



## **CITY OF KIRKLAND**

### **Department of Public Works**

**123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800**

**[www.ci.kirkland.wa.us](http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us)**

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Dave Ramsay, City Manager

**From:** Daryl Grigsby, Public Works Director

**Date:** September 26, 2008

**Subject:** RESPONSE TO SCHOOL WALK ROUTES E-MAILS

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the Mayor to sign a letter responding to the e-mails received regarding school walk routes in Kirkland.

### BACKGROUND:

Currently staff and the City's Transportation Commission are working through an update of the City's Non-Motorized Transportation plan (this is the first update since 2001). The updated NMT Plan will provide the framework for the next few years of the non-motorized network in the City of Kirkland. During the community outreach and update of the NTM Plan, staff and the Commission are looking at the prioritization of non-motorized improvements and are examining other approaches/evaluation criteria to consider. These alternatives are currently under review and would not be adopted, if at all, until a later date and not without additional and ongoing community input.

**From:** Jeff Trager [mailto:jtrager@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 21, 2008 2:14 PM  
**To:** David Godfrey  
**Cc:** KirklandCouncil  
**Subject:** Sidewalks for school walk routes

I recently learned that the city staff has dropped School Walk Routes within ¼ mile of elementary schools in Kirkland as the top priority for sidewalks. This comes as a great shock and surprise because I know that residents and City Council have expressed again and again that School Walk Routes are the number one priority for sidewalks in Kirkland. A study commissioned by the city reported that survey participants agreed overwhelmingly that sidewalks around schools are the most important.

I want to express my support for reinstating the School Walk Routes within ¼ mile of elementary schools, as identified by the School Walk Route Advisory Committee, as the top priority for sidewalks in the City of Kirkland. We need to protect these most vulnerable residents of our city. As the days shorten and we begin the season of dark, wet mornings when our kids are walking side-by-side with cars on their way to school, we remember the accidents that have happened in these conditions and renew our efforts to prevent them from happening again!

Sincerely, Kaylee Nilan

-----Original Message-----

From: Margaret Carnegie [mailto:[carnegiema@netzero.com](mailto:carnegiema@netzero.com)]  
Sent: Tuesday, September 23, 2008 9:59 AM  
To: KirklandCouncil  
Subject: sidewalks

Dear Council Members,

At the North Rose Hill Neighborhood Association meeting on September 15th, David Godfrey gave a presentation on sidewalks. We wanted information on sidewalks, as the lack of sidewalks was one of the major concerns expressed by the residents in a recent neighborhood survey.

Mr. Godfrey made the statement, as I understood it, that sidewalks in school areas no longer have the top priority rating that they used to have.

Presuming that I did hear him correctly, I want to state that I strongly believe that safe walking routes to schools should have the highest priority. We need to care for the children in our city and one way to do that is to provide safety to and from school. I believe that should be all levels of schools, but I would put elementary schools at the top of the list as those children are the most vulnerable.

Thank you for your time and I'm trusting your dedication to the children of Kirkland in your decision making.

Sincerely,  
Margaret Carnegie  
11259 126th Ave. N.E.  
Kirkland, WA 98033

**From:** TennysonKK@aol.com [mailto:TennysonKK@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 24, 2008 7:31 PM  
**To:** David Godfrey; KirklandCouncil  
**Subject:** Sidewalks

As one who has volunteered to serve on two sidewalk advisory committees, I'm disheartened to be informed through a neighborhood email that the City of Kirkland has removed from their priority list sidewalks within 1/4 mile of schools. It is especially discouraging to think that the city would take this action without talking with the neighborhood associations first.

Please reconsider this action, school walkways was the most popular item when the survey was done for the potential sidewalk bond. It would be great if we could not only restore the priority of 1/4 mile within schools, but increase it to 1/2 mile. This is an investment in our future.

Thanks,  
Karen Tennyson  
12617 N. E. 87th Place  
Kirkland, WA 98033

**From:** James McElwee [mailto:jandlmcwee@msn.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 21, 2008 10:12 PM  
**To:** jandlmcwee@msn.com  
**Cc:** Kari Page  
**Subject:** Sidewalks Near Schools--Urgent Message

To: KAN Reps and Neighborhood Activists

If you see merit in my message, please forward it or your own version of it to your neighborhood people and especially to folks you know who are active in the PTSAs in your neighborhood.

This message has not been reviewed by any KAN committee. I am doing this of my own volition because there is nothing higher in my priorities than our children. I hope you agree and will pass on your comments to the City Staff and City Council.

Jim McElwee

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Sidewalks Near Schools

I learned earlier in the week that the City staff have dropped sidewalks around elementary schools as the top priority for sidewalks. It appears that the staff is not using "within 1/4 mile of schools" as a top priority for sidewalks. To my knowledge the change was made without consulting the Neighborhoods and possibly without consulting the City Council.

If sidewalks close to schools are a top priority for our Neighborhoods and our City, we need to press the City staff hard on the issue of sidewalks around elementary schools. For our most vulnerable population, we have let school kids slip back into the multi-page prioritization list that we determined several years ago was not working adequately.

The City is seeking public input on a revision to the non-motorized transportation plan. I would like to see out residents, and maybe our Neighborhood Associations, send a strong message that

sidewalks around elementary schools must be the City's top priority. Our expressions can go a long way to raising the issue that the policy appears to have changed without notice. To get the most responses, it is often best to draft a message that expresses the issues and encourage the writer to personalize their message.

Some talking points that I just pulled out of my head. Personalize your message by using these points or others that are relevant—

Dark mornings and rainy evenings are already upon us.

Even the best drivers sometimes suffer from unclear windshields and headlight glare.

A child wearing non-reflective clothing is very difficult to see, even within the headlight cone.

Drivers are more distracted than ever as they rush to jobs or school drop-offs.

Our children are not safe walking on the edge of the street. Sidewalks are where they belong.

It's the right thing to do.

Our children don't have a choice in this situation, but we do as residents, parents, citizens. We need to make the safety of our children the highest priority we can achieve.

October 7, 2008

**DRAFT**

Dear Concerned Citizen:

Thank you for your interest and recent input regarding School Walk Routes in the City of Kirkland. We want to assure you that the City continues to operate under the same prioritization criteria that were developed as a part of a community process and approved by City Council in 1998. In other words, all things equal, a higher priority continues to be given to an identified school walk route (SWR). This emphasis has been supported by citizens, various committees, PTSA's, and the City Council over the years and remains an essential part of the rating criteria.

In 1995, the City Council adopted a set of 'ad-hoc' criteria which were developed by a citizen advisory committee for evaluating and prioritizing transportation projects. These ad-hoc criteria, also known as the Transportation Project Evaluation, were then used in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for two years to prioritize all of the proposed transportation projects. After two full CIP prioritization processes, the City Council reconvened the original committee to ascertain whether or not the resulting CIP projects reflected the desired outcome of the committee. After looking at the projects that were being funded in the CIP, the committee concluded that the projects did not provide enough recognition for a SWR. As a result, the committee recommended, and the City Council approved, a modification to the criteria in May of 1998. The criteria gives additional points to sidewalk project proposals on identified SWR's.

These modifications were included in the Transportation Project Evaluation process and are used by staff to rate non-motorized projects for placement on the priority list and ultimately in the CIP. In addition, the Transportation Project Evaluation was included in the City of Kirkland's Non-Motorized Plan adopted in 2001 by the City Council and remains the City's published criteria.

In further support of the City's continued commitment to providing projects along SWR, in October of 2000 the City Council created a School Walk Route Committee including residents, parents, the School District and others. In May of 2002, after numerous meetings, discussions, open houses and interaction with the various schools, the City Council approved the committee's recommendations. These recommendations included:

- Build \$1 million worth of priority SWR projects identified by each school
- Allow other identified SWR's to compete in the CIP process using the rating process (*described earlier*)
- Explore possibility of a Sidewalk Bond
- Collect on concomitant agreements

The priority SWR projects were constructed at each of the seven elementary schools by the Fall of 2002, and other routes continue to be evaluated in the CIP process. The Sidewalk Bond was not undertaken after a further study.

Currently, staff and the City's Transportation Commission are working through an update of the City's Non-Motorized Transportation (NMT) plan. This is the first update since 2001. The updated NMT Plan will provide the framework for the next few years of the non-motorized network in the City of Kirkland. During the community outreach and update of the NMT Plan, staff and the Commission are looking at the way non-

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motorized improvements are being prioritized and are examining other approaches/evaluation criteria to consider. Other approaches, and or evaluation criteria, being looked at during this update process are being introduced at various open houses, on the City's web-site, and at the Transportation Commission meetings. Feedback and input received from the community is being considered in the final decision on the prioritization process.

Your input on the current or any future approaches is valued and appreciated. The update process will continue through this year, and we welcome your comments and assure you that staff will consider your input as they develop the criteria, project lists, network, and programmatic elements of the Plan.

If you have other thoughts or ideas, please contact David Godfrey, Public Works Department at 425-587-3865 or [dgodfrey@ci.kirkland.wa.us](mailto:dgodfrey@ci.kirkland.wa.us). Information regarding the status of the NMT Plan and information on the existing 2001 Plan is located on the City of Kirkland Public Works Department website at [www.ci.kirkland.wa.us](http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us).

Sincerely,

Kirkland City Council

By: James L. Lauinger, Mayor

Cc: David Godfrey, Transportation Engineering Manager