

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Board Member

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF TWO ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS FOR SUBMITTAL UNDER THE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM, SPONSORED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

LINK TO DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN: IMPROVED SAFETY THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT BY IMPLEMENTING PREVENTATIVE MEASURES AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Background

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Infrastructure Grant Program enables and encourages children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school, by making pedestrian routes safer and more appealing, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age. The U.S. Department of Transportation implemented federal-aid highway funds legislation providing federal grant dollars for infrastructure improvements to establish SRTS programs at public schools nationwide for five fiscal years. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is processing all SRTS grant applications at the local level.

To date, the School Board has endorsed 57 schools for inclusion in the SRTS Program. All 57 schools were chosen in collaboration with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Miami-Dade County Public Works Department (Public Works), based on having a large population of students that walk to school and are located in areas where there have been high instances of pedestrian traffic accidents involving children between the ages of five and thirteen.

Thus far, FDOT has selected 41 of those schools for funding, which will receive over \$6,200,000 for necessary infrastructure improvements. District staff, along with the members of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Community Traffic Safety Team (Public Schools CTST), are developing applications for the 16 remaining schools that have not yet received funding. The FDOT application deadline is scheduled for April 30, 2009.

Additional Schools Identified

The City of Miami (City) has approached the District with a request to include two additional schools for inclusion in the SRTS Program. The City plans to implement an Overtown Greenway Pilot Project encompassing NW 11 Street, between NW 3 Avenue and 7 Avenue. The project will beautify and improve the general area by providing greenway paths, a gateway plaza that improves transit access to Booker T. Washington Senior High School, and roadway improvements to NW 11 Terrace, currently the service access route for Frederick Douglass Elementary School. Large populations of students walk along the corridor from southwest Overtown to and from the school. The improvements will also provide safer walking paths for students attending Paul Lawrence Dunbar Elementary School.

According to crash data obtained from the MPO, this area is located within a high vehicle/pedestrian crash zone, with a total of 9 bicycle crashes and 34 pedestrian crashes (two of which were fatal) that have occurred within the square mile surrounding the schools. These safety conditions make the two elementary schools eligible for SRTS funding. Booker T. Washington Senior High School, although benefiting from the Overtown Project, is not eligible for SRTS funding, which is only applicable for elementary and middle schools. The City of Miami will provide the engineering studies required under the FDOT application process.

The Public Schools CTST has reviewed the project information and unanimously endorsed the two elementary schools for grant transmittal to the FDOT SRTS Program. These two schools when combined with the 16 previously endorsed by the School Board will generate a total of 18 schools that will be submitted to FDOT in 2009.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. PERLA TABARES HANTMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse two additional schools for submittal under the Safe Routes to School Infrastructure grant program sponsored by the U.S Department of Transportation, and direct the Superintendent to formalize the grant application accordingly.