

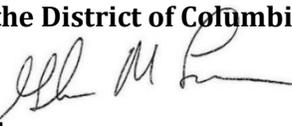
Government of the District of Columbia
Office of the Chief Financial Officer



Glen Lee
Chief Financial Officer

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Phil Mendelson
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia

FROM: Glen Lee
Chief Financial Officer 

DATE: December 6, 2022

SUBJECT: Fiscal Impact Statement – Safe Streets for Students Amendment Act of 2022

REFERENCE: Bill 24-66, Draft Committee Print as provided to the Office of Revenue Analysis on December 4, 2022

Conclusion

Funds are not sufficient in the fiscal year 2023 through fiscal year 2026 budget and financial plan to implement the bill. The bill's implementation will cost approximately \$2.5 million in fiscal year 2023 and \$79.2 million over the four-year financial plan period. The bill's implementation is subject to the inclusion of its fiscal impact in an approved budget and financial plan.

Background

The bill codifies three programs, or efforts, managed by the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME). First, the bill formally establishes the Safe Passage Program. The Safe Passage Program focuses on ensuring students can travel to and from school safe from threats of violence, intimidation, and other public safety concerns. Under the Safe Passage Program, DME should gather data on student transportation and safety, support the development of the Safe Streets for Students Master Plan (Master Plan), coordinate with other District agencies to support safe passage, and administratively support the School Safety and Safe Passage Working Group (Working Group). Second, the bill establishes the Safe Blocks Program within the Safe Passage Program and provides grant-making authority to DME for Safe Blocks. DME should partner with, and grant funds to, community-based organizations that will provide safe passage services to students in selected priority areas designated by DME. The bill outlines the responsibilities of a community-based organization and requires that personnel hired

by the organizations are properly trained,¹ daily monitor the designated areas, and work with schools and school staff. DME must annually report to Council the details of grants issued in support of the Safe Blocks Program. DME must work with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to develop an interactive map or digital tool to identify the priority areas and the safety infrastructure located within the Safe Blocks areas, such as crosswalks, sidewalks, and crossing guards. For the eleven-member Working Group,² DME is required to post meeting minutes and other meeting materials on the DME website within fourteen days of a meeting.

The bill requires DME to annually report, by July 1st, on the number and name of community-based organizations participating in safe passage programs, a list of businesses participating in safe passage programs, a summary of any student surveys, and the average distances traveled by students from home to school.

The bill also codifies DDOT's federally-funded Safe Routes to School Program. Under the Safe Routes to School Program, DDOT will manage four efforts identified in the bill. These efforts include developing a Master Plan, producing Safe Routes to School Action Plans (Action Plan), conducting spot safety assessments, and implementing the School Streets Pilot Program. Each of these plans and efforts will be described in greater detail below. DDOT's Safe Routes to School Program ensures the safety of students from traffic violence, installs traffic safety infrastructure for schools, performs overall community engagement regarding safe routes, and coordinates interagency efforts to support the Safe Routes to School Program.

In the Master Plan, DDOT must identify and prioritize schools that will receive Action Plans. DDOT must develop a rubric to establish the school priority list, which must be submitted to Council within twelve months of the bill's applicability date. The rubric must consider traffic-related injuries that occurred within one quarter mile of the school; if the school is within one quarter mile of one of the District's top 15 crash intersections; the presence of principal arterials, interstates, freeways, or expressways in the school zone; the number of other schools within one half mile of the school; the date of the last implemented Action Plan; and the number of at-risk students attending the school. DDOT may also consider other traffic safety capital projects recently implemented or already planned within the walk and bike sheds of a school and immediate life and safety concerns. DDOT must also include in the Master Plan the types of safety infrastructure the agency will consider under Action Plans and the standards for implementing those infrastructure elements. However, the bill mandates that those standards require DDOT to install high-visibility crosswalks; speed humps, bumps, tables, and cushions (vertical deflection devices) at intersections adjacent to public school entrances; all-way stop signs or traffic signals at all intersections; raised crosswalks and curb extensions at intersections adjacent to school campuses; flashing beacons on approaches within a school zone; and mid-block crossing protections. DME must also include in the Master Plan details on the Safe Blocks Program priority areas, any related programs or pilots, and its reasoning for discontinuing any safe

¹ Community-based organization staff should be trained in bystander intervention, racial and implicit bias, and any other training required by the Mayor.

² The Working Group includes the director or a designee of DME, District of Columbia Public Schools, the Public Charter School Board, DDOT, the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, the Metropolitan Police Department, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), WMATA Metro Transit Police Department, the Attorney General for the District of Columbia, at least one public school parent, and at least one public school teacher.

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passage programs previously executed. The Mayor must submit the Master Plan³ within twelve months of the bill's applicability date and every five years thereafter for approval by the Council.⁴

The bill requires DDOT to produce Action Plans for 25 schools annually, beginning June 1, 2024. These Action Plans should include a comprehensive traffic safety assessment of the school, details of existing and to-be-installed traffic safety infrastructure, and the extent of required community engagement. DDOT must install any traffic safety infrastructure identified in the Action Plan within one year or provide written notice of the delay to affected school principals, the relevant Ward Councilmember, and the chairs of the Council committees with oversight over public education.

The bill authorizes DDOT to perform spot safety assessments, display requests for these assessments in its Traffic Safety Investigations Dashboard beginning October 1, 2023, and establish a process for assessments to be referred to the Safe Routes to School program. Like an Action Plan, DDOT must install any traffic safety infrastructure called for under a spot safety assessment within one year or else the agency must notify affected school principals, the relevant Ward Councilmember, and the chairs of the Council committees with oversight over public education.

The bill establishes the Safe Streets Pilot Program to be implemented within 18 months of the bill's applicability date and to run for two years. Under the pilot program, DDOT must work with one public school in each Ward to designate one street adjacent to the school as closed to unauthorized motor vehicles⁵ during specified hours. DDOT must assign a traffic control officer or crossing guard to the closed roadway, install relevant signage, and provide the school with the necessary equipment to close the street. Within 18 months of the conclusion of the Safe Streets Pilot Program, DDOT should report to the Mayor, Council, the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Chancellor, and Public Charter School Board assessing the program and making recommendations on how to improve and expand the program.

The bill makes several changes or enhancements to school zones. First, the bill expands a school zone from 200 feet of a school property to 350 feet from the property, including facility and outdoor spaces. Next, the bill establishes a daytime speed limit of 15 miles per hour in a school zone and authorizes DDOT to increase an arterial roadway speed limit to 25 miles per hour outside of designated school drop-off and pick-up times. Finally, the bill maintains that the fine for speeding in a school zone should be doubled.

The bill provides additional structure around the school crossing guard program. The bill reaffirms that school crossing guards should be placed at any DCPS or public charter school where DDOT deems them necessary. The bill requires DDOT to create an online system for a school to request a crossing guard by January 1, 2024. The bill also requires DDOT to provide crossing guards with the same trainings provided to community-based organizations under the Safe Blocks Program and any other trainings required by DDOT.⁶

³ The bill requires DCPS, the Public Charter School Board, public charter local education agencies, WMATA, the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, the Department of Public Works, the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, and the Office of Planning to support DDOT and DME in developing the Master Plan.

⁴ The bill requires the Mayor to host three public meetings prior to submission to the Council and for Council to hold one public hearing prior to approval. The Mayor must resubmit the Master Plan within 180 days if the Council disapproves of the plan.

⁵ DDOT may only authorize vehicles to access the closed street that are vital to school functions or public safety.

⁶ DDOT should provide these trainings at least once every two years.

The bill requires DDOT to submit a plan to the Mayor and the Council by June 1, 2024, identifying options to convert part-time crossing guard positions into full-time positions.⁷ The plan should evaluate how many crossing guards are needed District-wide, how many positions should be retained as part-time positions, and a list of roles a crossing guard could reasonably undertake outside of crossing guard service hours both within DDOT and at other District agencies.

The bill requires DDOT to annually report on its website, by July 1st, on the number of crashes, fatalities, and injuries that occur within one quarter mile of a school; a list of fulfilled and outstanding spot safety assessments; the planned deployment of traffic control officers for the upcoming year; and the number of bicycle racks located within school zones.

Financial Plan Impact

Funds are not sufficient in the fiscal year 2023 through fiscal year 2026 budget and financial plan to implement the bill. The bill's implementation will cost approximately \$2.5 million in fiscal year 2023 and \$79.2 million over the four-year financial plan period.

DME currently manages the Safe Passage Program (including the Safe Blocks Program and the Working Group) under a \$5.2 million federal grant. The bill codifies the program and plans for its extension beyond the expiration of the federal grant in fiscal year 2024. DME requires three new staffers to focus on and manage the Safe Passage Program, plan for its extension, and support the reporting needs. These staffers will cost \$418,000 in fiscal year 2023 and \$1.7 million over the four-year financial plan period. Once the federal grant expires, DME will also need to fund the Safe Passage Program's grants to community-based organizations and employ a grant manager. The required grant funding is \$5.1 million beginning in fiscal year 2025 for a total of \$10.2 million over the four-year financial plan period. The grant manager position requires approximately \$115,000 annually beginning in fiscal year 2025 for a total of \$230,000 over the four-year financial plan period. In total, DME requires \$418,000 in fiscal year 2023 and \$12.2 million over the four-year financial plan period.

The bill also requires an interactive map of Safe Passage priority areas where DDOT needs to gather and supply relevant information. DDOT requires \$460,000 in fiscal year 2023 to collect data on sidewalks, crosswalks, and intersection regulation within the priority areas to support the interactive map.

The bill codifies and enhances DDOT's existing Safe Routes to School Program. The Safe Routes to School Program ensures the safe travel of students to and from school through the installation of traffic safety infrastructure and other services and programs to support safe travel for students. The Safe Routes to School Program will have four main components: Master Plan, Action Plans, spot assessments, and the Safe Streets Pilot Program. The overall Safe Routes to School Program requires an additional staffer and associated technology systems and licenses at a cost of \$104,000 in fiscal year 2023 and \$428,000 over the four-year financial plan period. To develop the Master Plan, the associated rubric, and to support implementation of the Master Plan, DDOT requires an additional staffer at a cost of \$116,000 in fiscal year 2023 and \$478,000 over the four-year financial plan period.

⁷ The City Administrator, DME, and the Deputy Mayor for Operations and Infrastructure should support DDOT's efforts to develop the plan.

The bill requires DDOT to implement Action Plans for 25 schools annually, as well as the spot safety assessments. These Action Plans and assessments will result in the installation of significant safety infrastructure for a school, including high visibility crosswalks, fully controlled intersections, vertical deflection devices, raised crosswalks, and flashing beacons, beginning in fiscal year 2024. The bill's definition of an Action Plan applies it to a school without defined boundaries, so the need for additional infrastructure could expand beyond a traditional school zone. These capital costs will be approximately \$19.4 million in fiscal year 2024 and \$57.3 million over the four-year financial plan period.⁸

DDOT requires three new staffers to manage the Safe Streets Pilot Program at a cost of \$366,000 in fiscal year 2023 and \$1.5 million over the four-year financial plan period. The bill also requires each pilot zone to have at least traffic control officer or school crossing guard at each zone. The cost of a traffic control officer at each of the eight pilot zones is \$637,000 beginning with the launch of the pilots in fiscal year 2024 and \$2 million over the four-year financial plan period. Implementation of the pilot will also require equipment and appropriate signage costing \$155,000 in fiscal year 2024 and \$175,000 over the four-year financial plan period. The ongoing data collection and ultimately the final report that is due by January 2028 will cost \$100,000 in fiscal year 2023 and \$1.4 million over the four-year financial plan period. The total cost of the Safe Streets Pilot Program is \$466,000 in fiscal year 2023 and \$5 million over the four-year financial plan period.

The combined resource needs under DDOT's Safe Routes to School Program, including the installation of traffic safety infrastructure, is \$686,000 in fiscal year 2023 and \$63.2 million over the four-year financial plan period.

The bill's provisions around school zones, including expansion and speed limits, will require DDOT to change out all the school signs, and install new signs.⁹ This effort will be overseen by a new staff member at a cost of \$134,000 in fiscal year 2024 and \$554,000 over the four-year financial plan period.

The bill expands the school crossing guard program, eases the ability of a school to request a crossing guard, and requires the District to develop opportunities for crossing guards to transition to full-time positions. DDOT requires one staffer to support the school crossing guard program and oversee the school crossing guard planning and full-time employment efforts. This staffer will cost \$116,000 in fiscal year 2023 and \$476,000 over the four-year financial plan period. Based on requests for crossing guards that cannot currently be fulfilled and an expectation that the portal and new focus on the school crossing guard program, DDOT expects that it will need 25 new crossing guards to satisfy all locations where they are needed. The cost of 25 crossing guards is approximately \$508,000 annually. The cost to develop an online portal for a school to request a crossing guard will be \$150,000 in fiscal year 2023 and \$218,000 over the four-year financial plan period. The total cost of the bill's school crossing guard program provisions is approximately \$774,000 in fiscal year 2023 and \$2.7 million over the four-year financial plan period.

⁸ These capital costs include the fabrication and installation of new speed limit signs to meet the bill's daytime speed limit of 15 miles per hour in school zones.

⁹ The capital costs of installing new signs and flashing lights at approaches within school zones is included above in the capital costs associated with the Action Plans.

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The bill's requirement for DDOT to annually report on crashes near schools, fulfilled and outstanding spot safety assessments, traffic control officer deployment plan, and the location of bicycle racks in a school zone will cost \$41,000 in fiscal year 2023 and \$54,000 over the four-year financial plan period.

Bill 24-66, Safe Streets for Students Amendment Act of 2022					
Implementation Costs					
Fiscal Year 2023 – Fiscal Year 2026					
(\$ thousands)					
	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	Total
DME Safe Passage Program					
Personnel ^a	\$418	\$427	\$549	\$561	\$1,955
Grants and Training ^b	\$0	\$0	\$5,100	\$5,100	\$10,200
DDOT Interactive Map Data	\$460	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$460
Subtotal	\$878	\$427	\$5,649	\$5,661	\$12,615
DDOT Safe Routes to School Program					
Program Administration	\$104	\$106	\$107	\$109	\$426
Master Plan Development	\$116	\$118	\$121	\$123	\$478
Safe Streets Pilot Program ^c	\$466	\$1,566	\$1,443	\$1,565	\$5,040
Traffic Safety Infrastructure	\$0	\$19,405	\$18,934	\$18,934	\$57,274
Subtotal	\$686	\$21,195	\$20,606	\$20,732	\$63,220
School Zone Updates	\$134	\$137	\$140	\$143	\$554
School Crossing Guard Program	\$774	\$649	\$652	\$654	\$2,729
DDOT Annual Reporting	\$41	\$4	\$4	\$5	\$54
TOTAL IMPLEMENTATION COSTS	\$2,513	\$22,411	\$27,051	\$27,195	\$79,170

Table Notes

^a Includes 3 employees starting in fiscal year 2023 and an additional employee starting in fiscal year 2025.

^b These costs are federally funded through fiscal year 2024.

^c The pilot should run for two school years.