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## Breckenridge to host Safe Routes to School open house

By Audra Anderson • Daily News

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Breckenridge Police Chief Kris Karlgaard said speed signs would improve safety no matter where they are located in town.

Daily News file photo

Ulteig Senior Engineer Brian Hiles provided the Breckenridge Active Living Committee with an update on the Safe Routes to School plan at a Wednesday, June 9 meeting.

Hiles said the route will run between the elementary and high school along Hall Avenue and along the Breckenridge Family Aquatic Center lot. The scope of the plan was reduced after Ulteig calculated the total cost to be higher than expected in March.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation reviewed and approved the updated plan. The next step will be to hold an open house to gather public input on the project, Hiles said.

A Safe Routes to School open house will be held from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Monday, June 28 at Breckenridge City Hall. Community members can stop in to ask questions or learn more about the project and its history.

"It'll be real informal, people can come in and ask questions as they have them," Hiles said.

The project has been in the works for years. In 2018, the committee received a grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation and West Central Initiative to help fund the project. If the project is approved, Safe Routes to School construction could be completed before the commencement of the 2021-2022 school year, Hiles said.

Active Living Committee President Shawn Roberts said she expects to get questions from the public about how Safe Routes to School will move forward if the community votes in favor of building a new school in elections this fall.

The committee determined the Safe Routes to School project would be beneficial to the community regardless of a new location for the school. The project entails speed signs and adding sidewalks that lead to the high-traffic aquatic center.

"All the neighborhoods in that area, it benefits them with access to the pool," Hiles said.

Breckenridge Police Chief Kris Karlgaard said speed signs would improve safety no matter where they are located in town. They are also easy to relocate if the city decides it wants to move the speed signs elsewhere.

If the community votes in favor of building a new school, it would take several years to construct, too, Roberts said. The Safe Routes to School would be utilized in that time.

Active Living Committee member Evie Fox said the community may ask questions about the placement of the Safe Routes to School, which the committee should be prepared to answer.

The committee plans to send letters inviting the homeowners directly affected by the project to the open house, but any interested community member is encouraged to attend.

Audra Anderson

