

For Immediate Release

July 1, 2004

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SJ Traffic Safety Program for Schools & Neighborhoods Wins National Award

San José, California – Street Smarts, a City of San José traffic safety education program that targets behavior change for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists near San José schools and in neighborhoods, has been awarded the national 2004 Pedestrian Project Award by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and the Partnership for a Walkable America. The award will be presented at the annual ITE meeting and awards dinner in Lake Buena Vista, Florida in late July, and Street Smarts will also be recognized in the ITE Journal, an international publication.

In May, Street Smarts won a "Tranny" Award - the top transportation award in the state, in the area of community awareness, from the California Transportation Foundation. The award was presented in Sacramento at a luncheon attended by an estimated 500 transportation officials and legislators from throughout the state.

Last month, the City's School Safety Program received a two-year grant totaling \$230,000 from the State of California Office of Traffic Safety to develop a new education component for Street Smarts that will bring interactive traffic safety programs into San José elementary and middle schools. Development of this new Street Smarts program element will begin immediately, with an estimated rollout to schools in January 2005.

According to Jim Helmer, the City's Transportation Director, "Street Smarts was developed as an educational tool, to be used in conjunction with engineering solutions and police enforcement, to address the root cause of many accidents in San José and to improve safety on our streets. And while San José has the second lowest pedestrian fatality rate in the nation for

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large cities, we're committed to do even more to improve safety because we believe that one fatality is one too many." In 2003, the City of San José experienced the lowest number of pedestrian fatalities in 10 years, dropping from 20 in 2002, to nine fatalities in 2003.

The City of San José launched the Street Smarts public education program in November 2002 to improve safety on San José streets by tackling behavior issues – an increasing problem on Bay Area roads, according to a AAA survey taken in August 2002, and a leading cause of accidents. The Street Smarts program focuses on five target behaviors: red light running; stop sign violations; speeding; school zone violations; and crosswalk violations; and utilizes a combination of media and grass roots efforts to educate schools and neighborhoods about the need for behavior change on our streets.

And because drivers do not change behaviors as they cross city boundaries, Street Smarts was developed with regional participation in mind. Currently, five other communities have launched Street Smarts: Cupertino, Contra Costa County, Danville, San Ramon, Napa, and a number of other cities and counties are exploring partnerships with the program.

The City of San José Street Smarts traffic safety education program was developed in partnership with the San José Police Department, with assistance from external traffic safety professionals and other stakeholders, including AAA; Walk San José; the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC); San José Unified School District; the Valley Transportation Agency (VTA); the California Highway Patrol (CHP); Caltrans; the Santa Clara County Traffic Safe Communities Network (TSCN); the City of San José Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee; Safe Moves, Inc.; and the cities of San Francisco and Santa Clara.

Schools and neighborhoods interested in more information about the Street Smarts program can contact the City's Transportation Department at (408) 277-4499, or visit: www.GetStreetSmarts.org.

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