



Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works

Date: May 1, 2007
To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

Subject: School Pedestrian Safety Program

Recommendation: Receive and file

Previous Directives: None

Prepared by: JoNette Kuhnau, P.E., PTOE, Traffic and Parking Services
Jon Wertjes, P.E., PTOE, Director of Traffic and Parking Services

Approved by: _____
Steven A. Kotke, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenters: JoNette Kuhnau, P.E., PTOE, Traffic and Parking Services
Jon Wertjes, P.E., PTOE, Director of Traffic and Parking Services

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget

Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase

Action requires use of contingency or reserves

Other financial impact (Explain):

Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Background/Supporting Information

The School Pedestrian Safety Program was developed and implemented in July 2005 to improve the safety environment at schools, recognizing that additional safety measures are needed to address the needs of school children. In the 2005-2006 school year, 20 elementary schools throughout the City were reviewed and evaluated, with improvements in signing, striping, and signal timing to improve the safety around the schools. Recommendations for some additional funding-dependent infrastructure improvements including overhead school crossing signs and durable pavement markings were also developed.

In the 2006-2007 school year, evaluations have been completed at another 19 K-8 schools. Improvements that have been made at these schools have included installing school crossing signs, repainting crosswalk markings, installing zebra crosswalk markings, adjusting signal timings, and installing a pedestrian countdown timer. Several City-wide and site-specific projects that would depend on additional funding sources were also identified through these reviews.

Safe Routes to School

The federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was passed in August 2005 and included Safe Routes to School funding for each state. Safe Routes to School is designed to improve the conditions and quality of bicycling and walking to school. The goal of the program is to reverse the 30 year decline in the numbers of children walking to school and reintroduce opportunities for regular physical activity. An estimated \$8 million dollars has been authorized for Minnesota's Safe Routes to School program during the life of SAFETEA-LU.

In the first round (FY 2005-2006) of Safe Routes to School funding, both Public Works and Minneapolis Public Schools were successful in their applications for \$173,000 and \$10,000, respectively.

The project memorandum and city force account documentation for the Minneapolis Collector/Arterial School Crossing Improvement Project, which was awarded FY 2006 Safe Routes to School funds, have recently been completed and submitted to Mn/DOT. Construction plans are currently being developed for the six intersections where overhead school crossing signing and durable pavement markings are being installed. Completion of the infrastructure portions of the project are anticipated in 2007.

In January 2007, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) solicited applications for the Fiscal Year 2007 Safe Routes to School funding, and received 111 applications, an increase of nearly 50 percent of the applications received for Fiscal Years 2005-2006 funds. The projects for which Public Works submitted applications were unfunded needs identified from the evaluations of the 39 schools reviewed in the School Pedestrian Safety Program in the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. The three applications included:

- a project to install the collector/arterial crosswalk treatment at one additional location, which is a continuation of the program of improvements that was successful in receiving Safe Routes funding in the last solicitation;
- a project to construct a missing sidewalk connection at one location adjacent to a school;
- a project to install durable crosswalk markings and strong yellow-green sign post sleeves at all school patrolled crossings reviewed in the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years (approximately 80 intersections throughout the City).

In April 2007, the awards were announced totaling \$1.3 million for 13 infrastructure projects and \$250,000 for 10 non-infrastructure projects. Minneapolis and Duluth were the only two cities in the state to receive funding in each of the first two rounds of Safe Routes to School awards. For FY 2007, Minneapolis was awarded \$30,000 for the collector crosswalk treatment at Lake Harriet School Upper Campus, which is a continuation of the projects funded under the FY 2005-2006 Safe Routes to School program. Lake Harriet School has an extremely innovative bicycle skill and safety curriculum developed by one of its teachers that has resulted in as many as 120 students biking to school, so the project also includes the installation of new bike racks at the school to meet the demand for bike parking. Applications for Non-Motorized

Transportation Pilot Project Funds were submitted to TLC in April 2007 for the two school safety projects that were not selected for FY 2007 Safe Routes to School funds.

Public Works intends to continue to apply for Safe Routes to School funding each year of the program, and Mn/DOT has stated that the FY 2008-2009 funding solicitation, the final year of SAFETEA-LU funding, will be released in August 2007. There are approximately 50 remaining K-8 schools in Minneapolis that are eligible for Safe Routes to School funding that have not yet been reviewed and evaluated. In order to respond to the accelerated Safe Routes funding schedule and identify additional projects and needs, Public Works is currently conducting preliminary evaluations at the remaining 50 schools, to be completed by June 2007. These preliminary reviews will not replace the comprehensive evaluations completed as part of the School Pedestrian Safety Program, but are only intended to identify potential projects that would be eligible for Safe Routes to School or NTP funding.