

Bobbie Walthall

From: Michael Kelly <job4mike6@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, June 19, 2017 7:08 PM
To: Bobbie Walthall
Cc: Leslie Soden; Nick Voss; Jessica Mortinger; Jackie Mickel; Connie Grimes; Sarah Hoskinson; Chris Tilden (ctilden@ldchealth.org); David Cronin; Charles Soules; Julie Boyle; Kyle Hayden; Stuart Boley; Matthew Herbert; Mike Amyx; Lisa Larsen; Scott McCullough; Marcel Harmon; Ron May (rkmay@usd497.org); Tony Barron; Denise Johnson; Reenie Stogsdill; Chad Lawhorn
Subject: June 20, 2017 Consent Agenda Item 13- Submission of Transportation Alternatives Applications to KDOT and Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)

City Leaders:

This comment refers to the portion of the subject application to KDOT concerning filling sidewalk gaps along Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS.)

Request:

Remove Item 13 from Consent Agenda and move to Regular Agenda.

Concerns:

1- There is no City or USD 497 School Board-agreed process to approve the list of Safe Routes to Schools and no formal process to update those SRTS-priority sidewalks for new zoning or property development.

2- When KDOT-controlled funds are made available which specific SRTS sidewalk gaps will be addressed? What is the prioritization rubric for gap-filling priorities?

Discussion:

Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department (LDCHD) obtained grant funding for SRTS circa 2014. LDCHD developed a list of SRTS candidate routes based upon inputs provided from several sources, including community input. However, new property development and residential construction in northwest Lawrence has not been considered in the ongoing SRTS efforts. Construction west and northwest of Langston Hughes ES (Langston Heights subdivision) and north of Overland Drive between George Williams Way and Queens Road has resulted in new streets and new demands for pedestrian and bicycle access to public schools. At one time USD 497 planned to provide an extension drive to the western boundary of the Langston Hughes ES site to connect with Langston Heights and the Langston Commons commercial development site northeast of K-10 and Bob Billings interchange. USD 497 has pulled this project from the 2017 portion of their Capital Improvement Plan, citing uncertain state education funding levels.

Obviously, what was a well-considered Safe Route to School listing circa 2014 has been overcome by events and is no longer up-to-date in northwest Lawrence for the sidewalks in the vicinity of Langston Hughes ES. There is no formal process to update the SRTS and no formal opportunity for the public to provide input based upon new infrastructure or other new evidence from facts on the ground. Other local schools may suffer similar gaps that are presently unidentified.

Recommendation:

City Commission direct the City Transportation Commission to hold a hearing on this problem in the very short term. Invite every local school community to come forward and provide testimony as to the currency of the SRTS listing for each school. This invitation should extend to non-public schools that have student cyclist and pedestrians. Direct the Transportation Commission to provide for an update to SRTS on a regular periodic basis such as every 12 or 24 months. The public input provided at these hearings should be shared with USD 497 staff. The City Commission and USD 497 School Board in their role as elected public officials should approve the SRTS Priority Routes, approve the gaps in SRTS, and approve the priority of efforts to address these gaps. This formal process should repeat every 12-24 months.

Thank you for your ongoing public service and consideration of these concerns.

Best wishes,

Michael Kelly
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Lawrence