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Agenda Items: ID#20-0090 (5-A)

Date: 1/16/2020

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CITY OF FRESNO
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FRESNO CITY COUNCIL



Item(s)

File ID20-0090 (5-A) – RESOLUTION – Adopting the Safer Sidewalks to School Program

Sponsors: Councilmember Karbassi, Council President Caprioglio and Councilmember Chavez

Contents: Letter from Leadership Counsel

Supplemental Information:

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January 15, 2020

SENT VIA EMAIL

Miguel Arias
District 3 City Councilmember and Council President
2600 Fresno Street Fresno, CA 93721

RE: Comments on the Resolution to Adopt the Safer Sidewalks to School Program

Dear Council President Arias and Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the proposed "Resolution to Adopt the Safer Sidewalks to School Program." Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability works with low-income communities of color in south Fresno to support and elevate residents' priorities to address barriers to access equal opportunity and resources. As such, an extensive part of our advocacy with communities has been working with parents who have identified infrastructure needs in their neighborhood, especially as it relates to a safe path to school. To ensure that this resolution is implemented most effectively and equitably, we would like to remind the City of existing policies Fresno City currently has in place and additional language. We offer the following recommendations for revisions to the draft Resolution.

The City of Fresno adopted its Active Transportation Plan in 2017 where after several rounds of workshops, residents helped identify areas where infrastructure to facilitate active modes of travel was lacking. With this extensive plan, there were maps developed identifying priority sidewalks the City would build out first as funding became available. As such, we recommend the Safer Sidewalks to School Program add the following language to the first resolution:

1. The City shall identify and improve vacant property along routes to neighborhood sidewalks, *prioritizing neighborhoods highlighted within the Priority Pedestrian Area Maps found in the City of Fresno Active Transportation Plan 2017.*



The Resolution also states that “2. To the extent legally permissible, at the time the property is developed, the City shall seek reimbursement from property owners for the cost of the sidewalk.” We recommend that this policy be revised to clarify that low-income property owners and property owners from low-income neighborhoods which have been impacted by historic public underinvestment. The cost of construction, in these instances, should remain the financial responsibility of the City and the City should prioritize existing funding (see existing policies set forth below) and seek available local, state, and federal resources to meet these municipal infrastructure needs.

With respect to Resolution Numeral 3, we recommend that the Council amend the Resolution to state that the report that staff will prepare shall demonstrate how the properties selected and potential funding sources are consistent with and advances the following existing city policies and priorities:

- **2017 Active Transportation Plan (ATP), Priority Pedestrian Area Maps**
- **ATP, Ch. 5, Planned Networks (p. 71):** Bicycling and walking networks are useful for all residents of the City, but especially important for disadvantaged communities who may have limited access to automobile travel. *With limited funding available, prioritizing networks connecting key destinations and serving disadvantaged communities will also make the best use of funds spent.* (italics added)
- **ATP, Ch. 5, Planned Networks (p. 125):** Because pedestrians travel shorter distances than bicyclists, the priority pedestrian network focuses on areas with the greatest need for infrastructure...additionally considering:
 - Disadvantaged and underserved neighborhoods with large sections of missing sidewalks
 - High levels of pedestrian activity (major shopping, educational, and entertainment destinations)
 - High frequency of pedestrian collisions
- **MT-5a Sidewalk Development.** Pursue funding and implement standards for development of sidewalks on public streets, with priority given to meeting the needs of persons with physical and vision limitations; providing safe routes to school; *completing pedestrian improvements in established neighborhoods with lower vehicle ownership rates*; or providing pedestrian access to public transportation routes.
- **MT-6-c Link Paths and Trails and Recreational Facilities.** Strive to provide path or trail connections to recreational facilities, including parks and community centers where appropriate, and *give priority to pathway improvements within neighborhoods*



characterized by lower vehicle ownership rates and lower per capita rates of parks and public open space.

- **HC-6a Safe Routes to Schools.** Continue to improve the conditions for youth walking and bicycling in the areas surrounding schools by working with the school districts including Fresno USD, Clovis USD, Central USD, Sanger USD, and Washington Union USD, as well as California State University, Fresno, Fresno Pacific University, and State Center Community College District to implement a safe routes to school program. Prioritize identified safe routes to school infrastructure improvements in annual transportation improvement budgets.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. If you have any questions, I can be reached at (559) 369-2790, or isaunders@leadershipcounsel.org.

Sincerely,

Ivanka Saunders
Policy Coordinator
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability