



CITY OF  
EAST GRAND RAPIDS

14

750 LAKESIDE DRIVE SE • EAST GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49506

(616) 940-4817

www.eastgr.org

DOUG LAFAVE  
DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners  
FROM: Doug La Fave, Deputy City Manager  
DATE: August 14, 2024

RE: Safe Routes to School Program/Program Application Resolution-Revised

**Action Requested:** That the City Commission consider adopting a revised resolution to support a Safe Routes to School grant application to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and non-infrastructure educational funding specific to naming the authorized city agent with MDOT and attestation that if a project is funded and accepted that the city is responsible for any cost over runs or non-participating items (noted in highlighted yellow) in the resolution provided.

**Background:** The associated resolution was authorized by the City Commission in May 2024. MDOT requests two modifications as noted in the action request above. Information below is the same as was presented in May 2024.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an international movement and a federal program to make it safe, convenient, and fun for children, including those with disabilities, to bicycle and walk to school. When routes are safe, walking or biking to and from school is an easy way to get the regular physical activity children need for good health. Safe Routes to School initiatives also help ease traffic jams and air pollution, unite neighborhoods, and contribute to students' readiness to learn in school. The program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with funds distributed through the Michigan Department of Transportation in partnership with the Michigan Fitness Foundation to the local Act 51 Agency. City of East Grand Rapids (city) is the Act 51 Agency for infrastructure improvements and programming/educational associated funding to East Grand Rapids Public Schools (EGRPS).

The local SRTS team, that is required by MDOT, is comprised of city and school representatives that have associated operational, or infrastructure responsibilities related to pedestrian safety. This includes city engineering/public works staff, public safety officers, school crossing guards and school educators/administrative staff, MDOT representatives and consultants.

Eligible school facilities that account for federal funding with respect to the current SRTS program include East Grand Rapids High School and Middle Schools, and Wealthy, Lakeside, and Breton Downs Elementary schools. There are two categories of grant funding infrastructure related improvements and non-infrastructure funds for educational/safety programming and items like new bike racks. Eligible infrastructure expenses are permitted within 2 miles of school locations within associated jurisdictions. Funding is currently allocated at \$300,000 for each registered school location, which would total \$1,500,000 for eligible infrastructure projects. Currently grant funding covers all capital construction costs for improvements with the community local match in-kind staff time/costs and associated consulting services. Non-infrastructure funding that would be provided to EGRPS via the grant would potentially be funded at \$15,000 per school location, totaling \$75,000.

The SRTS program engagement consisted of parent and student surveys which focused on finding out what concerns or barriers exist pertaining to infrastructure/environment related to their experiences walking and

biking to school locations. This past spring, EGRPS partnered with educators to have students complete surveys as well as to help encourage parents to participate as well. There was a total of 3,045 responses with 2,024 completed by students at school and 1,021 parent responses by household completed. Additionally walking audits were completed at the end of this past school year with crossing guard staff, Michigan Fitness Foundation (MDOT authorized partner), engineering consultants and city engineering/public works staff adjacent to school locations and areas noted of concern from community surveys.

The most common eligible projects that are funded by the SRTS program include pathways, sidewalks, signal enhancements, crosswalks, and signage. Replacement or maintenance of these types of existing infrastructure are typically not eligible for funding. Survey responses and feedback received from students and parents related to sidewalk defects, pavement markings, etc. that are not eligible expenses have been addressed or will be addressed by the Department of Public Works after follow up and evaluation.

After reviewing survey responses and feedback provided by walking audits, eligible projects defined by the SRTS program were brought back to the local SRTS team for prioritization. The prioritized projects are noted in the attached priority map and include new trail facilities, pedestrian enhanced crossings, and ADA crosswalk ramp improvements. Engineering estimates for projects noted align with eligible grant funds.

It should be noted that additional work that the city has undertaken or has planned for other projects, including Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) pedestrian crossing enhancements, existing/planned sidewalk/bicycle facilities, traffic signal enhancements, pavement markings, and other new facilities were accounted for in the process to align with existing or planned grants or programmed funding. Essentially, these projects noted are not reflective of all needs or planned infrastructure improvements, but a piece of overall planned integration of projects and associated funding.

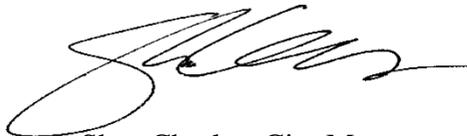
Eligible projects that are identified require notices be sent to residents in adjacent areas in coordination with a project application, which was completed. Since mailed notices, the city has had in-person, e-mail, phone, and a neighborhood meeting with approximately a dozen households along the southside of Reeds Lake Blvd. west of Manhattan Road. Residents along this stretch are not supportive of a pathway project in the public right-of-way adjacent to their homes. These communications have been provided to the City Commission as well as MDOT with updated/clarifications made in the MDOT grant application system.

The SRTS submittal to MDOT was made June 19, 2024, with an anticipated project award determination at the end of the calendar year. MDOT may alter projects based on federal guidelines/engineering standards, etc. If projects or some variations are approved for funding, additional notice will be sent to adjacent residents of projects areas funded with the opportunity to provide public comment at a City Commission Meeting where acceptance of funding would be considered. Depending on outcomes and bid cycles, projects may be funded in the 2025 or 2026 construction seasons.

For additional information and resources pertaining to the SRTS, please visit the following links:

- History of SRTS: [History | SRTS \(saferoutesmichigan.org\)](https://saferoutesmichigan.org/history)
- SRTS Process and Funding Overview: [SRTS Process & Funding Overview | SRTS \(saferoutesmichigan.org\)](https://saferoutesmichigan.org/srts-process-funding)
- Michigan Fitness Foundation-SRTS: [Safe Routes to School - MFF \(michiganfitness.org\)](https://michiganfitness.org/srts)

**REVIEWED & APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:**



Shea Charles, City Manager