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PRESS RELEASE

Three Programs Extend Sumner's Efforts to Complete Sidewalk System

Sumner, WA.—The City of Sumner currently has three efforts moving forward that together will help fulfill the city's long-held goal of a complete sidewalk system. The first effort is a voluntary sidewalk program the City offered this year to assist individual homeowners who have curb and gutter but are missing sidewalks. The other two are funded by grants the City received this spring, one from the State of Washington for Safe Routes to Schools and one from Pierce County's Community Development Block Grant program.

Volunteer Program

On February 5, 2007, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 1215, establishing a voluntary sidewalk program. Through this program, the City will pay 50% of the cost for properties already containing curb and gutter but no sidewalk, with property owners paying the other 50%. The Council authorized \$75,000 for this program, which required eligible property owners to apply and be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. The city received 22 applicants for 26 separate sites, filling in over 2300 linear feet of sidewalk, which a City crew will complete this summer.

Safe Routes to Schools

Through the Washington State Department of Transportation, Sumner is receiving a \$360,000 grant to help complete walking routes to Maple Lawn Elementary and Sumner Middle School. This program uses a three-step approach to encourage students to walk to school: engineering, education and enforcement. The grant money will help fund engineering, or structural improvements to walking routes, which includes completing sidewalks where they are missing on main routes and adding visual enhancements to three key street crossings. Washington State Department of Transportation ranked the proposals they received and placed this project at number 11. The project remained in the package approved by the State Legislature, and construction could begin in 2008.

Community Development Block Grant

Through Pierce County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the City applied for a grant to finish sidewalks in the Cyrus Woods neighborhood of Sumner, located
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between Wood and Valley Avenues and Elm and Main Streets. A previous award of CDBG funding had filled in about half the missing sidewalks in this area, and this proposal requested the funding to finish the rest. On May 2, the committee approved Sumner's proposal and awarded the full funding of \$80,000. Next, the city will go through a contract process that should result in a commitment of funds in July of this year.

A complete sidewalks system has been a goal of the City of Sumner since shortly after its incorporation in 1891. When the city asks citizens about what they'd like, completed sidewalks routinely appear at or near the top of the list. However, gaps have remained in the system, usually when unincorporated land was annexed into the city. The code requires property owners to install sidewalks, a regulation that is enforced when a property owner without sidewalks requests a permit to add habitable space to their property.

Over the years, the city and community have tried different approaches to complete the sidewalk system. Some have been successful at construction segments of sidewalks, but none have successfully addressed the gaps. Regardless, the public has continued to ask the city to find other ways to fill in the sidewalks. Together, the voluntary program and the two grants will move forward in fulfilling that request.

“This is fantastic news for Sumner,” said Mayor Dave Enslow. “Whether the assistance is coming from the city, county or state, I'm glad property owners are getting help to finish their sidewalks. A completed system is so important so that all of our citizens can safely walk through the city.”

Said City Administrator John Doan, “Each of these three efforts is individually a great step forward, and together, they will make a significant impact. We're very thankful to the State and the County for recognizing how important sidewalks are to our community.”

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