



Staff Report

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Date: 6/10/2019
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TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager
FROM: Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director

SUBJECT:

Safer Crossings Program

Ward(s): All Wards
Councilor(s): All Councilors
Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods
Result Area(s): Safe, Reliable and Efficient Infrastructure

ISSUE:

Information report on the Safer Crossings Program.

RECOMMENDATION:

Information only.

SUMMARY:

The City of Salem *Pedestrian Safety Study* was conducted in response to a spike in pedestrian fatalities in 2015. Completed in March 2018, this study evaluated the various causes of pedestrian crashes, identified trends and patterns, and developed a set of recommendations aimed at reducing the frequency and severity of pedestrian crashes. Among the recommendations from the study was for the City to develop a "Safer Crossings Program" (Program). The purpose of the Program is to establish an objective, request-driven process to evaluate pedestrian crossings and rank potential safety improvement projects at the crossings.

Staff worked with a Project Advisory Committee between October 2018 and February 2019 and developed 12 weighted criteria for ranking potential safer crossings projects. Once the Program is fully implemented, users will be able to propose crossing projects online and see how all of the submitted projects are ranked. The attached initial list of ranked crossing locations illustrates how various proposed projects scored relative to others. This listing also identifies which crossing projects

are proposed to be included in applications for federal funding through the Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS).

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

1. Public Works Department staff worked with an eleven-member Project Advisory Committee (PAC) between October 2018 and February 2019 to develop the Program.
2. The criteria developed by the PAC include both eligibility and scoring criteria. The scoring criteria address the following 12 factors:
 - Proximity to schools
 - Traffic volume
 - Posted speed
 - Proximity to transit stops
 - Pedestrian volume
 - Number of lanes to be crossed
 - Distance to nearest improved crossing
 - Crossing distance
 - Pedestrian activity
 - Equity
 - Pedestrian crashes
 - Lighting
3. The attached Safer Crossings Program Summary Report describes the Program in more detail and provides the weighting of the scoring criteria.
4. The Program was endorsed by the Citizens Advisory Traffic Commission on April 10, 2019.
5. In developing the Program, staff ranked crossing requests made by the PAC as well as other requests from the public. The rankings of those requests are attached and will form the basis for the initial list that will be made available on the City webpage once the Program is fully implemented.
6. The Safer Crossing Program is intended to guide future decisions on selecting pedestrian crossing projects. Other considerations that are not captured by the Program, such as costs, geographic distribution, and funding opportunities, also factor into funding decisions.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Salem *Pedestrian Safety Study* (March 2018) contains a series of programmatic and policy strategies, including a Safer Crossings Program as described below.

Safer Crossings Program

By developing an objective, request-driven process for implementing new pedestrian crossings, the City can improve the efficiency and transparency of the decision making process for where new crossings should be installed. This type of program has proven very successful in cities across the nation. The program would define a set of criteria (based on factors like crash history, pedestrian volume, roadway type, etc.) to evaluate a proposed crossing location. These criteria would be used to rank potential projects for initial consideration, design, and eventually construction. At any point in the process, the City can inform citizens of the current ranking of a crossing that has been requested. The program can also identify potential funding sources outside of City funds, such as private developers or entities, other public agencies, and public-private partnerships. (Quoted from page 19)

Robert D. Chandler, PhD, PE
Assistant Public Works Director

Attachments:

1. Safer Crossings Program Summary Report, May 24, 2019
2. Safer Crossings Program - Initial List of Ranked Crossing Locations, May 24,2019