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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 7th, 2007

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COUNCILWOMAN WENDY GREUEL CALLS FOR LOS ANGELES' FAIR SHARE OF FUNDS FROM STATEWIDE SCHOOL SAFETY PROGRAM

Los Angeles County received only 0.5% of funding over past two years

After Los Angeles failed to receive an equitable portion of state dollars in the 2007 Safe Routes to School funding cycle, Councilwoman Wendy Greuel, today, called on the California Department of Transportation, to change the process for allocating funds to improve safety and infrastructure around Los Angeles schools.

"We are the biggest City in all of California and yet again we were shortchanged in receiving Safe Routes to School money," said Councilwoman Greuel, Chair of the Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee. "In order to protect our children going to and from school we need our fair share of state dollars."

In the last two funding cycles, the City of Los Angeles, which contains 10% percent of the California population, received only 0.5% of the Safe Routes to School dollars. Meanwhile, Sacramento County, home to 3.7% of California residents, received 4.39% of available funds; The City of San Francisco, home to 2% of California residents, received 4.31% of funds and San Luis Obispo County, home to 0.7% of Californians, received 3.12% of funds.

In a letter to California Secretary of Transportation Dale Bonner, Councilwoman Greuel identified several flaws in the allocation process including the fact that the Caltrans Headquarters rating committee was overwhelmingly comprised of raters from Northern California who had the opportunity to favorably rank Northern California projects in the competition and the rating sheets used by the various Caltrans Districts to score local projects were different from the rating sheets used during the final selection.

"Los Angeles has more school-aged children than any other City in the State of California. We need all the help we can get to keep these kids safe," said David Brewer, Superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Based on City staff recommendations, Councilwoman Greuel urged Caltrans to introduce new evaluation guidelines to make the process more equitable.

The Los Angeles City Transportation Committee, led by Councilwoman Greuel, scrutinized the Los Angeles application for the 2008 Safe Routes to School funding cycle today, November 7th. Greuel directed the Los Angeles Department of Transportation and the Bureau of Street Services to rigorously refine the applications considering the current procedural hurdles facing the City.

(more)



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Councilwoman Wendy Greuel has made improving child safety a cornerstone of her tenure. She secured updated safety signage around all CD 2 elementary schools and as Transportation Committee Chair, she has demanded that the Department of Transportation prioritize safety projects around schools citywide. She has provided a Safety Valet program to every interested elementary school in her district. She sponsors three to four car seat giveaways annually and a child health and safety fair each year.

Safe Routes to School is a federally funded program designed to improve conditions for children in kindergarten through eighth grade to safely walk and bicycle to school. The program funds infrastructure improvements within 2 miles of a school. In the 2006-2007 funding cycle, \$45 million was available statewide. Los Angeles received a total of \$239,470 in both cycles combined.

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