March 15, 2011

TO: Commissioners, Director and Deputy Directors

FROM: Ryan Head, Transportation Funding Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Federal Safe Routes to School Grant Application**

Liberty Elementary Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing

Staff Memo for March 23, 2011 Commission Meeting

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**Executive Summary**

Staff is seeking Commission approval to submit an application for the Federal Safe Routes to School (SR2S) grant program for an enhanced pedestrian crossing at Liberty Elementary School entrance and Bergeson Street. This project would include the installation of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible ramps on all corners, installation of a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) pedestrian signal, and restriping of the crosswalks. This memo outlines the details of the proposed project and the process used in selecting the project. Staff recommends approval of the grant submission.

**Facts & Findings**

The proposed project is for the construction of an enhanced pedestrian crossing at Liberty Elementary School. An RRFB is a pedestrian actuated flashing beacon that attaches beneath the standard crosswalk sign to improve visibility and driver awareness of the crossing. This would be the first of its kind in Ada County. A photo of the device can be found in Attachment 1.

The Federal SR2S program requires a number of considerations when selecting a project. Of particular importance are:

- Clearly establishing project need.
- Infrastructure projects must be accompanied by non-infrastructure efforts. This requires the creation of a school level task force and plan prior to an application being submitted. In Ada County, the Boise School District partners with the YMCA for these efforts. No other School Districts in Ada County have a permanent task force. However, ACHD is willing to work with other communities who form such a task force.
- Infrastructure project funds are limited to $100,000. A maximum of 10% of the project can be used for design. Project funds cannot be spent on right-of-way acquisition. For this purpose, projects must be simple in nature.
- All Federal requirements apply including environmental analysis (NEPA), Davis Bacon wage rate, and Buy America. These requirements increase the project cost further limiting possible projects.
Additionally, SR2S funds are not guaranteed and are not available to the project for 2 to 3 years. As a result, ACHD staff sought a project that is a priority but may not be needed as quickly as other projects.

The pedestrian crossing for Liberty Elementary School was identified in coordination with Boise School District and meets the criteria for a SR2S grant. The proposed crossing has the following conditions:
- High level of pedestrian traffic (95 students crossing in the afternoon),
- No right-of-way needed,
- Project ease in design and construction, and
- Stated need from the school district.

School officials at Liberty have observed problems with traffic continuing through the crosswalk when children are present and waiting. Current efforts including student crossing guards, cones, and visits from law enforcement officials have been insufficient to date at resolving the issue. ACHD Traffic Department has indicated that the crossing meets warrants for an RRFB.

The draft application is being reviewed by Idaho Transportation Department District 3 at this time to evaluate the concept report for any fatal flaws. The entire draft application (32 pages) is available from staff upon request. Upon Commission approval, the application will be finalized and submitted to ITD Headquarters for evaluation and scoring. ACHD would receive word if the application is selected during summer 2011.

**Fiscal Implications**
The Federal Safe Routes to School program is a 100% reimbursable program. If the project is funded, ACHD will be responsible to pay the initial cost of the project and will be reimbursed up to 100% of the approved funding amount.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Phase</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>Reimbursement</th>
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**Policy Implications**
By directing staff to submit the application, it continues ACHD policy of seeking outside funding sources to supplement general funds. The additional funding from the Federal program would assist the District in meeting its goals set forth under the Community Programs Safe Routes to School efforts.

**Alternatives**
1. Direct staff to proceed with submittal of the project application for the Federal SR2S program.
2. Direct staff to not proceed with submittal of the project application.

**Recommendation**
Direct staff to proceed with submittal of the project application.

Attachment(s): Photo of an RRFB

CC: SR2S Project File, PPC Files, Central Files
Attachment 1 – Photo of an RRFB

Photo Credit: http://www.townofcary.org/Assets/Staff+Reports/PL11-002+RRFB+Image.jpg