

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 8, 2008

SUBJECT: Safe Routes to School Activity and Infrastructure Update

SUMMARY

The "Safe Routes to School" concept includes infrastructure and non-infrastructure activities and projects that promote walking and bicycling among elementary to high school students. Safe Routes to School funding has come from both State and Federal funding programs in the past, but as of Fiscal Year 08/09, will only be available from Federal funds (\$46 Million available). Throughout the lifetime of both funding cycles, seven grants have been awarded within the San Luis Obispo region (5 state and 2 federal) totaling \$2.6 Million. In addition to these infrastructure grants, SLOCOG allocated \$23,000 in SHA funds for Rideshare's Safe Routes to School Program. This program provides a regional workshop, lending materials, individualized school-based program planning, and mini grants. For Fiscal Year 2008/2009, Rideshare is hosting a third Safe Routes to School Workshop on October 28th and 29th in Atascadero. See attachment A for Poster. Rideshare will also be offering two mini grant programs during the fiscal year: Activity Mini Grants will be available to six schools in the amount of \$100 each and Program Mini Grants will be available to three schools in the amount of \$1,500.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommendations: Information item

TTAC:

CTAC:

SSTAC:

DISCUSSION

The underlying premise of Safe Routes to School is that improving physical conditions and providing activities will increase the number of children walking and biking to school. This is important for several reasons:

- More children walking or biking to school may reduce obesity and improve health among youth.
- Reducing car traffic to schools is better for air and road quality around schools.
- Children may be more alert and ready for the day.

Infrastructure and Non-Infrastructure

Types of Safe Routes to School projects can be categorized as either infrastructure or non-infrastructure. The two categories are most effective when used in concert with one another.

Infrastructure projects include engineering enhancements that make it safer for walking and bicycling. These projects may be considered Safe Routes to School projects when they happen within a specified walking distance of schools. Types of projects are:

- Sidewalk improvements
- Crosswalks
- Signalized intersections
- Bike lanes
- Separated bike or multi-use paths

Non-infrastructure projects are all other activities associated with improving walking and bicycling to schools. This may include:

- Crossing guard programs
- Law enforcement patrolling schools more frequently during pick up or drop off times.
- School officials organizing a walk or bike to school day.
- Classrooms competing to have the most students walking/biking to school during a month.
- Parents organizing neighborhood based “walking school buses” or “bike trains”.

Grant Types: State and Federal

There are two types of “Safe Routes to School” grants that have been available until now.

California

Called SR2S, this grant issued its seventh funding cycle in October 2007, award notices were given in March 2008. This grant was for infrastructure projects only, required a 10% match and could be used at schools serving grades K-12. Cities, counties and school districts were able to apply.

The following five grants have been issued to jurisdictions in the San Luis Obispo Region over the lifetime of the grant:

Cycle Seven (awarded March 2008):

- City of Arroyo Grande: Sidewalks at Paulding Middle School (\$308,610)
- City of San Luis Obispo: Various pedestrian improvements at Hawthorne and Sinsheimer Elementary schools and San Luis High School (\$225,150)
- City of Atascadero: Multi-Use Path adjacent to San Gabriel Elementary School (\$383,400)

Cycle Five:

- City of San Luis Obispo: construct curb, gutter and sidewalk, improve sight distance, relocate crosswalk and traffic signal adjacent to Laguna Middle School (\$155,700)

Cycle Three:

- County of San Luis Obispo: construct sidewalks and enhance crosswalks on Old Country Road from Florence Avenue to Vineyard Drive for Templeton Elementary Middle and High Schools (\$288,000)

State SR2S funding is no longer automatically annually programmed. During last fiscal year the state legislature modified the authorizing legislation and provided that all funding be annually allocated to the State budget. Due to the state deficit, no State funding is allocated to Safe Routes to School this year.

Federal

Called SRTS, the Federal funding program is similar to the California grant program, with a few differences: This grant is for infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects, has no match requirement and can only be used for schools serving grades K-6. The federal grant has provided two cycles of funding. The second cycle closed on July 18, 2008. State, local, regional agencies; cities and counties; non-profit organizations; school districts; and Native American Tribes can apply. Two jurisdictions in the SLO Region have received Federal Safe Routes to School funding:

Cycle One:

- City of San Luis Obispo: Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge across Prefumo Creek to benefit CL Smith and Laguna Middle Schools (\$798,600)
- County of San Luis Obispo: Construct sidewalk, curb and gutter on the south side of Price Street, install bulbouts, flashing crosswalk system signs, and pedestrian bridge segments to benefit Nipomo Elementary School (\$605,000)

Current Federal Cycle

The most recent federal funding cycle closed on July 18, 2008. The following entities applied for funds during this cycle. Award notification for this cycle is unknown.

- County of San Luis Obispo: El Morro Avenue, Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements (Los Osos)
- City of Arroyo Grande: Ocean View Elementary School Sidewalks
- County of San Luis Obispo: 16th Street Railroad Crossing (San Miguel)
- SLOCOG/Rideshare: Non-Infrastructure program funds

Activities in the Region

School activities

The following table shows schools and activities at each school. This list is not comprehensive, it represents schools that have worked with, requested materials from, or volunteered information to Rideshare.

Safe Routes to School Activities in San Luis Obispo Region*

Activity	total number of schools
Infrastructure grant	
CL Smith	City of SLO
Hawthorne Elementary	City of SLO
Laguna Middle School	City of SLO
Nipomo Elementary	County of SLO
Paulding Middle School	City of Arroyo Grande
San Gabriel Elementary	City of Atascadero
San Luis High School	City of SLO
Sinsheimer Elementary School	City of SLO
Templeton Elementary, Middle and High School	County of SLO
Parent survey	
Baywood	Completed Spring 2008, results tallied by Cal Poly Engineering class
CL Smith	Completed Spring 2008, results tallied by Cal Poly Engineering class
Harloe Elementary	Completed Spring 2007, results tallied by Rideshare
San Gabriel Elementary	Completed Winter 2006, results tallied by parent group
Assembly	
San Gabriel Elementary	Performed by Rideshare staff, SLOCBC, and Cal Poly Wheelmen
Hawthorne Elementary	Performed by Parent group, SLOCBC, SLO Police
Oceano Elementary	Performed by Rideshare staff, Cal Poly Wheelmen, APCD
Lange Elementary	Performed by Rideshare staff and Cal Poly Wheelmen
One day activity	
Santa Margarita Elementary	Bike to School Day in May
Harloe Elementary	Walking School Bus from neighborhood park
Nipomo Elementary	Weekend Bike Rodeo at school
San Gabriel Elementary	walk to school events in Winter 2006 and Spring 2007
Los Osos Middle School	Week long bike related activities in PE class during Bike Month 2007
Laguna Middle School	bike to school day during Bike Month 2007
Paso Robles High School	bike to school day during Bike Month 2007
Lillian Larsen Elementary School	Health Impact Assessment and Walk to school day Spring 2007 and Fall 2008
Fair Grove Elementary School	Walk to school day October 2006, 2007, 2008
Ongoing activity	
Hawthorne Elementary	afterschool bike program, walking wednesdays, classroom incentives
Monarch Grove Elementary	afterschool bike program
Oceano Elementary	year long classroom incentive program for 4th grade

**This list is of known activities at the current time. It is not comprehensive, many schools and teachers may be doing activities that are not reported to Rideshare or SLOCOG. Rideshare is making an effort to identify all activities, but unless schools or teachers request resources, we don't always know what activities are happening.*

Regional Rideshare Involvement

Rideshare and SLOCOG are positioned to provide ongoing regional support for both grant applications and ongoing activities.

- SLOCOG and Rideshare staff have reviewed applications for California grant funds
- Rideshare provides resources, activities, and educational opportunities to interested participants in the region.

Workshop

For the last two years, Rideshare and the SLO County Bicycle Coalition have provided Safe Routes to School workshops in October. Rideshare will be offering this workshop again on October 28th and 29th at Atascadero City Hall (see poster attachment A). The workshop provides valuable resources to parents, administrators, city officials and staff, and community members. This year the workshop will cover:

- How to create a School-based SRTS Plan, including performing a walk/bike-ability assessment to identify gaps in infrastructure.

Additional information will be available on the following topics:

- Writing a successful Safe Routes to School Grant
- Performing a Health Impact Assessment
- Organizing a Walk/Bike to School Day
- Putting on A Bike Rodeo
- And more...

Website

Rideshare is updating the website to become an online Safe Routes to School resource of information for the region. Advocates, principals, parents, teachers, and others are contributing to a “recipe book” that will be available in print and online. This “recipe book” will be a resource guide of activities and an ongoing collaboration of ideas for anyone who is interested. This recipe book and the website will highlight individuals in our region who have made great strides in making schools safer for children to walk and bike.

Event support

Rideshare and the SLO County Bicycle Coalition partner to provide assemblies and bike skills events when solicited. These activities have been done for schools and auxiliary school programs such as SLO City Parks and Recreation. The City of SLO also puts on a yearly Bike Rodeo and offers support to Rideshare through distribution of bike bells and other resources.

Resources

Rideshare has a library resources available for check out:

- National walk/bike instructional materials
- DVDs and videos
- Reflective safety vests
- A “bike rodeo kit” with cones, clipboards, skills checklists, chalk, etc.
- And more...

Local Mini Grant Program

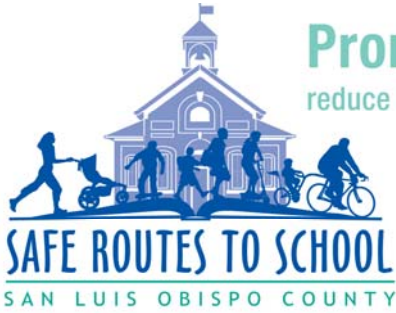
During Fiscal Year 2008/09, Rideshare will be offering two types of grants to schools and agencies who create more walkable and bikeable schools. Providing two grant types enables Rideshare to support schools and agencies that a) do not have the resources to perform a full School-wide Safe Routes to School Program, and b) provide individualized attention to schools that do want to create full-fledged programs. The types of grant are shown below:

Activity Mini Grants are modeled after the successful Bike Month Mini Grants, and awarded on a first come-first served basis for up to \$100 to cover the costs of purchasing incentives and other incidental costs for events and activities. Six activity mini grants are available this fiscal year. (Total available: \$600)

- Example: Oceano Elementary School is using the mini grant to provide a year-long walk/bike/bus incentive for sixth graders. Students who walk, bike, or take the bus to school receive a raffle ticket and are entered into a monthly drawing to win a prize. The mini grant covers the cost of the prize.

Program Mini Grants of \$1,500 each will be available to up to three schools. These grants will be available in Spring 2009 and will be preceded by a workshop describing Safe Routes to School Program components and expectations for use. The purpose in holding the workshop in Spring will be to encourage schools to plan activities ahead of the next school year. This grant will be used to identify and support schools that wish to start school-wide programs. (Total available \$4,500)

This staff report was prepared by Jessica Berry.



Promote health and wellness,

reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality around your school.

Take part in our FREE training sessions!

Bruce Mackey, former State Education Officer of Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety for Nevada and League of American Bicyclist "Educator of the Year, 2006" will be giving two **FREE** trainings

Tuesday, October 28th

6-7:30 pm

Atascadero Library
6850 Morro Road, Atascadero
Info Session

Wednesday, October 29th

9 am-3 pm

Atascadero City Hall, Community Room
6907 El Camino Real, Atascadero
Workshop

Get resources to support a program at your school.

- Lunch provided
- Childcare provided
- Limited space, RSVP early

For more information call 781-1385
or email jberry@rideshare.org

The Safe Routes to School program incorporates:

EDUCATION developing activities such as walk/bike assemblies

ENCOURAGEMENT creating walk to school days and classroom competitions

ENFORCEMENT coordinating with the help of police & crossing guards

EVALUATION using parent and student surveys to measure results

ENGINEERING placing sidewalks, bike lanes and crosswalks where students need them



Looking for another way to get to school?
If you live too far to walk or bike, share the ride instead. Let TripLink help you find other parents who want to carpool to school!



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San Luis Obispo Council of Governments