Safe Routes to School

Briefing to: City Council Transportation and Environment Committee

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Purpose of Briefing

- Review Safe Routes to School Grant Program and application requirements
- Request to approve list of candidate projects recommended by staff in conjunction with school/pedestrian stakeholders

Overview

- Current school safety issues
- Purpose of Safe Routes to School Program
- Application requirements
- School selection process

Safe Routes to School Program

- **Current Issues**
  - A 2001 national study found 16% of students walk to school compared to 87% in 1969
  - Increase in health problems due to reduced physical fitness
  - Schools were not designed for passenger drop off resulting in increased congestion and pedestrian conflicts

Safe Routes to School Program

- **National Safe Routes to School Program initiated to address issues**
- **Purpose of Program**
  - Promote walking and biking to school
  - Provide safety training programs
  - Eliminate hazards and obstacles along routes
- **Benefits of Program**
  - Increase safety and awareness
  - Reduce vehicle traffic, fuel and pollution
  - Increase student fitness and health

Safe Routes to School Program

- **2007 Safe Routes to School Call for Projects**
  - Nov 13, 2006 Staff briefed TEC on Safe Routes to School Program
  - Jan 15, 2007 - TxDOT issued Call for Projects
  - Mar 16, 2007 - TxDOT held workshop to explain application forms, procedures and scoring criteria
  - May 25, 2007 - Applications due to TxDOT

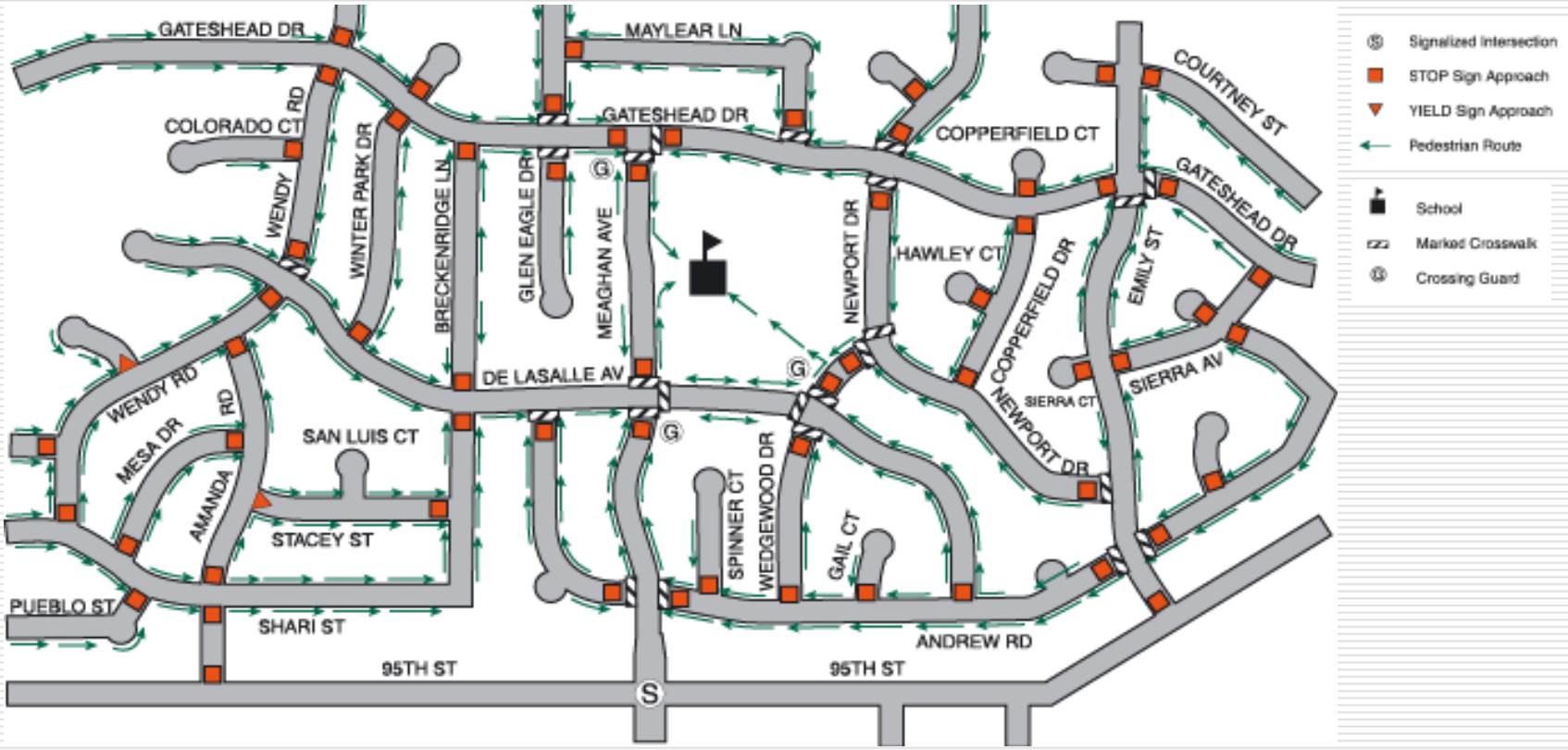
Available Funding

- Statewide competitive call for projects
- $40M to be distributed between 2007-2009
- 100% federally funded (cost reimbursement)
- No local match required
  - Significant effort by staff to coordinate plans, prepare designs, implement traffic control devices, manage sidewalk construction contracts, and coordinate programs
- TxDOT anticipates a subsequent project call in 2008

Safe Routes to School Plan

- All infrastructure applications must be accompanied by a Safe Routes to School Plan
  1. Comprehensive map illustrating:
     - Attendance boundaries, routes and crossing points
     - Traffic signals, signs, and markings along routes
     - Crossing guard locations
  2. Describes strategies to educate, encourage and enforce safe routes
- Plan preparation is very labor intensive and requires extensive coordination with school administration, police, and parent volunteers

Sample Plan Map



- Bounded by school attendance zone
- Minimizes number of crossings and uses low volume streets
- Proactively places traffic control devices along routes

Applications

- Two types of applications:
  1. Infrastructure ($750,000 max per application)
  2. Non-infrastructure ($10,000 max per application)
- Applications may serve single or multiple schools
- No limit on the number of applications submitted by agency

Eligible Projects

- **Infrastructure applications**
  - Sidewalk improvements
  - On street improvements to street crossings
    - Traffic signs
    - Pavement markings
    - Warning flashers
    - Traffic signal pedestrian count down timers
  - Traffic diversion improvements to separate pedestrians from vehicles and buses
  - Traffic calming and speed reduction projects

Eligible Projects

- **Non- Infrastructure applications**

  a) Fund implementation of programs defined by an existing Safe Routes to School Plan:
     - Brochures
     - Safety classes and videos
     - Parent parking patrols
     - Walking School Buses

  b) Fund preparation of a Safe Routes to School Plan for future project calls
     - Identify routes and audit for hazards/obstacles
     - Develop traffic circulation plans
     - Identify programs to promote walking and educate students/parents on safety

Ineligible Projects

- **Projects that are <u>not</u> eligible**
  - Safety improvements at high schools (only grades K-8 eligible)
  - Recurring costs such as crossing guard salaries
  - Improvements to bus stops
  - New road construction
  - Improvements to schools under construction

Project Selection Process

1. Stakeholders requested to identify schools with pedestrian issues
   - Independent School Districts (Superintendents & Principals)
   - Safe Kids Dallas Area Coalition
   - Injury Prevention Center of Greater Dallas
   - City of Dallas Transportation Engineers
   - City of Dallas Police Department-Cross Guard Unit
2. Stakeholders returned list of schools for consideration:
   - Identified safety issues
   - Provided travel modes (% walking, biking, driven and bused)

Project Selection Process

3. A total of 64 schools were returned from stakeholders for consideration. City staff placed schools into the following application categories based on the issues identified:
   - **Infrastructure**: 21 schools reported issues related to walking and infrastructure deficiencies
   - **Non-Infrastructure**: 31 schools reported issues related to traffic congestion and pedestrian conflicts
   - **Not Considered**: 12 schools reported issues internal to the school campus or issues that have or will be addressed through other funding sources

Project Selection Process

4. Infrastructure Applications: 12 of the 21 schools selected based on following criteria:
   - Number of students walking
   - Infrastructure deficiencies were higher in severity:
     - Requires students to walk in the street
     - Students required to cross major streets
     - History of pedestrian-vehicle conflicts
5. Non-Infrastructure Applications: 14 of the 31 schools selected based on following criteria:
   - Stakeholders reported major issues related to conflicts between pedestrian and vehicular traffic
   - Large student population
   - School located on or near major streets

Summary of School Applications

Infrastructure Applications

1. Burnet Elementary School (ES)
2. Ireland ES
3. Johnston ES
4. Jones ES
5. Lowe ES
6. Roberts ES
7. Starks ES
8. Stone ES
9. Tasby Middle School (MS)
10. Truett ES
11. Weiss ES
12. White Rock ES

Non-Infrastructure Applications to prepare SRTS Plan

1. Botello ES
2. Bowie ES
3. Cary MS
4. Comstock MS
5. Florence MS
6. Gill ES
7. Hernandez ES
8. Hood ES
9. Miller ES
10. Moreno ES
11. Peabody ES
12. Rogers ES
13. Rusk MS
14. Sanger ES

Applications will be scored by a TxDOT Evaluation Committee (see Appendix A & B)

Future Actions

Staff recommended school list will be included in the grant application submittal pending council action

May 23	Council resolution to authorize grant applications
May 25	Applications due to Texas Department of Transportation

Appendix A

Scored by TxDOT Evaluation Committee

Infrastructure Category	Points
A. Problem Identification: Problem severity increases score	0-25
B. Proposed Improvement - Proposed improvement addresses problems identified	0-40
C. Project Measurement: How success of program measured	0-10
D. Project Support: - How project relates to bike plan, trails, or safe routes plan - Evidence of local support and partnerships - Ability to "front" project costs and maintain infrastructure	0-10
E. Project Cost: Costs are sufficiently detailed and reasonable	0-15
Total	100

Appendix B

Scored by TxDOT Evaluation Committee

Non-Infrastructure Category	Points
A. Problem Identification - Describes potential safety issues	0-30
B. Proposed Program or Plan Development - Proposed strategies address safety	0-30
C. Partnership Coordination - Describes proposed partnerships - Defines project management responsibilities	0-30
D. Project Cost - Costs are sufficiently detailed and reasonable - Schedule of milestones defined	0-10
Total	100