



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

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Safe Routes to School Project to be Dedicated

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Harrisonburg, VA – To celebrate the completion of Harrisonburg’s first Safe Routes to School Project, the City of Harrisonburg and Harrisonburg City Public Schools will be hosting a dedication ceremony on Friday June 3, 2011 at 8:45am. The ceremony will be held at Keister Elementary between the walking track and the building.

The project includes the construction of over 1.25 miles of new sidewalks and new pedestrian signals which will improve safety for students walking to Keister Elementary School. The project was designed by the City of Harrisonburg and constructed by Contracting Unlimited, Inc. It was funded through a \$455,335 Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Safe Routes to School Grant and city funds.

“Lack of pedestrian facilities is a real obstacle for city schoolchildren who live a walkable distance from their school but don’t have the safety of the sidewalk or pedestrian signals,” said Public Works Planner Thanh Dang. “The Safe Routes to School program addresses this challenge head on, and we are very excited to give these neighborhoods much needed facilities for walking.”

This project compliments Keister Elementary School’s ongoing efforts to encourage students to walk and bike to school for increased physical activity and better health. Each Friday, students celebrate “Walking Fridays” by either walking to school or walking the track before school starts. School buses stop at the track and students have the opportunity to walk before starting the school day. Bike helmets are also provided by the school to any student who needs one; bicycle and pedestrian safety is taught in school and featured at the school’s health fair.

A second project around Waterman Elementary School is currently under design by the city and funded by another VDOT Safe Routes to School Grant. That project is anticipated to begin in Spring of 2012.

More information about City of Harrisonburg’s bicycling and pedestrian initiatives can be found at www.harrisonburgva.gov/bikeped.

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