

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Safe Routes to School Grant Programs

MEETING DATE: September 6, 2007

AGENDA ITEM: 6

STAFF CONTACT: Brittany Odermann

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive information on the Safe Routes to School federal and state funding programs including a summary of the Federal Program Cycle 1 Santa Barbara County applications and awards, proposed dates for the next cycle(s), and best practices for successful applications.

DISCUSSION:

The federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program was authorized with the passage of SAFETEA-LU in August 2005 and built on successes of California's Safe Routes to School Program and other similar programs in other states. The federal program is a five-year grant program that aims to make walking and bicycling to school a more appealing mode choice by facilitating the planning, design and implementation of projects that improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities within a two-mile radius of a school. Caltrans, Division of Local Assistance administers both the federal and state-funded programs and selects the projects to be funded through a statewide, competitive application process. While there are slight differences in the eligibility for the state versus the federally funded programs, Caltrans expects that applicants will send in the same applications for both programs (separately) in cases where their projects meet the eligibility for either program.

The first federal funding cycle was conducted last fall and awarded nearly \$45 million statewide to projects that improved conditions for children in grades K-8 to safely walk and bicycle to school. The attached table summarizes the Safe Routes to School applications submitted from Santa Barbara County agencies in the first cycle of the federal program. The second cycle of federal funding is scheduled to begin in mid-September in the amount of \$48 million. There will be a call for projects issued at that time. It is anticipated that the California state-funded SRTS program will initiate a call for projects as early as August 27th to award \$52 million statewide. Collectively, there will be nearly \$100 million available for Safe Routes to School Projects from the two programs.

Generally, the purposes of both programs are:

- to enable and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school;
- to make bicycling and walking to school safer and more appealing; and
- to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects that will improve safety and reduce traffic in the vicinity of schools.
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The federal program is limited to funding projects that affect primary and middle schools (grades K-8). The state program includes projects in the vicinity of high schools (grades K-12). The other

Member Agencies

Buellton ■ Carpinteria ■ Goleta ■ Guadalupe ■ Lompoc ■ Santa Barbara ■ Santa Maria ■ Solvang ■ Santa Barbara County

significant difference between the federal and state programs is that the state program is comprised strictly of infrastructure projects whereas the Federal Program allots a percentage of its program to non-infrastructure projects including educational posters, increased signage, etc.

Historically, Santa Barbara communities have received a generous amount of SRTS funding. This trend can continue if applications remain well executed. Applicants should submit projects with well-defined scopes that directly relate to the objectives of the SRTS program. Applicants may also consider submitting one application per cycle, per program to minimize competition within the same jurisdiction.

Cycle 1 Federal SRTS Summary for Santa Barbara County

Agency	Project	Requested	Awarded
City of Santa Barbara	Jake Boysel Multipurpose Pathway	\$901,700	\$901,700
City of Lompoc	Sidewalk Infill and ADA Pedestrian Ramp	\$650,620	0
City of Lompoc	“U” Street/San Miguelito channel Ped Bridge Replacement	\$200,000	0
County of Santa Barbara	Lakeview Jr. High School Sidewalk and Crosswalk Improvements	\$764,652	0
County of Santa Barbara	Sisquoc Bicycle and Ped Bridge Replacement Project	\$455,400	0
County of Santa Barbara	Vandenberg Village Curb Ramps for ADA Compliance	\$364,170	0
City of Santa Maria	Robert Bruce Elementary, Handicapped Access Ramps	\$495,000	0
City of Santa Maria	School Signage - Upgrade to Fluorescent Green - Various Locations	\$425,000	0
City of Santa Maria	Miller School - Handicap Ramps/Adequate Alley Improvements	\$485,000	0
City of Santa Maria	Alvin School - Handicap Ramps/Adequate Alley Improvements	\$480,000	0
City of Santa Maria	Tunnell School - Handicap Ramps/Adequate Alley Improvements	\$495,000	0
	TOTALS:	\$5,716,542	\$901,700

DISTRICT 5 TOTALS		
No. of Applications	27	4
Funding	\$10,470,688	2,602,300

The Safe Routes to School grant programs are competitive; still there are many eligible projects in Santa Barbara County that should compete well. It is important for agencies to seek funding from multiple sources for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, especially given the commitment of STIP funding to regional highway projects, the limited amount of STIP-TE funding available countywide, and the county’s loss of eligibility for CMAQ funding which could fund bicycle and pedestrian projects that improved safety and air quality. SBCAG and District 5 Local Assistance staffs are available to review applications, at a local agency’s request for consistency with eligibility requirements and program emphases. Caltrans District 5 Local Assistance has committed to attending the October 4 TTAC meeting to discuss best practices further.

More information about Safe Routes to School Programs can be found on the Caltrans Division of Local Assistance website:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoute2.htm>

RECOMMENDATION: This is an informational item only.