

Memorandum



DATE: June 13, 2008

TO: Members of the Public Safety Committee

SUBJECT: **Dallas Police Department School Crossing Unit**

Attached is briefing material on the "Dallas Police Department School Crossing Unit" to be presented to the Members of the Public Safety Committee on Monday, June 16, 2008.



Ryan S. Evans
First Assistant City Manager

alb

Attachment

DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT SCHOOL CROSSING UNIT

DEPUTY CHIEF THOMAS LAWRENCE



June 16, 2008

Mission Statement

The primary mission of the Crossing Guards is to supervise the safe crossing of elementary school children, usually at crossing points which are established and clearly marked by the City of Dallas.

Traffic Standard Operating Procedures

History

- City Council established program in 1942
 - Retired officers as guards
 - Eligible adults as guards
- 1970s – Police supervision
- 1980s – Civilian supervision

Functions

- Hire and train Crossing Guards
- Survey school crossings
- Staff school crossings
- Monitor school zones and crossings
- Supervise Crossing Guards
- Present safety programs

Training Resources

- Public Works and Transportation
 - National Center for Safe Routes to School
- Injury Prevention Center of Greater Dallas (IPC) and Safe Kids Dallas Area Coalition
 - Walk this way
- DART
 - Safety Education Program

Current Status

- School Crossing Unit
 - Unit Supervisor III
 - 8 District Supervisors
- 378 School Crossings
 - 360 Crossing Guards
 - 391 Authorized

School Crossing Districts

- Central
- North Central
- Northeast
- Northwest
- Southeast (A)
- Southeast (B)
- Southwest (A)
- Southwest (B)

Enabling Legislation

- Local Government Code (cities larger than 850,000)
- Provide and equip Crossing Guards
- Establish a Child Safety Trust Fund
- Use remaining funds for child safety programs
- Assess additional court costs

Funding

- Must assess an additional court cost, using court costs to fund School Crossing Guard program
- \$25 per case for convictions of school zone speeding (Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 102.014(c))
- \$2-\$5 per municipal parking offense (Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 102.014 (a))

Budget

- \$2.7 million annual budget
 - City of Dallas
 - General fund \$ 1,809,920
 - Court and Detention Services \$ 134,000
 - Parking Enforcement \$ 635,000
 - Collin County \$ 121,852
 - Denton County \$ 32,930
 - Dallas County \$ 0

Staffing Challenges

- Pay (range \$8.16 to \$10.95)
- Increasing fuel costs (travel pay)
- Continuous recruiting and hiring
- Northern sectors
- High attrition rate
- Staffing remaining crossings

Questions



DALLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

May 13, 2008

The Honorable Tom Leppert, Mayor
City of Dallas
1500 Marilla
Dallas, Texas 75201

Dear Mayor Leppert:

Thank you for the City's request for us to impose an additional \$1.50 fee on the registration of all vehicles in Dallas County to help fund the cities school crossing guard programs. We have been reluctant to utilize this provision in state law, as fees on vehicle registration have historically been targeted for transportation, and since transportation has been drastically under funded, we feel any other use would only impact future assessments.

We have already begun our planning for the upcoming legislative session and one of the issues we will be debating is if we should ask the Legislature if the current \$10.00 assessment on registrations for transportation should be increased. If we conclude that this is an item we need to pursue, adding the crossing guard fee would only enhance what will be a difficult challenge.

Over the years we have gotten more citizen push back and complaints on the vehicle registration fee than any other fee or tax increase that we have approved. That is why in 1991, when the City of Dallas first made the request that we impose the crossing guard fee we added to the ballot of a county-wide election, a non-binding referendum, if voters of Dallas County wanted an additional \$1.50 added to the cost of their vehicle registration to fund school crossing guards. Our citizens voted 59% to 41% against assessing this fee. We fully support your goal of improving and providing an adequate crossing guard program to protect our school children. However, we encourage you look to other funding mechanisms that are available to your City or that you re-prioritize the importance of this service and re-direct current revenues to this very worth while need.

Thank you for your understanding in this matter and if you wish to discuss it any further, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Jim Foster, County Judge

Maurine Dickey, District 1

Mike Cantrell, District 2

John Wiley Price, District 3

Kenneth A. Mayfield, District 4