




Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR  
July 13, 2010

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From:  Phil Kamlarz, City Manager  
Submitted by: Claudette R. Ford, Director, Public Works  
Subject: Grant: Safe Routes to School for Emerson Elementary School et al

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit grant applications to the Caltrans Safe Routes to School program for traffic safety improvements around three Berkeley public schools (Emerson Elementary School, John Muir Elementary School and Martin Luther King Middle School) totaling \$857,167; and accept the grants awarded, and execute any resultant agreements and amendments.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

If awarded, this Safe Routes to School (SR2S) application would bring in \$857,167 of competitive grant funding (revenue code 689-4950-331-2089). The total estimated cost of the project is \$952,408. The \$95,241 difference represents the City's required local match, which has been set aside in the FY 2011 Measure B Bike & Pedestrian Fund budget (expenditure code 392-4950-431-6580) for this purpose.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The majority of Berkeley public schools are located on or adjacent to major arterial streets such as Ashby Avenue (State Highway 13), University Avenue, Solano Avenue and Shattuck Avenue, Martin Luther King, Jr. Way (MLK), Sacramento Street and San Pablo Avenue (State Highway 123). Students walking and biking to schools must navigate their way through a hazardous combination of traffic, including arterial roadways, regional freeways, and school-related drop-off/pick-up activities. Currently, the City lacks sufficient funding to address the traffic-related safety issues around many schools. As a consequence, fewer students walk and ride bikes to school than otherwise would.

BACKGROUND

Safe Routes to School is a State program managed by Caltrans that grants funding to improve walking and bicycling routes to schools. The current two-year funding cycle (2010-2011) offers a maximum of \$450,000 per application (\$24.25 million statewide) for school safety improvements, but unlike previous cycles allows jurisdictions to submit

more than one application. In 2009 the City of Berkeley was successful in obtaining \$898,660 for improvements around four Berkeley public schools (Malcolm X Elementary School, Rosa Parks Elementary School, Thousand Oaks Elementary School, Berkeley Arts Magnet School). In 2005, Berkeley was successful in obtaining \$364,320 for improvements around Malcolm X Elementary School. In 2000, Berkeley received \$450,000 in Safe Routes money that was used for the installation of two traffic signals on Telegraph at Stuart and Russell Streets to improve the safety of children attending Willard Middle School and LeConte Elementary School.

For FY 2011 the Transportation Division has developed two grant applications, totaling \$857,167. Details are provided below.

Emerson Elementary School and John Muir Elementary School (grant request: \$448,792): Traffic calming and pedestrian crossing safety improvements, including traffic calming adjacent to the school and improved crossing of College Avenue with new beacons and pedestrian push-buttons (Emerson School); and new pedestrian walkway lighting and an improved crossing of Claremont Avenue with bulbouts, updated beacons and new pedestrian push-buttons (John Muir School).

Martin Luther King Middle School (grant request: \$408,375): Traffic calming and pedestrian crossing safety improvements at the intersection of Martin Luther King/The Alameda/Hopkins Street, including new bulb outs, pedestrian refuge islands and pedestrian signal push-buttons.

These applications address safety needs based in part on the school area improvement plans initiated by the Alameda County Safe Routes to School (SR2S) program, and developed by local parents, administrators and teachers. The city has integrated additional school area improvements as identified in the draft Berkeley Pedestrian Master Plan.

Staff recommends that Council authorize applying for these grant funds for safety improvement projects, accept the grants, if awarded, and execute any resultant agreements and amendments.

Berkeley's Department of Health Services and the Alameda County SR2S Program have been working with parents, staff and students at local schools to promote safer walking, bicycling, drop-off and busing activities at schools.

#### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Safe Routes to School funding will allow the City to address the hazards posed by automobile traffic around Berkeley public schools. The application has been reviewed and approved by the City's Traffic Engineering unit and thoroughly vetted with stakeholders such as the Alameda County SR2S program and Safe Routes Team Leader parents at each school. Not approving the application would mean foregoing \$450,000 in potential grant funding.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

The City could chose not to apply for these funds, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the areas surrounding schools would likely remain unfunded. Staff considered applying for funds for a different set of improvements based on projects from the draft Berkeley Pedestrian Plan, but felt that the school area improvement plans initiated by the Alameda County SR2S program and crafted by local parents and school administrators would serve as the basis for the most effective and competitive application.

CONTACT PERSON

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Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. -N.S.

GRANT APPLICATION: CALTRANS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR  
TRAFFIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AROUND FOUR BERKELEY PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, students travelling to Berkeley public schools experience conditions which discourage walking and biking to school; and

WHEREAS, the State Safe Routes to School funds can be used to make safety improvements to bicycle and pedestrian routes to schools; and

WHEREAS, sidewalk bulb-outs, pedestrian refuge islands, crosswalk safety beacons and signing and pavement striping and legends are among the potential safety improvement measures proposed; and

WHEREAS, if awarded, the grant funds will be placed in revenue code 689-4950-331-2089; and the City will provide matching funds in the amount of \$95,241 as its required local 10%, which is available in the FY 2011 Measure B Bike & Pedestrian Fund budget (code 392-4950-431-6560) and for this purpose.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley authorizes the City Manager to submit grant applications to the Caltrans Safe Routes to School program for traffic safety improvements around three Berkeley public schools (Emerson Elementary School, John Muir Elementary School and Martin Luther King Middle School) totaling \$857,167; and accept the grants awarded, and execute any resultant agreements and amendments.