



City of Tacoma

Standing Committee Memorandum

TO: Elizabeth A. Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Kurtis D. Kingsolver, P.E., Public Works Director/City Engineer *kk*
COPY: Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee
 Tadd Wille, Deputy City Manager
 Michael P. Slevin III, P.E., Executive Liaison
PRESENTER: Carrie Wilhelme, Safe Routes to School Coordinator, Public Works
SUBJECT: Safe Routes to School Action Plan Update
DATE: September 9, 2020

PRESENTATION TYPE:

Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:

Public Works Department staff will present an overview of the City's Safe Routes to School Action Plan. The presentation will include an overview of current and future projects related to the six Es of Safe Routes to School.

BACKGROUND:

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a federal program established by Congress in 2005, with a focus on creating a healthier, safer student population that walks and bikes. Safe Routes to School goals and actions are developed through the lens of six Es: Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Equity, and Evaluation. The sixth E was Enforcement but was removed in June 2020 by the National Safe Routes to School Partnership and replaced with Engagement.

The goals for SRTS are to reduce the number of traffic collisions involving youths and empower independence through walking and bicycling. The City has worked over many years to improve roadway design and infrastructure around schools but has lacked adequate funding to address the infrastructure, education, and encouragement needs of all school sites. The SRTS Action Plan was completed August 2017, in partnership with Tacoma Public Schools, Puyallup Watershed Initiative, and community partners to identify and understand the gaps for students walking and bicycling to school, strategically develop a sustainable and ongoing SRTS Program for walkers and bicyclers, identify dedicated and sustainable funding, and leverage grant opportunities. The main components of the SRTS Implementation Plan include visions, goals, and actions.

ISSUE:

Infrastructure improvements for two schools per year has been possible due to dedicated funding included in the 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 biennium budgets. Additionally, the City has been successful in receiving grants related to SRTS projects including education and encouragement activities. This combined funding has allowed the City to develop a robust and well regarded SRTS program through improving school crossings and walking routes, installing school zone flashing beacons, and providing education and encouragement programs and activities.

However, the need for non-motorized infrastructure improvements is significant. While progress has been made, there is much more work that needs to be done in order to achieve the goals within the SRTS Action Plan and create a youth-friendly city. As progress is made toward the City's goal of having more students walk and bike to school, their safety and access to active transportation infrastructure can be improved with continued implementation of the SRTS Action Plan and complementary efforts such as Vision Zero.



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ALTERNATIVES:

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.