

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chairman

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS FOR SUBMITTAL UNDER THE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM

COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: SAFE, HEALTHY, & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The Federal Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) was created in 2005 to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school, by making pedestrian routes safer and more appealing. SRTS also plays a critical role in reversing the alarming nationwide trend toward childhood obesity and inactivity. In 2012 the “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century” (MAP-21) Transportation Bill was enacted, which did not specifically earmark funding for SRTS, but instead included the SRTS Program along with a variety of other enhancement programs to compete for federal dollars under the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). In 2015, the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Program (FAST) Act was enacted to replace the TAP program with a set-aside from the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program, referred to by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as the Transportation Alternatives set-aside. This new program, similar to the previous TAP program, provides for SRTS improvements, with annual funding for alternative transportation improvements. The Florida Department of Transportation is processing all grant applications through a competitive process at the local FDOT level.

The District’s goal is to provide SRTS improvements for all public schools. Since 2007, over 157 schools have received funding for infrastructure improvements. Funds totaling over \$28.3 million have been awarded for necessary infrastructure improvements.

Due to limited funding, a prioritized list of remaining elementary schools and K-8 educational centers schools which have not yet participated in the program was developed in 2013. The prioritization study was headed by the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization (TPO), in partnership with the District, Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works, and the Public Schools Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST).

In 2018, the Florida Department of Transportation expanded the scope to include high school applications for SRTS improvements required for high schools. Once again, a prioritization study was headed by the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization (TPO), in partnership with the District, Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works, and the Public Schools Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST). The prioritization study included elementary, middle, and high school facilities.

The school prioritization matrix was modeled on the “Safety-based Prioritization of Schools for SRTS Infrastructure Projects” developed by the National Center for Safe Routes to Schools, and includes pedestrian and bicyclist safety, traffic volume, and number of students currently walking and bicycling to school. In selecting schools, other factors are also considered such as recent pedestrian related incidents/concerns, and collaboration with municipalities to leverage available funds.

The following schools were identified as priority schools for the next SRTS application cycle. TPO general planning consultants will perform the requisite engineering studies.

- American Senior High
- Homestead Senior High
- Madison Middle
- Miami Norland Senior High
- Palmetto Middle

All referenced applications will be submitted by the District as a co-applicant for consideration by FDOT for the 2023 application cycle.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney’s Office as to form and legal sufficiency.

ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIRMAN

PERLA TABARES HANTMAN:

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