

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL – NON INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT

Justification: Safety Coordinator

The School District of Palm Beach County Planning and Real Estate Dept. is currently implementing a Non-Infrastructure grant for \$129,200 to keep our students safe as they walk and ride their bicycles to school. The grant is being used to assist students at 12 schools in Palm Beach County; 9 elementary and 3 middle schools. These schools are Pleasant City with an enrollment of 257, Sunset Palms Elementary School with 1010 students, Forest Park Elementary with an enrollment of 574 students, Palm Beach Gardens Elementary 714, Roosevelt Elementary with 414 students, Gove Elementary school with 923 students, Glade View Elementary 364 students, North Grade Elementary 741 and South Grade Elementary 589 students, Boca Raton Middle School 1338 students, Okeehelie Middle School 1475 students and Roosevelt Middle School at 1158 students. Even though all the students are not equally impacted, the schools benefit from the overall knowledge of the program. Usually grades 5 at the elementary school and 6 grades at the middle schools benefit the most from the program and students in after care.

These schools were chosen based on the following criteria:

1. They have a high number of walkers and bikers
2. They are in an urban environment
3. The School District received traffic / access complaints
4. Schools were selected to represent different areas in the County and the diverse student population.

The program encompasses the five Es – Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation. The **Safe Routes to School Coordinator** has been very effective and is primarily responsible for implementing this grant in Palm Beach County. She has been working full time with the schools, including the students, teachers, principals and community. In addition, she is also implementing the walking school bus program at schools. She takes this as her full time job. She recently met with the principal of Palm Beach Garden Elementary school to review the 2 mile radius of the school for walking hazards; she reviews the safe routes to school maps and brings issues of concerns to the Safe Routes to School coalition. The grant was scheduled to end in February 2013. However due to the work left to be done at the schools and monies still in the budget, Planning and Real Estate staff asked FDOT for a time extension.

The grant has been extended until May 1, 2013. The Safety Coordinator has continuously been working with the schools, educating, implementing programs, having contests and performing other activities to educate the students, teachers parents and communities on walking and bicycling to school safely and the health benefits of doing so. There was recently an accident at Forest Park Elementary school where a teacher was hit by a parent dropping off a student. The school has asked that the safety Coordinator. go back to the school to reeducate the students and parents on Safety issues. She is also just starting to work on the Rock and Roll Poster contest with the 12 schools. Roosevelt Elementary school Principal was hesitant to participate in the program. Now that she has learned about the success at other schools, she is now asking that the program be implemented at her school. The Safety Coordinator will now be working with her. We also recently hired the Physical Fitness Expert who has 3 upcoming activities planned. The Safety Coordinator will also be actively involved in these events. Our traffic engineer will conduct analysis at Palm Beach Gardens Elementary School and Forest Park Elementary School however, would like to go over some of the issues the principals and parents have mentioned to the Safety Coordinator and therefore will be meeting with her. When the School District commenced

implementing the grant, there was a walking school bus representative. This program was discontinued just after implementation of the grant. The Safety Coordinator has assumed the role of implementing the Walking School bus at schools. She also works with School Pool in encouraging parents to car pool at high traffic schools.

The Safety Coordinator position is so needed in the District. It could easily become a full time position based on need. The Transportation Department asked for our help also in evaluating walking routes. The list continues with responsibilities. Since completion of her Master's degree the end of last year, the safety Coordinator has dedicated her time fully to this program. We would like for her to continue in this role until the end of the grant in May, 2013.

In order for her to continue, her consultant budget has to be increased, which will take it beyond the \$10,000 limit allowed for staff approval. There is money in the grant budget to allow for her to continue working with the schools under this grant. This request is for the increase in budget.

It is staff's intention to apply for this grant this upcoming year, so that the Safe Routes to School program can continue to be implemented in our schools to assist our students to get to and from school safely.

The Safety Coordinator is very effective with working with the students, principals and community in implementing the objectives of this grant. She is just starting on the Poster contest and recently received consent from one of the Principals to implement the program fully at her school. She is working on this project full time and is very effective. I would like to see her continue with this and based on her success, the District plans to continue this program next year.

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