



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
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Memorandum

Date: March 26, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor, Members of City Council, and Interim City Manager

From: Scott Schafer, Public Works Director
Bob Desgrosellier, Acting Chief Engineer

Subject: Top 10 Safe Routes To School Projects

At the January 21st City Council meeting, staff was directed by City Council to compile a list of the "Top 10" projects associated with Safe Routes To Schools (SRTS) and to provide estimated costs and a timeline of appropriate next steps.

A previous City Council directive was for staff to identify main corridors at each of the elementary schools within the City by the end of 2019. Specifically, identify with the assistance of both the Yakima School District (YSD) and the West Valley School District (WVSD) main routes utilized by the students at each school running east/west and north/south. Once identified, provide cost estimates of sidewalk needs along those routes. Collectively, the estimated cost for sidewalk installation exceeded \$5 million and was presented to City Council.

In developing our "Top 10" projects, the costs of the sidewalk installation along the main east/west and north/south routes was factored into the scope of work for each of the schools. The Top 3 - Robertson, Nob Hill, and Hoover Elementary Schools, have remained the top priority for the past few years. City staff and YSD staff have worked collaboratively in identifying improvements needed to increase the safety in order to apply for SRTS grants. The remaining projects were prioritized with the assistance of City staff, YSD staff and WVSD staff. The project list is estimated at \$3.7 million. **Attached – Top 10 SRTS Projects**

In mid-February of this year, Representative Jeremie Dufault of the 15th District reached out to the City requesting that the City submit an application for a Local Community Project grant for a project estimated at \$50,000. Staff quickly identified Hoover Elementary for its need for sidewalk improvements. The scope of the project would consist of constructing 620 linear feet of sidewalk to extend the drop-off and pick-up area around Hoover Elementary and to add ADA ramps; increasing the safety for the students. At this time, the outcome of our application submittal is unknown.

Senator Curtis King in late February requested that the City provide him our "Top 5" school sidewalk project list. At this time, State funding for these projects also remains unknown.



With passage of I-976 (Car Tab fees), a direct result has been a significant reduction in the state's transportation budget. This has caused the State's Safe Routes To Schools competitive grant program to be placed on hold. No grant applications will be accepted in the next grant cycle. In addition, the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) experienced a \$4.6 million reduction. This too has placed several programs on hold that the City has heavily relied upon to install sidewalks and improve public safety. The "Complete Streets" program in which the City utilized to install several areas of needed sidewalks at the beginning of this year, has been placed on hold until there is funding certainty for such a program. Other grant programs associated with TIB on hold are the "Sidewalk Program" and the "Arterial Preservation Program."

The City will continue to do its due diligence; always evaluating how to improve public safety especially for our kids. We have identified several Safe Routes To School projects with the assistance of both YSD and WVSD. By doing so, we have positioned ourselves to be eligible to apply for not only SRTS and Complete Streets funding, but also to pursue other grant programs and funding sources as they come available.