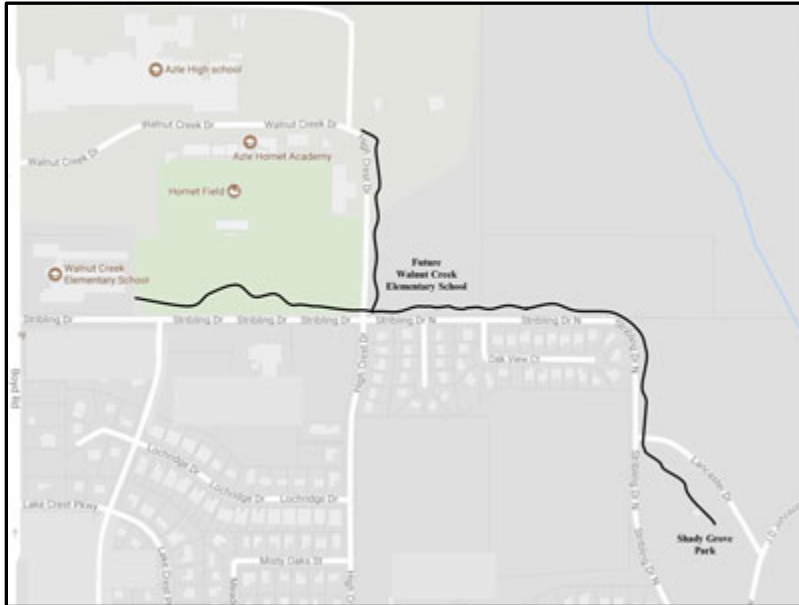


Walk on

July 26, 2017



The 4,500 linear feet of sidewalk will benefit not only Walnut Creek students but AHS runners as well.

Long sidewalk approved near future Walnut Creek Elementary

BY CHRISTINA DERR

The Azle Independent School District is the first school district to receive a safe travels grant from the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG).

AISD Assistant Superintendent Todd Smith said the NCTCOG grant program has as its purpose creating safe travels, and that the district pursued the grant under the title “Safe Travels to School.”

In conjunction with the City of Azle, Azle ISD officials filed an application for the matching grant this February and learned they were awarded the funds last month.

The grant will allow nearly 4,500 linear feet of sidewalk to be constructed from the existing Walnut Creek campus through the site of the future school, along Stribling Drive, and through Shady Grove Park.

A portion will also extend north from the intersection of Stribling and High Crest Drives to allow high school students to access the pathway.

Incorporating crosswalks will allow students from several subdivisions near the school – including Azlewood, Stribling Square, and students who live west of FM 730 – to safely travel to school on foot or by bicycle.

Eighty percent of the approximately \$365,000 project will come from grant funds with

Azle ISD and the city splitting the remainder based upon the portion of the sidewalk on their respective properties.

The sidewalk will not be typical in that it will not follow an identical path next to the roadway but will instead meander through the campuses and the park.

One group expected to benefit from the roadway especially are high school athletes such as cross-country runners who are often seen running along Stribling Drive in the early morning when traffic is heavy.

Smith said the partnership with the City of Azle was essential in procuring the grant.

“They started talking about forms and stuff that we had no idea...”

“Rick White with the City of Azle said he will take care of submitting the forms,” he said.

Both parties have elected to allow TxDOT to oversee the planning, design, and construction of the sidewalk.

“The only disadvantage is TxDOT is involved,” Smith said. “I say that is a disadvantage because you either build everything to TxDOT standards, and they come in and inspect, or you just let them do it. Well, we have been advised the best thing to do is just let TxDOT do it,” Smith said.

He added that the main disadvantage of letting the state agency handle the project is that students will be in the new Walnut Creek campus prior to construction even beginning.

“It is not going to be open at this time next year; it will be awhile as we go through this process,” Smith said.