

MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

INFORMATION SUMMARY... for your review

DATE:

February 1, 2011

SUBJECT:

Recommendation to the Arizona Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School Program

SUMMARY:

Many of us remember a time when walking and bicycling to school was a part of everyday life. In 1969, about half of all students walked or bicycled to school. Today, however, the story is very different. Fewer than 15 percent of all school trips are made by walking or bicycling, one-quarter are made on a school bus, and over half of all children arrive at school in private automobiles.

This decline in walking and bicycling has had an adverse effect on traffic congestion and air quality around schools, as well as pedestrian and bicycle safety. In addition, a growing body of evidence has shown that children who lead sedentary lifestyles are at risk for a variety of health problems such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Safety issues are a big concern for parents, who consistently cite traffic danger as a reason why their children are unable to bicycle or walk to school.

The purpose of the Federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program, established in SAFETEA-LU, is to address these issues head on. At its heart, the SRTS Program empowers communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity once again. The SRTS Program makes funding available, through state departments of transportation, for a wide variety of programs and projects, from building safer street crossings to establishing programs that encourage children and their parents to walk and bicycle safely to school. To this end, the Safe Routes to School Program was created to accomplish three goals:

1. Enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school.
2. Make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age.
3. Facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution near schools.

The program hopes to accomplish this by providing funds for schools and communities to implement infrastructure projects (such as sidewalk improvements, trails, and 'traffic calming') and non-infrastructure projects (such as education campaigns, safety training, law enforcement efforts, and promotional giveaways).

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is administering the state's Safe Routes to School Program and announced the fifth cycle/call for projects in October 2010. Awards in this cycle will be made to safety projects in three categories: (1) Infrastructure; (2) Non-infrastructure; (3) Materials and Regional Support. For infrastructure-based projects the total amount available is \$2,500,000 and the maximum award for a single project is \$400,000. For non-infrastructure projects, the total amount available is \$1,000,000 and the maximum award for a single project is \$45,000 per year or \$120,000 for a three-year project, and for Materials and Regional Support projects, both the total available and the maximum award are \$30,000. The Safe Routes to School is a reimbursement program. Selected applicants will be entitled to request reimbursements from ADOT for an amount agreed upon at the time of selection.

The ADOT application review process stipulates that MPOs/COGs must provide ADOT with a ranked list of project applications from their regions as the MPO/COG recommendation. This ranking will be

considered when all applications are reviewed as part of the statewide selection process. A total of 37 project applications has been received by ADOT. The MAG region has generated applications for eight infrastructure projects and two non-infrastructure projects (see Attachment A). The project selection by ADOT is expected to be finalized by May 2011.

PUBLIC INPUT:

None has been received.

PROS & CONS:

PROS: The successful implementation of Safe Routes to School programs, projects and activities across the MAG region is likely to lead to more kindergarten through eighth grade students walking and bicycling to their schools, and a safer road environment on school access routes for all pedestrians and bicyclists.

CONS: None.

TECHNICAL & POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

TECHNICAL: None.

POLICY: Since this national program, will be making funds available each year for school access related road safety improvements, there is a potential need for staff resources to administer School Traffic Safety Programs at MAG member agencies.

ACTION NEEDED:

Recommend approval of the ranked list of projects to be submitted to the Arizona Department of Transportation for the Safe Routes to School Program.

PRIOR COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

The MAG Transportation Safety Committee conducted a detailed review of all 10 project applications and unanimously approved recommendation of the ranked lists of proposed projects as shown in Attachment A, at the January 18, 2011, meeting.

MEMBERS ATTENDING

- Julian Dresang, Tempe, Chairman
- * Linda Gorman, AAA Arizona
- * Tom Burch, AARP
- * Kohinoor Kar, ADOT
- Shane Kiesow, Apache Junction
- # Margaret Boone-Pixley, Avondale
- Paul Ward, Buckeye
- Huang Huo for Martin Johnson, Chandler
- * Lt. Jenna Mitchell, DPS
- Jorge Gastelum, El Mirage
- Kurt Sharp, Gilbert
- # Luke Albert for Hugh Bigalk, Goodyear
- * Kelly LaRosa, FHWA
- # Chris Lemka, Glendale
- * Chris Plumb, Maricopa County
- Sanja Grujakovic for Renate Ehm, Mesa
- * William Mead, Paradise Valley
- Mannar Tamirisa for Jamal Rahimi, Peoria
- Kerry Wilcoxon, Phoenix,
- Paul Porell, Scottsdale
- # Tracy Eberlein, Surprise
- Gardner Tabon, ValleyMetro

* not present,

participated via teleconference

CONTACT PERSON:

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ATTACHMENT A

Infrastructure Projects

Project Name	Lead Agency	Funding Request	Rank
Sidewalks along 17th Avenue for C.J. Jorgensen School	Phoenix	\$340,484	1
Safer Crossing Improvements for Lowell Elementary	Phoenix	\$202,527	2
Safer Crossing of Van Buren for Wilson Elementary	Phoenix	\$202,527	3
Safer walking route to Four Peaks Elementary School	Fountain Hills	\$327,600	4
Martin Street Landscape, Pedestrian, Bikeway and Roadway Improvements	Gila Bend	\$299,217	5
Old Litchfield Rd Pedestrian Connectivity Infrastructure Project	Litchfield Park	\$157,825	6
Mountain Sky Junior High Safety Improvements	Phoenix	\$79,692	7
Arizona School of Arts Safer Crossing of McDowell Road	Phoenix	\$109,556	8
		\$1,719,428	

Non-Infrastructure Projects

Project Name	Lead Agency	Funding Request	
Banner Buddies Injury Prevention	Banner Health	\$120,000	1
Bicycling & Walking to School for Fun, Safety & Fitness	Higley Unified School District	\$120,000	2