

For Immediate Release
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AAA Teams Up with New San José “Street Smarts” Program to Calm Traffic

San José, California – The City of San José announced today (12/17/02) that it will receive a \$10,000 donation from AAA of Northern California in support of the City’s new *Street Smarts* traffic safety education program. The San José City Council formally accepted the contribution from AAA at its meeting earlier today.

Street Smarts, launched last month by San José Mayor Ron Gonzales, is a public education campaign aimed toward raising awareness and changing driver behavior to improve the safety of city streets. Recent pedestrian fatalities over the past few weeks speak to the increasing need to do something beyond engineering and enforcement.

"We are making San José neighborhood streets safer for our kids to walk to school and for seniors going to the market," said Mayor Ron Gonzales. "Getting drivers to just slow down is one of our highest priorities in every part of our city, and we can do that through public education, aggressive traffic enforcement, and good traffic engineering."

The *Street Smarts* public education campaign will target behaviors of drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists, and will use both advertising and a focused community relations effort to bring the messages about the need for behavior change to neighborhoods, schools and businesses.

"San José is always on the cutting edge of traffic safety programs, and AAA is very pleased to be working with them on this innovative new program," said AAA Traffic Safety Senior Manager Merry Banks. "This effort has great potential to expand in partnership with other

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communities throughout the state to achieve a critical goal that we share – making our streets safer for everybody to use.”

Specific behaviors that the campaign will address are:

- Speeding
- Red light running
- Stop sign violations
- School zone compliance
- Crosswalk safety & compliance

“Much like housing and transportation planning, solutions for this kind of community problem must be addressed on a regional or statewide level to achieve the greatest success,” said James Helmer, the City’s Transportation Director. “San José is working with regional partners, such as the Santa Clara County Traffic Safe Communities Network, to improve driving, walking and bicycling behaviors throughout the Bay Area.” In addition to 16 Bay Area cities and public agencies considering a regional partnership with San José, the City of Los Angeles also has indicated interest in working to expand the *Street Smarts* campaign statewide.

“In order to ensure that children, pedestrians and bicyclists are safe in our neighborhoods we need solutions that slow down speeding cars and limit cut through traffic. In addition to the excellent work being done by San José, our countywide efforts have successfully reduced red light running violations up to 60 percent at critical intersections.” stated County Supervisor Jim Beall, Chairperson of the Santa Clara County Traffic Safety Communities Network.

To encourage greater regional participation in the *Street Smarts* program, the City of San José will be sharing creative materials developed for this campaign with any public agency at no cost, enabling other agencies to take advantage of the initial investment by San José to launch *Street Smarts* in their community. This approach is expected to increase regional participation in the campaign to improve safety on Bay Area streets, and will better leverage public dollars. For more information about *Street Smarts*, visit: www.GetStreetSmarts.org.

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