



Crossing guard implementation plan

As the City of Menlo Park develops its citywide Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, several aspects of the Program Strategy require further refinement prior to implementation. This Appendix provides more detail about next steps for implementing the citywide crossing guard program.

Crossing Guard Program Recommendations

Adult crossing guards help students and families navigate difficult crossings, reducing the common barrier parents describe in allowing their children to walk and roll to and from school. Crossing guard programs should include a crossing guard coordinator or traffic safety liaison and paid or volunteer crossing guards. The crossing guard coordinator may be a staff member of a school, the school district, or city, working within one school or across a city or school district(s). Crossing guards can be school staff or teachers on yard duty, parent volunteers, or paid community members. The coordinator may also supervise a School Safety Patrol composed of student crossing guards with flags who accompany younger students crossing the street. Currently, each School District serving Menlo Park provides a limited number of crossing guards but many would like to expand the program.

Crossing Guard Prioritization and Policy

The City should begin by conducting a survey of the school districts to gather input on current crossing guard resources and desire to expand the program. This information may be used to identify each districts level of interest, participation, and a prioritization assessment of where crossing guards should be placed. This information can be used to inform a future collision assessment, needs assessment, and preliminary warrants assessment per the California Manual on Uniform Control Devices. Input from the Community Trust, Parents for Safe Routes, and the Menlo Park Police Department will also be important. Based on the data collected in the survey, quantitative evaluation and stakeholder input, the City should consider adopting a crossing guard policy that includes an assessment of program administration options, costs, and funding mechanisms for a program.

Based on the quantitative evaluation and stakeholder input, the City should consider adopting a crossing guard policy that includes more rigorous guidelines for crossing guard placement. This information will enable the City to determine the most effective existing and potential locations for crossing guards.

Adult Crossing Guard Program

Background

Adult crossing guards help students and families navigate difficult crossings, reducing the common barrier parents describe in allowing their children to walk and roll to and from school. Crossing guard programs often include a crossing guard coordinator or traffic safety liaison and the paid or volunteer crossing guards. The crossing guard coordinator may be a staff member of a school, the school district, or city, working within one school or across a city or school district(s). Crossing guards can be school staff, volunteers, or paid community members, and may work to supervise a School Safety Patrol program composed of student crossing guards at multiple locations (see for a suggested resource on School Safety Patrols).

Creating a School or District Crossing Guard Program

Three main models for adult crossing guard programs exist depending on the desired breadth of implementation:

1. **Individual school:** A school staff trains and coordinates their own staff and/or PTA volunteers as crossing guards.
2. **School district:** School district crossing guard coordinators hire, train, schedule, and manage the crossing guard program at all applicable schools. The school district, city transportation department, or safety committee may provide a prioritization process to identify and evaluate schools and crossings that need a crossing guard.
3. **Citywide:** A city staff member coordinates cross guard assignments, prioritization, and personnel

management within school districts or at schools within the city boundaries.

A Safe Routes to School coordinator should organize and coordinate stakeholder input into recommendations to a future crossing guard program. Program recommendations should include administration options, costs and funding mechanisms to initiate a program

Locations

Consider the following when identifying and prioritizing key locations where adult school crossing guards are needed.

- **Age of students crossing:** Younger students typically require more direction on when to safely cross streets.
- **Width of the street and number of lanes of traffic to cross:** Multiple lanes of traffic and wide streets can be challenging to navigate and judge when it is safe to cross.
- **Traffic Volumes:** Consider the number of motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists traveling through or using the crossing. The MUTCD California Supplement's criteria for crossing guards includes: (1) Adult school crossing guards normally are assigned where at least 40 school pedestrians over the course of two hours each day cross a public highway on the way to or from school and (2) Guards also should be considered when special situations make it necessary to assist elementary school pedestrians in crossing the street.
- **Sight distance at the crossing:** Assess any temporary or permanent obstructions to sight distance from a student and drivers perspective.

- **Crash history at the crossing:** Analyze where many crashes have occurred, how many, and at what time of day.
- **Safe gaps in traffic:** The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) supports using adult crossing guards to create gaps in traffic when there is not at least one safe gap in traffic per minute of crossing time.
- **Presence of traffic control devices:** Assess if the current control devices are sufficiently controlling traffic.
- **Attendance boundaries and walk zones:** Consider how far the walk zones reach for each school in relation to the attendance boundaries.

Components

Key components of any crossing guard program involve the following:

- Hiring/Recruiting Training
- Scheduling (consider need for back up in case the scheduled guard is unable to show)
- Materials: safety vests and stop/crossing sign or flags
- Retention: wages, gifts of gratitude, and/or ceremony of appreciation

Key Stakeholders

To develop a city, school district, or individual school crossing guard program, the following individuals could be key stakeholders, depending on the program type and community context.

- City or school district Safe Routes to School coordinator, if applicable

- City traffic safety officers
- School district transportation planners and coordinators
- City traffic planners/engineers
- PTAs
- School administration and teachers
- High school, middle school, and older elementary school students
- Public health agency staff focused on traffic safety and Vision Zero
- Community or neighborhood associations
- Volunteer and retiree networking organizations

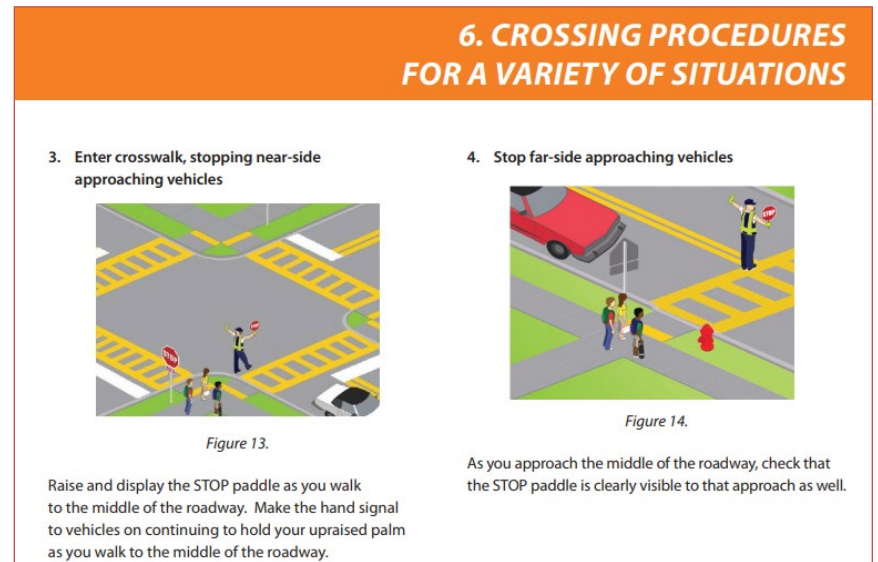


Figure 1. The Caltrans Active Transportation Resource Center has Adult Crossing Guard guidelines and training materials.

Funding Considerations

There are various ways in which cities, school districts, and schools can support an adult crossing guard position(s), whether these are paid or volunteer positions.

Funded Programs

- **Traffic Safety Funds:** Many city police, public works, traffic engineering, and transportation departments fund crossing guard programs and paid positions through funds collected through traffic and parking fines and forfeitures. Stated explicitly in the California Vehicle Code Section 42200, Traffic Safety Funds can be used “to pay the compensation of school crossing guards who are not regular full-time members of the police department of the city.” The revenue from the City of Seattle’s school zone Automated Photo Enforcement Program (\$234 per citation) funds the city’s crossing guard program, in addition to SRTS mini grants and engineering projects.
- **California Office of Traffic Safety Grants:** The California Office of Traffic Safety provides grants to improve traffic safety for a variety of purposes, such as pedestrian and bicycle safety and police traffic services.
The Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety grant is geared towards reducing collisions and fatalities with an emphasis on child safety and educational programming (under 15 years old). In comparison, the Police Traffic Services grant is intended to support police department implementation of selective enforcement and educational programs, such as selective enforcement around schools. This grant would require strong collaboration with the

Police Department to identify key areas in need of their selective enforcement and whether a police officer acts as the crossing guard or supports the guard(s) positions with grant funding.

- **Cost Sharing:** Crossing guard programs or individual positions may be funded through cost sharing agreements between select entities, which may include school districts or school boards, sheriff and/or police departments, city or county public works or transportation departments, and private or non-profit organizations, such as PTAs. When cost sharing occurs between a city and school district, for example, the city may implement the program under a comprehensive safety initiative or through their police or sheriff department. When a district implements the program, the city may provide a grant and the school district coordinates employing, coordinating volunteers, or hiring outside contractors.
- **PTA:** Select PTAs may contribute or fully fund a crossing guard program at an individual school; however, this funding mechanism often highlights inequity across a city or school district, where PTAs in wealthier areas have greater ability and likelihood to fund a program compared to those in working class areas.

Unfunded Programs

- **Teacher Service Rotation:** At an individual school level or across a school district, teachers or other school administration can take on the role of crossing guards as part of their “rotating services,” as included in their employment contracts.
- **Volunteers:** Volunteer crossing guard programs depend upon the capacity of school and neighborhood

community members to volunteer their time. As with PTA funded programs, relying on volunteerism reinforces the inequities experienced across a city and school district, as working class areas may have fewer individuals with capacity to volunteer their time and energy. A volunteer crossing guard program was piloted by the Eureka City School District at Lafayette Elementary School during the months of April, May, and June 2015
<http://www.naturalresourcecesservices.org/projects/redwood-crossing-guard-program-rcgp> and
<https://humboldt.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=531>

Training Materials and Resources

The following materials provide crossing guard training. In California, crossing guard training has three components: online training and testing, practical training, and a field assessment.

- California Active Transportation Program, [Crossing Guard Training Guidelines](#)
- National Center for Safe Routes to School, [Adult School Crossing Guard Guidelines](#)
- Minnesota Safe Routes to School, [Crossing Guard Training](#)
- City of Seattle, Automated Photo Enforcement Program [School Zone Speed Cameras Pilot Preliminary Data Review](#)
- AAA's School Safety Patrols: www.schoolsafetypatrol.aaa.com/
- City of Palo Alto [Crossing Guard Warrants](#)
- [Change Lab Solutions, Cross Guards Policies and Programs](#)
- CBSA, [Distribute Funding for School Crossing Guards](#)