



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

Date: January 16, 2006
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, Traffic and Parking Services

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

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

Permanent Review Committee (PRC) Approval _____ Not applicable
Policy review Group (PRG) Approval _____ Not applicable

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

- No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget
 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
 Business Plan: Action is within the plan. Action requires a change to plan.
 Other financial impact (Explain):
 Request provided to department's Finance Dept. contact 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. Some funding-dependent recommendations were also developed, for which Public Works submitted an application to MnDOT for Safe Routes to School funds. Both Public Works and Minneapolis Public Schools were successful in their applications for \$173,000 and \$10,000, respectively.

To date in the 2006-2007 school year, evaluations have been completed at 6 of the below listed schools and preliminary reviews for Safe Routes project eligibility have been made at 13 additional schools also listed below.

School Year 2006-2007 School Evaluations:

- Lake Harriet Community School, Upper Campus (completed)
- Carondelet Catholic School, Upper Campus (completed)
- Sojourner Truth Academy (completed)
- Tuttle Community School (completed)
- Lyndale Community School (completed)
- Kenny Community School (completed)
- Jefferson Community School (preliminary)
- Whittier School for the Arts (preliminary)
- Harry Davis Academy (preliminary)
- Lincoln/Willard Community School (preliminary)
- Bethune Community School (preliminary)
- Pope John Paul II Catholic School (preliminary)
- New City Charter School (preliminary)
- Dowling Urban Environmental School (preliminary)
- Aurora Charter School (preliminary)
- Seward Montessori School (preliminary)
- Longfellow/Cooper Community School (preliminary)
- Andersen Elementary School (preliminary)
- Anishinabe Academy (preliminary)

Improvements that have been made to date at some of 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 K-8 schools. 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.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) is currently soliciting applications for the Fiscal Year 2007 Safe Routes to School funding, and a total of \$1.3 million will be awarded

for infrastructure projects and \$250,000 for non-infrastructure projects. A maximum award of \$175,000 is available per school district for infrastructure improvements. The Safe Routes to School awards do not require any local matching funds; however, the first solicitation in July 2006 was extremely competitive with only 17 of 76 applications receiving funding. It is expected that the communities that did not receive funding will re-apply for the FY 2007 funds, in addition to other agencies that did not submit in the first round of applications.

Mn/DOT's stated objective in the first two years of the program is to launch Safe Routes to School programs in as many communities as possible. Realizing that that the first Safe Routes solicitation had seventeen successful projects and that there are approximately 350 school districts in the state, Minneapolis will have a challenge to be successful with our current submittal for FY 2007 funds. However, funding awards in future years are expected to be evaluated based on proven success of past projects, which will be an advantage for Minneapolis due to the strong walking and biking facilities and programs that already exist in the city.

To maximize the potential for a Safe Routes funding award in the current solicitation, Public Works intends to submit three separate applications with different funding levels. The projects for which Public Works is requesting funding are for needs identified from the evaluations of the 39 K-8 schools reviewed in the School Pedestrian Safety Program in the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. The three applications will include:

- 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 (approximately \$35,000);
- a project to construct a missing sidewalk connection at one location adjacent to a school (approximately \$25,000);
- 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) (approximately \$125,000).

Public Works has been and will continue to work with the Minneapolis School District, the individual school principals, and Minneapolis Health and Family Support to coordinate the necessary information and inter-agency support for these projects. The Safe Routes to School application will be submitted to the Mn/DOT in January 2007, and funding awards are expected in March 2007.

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 25 K-8 remaining 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 will be conducting preliminary evaluations at the remaining 25 schools during spring 2007. This represents a significant acceleration of the initial 4-5 year schedule to review all schools in Minneapolis.

Public Works will also continue to seek out additional funding sources for School Pedestrian Safety projects, including applying for Non-Motorized Transportation funding in March 2007 to address additional outstanding bicycle and pedestrian needs at Minneapolis schools.