



## REPORT/RECOMMENDATION

<b>To:</b> <b>MAYOR AND COUNCIL</b>	<b>Agenda Item #</b> <u>IV. M.</u>
<b>From:</b> <b>Wayne D. Houle, PE</b>  <b>City Engineer</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Action</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Discussion</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Information</b>
<b>Date:</b> <b>April 3, 2012</b>	
<b>Subject:</b> <b>Resolution No. 2012-54 Safe Routes To School – Edina Transportation Advisory</b>	

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

Approve attached Resolution No. 2012-54 supporting the creation and funding of a Minnesota Safe Routes to School Grant Program as recommended by the Edina Transportation Commission.

**INFORMATION/BACKGROUND:**

Attached is an ETC Advisory Communication regarding the attached resolution.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- ETC Advisory Communication – Support for the Creation and Funding of a Minnesota Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Grant Program
- Resolution No. 2012-54
- SRTS Fact Sheet

# ETC ADVISORY COMMUNICATION

**DATE:** March 26, 2012

**SUBJECT:** City of Edina Support for the Creation and Funding of a Minnesota Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Grant Program

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

- SRTS Bonding Resolution of Support Template
- American Heart Association SRTS Fact Sheet

## **SITUATION**

The City of Edina has identified improving conditions for walking and bicycling in public school, park and activity center walking zones as a priority. Across the state, community requests for federal Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Funding, administered through MnDOT, consistently outpace the available funding. To better meet state infrastructure needs, a Minnesota SRTS Program is proposed for inclusion in the 2012 bonding bill.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City has pursued federal SRTS infrastructure funding with varying degrees of success. In 2009 the City was awarded funding to do a Speed Zone Study. In 2011 the City was denied a funding request for sidewalks. As noted in chapter 7 of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Edina has many outstanding needs with regard to completing gaps in the sidewalk network near important community destinations such as schools, many of which functionally serve as neighborhood parks as well. Federal SRTS funding is noted as an important supplemental source of funding to other financing solutions.

In response to MnDOT's 2011 solicitation, 82 SRTS grant requests totaling \$23 million were received. Only 16 were able to be funded with the available \$3.8 million in federal funds.

## **ANALYSIS**

It is in the City's interest to support the creation of a Minnesota Safe Routes to School Grant Program. The City has a need and desire to fill gaps in existing infrastructure to support walking and bicycling to school. Many other Minnesota communities share this goal, making the existing federal funds extremely

competitive. The availability of state funds through the bonding bill would provide an additional source of financing for the state to better meet the existing needs.

The Council has demonstrated that it is interested in improving the conditions for walking and bicycling, particularly for children. This would have a variety of benefits consistent with other City initiatives (i.e., do.town, GreenStep Cities, etc.) including improving support for daily physical activity, potentially reducing traffic congestion in neighborhoods, improving air quality around schools, and reducing wear and tear on local roads.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Adopt a resolution that encourages the Minnesota Legislature to pass and Governor Dayton to sign a bill that creates a Minnesota Safe Routes to School Grant Program and funds it with an allocation of \$3 million in the 2012 Bonding Bill.**

**Share this resolution with the Edina legislative delegation.**

## **ROUTING**

**PREPARED BY:** Katherine Bass

**REVIEWED BY:** Jennifer Janovy, Michael Thompson

**REQUEST:** Please distribute to the City Council with attachments for discussion and action at the April 3, 2012 regular meeting.



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**RESOLUTION NO. 2012-54  
RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT  
FOR THE CREATION AND FUNDING OF A  
MINNESOTA SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM**

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Department of Transportation received 82 Safe Routes to School grant requests in 2011 totaling \$23 million but were only able to fund 16 with the \$3.8 million in federal funds that were available; and

**WHEREAS**, about one-third of the children in the United States are obese or overweight; and

**WHEREAS**, the number of obese and overweight children has tripled in the last 20 years and is expected to increase at an even more rapid rate; and

**WHEREAS**, 43% of children that live less than a mile from school are driven to school; and

**WHEREAS**, walking one mile to and from school would equal 2/3 of the recommended daily physical activity, and

**WHEREAS**, many children do not get the recommended 30 minute minimum of moderate to vigorous physical activity most days; and

**WHEREAS**, \$14 billion is spent annually in United States on child obesity related health care; and

**WHEREAS**, studies have shown that physical activity has a positive effect on scholastic achievement, cognitive ability, reducing tobacco use, insomnia, depression, anxiety and body mass index; and

**WHEREAS**, epidemiologists have forecasted that today's American children may be the first generation to live shorter lives than their parents because of disease related to physical inactivity.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Edina City Council encourages the Minnesota Legislature to pass and Governor Dayton to sign a bill that creates a Minnesota Safe Routes to School Program and funds it with an allocation of \$3 million in the 2012 Bonding Bill.

Dated: April 3, 2012

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Debra A. Mangen, City Clerk

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James B. Hovland, Mayor

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**ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**

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STATE OF MINNESOTA )  
COUNTY OF HENNEPIN ) SS  
CITY OF EDINA )

CERTIFICATE OF CITY CLERK

I, the undersigned duly appointed and acting City Clerk for the City of Edina do hereby certify that the attached and foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the Edina City Council at its Regular Meeting of April 3, 2012, and as recorded in the Minutes of said Regular Meeting.

WITNESS my hand and seal of said City this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

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City Clerk



## Talking Points: Safe Routes to Schools in Minnesota

### Background on Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national and international movement to create safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to bicycle and walk to and from schools. The program has been designed to reverse the decline in children walking and bicycling to schools. Safe Routes to School can also play a critical role in reversing the alarming nationwide trend toward childhood obesity and inactivity.

There is a federally funded program that was established in 2005 and several states have established a state-funded SRTS program, including Texas and California.

### Benefits of Safe Routes to School

#### **Safety:**

- In 2009, more than 23,000 children (ages 5 to 15) were injured and 250 killed by cars when they were struck while walking or bicycling. This represents 25% of all children's traffic fatalities and 15% of all children's traffic injuries.<sup>i</sup> Safe Routes to School is the only program focused on addressing this tragic reality.
- For children who live less than a mile from school, 43% are driven to school—an easy distance for walking and bicycling if conditions are safe.<sup>ii</sup>
- These short trips can be shifted to walking and bicycling with Safe Routes to School, easing the morning commute and increasing physical activity.

#### **Promotes academic achievement:**

- Evidence suggests that physical activity has a positive impact on cognitive ability, avoiding tobacco use, insomnia, depression, and anxiety.<sup>iii</sup>
- Other studies have shown that normal weight children have higher scholastic achievement, less absenteeism, and higher physical fitness than their obese counterparts.<sup>iv,v</sup>
- Recent studies have found a strong correlation between physical activity and physical education in schools and students' academic performance.<sup>vi</sup>

#### **Promotes physical activity:**

- It is recommended that children engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day. Walking one mile to and from school each day equals two-thirds of the recommended level of physical activity per day, and children who walk to school are more physically active throughout the day.

**2012 Proposal: Establish and fund Minnesota's Safe Routes to School program with state bonding dollars**

SF 1439/HF 1429 would allow for the sale and issuing of an additional \$3 million in bonds for capital investment towards walking/biking infrastructure improvements. In the last federal funding cycle MNDOT received 82 applications from local schools requesting \$23 million but only \$3.8 million was available and awarded to 16 applicants through the federal program.

- Studies show that children who walk and bicycle to school are more physically active,<sup>vii</sup> have lower body mass index scores,<sup>viii</sup> lower obesity levels<sup>ix</sup> and are more likely to meet physical activity guidelines<sup>x</sup> than students who are driven or bused to school.
- Studies of Safe Routes to School programs have shown they can increase walking and bicycling anywhere from 20 to 200%.<sup>xi</sup> Another study found that just a 5% increase in neighborhood walkability was associated with 32.1% more minutes devoted to physically active travel.<sup>xii</sup>
- It's unfair to –expect and encourage children to be more physically active without providing them with an opportunity and safe environment to allow them to incorporate exercise into their daily routines. Infrastructure installed with Safe Routes to School funding is proven to reduce pedestrian and bicycle deaths and injuries. For example, adding a sidewalk cuts in half the risk that a pedestrian will be struck by a car.<sup>xiii</sup>

***Benefits the community economically:***

- Studies have found that building bike/pedestrian trails **reduces health care costs** associated with physical inactivity. For every dollar invested in building these trails, nearly \$3 in medical cost savings may be achieved.<sup>xiv</sup>
- In addition, adding a sidewalk can **reduce long-term school busing costs**, and ease financial burdens on schools struggling to absorb the rising price of gasoline. Conservatively assuming that 5% of today's school busing costs are for hazard busing, making it safe for those children to walk or bicycle instead could save approximately \$1 billion per year in busing costs.<sup>xv</sup>
- Construction of pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure **creates jobs**. In fact, for each \$1 million in bicycling or pedestrian infrastructure 10-11.4 jobs are created; compared to 7.8 jobs for road-only construction projects.<sup>xvi</sup>

## **State and Local Communities Drive SRTS Efforts**

- A key to Safe Routes to School is the requirement for a comprehensive planning approach whereby cities, schools and parents work together to set priorities for projects to address the most pressing safety concerns. This approach helps target funding where it is most needed.
- Since 2006, \$11.2 million in SRTS grants have been awarded in Minnesota to 114 grantees. There are many local success stories in Minnesota. Some are on the Minnesota Department of Transportation Web site: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/saferoutes/successstories.html>
- State funding is needed to help address the growing demand for SRTS resources. In the 2011 funding round just one in five applications were funded. Eighty-two local communities applied for a total of \$23 million but only \$3.8 million was available and awarded to 16 applicants.
- This initiative would complement the SRTS activities taking place under the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP). Through SHIP at least 181 schools across the state are actively engaged in implementing Safe Routes to School policies, practices and systems changes that will increase opportunities and support for youth to walk or bike to school and ultimately lead to increased physical activity and reduced obesity. The SHIP funds cannot pay for the infrastructure needs of a SRTS initiative. This bonding initiative would help pay for the infrastructure costs of achieving Safe Routes to School across Minnesota.

*For further information, please contact Rachel Callanan, Regional Vice President of Advocacy for American Heart Association at [rachel.callanan@heart.org](mailto:rachel.callanan@heart.org).*

## End Notes

<sup>i</sup> "Pedestrians: 2009 Data" and "Bicyclists and Other Cyclists: 2009 Data" Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2009. Available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811394.pdf> and <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pubs/811386.pdf>.

<sup>ii</sup> "Safe Routes to School: Helping Communities Save Dollars." Safe Routes to School National Partnership, 2011. Available at:

<sup>iii</sup> Suitor, CW, Kraak, VI. Adequacy of Evidence for Physical Activity Guidelines Development: Workshop Summary. Institute of Medicine. Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2007.

<sup>iv</sup> Shore SM, Sachs ML, Lidicker JR, et. al. Decreased scholastic achievement in overweight middle school students. *Obesity* 2008; 16, 1535–1538.

<sup>v</sup> Geier AB, et al. The Relationship Between Relative Weight and School Attendance. *Obesity*. 2007. 15:2157-2161.

<sup>vi</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Association Between School-Based Physical Activity, Including Physical Education, and Academic Performance Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2010.

<sup>vii</sup> Cooper AR, LB Andersen, N Wedderkopp, AS Page, and K Froberg. "Physical activity levels of children who walk, cycle or are driven to school." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 29 (2005): 3, 179-184.

<sup>viii</sup> Rosenberg DE, JF Sallis, TL Conway, KL Cain, and TL McDenzie. "Active transportation to school over 2 years in relation to weight status and physical activity." *Obesity* 14 (2006): 10, 1771-1776.

<sup>ix</sup> Mendoza JA, K Watson, N Nguyen, E Cerin, T Baranowski, and TA Nicklas. "Active Commuting to School and Association with Physical Activity and Adiposity Among US Youth." *Journal of Physical Activity and Health* 8 (May 2011): 4, 488-495.

<sup>x</sup> Sirard JR, WF Riner, KL McIver, and RR Pate. "Physical activity and active commuting to elementary school." *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* 37 (2005): 12, 2062-2069.

<sup>xi</sup> Orenstein, M. R., Gutierrez, N., Rice, T.M., Cooper, J. F., and Ragland, D. R. (2007). "Safe Routes to School Safety and Mobility Analysis," Safe Transportation Research & Education Center, Institute of Transportation Studies, UC Berkeley. Available at: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/5455454c>.

<sup>xii</sup> Lawrence D. Frank, James F. Sallis, Terry L. Conway, James E. Chapman, Brian E. Saelens, and William Bachman. "Many Pathways from Land Use to Health: Associations between Neighborhood Walkability and Active Transportation, Body Mass Index, and Air Quality," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 72, No. 1, Winter 2006. American Planning Association, Chicago, IL.

<sup>xiii</sup> Knoblauch, R, B Tustin, S Smith, and M Pietrucha. "Investigation of Exposure-Based Pedestrian Accident Areas: Crosswalks, Sidewalks, Local Streets, and Major Arterials." Washington DC: US Department of Transportation, 1987.

<sup>xiv</sup> Wang, G., C. A. Macera, et al. (2005). "A cost-benefit analysis of physical activity using bike/pedestrian trails." *Health Promotion Practice*. 6(2): 174-9.

<sup>xv</sup> Digest of Education Statistics, 2010. Tables 184, 186 and 187. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011.

<sup>xvi</sup> Garrett-Peltier, Heidi. June 20, 2011. "Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure: A National Study of Employment Impacts." Political Economy Research Institute.