



City of Tigard Press Release

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New Grant Will Promote Safe Walking and Biking to and from Schools

Tigard's efforts to promote walkability and walking connections for all residents got a big boost this week when Metro announced the city was the recipient of a two-year \$150,000 grant that will encourage safe and healthy options for children to walk and bike to and from school.

Tigard was among 18 area grant recipients of the highly competitive Regional Travel Options grant program, which will provide \$2.1 million in federal transportation funding to communities that are boosting options that encourage walking, biking, ride sharing and transit.

"This is strong vote in confidence in the city's vision to make Tigard the most walkable community in the Pacific Northwest," said Kenny Asher, director of Department of Community Development. "Parents and schools want their kids to be healthy and to exercise, and to arrive at school safely. The program will fund a coordinator to work with our school partners, parents and kids to ensure this happens at our local schools."

The grant will pay for a new school coordinator position through 2017. The coordinator will work with four Tigard-Tualatin School District elementary schools where there is already a Safe Routes to School presence and establish programs at the remaining three elementary schools and two middle schools in Tigard.

Tigard has been implementing Safe Routes to School activities for nearly a year at four elementary schools serving Tigard students on activities like walkability audits, with parent participation. These are designed to improve safety in school environments and promote healthy transportation for children to and from schools.

Nationally the Safe Routes to School Program encourages primary and middle-school age students to walk and bike to school. Funding for programs helps communities pay for education initiatives and safety training. These also encourage physical exercise to address a national trend of obesity and overweight among school-age children.

Active commuting like walking and biking has been linked to better school performance and future health outcomes for kids, and bicycling and walking to school significantly improve the odds for being fit.

Today, fewer kids are getting the benefits of exercise getting to and from school. In 1969, about half of all school-age children walked or biked to and from school, and 87 percent lived within a mile from the school reached by foot or bike. By 2004, less than 15 percent of children and adolescents used either mode of transportation to and from school.

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