

**Application Details - TE 2012066.01, City of Grand Rapids, Bicycle Safety Education Project, Approved**

**Environment/Community**

**1. Check all that apply:**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ROW/Construction Access Permit | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Lands | <input type="checkbox"/> State Historic Preservation Office Clearance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inland Lakes or Streams Permit | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Removal       | <input type="checkbox"/> Contaminated Sites                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands Permit                | <input type="checkbox"/> Endangered Species | <input type="checkbox"/> Other  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Floodplains Permit             | <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Zone       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other  |

**Please describe:**

Not applicable to the proposed project.

**2a. Describe the anticipated impact of the project on adjacent property owners, your efforts to inform them of the project, and responses to these efforts:**

This is a non construction project and therefore will not have an impact on property owners.

**2b. Is property acquisition necessary? No**

**(Select all that apply and describe below.)**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donation        | <input type="checkbox"/> Willing Seller     | <input type="checkbox"/> Appraisal Completed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase Option | <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase Agreement |  |

**Please describe:**

**3a. How did you facilitate stakeholder engagement in the development of this project concept and what stakeholders were involved?**

The Green Grand Rapids Master plan update completed in 2011 entailed a three year process in which community involvement was a cornerstone of the planning process. Resulting plan recommendations for balanced transportation included the creation of bicycle friendly streets. Per the plan, a strategy to accomplish that goal is driver and cyclist education on rights and responsibilities&In addition, steps to encourage cycling by building skills and confidence are recommended. The City has been working with Greater Grand Rapids Bicycle Coalition (GGRBC), a key player in bicycle advocacy and safety education, to assist in preparing this grant request. The GGRBC has a membership of various bicycling interest groups and has been very active in advocating for a comprehensive bicycle facilities plan that includes safety education. In 2009 Grand Rapids bicycling advocates organized the area's first Bike Summit to raise awareness about and foster participation in making Grand Rapids a bicycle-friendly community. GGRBC held a second Bike Summit in 2011. It was during that gathering of local and state bicycle advocates, City staff, MDOT staff, residents and retailers that the concept of a bicycle safety education program gained momentum and the decision to seek a transportation enhancement grant to assist in funding the project began to solidify.

The project concept has been presented at various community meetings, City Commission meeting, GGRBC board meeting and annual meeting and other bicycle related community events/meetings. The bicycling community has expressed support for the project as a way to address safety issues on the roadway and to encourage bicycling. The bus transit leadership has a strong interest in participating in opportunities that will educate bus drivers about bicycle safety.

During Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the proposed project, stakeholder input will be further sought from residents, businesses, bicycling organizations, and institutions. Stake holders may also include the neighborhood and business associations, the police department, universities, driver education providers, insurance companies, bus transit, etc. The City envisions the formation of a committee that will provide feedback and guidance during the course of the project.

**3b. Describe the stakeholder input you received. How did this input help shape this project concept?**

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The proposed project has been a topic of discussion for several years. The dialogue and feedback has consistently supported the development and implementation of the safety education component. Community stakeholders clearly expressed their support for the project concept during the Green Grand Rapids Master Plan development process. Cycling advocates, including the Greater Grand Rapids Bicycle Coalition, have done much to support and promote bicycles as a viable mode of transportation, as well as, the value of bike safety education. The City Commission resolution for utilization of Complete Streets concepts in street design fueled the efforts to develop a comprehensive urban bike network plan. The Rapid (Interurban Transit Partnership), the authority that provides a variety of public transportation services for the Grand Rapids metro area, also recognizes the need for a safety education program and desires to collaborate with other organizations in its development. The common thread has been the need to provide a safe and convenient road experience for all users.

In the past year, the topic of bicycling and bicycle safety has appeared numerous times in the local media. Some of those news articles are included in Documents 6 through 9.

**4. If this project is identified in an adopted community, county, and/or region-wide plan, please describe (such as master plan, comprehensive plan, trail plan, downtown development plan, etc.):**

The proposed project is identified in various plans. The project supports the City's Green Grand Rapids Master Plan and the Complete Streets goals to promote multi-modal transportation and to design streets to accommodate cyclists in combination with the education of motorists and cyclists sharing the road. It also supports the City of Grand Rapids Sustainable Streets Task Force goal of providing multi modal transportation for vibrant streets. The City is in the process of developing an urban bicycle network plan that includes bike facilities improvements; establishment of bicycle standards; and regional coordination. Multiple jurisdictions have responded to the call for collaboration including the Cities of Walker, Kentwood, Wyoming, East Grand Rapids; Kent County, The Rapid; and the townships of Plainfield, Ada, and Cascade. These planning efforts have served to reinforce the need for the proposed bicycle safety education project. The infrastructure improvements and the safety education project complement and strengthen each other.

**5. Has your community adopted a Complete Streets policy?**

Yes

**a. What type of document is your policy? (Select all that apply.)**

- |  |                                      |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policy                | <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance   | <input type="checkbox"/> Capital Improvement Program |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resolution | <input type="checkbox"/> Master Plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                       |

**b. How does this project support this policy?**

The goal of Complete Streets policies is to integrate the needs of all road users into any transportation plan in order for all users can travel safely and conveniently. The proposed project supports Complete Streets through the project goals to 1) improve traffic skills of bicyclists and motorist awareness; 2) increase knowledge of the responsibilities of bicyclists and motorists; 3) encourage bicycling as a transportation mode; and 4) promote a share the road culture within the City of Grand Rapids and the surrounding communities.

**c. Describe what investment your community has made and/or activities you conducted to support your complete Streets policy.**

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On March 22, 2011 the City Commission (CC) adopted a Complete Streets resolution (See Doc 1- Complete Streets). The CC action reinforced existing efforts by the City of Grand Rapids planners and engineers to integrate Complete Streets design guidelines into street repaving, reconstruction projects, and other public infrastructure improvements. The City is currently developing an urban bike network plan (See Doc 2- Draft GR Bike Facilities Map) and for that purpose recently employed a full-time Non-motorized Transportation Coordinator. The CC has directed City staff to examine the City Code provisions concerning bicycles. To accomplish this, a two-step process has been implemented. Step one involves minor revisions to the existing City Code to address immediate issues and concerns. Step two involves a larger effort to re-write the City Code in conjunction with various stakeholders groups and concerned citizens. The Mayor has hosted a Mayor's Bicycle Ride for four years. The annual trip is meant to raise awareness about what Grand Rapids has to offer riders.

Through the efforts of bicycle advocates, such as the GGRBC, there is greater understanding about the viability and desirability of biking as part of a comprehensive transportation system (See Doc 4- GGRBC). In 2012, the GGRBC hosted Active Commute Week as part of National Bike Month in May (Doc 13). They published a Bike Grand Rapids map in 2011 that is sold in retail stores; conducted three Bike Traffic Count & Surveys; and developed a Bicycle Education program for elementary schools. In 2009, the League of American Bicyclists designated Grand Rapids a bronze level bicycle friendly community. The League highlighted the region's extensive trail system and the dozens of organizations, teams, and businesses promoting opportunities for bicycling in the Grand Rapids community.