

Council Business Meeting

March 1, 2022

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| Agenda Item | Approval of a Safe Routes To School Grant Application – Project Identification Program | |
| From | Scott Fleury P.E. | Public Works Director |
| Contact | Scott.fleury@ashland.or.us | 541-552-2412 |

SUMMARY

Before the Council is a request by Public Works to apply for an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Project Identification Program (PIP) grant. Public Works Staff has coordinated with the Ashland School District and Transportation Commission to gather support for the grant opportunity in order to develop a formal Safe Routes to School Plan with the focus on eliminating barriers that keep school children from walking and biking to school.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

Council Goals-Essential Services:

- Streets

Department Goals:

- Maintain existing infrastructure to meet regulatory requirements and minimize life-cycle costs
- Deliver timely life cycle capital improvement projects
- Maintain and improve infrastructure that enhances the economic vitality of the community
- Evaluate all city infrastructure regarding planning management and financial resources

Transportation System Goals:

Goal 2: Make safety a priority for all modes of travel.

Goal 4: Create a system-wide balance for serving and facilitating pedestrian, bicycle, rail, air, transit, and vehicular traffic in terms of mobility and access within and through the City of Ashland.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION

The Council has previously approved similar type applications with respect to SRTS grant funding.

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

“Safe Routes to School” refers to efforts that improve, educate, or encourage children safely walking (by foot or mobility device) or biking to school. The Oregon Department of Transportation has two main types of Safe Routes to School programs: infrastructure and non-infrastructure. Infrastructure programs focus on making sure safe walking and biking routes exist through investments in crossings, sidewalks and bike lanes, flashing beacons, and the like. Non-infrastructure programs focus on education and outreach to assure awareness and safe use of walking and biking routes. Investments include developing Safe Routes to School Action Plans, educating students on walking and biking options and how to do use them safely (laws, rules, and guidelines), among other efforts. ODOT's Safe Routes to School programs are focused on providing grants to make it safer for Oregon's children to walk or bike to school, providing opportunity and encouragement. ODOT also houses information resources and provides some technical support.

Project Identification Program:

Consultant services will assist the community (school representatives, school community, and local road authority representative) identify infrastructure needs near one school or a cluster of schools feeding into the same middle or high school, focusing on all streets within a quarter-mile of the school, as well as critical issues within a mile of the school. The outcome of each Project Identification Program process will be a Safe Routes to School Plan for each school, cluster of schools, or small community that outlines infrastructure and education needs to address barriers to students walking and biking to school and provides some information needed to apply for the ODOT Safe Routes to School Competitive or Rapid Response Infrastructure Grants.

ODOT expects to serve up to 20 communities with PIP grants in the upcoming cycle. As part of the PIP program a commitment is needed from both the local road authority and the school district to participate as part of the project management team lead by a consultant. This involves team meetings and site visits. The school district has already committed to this by providing a letter of support for the project. Staff believes a successful PIP project would lead to a higher potential to apply for and receive SRTS construction grant funding for projects in the future as this is how many communities have been successful in the past applications.

Staff also brought this item before the Transportation Commission and they recommended the Council authorize Public Works to apply for the PIP grant.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The only fiscal impacts associated with the SRTS PIP grant is the associated staff time to develop the application and participate as part of the project management team in development of the Safe Routes To School Plan. There are no grant match requirements for the PIP grant.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Council approve moving forward with the final grant application package for SRTS PIP Grant.

ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS

Council has two potential motions:

- I move to approve the Public Works Department apply for a Safe Routes to School Project Identification Program Grant through the Oregon Department of Transportation.
- I move to request the City take no action and not submit the SRTS Grant.

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment #1: Road Authority Letter of Support
- Attachment #2: Ashland School District Letter of Support

March 18, 2022

This is letter of commitment from the Public Works Department, the main Road Authority of the roads around the focus school identifies in the application submitted by The City of Ashland for ODOT's Project Identification Program.

The ODOT Safe Routes to School Project Identification Program provides a service to school communities to identify infrastructure projects and non-infrastructure programs that address barriers to students walking and biking to school in a newly-created local plan.

I, Scott Fleury understand that consultant services will assist our community (school representatives, school community, and local road authority representative). ODOT's consultant will coordinate and implement the Project Identification Program process in our community for each school and provide support in collecting necessary background data, conducting outreach for community participation, and developing a SRTS Plan for your community (including one or more schools).

I understand that in order to maximize the benefits of Project Identification Program participation, Project Identification Program recipients are expected to attend all scheduled calls, provide timely responses (within two weeks) to requests for data or other information, follow through on assigned tasks, and work to meet the scheduled timeline.

ODOT's SRTS Infrastructure Technical Assistance Provider will schedule and coordinate all conference calls, collect available background data, conduct planning and engineering assessments, and provide draft and final documents via email.

I will be the representative from the Road Authority to participate in this process. I understand that ODOT anticipates it will take 21 weeks to complete our new Safe Routes to School Plan.

I understand that ODOT expects this service to be completed before the end of next school year.

I will:

- ✓ Attend 3 conference calls (kick-off, preliminary product review, draft product review)
- ✓ Provide data as requested
- ✓ Invite local stakeholders
- ✓ Attend walk audit observation and community meeting
- ✓ Review draft materials and provide timely, consolidated feedback
- ✓ Circulate Public Review Draft materials
- ✓ Prepare letter of support for projects

Sincerely,

Scott Fleury PE
Public Works Director
City of Ashland



ASHLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

JACKSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #5

Samuel Bogdanove

Superintendent

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January 18, 2022

LeeAnne Ferguson, ODOT Program Manager

Heidi Manlove, ODOT Program Manager

SRTS Grant

355 Capitol St. NE, MS11

Salem, OR 97301-3871

Ms. Ferguson and Ms. Manlove:

I am writing in support of an ODOT SRTS grant application for 2022 with the City of Ashland. We have a community committed to kids and a strong desire to partner with the City of Ashland and ODOT to remove barriers and create safe routes to school for every student. We also have unsafe areas of significant need that can be addressed through partnership, infrastructure and education.

We would value the expertise of an ODOT consultant and the City of Ashland in developing a plan that will increase safety and independent travel for all ages of students. Together, we can provide choice for students and families to access safe, active and shared transportation options to and from school.

I look forward to the next steps in the application process and that good things that can come for kids and families through a partnership with ODOT and the City of Ashland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Samuel Bogdanove".

Samuel Bogdanove

Superintendent

Ashland School District

Pronouns: He, Him, Him