time to prepare staff report is included in Adopted FY 2024-25 General Fund Budget.

BACKGROUND:

The City has funded and managed the School Crossing Guard Program for elementary and middle schools since 1964. The program currently supports 24 City Council-approved crossing guard locations at 20 CVUSD schools, including 15 elementary and five middle schools (Attachment #1). The overall program budget is approximately \$500,000 for direct and indirect costs (roughly \$21,000 per location) funded solely by the General Fund. The program is managed by a Public Works Department program administrator, two Senior Crossing Guards, and approximately 30 part-time Crossing Guards.

2025 Crossing Guard Program Update
May 20, 2025
Page 2

In June 2022, City Council directed staff to prepare a Program Report and update the Crossing Guard Placement Policy. On November 16, 2022, a draft updated Crossing Guard Placement Policy and Program Report was presented to the Traffic and Transportation Advisory Commission (TTAC). Input from that meeting was incorporated into an updated draft policy which was approved by the TTAC at its December 7, 2022, meeting. On February 14, 2023, City Council adopted a new School Crossing Guard Program Policies and Standards (Policy) that outlines objective standards to be used to determine which locations qualify for crossing guards (Attachment #2).

Pursuant to the 2023 approved Policy, annual intersection pedestrian and vehicle tabulations were conducted by a professional engineering firm at the 24 existing crossing guard-controlled locations in Spring 2023, 2024, and 2025. The results were provided to the Public Works Director. The 2025 TTAC Crossing Guard Pedestrian and Vehicle Count Report was completed and approved by the Public Works Director on May 6, 2025 (Attachment #3). Per the Policy, the information is to be presented to TTAC as an informational item within 60 days to advise the public and provide an opportunity to receive feedback on the report's findings. The 2025 annual counts report is scheduled to be presented to TTAC as an information item at their next regularly scheduled meeting on May 28, 2025.

Public Outreach and Education

Starting in 2023, staff provided focused public outreach and education efforts to help support and promote walking to school citywide. Staff has also been working closely with CVUSD, interested parties, and the Thousand Oaks Police Department to better promote pedestrian and bicycle safety. These efforts to raise awareness about walking to school and crosswalk use resulted in a large and highly successful outreach campaign, with a total reach of over 12,500 on social media alone. The campaign effectively drove traffic to the City's walk2schoolto.org website which saw over 750 visits during the past school year. Complementing the online efforts, staff conducted in-person presentations, distributed custom flyers tailored to the school district, and placed an advertisement in the Thousand Oaks Acorn newspaper, ensuring a comprehensive approach that resonated with a broad audience. A summary of the outreach data is included with this report for reference (Attachment #4). The ongoing updates to the dedicated website will further strengthen this initiative and will provide a valuable and continuously available resource for the public to engage.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The results of the 2023, 2024, and 2025 pedestrian and vehicle counts indicate that many campuses do not have enough pedestrians and/or vehicle conflicts to qualify for Crossing Guards. The 2025 pedestrian and vehicle counting results

2025 Crossing Guard Program Update
May 20, 2025
Page 3

reveal that 11 of 24 existing sites do not meet the minimum criteria to qualify for a Crossing Guard, with five of those locations having single-digit pedestrian counts which is a disqualifying factor, and the remaining six locations not achieving minimum pedestrian or vehicle counts.

Per the Policy, closure of a crossing guard location occurs after failing to meet the school pedestrian and vehicle count minimums over two consecutive years. 10 of the 11 locations that did not meet the minimum criteria in 2025 have also not met the minimum criteria for at least two years in a row. Accordingly, these 10 locations will be discontinued for School Year 2025/2026 per City Council adopted Policy. Four of the 10 locations have an existing traffic signal or an electronic flashing beacon traffic control system in place. All but one of the locations that did not meet standards are elementary schools except for one of the intersections at the combined elementary/middle school at Sycamore Canyon.

Eighteen of the 24 existing locations do not meet the standard State of California's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) crossing guard placement criteria, which is the standard utilized by most agencies and municipalities. The City's Policy, however, allowed a total of seven additional intersections to qualify because of the lower threshold established by the Policy. Four of these seven additional locations qualified directly from the lower thresholds in the City Policy, while three additional locations also qualified based on one of the alternative pathways that is included in the Policy (Alternative #1; the 75 percent exception). This combines to provide a total of 13 qualifying intersections in Thousand Oaks as compared to only six that would qualify under the typical state standards used by most other jurisdictions.

Prior to 2023, the failure to meet the minimum school pedestrian and vehicle minimums during any single school year subjected that location to closure. The two-year rule is another feature of the Policy that allows for increased opportunities to qualify for crossing guard locations.

Infrastructure Improvements

Staff continues to enhance school crossing locations as appropriate and feasible. In 2024, the City added new electronic rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) warning systems at two crossing guard-controlled elementary school intersections (Mates Elementary School at La Granada and Wilder as well as at Weathersfield Elementary School at Camino Calandria and Darlington), under a larger project that enhanced crosswalks at 10 intersections citywide aided with grant funding. The City continues to seek additional grant funds to add additional RRFB warning systems at school crosswalks as appropriate, including those that do not meet the Policy's school pedestrian and vehicle requirements. The City also continues to provide maintenance and upgrade at electronically enhanced crossing locations,

with the most recent example being the crosswalk warning system at Colina Middle School which was upgraded from a standard beacon to an RRFB system in 2024 to help increase yield compliance on Hillcrest Drive.

COUNCIL GOAL COMPLIANCE:

Meets the following City Council goal:

C. Operate City government in a fiscally and managerially responsible and prudent manner to ensure that the City of Thousand Oaks remains one of California's most desirable places to live, work, visit, recreate, and raise a family.

PREPARED BY: Grahame Watts, Emergency Services Administrator

Attachments:

Attachment #1 – Current Crossing Guard Locations Site Map

Attachment #2 – 2023 City Council School Crossing Guard Program Policy

Attachment #3 – 2025 Crossing Guard Intersection Pedestrian and Vehicle Counts

Attachment #4 – Public Outreach and Engagement Summary Data