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2 COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3 PUBLIC HEARING

4 COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT

5 and

6 PUBLIC SAFETY

7 - - - -

8 Room 400, City Hall
 9 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Thursday, April 22, 2004
 1:20 p.m.

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11 RESOLUTION 040035 - Resolution authorizing
 City Council's Committee on Legislative
 12 Oversight and Committee on Public Safety to
 hold joint hearings to investigate the
 13 alarmingly high number of incidents in which
 our school children are struck by vehicles
 14 on their way to and from school.

15 PRESENT:

16 COUNCILMAN JAMES KENNEY, Chair
 COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER, Chair
 17 COUNCILMAN DAVID COHEN
 COUNCILMAN MICHAEL NUTTER
 18 COUNCILMAN JAMES KENNEY
 COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
 19 COUNCILWOMAN JOAN KRAJEWSKI
 COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO
 20 COUNCILMAN BRIAN O'NEILL

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I N D E X

1		
2		
3		
4	RESOLUTION 040035	PAGE
5	BRIAN SIMPSON.....	8
6	TAMISHA JOHNSON.....	8
7	HARVEY RICE, Phila. School District..	20
8	PAT RAYMOND, Philadelphia Home and	
9	School Council.....	27
10	JENNIFER TOOLE, Toole Design.....	45
11	WALTER BROWN, Paradise Valley	
12	School District.....	65
13	LEIGH MATUSICK, Florida Dept. of	
14	Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.	83
15	CLARENA TOLSON, Commissioner,	
16	Philadelphia Streets Department..	105
17	DEXTER GREEN, Chief Safety Executive,	
18	School District of Philadelphia..	108
19	PHIL GOLDSMITH, Managing Director....	113
20	EUGENE CUMMINGS, Philadelphia Police	
21	Department.....	132
22	BETTY MCDONALD, Local 1956.....	134
23	ROXANNE GALEOTA.....	141
24	SEAN MCALEER, Franklin Town Charter	
25	High School.....	149

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Good afternoon,
3 ladies and gentlemen. This is a joint
4 Committee of the Legislative Oversight and
5 Public Safety Committee. I'm Chair of the
6 Oversight Committee, Councilman Kenney, and
7 Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller chairs the
8 Public Safety Committee.

9 In attendance is Councilman W.
10 Wilson Goode, Jr. Other Councilmembers are
11 coming, but we would like, in the interest of
12 people's time and schedule, to get started
13 with our testimony.

14 Before we get to our first witness,
15 let me just state for the record that this
16 issue is a very serious concern to the Members
17 of Council relative to public safety.

18 Also in attendance is Councilwoman
19 Joan Krajewski.

20 As I said earlier, this Council has
21 some serious concerns, as does the
22 Administration and parents and School District
23 Administration officials, serious concerns,
24 about the safety of our children coming and
25 going to school, of pedestrian safety in

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 general and the issues related to the 70
3 children that have been hit so far by
4 automobiles this year, in either coming to
5 school or leaving school.

6 We have assembled a list of
7 witnesses today, some people who have come to
8 us from the State of Florida, from Phoenix,
9 Arizona and from Baltimore, Maryland, three
10 areas, three jurisdictions and states that
11 have a very good program that we would like to
12 see how they have put that program together
13 and see if we can emulate some of what they
14 have done.

15 Also, Managing Director Phil
16 Goldsmith and Dexter Green from the School
17 District will be testifying to talk a little
18 bit about some of the efforts they've
19 undertaken to put a task force together to
20 look at the problem holistically and see if
21 they can't come up with some recommendations.

22 Our effort here is to try to work
23 together as best we can to come up with a set
24 of plans and recommendations that we can
25 implement, hopefully, by September to get that

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 70 number down to, hopefully, zero, but to get
3 it down significantly.

4 Also, I'd like to take the
5 opportunity to thank the Philadelphia Daily
6 News and Marilyn Kim for her terrific work and
7 investigation and writing about this issue
8 because it's very, very important and it kind
9 of brought it to our attention. And,
10 therefore, we look forward to try to develop
11 this hearing. The task force got started as a
12 result of that coverage and we are very happy
13 to kind of work together to solve this
14 problem.

15 Our children are our number one
16 priority and their safety is extremely
17 important to us. And I think generally we
18 need to have a discussion about not only
19 school safety and pedestrian safety coming and
20 going to school, but kind of just the way we
21 in this area in Philadelphia drive and treat
22 pedestrians, bicyclists and the like. It's a
23 very dangerous place out there.

24 I notice in Center City and in other
25 neighborhoods you'll see people blowing red

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 lights on a regular basis. There seems to be
3 a major disregard for the traffic laws in our
4 City, and hopefully through this kind of
5 effort, through education and through
6 enforcement we can kind of get ourselves back
7 into a more calm and safer environment for our
8 kids and for everybody who lives in
9 Philadelphia.

10 I would like to recognize
11 Councilwoman Miller, who has a comment.

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you,
13 Councilman.

14 I'd just like to reiterate the
15 comments of Councilman Kenney and just restate
16 that the safety of our children here in this
17 City is most important. The safety of them
18 traveling to and from school is just as
19 important as the deterrent and all the
20 publicity and the community action that's
21 taken place around the gun violence that's
22 been mowing our children down. So I'm glad
23 that we're going to have this discussion
24 today.

25 I was certainly very pleased to read

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 in the paper that the School District is going
3 to put money up, the \$1 million for the school
4 flashing lights, which we think is also
5 important, and it does help deter some of the
6 speeders.

7 Enforcement is the issue. This is a
8 very important topic here in Philadelphia and
9 I'm glad to see other states here that will be
10 participating in today's hearing because we
11 need to look at best practices that's
12 happening around the country.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
15 much.

16 I'd also like to acknowledge the
17 presence of Councilman Frank Rizzo and
18 Councilman Brian O'Neill.

19 Our first witnesses today are Brian
20 Simpson and Tamisha Johnson, who are parents
21 of Denarah Williams, who has experienced this
22 terrible situation as a family and as a young
23 person, and we'd like to ask them to come
24 forward and to give us some indication of what
25 their experience has been with their daughter

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 being struck.

3 I'd like to take the opportunity to
4 thank you for taking time out of your schedule
5 and your day to come here and speak with us
6 today. We'd like to first make sure you relax
7 and just tell how you feel and talk freely to
8 us. Please identify yourself for the record,
9 because the stenographer wants to make a
10 record of that. Either one, feel free to
11 begin.

12 MR. SIMPSON: My name is Brian
13 Simpson.

14 MS. JOHNSON: Tamisha Johnson.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Whoever would
16 like to start.

17 MR. SIMPSON: Actually, October
18 10th, I was feeling sick that day so I decided
19 to stay home from work. We had my
20 sister-in-law come into the house telling us
21 that Denarah had been struck by a vehicle. So
22 Tamisha ran down the corner and checked on
23 Denarah to see what happened. By the time she
24 got there, that person that struck her was
25 already out of the vehicle and attending to

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 her.

3 Tamisha got there first. I came out
4 secondly. They were already in an ambulance.
5 And basically what happened was, the crossing
6 guard was trying to handle a bunch of kids
7 crossing the street and Denarah stopped and
8 was waiting for her brother. And the crossing
9 guard told him to go ahead on, and the person
10 who struck her did a pitted stop right at the
11 intersection. In my opinion, I think she was
12 traveling a little excessively when she pit
13 stopped right at the intersection.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: How far do you
15 live from the school?

16 MR. SIMPSON: About a block away.

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And she normally
18 walks to school by herself?

19 MR. SIMPSON: With her sister and
20 brother.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What were the
22 extent of her injuries?

23 MS. JOHNSON: She had a broken leg.
24 Her bone actually came out of her leg. She
25 had a contusion on her head. She had to go to

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 surgery and she had to be re-hospitalized
3 after she was discharged from the hospital
4 because she caught an infection in her leg.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: How is she doing
6 now?

7 MS. JOHNSON: She's doing much
8 better now.

9 MR. SIMPSON: She's up and about
10 running around. She brought her grades back
11 up.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Good.
13 Did the police investigate the
14 incident? Were there police reports.

15 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Were there any
17 tickets issued to the driver?

18 MS. JOHNSON: I'm not sure.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Had you noticed
20 any changes at the school intersection?

21 MS. JOHNSON: No. Sometimes when I
22 come home from work -- I work 11:00 to 7:00.
23 By the time I get there it's, like, 7:30, 8:00
24 and there's still no crossing guards where the
25 children are walking.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Also where my children go to
3 school, there's no traffic light, like a red,
4 green and yellow, so children just run across
5 the street and it's, like, a busy
6 intersection.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Is there a stop
8 sign or is there any type of signaling signs
9 there?

10 MR. SIMPSON: There's a yellow sign
11 behind the tree. We've been seeing it since
12 we moved into the area. No one notices the
13 sign, but if people are traveling in the
14 neighborhood, you know where the school is.
15 They just zoom past Wayne Avenue. We live on
16 Wayne Avenue. They zoom past Wayne Avenue on
17 Manheim trying to catch the light. They're
18 doing about 40 miles an hour. By the time
19 they start slowing down, they're in the middle
20 of the next block, almost on Pulaski.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So a lot of this
22 excessive speed is a result of trying to make
23 the green light?

24 MS. JOHNSON: Sometimes they come
25 from around the bus. If the bus stops, they

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 don't want to wait for the bus to load the
3 passengers. They'll come from around the bus
4 and go right through. Last March they had
5 mauled three children from coming behind the
6 bus.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: That's included
8 when the bus is stopped with its stop sign out
9 and its flashers on?

10 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And the people
12 still continue around?

13 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

14 MR. SIMPSON: Are you talking about
15 a school bus or something?

16 MS. JOHNSON: No. I'm talking about
17 a SEPTA bus.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Oh, a SEPTA bus.
19 Not a school bus?

20 MS. JOHNSON: No, not the school
21 bus.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Are there any
23 questions for these witnesses?

24 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Where was your
25 little girl hit?

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 MS. JOHNSON: She was hit at the
3 corner of Manheim and Pulaski.

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: There's a
5 four-way stop sign there, correct?

6 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I represent
8 Kelly School. Your child goes to Kelly, John
9 B. Kelly?

10 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

11 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: One of the
12 things that we talked about when we had a
13 couple meetings at John B. Kelly when the
14 three children were hit by the car that went
15 around the bus -- and we kind of think he blew
16 the stop sign, and they were crossing and he
17 couldn't see them because the bus was there.
18 But one of the things that came to our
19 attention -- when I thought about it, it's
20 true -- we teach our children how to cross,
21 You know, you go on the green light.

22 I walked my niece to school the
23 other day, and we were standing at the corner
24 and I said, "No, you cross when the light is
25 green."

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 One of the things that we have to do
3 is to start trying to figure out how we can
4 teach our children how to cross at stop signs.
5 Because you know yourself, and I know for me,
6 if you're trying to either get through the
7 stop sign or if you're trying to cross through
8 the stop sign, you know, get through with the
9 vehicles, the traffic just keeps coming. They
10 stop, but it kind of keeps coming. So at some
11 point I guess we need help with trying to help
12 teach our children how to cross at stop signs.

13 But also, I think drivers should
14 have to be more sensitive to when they're
15 driving in a school area, just like one of you
16 said, and slow down and stop speeding.
17 Because speeding through something and you
18 injure a child, it wasn't worth it. It wasn't
19 worth it.

20 MR. SIMPSON: I agree with what
21 you're saying. For instance, with our kids,
22 before we moved to Wayne Avenue, we lived at
23 Rittenhouse and Morris. To get to their
24 school was about a 20-minute walk to Felton
25 Elementary. In between there and our house

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 are stop signs and traffic lights, so I teach
3 them about how to look out for different
4 intersections, stop, wait until there is no
5 traffic and then proceed. I do not teach them
6 to stand at the corner, don't wait at the very
7 tip of the corner because most people that
8 turn the corner either don't have licenses or
9 don't have insurance and they'll take the
10 corner doing 20 and 30 miles an hour. So I
11 teach them to stand back at least six feet and
12 wait until it's clear.

13 I'm pretty confident that Denarah
14 didn't do anything as far being at that
15 corner.

16 But I do agree with what you're
17 saying, teaching them how to cross the
18 intersections and stop signs, because I see a
19 lot of kids just dart out in the middle of the
20 street a lot. Some days I just wake up late
21 before I go to school at night and I see the
22 kids darting in the middle of the street,
23 playing tag or full of book bags so they're
24 not paying attention.

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilman

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 O'Neill.

3 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Following up on
4 Councilwoman Miller and the stop signs, I
5 think we should all recognize that in
6 Philadelphia over the last 20 to 30 years the
7 idea of a stop sign being a suggestion rather
8 than an order is the way it goes. I had first
9 heard it years ago being called the South
10 Philly slide, but it's really the Philadelphia
11 slide. And people do slow down; I wouldn't
12 say they blow through stop signs as if they're
13 not there, but they don't come to a stop.
14 That used to be enforced by Philadelphia
15 Police and doing traffic enforcement as part
16 of their duties. It ended a long time ago.

17 I don't want to blame one
18 Administration or one Commissioner, but I do
19 know that Philadelphia drivers drive
20 differently when they leave the City borders,
21 whether it's going into one of our counties in
22 Pennsylvania or across the bridge to New
23 Jersey because they still enforce a stop sign
24 as an order to stop, and come to a full stop.
25 It's not enforced in Philadelphia at all. And

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 that can cause by itself the kind of injuries
3 we're talking about here today.

4 Thank you.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilman
6 Rizzo.

7 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: You know that
8 there's legislation pending, and I think
9 honestly politics has entered into the delay
10 of the installation of the red light cameras.
11 I'm only telling you that for some background,
12 that we are eventually going to have red light
13 cameras at some of the real dangerous
14 intersections.

15 I believe during one of the budget
16 hearings -- and not privately, but publicly --
17 I had a conversation with the Police
18 Department, and I asked that possibly some
19 type of a program be initiated to really get
20 aggressive when it comes to violators of stop
21 signs, and especially red lights, until we
22 have some of these major intersections under
23 control with camera control. And I was
24 disappointed when the answer that I got back
25 from the Police Commissioner was that our

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 police officers, if they see someone run a red
3 light, that they'll issue a ticket. I don't
4 think that was good enough.

5 I see the Managing Director -- at
6 least he was here a moment ago -- to ask the
7 Police Department if they have to come up with
8 a campaign to go after people that violate red
9 lights.

10 Councilman O'Neill and Kenney
11 mentioned that this is really a culture issue,
12 I think, here in the City of Philadelphia.
13 And something has to be done. And if we
14 really need to get aggressive on people -- I
15 live in a neighborhood where stop means 10
16 miles an hour at a stop sign. You can tell
17 that they don't stop. So I would appeal to
18 the Managing Director, the Administration, to
19 ask the Police Department to come up with a
20 very aggressive campaign to remind the
21 officers -- from my opinion, is that they're
22 so very busy out there, that enforcing traffic
23 violators is not as high a priority as it was
24 once when we had more police officers.

25 And also the fact that many times

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 when we see a person run a red light and we
3 see a police officer not responding, many
4 times they're involved in responding to
5 another assignment where they can't stop the
6 person that they observe. So many times we
7 think that they're just not doing their job,
8 but really they are and they just can't be
9 distracted from the assignment that they have.

10 So I appeal to the Administration in
11 asking them to come up with a campaign and we
12 get very aggressive when it comes to
13 enforcement. I don't think that's the case
14 right now.

15 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
17 much.

18 If there's no other questions for
19 these witnesses, I'd like to thank you for
20 taking the time to come in and wish you and
21 you daughter well. Hopefully. This
22 experience hasn't caused her any mental
23 anguish and hopefully as time goes on she'll
24 fully recover. Thank you for taking the time.

25 Our next witness is Harvey Rice.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 He's a Philadelphia School District Safe
3 Schools Advocate. And Patricia Raymond,
4 Philadelphia Home and School Association
5 President.

6 Please identify yourself for the
7 record.

8 MR. RICE: Harvey Rice, the Safe
9 Schools Advocate.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Please proceed.

11 MR. RICE: Good afternoon. I'm
12 Harvey Rice, Pennsylvania Department of
13 Education Safe Schools Advocate for the School
14 District of Philadelphia. As a Safe Schools
15 Advocate, it is my job to advocate for victims
16 of school violence and monitor the School
17 District's compliance with the Safe Schools
18 Act, as well as making recommendations to
19 improve school safety and help keep our
20 children safe at school.

21 Parents should feel secure knowing
22 their children are safe, not only while they
23 are in school, but also on their way to school
24 and back home again. Statistics reveal that
25 between 80 and 90 percent of all Philadelphia

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 elementary school students walk to and from
3 school. Alarmingly, in recent years we have
4 seen a steady rise in the number of students
5 being struck by vehicles on their way to and
6 from school. So far this year, 70 students
7 have been struck by vehicles, and we still
8 have over six weeks to go before the end of
9 the school year. Last year, 72 children were
10 struck by moving vehicles and 52 children
11 struck during the 2001-2002 school year.
12 Almost 300 children have been struck by moving
13 vehicles during the past three years.
14 Fortunately, there have been no fatalities.
15 75 percent of these accidents took place right
16 outside the school building.

17 The lack of consistency in placing
18 crossing guards at key intersections near
19 local schools throughout the City each and
20 every school day is a contributing factor in
21 many of cases where students are hit by
22 vehicles going to and from school.

23 The Office of Safe Schools Advocate
24 has received numerous complaints from parents
25 about corners close to their child's school

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 where there is no consistent placement of
3 crossing guards each and every day of the
4 school year. Today, I submit a list of those
5 schools for your review with my testimony.

6 One parent reported back in October
7 of 2002 that the crossing guard usually
8 assigned to the corner at 70th and Old York
9 Road was absent for more than a month. The
10 child of this parent who attended Ellwood
11 Elementary School notified the 35th Police
12 District and found that the guard was on a
13 long-term sick leave and no replacement was
14 ever assigned. Eventually, four months later,
15 police officers were assigned the task of
16 crossing the students at this intersection.
17 So for five months out of the school year that
18 year that corner was without a crossing guard.

19 There is also an issue with the
20 coordinated deployment, training and
21 monitoring of the more than 1,000 crossing
22 guards charged with protecting children on the
23 way to and from school. Some crossing guards
24 are stationed at corners where very few
25 children travel, and there are other corners

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 in the City with high traffic by children, yet
3 no crossing guards.

4 Another likely contributing factor
5 to these accidents is the absence of blinking
6 yellow lights and 15 miles per hour signs at
7 more than half of the schools in the City. In
8 many cases, the yellow blinking lights are not
9 operational during arrival and dismissal
10 times, which leads to most motorists ignoring
11 the posted 15 miles per hour speed limit signs
12 that are posted, combined with the lack of
13 consistent police enforcement in these
14 restricted speeding school zones.

15 As the Daily News reported, no
16 school zone speeding violation tickets were
17 issued last year. During the 2001-2002 school
18 year, two tickets were issued and the prior
19 year before that one ticket was issued.

20 Illegal parking in the front of
21 schools in clearly posted no-parking zones
22 during school hours creates blind spots for
23 most motorists and children and is a serious
24 contributing factor to the number of incidents
25 involving children getting struck by vehicles

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 to and from school. With 75 percent of these
3 accidents occurring directly outside the
4 school, better enforcement of the no-parking
5 zones in front of schools could dramatically
6 reduce the number of accidents involving our
7 school children.

8 The School District of Philadelphia
9 has enacted many programs to address this
10 problem, such as the Safe Corridors Program,
11 the Walking Bus Tour, and incorporation of
12 school safety programs into the school
13 curriculum. However, the Safe Corridors
14 Program is only operational in 38 of the 264
15 schools, or less than 20 percent of all our
16 schools.

17 While these programs are worthwhile
18 measures, the School District of Philadelphia
19 cannot solve this problem alone. While many
20 concerned parents volunteer their time to
21 watch over their children and other children
22 at some of these key intersections, they
23 cannot and should not be the first line of
24 defense in protecting children going to and
25 from school.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 I want to thank this Committee,
3 especially you, Chairman Kenney, for looking
4 into this dangerous problem, and offer my help
5 and assistance in finding a solution that will
6 reduce, if not eliminate, the number of
7 vehicular accidents involving school children.

8 By way of recommendations, I would
9 strongly urge that a comprehensive training of
10 all crossing guards take place and that
11 crossing guard deployment decisions take into
12 account the number of school walkers versus
13 the level of vehicle traffic at key
14 intersections.

15 Additionally, better daily
16 monitoring of crossing guard attendance should
17 take place so when a crossing guard doesn't
18 show up for work, a substitute can be sent to
19 replace them for that day, or longer if
20 necessary.

21 I would also strongly urge that all
22 no-parking and reduced speed limit zones
23 around schools be strictly enforced during
24 school hours. I believe the Philadelphia
25 Police Department must adopt a zero tolerance

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 policy towards illegal parking in front of
3 schools and excessive speeding in school
4 zones. These measures, while basic and
5 manageable, need the commitment of the City
6 police and, where applicable, the State
7 police.

8 In suburban school districts, 15
9 mile per hour school zones are taken very
10 seriously and they mean something. Drivers
11 are ticketed at higher levels and the courts
12 take a no-nonsense approach to violators
13 speeding in school zones. A driver who is
14 caught speeding in a school reduced speeding
15 zone can get up to five points against their
16 license and possibly lose their license for a
17 period of time.

18 While the City is facing a budget
19 shortfall and departments are being asked to
20 do more with less, I urge this Council to
21 resist making any budget cuts on the backs of
22 our school children.

23 I would urge that yellow blinking
24 lights and 15 mile per hour speed signs be
25 posted in every school zone in Philadelphia,

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 public, charter, private and parochial, and
3 that strict enforcement of these zones be
4 enforced.

5 This problem can be solved if
6 addressed adequately and immediately. I
7 commend Councilman Kenney and the Members of
8 this Committee for taking the initiative to
9 listen to concerned citizens. I hope this
10 Committee makes the necessary recommendations
11 to fix this problem and that the necessary
12 departments and agencies act to implement your
13 recommendations.

14 Thank you for allowing me the
15 opportunity to be a part of this discussion.

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

17 I'd ask Ms. Raymond to identify
18 yourself and proceed with your testimony, and
19 then we'll open up the questioning for both of
20 you.

21 MS. RAYMOND: My name is Pat
22 Raymond. I'm currently serving as the
23 president of the Philadelphia Home and School
24 Council, which is the volunteer parent
25 organization that's in every school known as

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Home and School Associations. My part of the
3 board oversees what happens daily in the
4 schools across the City. And like I said, it
5 is strictly volunteer.

6 I'm here, like you are, because I've
7 been voted into office. So I would ask you
8 for a moment to just imagine these halls
9 filled with parents because I am their voice.
10 They're out manning your city, your hospitals,
11 your police force, your fire department,
12 building new buildings and everything. So
13 that's why I'm here. I'm voted to do that.

14 Every day the press brings us
15 heartbreaking reports of our children being
16 victimized, brutalized or paying the ultimate
17 price, with their young lives. As parents we
18 struggle daily to educate our children about
19 and protect them from the perils of the real
20 world. Our babies are exposed to war,
21 disease, crime and natural disasters on a
22 daily basis. But should our children have to
23 fear for their lives doing the one thing that
24 can point them in the right direction, doing
25 the one thing that can prepare them to be an

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 active, viable member of society? Every day
3 in every neighborhood across the City of
4 Philadelphia children are risking their
5 well-being just by going to and from school.

6 With the number of vehicles and
7 drivers at an all-time high and the
8 ever-increasing pace of our society, parents
9 and caregivers are bombarding the City streets
10 surrounding our schools, parking in bus lanes,
11 double parking, triple parking, parking on
12 sidewalks, crosswalks and intersections
13 blocking streets is going on every day at
14 every school in our City. Add to that the
15 fact that the no-parking regulation around
16 schools is not being enforced and you have the
17 recipe for disaster.

18 The number of students being hurt in
19 these situations is at an all-time high. This
20 is not a record that we can be proud of. The
21 answer to this issue seems to be very
22 simplistic: No parking around schools and
23 obeying all traffic laws even during the
24 opening and closing of schools. Gosh, if life
25 were only that simple.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 We witness daily the abuse that the
3 School District of Philadelphia staff,
4 volunteers and Philadelphia's finest have to
5 withstand when dealing with irate people who
6 will only be a minute trying to drop off and
7 pick up a student. And what about the poor
8 sucker who just happened to be driving by the
9 City school at the wrong time? The village we
10 have enlisted to raise our children seems to
11 be getting a little testy when they get in
12 their vehicles to go somewhere, even when
13 children are involved.

14 I'm really not certain what the
15 solution to the issue is. I understand our
16 City has a budget deficit. I know our School
17 District is in a permanent state of deficit.
18 I know our police force is understaffed and
19 crossing guards are few and far between.
20 Parents and children feel that our streets are
21 not safe, which is one reason why so many
22 children are being driven to and from school.
23 But most importantly, I know that we cannot
24 sacrifice one more child to the ignorance of a
25 society that is in a hurry and out for number

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 one.

3 We must pledge from this moment to
4 work together to enlist the aid of all parties
5 to ensure that our babies don't become
6 statistics. If we don't find a solution, we
7 just might lose that one special child who
8 would have grown up to discover the cure for
9 cancer, how to obtain world peace, or better
10 yet, how to make our school system the best in
11 the nation.

12 And if I can just speak from my
13 heart for a minute. We have an office in the
14 School District building. Every day we get
15 phone calls on how can I get a new crossing
16 guard, how do I do this, so and so got hurt,
17 parents fighting with each other. They call
18 my office and expect us to go in and mediate
19 between these parents who are ready to kill
20 each other because so-and-so stole somebody
21 else's parking spot or, you know, she said she
22 was leaving or whatever. My mother always
23 taught me that growing hurts.

24 I really have to agree with what
25 Councilman O'Neill said. My husband is

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 teaching my 16-year-old how to drive. And
3 when we get to Bucks County, he told her -- I
4 was floored. He sat in the back seat of the
5 car and he said, "Okay, now. Right here,
6 Honey, you've got to watch out because the
7 police are really, really bad."

8 And I said to him, "What are you
9 teaching her?"

10 Yet, this is what society mandates.
11 And I've got to tell you she was scared to
12 death to drive. She's still scared to death
13 to drive.

14 If we don't enforce the laws on the
15 books, nothing is going to make a difference.
16 And I think that's the issue here. Whatever
17 we do, whatever resolve we can find, we need
18 to ensure that we're going to enforce it
19 because we are really being lax.

20 Philadelphia is -- you're right, not
21 the South Philly slide. I can't remember the
22 last time I was behind somebody that actually
23 stopped at a stop sign or even a traffic
24 light. You don't have to because Philly's not
25 going to do anything about it.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Did you ever
3 notice when you stop at a stop sign, come to a
4 full stop and you allow a senior citizen to
5 cross the street, they look at you like you
6 are crazy? It's like, "Are you sure? Can I
7 go?" Because they're so used to waiting
8 because no one stops.

9 Let me ask you a question about the
10 parking around the school, because I know both
11 of you have dealt with complaints and conflict
12 relative to that. The cause of the problem is
13 the double parking because there are cars
14 along the curb around the schools. So when
15 people come before school or after school and
16 drop off kids, they double park because those
17 spots are already taken. Do we have an idea
18 just anecdotally whether or not these are
19 neighborhood people parking there, whether
20 it's staff from the school parking there? If
21 we are able to strictly enforce the no parking
22 around schools, I'm trying to determine who's
23 going to be screaming the loudest.

24 MS. RAYMOND: Everybody.

25 MR. RICE: It's a mixture. At some

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 schools there isn't a yard for the teachers or
3 the staff to park so they park around the
4 school because they feel the closer the car is
5 to the school, the safer their vehicle will
6 be. Others, it is neighborhood people. It's
7 people going to school for meetings or
8 whatever. So it's a mixture.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I know
10 anecdotally it's a big conflict. There's
11 constant arguing and issues.

12 For example, there's a charter
13 school on South Broad Street in Councilwoman
14 Verna's district, Broad and Shunk, between
15 Shunk and Oregon. At 2:00 to 2:30 in the
16 afternoon we have traffic backed up to almost
17 City Hall going south because of all the
18 double parking and the cars having to merge
19 into one lane. And that goes on for about a
20 45-minute to an hour clip. Is there any
21 interface between the principal or the vice
22 principal in the school charged with kind of
23 safety of staff and parents, or is it just
24 kind of whatever happens, happens?

25 MS. RAYMOND: I've actually had

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 conversations with principals that have begged
3 me to try to do something. Because every day
4 they have cars parked in the bus zones.

5 One example is the Rush Middle
6 School up on Woodhaven Road. The principal
7 pleaded with me, please do something. They've
8 got a parking lot that when you're going in
9 the proper direction on Knights Road you can
10 pull in the parking lot, make a circle and
11 drop your child off. But it's much easier to
12 go double park on the sidewalk where the buses
13 are supposed to be discharging their students.
14 The principal has tried. At meetings they
15 tried issuing citations because you're doing a
16 good job, you know, trying to deal with it
17 positively and it ultimately --

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Citations being
19 merit awards or something, not tickets?

20 MS. RAYMOND: Well, yes. Like,
21 thanks, you did a good job. Try to do the
22 positive thing. Ultimately they've had to
23 call the police out because they've literally
24 had fist-fights in the middle of Knights Road
25 over parking.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Other communities you go into, the
3 neighbors don't want you parking in their spot
4 because that's their spot. They know if you
5 park there, when they come home you're not
6 going to be there. It's just really an issue
7 around the City.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: One of the
9 things that we're going to have to brace
10 ourselves for if, in fact, we decide to pursue
11 this no parking around the schools is a
12 cacophony of people complaining to all these
13 elected officials, myself included, as to that
14 issue.

15 But one of the things that I would
16 like to take a look at is -- I know the
17 Parking Authority starts in their meter
18 enforcement zones probably I think around
19 10:00 or so, between 9:00 and 10:00 because I
20 see the vans of the enforcement officers going
21 out and being dropped off at various
22 locations. I was wondering -- and we'll
23 pursue a question to the Parking Authority on
24 whether or not their people could be utilized
25 at an earlier time around schools to begin the

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 appropriate no-parking tickets. I know that
3 will create a raft of complaint. However,
4 over a period of time, I'm wondering if it
5 would not in some way change the behavior of
6 the people who are coming there.

7 Because I know myself, my children
8 attended parochial school in South
9 Philadelphia about a block and a half from my
10 house, and believe it or not, many people
11 drive their kids to school where there's no
12 need to be driven. Our crossing guard last
13 year was severely injured with compound
14 fractures of her leg because she got backed up
15 by a mother who was in a hurry and put the car
16 in reverse instead of drive and ran her over.
17 She was in a cast with pins in her legs nearly
18 a year.

19 I'm wondering whether or not kind
20 of trying to curb that behavior through
21 parking tickets -- I don't know the answer to
22 it -- would maybe make some people get their
23 kids there another way as opposed to driving
24 them.

25 MS. RAYMOND: If I could offer a

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 suggestion. I'm real good at that, but I
3 don't have any finances to back it up, so...
4 but I think if we do some kind of media
5 campaign. It doesn't have to be elaborate.
6 But if we give people a heads-up that on
7 whatever the date is going to be, this is
8 what's going to happen if you double park, if
9 you triple park, whatever, you are going to be
10 subject to this, because then you've given
11 them a heads-up. It is going to hurt. It's
12 going to hurt before it gets better but,
13 unfortunately, that's the reality of the
14 situation.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: The choice is
16 either you have some pain and some complaint
17 or you have kids continually being hit. I
18 think the choice is pretty clear, although it
19 will be a painful political choice.

20 MS. RAYMOND: I also will offer my
21 services. Our organization, we are the
22 parents of the children in public schools. If
23 we can be part of the campaign to kind of be
24 proactive instead of reactive, it might be
25 better to make parents responsible for their

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 own behavior. Honestly it's not really just
3 parents. It's the rest of the citizens too.

4 With my children comes two sets of
5 grandparents, some aunts and uncles. You know
6 what I mean? So if we just kind of give them
7 a heads-up, if we make them accountable for
8 their own behavior and then once the deadline
9 is passed, you know, you were told, you were
10 warned.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Harvey, do you
12 have anything else to add?

13 MR. RICE: No.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilman Rizzo
15 had a question.

16 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: If we do start
17 enforcing the no parking around the schools,
18 what I appeal to the Managing Director is that
19 we do a survey to make sure -- because I know
20 that signs are faded in many places. They're
21 missing because of the fact that there's
22 nobody enforcing them, so why worry about it.
23 So before we start issuing tickets, I would
24 hope we communicate clearly to the people that
25 are parking that they shouldn't be parking

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 there.

3 Not that I remember this, but I
4 understand -- I do remember. We had a program
5 in the schools called Safeties.

6 MS. RAYMOND: It's still there.

7 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: And I didn't
8 realize we even still had them because I don't
9 see any safeties working with the school
10 crossing guards. Has the program slipped
11 away?

12 MS. RAYMOND: It's not cool to be a
13 safety. AAA still works with the schools.
14 It's actually an EC position. A teacher has
15 to sign up to be responsible for the safety
16 patrol. If a teacher doesn't sign up to do
17 that, you don't have a safety patrol.

18 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I don't think
19 I've ever seen one. The concept worked pretty
20 good because anybody that got picked to be a
21 safety, you're like a hotshot.

22 MS. RAYMOND: Well, now you're a
23 nerd if you get picked to be a safety. It's
24 not cool.

25 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Maybe we can

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 change the culture there. I would think that
3 that would be something that should be
4 revisited, at least strengthen it up.

5 So that was all I wanted to
6 contribute, was the fact that if we do start
7 writing tickets -- and I hope the Managing
8 Director is listening.

9 The thing that bothers me is, do you
10 ever see people that park facing the wrong way
11 on a two-way street? Well, rather than give
12 lots of tickets out in one particular
13 district, the captain came up with a document
14 that warned people before they actually wrote
15 the ticket. They went through the community
16 -- the police officers actually had them in
17 the car and said, in case you're not aware --
18 and a lot of people honestly did not realize
19 parking the wrong way on a two-way street was
20 a violation of the Motor Vehicle Code. The
21 community really liked the fact that the
22 police officers were reaching out to them.
23 And any time the police officer saw one that
24 was not an immediate dangerous situation, left
25 a little flyer in this particular area around

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Fairmount Park where they were doing that.

3 Just for convenience they would pull over and
4 park the wrong way. I'd like to see something
5 like that occur, maybe try to reach out to
6 them before we issue tickets.

7 MS. RAYMOND: I totally agree.

8 I'm sorry that I have such a big
9 mouth, Harvey, but that's why I'm in this
10 position.

11 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: That's part of
12 the qualifications.

13 MS. RAYMOND: Maybe what we need to
14 be is proactive again. And assuming that
15 nobody really is kind of boned up on what the
16 traffic rules and regulations and parking
17 rules and regulations are in the City, maybe
18 the City could publish a tri-fold or something
19 that the police, the schools, everybody could
20 give out.

21 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: It made the
22 police in that particular community look
23 human. They weren't just going out there and
24 writing the ticket. They left a little flyer
25 on the car, and many people respected that.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 They said, I wasn't aware. Even if they were
3 aware, they cleaned up their act.

4 And now that the Managing Director
5 is back, I'd like to restate what I said
6 earlier, that I was disappointed at the lack
7 of interest from the Police Department in
8 reference to a campaign to enforce red light
9 running and other violations of the Motor
10 Vehicle Code. The Police Commissioner stated
11 to me that basically if the police see a
12 person run a red light, they'll do what
13 they're supposed to do, issue a ticket.

14 Well, Mr. Managing Director, that's
15 not good enough. I think we really need to
16 have a campaign in the City, have an
17 aggressive campaign until red light cameras
18 come. That's only going to affect a few
19 intersections, the red light cameras. I would
20 appreciate you asking the Police Commissioner
21 to cooperate and go out there and really do an
22 aggressive campaign to get these red light
23 runners and other violators under control.

24 Councilman O'Neill or Kenney, I
25 forget which said it, that when you leave

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Philadelphia and go in the suburbs, everybody
3 changes the way they drive, because if you go
4 into Abington Township or Montgomery County,
5 all of a sudden everybody starts playing by
6 the rules. When you're in Philadelphia, there
7 aren't any.

8 Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
10 much.

11 I'd like to acknowledge the presence
12 of Councilman Cohen and Councilman Nutter.

13 Are there any other questions for
14 these witnesses?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: This panel is
17 excused. Thank you very much for coming in.

18 Our third panel today is Ms. Leigh
19 Matusick, who's the Florida School Crossing
20 Guard Program Administrator.

21 Dr. Walter "Skip" Brown, who's the
22 Paradise Valley School District Superintendent
23 in Phoenix, Arizona.

24 Jennifer Toole, who is a traffic
25 consultant in Baltimore Maryland.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Could you please come forward?

3 I believe that Ms. Toole is going to
4 do a presentation from that desk there.

5 Please identify yourself for the record and
6 proceed with your testimony and presentation.

7 MS. TOOLE: My name is Jennifer
8 Toole. I'm the president of Toole Design
9 Group, a planning and engineering firm based
10 in Baltimore, Maryland. And I want to thank
11 you very much. I'm very honored to have been
12 asked to come and testify.

13 You'll have to forgive me, I can't
14 talk about pedestrian safety without showing
15 pictures, so first to just give you a little
16 bit of information on my background. I am the
17 President of Toole Design Group. I formed my
18 firm specifically to focus on planning and
19 engineering safer streets for pedestrian and
20 bicycles. And because of that specialty,
21 we've had the opportunity to work on several
22 routes to school programs over the past three
23 years.

24 We were the primary consultant for
25 Maryland's Safe Routes to School Pilot

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Program. That was a two-year effort to work
3 in two schools in Maryland. One of those
4 schools was an inner-city Baltimore school
5 with issues very similar to what you're facing
6 here in Philadelphia. We are also the
7 consultant for Delaware DOT's Safe Routes to
8 School Program, as well as a national Safe
9 Routes to School training course that's being
10 developed by the Federal Highway
11 Administration. So this is something very
12 that's very near and dear to my heart.

13 This is my son. I also come from
14 the perspective of a parent as well.

15 I also want to mention that I have
16 worked in Philadelphia before. We were the
17 consultant for the Philadelphia Bicycle Master
18 Plan. In a previous job I was a project
19 manager for that plan. So I've experienced
20 the City as a motorist, as a pedestrian and as
21 a bicyclist too quite a bit over the past
22 eight years.

23 I wanted to sort of explain what the
24 Safe Routes to School movement is and what
25 components there are. We talked a lot about

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 enforcement. That's one component of a Safe
3 Routes to School Program. I think one thing
4 that most people agree on is that we really
5 need for children to be able to walk to
6 school. And when you look at the obesity
7 statistics among children, the rising
8 statistics, the percent of children who are
9 overweight, I can tell you that that blue line
10 continues to go up and children are making
11 fewer and fewer trips on foot. This is a real
12 serious health issue for kids. So we want
13 children to be able to walk to school.

14 It's really also an issue of
15 personal independence. I think we all
16 remember the first time we got to walk
17 someplace on our own. It's that feeling of
18 self worth I think that's very important for
19 kids.

20 The realities in a City like
21 Philadelphia, though, are that those trips are
22 often not safe. You see this happening all
23 the time. Kids going to school, sometimes
24 they have to be there early for the early
25 breakfast program. It's still the early dawn

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 hours and it's just a very dangerous mix. In
3 Baltimore we know that we're killing an
4 astonishing number of kids, killing and
5 injuring them on the streets. They're three
6 times more likely to be killed or injured as
7 pedestrians than any of the other urban
8 counties in Maryland. So this is a serious
9 issue in many other places, as well as here in
10 Philadelphia.

11 We also know that the morning rush
12 hour is a real problem as well. Twenty to
13 twenty-five percent of the rush hour traffic
14 is school traffic, and this is the same here
15 in Philadelphia as well. That morning chaos
16 of parents arriving at the same time that
17 children are arriving on foot, it's a very
18 dangerous mix.

19 So, to talk about sort of what the
20 ingredients are for a successful program.
21 It's very important that a Safe Routes Program
22 address not only the engineering side of
23 things, sort of the physical environment side,
24 but also the education and enforcement side.
25 Previous speakers have talked about that.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Those things in combination are what make a
3 difference and make kids safer. It's not one
4 single thing and no others; it's all of those
5 things together.

6 A second very important thing is
7 that the program must involve parents.
8 Because if one of the goals is to get parents
9 to drive their kids to school less, then you
10 have to address their concerns, their reasons
11 why they're driving their kids to school.

12 And then the engineering components
13 really have to be outside the box. I'm going
14 to show you some pictures of things that other
15 communities have done to address the
16 engineering components.

17 One thing we know about roadway
18 design is that speed kills. The faster a car
19 is going when it strikes a pedestrian, the
20 more likely that pedestrian will die. And so,
21 you can see at 40 miles an hour the pedestrian
22 chance of death is up around 85 percent.
23 That's pretty high. If we can get those
24 traffic speeds down to 20 miles an hour you
25 can tremendously reduce their chances of

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 death. That's a very important feature of any
3 kind of engineering program for Safe Routes.

4 Now, the evidence on flashing
5 beacons now in Philadelphia is mixed. I want
6 to make sure that you understand that in some
7 places flashing beacons do have an effect on
8 speeds, but they don't always have an effect.
9 So I'm going to encourage you to do other
10 things as well as flashing beacons. They're
11 good for a start. And when they're combined
12 with other safety measures they can be very
13 effective.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I just want to
15 interrupt you for one second. Councilman
16 Rizzo earlier today had mentioned to me that
17 he was going to bring up the issue that
18 they're solar powered, the flashers, as
19 opposed to what we've been installing on the
20 electric-based ones that we have here in
21 Philadelphia.

22 MS. TOOLE: That's in Lancaster.

23 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Can I jump in?

24 MS. TOOLE: Absolutely. Certainly.

25 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: We have seen

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 these little trailers that monitor the speed
3 are very effective. Are any of those
4 permanent?

5 MS. TOOLE: I'm getting ready to
6 show you a picture, in fact. I think I've
7 already said this. Signs and paints are a
8 good first step, but sometimes they don't have
9 a significant effect on behavior. We should
10 know that from research studies.

11 This is exactly what you're talking
12 about. This is permanent speed sign and it's
13 in front of a school in Rockville, Maryland.
14 This very spot is where a child was killed
15 about three years ago. I should point out
16 that that child was killed because he stepped
17 directly in front of a car. He was at fault.
18 The child was at fault. That's the reason why
19 you have to have the education side. But this
20 is the engineering solution that they put in
21 place and it has been very effective. They've
22 got a crosswalk there, the warning signs.
23 That is a very bright warning sign. It's
24 called a fluorescent yellow-green warning
25 sign. If you can see in the background, the

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 solar device is in the back and then there's
3 the speed limit sign. And this is what it
4 looks like from the other direction. It also
5 has a pedestrian bollard that's positioned in
6 the middle of the street to remind drivers
7 that they're required by law to yield to
8 pedestrians in the crosswalk. So that's been
9 a very effective sign.

10 The day I was out looking at it no
11 one was going faster than 25 miles an hour. I
12 watched the speed sign, so. That's just a
13 close-up of what a pedestrian bollard looks
14 like. These are being used in Pennsylvania.
15 They've been sanctioned for use in certain
16 crosswalks. They're not for every spot. They
17 are a maintenance issue because they get hit a
18 lot, as you can imagine.

19 One thing that is very important,
20 though, especially for children, is to divide
21 up the task of crossing the street wherever
22 you can, especially in mid-block locations
23 where -- and children do have to cross at
24 mid-block locations occasionally. So this is
25 an example of a device, a median crossing

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 island, where a child can cross one direction
3 of traffic and then wait and be safe while
4 they're waiting before they cross the other
5 direction. It also has a traffic calming
6 effect. People don't feel comfortable driving
7 past one of these things as fast. So drivers
8 tend to slow down.

9 Just another view of a little less
10 expensive center median device at an
11 intersection. This is in Sacramento,
12 California.

13 Another important thing to do is to
14 try to shorten that crossing distance as much
15 as possible. Here is an example where they
16 took out a few parking spaces in order to make
17 that crossing distance narrower, so that
18 you've reduced the pedestrian's exposure while
19 they're out in the street. It's a very
20 important safety measure.

21 In my testimony packet I included a
22 safety study that just came out in this
23 month's American Journal of Public Health, and
24 it's on the benefits of speed humps. They did
25 a study in Oakland, California. Children

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 living within one block of a speed hump were
3 50 to 60 percent less likely to be injured by
4 a car. It's a pretty significant finding. I
5 don't want to leave the impression that we
6 should put these everywhere because they're
7 also very annoying to drivers. They do create
8 some political backlash because they're just
9 annoying. But they work in some locations.
10 They can be very effective if they're
11 combined, again, with other devices.

12 Here is an example of one.

13 Actually, this is in front of my son's school
14 in Howard County, Maryland. It's combined.
15 It's a pedestrian crossing combined with a
16 speed table, so it's a very gentle -- it's not
17 a bump, but it's kind of an elongated table
18 crossing.

19 Then there are a variety of other
20 devices that you can use to calm traffic.
21 These are used all throughout the country.
22 This is a traffic diverter. It's something
23 that encourages drivers to go slower, and it
24 can be as fancy or as simple as you want to
25 make them. It just makes it more

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 uncomfortable for drivers to speed.

3 Another device that is being used is
4 the pedestrian count-down signal. This is a
5 device that tells the pedestrian how much more
6 time they have to get across the street, which
7 is very important information to know. It's
8 especially good for wide street crossings,
9 where you need to know if it's appropriate
10 start that crossing or not.

11 Already in Philadelphia you have
12 some leading pedestrian intervals. This is
13 essentially just an all red phase that gives
14 the pedestrians a chance to get out into the
15 crosswalk before that turning traffic starts.
16 That's another device that you all are already
17 using that can be very effective.

18 There are all kinds of other things.
19 This is a traffic circle. Seattle, Washington
20 uses a lot of traffic circles to calm traffic
21 in neighborhoods.

22 A Safe Routes to School Program
23 starts with an assessment of needs. We
24 typically do parent surveys. We find out what
25 the parents are concerned about. We find out

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 how many kids are walking to school. We do
3 workshops. And then we of course do an
4 engineering analysis as well.

5 And I guess I want to stress -- and
6 Ms. Raymond said this as well -- but for a
7 Safe Routes Program to be successful it must
8 motivate parents to become involved. The
9 schools that we've worked in, the parents have
10 probably played the strongest role on the
11 enforcement side. They have been the ones
12 that stand out in front of the school and yell
13 at the other parents when they don't do the
14 drop off right. You can really gain a lot by
15 including the parents.

16 These are just a few pictures from
17 the Save Routes Programs that we did in
18 Maryland. The parents really enjoy getting
19 involved in this stuff. They will go out and
20 do the site surveys. We've held community
21 workshops that have had many, many of the
22 parents from the school attending.

23 These are just some of the concerns
24 that we have heard from parents. I think the
25 last one on that list is important too.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 They're worried that their kids are going to
3 get abducted, and that's why they don't want
4 them to walk to school sometimes. That's
5 another issue that you have to deal with.

6 A good Safe Routes Program moves
7 forward both with the physical changes and the
8 education projects. Most kids don't get a
9 whole lot of pedestrian safety education in
10 school. They get a lot of fire safety
11 education. But it hasn't traditionally been
12 part of the curriculum. And so that's another
13 thing that we're working on in Maryland, is
14 getting more pedestrian safety into the
15 schools. And there's some great curricula out
16 there that you can take right off the shelf
17 and use.

18 Another important part of our
19 program in Maryland is Motorist Public
20 Awareness Campaigns. This is the Street Smart
21 Program that we're in the second year of
22 doing, and this is a public campaign to make
23 motorists aware that they need to be alert for
24 pedestrians. It's a very important campaign
25 and it's combined with an effort from the

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Police Department to crack down on motorists
3 that don't yield to pedestrians. It's called
4 a Pedestrian Crosswalk Sting. And what the
5 police officers do is they put out a dummy
6 officer who crosses the street and another
7 officer tickets all the drivers who don't
8 yield --

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Not a dumb
10 officer.

11 MS. TOOLE: Right. And I should
12 mention also at that program that the
13 Washington D.C. Area developed this program,
14 and they've been willing to share it with
15 anybody who wants the materials. So if this
16 is something that you're interested in, you
17 could get this and put it up on your buses and
18 at your bus stops as well.

19 Of course every good program
20 includes an assessment of conditions in the
21 neighborhood. This is that Baltimore City
22 school that I was talking about. This is just
23 a map that shows all of the pedestrian
24 accidents in that neighborhood around that
25 school. The parents actually mapped out the

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 children's walking routes around the school,
3 and then those are the places that we focused
4 on. This is just a view of one of the
5 crossings directly in front of the school.
6 That crossing guard had been hit by a car
7 before. She no longer would go all the way
8 out into the road to help kids cross because
9 she was too afraid for her own safety.

10 That program included a new drop-off
11 program, and the parents were the ones that
12 enforced it. It got initially some help from
13 the police officers, but the ongoing
14 enforcement was done by the parents as well
15 as, again, shortening those crossing distances
16 right in front of the school and providing
17 better crossing facilities.

18 So a good program includes a variety
19 of other ongoing promotions, and this is just
20 some of the programs that have been put in
21 place in Maryland and other places at our
22 school. In Baltimore, we had grandparents who
23 served as corner captains, and they would
24 stand at different corners. They had T-shirts
25 made up for themselves and they would just

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 sort of monitor children's crossings. You
3 can't put a crossing guard at every corner.

4 We also got the kids involved as
5 well. They did a logo contest for the Safe
6 Routes Programs. It's amazing how well the
7 children understand the problems.

8 So that's the end of my
9 presentation. Thank you very much for
10 inviting me.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
12 much. If you could go back to the main
13 witness table because there may be a few
14 questions.

15 You had indicated that there were
16 studies done on both speed bumps and tables.
17 Is there any statistics relative to rumble
18 strips that are less intrusive, I guess, to
19 the driver as far as bouncing of the car?

20 I know when you go into a toll lane
21 and you hit those rumble strips or if you go
22 off onto the side of the highway, on the
23 shoulder, you hear that. Has there been any
24 studies relative to the effectiveness of
25 those?

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 MS. TOOLE: I believe there have
3 been studies on rumble strips, and they are
4 used sometimes as a traffic calming device.
5 We use them in Maryland at times. The problem
6 you'll have is that the bicyclists will hate
7 them. They will be very loud about how much
8 they don't like this.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Well, if they're
10 only in the areas of the streets surrounding
11 schools theoretically.

12 MS. TOOLE: If they don't stretch
13 across the entire lane, if a bicyclist can get
14 around them. But they are a surface hazard
15 for a bicyclist. They can cause bicyclists
16 difficulty.

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Well, if the
18 traffic is calm in the school zones the
19 bicyclists are safer too, I would think.

20 MS. TOOLE: That's true.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilman
22 Rizzo.

23 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Just from my
24 observations here in Philadelphia, it seems as
25 though the principals of the school or the

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 management of the school, they're out of the
3 loop when it come to this part. They don't
4 believe it's their responsibility. I
5 constantly drive -- especially around daylight
6 savings time where our technology is
7 antiquated. I think we all know what these
8 new atomic clocks are. They reset themselves.
9 And there's digital timers.

10 One of the problems that I think
11 we're having here in the City is if there's a
12 power outage in a community, there's nothing
13 worse than to a see flasher on at 2:00 a.m. In
14 the morning. Is there technology out there
15 that would make it less of a maintenance issue
16 where the atomic clock technology could be
17 used to reset them, the signals, and also have
18 a way to digitally set the times? Because the
19 slightest black-out in a particular area
20 throws the signal's sequence off terribly, and
21 constantly they claim it's a terrible
22 maintenance issue. Is there anything that you
23 know of out there, that if we do start
24 installing the radar signs or the flashing
25 lights, any technology that could be less

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 maintenance?

3 MS. TOOLE: I don't know. I don't
4 know if there is. What I didn't tell you is
5 that that speed sign that I showed you the
6 picture of, on the other side it wasn't
7 working. It had zeros. Everybody who was
8 going was not speeding. So I think that the
9 maintenance issue is something that might be
10 solved a little bit by technology, because
11 we're certainly getting better in that
12 respect, but it's probably not going to go
13 away. And that's why, as much as you can, if
14 you can do other geometric things to shorten
15 those crossing distances and improve
16 crosswalks, it helps.

17 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well, our
18 Turnpike Commission and our Garden State
19 Parkway have all those radar signs, the ones
20 that give you the speed as pull into the toll
21 booth. It tells you how fast you're going.
22 And I've asked the question. And that part of
23 the technology seems to be working very well.

24 But the earlier problem that I
25 described where when they're supposed to be

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 working during dismissal time, they're not.
3 And I really believe -- and the School
4 District should be listening -- I think that
5 the oversight of any program, like you
6 mentioned the bollard, if the bollard is not
7 there, somebody from the school should be
8 responsible to make sure that it's ordered or
9 it's replaced. I don't think you can put this
10 burden on the Streets Department to manage it,
11 to actually manage a school safety zone
12 program. I think the School District has to
13 be more involved. Would you agree or not?

14 MS. TOOLE: The others here could
15 probably answer too. But traditionally it has
16 not been the School District. The schools
17 typically don't have jurisdiction over
18 anything but their property.

19 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I'm not
20 suggesting that they are out there installing
21 and repairing. I'm talking when deficiencies
22 occur, when the signs are flashing at 11:00 in
23 the morning instead of 8:00 in the morning,
24 that someone from the School District should
25 be responsible to report to the maintenance

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 people that there's a problem here. I mean,
3 I've called schools and the principal -- and
4 no names -- says, "Oh, yeah. It's been like
5 that for two months now." That, to me, is not
6 good.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you. What
8 I'd like to do, if possible, is whoever would
9 like to go next in sequence of testimony, I'd
10 like to get all the testimony in prior to
11 additional questions, if possible.

12 Please identify yourself for the
13 record.

14 MR. BROWN: Hello, Mr. Chairman and
15 Members of Council. I am Walter Brown, also
16 known as Skip. I'm the Assistant
17 Superintendent for Support Services and
18 Planning for the Paradise Valley School
19 District located in north Phoenix and North
20 Scottsdale. My job entails buying land,
21 building schools, feeding all the children and
22 transportation and pupils' safety.

23 My credentials are I've got a
24 masters in management, a PhD in public
25 administration, and the focus of my

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 dissertation was on pupil and transportation
3 safety. That's probably why I'm selected for
4 all these committees. I think I am the only
5 crossing guard with a doctorate. I've had
6 staff and supervisor responsibilities for
7 student safety within the Paradise Valley
8 Unified School District for 14 years.
9 Additionally, I served on the Phoenix Safe
10 Schools Task Force and the City of Phoenix
11 Streets and Transportation Committee for the
12 last bond election. I make presentation to
13 national risk management associations like
14 PRIMA and the National Safety Council
15 regarding student safety.

16 I'll talk a bit about the Paradise
17 Valley Unified School District. Paradise
18 Valley is one of 46 districts in the metro
19 Phoenix area. It's a little differently
20 organized in here. We have over 300,000
21 students attending public, and even more in
22 private and charter schools.

23 Public schools districts in Arizona
24 are separate governmental agencies from the
25 cities and counties in which they are located.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Consequently, there are constant challenges
3 and opportunities with overlapping the
4 jurisdictions and authorities.

5 Our boundaries include about a 100
6 miles located in two different cities, Phoenix
7 and Scottsdale. The district serves about
8 34,000 pre-K through 12th grade students using
9 44 schools sited in both urban as well as
10 suburban areas. We have 84 crossing sites
11 controlled by 97 crossing guards. Some sites
12 have two guards because of the width of the
13 street or density of the traffic.

14 The problem we've had to deal with,
15 like any major urban area, the streets of
16 metro Phoenix are potentially very dangerous.
17 According to the city there is one traffic
18 fatality every 2.6 hours, one traffic crash
19 every 14.8 minutes, one traffic injury every
20 22.3 minutes, one DUI-related collision every
21 3.5 hours, one bicyclist hit every 2.1 days
22 and one pedestrian hit every two days.

23 The district is located in one of
24 the fastest growing areas in metro Phoenix,
25 which in turn is one of the fastest growing

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 areas in the nation. We're developing about
3 one acre an hour of desert. Miles of new
4 street construction, unfamiliar streets,
5 drivers bringing bad habits from all over the
6 nation, ever-increasing traffic density and
7 maniacs on our streets, which I think I've
8 heard described here as well --

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do you have a
10 lot of Philadelphia transplants out there?

11 MR. BROWN: I'm pretty sure there's
12 nobody left in Chicago because I think they're
13 all from there.

14 By the way, we do boast the highest
15 number of red light runners in the nation.
16 We're not proud of it, but that's what we
17 happen to have.

18 This all presents a very real threat
19 to students making their way to and from
20 school every single day. Only 10,000 of our
21 students are eligible for school bus
22 transportation. The remaining 24,000 are
23 driven by parents or drive themselves -- which
24 is a whole different discussion -- or walk or
25 ride their bicycles or their skateboards --

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 shudder -- as much as a mile and a half to
3 school each day. The task the community faces
4 is to provide a safe environment for the
5 students as they travel to and from school
6 during the 180 school days we have, plus the
7 summer sessions as well. That's kind of the
8 environment we're working with.

9 The strategies my district uses for
10 safety is -- this is mostly for Paradise
11 Valley, but this also has to do with the City
12 of Phoenix because we partner with them pretty
13 thoroughly. Like any complex issue, there is
14 no single answer to school crossing safety.
15 I'll divide the strategies into four major
16 areas; environment, operations, equipment and
17 training.

18 The streets are designed for student
19 and pedestrian safety in Phoenix. They look
20 at them closely. One of Arizona's revised
21 statutes established yellow crossing zones and
22 the use of portable speed zone signs that are
23 rolled out. This is in lieu of the flashing
24 signs, so we're a little low tech, and the
25 school district has to roll the signs in and

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 out. We don't have daylight savings in
3 Arizona because we're backwards there, but the
4 school district is responsible for bringing
5 the signs in and bringing them out every day.

6 The school districts must request
7 for a school zone to be established, and once
8 it's established, the school is responsible
9 for manning that crossing site. Both the
10 cities of Phoenix and Scottsdale have been
11 very responsive to our need for student and
12 pedestrian safe streets. They've posted
13 traffic advisory signs before each crosswalk
14 in fluorescent green and yellow, which you
15 seen earlier, and they've also stenciled in
16 the pavement large words like "school zones"
17 before each crossing. That combined with the
18 roll-out signs gives plenty of warning for the
19 school zones as we get into them.

20 Additionally, Phoenix has thought
21 outside the box a bit and placed signs that
22 are equipped with speed sensors in one of our
23 most dangerous crossings. This is a very wide
24 street that traverses east to west in Phoenix,
25 comes off the freeway, and drivers generally

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 travel around 50 or so. We come to a
3 mid-block crossing where the speed limit is
4 40. They're probably traveling closer to 50,
5 and it drops to 15.

6 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Do those sensor
7 signs only activate during a specific time of
8 the day when the students are arriving and
9 dismissal?

10 MR. BROWN: In this particular case,
11 they do. We give the crossing guards keys to
12 turn those signs on and to turn those signs
13 off, so part of their responsibility is to
14 roll the signs out, plus turn that particular
15 device on.

16 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So they don't
17 function, like, 24/7. Got you. Okay. Thank
18 you.

19 MR. BROWN: The sign flashes while
20 crossing. So you get a little bit of the
21 flashing sign before you get to the
22 intersection. It also displays the sign in a
23 large, easy-to-read panel. And a strobe
24 light, reminiscent of flash photography or
25 photo radar, goes off as you exceed 15 miles

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 per hour. We thought about putting one that
3 would show your speed, but then we thought the
4 children in the area who were driving might
5 decide to use that as a device to see how fast
6 they can go through the speed zone. So we
7 said at over 15 we'll have it flash a strobe
8 light.

9 That crossing was probably the
10 single most dangerous in the city of Phoenix
11 in terms in of potentiality of student injury
12 and death. Traffic routinely sped through the
13 school zone. Traffic speed or passing
14 violations ceased to become a problem
15 immediately after this device was installed.
16 The district is looking into installing
17 similar signs on two other very busy streets.

18 Phoenix is partnering with the
19 district in some other innovative devices like
20 crosswalks with flashing lights embedded in
21 the street, advanced rumble stripes to
22 crossings, and even built a pedestrian bridge.
23 All of these efforts have had some measure of
24 success, but none has been as effective as the
25 sign with the strobe light and the speed

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 sensor I just mentioned.

3 We carefully choose our locations of
4 the schools. Whenever possible we locate
5 elementary schools -- that's pre-kindergarten
6 through 6th grade in my district -- in the
7 middle of neighborhoods and well off arterial
8 roads. We allow middle schools to abut feeder
9 streets, but still avoid the major streets for
10 our 7th and 8th graders. There are fewer
11 pedestrians and bicyclists going to high
12 schools so they are located on the major
13 streets. We want to afford reasonable, safe
14 ingress and access for student drivers and we
15 want to keep them out of neighborhoods,
16 frankly.

17 About 10 years ago we began consider
18 traffic and pedestrian safety when we designed
19 new schools and renovated older ones. In our
20 newer schools, the bus traffic is entirely
21 separated from the parental pick-up traffic.
22 The parental pick-up traffic, in turn, is
23 entirely separated from bicycles and
24 pedestrian traffic.

25 In our older schools, we sometimes

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 don't have the space or the layout to
3 physically separate the modes of
4 transportation. Consequently, we will stagger
5 school bus arrival/departure times or put out
6 road cones or use paints to help get that same
7 kind of effect.

8 Attendance area boundaries are
9 reviewed each year to ensure that new major
10 arterial roads have not suddenly appeared.
11 Once sleepy, backwater streets can become
12 six-lane raceways almost overnight. We'll
13 either modify boundaries so as to preclude
14 children from crossing dangerous streets or
15 provide them with the school bus service if
16 modifying the boundaries isn't feasible.

17 I've left a copy of the Arizona
18 Department of Transportation's rules regarding
19 traffic zones and specifications that we use
20 in Arizona. The document outlines existing
21 laws regarding yellow zones, use of roll-out
22 signs and what kind of painted markings are
23 used in Arizona. Laws and rules represent
24 half the battle. The other half is enforcing
25 them.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Phoenix, like most cities, is short
3 of police officers. We have some tools that
4 help alleviate the shortage. We use photo
5 radar and red light enforcement zones with
6 cameras. In Scottsdale if they found the red
7 light enforcement zone with the camera wasn't
8 enough, they also put a speed sensor for that
9 same thing so people who saw the light turn
10 yellow didn't suddenly hit 50 or 60 trying to
11 get through before the red light sensor would
12 come on. So they get you both ways there in
13 Scottsdale; they get you for speeding as you
14 go through or running a red light if you
15 should go through slowly.

16 It's still difficult to get
17 officers to enforce some of the parking around
18 our schools, which I think is probably a
19 universal problem, and some of the jaywalking
20 offenses commonly found around schools. Our
21 building principals do their very best to
22 enforce safety rules, but typically don't get
23 many thanks for their efforts, as you well
24 might imagine.

25 Under operations, safety and

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 planning of the operations encompasses much of
3 what I do. About 10 years ago I instituted a
4 safety program based on a silly play on words,
5 "Safety is No Accident." The school
6 principals and I met and discussed methods of
7 improving pupil safety, particularly those
8 walking to school.

9 My biggest concern was the unmanned
10 crossing. Parents have a reasonable
11 expectation that their child has a safe route
12 to school. A five or six-year-old crossing
13 the street unescorted is just an absolute
14 recipe for disaster. We decided the most
15 effective way to supervise the crossing guards
16 was not at the district office where we were
17 supervising, but that each individual school
18 would supervise their own crossing sites,
19 bringing the problem down to decentralizing
20 the supervision of crossing guards. This was
21 one of the best ideas we have implemented.
22 The district still helps recruit and we still
23 oversee training and we still check you, but
24 the school supervises the guards. The school
25 is much more able to respond if a crossing

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 guard is missing. I've seen plenty of
3 principals with a vest and a stop paddle
4 working what could have been a very dangerous
5 crossing sight when a crossing guard
6 unexpectedly does not show up for work. If
7 you look in the trunk of my personal car, you
8 will find a stop paddle and a vest, and I have
9 also done that as well. Since we've shifted
10 the responsibility to the buildings and the
11 principals, I cannot remember the last time I
12 had to report an unmanned crosswalk.

13 Several other operational components
14 of safety include coordinating with traffic
15 engineers to develop a safe route to school.
16 The city of Phoenix has been generous and has
17 given us a young man that comes out and shows
18 us the best way to walk to school. Taking
19 that approach has been very useful,
20 particularly as we start getting level three
21 sex offenders registered and living in our
22 district. We can then modify the safe route
23 to schools so we're not walking them through
24 potentially dangerous areas.

25 Several schools sponsor a walk to

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 school day where parents are encouraged to
3 take the time and walk the designated route
4 with their children. This has also been very
5 successful.

6 We have two schools piloting an idea
7 that we saw on television called the Walking
8 School Bus where two adults walk along the
9 route picking up kids at designated bus stops
10 and then walking them to school. Again, this
11 program is very well received and has the
12 effect of having a built-in crossing guard at
13 every single corner and traffic light and
14 driveway.

15 There are other techniques we use to
16 enhance safety. Some we can do with
17 coordination of the city of Phoenix and some
18 we cannot. For example, there are several
19 crossing sites on very wide roads. We simply
20 assign two crossing guards to these sites.
21 This doesn't require any additional
22 coordination. There are other situations
23 where we need wider sidewalks or queuing areas
24 for the students to stand. Typically we can
25 get pedestrian "stand back" lines painted on

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 sidewalks, traffic signal times lengthened for
3 crossing during school times or focused
4 traffic enforcement at a specific crosswalk
5 with little more than a telephone call to the
6 Police Department.

7 The third area was equipment. We
8 provide the typical equipment for our crossing
9 guards. We have reflective garments. We do
10 have a reflective hat that they can wear and
11 we also produce a cold bandanna for our
12 crossing guards. This is appreciated during
13 the first and last few months of the school
14 year, particularly in Arizona where it's
15 starting to get pretty darn hot. And wet
16 weather gear, which is not used very much in
17 the middle of our desert. We have on certain
18 occasions provided our crossing guards with
19 two-way radios. Typically this is so they can
20 call for help in some of the rougher areas of
21 town. The city provides them stop paddles.
22 Phoenix provides the roll out signs, but
23 Scottsdale does not. We have to buy those.
24 Both cities are responsive in installing
25 typical signage, though, no parking signs, the

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 ones that alert you that you're approaching a
3 school crossing zone. All crossings have
4 appropriate street lights for those winter
5 early hours when students walk to school in
6 darkness.

7 Training is probably one of the
8 single most important things and it's one of
9 the most difficult things because we have a
10 high turnover of crossing guards, and I think
11 that's probably endemic nationwide.

12 Again, the equipment is standard,
13 but no matter how good or how complete the
14 equipment is, the single most important
15 component of the safety chain is the crossing
16 guard. Their job description is pretty
17 simple, be the adult at the crossing site.
18 You're not allowed to direct traffic in
19 Arizona. In my district our crossing guards
20 are typically post-retired men and women who
21 want to be involved with schools. The other
22 largest group of our crossing guards are PTA
23 moms who are paid volunteers or sometimes
24 unpaid volunteers. Both groups are very
25 reliable and very dependable. But they need

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 to be trained. They have to have the
3 standardized training package throughout my
4 district and throughout the state. They do a
5 great job.

6 I am always entertained just before
7 winter break or at the end of the school year,
8 the guards get so many presents and baked
9 goods and pins and stuff, they can hardly get
10 back in their cars. That's one of the
11 benefits of having the guards associated with
12 the school, so as they become involved with
13 school activity and school functions they then
14 become identified as members of the school
15 district.

16 It's critical that we train this
17 dedicated and well-meaning group of people.
18 Simply arming them with a paddle and a
19 reflective vest puts them, the children and
20 the motoring public at risk. We have a
21 comprehensive training program that includes a
22 professionally produced videotape -- and I've
23 left copies. There will be one for the white
24 crosswalks and one for the yellow zone
25 crosswalks, and they have it in English and in

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Spanish. And we also have an annual refresher
3 course. My district has provided an
4 auditorium for the City of Phoenix to host
5 this training for the past few years. Other
6 governmental agencies, the county and Arizona
7 Department of Transportation will conduct
8 Train the Trainer seminars where we bring in
9 experts in the field from as far away as
10 Florida. My colleague to my right in fact has
11 been there and did some of that training for
12 us.

13 So how do we know this program is
14 working? You remember we have the mean
15 streets of Phoenix. They certainly are. Here
16 are the stats, just very briefly. The number
17 of children struck while traveling to and from
18 school during school hours from 1993 to
19 present in my district is zero. Crossing
20 guards struck in the line of duty during that
21 same almost decade, we've had four of them
22 struck; one eventually died from their
23 injuries and one was unable to return. The
24 last student fatality in the city of Phoenix I
25 believe in a school crosswalk was in 2000 or

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 possibly 2001.

3 I believe the most important element
4 in an effective safety program is to
5 continually evaluate the conditions and work
6 on improvements for the program. The entire
7 team, the crossing guards, the school
8 administrators, streets department, law
9 enforcement, parents, local businesses, have
10 all got to be involved with this particular
11 effort. It's our collective responsibility to
12 provide a safe environment for all the
13 children.

14 That concludes my presentation. Do
15 you have any questions?

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
17 much. Why don't we have your testimony and
18 then we can come back and ask some questions.

19 Please identify yourself for the
20 record. You have to pull that microphone
21 close to you.

22 MS. MATUSICK: I'm Leigh Matusick.
23 I'm with the Florida Department of Highway
24 Safety and Motor Vehicles, and I am the
25 state's school crossing guard trainer

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 administrator. Florida is only state in the
3 nation that has mandatory standardized
4 training by law for their school crossing
5 guards.

6 Unfortunately, we just didn't think
7 of it. It occurred by a tragic death in 1991
8 of a little boy named Ramon Turnquist (ph).
9 He was on his way to school with his mom.
10 There was a guard at the corner. The light
11 had changed red. The guard told the child to
12 come across the street, and a pick-up truck
13 ran the red light and hit and killed Ramon
14 Turnquist. There was such a public outcry by
15 the Police Department, which we found was kind
16 of odd because they had the crossing guard
17 program within their unit. They thought that
18 if they supplied some safety gear for the
19 guard, told them to go to the corner and get
20 the child across the street, there really
21 wasn't a whole lot of science or a lot of
22 knowledge that needed to go with that. They
23 were surely mistaken. And they readily
24 admitted it.

25 Also we had the state legislation

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 and the school administrators calling for
3 training for the school crossing guards, and
4 for training in education of the students. I
5 have presented at many state conferences
6 around the United States and done training
7 around the United States as well. I'm sorry
8 to say still Florida is the only one in the
9 United States with mandatory training, but we
10 have been able, such as Phoenix, Boston,
11 Detroit and some of the other larger cities,
12 Seattle, Washington, to be able to have their
13 cities come up with a program that will work
14 for them. They are still in the process of
15 making it mandatory for all children within
16 the state.

17 I also have been selected as an
18 expert witness. I have served in numerous
19 trials that have involved school crossing
20 guards, as well as school crossings. Usually,
21 I am sorry to say, it is also due to training
22 that a lot of the deaths and the injuries have
23 occurred -- or rather lack of training.

24 Florida State Statute 316.75 governs
25 the mandatory training. In your packet, I

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 have supplied you a copy of the Florida state
3 statute. I have supplied you a copy of our
4 school crossing guard training guidelines,
5 along with several of our forms that we do use
6 in the state.

7 Governor Jed Bush looks at this as a
8 very important service to the community. In
9 fact, the first Friday of every February is
10 School Crossing Guard Appreciation Day. The
11 governor issues a proclamation as well as
12 three awards for the state; one for guard of
13 the year, one for program of the year, and
14 also one for trainer of the year. So it is an
15 ongoing effort around the state.

16 For the school crossing guards, they
17 are required to have eight hours of training
18 in their initial training; four hours of
19 classroom, two hours in the field at a
20 simulated intersection or a real intersection
21 without students, and then some time during
22 that calendar year, a two-hour on-site
23 observation at their post making sure they are
24 still following the state guidelines.

25 For the school crossing guard

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 trainer, which I do the training for the
3 trainers, they have a two-day program, 16
4 hours. With that program there is also a lot
5 of in-the-field training, making sure they
6 understand how to do the crossing as a
7 crossing guard, as well as training and
8 instructing as a trainer.

9 In the training for the school
10 crossing guards, they go over visibility and
11 conspicuity, how to be seen, where to stand.
12 One of the unique things we found is even
13 though a lot of the crossing guards were
14 grandparents or parents, they didn't
15 understand how children think. Children are
16 not young adults. They think differently than
17 we do. They lack traffic safety skills. They
18 mix fantasy with reality. So all of these
19 also are encompassed with the problems with
20 traffic crashes. They focus on one event or
21 thought at a time. A child standing on the
22 side of the road and their friend calls them
23 across the street, do they stop and look left,
24 right, left before crossing the street, or do
25 they go straight over to their buddy? That's

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 what most important to them. So we have to
3 make the guards as well as the public
4 understand that children see things
5 differently.

6 Not only is school crossing guard
7 training important to the public and the
8 community, but supervision, accountability,
9 record-keeping and daily monitoring is also
10 critical. The school crossing guard program
11 is one of the highest liability divisions
12 within the law enforcement agency. If you
13 place a school crossing guard at a particular
14 intersection, it is public expectation that
15 somebody will be there every day of the school
16 year. School crossing guard posts cannot be
17 left unattended for any reason. Whether it's
18 the school crossing guard, a school substitute
19 guard or the crossing guard supervisor or
20 Police Department, someone must be at that
21 post each and every day. Parents can't guess
22 what day the post is going to be covered and
23 what day the post is not.

24 The motoring public also looks out
25 for the school crossing guards and are known

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 in the crossing areas, and they learn to
3 expect controlled activity of the students at
4 these intersections. If the school crossing
5 guard is not there, the children are likely to
6 run into traffic and/or not wait for the
7 traffic signals or the appropriate gaps in
8 traffic.

9 The purpose of the school crossing
10 guard is also to assist and educate students
11 on traffic behavior. We found in the State of
12 Florida that from K to 12th grade, children
13 are only given about one dollar's worth of
14 traffic safety education in the school system.
15 That's K through 12. But if they don't have
16 that traffic safety education going to and
17 from school and Saturdays, Sundays, holidays
18 and weekends, they're not going to be in
19 school Monday morning to learn reading, math.
20 More so, they may be so severely injured that
21 they may still physically be alive, but not
22 mentally alive where education wouldn't
23 benefit them anyway.

24 In order for the school crossing
25 guard program to work efficiently there must

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 be full commitment and support of the entire
3 police community, along with the City
4 governments to provide support, training,
5 proper road signage and pavement markings.
6 It's also important to have money to fund
7 these programs, as well as funding for
8 training and equipment. This program is an
9 investment in the children of our future and
10 the residents of our cities.

11 The State of Florida is not only
12 committed to the children in the State of
13 Florida, but children across the nation. We
14 as the State of Florida gladly will assist
15 your Police Department, Public Works, City
16 governments any possible way that we can help
17 create the aspects of the Safe Routes to
18 School and to make your children safe as well.

19 I thank you for the opportunity to
20 also be here. My background is law
21 enforcement. I've been doing the school
22 crossing guard program since 1984 and have
23 been with the state now 14 years. So I'll be
24 glad to answer any questions on school
25 crossing guard training, hiring practices and

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 so on.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
4 much for your testimony.

5 First, Dr. Brown, are there specific
6 design standards for either new or refurbished
7 elementary schools or high schools as it
8 relates to pedestrian safety issues? Are
9 there design requirements?

10 MR. BROWN: There are no design
11 requirements. There's a group called
12 Safety (ph), which is a national school design
13 association, and they'd be the ones to publish
14 such a thing as that. But I think because the
15 schools are so different nationwide there's
16 been no standard established.

17 I brought this to the table prior to
18 becoming the guy in charge of building and
19 designing the schools. I was also involved
20 with pupil transportation. And I brought an
21 aspect that typically doesn't come along, and
22 that is probably fairly unique to our
23 district. We provided prototypical designs to
24 other schools in the districts throughout
25 Phoenix and people like the idea when you

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 finally say it to them. They go, well, yeah,
3 that's a great idea.

4 But in answer to your question,
5 there is no specific design minimum standards
6 or even guidelines.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: One of the
8 opportunities that we have here in
9 Philadelphia is that Paul Vallas, our
10 superintendent, is embarking on a large-scale
11 new construction program for high schools and
12 a large-scale renovation program for our
13 elementary schools. And I'm wondering whether
14 or not there were some standards that maybe he
15 could roll into the design requirements for
16 both the new schools and for the refurbished
17 schools to maybe give us some ability at this
18 point to change some of the structure of the
19 schools relative to bus drop-off, parent
20 pick-up, especially in urban areas.

21 I know in suburban areas you have
22 the large parking lots and you can do
23 different things. When you're in a local
24 elementary school or high school that's in the
25 middle of a city, it's hard to redesign. Most

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 of our schools are 50, 60, 80 years old and
3 were designed when people didn't drive at all.
4 You said you could recommend --

5 MR. BROWN: I could see if I could
6 find if there is such a thing. I know the
7 headquarters for that particular organization
8 is in Scottsdale. I'll make a visit and see
9 if they've gotten any base standards. I can
10 report them back.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
12 much.

13 We're going to hear a little bit
14 later from people in the City and we're going
15 to discuss -- I'm not even aware in the City
16 right now what the training requirements are
17 for crossing guards and how much ongoing
18 training they receive once hired. It kind of
19 shocked me a little bit, I guess, the fact
20 that the State of Florida has a person that
21 does nothing but dealing with crossing guards
22 and crossing guard standards and training.
23 It's amazing. I know there's not one in the
24 State of Pennsylvania. Certainly there's an
25 office here in the City, but I don't think

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 it's as extensive as what you've talked about.

3 How do you become a crossing guard
4 in Florida?

5 MS. MATUSICK: Ninety-three percent
6 of all the school crossing guard programs in
7 the State of Florida are run out of local law
8 enforcement agencies. There's different types
9 of hiring practices as well as notifying
10 people. Everybody usually thinks the norm of
11 the newspaper. With that comes different
12 types of people, different people looking for
13 different types of work. So from there you
14 really need to start targeting the areas that
15 you need the school crossing guards. One of
16 the best places to look at is at churches.
17 All people usually go to a church within their
18 community. Work with the church, have a
19 little bulletin put in the church bulletin,
20 have somebody come and speak.

21 I think there's a misconception of
22 what school crossing guards are. Most people
23 don't even know they get paid, and they don't
24 know how they get there or why they're really
25 even there. So by somebody going out

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 publicly, which takes a little bit of time
3 because it's usually after the normal working
4 hours, but hitting the PTAs, going to your
5 rotary clubs, going to any kind of civic
6 organizations and let them know that you are
7 having a problem or needing guards.

8 Another place that we really found
9 effective in finding part-time people was
10 through our city newsletter. We put it in the
11 paychecks and just said we were looking for
12 part-time people. We found those people
13 usually stayed because their spouse had the
14 full-time paying job and they want to do an
15 excellent job, even part-time, so it wouldn't
16 interfere. So there's a lot of avenues that
17 you could look at. You just have to be a
18 little more creative.

19 With that, though, comes the
20 hiring --

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: This is a very
22 loud City. Sometimes I think it's louder than
23 New York. This is just a regular occurrence.

24 MS. MATUSICK: With that also comes
25 some different perspectives with hiring. The

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 most important, making sure that you do
3 background checks on the people that you hire
4 even though they're part-time. Workman's comp
5 issues, making sure that they're physically
6 fit. I live in Florida where we don't have
7 snow, but here in the winters, they're
8 standing out in the cold and in the summer and
9 spring. We're making sure they're physically
10 fit. We do a little hearing test and eye test
11 because you wouldn't want a hearing impaired
12 or a sight impaired crossing guard. If you
13 don't put those parameters in place prior as a
14 requirement for hiring, you're going to have
15 issues with that as well.

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: When it comes to
17 equipment, standardized equipment as far as
18 clothing, reflective clothing, paddles, radio,
19 is there a standard developed as well or in
20 areas of standardized equipment? In Florida
21 they require equipment for all guards?

22 MS. MATUSICK: Reflective vests, a
23 stop paddle and/or fluorescent gloves and a
24 whistle. But the agencies are more than
25 welcome to uniform their guards above that.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 If there is no uniform in process, they need
3 to have strict dress codes. You don't want
4 somebody standing on the corner with a shirt
5 with a beer logo or tobacco logo. Again, as a
6 public image, these people are your employees,
7 and they have to reflect positively. The
8 whistle isn't used each and every time, but
9 it's more of an emergency audio device if the
10 guard is in the roadway.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do you find that
12 the paddle is effective? Sometimes I'll see a
13 guard with paddles. A lot of times we don't.
14 I was just curious as to how effective the
15 paddle is in traffic calming or in
16 notification that there's an intersection
17 there.

18 MS. MATUSICK: Well, the MUTCD, the
19 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
20 requires anybody working in the roadway must
21 have at least an 18-inch paddle with a
22 six-inch lettering. They can either be metal
23 or they can be some sort of plastic. Florida
24 is the lightning capital of the world. We
25 don't suggest the metal paddles, as we don't

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 want the guards to be lightning rods. They
3 have enough trouble with traffic without
4 adding the lightning as well. But we find for
5 older people even though they are effective,
6 sometimes with the wind, it tends to blow
7 their wrists back. I think they're more
8 effective. A lot of guards like to have both
9 hands free in case of something. That's why
10 we require the fluorescent gloves so at least
11 when they're out there, they're not bare
12 handed.

13 Skip.

14 MR. BROWN: Our requirement is
15 simply a reflective vest and the paddle and we
16 tend to also go with the plastic paddles for
17 lightness. And then from time to time our
18 guards, like everybody else, have a little
19 road rage. So should they happen to whack a
20 car, I'd rather have them whack it with a
21 plastic paddle than a metal one, that's for
22 sure.

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: How about
24 Phoenix's minimum training requirements?

25 MR. BROWN: Well, there's no

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 formalized minimum training requirements. As
3 Leigh said, there's none in the state. We're
4 kind of backed into it by saying, what can we
5 do, and what needs to be a minimum. And the
6 minimum, we have the videotapes that I left a
7 copy of. This is produced by one of our local
8 news anchors. It's professional. It's not a
9 just a talking head type of thing. The thing
10 shows pictures and so on. That gives us a
11 standardized training for every single guard.
12 And it's very important to have something that
13 you can do more than simply once a year
14 because the guards tend to turn over rather
15 rapidly. At least we have a high turbulence.

16 And so before someone goes out be a
17 guard, whether it's a building principal, a
18 custodian or a new hire, then you see the tape
19 just to make sure they don't put the signs out
20 wrong and do it incorrectly. Then annually,
21 we host a city-wide crossing guard forum. And
22 that's a delightful three-hour period of time
23 where they have a chance to talk to law
24 enforcement, the streets, as well as get
25 whatever the updates are. And they tend to

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 get free gimmies like reflective hats and
3 things like that. We'll do Train the
4 Trainers. We're about to do another large
5 Train the Trainer throughout the metro Phoenix
6 area. That will be coming up next month.
7 That's being run by something called Maricopa
8 Association of Governments, Maricopa County,
9 which is overlaying all the messes of
10 municipalities we've got. So those are the
11 three things we primarily do.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What in Florida
13 and in Phoenix, what kind of cooperation do
14 you get from law enforcement when it comes to
15 the enforcement of speed limitations in school
16 zones? Is it an aggressive, zero-tolerance
17 type of operation or do you find it hit and
18 miss?

19 MR. BROWN: In Scottsdale, in fact,
20 it's very, very tightly enforced. I think
21 through the whole metro Phoenix area actually.
22 You'd be likely to get a ticket. The ticket's
23 fine is \$110 and two points on your traffic
24 record. If we don't have enough officers --
25 and we typically don't -- they've got some

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 mobile photo radar units that they can bring
3 out to a troublesome crossing. And in
4 Scottsdale they have vans that actually drive
5 around to these different places or we can get
6 motor policemen. So they've been very
7 responsive to us and it really works quite
8 well.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And in Florida?

10 MS. MATUSICK: We have a little
11 different set-up as far as law enforcement
12 hierarchy than you do here in Pennsylvania.
13 We have city police officers, but our city
14 police officers handle everything in the city,
15 including traffic, running radar, writing
16 tickets, traffic homicide as well. Our county
17 sheriff's office is the law office in the
18 unincorporated areas of the county. And then
19 our State Police are mainly state highway
20 patrol where they only do traffic on our state
21 roads and our inner state. So it's a little
22 bit different.

23 But, yes, the cities as well as the
24 counties actively target those school crossing
25 areas. Most every city and county has big

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 blitzes right in the beginning of school
3 reminding people that might have forgotten
4 that schools are in session. And they write
5 tickets. Florida also has doubled the fine
6 for a speeding violation in legally posted
7 school zones. If you're caught going 30 or
8 above it's a minimum \$500 fine base ticket,
9 not counting court costs and points on the
10 license as well. So it is taken very
11 seriously.

12 Also, Florida for their normal speed
13 laws, zero to five miles an hour over a posted
14 speed is a mandatory warning, not in a school
15 zone. A school zone is the only type of speed
16 zone that has a mandatory citation with it,
17 with no warnings at all.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Well, I don't
19 have any other questions. I want to thank you
20 for taking the time to come in. It was a
21 very, very terrific presentation. It was very
22 enlightening and we appreciate your
23 contribution to helping us solve our problem.
24 Thank you very much.

25 MS. MATUSICK: Thank you. Also, in

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 your packet -- and I think Jennifer was kind
3 of talking about it too -- things also to help
4 the children that the state does. We were
5 talking about give-aways in education. And
6 I've supplied you with some blinking lights
7 that let the kids be seen, the slap bracelets,
8 even though they're fun, gives them the
9 fluorescent and retro reflective. So it's a
10 whole conglomeration with that as well. And
11 there's some other samples in there.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I assume that
13 all your traffic signs in the school zones are
14 all yellow-green fluorescent, not just the
15 flat --

16 MS. MATUSICK: The yellow-black?
17 We're in the process -- the MUTCD, the Manual
18 on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, the 2000
19 version just made that as far as the
20 yellow-green is acceptable with the
21 yellow-black. So the state didn't go around
22 and change them all to the yellow-black. We
23 are in the process of changing them. But all
24 of Section 7 governs school crossing guard
25 signage. The State of Florida has a mandate

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 for how all school zones are supposed to be
3 marked, whether it's at a signalized
4 intersection, a stop sign mid block, a regular
5 type of crossing. And that is part of the
6 training because the crossing guards are there
7 every day and they go in and out of the school
8 zones, so it's important that they know how
9 they're supposed to be marked. So if there
10 are any problems, then the crossing guards can
11 report that as well as the supervisors who
12 should be out there daily making sure the
13 guards are on post.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thanks again for
15 your testimony.

16 Mr. Goldsmith, I saw him leave the
17 room earlier. If there's someone representing
18 him.

19 If not, is Commissioner Tolson or
20 someone from the Streets Department here?

21 And Dexter Green.

22 Is there anyone from the
23 Philadelphia Police Department here?

24 (No response.)

25 COMMISSIONER TOLSON: Good

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 afternoon. My name is Clarena Tolson,
3 Commissioner of the Philadelphia Streets
4 Department. Managing Director Goldsmith is on
5 his way. He's returning.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Please proceed.

7 COMMISSIONER TOLSON: I welcome the
8 opportunity to testify about the safety of
9 children going to and from school. The
10 Streets Department is a committed partner in
11 providing a safe route to school.

12 Static school speed limit signs are
13 erected on streets abutting schools. Since
14 1996, school flashing signal devices have been
15 installed at 155 schools, 23 in Calendar 2003.
16 We have begun laying out school flasher
17 locations under an FY' 2004 contract for
18 \$342,000. We expect this contract to install
19 school flashers at about 15 schools. As an
20 innovation to maximize the use of City
21 dollars, the Department is now including
22 school flashers on federally funded
23 improvement projects. Three schools have had
24 new flasher signals installed as part of an
25 Ogontz Avenue project.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Designated school crossings are
3 signed in accordance with state regulations
4 and crosswalks are marked with the continental
5 zebra pattern. Continental crosswalks are
6 also placed across controlled streets in a
7 school block. As a member of the Managing
8 Director's School Safety Task Force, the
9 Department is conducting an inspection of the
10 signage and markings at more than 1,000
11 designated school crossings. As of April 15,
12 944 crossings have been checked, and 736
13 signed work orders issued. Signs at 208
14 locations were satisfactory. Work has been
15 completed on 257 of them.

16 If one school crossing sign needs to
17 be replaced, we're replacing all the school
18 crossing signs with the fluorescent
19 yellow-green signs. Work orders also have
20 been issued to remark continental crosswalks
21 at 25 intersections. Crosswalks at 919
22 crossings were satisfactory.

23 At the request of the Managing
24 Director's School Safety Task Force, the
25 School District conducted a parking sign

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 survey. The Department's Traffic Engineering
3 Division is reviewing them for needed signage.
4 In the past, parking during school hours was
5 prohibited from streets abutting a school.
6 This was done to combat dart-out crashes by
7 providing additional visibility to both child
8 and vehicle. The School District's Safety
9 Office is reviewing loading and parking needs
10 at the schools. The Department will review
11 these recommendations, with our primary
12 emphasis being student safety during arrival
13 and dismissal. Loading and/or parking may be
14 permitted on the side of schools that do not
15 have direct access to the building or the
16 property. The safety of our children and our
17 students is a responsibility of all of us, and
18 the Streets Department will continue to work
19 with all to provide safe streets.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
22 much.

23 Chief, could you give your
24 testimony?

25 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Councilman.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Good afternoon.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm sorry. Just
4 for the record, you need to identify yourself.

5 MR. GREEN: My name is Dexter Green.
6 I'm the Chief Safety Executive for the School
7 District of Philadelphia.

8 Child pedestrian injuries are
9 frequently serious and often deadly.
10 Nationwide pedestrian injuries remains the
11 second leading cause of unintentional injury
12 and related death among children five to 14.
13 Children have difficulty judging how fast cars
14 are moving, how far away they are and which
15 direction traffic sounds are coming from.
16 They have trouble recognizing and reacting to
17 danger, which you heard earlier today. Most
18 children are struck in streets or driveways
19 near their homes when darting out between
20 parked cars, crossing in the middle of the
21 block or at other non-intersection locations.
22 Other children dart out between cars parked
23 illegally around schools. Tragically, many of
24 our victims are victims of speeding and
25 irresponsible drivers. To date there have

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 been 70 children pedestrian accidents since
3 the beginning of this school year.

4 The School District of Philadelphia
5 takes very seriously the safety and security
6 of our students. As such, the District has
7 implemented the following safety initiatives
8 aimed at increasing awareness of traffic and
9 bus safety and protecting our students from
10 future incidents.

11 Safe Corridors is one of the
12 programs the District has taken on. This
13 initiative recruits parents and community
14 members to volunteer to create safe routes to
15 and from school for students. Dozens of
16 volunteers this year have received training
17 and equipment, including vests, walkie-talkies
18 and other identifying apparel from the School
19 District of Philadelphia.

20 A new program is the Walking Bus
21 Safety Program, which we're bringing here to
22 Philadelphia. Every school administrator has
23 been asked to identify a safe and heavily
24 traveled route to and from school and to make
25 the route part of the official school safety

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 plan.

3 Every child and parent/guardian has
4 received a Safe Corridors Tip brochure, which
5 was produced by the School District of
6 Philadelphia, which advises them on safety
7 involving travel, bus and traffic safety.

8 The School District works in
9 conjunction with the City of Philadelphia, and
10 in particular the Managing Director's Office,
11 the Philadelphia Police Department, Streets,
12 Licenses and Inspections and the Traffic
13 Engineer's Office is working as a task force
14 to develop strategies to promote pedestrian
15 safety. The School District's multi-agency
16 partnership includes, as I said, the Police
17 Department and their school crossing guards,
18 law enforcement and also the highway flashing
19 lights in front of our schools.

20 The School District provided for the
21 first time last summer, provided funding for
22 summer school, which had never been done
23 before, for school crossing guards. Mr.
24 Goldsmith is not in the room yet. We haven't
25 paid the bill, but we intend to do that very

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 soon.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Consider
4 yourself the Gas Works. You don't have to pay
5 us anything. Consider yourself PGW.

6 MR. GREEN: No. The money is in my
7 budget and we're going to take care of that.
8 We're also going to do that program again this
9 summer, for this year's summer school.

10 Safety is incorporated in the
11 school's curriculum. We have a wristwatch
12 program which talks about bike safety,
13 pedestrian safety, fire safety and some other
14 issues. School police officers and our school
15 mobile patrols patrol around our schools
16 during arrival and dismissal times.

17 In addition, there are an other
18 strategies that the School District is
19 exploring to address child pedestrian safety,
20 including developing a partnership with Triple
21 A and the Department of Transportation.

22 The CEO, Paul Vallas, has committed
23 to contributing \$1 million to the City of
24 Philadelphia for the flashing lights near and
25 around public and charter schools. We will

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 continue also to look for and secure other
3 grant funding for additional flashing lights,
4 if needed, or to create safe school zones, and
5 grants for conducting engineering studies to
6 improve pedestrian safety near and around our
7 schools.

8 Increasing school participation in
9 implementing educational programs and events,
10 i.e., "Walk Our Children to School Week" and
11 other safety campaigns, safety book covers and
12 coloring books will be provided. Training for
13 parents -- and this is essential for us --
14 training of parent volunteers to teach young
15 children the basic pedestrian skills that will
16 enable them to better handle a variety of
17 traffic situations in a flexible way.

18 Finally, requesting an increase in
19 law enforcement and traffic enforcement in and
20 around our schools, and that has been part of
21 our dialog in the Managing Director's Office.

22 The District thanks you for the
23 opportunity to present here today and we thank
24 the Council for its continued support.

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 Managing Director, would you like to
3 give your testimony, and then we'll have some
4 questions?

5 MR. GOLDSMITH: Thank you for
6 indulging me for leaving.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I know you're
8 busy.

9 MR. GOLDSMITH: Good afternoon. My
10 name is Phil Goldsmith, Managing Director for
11 the City of Philadelphia. Thank you for
12 giving me this opportunity to explain what the
13 City is doing to ensure the safety of our
14 children as they walk to and from school.

15 I want to thank you, Councilman
16 Kenney, for chairing this. And I found a lot
17 of comments I heard earlier very informative.
18 When the Daily News recently raised concerns
19 about students being struck by cars as they
20 walk to and from schools, they found that the
21 responsibility for the safety of children was
22 divided, and that there was a lack of
23 coordination among those who shared that
24 responsibility. As a result, the safety of
25 children walking to and from school was not

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 receiving the focus and attention that it
3 deserved.

4 In response to these concerns, I
5 convened a School Safety Zone Task Force to
6 assess student pedestrian safety throughout
7 the City. The task force is composed of
8 representatives from the Police and Street
9 Departments, the City Planning Commission, the
10 School District, the Mayor's Office, the
11 Archdiocese, Traffic Court, and recently the
12 Parking Authority.

13 I authorized the task force to take
14 immediate corrective action where appropriate
15 and to recommend strategies to enhance the
16 safety of children walking to and from school
17 through a combination of initiatives.

18 It was interesting listening to
19 Jennifer Toole talk. I think our approach is
20 similar to what she was articulating, which I
21 would say is a balanced approach. Number one
22 is new traffic engineering measures. Number
23 two is pedestrian safety education for
24 children -- and I might add parents because I
25 think we can never lose sight of the fact of

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 parental responsibility -- and three law
3 enforcement strategies.

4 Since being convened in November
5 2003, which I would say is actually before the
6 publication of the Daily News article, though
7 we knew it was going to run, the task force
8 has taken a number of steps, including taking
9 immediate corrective action where appropriate,
10 such as reassigning an underutilized school
11 crossing guard to a higher need crossing
12 location near the Forrest Elementary School
13 within a matter of days of that matter being
14 brought to our attention.

15 I recently earlier this morning, I
16 asked the Streets Department to take a look at
17 the Franklin Town Charter School area where a
18 child was injured yesterday, and have asked
19 them to report back to me next week as to what
20 steps we have to take there. We directed the
21 Streets Department to conduct a comprehensive
22 safety audit of more than 1,000 school
23 crossing sites to ensure that all traffic
24 control devices are installed properly and are
25 functioning. Let me report that as of April

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 15th, 944 crossing sites have been checked,
3 generating 736 work orders. All work orders
4 generated by this audit should be completed by
5 the beginning of the new school year.

6 As the Streets Department completes
7 the safety audit, they will replace missing or
8 damaged older style yellow school crossing
9 guards with more visible fluorescent signs.
10 Again, those were mentioned in the slide show
11 and we have some in place. I hope you've had
12 the opportunity to see them. Eventually, all
13 of the older style yellow signs will be phased
14 out in favor of the new more visible signs.

15 The Streets Department will also
16 replace worn or install new, white continental
17 crosswalks at school crossing sites as needed.
18 The task force also asked the Streets
19 Department to conduct an analysis of parking
20 surveys completed by every public school at
21 the request of the task force. Once the
22 Streets Department completes its analysis of
23 the parking surveys, they will make
24 appropriate changes in parking around schools
25 to enhance pedestrian safety at arrival and

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 dismissal times.

3 At the request of the task force,
4 the Police Department has implemented a
5 progressive enforcement plan to address law
6 enforcement of speeding and other traffic
7 violations in school zones. This enforcement
8 plan will initially target schools with
9 priority enforcement needs as identified
10 jointly by the School District and the Police
11 Department. The Police Department will also
12 take advantage of opportunities as it has to
13 partner with the State Police whenever
14 possible to enforce school speed limits at
15 priority locations with radar guns, which can
16 only be used by State Police under state law.

17 At the request of the task force,
18 the District has required all public schools
19 to prepare a safe routes to school plan for
20 students and parents. These plans have been
21 submitted to the School District's Office of
22 School Climate and Safety for approval.
23 Approved plans will be distributed this spring
24 to students and families.

25 Also at the request of the task

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 force, the District is directing all schools
3 to revise their School Safety Plans for the
4 year 2004-2005 to include an educational
5 component for auto and pedestrian safety. In
6 addition, schools will be required to develop
7 pick-up and drop-off plans designed to improve
8 traffic safety in school zones. Students and
9 parents should be educated about safety
10 procedures for walking and driving to and from
11 school.

12 Early in the school year flashing
13 lights at public schools were reprogrammed to
14 coincide with the hours of the new
15 after-school and extended day programs. They
16 will be reprogrammed again at the end of the
17 school year to coincide with the extended year
18 programs. I've also asked the task force to
19 determine how many crossing guards we need
20 throughout the City and to establish criteria
21 for their deployment. I've asked them to
22 complete their analysis within 30 days so that
23 their recommendations will be available for
24 review within the current budget process.

25 At the request of the Traffic Court,

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 we've also added a section to tickets to label
3 whether the accident occurred in a school
4 zone, and police have been asked to add a
5 field in its accident report to include the
6 age of a pedestrian involved in an automobile
7 pedestrian accident.

8 Finally, the task force is exploring
9 different legislative strategies to enforce
10 enforcement measures.

11 Number one, we believe our police
12 should be able to use radar in school zones.
13 We do not understand why our police should be
14 unarmed when it comes to protecting the safety
15 of our school children.

16 Two, we believe that school zones,
17 just like construction work areas, should be
18 singled out for additional penalties when
19 people get caught speeding or in accidents.

20 And three, we believe that when it
21 comes to double parking or illegal parking
22 around our schools, the fines should be
23 doubled.

24 As the task force completes its work
25 over the coming months, we must remember that

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 the safety of children is a shared
3 responsibility. That responsibility is shared
4 by crossing guards, the police, traffic
5 engineers, schools, parents, people who drive
6 throughout our City, as well as the children
7 themselves. With the right combination of
8 traffic engineering measures, enforcement and
9 educational efforts we hope to change the
10 conditions and attitudes that have left too
11 many of our children injured or even killed by
12 automobile pedestrian accidents.

13 I'd like to take this opportunity to
14 thank the Daily News, which I don't often do,
15 for highlighting this important issue and
16 helping to define the problem, and even
17 suggesting some solutions. As part of their
18 continuing coverage, I would like to see the
19 Daily News publish the names of the drivers
20 who were caught putting our children at risk
21 as they walk to and from school. If we're
22 going to publish the pictures of johns, I
23 think it also makes sense to publish the names
24 of those that are caught speeding in our
25 school zone areas.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 So we will continue our work as a
3 task force. I want to thank all the members
4 of the task force and the cooperation that
5 we're getting and hopefully the progress that
6 we will be making in the months and year
7 ahead.

8 Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
10 much.

11 Managing Director Goldsmith and
12 perhaps even Dexter Green could answer maybe
13 from your experience as a high-ranking police
14 official, it's my anecdotal information -- and
15 I've heard it from other places before, not
16 just experience -- is that probably the least
17 busy time of the day for our police officers
18 crime-wise is that early morning hour, 7:00 to
19 9:00, 10:00. Do you find that in your
20 experience to be accurate, that it's usually
21 late night times that are more priority call
22 times as opposed to an 8:00 in the morning
23 type of time frame?

24 MR. GREEN: When it comes to
25 priority calls, that's probably true. But

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 there are other calls that I think that
3 sometimes officers need to respond to. So
4 when they're assigned, quite often when
5 they're assigned a school crossing, if a call
6 comes out, they're required to take those
7 calls.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: My thought is
9 not assigning the officer to the school
10 crossing, but to have the officer in a marked
11 police car in the school area while the
12 crossing guards are doing their work, they
13 could then be dispatched on a priority or
14 non-priority call and leave the scene at that
15 particular point, but they'd be in a car. I
16 guess, though, is that part of the enforcement
17 is there's not much visibility within the
18 school zones. We're only talking about a time
19 frame usually about quarter to 8:00 to perhaps
20 quarter to 9:00. It's only an hour time frame
21 both in the morning and in the afternoon when
22 they're getting out.

23 In addition to the pedestrian safety
24 issues, there's lots of stuff that goes on
25 around schools that we would like to get a

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 handle on, and that's strange guys in cars,
3 kids selling and buying drugs, fights
4 potentially after there. So wouldn't it
5 behoove us at some point to be able to within
6 our districts have those marked vehicles
7 assigned there on-call for other business, but
8 in the area of the schools during the morning
9 and dismissal times? It doesn't seem to me to
10 be that -- again, there may be other reasons
11 why we can't do it, but it seems it would
12 cover a lot of bases.

13 MR. GOLDSMITH: I think one of the
14 things that we do know is that we do know that
15 schools open at a certain time and close at a
16 certain time. I might say the task force has
17 gone through a certain amount of discussion
18 and debate among ourselves, for example, with
19 the flashing lights, as to when they should be
20 on or off. There are some that believe they
21 should be on all the time because schools are
22 a magnet for activity, whether it be
23 recreational activities or --

24 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Basketball
25 practice.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 MR. GOLDSMITH: Whatever. I would
3 say when it comes to police, this is an issue
4 we're dealing with the police. And I would
5 say that we've got over 400 schools in this
6 City when you throw in the charter schools and
7 parochial schools and so forth. I know we
8 don't have the manpower to specifically do
9 precisely what you're suggesting. But I think
10 conceptually there's more that we can do. We
11 will be looking at it from a deployment
12 perspective.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I guess even if
14 you looked at 20 to 25 percent of our more
15 dangerous, highly traveled, higher speed
16 areas. I'm sure there's some elementary
17 schools in neighborhoods that don't experience
18 that kind of traffic. But there are other
19 areas, Wayne Avenue or Germantown Avenue or
20 Broad Street or wherever, there's a lot of
21 traffic and a lot of volume and a lot of
22 speed. I just think that police presence for
23 that 45-minute to an hour period twice a day
24 would calm a lot of people.

25 You know, you look at your

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035
2 speedometer sometimes as soon as you see a
3 police car, especially on the turnpike. I
4 always have to check my speedometer if I see
5 them up ahead. But I just -- and I also
6 understand that officers feel -- some officers
7 feel that being assigned actual crossing guard
8 duty is kind of degrading and beneath them. I
9 don't agree with them, but I think they often
10 feel that's not something they want to be
11 doing. So I guess if they're assigned to be
12 in their car on call and could respond to
13 anything during the course of that time, I'd
14 appreciate you looking at that.

15 MR. GOLDSMITH: I should say we're
16 also working with the Parking Authority to
17 really get their help and assistance in the
18 issue of illegal parking, double parking
19 around schools and so forth. I think you're
20 going to see us being much more stringent on
21 those issues.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: That's going to
23 be the battle, I'll tell you right now. It's
24 going to be the battle with the public, at
25 least with the parents. We couldn't get

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 people to move their cars to sweep their
3 streets. We had to abandon the program.
4 Frank DiCicco had an opponent in last year's
5 election because he had the audacity to try to
6 sweep their streets and ask them to move their
7 cars or they would be ticketed, so he winds up
8 with an opponent, who's one of his issues is
9 based on ticketing for street sweeping, which
10 the most bizarre thing I've ever heard.

11 What I'm concerned about is that
12 elected officials like ourselves, once that
13 initial torrent starts -- again, the issue
14 with the Parking Authority is they usually
15 don't start until about 9:30, 10:00 in the
16 metered areas because I think that's when the
17 enforcement begins. If you were to get them
18 out there maybe a bit earlier in the school
19 zones in the areas where they're servicing and
20 they start writing a reasonable amount of
21 tickets early on, we're going to get a raft of
22 complaints. But if we weather that, I think
23 that behavior gets modified.

24 MR. GOLDSMITH: I agree. Unless we
25 show people that we're serious about

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035
2 enforcement, then we're just whistling Dixie.
3 And I would say there's differences between
4 ticketing someone so you can clean the street
5 and ticketing someone so you can protect a
6 child. I think they're two different issues.
7 But we are working with the Parking Authority
8 and we'll see what they can do in terms of
9 their timing.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Commissioner
11 Tolson, there was discussion earlier of speed
12 bumps, speed tables, rumble strips, has the
13 Department looked at any of those things?
14 Does PennDOT have an opinion on them? Is
15 there something that could done in that area?

16 COMMISSIONER TOLSON: There's
17 certainly regulations and guidelines that we
18 have to be governed by. However, I think the
19 Department is trying to take a new look at the
20 whole notion of slowing down the City and
21 making the streets safer. So we are
22 reexamining the issue on use of speed bumps or
23 humps in the City. We have a couple of
24 applications that we're testing out with soft
25 rumble strips.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What are they?

3 COMMISSIONER TOLSON: They're a
4 plastic bubble applied to the street. They
5 don't provide the same vibration that was
6 talked about earlier, what you see at the
7 turnpike, as you mentioned earlier today.
8 We're testing that in, I think, two locations
9 around the City to see if we can get traffic
10 to slow down a little bit and also to examine
11 how the neighboring houses respond to their
12 use. So we will be progressive in our action
13 and looking at all alternatives to slow the
14 City down.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: When it comes to
16 the equipping of crossing guards, uniform,
17 reflective gear, safety equipment, paddles,
18 which I don't see too much of, have we kind of
19 looked over how we equip our guards? I know a
20 lot of our guards have been guards for many,
21 many years and kind of have their own style --
22 general uniform -- but their own style of
23 wearing it and what's worn when and what time
24 of the year. Again, it's a very difficult
25 job. It's very dangerous, and it's very cold

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 and it's very hot and very wet when it rains.
3 There's various issues. But is there any look
4 at standardizing both the uniform and guard
5 equipment?

6 MR. GOLDSMITH: I do not know the
7 answer to that. Lieutenant Cummings is here
8 --

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: He's up next.

10 MR. GOLDSMITH: He may know that
11 answer.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Education issues
13 relative to the School District. It was
14 testified to earlier, I think, that some
15 districts that don't pay attention to this as
16 much as -- we look like we're paying attention
17 to it now -- may wind up with one hour of
18 pedestrian crossing training for students K to
19 12th grade, period. When I remember growing
20 up -- and I'm sure all of us do -- all the
21 amount of fire safety training that we get and
22 nowadays stranger safety training that
23 children get. Is there any discussion within
24 the District or within the task force to
25 really expand the amount of in-school

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 instructions children get on how to traverse
3 to and from and traffic rules and regulations
4 and the like?

5 MR. GREEN: I think one of our
6 shortcomings -- we have the Wristwatch
7 Programs in the K to 8th grades, which talks,
8 as I said before, about bike safety,
9 pedestrian safety, bus safety, fire safety.
10 One of the problems and one of the things that
11 I think we're trying to correct on our end is
12 knowing what safety programs are in each of
13 the -- particularly the elementary schools.
14 And we haven't successfully completed that.

15 One of the things we'd like to do is
16 find out first what programs are in what
17 schools and then look at the best programs.
18 And as someone said earlier, there are a lot
19 of programs you can take right off the shelf.
20 Triple A has a program out. PennDOT has a
21 program out that we can take right off the
22 shelf and put in our schools. Mr. Vallas has
23 asked us to take a real serious look at that,
24 and again, he's willing to come up with the
25 dollars to get it done.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: That would
3 include, I guess, the software for computer
4 programs that children could interact with?

5 MR. GREEN: Absolutely. Yes.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I know we've
7 always done for years fire drills. I'm
8 wondering whether or not on a smaller
9 class-by-class basis there's some way to do
10 kind of safety drills as it relates to
11 crossing street crossings and the like. So
12 maybe that is something you could also look at
13 in getting kids physically on the scene to
14 show them what some of the hazards and issues
15 are relative to getting home and getting to
16 school.

17 MR. GREEN: We'll explore that.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I want to thank
19 you for your work and the task force. I want
20 to thank you for coming in today and for your
21 patience. I wanted to get some of our
22 national people on so we had a framework. And
23 I do appreciate your coming in. We intend to
24 as a Committee issue some recommendations also
25 and hopefully they will be able to mesh and

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 coincide with what you're doing.

3 Representative from the Police
4 Department and Betty McDonald.

5 After that we'll have Roxanne
6 Galeota and Sean McAleer. They'll be our last
7 two witnesses.

8 Please identify yourself.

9 MR. CUMMINGS: Eugene Cummings,
10 Philadelphia Police Department.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Please proceed.

12 MR. CUMMINGS: I don't have any
13 formal testimony. I'm sorry.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. But
15 you've been listening to testimony here today
16 relative to -- I guess your area is the
17 hiring, training, staffing of corners?

18 MR. CUMMINGS: Not exactly. But I
19 represent the Deputy Commissioner for
20 Operations, Deputy Commissioner Fox. She's
21 regrets that she's not able to attend, but she
22 empowered me to provide you some answers or to
23 get the answers for you.

24 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Well, if there's
25 anything you've heard either from a question

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 standpoint or from a testimony standpoint that
3 you would like to respond to, fine. If you're
4 not prepared to respond, it's not an issue
5 because you probably weren't told to be
6 prepared. So if there's something you'd like
7 to just add to the record as a result of what
8 you've heard, that would be fine.

9 MR. CUMMINGS: With relationship to
10 the school crossing guard training?

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Yes, sir.

12 MR. CUMMINGS: The Department
13 provides a four-hour training block for each
14 new guard and then from time to time the
15 School Crossing Guard Unit provides additional
16 training as needed or if there's some
17 deficiencies found with some of the guards.
18 The supervisor of the School Crossing Guard
19 Unit provides some on-the-job training, so to
20 speak.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What does the
22 four hours of training entail?

23 MR. CUMMINGS: It entails an
24 overview of Police Department procedures,
25 chain of command routines, traffic safety as

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 well as a practicum out on the street where
3 the supervisor of the Guard Unit actually
4 takes a new guard applicant and provides them
5 some on-the-street training. I believe they
6 use the intersection at 22nd and Walnut
7 Streets.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: That's the
9 intersection that you use traditionally?

10 MR. CUMMINGS: Yes, sir.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Is there a
12 school there?

13 MR. CUMMINGS: Yes, sir.

14 MS. MCDONALD: The school is
15 actually at 22nd and Chestnut, between
16 Chestnut and Walnut.

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: You have to
18 identify yourself for the record.

19 MS. MCDONALD: I'm sorry. Betty
20 McDonald, President of Local 1956. School
21 crossing guard for 23 years.

22 We have used 22nd and Walnut and
23 22nd and Chestnut, and I go with them.

24 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: You go with
25 them?

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 MS. MCDONALD: Yes, I do. In fact I
3 should be there today.

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What is your
5 opinion on the training and what you've heard
6 about other jurisdictions and the amount of
7 training that they provide, not only
8 initially, but ongoing as the guards are
9 working throughout the course of the year?

10 MS. MCDONALD: Officer Gail Braxton
11 at headquarters is quite good. We work
12 together. I do orientation before she begins
13 when they are hired. I give them my expertise
14 of 23 years on the corner. They know the do's
15 and the don'ts. And then after Officer
16 Braxton is in the office for four hours, we go
17 out to 22nd and Walnut, and the last time we
18 did 22nd and Chestnut and Walnut because we
19 had about six guards.

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I was wondering
21 whether or not there's been any discussion of
22 maybe changing up some of the orientation
23 corners to areas that maybe have a little more
24 traffic volume or that maybe serve one or two
25 schools as opposed to one just down the

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 street? How long ago was that corner selected
3 as the practicum corner?

4 MR. CUMMINGS: It's been a couple of
5 years, as far as I know.

6 MS. MCDONALD: As long as I've been
7 doing it, it's been there. That's the same
8 one, yes.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What's your view
10 on the equipment and uniform and other issues
11 and other items that are issued to guards and
12 the upgrade and upkeep of that equipment and
13 the use of paddles?

14 MS. MCDONALD: Well, the use in
15 paddles is difficult. I came on in '73 and we
16 were prohibited from using them at that time.
17 Under Corporal Tom Graham, he had 500 donated.
18 Just as I was going out in '95 I got one.
19 It's difficult to use one if you've worked 23
20 years without one. But I did try it for a
21 day. A lot of guards like them. They have to
22 buy their own.

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: They have to buy
24 their own?

25 MS. MCDONALD: Yes.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: How about issues
3 like reflective gloves, reflective vests?

4 MS. MCDONALD: They wear reflective
5 vests.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Is it a
7 requirement, because I do in my own travels
8 see people that don't have them on.

9 MR. CUMMINGS: Each guard has a vest
10 and has a clothing issue as well.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Is there any
12 supervision as to whether it's used or whether
13 it's worn?

14 MR. CUMMINGS: Well, practically
15 speaking, in addition to the Crossing Guard
16 Unit, the district supervisors are to make
17 spot checks of the individual guards to make
18 sure they're wearing the appropriate uniform.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I know it's a
20 tough job, so sometimes you have to call in
21 sick or injured, what's the process of calling
22 in that day when you're not going to show up
23 or you can't make it or you're ill? And what
24 happens as a result of that corner being
25 vacated for a day or for a week?

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 MR. CUMMINGS: The individual guard
3 is expected to contact the district where they
4 work and indicate the reason for their absence
5 from work. And then a decision is made based
6 upon the traffic at the particular area by the
7 district supervisor to determine whether or
8 not a police officer should in fact go there
9 to try and cover that.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But there's no
11 specific policy as to the coverage of the
12 corner, other than someone making a judgement
13 call?

14 MS. MCDONALD: The guard must call
15 an hour before she's going to be off.

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. That's a
17 contract issue?

18 MS. MCDONALD: It's in the manual.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Because I'm
20 wondering whether or not maybe some additional
21 time prior to that hour might give the
22 district supervisor commanders the ability to
23 make other arrangements rather than leave the
24 corner empty. That's just a suggestion.

25 MS. MCDONALD: It would be very

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 difficult if you woke up in the morning and
3 were sick to give you more notice if you
4 weren't sick the night before.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What happens
6 with longer-term illness? The guard is out
7 for some other injury that you know the person
8 is going to be out a week, 10 days, two weeks?
9 What happens then?

10 MR. CUMMINGS: The district
11 commander will evaluate that area. Sometimes
12 in some cases he may redeploy a guard from
13 what may be a less busier area to a busier
14 corner, as that instance might be. And that's
15 done on a frequent basis, but at sometimes
16 there are temporary replacements that are put
17 into those corners.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Who in your unit
19 is involved with the task force?

20 MS. MCDONALD: Not me.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Not you?

22 MS. MCDONALD: No. And I want to
23 thank you for having me here today. You kept
24 your word.

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: You're always

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 welcome here.

3 MS. MCDONALD: No. I was supposed
4 to be called for the task force, but as of
5 this hearing I have not.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anybody from
7 your unit in the Department?

8 MR. CUMMINGS: Deputy Commissioner
9 Fox and Inspector Rebstock.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: They are members
11 of the task force?

12 MR. CUMMINGS: Yes, sir.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Unless there's
14 anything else you'd like to add, I will thank
15 you for coming in and thank you for your input
16 and testimony.

17 If there's any recommendations that
18 Deputy Commissioner Fox would like to make to
19 the Committee in writing, or anything Betty,
20 that your Local would like to make part of the
21 record in writing, we'd be happy to take and
22 make part of our report recommendations.

23 MS. MCDONALD: Anything that would
24 protect the children of the City of
25 Philadelphia we will welcome.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But I know you
3 guys are out there on the street --

4 MS. MCDONALD: Every day.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: -- and you know.
6 So anything you guys want to put together for
7 our consideration as a joint Committee for our
8 end report we'd be happy to try to include.

9 MS. MCDONALD: I thank you. Many
10 thanks.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
12 much. Have a nice day.

13 Roxanne Galeota and Sean McAleer,
14 please.

15 Thank you for your patience. Please
16 identify yourself for the record.

17 MS. GALEOTA: I'm Roxanne Galeota.
18 I live at 718 Pemberton Street in Bella Vista,
19 and I have my daughter Raquel Smith, with me.

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Please proceed.

21 MS. GALEOTA: As I said, I'm a
22 long-time resident of Bella Vista. I walk my
23 daughter to school every single day. The
24 reason I asked to testify is because for three
25 years since she was in first grade we've been

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 attempting to make the route to school safer
3 for her and scores of other kids.

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What school does
5 she attend?

6 MS. GALEOTA: She goes to Meredith
7 School. Meredith School is located at Fifth
8 and Fitzwater. We brought a map that shows
9 our route to school. We've made 10 copies.

10 The problem street is Passyunk
11 Avenue at Fitzwater.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: A problem street
13 and a problem to pronounce too. I live next
14 to Passyunk Avenue, so I know. I'm sorry. Go
15 on.

16 MS. GALEOTA: Well, the problem is
17 that we have no place to cross without dodging
18 between parked cars in order to get to the
19 crossing guard at Fifth and Fitzwater Streets.

20 Every day scores of children go to
21 school along Fitzwater Street and even more
22 children are crossed back after school with
23 their after-school programs. There must be
24 about four or five programs that walk their
25 children west of Meredith School.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So you're
3 talking proceeding east across Passyunk Avenue
4 onto Fitzwater?

5 MS. GALEOTA: Right.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And then
7 continuing east to Fifth?

8 MS. GALEOTA: Right. The corner of
9 Fifth and Fitzwater Streets is fine. We have
10 one crossing guard there. There's another
11 crossing guard at Fourth and Fitzwater.
12 They're wonderful. We have crosswalks. The
13 reason why I felt it was important to
14 highlight our experience is that I'm hoping
15 that the emphasis of Mr. Goldsmith's task
16 force is not just on the designated school
17 crossing areas adjacent to the school, but
18 streets that might be unsafe immediately
19 surrounding the school that are known to be
20 part of the path that children take to get to
21 and from school.

22 In the beginning of 2001 when our
23 daughter was in first grade, we spoke to
24 Principal Stuart Cooperstein about what we can
25 do to campaign to get some kind of safety

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 thing done on Passyunk Avenue. He encouraged
3 us and supported our doing petitions to the
4 Commissioner of the Department of Streets,
5 which we did. We gathered 250 signatures, and
6 I believe those were parents, and then another
7 50 kids signed up. And I brought those, for
8 what they're worth. This evidence is our
9 level of support commitment and concern at our
10 school. What we asked for was basically
11 anything. We wanted a study, which we got.
12 We asked for either a crosswalk, slow sign,
13 school zone signs, even a guard. But of
14 course we knew the guard would be a real long
15 shot.

16 As I said, a study was done, and we
17 copied our petitions to Councilman DiCicco, so
18 he's been aware of our efforts, and Mr. Green
19 also got copies of everything. In 2002, the
20 study was done by a Department of Streets
21 engineer. And in my conversation with him --
22 and I never got a copy of the report, but in
23 my conversation with him it was pretty clear
24 that he interpreted the regulations as not
25 allowing school zone signs on any street or

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 any highway that's not adjacent to the school,
3 and the crosswalk issue couldn't be handled
4 because he didn't see this as an appropriate
5 intersection or an appropriate place to put a
6 crosswalk, according to PA DOT regs. Not
7 being an engineer, not being an attorney
8 versed in traffic regulations, I simply moved
9 to plan B, which was to apply for flashers.
10 So that's what we did.

11 What I will say they did at the
12 Department of Streets was they did agree to
13 block off several spaces where people park so
14 that at least when we dodged between parked
15 cars, we're dodging between hopefully maybe 15
16 feet or more.

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: More site line.

18 MS. GALEOTA: There is some kind of
19 site line. But there's nothing that shows
20 people that this is really the place to cross,
21 and there's nothing on Passyunk Avenue that
22 slows cars down.

23 We applied flashers for 2002.
24 Councilman DiCicco approved them, got them
25 through. This is Exhibit C, our application

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 for flashers. The application, as I said, was
3 approved. We requested flashers for Passyunk
4 Avenue because there is a crosswalk. There
5 are crosswalks and a guard at Fifth and
6 Fitzwater Streets right in front of the school
7 entrance.

8 In September 2003 the flashers were
9 installed, but they were not installed on
10 Passyunk Avenue at any point on the avenue.
11 They were installed at Fifth and Fitzwater
12 Street right under the nose of the guard and
13 right next to the entrance to the school. I
14 did look at these PA DOT regs at that time and
15 I saw that clearly flashers were not supposed
16 to be installed within an area less than 150
17 feet from the entrance to the school. I'm not
18 sure what gave rise to that, but I can site
19 you the regulation. Again, I wrote Mr. Green.
20 No response. Really I felt completely
21 powerless, other than choosing to do a
22 lawsuit, a class action suit or filing appeals
23 from determinations I had no evidence or no
24 documentation about. Other than doing the
25 lawyer thing, I felt politically hopeless. I

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 felt that nobody cared, other than Councilman
3 DiCicco and the people in the school
4 community.

5 And I also felt that rather than
6 finding ways to do something to help, the
7 powers that be were either ignoring the
8 request or finding excuses not to do anything.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: That is the
10 Traffic Engineering Division. It's the "no"
11 department.

12 MS. GALEOTA: This is what I've
13 learned.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Actually, I
15 think -- John's not here -- I think four years
16 ago we had a hearing on the optic yellow-grown
17 crossing signs that they testified that they
18 don't work, that they don't reduce -- there's
19 no greater visibility, that they're too
20 expensive, that they're too hard to maintain.
21 I didn't call them on today, but today in
22 their testimony they're replacing all the old
23 signs with the optic yellow-green. So there's
24 like a four-year delay button, a four or
25 five-year delay button in new ideas before it

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 finally gets to them.

3 What I will do is bring this to the
4 attention of Phil Goldsmith, relative to their
5 task force, see if they can't take a look at
6 it again, make sure I let Councilman DiCicco
7 know what we're doing and maybe this is the
8 right time to get at least some signage, if
9 not a -- I don't see why you can't have a
10 painted crosswalk there. That to me is the
11 cheapest and easiest thing to do with signage.
12 If for some reason or other the flashers
13 aren't able to be there, at least that painted
14 crosswalk at Passyunk and Fitzwater makes some
15 sense, along with some signage. This may be
16 an opportune time with all the scrutiny on
17 this to get them to move in that direction. I
18 will do my best.

19 MS. GALEOTA: That would be
20 wonderful. We'd be very appreciative.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thanks. Thanks
22 for hanging around for the testimony. We
23 appreciate it.

24 MS. GALEOTA: Thank you for having
25 us.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 MR. MCALEER: My name is Sean
3 McAleer, Director of Planning and Development
4 for Franklin Town Charter High School. I'd
5 like to thank the Committee for allowing me to
6 speak.

7 As you are aware, one afternoon a
8 14-year-old freshman, Ashley Thorpe (ph), was
9 struck by a pick-up truck while she was
10 leaving the grounds of Franklin Town Charter
11 High School, which is located in the Arsenal
12 on Tacony Street, Bridge and Tacony Streets in
13 the Northeast section of Philadelphia. Ashley
14 is lucky to be alive. I wasn't there to see
15 the accident, but from what I was told she was
16 crossing on a green light and the pick-up
17 truck ran a red light, made a right turn and
18 struck her. Also from what I've told there's
19 an ongoing investigation. No tickets have
20 been written so far.

21 To date we have no traffic devices
22 at all. We have no crosswalks, no safety
23 cards, no school zones. We have nothing in
24 place. We have gone to local politicians in
25 the past and they have worked very diligently.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 We are on a list to get these devices, but
3 unfortunately it takes time to get these done.

4 I have 925 students currently
5 enrolled, up to 50 percent of those students
6 walk to and from school in that area. And if
7 you're familiar with the area, the speed limit
8 is 35. There's one posted sign further down
9 from the Arsenal. But it's just a raceway.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: It's a raceway
11 with trucks.

12 MR. MCALEER: With trucks, with
13 cars. To escape 95 traffic, cars constantly
14 take Tacony Street. At least Tacony Street,
15 we have a traffic light. On the Bridge Street
16 side we don't even have a traffic light in
17 place. There is no traffic light at all
18 except if you walk up to the corner. Of
19 course, we have the safety in place for the
20 school that we tell all the kids they have to
21 go up to the corners, which most of them do,
22 but of course they're kids. So sometimes kids
23 do what they have to do and cross the street.
24 But on the Bridge Street side we don't have a
25 traffic light.

1 04/22/04 - RESOLUTION 040035

2 We have had several occasions, close
3 calls, run-ins that we've also let our local
4 politicians know, and they have come back and
5 done studies and made people work and put us
6 on list, but to date nothing has been done,
7 and I just feel really bad that something like
8 this had to happen to Ashley that's home
9 suffering right now and we don't know how the
10 outcome is going to be.

11 So I just ask for the Committees --
12 I am glad that there is a task force that is
13 formed, but we're a charter school. We're
14 different from the public schools. The
15 charter schools, we don't have what the public
16 schools have in place. We don't have all
17 these devices and financial abilities to put
18 them in place. So we really need help, the
19 whole charter school community, which there's
20 47 charter schools in the City of
21 Philadelphia. We need help and we need it
22 now. We need it not in September. I just ask
23 for you to take a bigger look at this and take
24 a look at it now before -- like I said, 925
25 kids -- before another child gets hurt.

1

2

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I agree. I

3

think the time is very opportune for this kind

4

of attention. It's sad to say that Ashley had

5

to be the cause of it. But thank God she was

6

not killed. I think we can bring this also to

7

the Managing Director's attention to see if we

8

can get some action on it quickly.

9

MR. MCALEER: Thank you.

10

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very

11

much.

12

Is there anyone else to testify on

13

this resolution?

14

(No response.)

15

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, we

16

thank everybody for your attendance. And the

17

Committee intends shortly to cull through this

18

information and to issue a report that

19

hopefully can be used in this task force

20

effort to improve the situation.

21

Thanks again to the Daily News for

22

their efforts. We appreciate it.

23

This Committee is adjourned.

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(Council adjourned at 4:00 p.m.)

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RE: COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT and

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PUBLIC SAFETY

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Lisa C. Bradley, RPR

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