



**Date:** July 9, 2019

**To:** Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager  
**Through:** Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager  
**From:** Bill Judge, Interim Director of Transportation  
**Subject:** Grant Agreement for the Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Grant Program (TIP # EB-6033E)

### **Executive Summary**

The City of Durham has been awarded federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds through NCDOT to develop creative programs that educate children and parents about safely walking and bicycling to school. A total of \$150,000 is provided over three years. The federal funding amount is \$120,000 which requires a minimum 20 percent local match of \$30,000. To utilize these funds, the City Council must approve an ordinance accepting the funds and authorizing the City Manager to execute a grant agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT).

### **Recommendation**

The Department of Transportation recommends that the City Council:

- Adopt the Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Program Grant Project Ordinance, and authorize the execution of the grant agreement with NCDOT.

### **Background**

Safe Routes to School is a federal program that enables and encourages healthy transportation options for elementary and middle school-aged children to walk and bicycle to school. The SRTS program encourages a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age by facilitating the planning, development and implementation of non-infrastructure projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution near schools.

Over the past few years there have been Safe Routes to School activities in Durham. Several schools in Durham regularly participate in Walk/Bike to School Days (at least 10 in the past year), and a pilot program has been set up at four elementary schools to teach 4th graders basic bicycling fundamentals such as fitting a helmet, rules of the road, and basic riding skills.

The NCDOT funding will provide stability and allow expansion of these programs to additional schools. The program will help to address the “Improve Mobility Networks” objective of the FY19-21 Durham Strategic Plan by encouraging residents to utilize multi-modal transportation choices. The activities funded by this grant will help children develop a healthy lifestyle, learn how to bike and walk safely, and start to think of walking and biking as modes of transportation which can contribute positively to their adult lives. Additionally, the proposed program is consistent with the encouragement, education, and enforcement components of the City’s Vision Zero Program and with recommendations in the adopted Bike+Walk Implementation Plan.

**Issues and Analysis:**

The Durham SRTS programs will use a variety of education and enforcement strategies that help make routes safer for children to walk and bicycle to school, and encouragement strategies to entice more children to walk and bike, as follows:

1. Encouragement: Increase the walking and biking efforts at Durham elementary schools that are already holding Walk/Bike to School days, expand Walk/Bike to School days to additional Durham schools, and purchase materials for these events.
2. Education: Provide bicycle training to fourth graders in Durham elementary schools using trained instructors to teach a modified version of the “NC Let’s Go” cycling curriculum during physical education classes. This instruction teaches fundamentals such as fitting a helmet, rules of the road, and basic riding skills, and provides an opportunity for students to ride on a bike.
3. Enforcement: Improve safety and compliance with traffic laws, including safe crossing and yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks near elementary schools, by working with crossing guards as well as the Durham Police Department and Durham County Sherriff’s Office.

It is anticipated that the project will be overseen by staff housed in the City of Durham Transportation department. The program will work with elementary schools in the Durham Public Schools (DPS) system and could possibly be expanded to middle schools.

**Alternatives**

The Durham City Council could decide to:

- Adopt the Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Program Grant Project Ordinance and authorize execution of the grant agreement with NCDOT; or,
- Send the item back to staff for further review; or,
- Not authorize the adoption of the Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Program Grant Project Ordinance or execution of the grant agreement with NCDOT.

**Financial Impacts**

Upon completion of the project, NC Department of Transportation shall reimburse 80 percent of the eligible activity expenses incurred by the City up to a maximum of \$120,000 over three years. The cost to the City is expected to be 20 percent of the total cost (\$30,000). The local match contribution can be provided through the existing operating budget for the Transportation Department. The administration of the project will require a commitment of staff resources.

**Equal Business Opportunity Summary**

The municipal agreements with NCDOT require that their procedures be followed for these projects. The Equity & Inclusion Department did not review this item for compliance with the Ordinance to Promote Equal Business Opportunities in City Contracting.

**Attachments:**

Attachment A – NCDOT Grant Agreement for Project EB-6033E  
Attachment B – Grant Project Ordinance