

# BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. A(1)

## AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: May 22, 2012

TITLE: Public Hearing on the Safe Routes to School Action Plan

<b>DEPARTMENT: Planning</b>	<b>PUBLIC HEARING: YES</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b> A. Resolution B. Advisory Board recommendations C. Excerpts from the Action Plan – Summaries of infrastructure improvements and table of action steps	<b>FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:</b> Jeff Brubaker, Transportation Planner – 918-7329

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this agenda item is to hold a public hearing on the draft Safe Routes to School Action Plan, which offers recommendations on improving the safety and convenience of walking and cycling to school in Carrboro. The public hearing will be a chance for further public input on the plan.

### INFORMATION

#### **Background**

In 2009, the Town received a service award from NCDOT to develop a Safe Routes to School Action Plan. The plan outlines infrastructure improvements, programs and activities, enforcement strategies, and educational efforts that serve to improve options for walking and cycling to school. Funding was provided by the grant award directly to a consulting team, who developed the plan and offered technical assistance. The two participating schools are Carrboro and McDougle Elementary Schools.

#### *Participants*

The Action Plan was prepared by consultants Greenways Inc. and Greene Transportation Solutions. The Action Plan Team – a steering committee composed of school principals, teachers, parents, staff from the CHCCS Transportation Department, the Chair of the Carrboro Transportation Advisory Board, and Town staff (Police, Fire, Planning, Recreation and Parks, Public Works) – guided plan development and made comments at public meetings.

#### *Public participation*

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The following dates provided opportunities for the participants and interested community members to offer input.

- December 7, 2009: Action Plan Team Kickoff Meeting at Town Hall
- Spring 2010: Consultant site visits to schools
- May 3, 2010: Public Open House @ Carrboro Elementary
- June 1-2, 2010: Student travel tallies and parent surveys
- June 15, 2010: Board of Aldermen receives update on SRTS programs
- September 21-23, 2010: Student travel tallies and parent surveys
- October 11, 2010: Action Plan Review Meeting @ McDougle Elementary
- October 30, 2010: Map of recommendations @ McDougle Elementary Fall Festival
- February 15, 2011: Presentation to the Board of Aldermen

Input was also received at other times via email and phone.

### *Vision and goals for the Action Plan*

The following goals were established by the Action Plan Team at the kickoff meeting to guide the plan's development and recommendations:

- Increase the percentage of children walking and bicycling to school to 25% by year 2015.
- Expand walk zones so that less people ride the bus and more people walk or bicycle to school.
- Implement incentive programs for participating kids.
- Relieve parents' fears about walking and bicycling.
- Create a culture that encourages walking.
- Reduce vehicular miles traveled.
- Calm traffic and enforce traffic laws.
- Develop encouragement / incentive programs that will include all children (including the ones that cannot walk or bicycle to school).
- Develop new greenways.
- Educate parents and children on the benefits of walking and bicycling.
- Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle safety in PE classes.
- Increase school board participation and support.
- Incorporate/consider SRTS guidelines in new site selection.
- Provide greater connectivity between neighborhoods and schools.
- Develop guidelines and set priorities for actual projects that will encourage and increase walkers (will require DOT support).
- Conduct neighborhood education and support initiatives to address current opposition.
- Develop programs for working parents.
- Involve/develop collaboration with local businesses and agencies for park and walk locations and sponsorships.
- Have bi-lingual education and encouragement plans.
- Create and maintain evaluation and monitoring subgroups such as a Safe Routes to School advocacy group that would champion this plan and evaluate its progress.

### **Report to the Board of Aldermen**

On February 15, 2011, the Board of Aldermen received a report from the consulting team describing the plan and its findings and recommendations. The Board adopted a resolution directing that the plan be shared with the CHCCS Board of Education, the two schools' PTAs, and school administrators; that staff continue to work with the schools and PTAs to further Safe Routes to School education; and that the plan be posted on the Town website.

The draft Action Plan is available at the following link: <http://www.townofcarrboro.org/pzi/Trans/transportation.htm>. *Attachment C* comprises excerpts from the plan, including Ch. 1 – Introduction (with vision and goals); summaries of infrastructure improvements from Ch. 3; and an action steps table from Ch. 7.

### **Presentations to CHCCS Board of Education and PTAs**

The following presentations of the draft Action Plan were made by Town staff:

- February 7, 2012 – McDougle Elementary PTA
- April 19, 2012 – CHCCS Board of Education

Both of these presentations were informational in nature. The agenda for the April 19, 2012, CHCCS meeting can be accessed here: <http://www2.chccs.k12.nc.us/chccs-board-meeting-agendas>.

A presentation to the Carrboro Elementary PTA has not yet occurred; however, the PTA has been informed of the plan and received a link to the plan via email.

### **Advisory Board recommendations**

Advisory Board recommendations are included in *Attachment B*. Because the Greenways Commission meets Monday, May 21, it is expected that if the Commission adopts a recommendation, it will be provided at the Board meeting.

### **FISCAL AND STAFF IMPACT**

Since the Action Plan is a guiding document, the Town is not bound to fulfilling any or all of its recommendations. Some recommendations are already being pursued through concurrent planning processes, e.g. the West Main Street Road Diet; exploration of a curb extension at the Hillsborough-James-Quail Roost intersection; and a sidewalk on Pine St. (bond project). Other recommendations would require further staff and budget commitments.

The Action Plan recommends, as a first step after mutual adoption of the plan by the Board of Aldermen and Board of Education, the formation of a Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee, composed of Town of Carrboro, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, NCDOT, and active parents/residents. The plan goes on to describe such a Committee:

One of the most important steps in implementation is the continuation of a committee that would meet on a monthly or quarterly basis. The core group of the Action Plan's Steering Committee could provide the starting point. This group would help maintain the momentum established during this Action Plan. The group would "shepherd" the plan, be

knowledgeable about the Plan, advocate for its implementation, assist the Town and schools in programming and grant writing, continue to make SRTS a priority for the schools, evaluate progress, re-examine priorities, and utilize the Action Plan document. The continuity of activity in the future is essential even if members come and go from this Committee.

If a Committee is formed and meets quarterly, the following would be the expected staff impact.

Meetings: 40 hrs. (4 mtgs./yr. x 10 hrs/mtg.).

Technical assistance with SRTS programs: 30 hrs.

Technical assistance with SRTS engineering project implementation: 30 hrs.

Total hours: 100 (approx. 5% FTE). Some hours may overlap with regular tasks already being completed by staff (e.g. working with NCDOT to improve pedestrian safety at intersections).

Given the fact that this committee would be a collaboration between the Town and CHCCS, it is recommended that the committee would also share staffing between Town and CHCCS staff.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommend that the Board approve the resolution in *Attachment A-1* adopting the Action Plan as a guiding document for future improvements. A second resolution provided in *Attachment A-2*, is placeholder for alternative actions should the Board decide not to adopt the Action Plan.