

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(5)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: June 15, 2010

TITLE: Update on Safe Routes to School Programs

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| DEPARTMENT: Planning | PUBLIC HEARING: YES ___ NO ___ X ___ |
| ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Action Plan newsletter C. Action Plan Kick-off Meeting Minutes | FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff Brubaker – 918-7329 George Seiz – 918-7427 |

PURPOSE

An update on Safe Routes to School Programs the Town is carrying out to promote walking and bicycling to school.

INFORMATION

Background

Walking to school in the United States has declined from 48 percent of students in 1969 to 12 percent in 2009, according to the National Center for Safe Routes to School. About 2 percent of students bicycle to school. According to 2009 student travel data collected by the Planning Department, these numbers are generally reflective of walking and bicycling mode shares for Carrboro and McDougle Elementary Schools.

The federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program was initiated by SAFETEA-LU, the 2005 federal transportation authorization bill. Under the program, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) makes funding available to states to implement infrastructure projects, plans, and programs that encourage safe walking and bicycling to and from school. NCDOT administers North Carolina's SRTS program, which is supporting and overseeing the programs described below.

For more information on Safe Routes to School, visit:

- National Center for Safe Routes to School: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/index.cfm>
- Safe Routes to School National Partnership: <http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/home>

Safe Routes to School Action Plan

The Carrboro Safe Routes to School Action Plan will guide Town decisions in encouraging walking and bicycling to Carrboro and McDougle Elementary Schools. The Action Plan is made possible by a Service Award from NCDOT that the Town received in July 2008. It is being developed by consulting firms Greenways Inc. and Greene Transportation Solutions.

The current status of the project is the creation of a draft of the Action Plan. The Action Plan Team, which is the steering committee for the plan, will meet in July to review the draft. The Plan is scheduled to be presented to the Board of Aldermen in the fall for consideration of adoption.

A Spring 2010 newsletter is available in Attachment B.

Timeline

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| December 7, 2009 | Kick-off meeting – Team members outlined goals and objectives of the project (Attachment C) |
| Early 2010 | Data collection |
| May 3, 2010 | Public Open House – Team members and general public provided feedback on barriers to walking and bicycling and offered solutions |
| July 2010 | Third Team meeting and review of draft Action Plan |
| Fall 2010 | Final Action Plan – Adoption and Implementation |

One of the guidelines of the type of Action Plan grant the Town received limited the amount of participating schools to one or two. Town staff have identified Morris Grove Elementary as a priority for future SRTS programs, and funding the Town received under FHWA’s Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program last year to construct a connector between Orange County’s Twin Creeks Greenway and the planned Jones Creek Greenway near Morris Grove also includes funding for implementing Safe Routes to School events. This project is scheduled for 2013-2014; however, a funding source for the required local match has not yet been identified. Staff will continue to look for future SRTS funding opportunities for any or all schools in Carrboro.

Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Project

In September 2009, the Town received a \$300,000 reimbursement grant from NCDOT to construct a sidewalk on Elm St. between Weaver and Shelton, leading to Carrboro Elementary. The project consists of planning, design, and construction of approximately 870 linear feet of 5-foot wide sidewalk along the east side of the street. Elm St. is a Phase 1 sidewalk bond project. A Notice to Proceed with design and utility relocation was received by the Town on June 1. The sidewalk is expected to be completed by June 2012.

Safe Routes to School Non-infrastructure Project

In Fall 2009, the Town was awarded a grant for \$12,864 to support two “Walk n’ Roll” walk/bike-to-school promotional events at Carrboro Elementary. The Town and Carrboro

School coordinated on the grant application and have been working with NCDOT and FHWA to scope and plan the events.

The events are planned to be held during the 2010-2011 school year, with one event occurring in the fall and one event occurring in the spring. Town staff and Carrboro School will be evaluating the effect of the events on student travel patterns through student and parent surveys.

FISCAL AND STAFF IMPACT

No fiscal impacts accrue from receiving this update.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that the Board of Aldermen adopt the resolution receiving the update.