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City and School District Work Together to Prioritize Safety Projects

MCMINNVILLE, Ore. - Nov 2, 2017 - The 2014 voter-passed Transportation Bond brought many necessary street improvements to McMinnville in recent years, but possibly most anticipated were the safety updates near local schools.

Jack Crabtree, McMinnville school district's safety manager, has seen first-hand just how important these changes have been.

“When you drive through Memorial Elementary you know you're in a school zone, there's no question about it. They've got three or four crosswalks right there — just very well done — it's incredibly safe.”

The importance of these projects lies in the safety concerns for kids at the beginning and end of school days. Many sidewalks had gaps, requiring school goes to walk in the streets. Crosswalks were nonexistent in some areas, and hardly noticeable in others, making safely crossing the street difficult on the way to and from school.

With 6,906 students total in the District, about 2,512 walking home every day, and numerous parents picking up kids, it was apparent that upgrades were needed. When the City met with the School District to discuss the improvements, safety was the prominent issue.

“I think at 15th and Galloway...I don't remember a crosswalk even being there,” Crabtree said.

The Pedestrian Safety portion of the Transportation Bond Project provided upgrades to many sidewalks and crosswalks including: Fellows Street crossing, installation of sidewalk along South Davis Street, and the completion of both Star Mill Way and Wallace Road sidewalks. The previously nonexistent crosswalk on 15th and Galloway Street was a concerning intersection near the High School that is now much safer. A full list of project areas can be found at http://mcminnvilletransportationbond.org/projects_pedestriansafetyprojects.html.

Local contractors Haworth Inc., and Concrete Solutions constructed the improvements, totaling \$483,000. “Overall, any improvements the City does to make our school safer, I'm happy,” Crabtree said. “If you think about it, we have almost 7,000 kids in our District and they need to get to school safe and get back home safe. I'm just glad to see they put some resources into helping that out because obviously there's nothing more important than keeping the kids safe.”