

# Chapter Five: Enforcement



**“Caution: kids walking to school”**

## Enforcement

### Introduction

Enforcement refers to the activities undertaken mostly by outside entities such as local law enforcement but can also be done on a smaller scale by the school, parents, or the community. Enforcement activities remind motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians to work cohesively within the transportation network.

### Current Enforcement Activities

Some enforcement activities or programs currently exist in the community to promote safe walking and bicycling to school, and are listed below.

#### Sioux City Police Department

Enforcement actions are based on complaints brought to the attention of the Sioux City Police Department. From the complaints, those specific areas and issues will be targeted.

#### Woodbury County Sheriff's Department

The Woodbury County patrol does enforcement activities upon request by the school. The Sheriff's Department has a portable radar speed sign that can be placed in an area of concern.

### Obstacles and Deficiencies

Below is a list of obstacles and deficiencies in the enforcement activities within the schools and the community.

#### Vehicles Following Traffic Signs

During observations, it was noted that parents were not following posted traffic signs, in particular, "no parking" signs. As seen in the picture to the right, vehicles were parking where a sign was visibly displayed. In this instance, the no parking sign is in place near a school crosswalk. Parking is prohibited in this area so that children are visible to traffic when utilizing the crosswalk without any visual impairment.

#### Crossing Guard Education

The Sioux City Community School District does not have a formal program in place for crossing guard and student safety patrol education. The Sioux City Police Department does have a School Resources team with an officer housed in the middle and high schools and one of the officers speaks to the guards about what to watch out for.



### **Speed of Traffic along Routes and Safety of Intersections and Crossings**

Two consistent issues that were highlighted in each school's parent surveys were the speed of traffic along the route and the safety of intersections and crossings. Whether this is a perceived issue or an actual problem, enforcement activities can help ease parents' apprehensions of children walking to/from school.

### **Arrival/Dismissal Procedures**

While some schools in the study area have detailed arrival and dismissal procedures for adults and students to follow, some schools do not have any or provide little direction.

### **Three Feet Legislation for Passing Bicyclists**

The State of Iowa has had legislation introduced to both the House and Senate regarding requirements for motor vehicle operators when overtaking and passing a bicyclist during the 2011 session. Both House File (HF) 276<sup>1</sup> and Senate File (SF) 96<sup>2</sup> explain that:

"This bill requires the driver of a vehicle to use an adjacent travel lane when passing a bicycle proceeding in the same direction. In addition, the driver of the vehicle must maintain a distance of not less than three feet between the right side of the driver's vehicle, including all mirrors or other projections, and the left side of the bicyclist. The requirements do not apply to implements of husbandry.

The provisions of the bill are in addition to current law, applicable to both vehicles and bicycles, which requires a vehicle to pass to the left of the other vehicle at a safe distance and not return to the right side of the roadway until safely clear of the overtaken vehicle. The vehicle being passed is required to give away to the right in favor of the overtaking vehicle and not increase speed until completely passed by overtaking the vehicle. Exceptions apply in specific situations when passing on the right is permitted."

During the 2011 session, HF 276 was introduced and referred to the Public Safety Committee on February 15, 2011. The Public Safety Committee then sent it to a subcommittee where it was not passed. Senate File 96 was introduced and referred to the Transportation Committee on January 26, 2011. The Transportation Committee then sent it to a subcommittee where it was not passed. Even though a bill was not passed during the 2011 session, there is still opportunity to consider this type of legislation again in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> 2011 HF 276

<http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&menu=false&hbill=hf276>

<sup>2</sup> 2011 SF 96

<http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&menu=false&hbill=sf96>

### **Locations Identified in Parent Surveys**

In the parent surveys that were distributed in the fall of 2008, parents were given the opportunity to fill in additional information in the comments section. Some parents used that space to identify certain road and intersection locations that were of concern in letting their child(ren) walk to school. The following locations were identified by the parents:

#### Joy Elementary

- Morningside Avenue – amount of traffic
- South Cornelia – unsafe and amount of traffic
- South Martha – amount of traffic
- South Martha and Indiana Avenue – crossing guard needed

#### Longfellow Elementary

- Transit and South Glass – crossing guard needed

#### Nodland Elementary

- East High School – traffic generated by school a concern

#### Sunnyside Elementary

- Streets located around the school – speed of traffic

#### Washington Elementary

- Glenn Avenue and South St. Aubin Street – busy intersection, needs crosswalks
- South St. Aubin Street and Bushnell Avenue – dangerous intersection, crossing guard needed
- South Royce Street and Glenn Avenue – amount of traffic
- Glenn Avenue – amount and speed of traffic

#### Whittier Elementary

- Morningside Avenue – safety of intersections and crossings
- Gordon Drive – amount of traffic

### **Recommended Enforcement Activities**

Based on current activities being done within the schools and community and the obstacles and deficiencies noted above, a list of recommended projects has been developed.

#### **Obey the Signs – Progressive Ticketing Campaign**

During each school observation, it was noted that at all the schools, traffic signs were not being followed; in particular, the no parking signs. It is recommended that parents are educated at the beginning of the year about the location of the no parking signs and why it is important and courteous to follow them. One solution used by some of the schools in the study area was to place orange traffic cones in the No Parking areas to deter violators which didn't always work as parents continued to use



these areas. If the problem continues, it is suggested to get local law enforcement involved in a ticketing campaign. The purpose of conducting a ticketing campaign is to emphasize local law enforcement agencies' involvement in and around the schools in hopes of improving drivers' awareness of traffic signs and what is required of them.

### **Restructure the Crossing Guard Program**

The Iowa Bicycle Coalition has developed a Crossing Guard Training Program based on the Florida Crossing Guard Training.<sup>3</sup> The Iowa Bicycle Coalition travels around the state providing the training, which is geared toward adult crossing guards and school officials. The training covers topics such as, how to recognize and deal with hazards, law and traffic control devices, what to do in case of an emergency, and others. The training is a one-day event that begins at 9 AM and ends at 4 PM.

The program emphasizes that students, as part of the safety patrol, should not be in the street helping children cross. That responsibility should fall on the adult crossing guards while student safety patrol members should stay at the curb directing walkers by verbal cues. It is recommended that adult crossing guards should be stationed at busier intersections, while student safety patrol should be on school grounds or on lower volume traffic roads.

In addition, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) gives standards and options on crossing guard uniforms in Section 7D.04 and equipment and operating procedures in Section 7D.05.<sup>4</sup> The MUTCD Chapter 7D refers the "AAA School Safety Patrol Operations Manual"<sup>5</sup> regarding the organization, administration, and operation of a school safety patrol program.

### Crossing Guard Locations

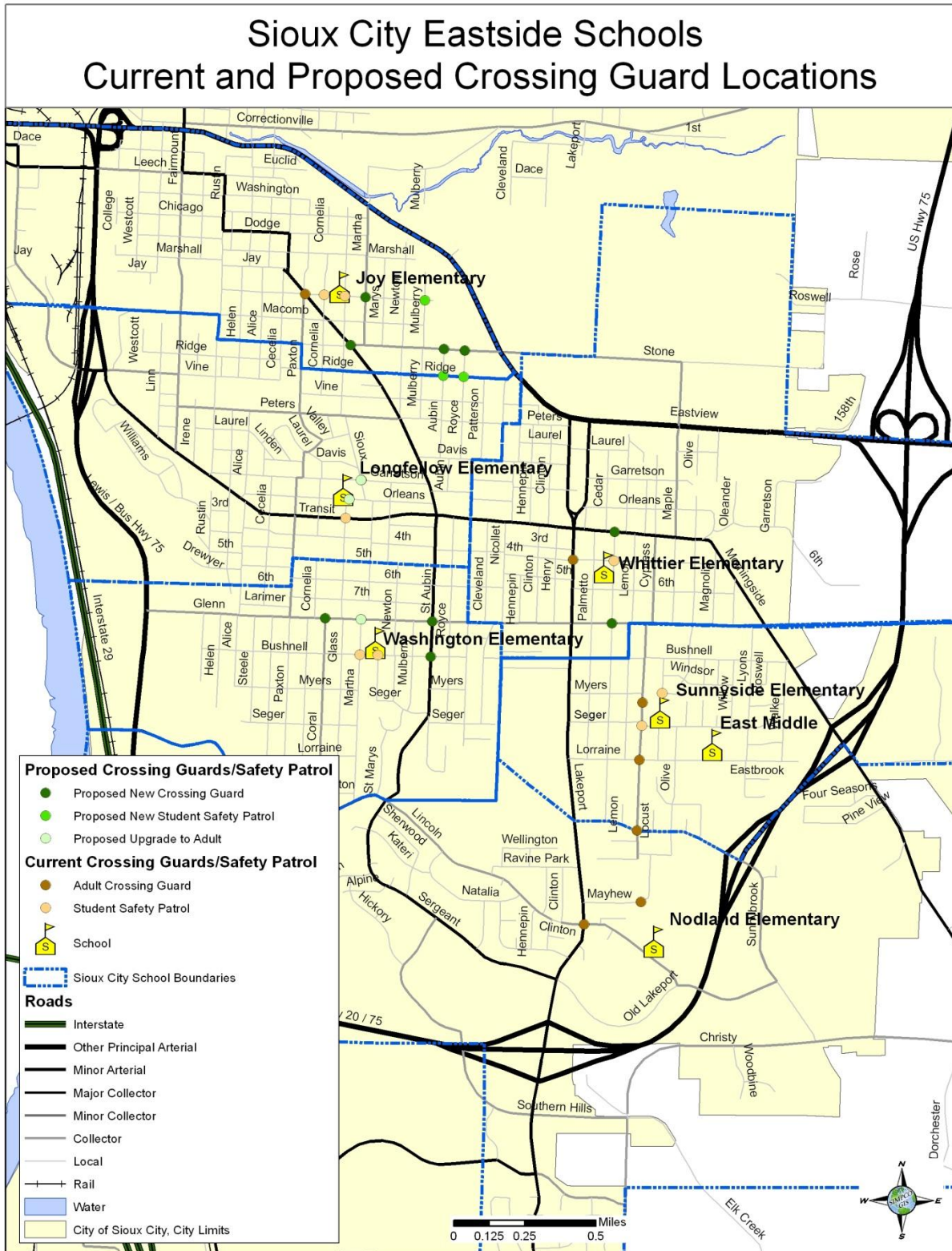
Map 5.1 shows the locations of the existing adult and student safety patrol as well as proposed locations where additional crossing guards/student safety patrol are needed. While the current locations are certainly helpful, there are many larger streets with higher volumes of traffic that parents expressed specific concerns about (as noted in the Locations Identified in parent surveys section). Adult crossing guards at these new locations would make walking or biking to school safer, and help to ease parents' concerns.

<sup>3</sup> Iowa Safe Routes to School: Crossing Guard Training [http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/case\\_studies/education.cfm](http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/case_studies/education.cfm)

<sup>4</sup> Chapter 7D – MUTCD 2009 Edition: <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/htm/2009/part7/part7d.htm>

<sup>5</sup> AAA School Safety Patrol Operations Manual: <http://www.aaa.com/aaa/049/PublicAffairs/SSPManual.pdf>

Map 5.1: Crossing Guards



### **Three Feet Legislation for Passing Bicyclists**

Drivers often do not know what to do when encountering bicyclists on the road. In addition, it is difficult for drivers to predict the speed and space that bicyclists need. Oftentimes bicyclists will swerve to avoid obstacles in the road that drivers are unaware of. Many believe that passing legislation that requires drivers to allow bicyclists at least three feet of space when passing will help to improve the safety of riding a bike. The three foot buffer gives the driver a little extra room for error, which could translate into fewer injuries and fatalities. While there may be dissention on passing this type of legislation due to the difficulty of actually enforcing the law, it is still beneficial to have legislation regarding the overtaking of cyclists on the road so drivers are aware of what equates a “safe passing” distance.

Passing legislation is only a first step in this recommendation. Once a three feet bill has been passed, it is vital to educate the public on the proper way to overtake a cyclist on a road.

### **Speed Enforcement Campaigns**

The speed of traffic was one of the largest concerns for parents based on the parent surveys. Enforcement projects have the potential to minimize this problem significantly, and partnerships between school officials, local law enforcement, neighborhood residents, and/or the media are needed to tackle the issue.<sup>6</sup> An effective enforcement campaign involves several steps, including public involvement, education, and enforcement. First, community members and school officials can help to identify dangerous areas, which law enforcement may want to focus on. Next, the community should be notified that more enforcement activities, including ticketing will occur. This can be done with press releases or informational signs or flyers for the residents (since these are the typical drivers in the nearby school zones). This notification alone may reduce many drivers’ speeds. Another method is to install flashing lights on speed signs to get the driver’s attention and let them know what the posted speed limit is. Next, officers should be stationed in areas of concern to issue warnings and/or tickets. Warnings may be more effective for a period of time, because they can be issued quickly and mailed to speeders. Yet, if speeding persists, tickets must be used for enforcement.

The Woodbury County Sheriff’s Department has a movable Active Speed Monitor (or Driver Feedback Sign (DFS)) that can be placed at different locations to make drivers aware of their speeds within the school zone. Both the Woodbury County Sheriff’s Department and the Sioux City Police Department will upon request or complaint, carry out an enforcement activity such as a ticketing campaign, setting out the DFS, or patrolling the area/having a stronger police presence.

Specifically, the first speed enforcement campaigns should be held at the following locations that were identified in the parent surveys as a concern:

- Morningside Avenue;
- South Cornelia Street from Marshall Avenue to Stone Avenue;

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<sup>6</sup> The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center: Enforcement programs  
<http://www.walkinginfo.org/enforcement/programs.cfm>

- South Martha from Gordon Drive to Stone Avenue;
- Transit Avenue;
- Mayhew Avenue;
- South Cypress Street from Glenn Avenue to Lorraine Avenue;
- Glenn Avenue;
- South Royce Street from Transit Avenue to Bushnell Avenue; and
- Gordon Drive.

### **Flashing Lights on Speed Signs near Schools**

Often, drivers are not aware that the school zone speed limit is in effect. Flashing lights on speed signs help to get the driver's attention and let them know what the school zone speed limit is. There is, however, some evidence that the effectiveness of this equipment wears off over time without some enforcement.

### **No Idling Zones**

Idling vehicles create clouds of car pollutants where they are idling. This is very common around school zones, especially in the afternoon when parents are picking their child(ren) up. In addition, children are more vulnerable to pollution from vehicles than adults because they breathe heavier than adults and are closer to the tailpipe of cars. Many schools across the country have created and begun enforcing "No Idling Zones" to address this problem. These zones are easy to enforce since cars are either on or off. However, as mentioned earlier, it is important to educate drivers before simply issuing tickets. This can be done with newsletters or information cards sent home with the students.

### **Neighborhood Enforcement Activities**

Neighborhood residents can be very effective at enforcing traffic laws. For example, neighborhood speed watch programs allow residents to borrow a speed radar and record speeders and license plate information. Then, law enforcement officials can contact those drivers and ask for voluntary compliance. Another activity is the Pace Car program, which involves signing up and pledging to drive safely and at the right speed in school zones. Drivers pace the other cars and receive a sticker to put in the back window notifying other drivers of this. These programs can help to increase awareness and lower speeds in school zones, which translates into a safer environment to walk and bike to school in.