

# Pupil Transportation Child Safety Zone Study

For

Peekskill City School District  
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November 2015

## I. Introduction

The Child Safety Transportation Act permits school districts to transport pupils for distances less than statutory requirements if they would encounter hazards while walking to school. There are three types of hazards identified by legislation:

- Highways without sidewalks or adequate shoulders;
- Highway intersections;
- Highway – Railroad intersections.

An Amendment to the Child Safety Zone Act make the expense for the transportation on the basis of hazard a contingent expense eligible for State Transportation Aid.

The Peekskill City School District asked the Pupil Transportation Safety Institute to evaluate the possibility of establishing Child Safety Zones pursuant to permit transportation on the basis of hazards. This report is the result of PTSI's analysis based on fieldwork carried out by PTSI's Senior Management Consultant Dr. Richard Ahola in November 2015.

## II. Limitations for Establishing Child Safety Zones

The Peekskill City School District includes the City of Peekskill extensive sidewalks, and 25 – 30 MPH speed limits. Many of the road intersections are four way stops or stop lights; some with pedestrian signals. The city employs crossing guards who assist pupils walking to and from school.

Eligibility for pupil transportation in the Peekskill City School District is currently based on a distance policy approved by the district voters. The policy provides school bus transportation for pupils living more than the following distances from school.

<u>School</u>	<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Eligibility Distance</u>
Woodside	K – 1	½ Mile
Oakside	2 – 3	1 Mile
Hillcrest	4 – 5	1 Mile

## Potential Safety Zones

Discussions between PTSI consultant and school officials identified the following school attendance zones as possibilities for establishing child safety zones:

- Woodside Elementary
- Oakside Elementary
- Hillcrest Elementary
- Peekskill Middle School (6 – 8 grades)
- Peekskill High school (9 – 12 grades)

\*No transportation is provided to Uriah Hill Elementary (pre-K).

PTSI was asked to evaluate these schools for possible child safety zones.

Many highways on the city were discounted due to the presence of sidewalks and 25 – 30 MPH speed limits. Under the point system established by the Department of Transportation in consultations with the State Police and the New York State Education Department, no points are allowed for roads and streets with sidewalks and have speed limits under 40 MPH; these do not generate any points. Also, no points are allowed for intersections with crossing guards and all way stop signs. NYS DOT guidelines identify factors for hazardous conditions. Hazards are assigned point values when added together and used to establish a potential Child Safety Zone.

Up to two greatest hazards may be considered. The total number of points required to qualify a pupil for transportation on the bus is if a hazard is:

- Grades K – 8 with 1 hazard – 12 points
- Grades K – 8 with 2 hazards – 21 points
- Grades 9 – 12 with 1 hazard – 15 points
- Grades 9 – 12 with 2 hazards – 27 points

The two greatest types of hazards present in the Peekskill City School District are pupils walking along highways without sidewalks or adequate shoulders (in some cases no shoulders) and crossing busy road intersections. For each potential Child Safety Zone in the district, points total are assigned according to DOT guidelines. Since no pupil crosses railroad tracks to and from school, highway railroad crossings were not evaluated.

When the district highways were evaluated, A.M. and P.M. traffic counts of 15 minute periods were recorded; walking distances along hazardous streets were measured using maps and automobile odometers.

The Following tables summarize scores needed for transportation in Child Safety Zones:

TABLE 1 – NUMBER OF QUALIFYING POINT REQUIRED

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Total number of points required to qualify for POINTS transportation

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- A. Grades K – 8 with 1 HAZARD 12
- B. Grades K – 8 with 2 Greatest HAZARDS 21
- C. Grades 9 – 12 with 1 HAZARD 15
- D. Grades 9 – 12 with 2 Greatest HAZARDS 27

TABLE 2 – HIGHWAYS WITHOUT SIDEWALKS OR ADEQUATE SHOULDERS

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SITUATION POINTS

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1. Student walks on a sidewalk, shoulder or roadway with a given length:

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- A. Sidewalk or shoulder  $\geq$  5 feet wide: 0
- B. Shoulder  $<$  5 feet wide:\*
  - \* 1 point for every 500 ft. or fraction thereof; examples:  
1 to 500 ft. = 1 point, 501 ft. to 1000 ft. = 2 points
- C. Roadway with no shoulder: \*\*
  - \*\* 1 point for every 300 ft. or fraction thereof; examples:  
1 to 300 ft. = 1 point, 301 ft. to 600 ft. = 2 points
- D. Roadway with a narrow bridge or overpass: \*\*\*
  - \*\*\* 1 point for every 25 ft. or fraction thereof; examples:  
1 to 25 ft., 26 ft. to 50 ft. = 2 points

2. Student walks away on roadway or shoulder  $<$  5 ft. wide with 15 minute traffic volumes:

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- A. Low (L) – less than 50 vehicles 1
- B. Medium (M) – 50 to 100 vehicles 3
- C. High (H) – more than 100 vehicles 5

3. Student walks on roadway or shoulder  $<$  5 ft. wide with a speed limit  $\geq$  40 MPH:

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- A. 40 MPH 1
- B. 45 MPH 2
- C. 50 MPH 3
- D. 55 MPH 4

TABLE 3 – HIGHWAY INTERSECTIONS

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SITUATION POINTS

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4. Student crosses highway intersection with the following degree of traffic control:

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- A. All way stop signs, an adult crossing guard, or a pedestrian bridge/underpass with 500 feet of the crossing 0
  - B. Traffic signal with pedestrian devices 1 per lane (\*)
  - C. Stop signs, or a traffic signal without 2 per lane pedestrian devices (\*)
  - D. No traffic control measures 3 per lane (\*)

5. Student walks on roadway or shoulder < 5 ft. wide with 15 minute traffic volumes of:

- 
- A. Low (L) - less than 50 vehicles 1
  - B. Medium(M) – 50 to 100 vehicles 3
  - C. High (H) – more than 100 vehicles 5

6. Student crosses a highway intersection with a speed limit of:

- 
- A. 40 MPH 1
  - B. 45 MPH 2
  - C. 50 MPH 3
  - D. 55 MPH 4

(\*) – Up to 4 lanes may be considered

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TABLE 4 – HIGHWAY – RAILROAD GRADE CROSSING

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SITUATION POINTS

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7. Student crosses an active railroad crossing during the normal school crossing period:

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- A. 1 or 2 tracks and 0 trains 0
    - 1 train 5
    - 2 trains 9
    - 3 or more trains 13
  - B. 3 or more tracks and 0 trains 0
    - 1 train 7
    - 2 trains 11
    - 3 or more trains 15

Traffic counts for 15 minute periods during school walking hours established low traffic volume for Ringgold Street (less than 50 cars in 15 minutes) adjacent to Woodside Elementary School. While a moderate volume (50 to 100 cars) for streets, within one mile, of the Oakside and Hillcrest Elementary School areas.

Traffic counts applicable for Middle School and High School pupils are the four lane section of Route 6, exceeded 100 car in 15 minutes (heavy traffic volumes).

The following observations and calculations are provided for the Woodside, Oakside and Hillcrest Elementary Schools.

III. **Woodside Elementary School Grades K-1**

Need 12 points for one hazard and 21 points for two hazards.

Potential Hazards

**Greatest Hazard:** Crossing two lanes at stop sign (no crossing guard)

**Second Hazard:** Walking along Ringgold Street (inadequate shoulders)

<u>Potential Hazard I</u>	<u>Points</u>
Crossing two lanes at stop sign	4 points
Medium traffic volume	<u>3 points</u>
First Hazard	7 points

<u>Potential Hazard II</u>	<u>Points</u>
Ringgold Street – 919 feet	4 points
Low Traffic volume	<u>1 point</u>
Second Hazard	5 points

Speed limit under 40 MPH 0 points

Total points for two hazards 12 points

No pupils attending Woodside Elementary School qualify for transportation on the basis of hazards.

IV. **Oakside Elementary School Grades 2 – 3**

Need 12 points for one hazard and 21 points for two hazards.

Potential Hazards

**Greatest Hazard:** walking along Decatur Avenue (inadequate shoulders).

**Second Hazard:** Crossing two lanes at stop sign.

<u>Potential Hazard I</u>	<u>Points</u>
Decatur Avenue – 1109 feet	4 points
Medium traffic volume	<u>3 points</u>
First Hazard	7 points

<u>Potential Hazard II</u>	<u>Points</u>
Crossing two lanes at stop sign	4 points
Medium traffic volume	<u>3 points</u>
Second Hazard	7 points
Speed limit under 40 MPH	0 points
Total points for two hazards	14 points

No pupils attending Oakside Elementary School qualify for transportation on the basis of hazards.

V. **Hillcrest Elementary School Grades 4 – 5**

Need 12 points for one hazard and 21 points for two hazards.

Potential Hazards

**Greatest Hazard:** walking along Howard Street (inadequate shoulders).

**Second Hazard:** Crossing two lanes at stop sign.

<u>Potential Hazard I</u>	<u>Points</u>
Howard Street – 950 feet	4 points
Medium traffic volume	<u>3 points</u>
First Hazard	7 points

<u>Potential Hazard II</u>	<u>Points</u>
Crossing two lanes at stop sign	4 points
Medium traffic volume	<u>3 points</u>
Second Hazard	7 points
Speed limit under 40 MPH	0 points
Total points for two hazards	14 points

No pupils attending Hillcrest Elementary School qualify for transportation on the basis of hazards.

#### VI. Uriah Hill Pre-K School

Only pre-kindergarten pupils attend Uriah Hill Elementary School. Neither State Law nor district policy requires transportation for Pre-K pupils and the Child Safety Zone Law applies only for pupils in grades K– 12. Never-the-less the following analysis would apply if the district decided to use the Uriah Hill School for pupils in Grades K – 6 or if a change in State Laws and district policy included pre-K transportation.

Need 12 points for one hazard and 21 points for two hazards.

<u>Potential Hazard I</u>	<u>Points</u>
Crossing two lanes (Pemart Avenue)	4 points
Medium traffic volume	3 points
Speed limit under 40 MPH	<u>0 points</u>
First Hazard	7 points



<u>Potential Hazard I</u>	<u>Points</u>
Walking along Brandt Avenue or other avenues with no sidewalk and with inadequate shoulders 581 ft.	2 points
Medium traffic volume	3 points
Speed less than 40 MPH	<u>0 points</u>
Second Hazard	5 points
Total points for two hazards	12 points

No K – 6 elementary pupils who attend Uriah Hill School qualify for transportation on the basis of hazard.

## **VII. Peekskill Middle School**

Pupils in grades 6 – 8 walk to school protected by crossing guards, stop lights, stop signs and sidewalks in the vicinity of the school. Pupils who cross the four lanes of Route 6 are protected by stop lights with pedestrian controls.

The greatest single hazard for middle school children is posed by crossing the four lanes of Route 6 between a housing complex and a shopping center. The following score is provided for the intersection.

Crossing four lanes with stop light and pedestrian signals	4 points
Crossing heavy traffic	5 points
Speed limit under 40 MPH	<u>0 points</u>
Total points	9 points

The roads of the housing complex are private roads according to the April 2009 street maps of the city and do not generate any points towards second hazards.

The Hazards for the elementary schools could apply for the some middle school pupils for a maximum of seven points for one hazard and fourteen points for two hazards. No middle school pupil qualifies for transportation on the basis of hazards.

City school districts are not required to provide transportation based on distance from school. The Peekskill City School District does not provide transportation for pupils in Grades 6 – 12 unless transportation is required due to a handicapping condition.

## **VIII. Peekskill High School**

The observations made for the Middle School also apply for the high school pupils. Since the qualifying point for grades 9 – 12 increase to fifteen points for one hazard and twenty-seven for two hazards, no high school pupils qualify for transportation on the basis of hazards.

## **IX. Conclusion**

Highway traffic hazards that do not calculate the presence of a child safety zone may require parents to make safe arrangements for pupils to and from school.

For the most, the City of Peekskill has mitigated traffic hazards for children who walk to and from school. Never-the-less there are dangerous situations such as Howard Street (inadequate shoulders, no sidewalks in parts, narrow road and steep downhill) that the consultant and the district transportation supervisor agree that pupils should not walk along; but do not qualify for transportation on the basis of hazards as mentioned above. It is the responsibility of parents to provide safe transportation in those situations; where school bus transportation is not provided due to distance from school or qualifying hazard.

# **Appendix A**

## **Section 3635-b**

### **Child Safety Zone Legislation 1992**

**As amended in 1992, 1999, 2000, 2002 and 2004.**