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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Safe Routes to School Project Now Underway on East Court Street

Kankakee, IL – If you have headed down Court Street recently, you may have noticed more construction has begun on the East Side. What started as a letter from a student, Ty Alderson, addressed to Mayor Wells-Armstrong in 2016 is now coming to life as he expressed his concerns about the safety of students and heavy traffic in front of King Middle School.

Following a visit to the school to meet Ty and his classmates, Mayor Wells-Armstrong came back to her capital team to formulate a plan. After doing some research, City Engineer, Neil Piggush, learned about the Safe Routes to School Grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and worked with Mayor Wells-Armstrong, Dr. Genevra Walters and school administrators to fulfill the application requirements. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a program that aims to make it safer for students to walk and bike to school by improving infrastructure and using best safety practices.

The City of Kankakee was later awarded \$200,000 for the Safe Routes to School grant to help fund the project in the Spring of 2019. Construction began earlier this week on Monday, October 12, 2020 which will include flashing beacons, a raised median, landscaping and sidewalk improvements.

“This project will provide long overdue and much needed safety improvements for the students, crossing guards, as well as, parents, and staff in front of King Middle School. It will also provide increased visibility and awareness for motorists,” said City Engineer, Neil Piggush.

“Ty's advocacy for the safety of students and crossing guards demonstrates that young people can have an impact in their communities. Furthermore, this project illustrates an example of how our schools and government can work together to bring solutions. I am proud of the collaborative work between the City and Kankakee School District 111 on this project. Once completed, this project will serve as an ongoing visual message to

youth that they have a voice and can be advocates for change,” said Mayor Wells-Armstrong.

"I drove by King with my parents and saw the construction for the first time the other day. I got excited to see it starting and I can't wait to see it finished! It will finally be a safe place to cross the street," said Ty Alderson.

The Safe Routes to Schools project is expected to be completed by March 2021.

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The City of Kankakee is dedicated to protecting, building and nurturing the community while enhancing lives. We are a historic, vibrant, and active riverfront community. We continue to transform into an extraordinary place to dream, grow, and thrive. Embracing our diversity, we strive to be progressive, inclusive, and innovative. For more information on the City of Kankakee, please visit the website at www.citykankakee-il.gov.