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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Meeting: April 7th, 2015

Subject

Cupertino's Safe Routes to School Task Force is a coordinated effort between the City, the Cupertino Union School District and the Fremont Union High School District to change community behavior, attitudes, and social norms to make it safer for all students to walk and bike to and from school through both programs and infrastructure projects.

Recommended Action

Staff recommends that the Council adopt Resolution No. 15-017 (Attachment A) in support of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership Consensus Statement (Attachment B) which lays the foundation to launch Cupertino's Safe Routes to School Task Force Pilot Program. This effort will formally ally the City and School Districts to team with relevant stakeholders to educate school site administrators, parents, and students about bicycle safety; build multigenerational pedestrian and cyclist awareness; and mitigate traffic concerns by promoting a comprehensive, proactive behavior and infrastructure-based approach to securing safety along school routes and within school sites.

Discussion

The City of Cupertino is committed to safeguarding our community members as they go about their daily lives, which frequently includes accessing our diverse network of roadways, bikeways and walkways. To enable this goal, our City recognizes that investing in infrastructure improvements alone cannot achieve these citizen safety and accessibility aims, though these projects provide the building blocks of programmatic and educational efforts (see Attachment C for Cupertino's recent investments). As such, staff approached Cupertino Union School District, Fremont Union High School District and De Anza College to launch new behavior change-focused pilot effort, shared below, to promote both campus and communitywide wellbeing and wellness. Only by engaging parents, kids and residents; as well as business, school and public safety partners, in examining current conditions, making critical modifications, and designing robust programs can we collectively and effectively reduce both school site and citywide traffic and air pollution.

The City's approach seeks to harness resources developed by and lessons learned available from the [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#) and the [Safe Routes to School National Partnership](#). Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national and international movement to create safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for kids and teens to bicycle and walk to and from schools. The SRTS program is designed to reverse the decline in students walking and bicycling to schools and lessen the alarming nationwide trend toward childhood obesity and inactivity. In 1969, approximately 50% of children walked or bicycled to school, with approximately 87% of children living within one mile of school walking or bicycling. Today, fewer than 15% of students walk or bicycle to school. As a result, kids and teens today are less active, less independent, and less healthy. As much as 20 to 30% of morning traffic can be generated by parents driving their children to schools, and traffic-related crashes are the top cause of death and major injury for children in the U.S. ages 1 to 17.

SRTS programs can vary greatly, ranging from programs to encourage walking and bicycling to active sponsorship of walking and bicycling programs and providing new infrastructure to support these activities, a multifaceted approach Cupertino proposes to take with its pilot. The most effective Safe Routes to School programs are built upon collaborative partnerships among many stakeholders that Cupertino proposes include educators, parents, students, elected officials, city planners and engineers, business and community leaders, health officials, and bicycle and pedestrian advocates in a pilot Task Force. As guided by the school districts, the pilot will initially target Lincoln and Sedgwick Elementary Schools, Kennedy and Hyde Middle Schools, and Monta Vista and Cupertino High Schools. If successful, the pilot could expand to include other schools, modeled after the citywide engagement approach utilized by the most successful program regionally, Palo Alto, which boasts a 70% bike to school rate.

Through this Task Force, members would collaboratively examine conditions around schools, recommend projects, and host educational programs that work to improve safety and accessibility and reduce traffic and air pollution in the vicinity of their local school. This would inform the City's Bicycle Transportation and Capital Improvement Plan implementation and create a conduit to school partnerships between existing transportation and safety-focused Commissions (i.e. Bicycle Pedestrian, Public Safety, and Teen Commissions) leading school-based programs such as Walk-One-Week (WOW) and Boltage. As a result, the Task Force will help make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation choice, encourage a healthier and more active lifestyle from an early age, while promoting social connections and responsibility.

Sustainability Impact

The City's 2010 greenhouse gas emissions inventory identified that 34% of community-wide emissions arise from the transportation sector (~105,000 MT CO₂e/yr). Based upon growth projections, this is anticipated to grow to ~120,000 MT CO₂e/yr by 2020 and 143,000 MT CO₂e/yr by 2035, despite local (i.e. Cupertino's Bicycle Transportation Plan and aforementioned infrastructure investments and Commission-led projects) and statewide efforts (i.e. AB1493, Pavley I and II; EO-S-1-07, Low Carbon Fuel Standard; and Vehicle Efficiency Regulations). As such, the City's [Climate Action Plan](#) (CAP), explicitly identifies greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategies to "encourage alternative transportation and convert the municipal vehicle fleet" (see Chapter 3, pg. 93 Goal 2: C-T-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). Advancing the proposed Safe Routes to School Task Force will enable the City to not only realize the public safety and health benefits attributed to decreased single occupancy vehicle use but also enable the agency to attain the emissions reductions goals associated with the CAP.

Fiscal Impact

To advance this work, the City will be utilizing available FY14/15 funds to hire a part-time Safe Routes to School Coordinator at an estimated \$30/hour, capped at \$30,000/year. This funding request is proposed to continue as part of the Public Works part-time staffing request for FY15/16. Infrastructure and public safety (i.e. crossing guards, traffic safety representatives) recommendations of the group will be assessed independently and will be incorporated into future Bicycle Transportation and Capital Improvement Plan budget requests. To mitigate additional financial and legal liabilities, staff propose to utilize regional (i.e. Traffic Safe Communities Network) national resources available (Attachment D and E) to inform program development.

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Attachments:

- A. Draft Resolution No. 15-017 Safe Routes to School
- B. Safe Routes to School National Partnership Consensus Statement
- C. City of Cupertino Safe Routes to School Update, March 2015
- D. [Safe Routes to School: A Primer for School Boards & Principals](#)