

TMACOG NEWS RELEASE

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Ohio Safe Routes To School Funding Available

Local governments and non-profit organizations are invited to apply for funds to help Ohio grade-school children get safely to school by foot or on a bicycle. The Ohio Safe Routes To School program serves students in grades k-8.

Eligible projects include infrastructure such as bike/walking paths within two miles of schools; and non-infrastructure projects such as training, public awareness and traffic enforcement. Last year ODOT awarded nearly \$4 million to communities across the state. In northwest Ohio, the Village of Whitehouse was awarded \$224,000 to construct a pedestrian bridge and sidewalks. Dennis Recker, administrator for the village, said that the preliminary work for that project – real estate appraisals and right-of-way research – is nearly complete and they expect to have new sidewalks and a bridge completed in 2010.

“It’s a great program,” said Recker. “I heavily encourage communities to look at it if you see a way that you can help kids get to school more safely.”

The application cycle is open from September 8 through November 2, 2009. To view and download applications go to the ODOT website (www.dot.state.oh.us) or call TMACOG: 419.241.9155 ext 116. Funds will be awarded on a competitive basis to eligible applicants who have ODOT-approved School Travel Plans, have developed their Safe Routes to School program, and who can show a demonstrated need for funding to implement the plan. Applicants may also apply for funds to develop their School Travel Plan.

Governor Strickland’s office says that more than a third of youths aged 9 to 15 live within a mile of school, but less than half of these students walk or bike even one day a week. The daily commute to school is a lost opportunity for students to get much-needed physical activity and to learn more about their neighbors and the community.

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