

September 22, 2021

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Paula Boggs Muething, City Manager **202102810**

Subject: Crossing Guard and Pedestrian Safety Improvements for Schools

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**Reference Document #202102676**

On September 9, 2021, City Council referred the following motion for a report:

MOTION, dated 8/31/2021, submitted by Councilmember Keating, WE MOVE that the City Administration provide a REPORT regarding the feasibility and cost of staffing Crossing Guards at the locations outlined by CPS, adding crosswalks to the locations outlined by CPS, installing School Zone Flashers at the locations outlined by CPS, and providing additional Traffic Control at the schools outlined by CPS. WE FURTHER MOVE that the administration also include alternative methods of addressing these issues, if relevant. The requests outlined by CPS will be attached to the document and have been discussed and compiled by the crossing guard coordinator and city planners. WE FURTHER MOVE that this report addresses any other requests by the community that were brought to light during the Budget and Finance Committee Meeting on Monday, August 30th during the conversation around the METRO/CPS decision...

**Crossing Guards**

Under an existing contract with Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS), the City of Cincinnati has agreed to employ, train, and supervise crossing guards to facilitate the safe and orderly transit of students to and from school. Under the contract, CPS has agreed to reimburse the City for 100% of all wages, overtime, applicable training costs, and other compensation and benefits of the crossing guards and pay an administrative fee equal to 7.5% of aggregate crossing guard compensation costs. Beyond this reimbursement mechanism, a method for setting the wages of the crossing guards is not further addressed in the agreement. Crossing guards are seasonal and part-time employees of the City, so in accordance with the City's Living Wage policy set forth in Cincinnati Municipal Code 317 the Administration has set their current wage rate at \$11.01 an hour.

The agreement sets forth the number and location of crossing guards and further provides that CPS may, at any time, request changes to the number of crossing guards or their location. To ensure open lines of communication, the City Manager's Office met with CPS leadership earlier this year and has provided contact information for CPS to reach out with any concerns regarding City-related issues. To date, the City Administration has not received a request from CPS to change the current locations or number of crossing guards.

As additional context, one historical reason for the arrangement of crossing guards as City employees is that the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) previously recommended that crossing guards be appointed by the local law enforcement agency and that such law enforcement agency should be responsible for selection, training, and supervision of crossing guards. However, ODOT updated their guidance in 2012 to remove this recommendation, and currently Article IV, Section 2-B of the Cincinnati Administrative Code grants independent authority to both the City Manager and CPS to appoint crossing guards. Accordingly, there is no longer a binding requirement that all school crossing guards must be City employees.

In response to the inquiry in the motion, in order to add crossing guards to the locations identified, CPS must simply follow the process set forth under the agreement and request such changes to the number and location of crossing guards as set forth in the agreement. Pursuant to the agreement, the financial responsibility for any cost increase for additional crossing guards will rest with CPS.

### **Pedestrian Safety Improvements**

In response to the request for an assessment of the feasibility and costs of various pedestrian safety improvements, including crosswalks, school zone flashers, and other traffic control improvements: the City's Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE) has been working since the beginning of the school year with CPS and the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority on some of the items identified in the motion and will continue that work to determine feasibility and currently available funding.

DOTE indicates that preliminary cost estimates for the identified proposed improvements, for carryover discussion purposes, total \$125,000. The City Administration cautions that the amount is only an estimate. Actual costs may be higher depending on fluctuating resources and availability.