

WSDOT's Safe Routes to School Program

Winter 2009



Why was the program established?

The purpose of the Safe Routes to School Program is to increase the number of children walking and biking to school safely. Eligible projects include three elements:

- Engineering Improvements,
- Education and Encouragement Efforts, and
- Enforcement Efforts.

In 2005, the Washington State Legislature included \$74 million over the following 16 years in the Transportation Partnerships Act to support pedestrian and bicycle safety projects such as pedestrian and bicycle paths, sidewalks, safe routes to school, and transit. Later that year the federal government established the National Safe Routes to School Program which provided federal funding to support Washington's Program.

The demand for this program continues to grow as evidenced over the last several years with requests amounting to approximately six times the funding available.

How are projects selected?

Project proposals are evaluated by the Washington State Safe Routes to School Advisory Board, as well as site visits conducted by WSDOT.

Who is eligible to apply?

Eligible projects and programs include engineering improvements, enforcement efforts, education, and encouragement activities. All public agencies in Washington are eligible to apply for projects within a one mile radius of schools servicing children in kindergarten through eighth grade.

After projects are evaluated by the Advisory Board, site visits are conducted by WSDOT. A report with the prioritized list of projects will be provided to the State Legislature by December 15, 2010, who will make the final decision on which projects to fund.

What has been accomplished?

To date, approximately \$10 million has been awarded to 49 projects. Eighteen projects have been completed, 19 are under construction and 12 are in design. These projects, when complete, will improve walking and biking conditions for 73 schools and over 15,000 children.

Preliminary findings indicate that the program is a success. Project evaluation results reflect a 49 percent increase in the number of children walking and biking to school.

When is the next call for projects?

The next call for projects will take place in **March 2010**. Competitive projects will reduce fatal and serious collisions involving pedestrians and bicyclists, support increased mobility, and encourage more children to bicycle and walk.

For More Information

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