

TO: John McDonough, City Manager

FROM: Tom Black, Director Public Works

DATE: November 9, 2010 for submission on the Agenda of the November 16, 2010 City Council Meeting

ITEM: Briefing on Safe Routes to School Grant Program

Background

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is administered by the Georgia Department of Transportation and provides funding to support infrastructure improvements aimed at making biking and walking to school safe and routine in Georgia's communities. Funds are available to support infrastructure improvements at schools that serve children in grades K – 8. Eligible projects under the SRTS program include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming and speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle improvement, on- and off-street bicycle facilities, secure bicycle parking facilities and traffic diversion programs.

Discussion

City staff contacted K-8 schools throughout the city to gauge interest in participating, as the program requires a commitment by the school to participate in the Safe Routes to School Resource Center and establish educational programming relative to the program. Spalding Drive Charter Elementary School expressed interest in participating. Working with the school, staff from the Public Works Department has developed a list of desired improvements, which are detailed below.

On the school grounds:

- Install switch back ramp from street (West Spalding Drive) to front of school for ease of Handicap Accessibility. This Handicap Accessible ramp would replace the current staircase at this location.
- Concrete Pad with sloped edging to house bicycle rack.
- New bicycle rack.
- Stone retaining wall along West Spalding Drive in order to mediate soil erosion with widening of sidewalks in this area. (see first bullet in Neighborhood Outreach).

- Install low ornamental fencing along the outer edge of the sidewalks at the street entrance of the school. This will provide some protection for those on the sidewalks in this area.

In the neighborhood around the school:

- Widen the existing sidewalk on West Spalding Drive from Faunsworth to Brandon Mill.
- Install sidewalk down Faunsworth Drive. This is an evacuation route for the school in case of a gas leak, bomb threat, or other event that would require moving from school grounds.
- Install sidewalk heading south on Brandon Mill to Seville Chase subdivision. Several families live within walking distance from the school in this subdivision but Brandon Mill to dangerous to walk on the side of the street. Also, with sidewalk installation, the Spalding Drive would have a secondary location for a school wide evacuation.
- Install two (2) crosswalks – West Spalding and Faunsworth and Brandon Mill and River Court Parkway.
- Install School Zone lights and signage on Brandon Mill heading north and south.
- Install flashing light signal at West Spalding Drive and Brandon Mill to notify vehicles and pedestrians of oncoming traffic.
- Install lamp posts consistent with City of Sandy Springs revitalization along West Spalding from Faunsworth to Brandon Mill. Current street lights do not cover the area and are not bright enough. The school entrance is especially dark.
- Install lamp posts consistent with City of Sandy Springs revitalization along Brandon Mill where sidewalks exist. This stretch of road is very dark.

Alternatives

Council could direct staff not to proceed with applying, limiting the infrastructure improvement options available to the area around Spalding Drive Charter Elementary.

Financial Impact

There is no negative financial impact to the City as no match is required and the City is not responsible for administering the project. Project administration is handled directly by the Georgia Department of Transportation.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends proceeding with the development of the grant application, which is due to DOT by November 23, 2010.