

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

**Narrative**

**1. In a brief narrative, describe the proposed work and how the project will benefit the affected community(ies):**

The proposed project includes the study, development and implementation of a bicycle safety education project. The multi-phased project will be completed over a three year period. The target audiences are bicyclists and motorists in the general population. The project limits include the greater Grand Rapids area. However, the project potentially may impact the wider region since bicyclists travel, not only on the urban bike network, but also any distance on the numerous miles of regional non-motorized trails. The project goals are 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.

A project manager/consultant will manage all four phases of the project. The project manager/consultant will oversee the study, development, implementation and evaluation phases of the project; serve as a liaison to the community and project participants; facilitate the process to define project scope, goals and deliverables, including a social equity component; manage the project budget; provide direction and support to the project team; monitor and report on progress of the project to all stakeholders; and implement and manage project changes and interventions to achieve project outputs.

Project Phase I (Study) includes a review of existing bike safety education programs and resources for best practices; clarification of bicycle safety related needs and requirements of the project; refinement of project goals and objectives in response to identified needs; establishment of criteria for success and the data needed to measure performance against those criteria; and engagement of community stakeholders.

Project Phase 2 (Development) includes the development of the education curriculum; identification of community based partners and their roles; development of a project schedule that identifies major milestones and critical path items; identification of venues for classes and/or community events, and development of surveys or other appropriate methods for collecting and monitoring feedback throughout the project.

Project Phase 3 (Program Implementation) includes the implementation of the education and awareness project activities. Specific project activities will be based on the results of Phase I and Phase 2. However, in general, Phase 3 activities may include instructional classes about bicycle safety; printed materials; billboards; posters; public service announcements; information dissemination via various media types; community events; pre and post evaluations; and bicycle enforcement activities. Every effort will be taken to utilize quality existing materials, such as publications and classroom education tools, that are provided free or at a nominal cost.

Project Phase 4 (Project Evaluation) consists of an analysis of the effectiveness of the project in accomplishing its objectives and whether the project was implemented as planned. Methodologies may include surveys, crash data set reviews, pre-post evaluations, etc. This phase also includes reporting of recommendations for continuing the program, modifications to the program; identification of any additional countermeasures; and lessons learned.

The project's long-term benefits would be multi-faceted. By broadening the knowledge base of area residents about the benefits of non-motorized transportation use, we expect to show a more cooperative and lawful behavior between cyclists and motorists. More significantly, we also expect a resulting reduction of bicycle crashes, fatal accidents and debilitating injuries to cyclists. In addition, by teaching people how to ride confidently and safely on area roadways, more people will use bicycles for transportation. As more people ride, they become more accepted as a viable road user.

**2. Describe how this project is competitive for funding:**

The City is making significant gains in developing and implementing a non-motorized facilities plan that will ultimately provide an urban bike network, promote multi-modal transportation, and enhance Grand Rapids' image of a bicycle friendly community. To date, the City of Grand Rapids has installed or constructed 19 miles of an urban bike network, including bike lanes, bike boulevards, and greenways. In addition, 10.05 miles of non-motorized trails have been constructed. The City plans to add to the urban bike network 26 miles of new facilities in FY2013 and an additional 26 miles in FY2014 (See Doc 2- Draft GR Bike Facilities Map).

The City understands that a successful non-motorized facilities plan includes a comprehensive bicycle safety

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

education component that can serve as a countermeasure to bicycle/motor vehicle crashes. The Michigan Department of Transportation 2012 report, Sharing the Road: Optimizing Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Vehicle Mobility, reported that between 2005 and 2010, 5,500 bicyclists were injured and 147 bicyclists were killed in automobile crashes in the State of Michigan. The same report also stated that in 2009, The bicycle fatality rate in Michigan was at 1.90 per 100,000 and the national average was 2.05. Although Michigan reported fatality rates lower than the national average, Michigan ranks 23rd in pedestrian traffic fatalities and 19th in bicycle fatalities. Michigan has higher pedestrian and bicycle fatality rates than the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Pennsylvania.

An effective bicycle safety education program could contribute to the reduction of tragic incidents such as the following that occurred in the greater Grand Rapids area.

Apr 2007 -13 yr old male cyclist struck by 19 yr old driver when bicyclist entered the road lane. The bicyclist was propelled into another lane of traffic where he was struck and killed by a hit-and-run driver.

Jul 2008 -56 yr old male cyclist struck and killed by 54 yr old driver when the cyclist turned left into the driver's path.

Sep 2008 -31 yr old male cyclist struck and killed by a hit-and-run driver.

May 2009 -55 yr old male cyclist killed after being struck by the 60 yr old driver of a refuse truck. The driver reported he did not see the bicyclist.

Jul 2009 -19 yr old male cyclist was killed entering an intersection when unable to stop to avoid striking a van driven by a 23 yr old driver. Reportedly, it appeared the brakes went out on the bicycle.

From 2005 -2010 there were 569 reported bicycle/motor vehicle crashes in Grand Rapids. In 2011 there were an additional 96 bicycle/vehicle crashes reported in the city. In Kent County, of the reported 194 bicycle/motor vehicle crashes report in 2011, 77% (148 bicyclists) were injured or killed. For Kent County, the number of crashes represents an increase of 18% from 2010.

Bicycle safety education could impact these statistics. The 2012 AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities reports that bicyclist crash studies have identified contributing causes of bicyclist-motor vehicle crashes for which education would be one effective countermeasure. Those contributing causes include wrong-way riding; sidewalk riding; motorist striking bicyclist with vehicle door; motorists failing to yield at intersections; presence of driveways; and night-time bicycle riding. FHWA's BIKESAFE ([www.bicyclinginfo.org](http://www.bicyclinginfo.org)) adds motorist turning into path of cyclist and vice versa; and motorist or cyclist overtaking vehicle as contributing causes. Education and enforcement is identified as an appropriate countermeasure (See Doc 3- Crash Matrix). This grant request will provide resources dedicated to education of bicyclists and motorists about safe traffic skills, encourage bicycling, and promote a share the road culture.