



TO: Elizabeth A. Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Cailin Henley, Safe Routes to School Coordinator, Transportation Planner, Public Works
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COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution - Amendment to Interlocal Agreement with DSHS for Traffic Gardens - December 12, 2023
DATE: November 16, 2023

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SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

A resolution authorizing an amendment of an Interlocal Agreement with the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), to accept up to an additional \$50,000, for the piloting and installation of traffic gardens and safety events, through June 30, 2025.

BACKGROUND:

This Department’s Recommendation is Based On: Providing Tacoma children with opportunities to safely practice biking and scootering and the rules of the road in an environment designed at child-scale and free from motorized vehicles. Traffic gardens are small versions of roadways painted onto a paved surface in a park, on school grounds, or closed-off street, offering a playful and low-stress environment for learning traffic safety. In various forms, traffic gardens have been used internationally since the 1950s for immersive, experiential learning, with the goal to equip youth with the skills needed to safely walk and roll to schools, parks, and other destinations.

The amended Interlocal Agreement (ILA) provides the City’s Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program with up to an additional \$50,000 to continue to plan and install traffic gardens, create educational and promotional materials, and host events that teach traffic safety skills and offer free helmets and proper helmet fit instruction for families through June 2025.

This pilot with the DSHS Traumatic Brain Injury Council provides the DSHS team and the City with a partnership opportunity to test temporary and permanent traffic garden strategies, offer safety education and materials, and teach vital traffic safety skills in a fun environment.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

From 2016 - 2022, WSDOT data shows that 168 youth, age 19 or younger, were hit in Tacoma while walking or biking by other road users. These collisions occur disproportionately in areas identified as very low or low access to opportunity, according to the City of Tacoma’s Equity Index (2020). Teaching youth traffic safety skills at a young age is one piece of a comprehensive approach to reducing youth injuries and fatalities while walking and biking. Additionally, creating events that welcome, engage, and educate their adults and older siblings to be role models transforms a traffic safety play space into a community safety event.

In summer 2023, the Safe Routes to School program installed and hosted four temporary traffic gardens and pop-up events, each event was an opportunity for youth to receive a free, properly fitted helmet, decorate their helmet, receive free bicycle tune-ups, borrow a bike or kick scooter, and learn traffic safety skills. Based on survey results, 67 percent said both the parent and child learned something about traffic safety skills and helmet fitting. The survey was available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, and Ukrainian, with responses received in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Russian.



This amendment presents an opportunity to expand temporary traffic gardens and begin planning efforts for a permanent traffic garden. Potential permanent and temporary locations will be prioritized using the Tacoma Equity Index and Safe Routes to School prioritization analysis, while also assessing areas that offer fewer play-spaces for young children. Implementation will require willing partners who have access to appropriate spaces.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

Using the funds provided by DSHS through this ILA and the amendment, the City’s SRTS program will prioritize temporary traffic garden installation and events in locations identified as very low to moderate access to opportunity in Tacoma and in areas with fewer places for younger children to play. By doing so, this works to increase quality, out-of-school learning opportunities and encourage active living. Furthermore, the traffic garden events that include free helmet giveaways are intended to enhance intergenerational community building and safety for youth. Lastly, information on the traffic gardens will be available in several languages.

Education: *Equity Index Score:* Low Opportunity

Increase the number of quality out of school time learning opportunities distributed equitably across the city.

Civic Engagement: *Equity Index Score:* Low Opportunity

Increase the percentage of residents who believe they are able to have a positive impact on the community and express trust in the public institutions in Tacoma.

Livability: *Equity Index Score:* Low Opportunity

Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

Improve access and proximity by residents to diverse income levels and race/ethnicity to community facilities, services, infrastructure, and employment.

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).

Traffic gardens and affiliated pop-up events can activate spaces and draw community together. Of the families who took the survey in 2023, 98 percent said that the event gave them a sense of being part of their community. These events and installations can provide young residents and their family members with an experience where they see government staff are working for them, care about them, wish to connect with them, and provide resources and opportunities for safe and fun exploration and play in their neighborhood.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1. No ILA with DSHS.	N/A	Traffic gardens would not be installed, limiting traffic safety education and the number of helmets available for the City to distribute to youth.



EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

As a part of the ILA with DSHS, the SRTS Coordinator will evaluate the traffic garden installations and events by:

1. Compiling data on the number of attendees at events, proper helmet-fit educational conversations with adults, and helmets fit and distributed to youth. - *2023 summer pop-up events hosted 275 people, with 174 youth receiving a free, properly fit helmet*
2. Assessing who the events reach and attract, identifying improvement opportunities to reach families reflective of the Tacoma community and of the area in which the traffic gardens are installed. - *Of families who took the 2023 traffic garden survey available in seven languages, 19% requested additional in-language materials, expanding beyond what was offered.*
3. Noting lessons learned about different locations and materials used for installing and promoting the traffic gardens. - *Promoting the event through the school administration and community groups was the most beneficial, followed by the flyers distributed in seven languages to students with activity books at the end of the school year.*
4. Offering different ways for youth and adults to provide feedback on the traffic gardens and events. - *Digital surveys worked well with the QR code in 2023, and yet, offering print surveys and adding language options in which to take the survey may help us hear from more people.*

STAFF/SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

A resolution authorizing the execution of an Interlocal Agreement amendment with DSHS to accept up to an additional \$50,000 from the DSHS Traumatic Brain Injury Council for the purpose of implementing traffic gardens and associated events in 2024-2025.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This ILA provides the City’s SRTS program with up to an additional \$50,000 for staff time and materials related to temporary traffic garden installation, education, events, project management, and evaluation and reporting. No current City funds are needed to match the funds from DSHS.

Fund Number & Name	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	Cost Element	Total Amount
1060 TGRNT - PW Transportation Grants	PWK-TG003-01	4338002	\$30,000 (existing)
1060 TGRNT - PW Transportation Grants	PWK-TG003-01	4338002	Up to \$50,000 (new)
TOTAL			Up to \$80,000



What Funding is being used to support the expense? No City funding is supporting the expense.

Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium's current budget?

NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN BELOW

This ILA offers additional funding for the SRTS program's education and encouragement efforts. The existing funding of \$30k is already budgeted. The additional funding through this amendment will be budgeted through the biennium-end process in 2026.

Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?

No

Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact?

No

Will the legislation change the City's FTE/personnel counts?

No

This ILA assists the City's SRTS Coordinator in carrying out education and encouragement goals of the Council-approved 2017 Safe Routes to School Action Plan and the 2023 Safe Routes to School Action Plan update.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Proposed Interlocal Agreement Amendment with the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services