



For Immediate Release
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City of Watsonville Approves Complete Streets to Schools Plan

Watsonville, CA – The City of Watsonville Complete Streets to Schools Plan has recently been unanimously approved by the Watsonville City Council and the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) Board, wrapping up a two-year planning process. The Plan includes recommendations for infrastructure improvements and programmatic changes at 15 Watsonville schools, with the goal of improving safety for families that are walking and biking to school and encouraging more active transportation trips. The Plan will be used by the City of Watsonville and PVUSD to prioritize future improvements around schools and to secure grant funding for project construction.

The City of Watsonville Complete Streets to Schools Plan is a partnership between the City of Watsonville, County Public Health, PVUSD, and Ecology Action. The Plan is funded through a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning grant.

The Plan includes detailed infrastructure recommendations for 15 school sites, such as filling sidewalk gaps, improving lighting, enhancing bicycle facilities, and calming traffic. Projects are prioritized based on cost, ease of implementation, the number of bicycle and pedestrian collisions near the project site, roadway type, and number of public comments received. The Plan also includes programmatic recommendations, such as education and encouragement programs, and information on how the Plan will be implemented.

The recommendations included in the Plan were developed based on community input. Public input was gathered through two community meetings in Watsonville, walk audits held at each school, parent surveys, and city council and school board presentations. After development of the draft recommendations, the planning team attended parent meetings to share the recommendations and gain feedback from parents and school staff.

Watsonville has been identified as a high-priority city due to its high rates of pedestrian collisions. In 2014, the California Office of Traffic Safety ranked the city as the worst in the state among cities of a similar size for injuries and fatalities among pedestrians under the age of 15, and 4th worst for pedestrians overall. To address these high collision rates, the Watsonville City Council adopted a Vision Zero policy in 2018. Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate traffic injuries

and fatalities while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility, and it has been implemented in cities across the world. The Watsonville City Council approved an action plan to guide implementation of Vision Zero at the February 25th council meeting.

Maura Leonor, a parent who has been advocating for safety improvements near Ceiba College Preparatory Academy, believes that improvements near schools are key to the safety of youth in Watsonville. “Safe drop-off zones, improvements to roadways near schools, and pedestrian education can help empower our students so that our schools can have a safe and healthier future,” she says.

The final City of Watsonville Complete Streets to Schools Plan can be viewed at <https://ecoact.org/planningwatsonville/>. Hard copies of the Plan will be available at the downtown Watsonville Library and the Freedom Library.

For more information, please contact Amelia Conlen, Transportation Planner at Ecology Action, at aconlen@ecoact.org or 831-515-1351.