

Speed detectors, lights to be installed

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SAN MARCOS – This fall, bright new signs, flashing lights and speed detectors will encourage motorists to check their speed as they approach schools.

San Marcos has received three new grants from the state Department of Transportation. Two will be used to buy and install the eye-catching safety equipment. The third will pay for sidewalks in an area where students walk to school.

Two of the grants, totaling about \$1.03 million, are from the state Safe Routes to School program, said city engineer Mike Edwards. One, for \$44,000, will be used to replace 130 old traffic and school-crossing signs with neon yellow ones in a few months.

The other, a \$990,000 grant, will pay for sidewalks on Rock Springs Road between Woodland Parkway and Richland Road. Woodland Park Middle School is east of that area, and Mission Hills High School is southwest of it.

A third state grant, for \$221,000, will allow the city to finish installing both dual-flashing beacon lights and speed-detector signs at all of San Marcos Unified School District's campuses in the city, excluding alternative schools. That work should be completed in the fall, Edwards said.

Last year, the city received a \$391,000 grant to build a different sidewalk segment adjacent to the Rock Springs project. This segment is on the west side of Richland, from Elizabeth Street to Rock Springs Road.

The two sidewalk projects are expected to cost \$2.2 million, Edwards said. The city will pay the \$819,000 not covered by the grants.

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Construction hasn't begun on either sidewalk project, but both will be built at the same time, Edwards said. The goal is to have them ready before the 2008-09 school year starts. He said the city will apply for more grants so that more sidewalks can be built along Richland, near Richland Elementary.

Kathy Tanner, the school district's facilities director, said she looks forward to the traffic-safety improvements.

"The traffic signs have a real positive impact when the motorists are going by and they can see their speeds," she said. "You see them slow down on the



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street.”

Tanner said that the area is a busy one for students walking to school and that the district will survey residents after the sidewalks are built to find out what difference they have made.