

METRO

City to Explore Barriers After 2nd O'Hare Death

By Fran Spielman
Staff Writer

The city will explore the possibility of installing guardrails or higher sidewalk curbs outside O'Hare Airport terminals after the second pedestrian death in a year on the airport roadway, officials said Monday.

Even as Mayor Daley suggested that nothing short of a "12-foot wall" could prevent such tragedies, Aviation Commissioner David Mosena ordered traffic consultants to report in two weeks on "a whole range of physical solutions" designed to improve pedestrian safety at O'Hare.

The possibilities range from higher sidewalk curbs outside terminals to concrete barriers, fences or guardrails to prevent cars from running onto the curb and striking pedestrians.



David Simon

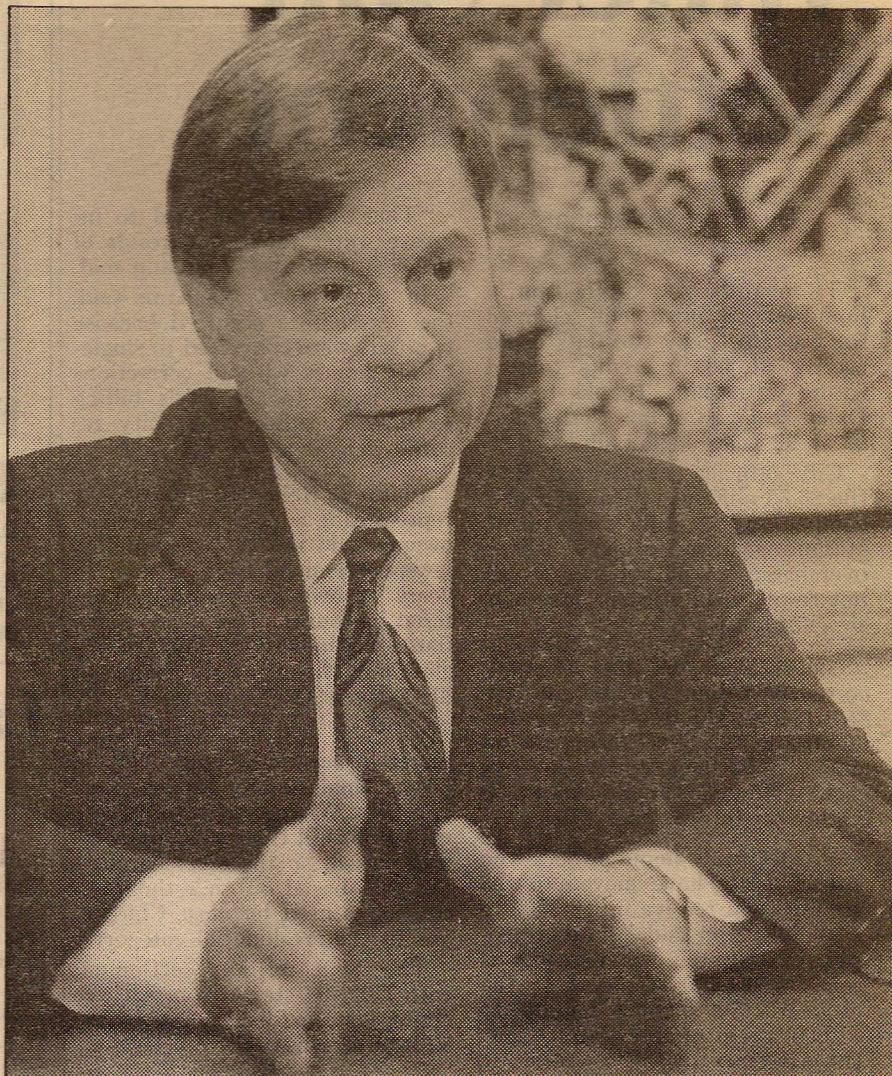
"It has to be something that has minimal impact on pedestrians because the whole idea at the curb is to get people to get out of their cars, unload their luggage and get onto the sidewalk as quickly and safely as possible," Mosena said.

"What you don't want to do is build a barrier that creates an even greater safety problem on the roadway with people wandering around, trying to figure out how to get onto the sidewalk and exposed to traffic while they're doing it."

Asked Monday what the city could do to protect pedestrians at O'Hare, Daley said, "12-foot walls."

Mayoral press secretary Jim Williams said later that Daley was "merely saying it's a tough nut to crack—that short of building a 12-foot wall, it's most difficult to come up with a solution that's going to provide 100 percent safety."

The two-hour meeting among aviation honchos, traffic experts, police



SUN-TIMES/Rich Hein

City Aviation Commissioner David Mosena discusses Sunday's accident at O'Hare Airport in which one person was killed and four were injured. Mosena ordered a study on ways to improve pedestrian safety at O'Hare.

and fire officials followed the death Sunday of David Simon, 22, of Deerfield. He was killed when a minivan jumped a curb outside Terminal 1.

Police said the driver, George Brinkman, 68, of Elgin, forgot to turn his wheels away from the curb as he

stepped on the gas to leave the upper level roadway.

Last April, an 87-year-old Elgin man plowed into a crowd of third-graders outside Terminal 2, killing a 9-year-old girl and injuring 79 children and adults.