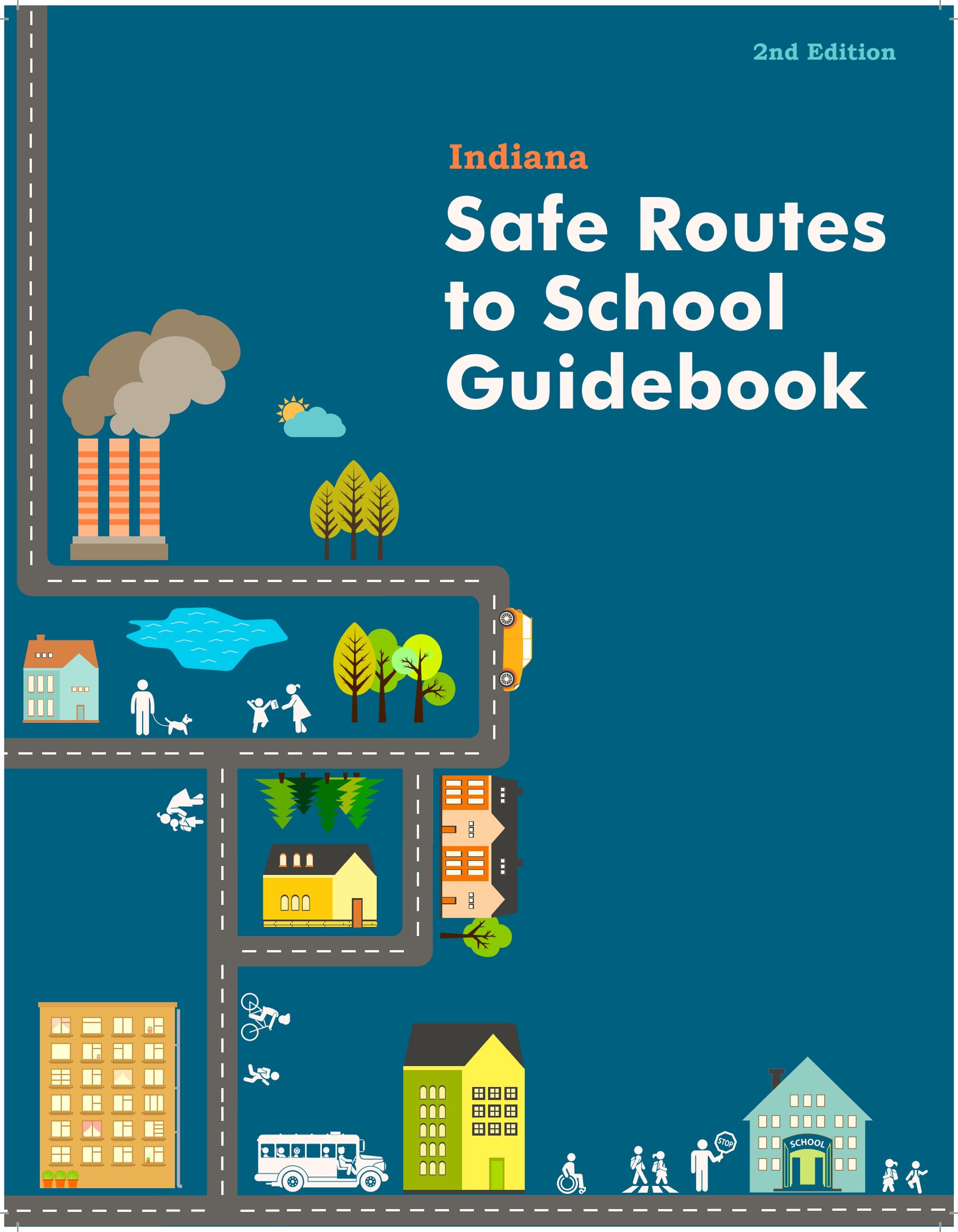
2nd Edition

Indiana

Safe Routes to School Guidebook



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INTRODUCTION

Creating Paths for Healthy Kids

Welcome and congratulations! You have joined a growing number of Hoosiers who are excited to make it safer and easier for children to walk and bicycle to school because of all of the benefits, and you have decided to work with others to improve conditions. The materials in this guide will enable you to establish a successful and ongoing Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program at your school—and to ultimately enhance the safety and health of your community for years to come.

As traffic volumes around schools have increased, parents/guardians have felt less and less comfortable about letting their children walk or ride bicycles to school. More and more parents/guardians have begun driving their kids to school. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 85% of children's trips to school are made by car or school bus; only 13% of school trips are made by walking or bicycling. These motor vehicle trips add to traffic problems on roads surrounding schools and create long lines of traffic in school drop-off zones. Other drivers stuck in these traffic jams become angry and drive aggressively. This cycle continues until very few parents/guardians feel comfortable letting their children walk or bike to school, even if they live close by.

Many, however, remember a time when walking to school was part of everyday life. Walking and biking to school helps children feel more connected to their community and increases their confidence that school is a safe place for learning. Studies have shown kids who walk and bike to school arrive more alert and ready to learn. Bicycling and walking to school helps establish a healthy, active lifestyle from an early age. Generally, increased physical activity among school-aged children contributes to their improved personal health. Furthermore, cities and towns with established SRTS programs report a stronger sense of community identity and increased social skills among the children.

It's 8:45 a.m. and kids are beginning to arrive at school. Some walk to school crossing busy, multilane roads along the way. In some locations, there are crossing guards, but students also cross these streets at convenient points where there may not even be crosswalks, let alone adult supervision. Some children walk on the street or shoulder because there are no sidewalks. Some children are driven to school by their parents/guardians (with many citing traffic and congestion as a concern) who wait in long lines to drop them off, adding to the confusion and congestion around the school entrance. To avoid the long drop-off line, some parents/guardians drop their kids off on the far side of the street. Many passing motorists appear oblivious to these children and other pedestrians in the area. The problem has created growing safety concerns among parents/guardians and school administrators.

Did you Know?

- In Indiana, 1,705 pedestrians and 820 bicyclists were involved in collisions in 2017; 114 of these were killed (104 pedestrians, 10 bicyclists).
- In 2017, there were 238 children ages 15 and younger involved in traffic crashes as pedestrians, of which, almost half (42.9%) experienced fatal or incapacitating injuries. An estimated 20 – 25% of rush hour traffic on local roadways is school traffic.
- Nationally, 85% of children's trips to school are made by car or school bus; only 13% of school trips are made by walking or bicycling.
- Approximately 16% of children and adolescents in the United States are now seriously overweight—more than twice the number of children considered obese in the early 1980s. Overweight children are more likely to develop cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other health-related problems.
- Asthma is on the rise among children. Vehicle emissions, especially diesel exhaust, are a known contributor to this disease.

SOURCES: NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION; INDIANA STATE POLICE; SURFACE TRANSPORTATION POLICY PROJECT; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES; CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION; AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION; AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION; AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

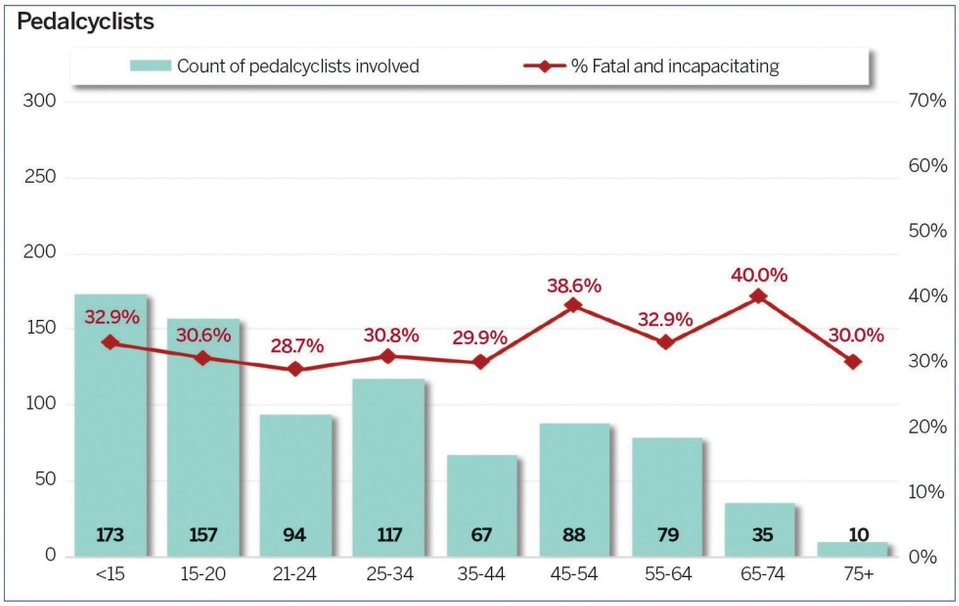
A Safe Routes to School Program Can Help

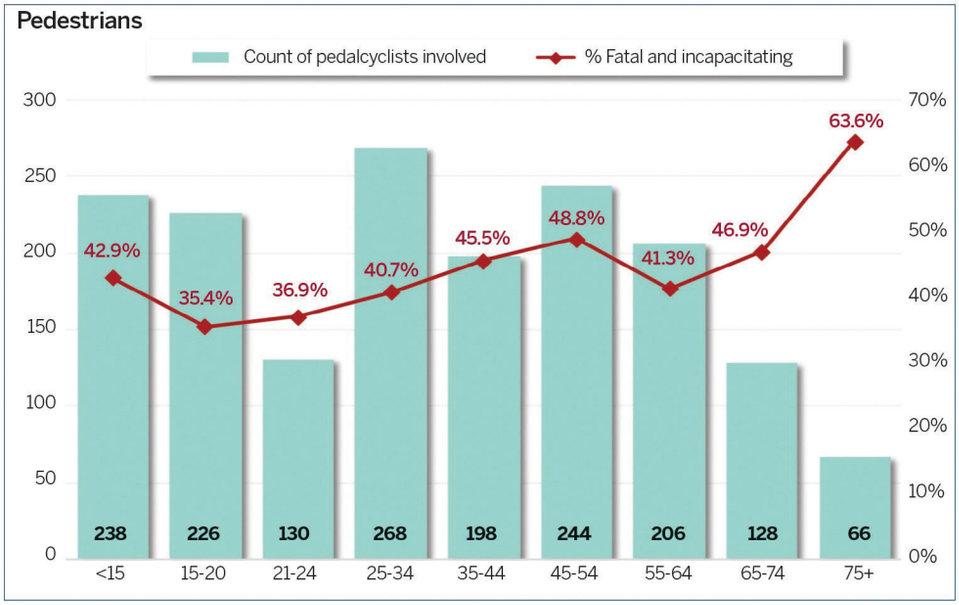
In Marin County, California, where a SRTS program has been in place for many years, participating schools saw positive results, even after a few years:

- Children walking to school increased from 14% to 23%.
- Children biking to school more than doubled from 7% to 15%.
- Children carpooling increased from 11% to 21%.
- Children arriving alone in a car decreased from 62% to 38%.

Figure 1. below shows the number of non-motorists involved in Indiana collissions by age and proportion who experience fatal and incapacitating injuries. The largest number of pedalcyclists involved in crashes was less than 15 years of age.

Figure 2. Non-motorists involved in Indiana collisions and fatal and incapacitating injury rate, by person type and age group, 2017



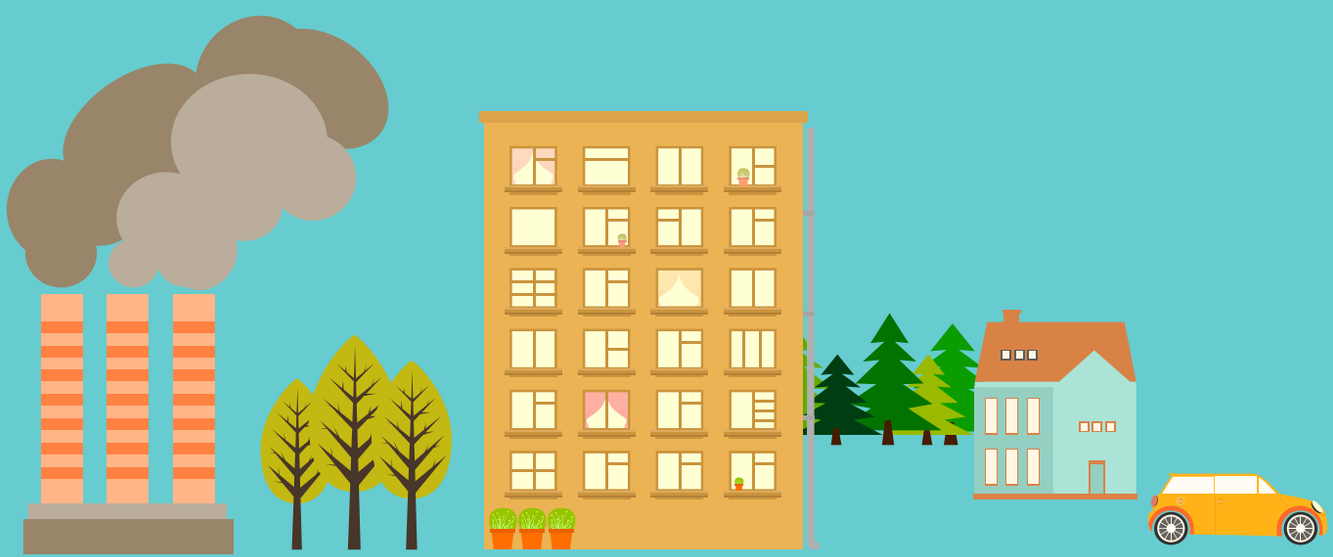


Source: Indiana State Police Automated Reporting Information Exchange System (ARIES), as of April 6, 2018

What Is Safe Routes to School?

Having a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is a way to improve the safety of children who walk or bicycle to school and to promote active transportation options. An SRTS Program begins with parents/guardians and administrators working along with other community partners and public agencies to build new sidewalks; improve pedestrian crossings; teach children safer bicycling and walking skills; and promote healthier, more active lifestyles. In addition to promoting active lifestyles, walking and bicycling have significant benefits; among them reductions in motor vehicle traffic, associated fuel consumption for school trips, and improved air quality.

Any school can participate in Safe Routes to School, regardless of whether they receive federal funding. A simple requirement is a dedicated group of parents/guardians, teachers, school administrators, and other community members who want to take actions to improve the walking and bicycling conditions near and around their school. This guidebook provides step-by-step instructions for developing and implementing an SRTS Program, as well as ideas and examples from other schools that have achieved success.



How to Use this Guidebook

The purpose of this guidebook is to assist communities and schools in identifying, seeking funding for, conducting, and evaluating Safe Routes to School projects, specifically non-infrastructure projects. The guidebook will be useful for communities that have and/or are applying for federal SRTS funding as well as for communities that wish to do a program without federal SRTS funding. This guidebook includes material that is appropriate for all types of schools, including those in urban, suburban, small town, and rural settings. It also includes materials to assist in preparing applications for SRTS funding for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Lastly, the guidebook contains resources that can be used to implement a walking and bicycling to school program.

The tools contained in this guide include:

- *Surveys*
- *Ideas for ways to educate and encourage safer walking and bicycling*
- *Enforcement ideas*
- *Tips on how to create a Safe Routes to School Plan*
- *Resources and potential funding sources for the improvements and programs you plan to make as part of your SRTS Program*

Background
The Evolution of Safe Routes to School in Indiana

From 2006 to 2012, Indiana distributed over $21.6 million to communities for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure activities related to making walking and bicycling to school easier. The awards consisted of 48 non-infrastructure projects and 80 infrastructure projects. A total of 318 applications were received over those 7 years, indicating significant demand for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) efforts beyond available funding.

In July 2012, Congress passed an updated transportation bill: Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). Since October 2012, SRTS activities have been eligible to compete for funding alongside other programs, including the Transportation Enhancements program and Recreational Trails program, as part of a new program called the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Along with other types of local projects, applications will be accepted for SRTS projects and activities and other TAP categories.

What is the status of Safe Routes to School in Indiana?

The Indiana SRTS Program, administered through the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), is based on a federal program designed to make walking and bicycling to school safe and routine. When the Federal Highway bill, SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users), was signed into law in 2005, the evidence was clear that disturbing weight gains among American children and a growing, nationwide obesity epidemic threatened our health.

From 2006 to 2012, INDOT funded a total of 128 SRTS projects totaling $21.6 million. Project funding is available for both infrastructure projects (built projects) and non-infrastructure projects (planning and programming). For information about INDOT funding for Safe Routes to School projects please see the **Additional Funding and Related Programs** section of this guidebook on page 43.

In Indiana, the first application round began in November 2013 and extended through the middle of December 2013. The second call occurred in the spring of 2014, and awards were announced in the summer of 2014.

Three changes under the new Transportation Alternatives Program are most noteworthy:

- All TAP projects and activities now require a 20% local match (under the former program, SRTS projects were funded at 100%).
- Funds must now be used within a limited timeframe.
- There is greater competition for limited funds because several former programs were collapsed into TAP.

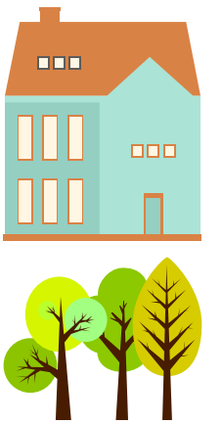
Strong applications emphasize connections to existing pedestrian and bicycling facilities, increased physical activity among students, improved student health, safer crossing locations, efforts to reduce parents/guardians driving children to school, and short-distance bussing. Effective school walking and biking policies are encouraged.

Due to the changes under MAP-21, INDOT no longer has a full-time Safe Routes to School coordinator. The local programs specialist currently oversees Safe Routes to School Projects in a manner similar to other INDOT-funded projects. Additionally, there is no longer dedicated funding specifically for SRTS, except for the funds dedicated to the activities and projects selected under the SRTS Program between 2006 and 2012. Funding for projects that would be considered SRTS projects would now come from TAP, and that program is currently administered by the Local Programs section at INDOT. Projects in urban areas over 50,000 in population will require endorsement and programming by the responsible Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Find out more at www.indianampo.com, or contact your local district office at www.in.gov/indot.

In December of 2015, Congress passed a new highway bill titled the FAST Act. Under the new bill, TAP was renamed the STP Setaside. Safe Routes to School projects can still compete for available funding similar to the requirements under MAP-21. Under the FAST Act, state and local nonprofit organizations that work on transportation safety will be allowed to compete directly for funding under the program. The FAST Act also required the U.S. Department of Transportation to issue new guidance for streamlining the regulatory and review process for smaller projects. The bill also encourages states to embrace complete streets standards for the planning, development, and operation of federally funded transportation projects along with adopting the more progressive NACTO Urban Street Design Manual for designing bicycling and walking facilities.

Did you know?

Definition of MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) were created by Congress in 1962 through the Federal Aid Highway Act. This legislation focused on planning for urban areas, rather than cities. The act requires that transportation projects be supported and coordinated with long-range plans. MPOs were created to carry out the planning process with the cooperation of the states and local jurisdictions. MPOs are required in every urbanized area as a condition for receiving certain highway and mass transit funds. There are 14 MPOs in Indiana representing 13 Indiana Urbanized Areas. Two of these MPOs have bi-state agreements that reach into Kentucky and Michigan.



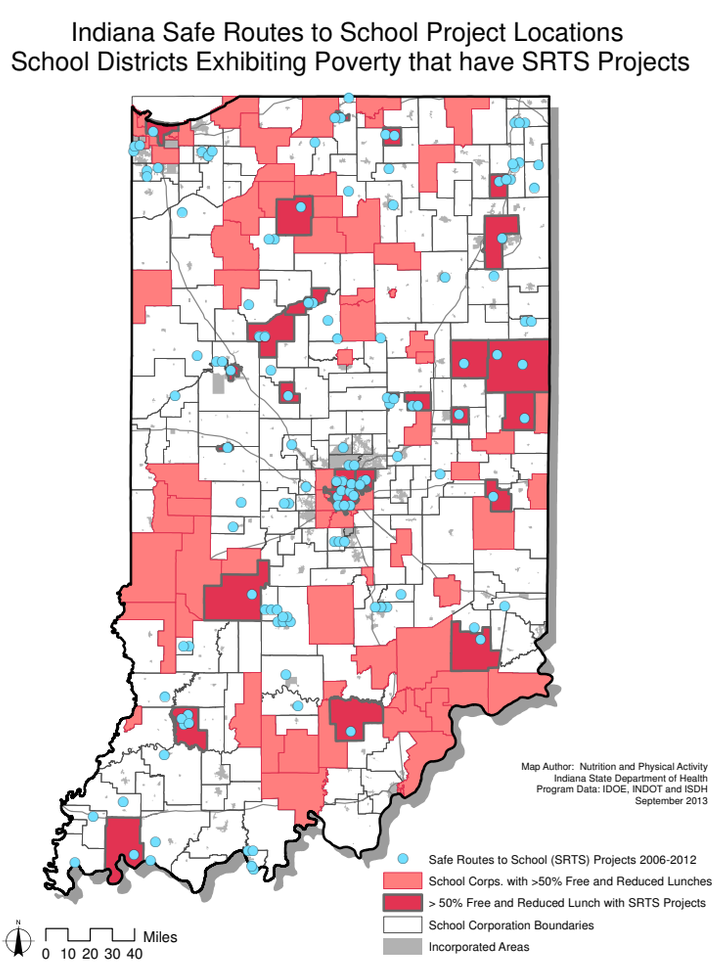
Skiles Test Elementary, Walk to School Day 2014.

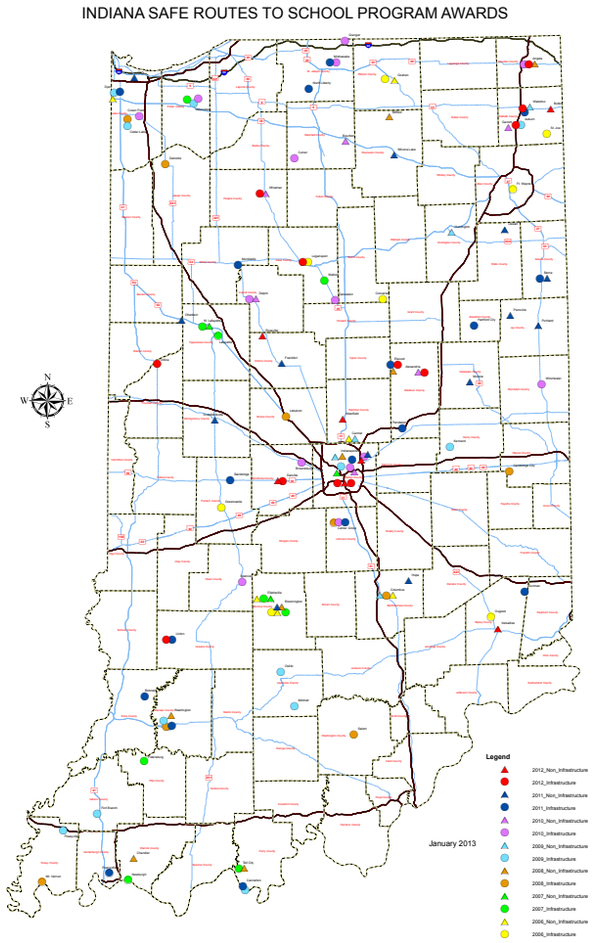
Emerging Trends for SRTS

There are a number of emerging trends in the SRTS movement in Indiana and across the United States that should be recognized. These trends are a result of lessons learned and changing attitudes as the program has matured.

Equity

The funding SRTS applicants have received is well distributed throughout Indiana. Certainly smaller rural and suburban communities have benefitted from the SRTS funding in Indiana. It appears that schools in more dense, urban areas outside of Marion County have not been funded as often based upon the funding distribution pattern illustrated in the following map.





The locations of funded projects point to another trend when compared with those school corporations exhibiting health disparities in Indiana. A school corporation is seen by public health professionals as demonstrating low socioeconomic status (a major contributor to health disparity) when over 50% of the students are eligible to receive free or reduced lunch subsidies from the federal government. Nearly 27% (27 out of 101) of the school corporations that meet this measurement of poverty have at least one SRTS project within their boundary. Typically, those areas demonstrating low socioeconomic status in Indiana are also those that have the greatest need for increased opportunities for physical activity for children (Levine, 2011)[1]. There are large geographic areas in west-central Indiana, southeast Indiana, and north-central Indiana with school districts exhibiting poverty that have not had an SRTS project funded in their districts. This could be due to a variety of reasons: lack of knowledge about the program, perceived lack of support or capacity, lack of having a health equity lens, etc. Regardless of the reason, Indiana could do a better job of reaching out to those areas with lower-income populations.

Complete Streets

Over the past century, many of our states, counties, cities, and towns have built many miles of streets and roads that are safe and comfortable only for travel in one way, by motor vehicle. These roadways often lack sidewalks; have lanes too narrow to share safely with bicyclists; and feature few, poorly marked, or dangerous pedestrian crossings. More than 5,000 pedestrians and bicyclists die each year on U.S. roads.

Each year, local jurisdictions throughout the United States spend a combined total of hundreds of billions of dollars to build new roads and highways and to reconstruct and resurface existing facilities. This investment provides an opportunity to design and implement Complete Streets, which serve the needs of all transportation users including pedestrians, bicyclists, people with disabilities, transit riders, and automobile users. A seamless network of Complete Streets including on-street walking and bicycling facilities, trails, and transit should connect schools, homes, shopping, employment centers, recreation areas, and other destinations.

In Indiana, local jurisdictions have begun to adopt Complete Streets policies which require that the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of roadway and transit facilities to accommodate people of all ages and abilities. As of April 2019, 27 cities, towns, and Metropolitan Planning Organizations have adopted Complete Streets policies. As such, this is an important strategy for Safe Routes to School, as children are among our most vulnerable roadway users. Safe Routes to School planning efforts should include goals and objectives to implement Complete Streets concepts in order to create safer roadways for children to walk and bicycle to school.

[1] Levine, J.A. (2011). Poverty and obesity in the U.S. *Diabetes, 60*(11), 2667-2668.

Shared Use Agreements

School facilities, especially those that are centered in the community, can be an excellent resource for recreation and physical activity where there is limited availability, or where private options are too expensive.

Schools can offer a variety of safe and clean facilities, including running tracks, pools, gymnasiums, fitness rooms, and playgrounds. However, districts often close their properties to the public after school hours due to concerns around liability, security, maintenance, and other costs.

A Shared Use Agreement (SUA) can be a formal or an informal agreement between separate government entities, often a school district, a parks department, and/or a city or county, setting forth the terms and conditions for the shared use of public property. School districts can minimize their risk for sharing their facilities if they maintain their property, carry insurance, and require community groups to have insurance and enter into formal SUAs. In 2013, the Indiana General Assembly passed a bill that limits the liability for schools that open up their grounds before or after school hours.

Schools may also choose to simply keep their facilities open for community use outside of school hours. An agreement is not necessarily needed for this type of shared use; however, promotion that these facilities are available is often necessary. Opening school facilities can also be a great way for the school district to connect with families near their schools. SUAs allow school districts, local governments, and community-based organizations to overcome common concerns and share the costs and responsibilities of opening school property to the public after school hours.

Active Transportation Networks

Regardless of the size or setting of your community, increased public investment in active transportation is an essential ingredient in creating an economically healthy, vibrant 21st-century community. The same is true of mass transit. In urban areas that have bus and/or rail service available, it provides the infrastructure for a well-connected community that supports getting around without having to get in a car. Using mass transit, walking and bicycling all help the environment and save money for residents as well as minimize transportation costs for schools.

Imagine a system of trails, quiet neighborhood streets, bikeways and side paths that connect your home with your work, school, shopping, entertainment, and other destinations. You could enjoy the freedom of safely, and conveniently, getting where you need to go without being forced to drive a car. Think about the long-term benefits of this active lifestyle for our children.

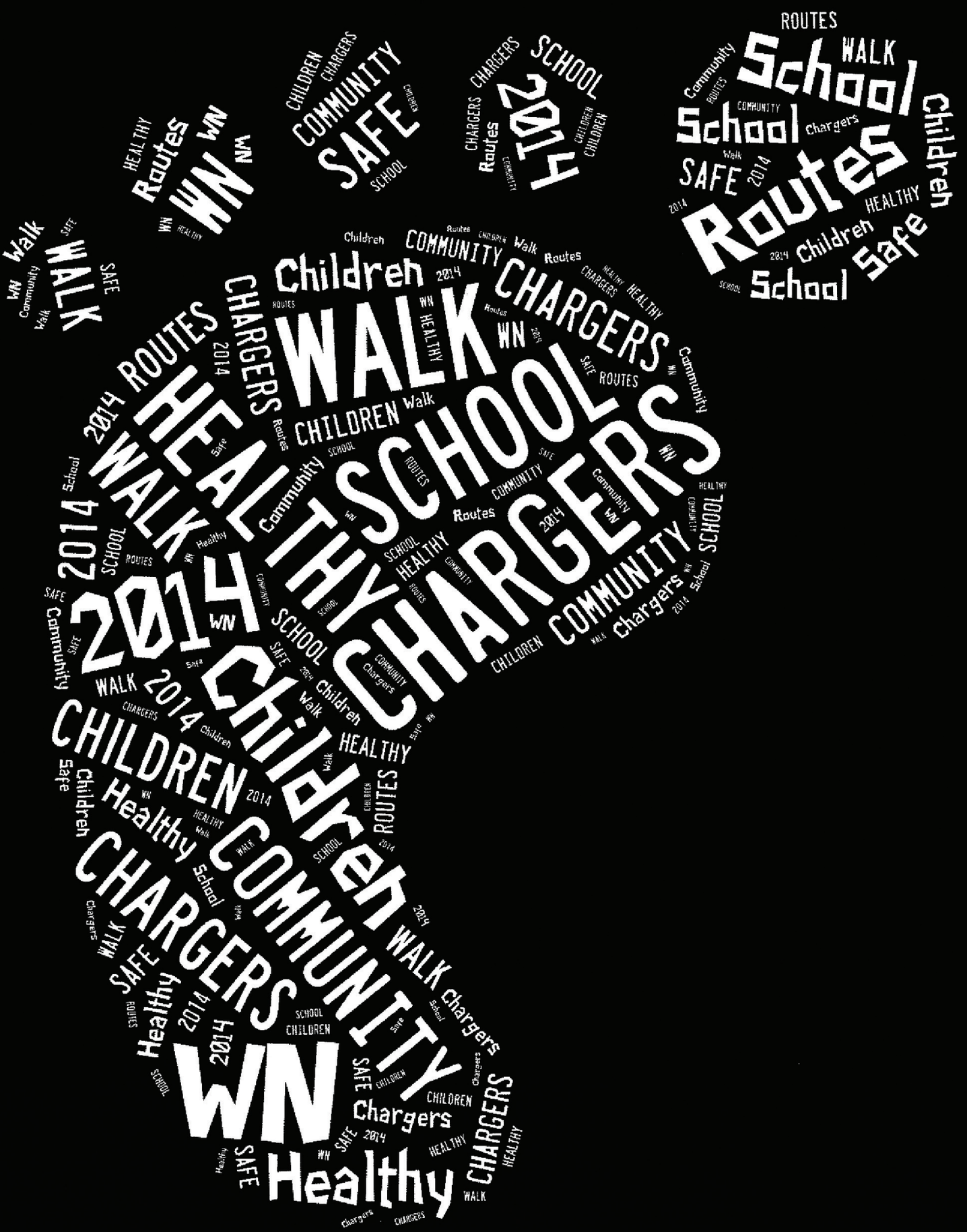


Photo created by Zachary Becker, a West Noble High School Junior, to raise awareness of National Walk to School Day

Did you know?

If the number of kids who walk and bike to school was restored to 1969 levels, our nation would cut 3.2 billion vehicle miles, 1.5 million tons of CO_2, and 89,000 tons of other pollutants annually. This is the equivalent of keeping more than 250,000 cars off the road for a year .[2]

---Margo Pedroso, 2008, Safe Routes to School National Partnership

[2]Pedroso, M. (2008). Safe routes to school: Steps to a greener future. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.* Data retrieved from Davis, T., & Hale, M. (2007). Public transportation's contribution to greenhouse gas reduction. *American Public Transit Association.*

The Benefits of a Safe Routes to School Program

Chances are the main reason you're reading this is because you want to make it safer and easier for children to walk and bike to school and to decrease the traffic on their way to school. You have good reason to be engaged: [In the year 2017 alone, more than 411 non-motorists (pedestrians and bicyclists) younger than age 15 were struck by motor vehicles in Indiana[3].] This accounts for 15.5% of all non-motorists involved in crashes with automobiles. These statistics can also be helpful as you talk to other people about why a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is needed in your community.

[3]Indiana Criminal Justice Institute. (2011). Indiana crash facts [Data report]. Retrieved from http://www.in.gov/cji/files/T_Fact_Book_2011.pdf

BICYCLE COLLISIONS BY AGE

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that the average age of bicyclists killed in U.S. traffic collisions in 2014 was 45. Bicyclists ages 14 and younger represent 5.3% of all bicyclists killed in 2015 collisions nationally. In Indiana the under-15 age group represented the largest number of bicyclists (173) involved in 2017 collisions.

The increasing number of parents/guardians driving or sending students on buses has had unintended consequences. These include increased congestion and pollution near schools, children who are less physically active, and schools that are less connected with the surrounding community. Starting a Safe Routes to School Program is a great way to help address many of these problems. Depending on the unique needs and goals of your school, your SRTS Program may strive to:

- **Improve traffic safety by:**
  - *Teaching children pedestrian and bicycle safety skills*
  - *Improving awareness of traffic conditions*
  - *Getting physical improvements (such as new sidewalks) that reduce pedestrian and bicycle crashes on the journey to and from school*
- **Improve safety and security for all children by working to reduce crime along school routes**
- **Increase child health and physical activity levels through increased walking and bicycling**
- **Contribute to a reduction in traffic congestion and improved air quality**
- **Develop a stronger relationship between children and their neighborhood community**
- **Teaching children to become more independent and self-reliant**
- **Enabling parents/guardians to become involved in making their communities safer**

What Does "Safe" Mean to Your Community?

There are different ways to define the word safe. In some communities it means keeping kids safe from being hit by a car on the way to school. In others it might mean keeping kids safe from crime such as drugs and violence. Or in many communities, it might mean both. By having a Safe Routes to School Program, you can determine what the most pressing safety problems are in your school and begin working as a community to address them.

BIG SUCCESS IN A SMALL TOWN

In 2016, the city of Rochester, Indiana, hosted an Active Living Workshop facilitated by Health by Design and the Indiana State Department of Health. The active living intervention selected as a goal from the workshop was Safe Routes to School. This intervention was identified and selected as a top priority by the attendees.

This Safe Routes to School intervention was implemented at Riddle Elementary School throughout the 2016-2017 school year. Walk to School Days happened each Tuesday during the fall and spring semesters. In the fall of 2016, Riddle Elementary School students who participated in walking days were given a Rochester Safe Routes to School t-shirt. Students who walked to Riddle Elementary School were given small incentives and educational items each week throughout the 2016-2017 school year.

To advocate and get individuals on board, the Safe Routes to School committee produced flyers, newspaper articles, Facebook posts, and school newsletters with information about Safe Routes to School, walking to school, and the walking school bus to inform students and parents to get on board and attend walking days. This information included education as to why students should walk to school, safety concerns, and logistical information about walking days.

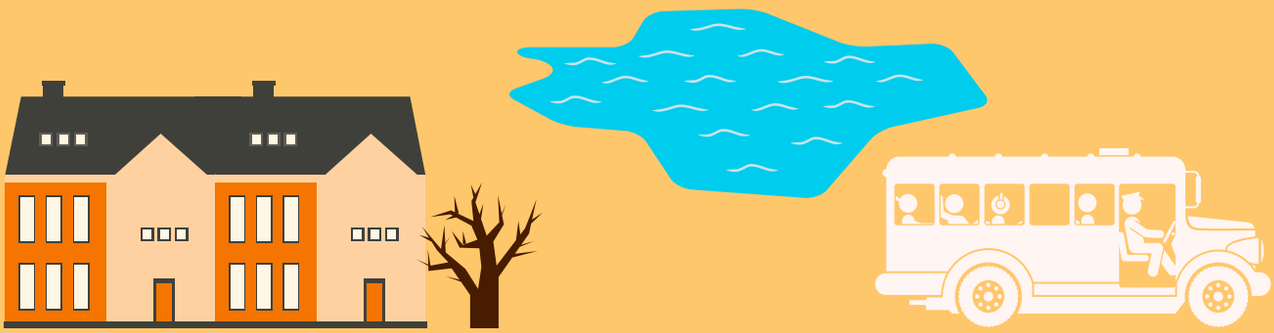
Safe Routes to School committee members tracked the number of students walking to school each week, and each student received a punch card that was punched each time he or she attended the walking days. Throughout the first year of Walk to School Days, the number of students walking/biking to school doubled.

You can learn more about Rochester's Safe Routes to School efforts by contacting the Fulton County Purdue Extension office or by checking out the Rochester Safe Routes to School Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/RochesterSafeRoutestoSchool/).

Preparing an SRTS Plan

A Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is usually a local school- and community-based initiative. This guidebook explains how to get your program underway and gives practical advice based on successful programs in Indiana and other parts of the U.S.

The SRTS Plan is usually developed by a mix of people from various groups working together as a committee, including parents/guardians, neighborhood organizations, the local Parent Teacher Association (PTA), a group of teachers, a community planner, the city engineer or road superintendent, health advocates, local police, transportation planners, and other interested businesses or organizations. There is no set formula. The key is to attract and retain dedicated, motivated individuals who will work together to improve the safety of the school journey.



The "E's" of Safe Routes to School[4,5]

EDUCATION activities teach students, parents/guardians, drivers near the school, and neighbors about traffic safety and create awareness of the benefits and goals of SRTS. Education is often linked to encouragement. For example, children may learn safety skills and then get the chance to join a mileage club that rewards them for walking or bicycling to school.

To craft education messages, first identify your goals and audiences. You might want to start with a survey of parents/guardians to see if there are informational barriers to overcome before more families choose to walk or bicycle. Do people need to know more about the benefits of walking or bicycling? Would maps of routes to the school help more people walk or bicycle? Would walking or bicycling safety information get kids and parents/guardians more excited about walking and bicycling?

Examples include:

- **SRTS maps with suggested routes to walk and bicycle to school that are near where students live**
- **School bicycle rodeo that teaches safe bicycling skills**
- **Curriculum focused on the benefits of walking and bicycling**
- **Seminars or events that educate parents/guardians about the benefits of walking and bicycling**
- **Traffic safety education**
- **Public education for safety improvements**

ENCOURAGEMENT strategies generate excitement and interest in walking and bicycling to school.

Encouragement is closely tied to education strategies, but is more focused on getting people to try walking and bicycling to school and celebrating and rewarding people for their efforts. Encouragement activities are more effective if the physical environment supports walking and bicycling to school.

Examples include:

- **Organizing events for "Walk to School Day" or "Bike to School Day" to encourage families to try walking and bicycling to school**
- **Creating walking school buses and bike trains that allow kids to walk and bicycle together along with adult volunteers**
- **Utilizing contests, mileage clubs, or other incentives to encourage walking and bicycling to school**

[4] Safe Routes to School National Partnership. (2016). *The "Six E's" of safe routes to school.* Retrieved from https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/safe-routes-school/101/6-Es

[5] Minnesota Department of Health, Physical Activity and Nutrition Unit. (2016). *Safe routes to school handbook.* Retrieved from http://www.dot.state.mn.us/mnsaferoutes/assets/downloads/srts_handbook_1-2017.pdf

ENGINEERING is a broad term that describes physical changes to the walking and bicycling environment. Engineering strategies include planning and implementing physical improvements that make it safer and more attractive to walk and bicycle to school. Assessments, such as a walk audit, will help identify physical barriers and opportunities for improvements to sidewalks and road crossings. Engaging planners and engineers are crucial to the successful implemention of safety improvements. It's also important to reach out to the community to educate neighbors about the benefits and importance of any proposed improvements.

ENFORCEMENT strategies act to deter unsafe behaviors of motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists and encourage all road users to obey traffic laws and share the road safely. It is a complementary strategy which includes students, parents/guardians, adult school crossing guards, school personnel, and neighborhoods all working together in conjunction with law enforcement. Ticketing for dangerous behaviors is only a small part of the overall strategy to enable more children to walk and bicycle to school safely. While it is typically difficult to get additional crossing guards for school zones, it is not impossible. The first step is to contact your school district's transportation department.

Examples include:

- **A school walking and bicycling audit and a school travel plan that includes specific goals**
- **Bicycle and pedestrian counts that show bicycling and walking rates over time**
- **Surveys on perceptions and attitudes from parents/guardians**
- **Data about vehicle crashes near the school, traffic speeds or traffic volumes**

EVALUATION will help you measure the impact of your efforts. Evaluation will also help inform needed changes or updates to your plan. Evaluation is very important to a successful SRTS initiative and should be considered from the onset of planning. Ask yourself, "How do we define success for our efforts and how can we measure or document our progress?" Evaluation will likely include a combination of quantitative information, such as counts of how many children are walking and bicycling and decreased crashes, and qualitative information, such as success stories from families who have chosen to walk and bicycle more, or improved safety behaviors and knowledge.

Examples include:

- **A school walking and bicycling audit and a school travel plan that includes specific goals**
- **Bicycle and pedestrian counts that show bicycling and walking rates over time**
- **Surveys on perceptions and attitudes from parents/guardians**
- **Data about vehicle crashes near the school, traffic speeds or traffic volumes**

EQUITY will ensure that Safe Routes to School initiatives are benefiting all demographic groups, with particular attention to ensuring safe, healthy, and fair outcomes for low-income students, students of color, students of all genders, students with disabilities, and others.

Not everyone has access to environments that support good health. A national study of 20,000 young people in the United States found that resources for physical activity—including parks as well as public and private recreation facilities—were distributed inequitably, with non-white and lower-income neighborhoods much more likely than higher-income white neighborhoods to have few or no such facilities[6]. At the same time, the streets in lower-income communities are more dangerous for people who walk or ride bicycles due to an absence of protective infrastructure and street design. Safe Routes to School can be a powerful tool in helping to increase physical activity for children while ensuring that all children are able to walk and bicycle safely.

Examples include:

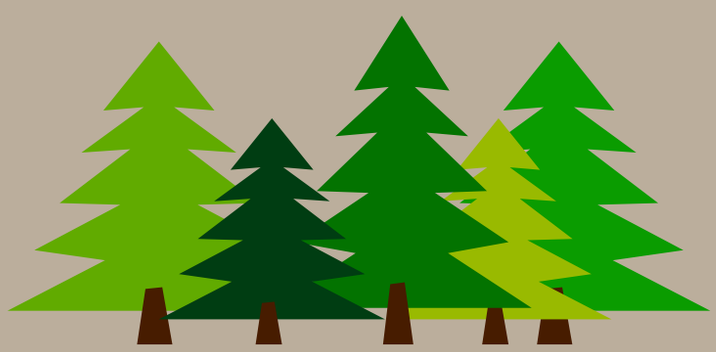
- **Prioritizing projects and programs in schools and communities with the highest need for safe walking and biking conditions**
- **Providing grant writing assistance to high-need schools for projects and programs**
- **Creating better access and communication between high-need schools and local and regional officials responsible for funding**

Being involved with SRTS can be fun and exciting as people work to change behaviors and improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities. However, at the end of the day, everyone wants to know if the programs and activities undertaken were successful. Decision-makers, funders, grant administrators, and local advocates need evidence that the program is a success. For those reasons, evaluation activities are an important component of a Safe Routes to School Program and should be planned for from the beginning.

Consider publicizing your findings from surveys or interviews. Low rates of walking and bicycling can actually show need for more SRTS activities. After your program has shown increases in walking and bicycling, it may be beneficial to work with local news agencies that can report on your program to help secure ongoing support in your community.

ENJOYMENT is yet another "E" that is mentioned for SRTS. It is important to keep in mind that a SRTS Program will be more successful if children, parents, school staff and the community are all having fun. Walking and bicycling to school can foster lifelong participation in physical activity and create positive attitudes and enjoyment among the children and staff.

Your Safe Routes to School Plan: Steps for Success



Phase 1 - GETTING STARTED

This section describes the process of starting a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program, providing examples along the way. Keep in mind that there is no single "right way" to develop a SRTS Program. Most likely, your particular program will develop in a way that makes it unique among all others. Every community will have different assets, needs, and goals.

The success of SRTS depends on the commitment and dedication of a few people who act as champions of the project, with a wider group of people who provide support. From the start, there should be someone willing to make arrangements and coordinate the project. It will be this person's job to get others involved and find ways to delegate tasks. To do this, it is essential that you establish a SRTS committee that is able to involve (or at least keep informed) a broad range of community members and interested parties.

STEP 1: FORM A SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The first step is to prepare a list of potential team members. There are a variety of potential partners for a SRTS Committee, including individuals who might not be directly involved with the school but may be interested in helping (such as nearby business owners). Potential candidates for this list include:

- Principal or assistant principal of the school
- 3-4 Parents/Guardians
- 1-2 Teachers (teachers or staff who have outside duty before or after school and physical education teachers are good candidates)
- A PTA representative
- School nurse or other health representative
- Representative from the school's Safety Committee or School Improvement Team
- The school corporation transportation director or a representative from the director's office
- Neighborhood and/or community association members
- A local transportation/traffic engineer (some ideas may require technical skills, and a traffic engineer would be invaluable)
- A representative from the local police or sheriff's office
- A school crossing guard (if applicable)

- Representatives from the regional and/or local roadway departments, for example:
    - — Local or State bicycle and/or pedestrian coordinator
    - — County or city transportation department staff, or
    - — Public works department representative
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee representatives
- Local walking or bike club representatives
- A representative from your local planning department or Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Children from your school—children who are already walking to school often have very good reasons for taking a particular route to school; by listening carefully to their ideas and opinions, the SRTS team can gain valuable insights.

This is just a sample list. There may be other individuals or organizations you'd like to invite to serve on your SRTS team. Chances are, you've already been in contact with one or more people about this idea, and they should be the first people on your list. Once you've put the list together (names and contact information), organize a kick-off meeting. A letter should be sent to each person inviting him or her to attend the meeting (see the example in the appendix). The letter should give a brief explanation of the purpose of the SRTS team and what you hope to accomplish, and it should request a RSVP. Remember that if you plan to meet at the school (a good idea), you need to obtain permission from the principal or assistant principal (who will hopefully already be on board and involved). It's a good idea to provide childcare at the meetings and note the availability of childcare in the invitation. If possible, send the invitations on school letterhead.

Allow three to four weeks between the day you send invitations and the first (or kick-off) meeting. Schedules fill up fast; oftentimes, it is difficult to make plans on short notice. Another tip is to make the meeting date, time, and place as convenient as possible for everyone.

The easier you make it for invitees to attend, the greater your chances are of a good turnout. Make reminder calls a few days before the meeting. Also, if you are able, consider providing healthy refreshments at the meeting.

It is important to understand that, although not everyone will respond to your invitation, those who decline to be part of the team should not be removed from your mailing list. You may need assistance from some of these people in the future (such as local transportation officials and neighborhood organizations); therefore, it is important to keep them informed. You should strive to achieve broad-based community support for a walkable, bikeable school neighborhood.

Ideally, your team should include 8 to 12 people. You could have more, but larger groups are sometimes hard to manage. You can have a smaller group, but then the workload will increase as the team size diminishes.

How to Get Media Coverage for SRTS

To get the word out and build community support for SRTS within your school and community, you will need to communicate with your local media, including newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and prominent online news sites. Getting good press is not difficult if you take the time and have a plan.

TIPS:

- If you don't already know your local media, identify the key reporters in your area and contact them regarding SRTS. Look at your local newspaper and see who covers issues of health, school, or transportation. Most newspapers and television stations are looking for story ideas, and SRTS can offer a new angle. If you know of an avid bicyclist or walker who works at a local media outlet, seek his or her advice.
- Send a well-written press release to your local news outlets. Include who, what, when, where, and why so that it is easy for a reporter to cover SRTS. Appoint someone to be the primary contact person so that reporters know exactly who they can contact for questions or assistance.
- Consider writing a letter to the editor or op-ed piece for your local newspaper. This would be a good opportunity to involve a prominent member of your SRTS task force such as an elected official or a member of the medical community.
- Don't overlook smaller publications in your community such as neighborhood newsletters, weekly newspapers, or foreign language newspapers.
- Ask your local city council to issue a proclamation and/or resolution of support for Walk to School Day or other SRTS activities. Consider holding events in addition to Walk to School Day. These events could be related to the seasons or a particular day of the week such as Walking Wednesdays or coincide with holidays such as Martin Luther King Jr. Day or Veterans Day.
- Treat the media with respect. Don't just contact them when they have gotten something wrong, but thank them when they have done a good job. Write a letter to the editor in praise of the article. Make their job easy so they want to work with you again.

STEP 2: HOLD A KICK-OFF MEETING

The kick-off meeting is a very important event—it will set the tone, pace, and level of enthusiasm for the project. You will want to be well prepared for this meeting. At the meeting, you should:

- Set the scene. Talk about the school's traffic problems and the difficulties children face in making the school journey. Explain the purpose of this project.
- Mention national trends. Talk about the growth in traffic, the decline in walking and bicycling among youth and the increasing concern for children's health.
- Explain how the SRTS Program will work, and describe the likely benefits for children, parents/guardians, staff, and the community. You may want to share some items from this guidebook as handouts—or to provide entire copies of the guide. (Electronic copies can be found at www.dnpa.isdh.in.gov.)
- Give participants an opportunity to talk about their safety concerns. Keep a running list of problems and ideas for solutions.
- Summarize the discussion by making a list of the goals for the project. Goal statements can be simple and straightforward—for example, increase traffic safety for students walking to school; alter unsafe pedestrian behavior among students; educate parents/guardians who drop off kids; increase security near the school, etc.
- Develop a project timeline.
- Explain what the next steps will be, and create an action plan. See below for more detail.
- Ask for support and involvement from everyone, assign some responsibilities to be completed prior to the next meeting.
- Set the dates for future meetings. Budget about two hours for this first meeting, and make sure everyone signs the attendance list. Subsequent meetings should be shorter, but the kick-off meeting usually takes longer. Remember that meetings should be made enjoyable and easy to attend. Have childcare available and provide refreshments if possible. Keep the discussion lively.

Think about asking participants to sign up for various committees—a Mapping and Information Gathering Committee to look at routes, an Outreach Committee to gather additional input, an Education and Encouragement Activities Committee to work closely with the school administration to organize and solicit for prizes, an Enforcement and Engineering Committee to develop recommendations, and a Traffic Safety Committee to build an awareness campaign.

The League of American Bicyclists Safety Curricula – http://bikeleague.org/ridesmart

National Center for Safe Routes to School – www.saferoutesinfo.org

Use Students:

Students can be powerful spokespeople for safer routes to school. Have students document existing conditions using digital cameras or smart phones with GIS locations. This is becoming increasingly feasible with current technology.

Frankfort Community School Walking School Bus

Phase 2 - ANALYZE EXISTING CONDITIONS

The first task for the SRTS Committee will be to find out more about conditions on the streets and roadways near the school site. This section describes how to develop maps and evaluate student walking and bicycling route conditions. These maps can be simple, hand-drawn creations, or they can be more elaborate, computer-generated maps.

STEP 3: GATHER INFORMATION AND IDENTIFY ISSUES

Get Input from Parents/Guardians, Teachers, Administrators, and Students

The most effective Safe Routes to School Programs take full advantage of the firsthand experience of the students, parents/guardians, and teachers at the school. These are the people who witness safety problems on a daily basis, and their opinions are important. It is also essential that input be gathered from the broader neighborhood community. They will want a say in anything that happens in their neighborhood. A number of techniques are recommended to get input from these people. These tasks should be assigned to several people on your SRTS team or to an outreach subcommittee.

Find an appropriate time, such as a school staff meeting, to make a presentation to teachers and other staff about the project. Solicit their input about student attitudes, unsafe behaviors, and other concerns. Ask the teachers if they typically teach pedestrian and bicycle safety skills and to what extent these lessons are taught (i.e., how many hours in a typical year). This will be a good time to find out if they are interested in teaching more lessons on bicycle and pedestrian safety (see previous page for more information on safety curricula).

Conduct Student and Parent Surveys

There are two surveys in the appendix of this guide that can be used for your SRTS project—one is for students and the other is for parents/guardians. These can be "personalized" with the name of your school. These surveys are an important part of the SRTS process because the information gathered in these surveys will enable you to evaluate progress and the success of your program. They will also give your SRTS committee a better understanding of the current situation, so you can plan more effectively for future improvements and safety features. Getting in contact with parents/guardians and compiling student data can be tedious. However, by following the instructions in this guide, these surveys should be relatively easy to accomplish and should provide you with accurate information. It will more than likely be important to have this information for any potential grant applications.

The student tally will generate information on what types of transportation are used at the school—i.e., how many children walk, ride the bus, are driven by their parents/guardians, or use some other mode of transportation. This survey will complement the parent survey and provide travel behavior data for the entire school. It should be conducted at school under the supervision of homeroom teachers. The parent survey will collect vital information on parents'/guardians' perceptions and opinions of conditions near the school, as well as what types of improvements would be needed in order for them to feel comfortable about allowing their children to walk/bike to school. This survey is specifically targeted to families who live within a two-mile radius of the school. The survey can be sent home with the students or distributed electronically or by direct mail. Parents/Guardians should be given two weeks to return their completed surveys to the school. Some schools have found success in getting surveys returned by providing small incentives such as pencils or erasers to students when they bring in a completed survey.

The following topics are covered by the parent survey:

- **Gender, age and grade of their child (or children) who attends the school**
- **Distance between their residence and the school**
- **Opinions on walking and biking conditions**
- **Factors that influence the decision to walk or bike**

The results of these surveys can help determine goals and priorities. For example, you may find from the surveys that many parents/guardians would allow their children to walk to school if they walked with an adult. You would then be able to focus on programs like a walking school bus where parents/guardians and other adults accompany kids to school. An alternative finding may be that a large percentage of children already walk to school, but parents/guardians are worried about safety and lack of sidewalks. At such a school, the goal would be to improve safety. Sidewalks and other physical improvements would be a top priority. You will also be able to determine the most heavily traveled routes to get to school.

Ask the Community What They Think

Hopefully, you've been able to involve representatives from your local community group or neighborhood organization on your SRTS committee. If not, it will be particularly important that you get input from them during this phase of the project. They may already be working to address some of the problems you identify, and they'll definitely have opinions about what should happen on their neighborhood streets. There are many ways you can get input from the neighborhood. Some ideas include making a presentation at a local neighborhood association meeting, talking to local environmental groups, getting volunteers to knock on doors to get neighbors' input about the project, and/or inviting neighborhood residents to participate in a workshop about the SRTS Program.

Prepare the Base Maps

You'll want to obtain and/or prepare two maps for the Safe Routes to School team: a school neighborhood map and a school site map. Some members of the SRTS team will need to be responsible for obtaining the maps, gathering information about where kids live and what routes they take to school, and finding out more about the existing conditions of streets and roadways near the school. The mapping task will likely take a lot of work, so it should be assigned to several volunteers or one of the larger subcommittees. Consider involving the local planning department to assist you.

The school neighborhood map should include:

- **The location of the school**
- **The school district**
- **The surrounding road and path network (that is, the location and names of roads and side paths within a 1-to-2 mile radius of the school)**
- **The school's "walk-zone" or "non-transport" limits (areas near the school where busing is not provided). This information should be available from the school's transportation director.**
- **The location of students' residences (homes, apartments, subdivisions) and how many students are walking from those locations. This is very important because it will give the team a sense of where walking trips originate and what potential routes they take to school. You may be able to get information about students' residences from the school principal; however, sometimes this information is kept confidential.**

Quick solutions for developing base maps:

There are a number of ways these maps can be prepared, from low-tech to high-tech. A commercially available roadmap pinned to a board can serve as a base map, with the other information added via markers, highlighters, etc. Often, these maps are the most user-friendly because people are familiar with them. For some areas, however, these maps may not show enough detail, so you might need to look elsewhere for a map that will work for your purposes.

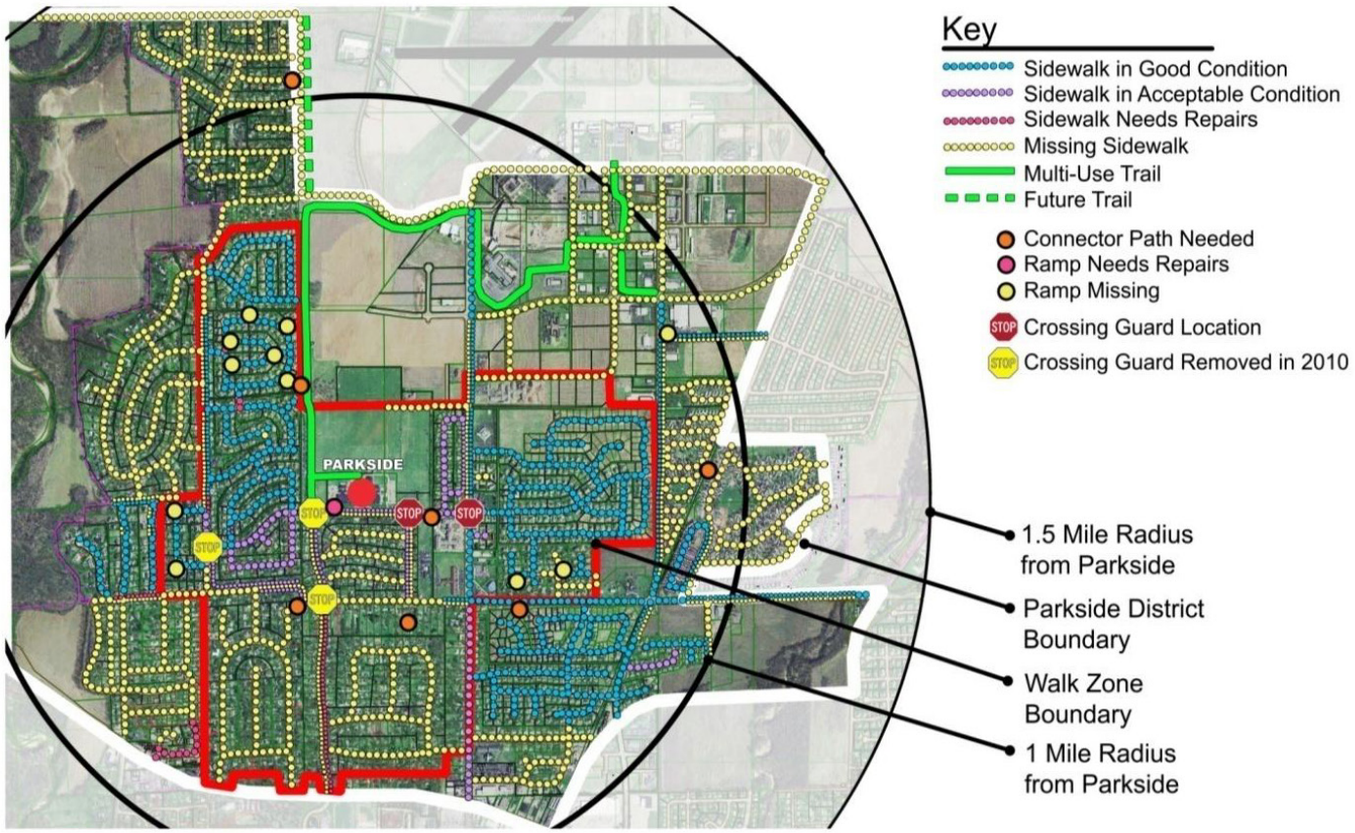
If you can enlist the help of the school board or local/regional government planning agency, you can gather the information and ask them to prepare a computerized map for you.

Be sure the map includes the entire area where students could walk or ride to school. School district maps might be available from:

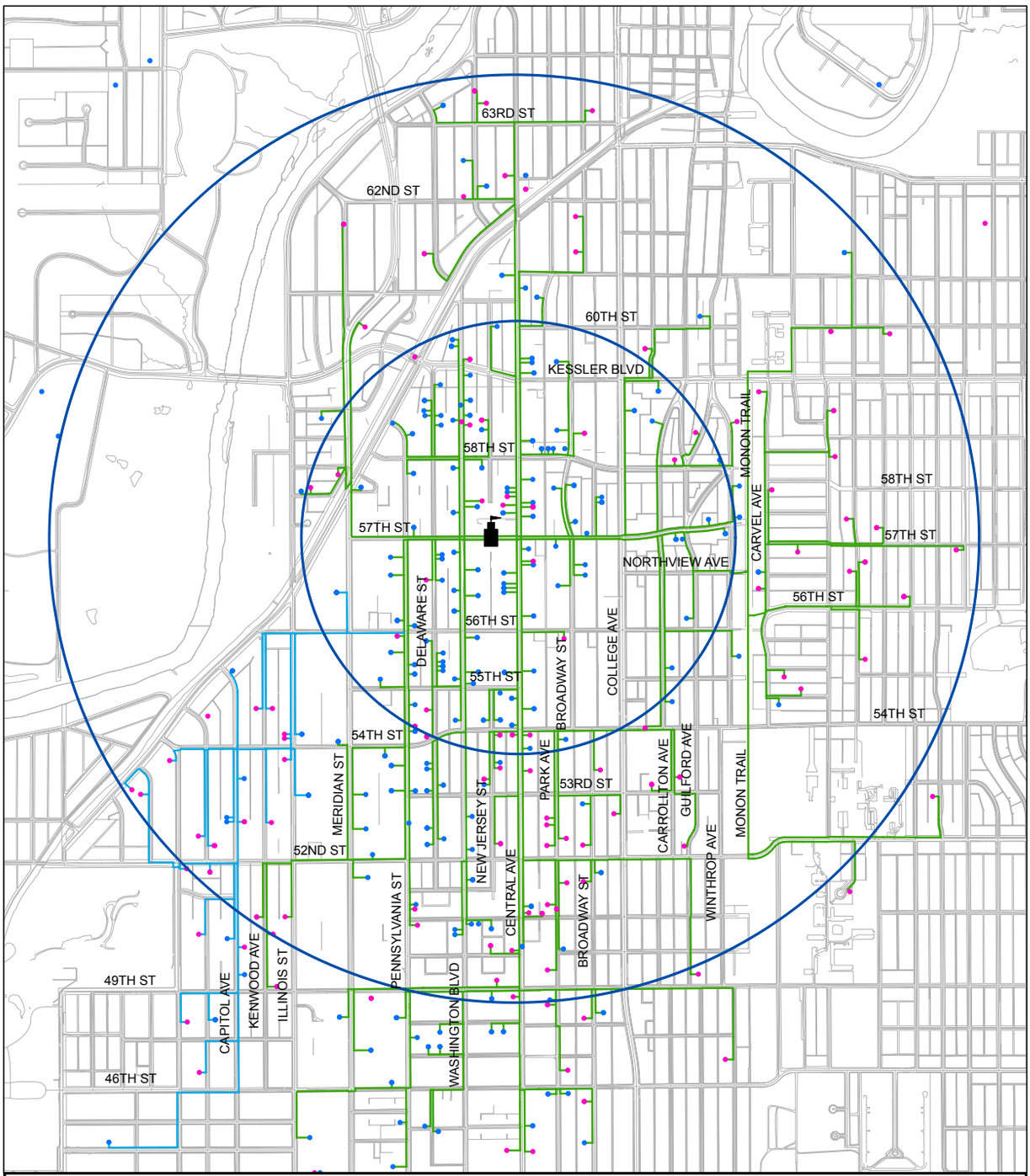
- **City planning department**
- **County planning department**
- **School master plan (a map which may have been created when the school was built)**

Note: In addition, good maps are available online at local, county and state websites (see the appendix for resources). If you don't have computer access or need help finding maps online, ask a librarian at your local library for help.

The School Neighborhood Map should cover 1-2 miles in every direction from the school or the entire school district. One way to figure distance is to measure a piece of string on your map scale, and use a pin to mark circular zones for a 2-mile distance, 1-mile distance and .5-mile distance, with the school being the center point. **Below are two examples, with different levels of detail.**



-Parkside Elementary, Columbus, IN



IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY AND CENTER FOR INQUIRY (IPS SCHOOL 84) SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN PREFERRED WALKING/BIKING ROUTES

smaller circle - 1/2 mile radius
larger circle - 1 mile radius

LEGEND

- **IHM Family**
- **CFI Family**

N

- **Preferred Walking/Biking Routes**
- **Preferred Walking/Biking Routes to be used if and only if sidewalk is installed along at least one side of 56th Street from Illinois Street to Washington Boulevard**

PB PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF

LSL Planning, Inc.
Community Planning Consultants

The school site map should be a large map of the school property (ask the school to provide a copy of their school site map, if available). This map should show:

- Parent and school bus drop-off and pick-up zones
- Sidewalks
- Immediately adjoining roads with their configurations (e.g., two-lane, four-lane with a median, etc.)
- Intersections with traffic signals
- Intersections with marked crosswalks
- Intersections staffed with crossing guards (if any)

STEP 4: IDENTIFY SOLUTIONS

Determine School Walking Routes Conditions

Now that you've created your base maps and determined if any roadway improvements are planned near your school, it's time to get out and take a look at existing conditions at your school and on the streets you identified earlier as routes that many students currently walk or live along. The main goal of this exercise is to list specific locations on the school site and the surrounding streets that need improvements.

Take time to watch what happens at the school during the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up periods. It's very important to watch the traffic patterns and observe students' movements. Do this on several different days, and make sure you talk to parents/guardians, teachers (especially those with outside duty in the morning and afternoon), students, and crossing guards about the problems. Keep a list of the problems that people tell you about or that you observe. While you may already know the major "hot spots," such as intersections that are difficult to cross or streets that need sidewalks, during your "walk-through," you might notice areas where sidewalks are missing or are in poor repair, corners that are in need of curb ramps (wheelchair ramps), intersections that are too wide and dangerous, streets where traffic is going too fast, etc. These are the types of problems you need to note on your list.

At some schools, you may find you can get all the information about existing conditions you need from watching what happens and talking to people as described in the following section on outreach. At other schools, you might want to do a more detailed study. If so, there are two types of "site surveys" or "audits" provided in the appendix of this guide to assist you in evaluating conditions: the school site audit and the neighborhood site audit. Directions for using these audits are provided below.

How to Use the School Site Audit

The school site audit will help determine walking and bicycling conditions on or adjacent to school property. Looking closely at such things as the student drop-off, bus loading zones, sidewalks, crossing guard locations, signage, and adjacent intersections will help you discover potential areas for design improvements and increased safety.

Members of the SRTS team and the school principal should complete the audit during the prime school hours in order to see how the children get to and from school. It will be useful to have a map of the school grounds on hand for note-taking. If a map is unavailable, you can construct a map as you go. (See the appendix for a sample school site audit.)

How to Use the Neighborhood Site Audit

Similar to the school site audit, the neighborhood audit is designed to help you evaluate the walking and bicycling conditions by inventorying the neighborhood intersections, streets, and sidewalks used by the students. There are separate forms for evaluating intersections or mid-block crosswalks and roadway segments (see the appendix). You'll want to use your base maps and some of the information you've already collected, such as traffic counts and the general locations of where students live.

At the conclusion of the site audits, gather participants to summarize the findings and create a list of problems and improvements that are needed (see Phase 3: Pulling It All Together). If a local transportation planner hasn't been involved yet, this would be a good time to speak to one about the problems you have identified.

As you begin to identify where students live and the routes along which they walk or bike, you'll begin to learn a lot about where you'll want to prioritize improvements. In dense city neighborhoods, kids may come from pretty much every street around the school. However, in more suburban communities, there might be a major street that carries a lot of the student foot/bike traffic. You will find that there are several logical, "main routes" to school.

Some communities have designated these main routes as "Safe Routes" and focused improvement efforts along them. You may want to do this depending on what you find in your community. This might be particularly helpful in neighborhoods that deal with violence. In these neighborhoods, a designated route could be focused on to create a safer space for children using a walking school bus and for advocating for physical improvements to make it safer and more secure.

THINGS TO DO IF SPEEDING IS A PROBLEM:

• Talk to your neighbors and community leaders to see if they agree that speeding is a problem. If others support your concerns, you are more likely to be "heard" when you ask for help in solving the problem.

• Ask your local police department to monitor speeds in the area. In addition to ticketing speeders, many police departments own "speed display trailers" which indicate when motorists are speeding. Ask if the police can place the speed display trailer along the street(s) you have identified as having a speeding problem.

• Let people in your community know that speeding is not acceptable. Include messages in community and school newsletters and on signs throughout the neighborhood (in some cases, school and church signs have been used to display messages about speeding).

• Ask your county or city to redesign your street to slow motorists through construction of traffic calming devices. Motorists commonly speed on streets that are too straight and wide open. Traffic calming devices can slow the speeds of motorists on such streets through the construction of road treatments which include raised devices (such as speed bumps and raised crosswalks), roadway narrowing, curves in the roadway, or planting trees along the street.

Phase 3 - PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER: THE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN

Now that you've thoroughly evaluated site conditions and have asked parents/guardians, teachers, students, and the community for their input, it's time to pull it all together into a plan of action to make your school a safe, walkable and bikeable destination!

This section of the guide explains how to develop goals and actions for your Safe Routes to School Plan (SRTS) Plan and also provides some successful techniques other schools have used to promote safe walking routes.

STEP 5: MAKE A PLAN

Prepare a List of Projects

Working with your SRTS Committee, prepare a list of needed safety/education projects. To generate these lists, you will need to review the survey evaluation results as well as the maps that you have prepared. These will serve as the basis of your school's needs list.

There are generally two types of projects that you will recommend on your needs list: education/encouragement and enforcement programs. Those with a stake in a particular program you are recommending will review the education/encouragement and enforcement programs. Let's look at each of these types of recommendations.

Education/Encouragement Program Recommendations

A well-rounded Safe Routes to School Program involves multiple non-infrastructure activities. You should identify education and encouragement programs to raise awareness and encourage kids who want to walk or bike to school. This is a great time to get community members, health and safety professionals, and physical education or other teachers involved. A sampling of education and encouragement programs that could also be included in your SRTS Plan is outlined below. Additional resources can be found in the appendix.

The Walking School Bus or Bicycle Train is an adult supervised and led walk or bicycle ride from a neighborhood to/from school. It allows children to walk or bicycle in groups, which increases their visibility and safety. Led by an adult "driver," this is a safe and fun way for kids to get to school.
Practical tips on how to organize a *Walking School Bus or Bicycle Train* may be found at (http://apps.saferoutesinfo.org/training/walking_school_bus/).

Crossing Guard Programs enable older students to be directly involved in the safety of kids crossing the streets surrounding their schools.

School Safety Patrols provide an opportunity for students to participate in promoting traffic safety in the area around their school. Patrols are often sponsored by the American Automobile Association and undergo training from local police. More information on starting a School Safety Patrol can be found at https://schoolsafetypatrol.aaa.com/.

Indiana example:

West Lafayette received funds for non-infrastructure activities to develop a SRTS plan for the city. To develop the plan, representatives from various city departments and the school district worked together to identify the needs of the community and to design strategies for addressing those needs. The goal was to create a plan that uses a variety of activities to make walking and bicycling to school safer for children. Two such activities included providing pedestrian and bicycle safety education to students in the classroom and training crossing guards to enforce safety strategies.

Walk to School Day is typically held on a Wednesday in early October each year and is an excellent way to raise awareness of pedestrian conditions surrounding the school. Each year, more and more schools in Indiana participate in this event. The Indiana Department of Transportation and Indiana State Department of Health are both very supportive of this event. If you are interested in holding this event at your school, please go to http://www.walkbiketoschool.org for resources and to register your event. Prizes can be given for the longest distance walked, the most kids walking from one neighborhood, etc.

Similarly, ***Bike to School Day*** is held on the first Wednesday in May each year. It is an excellent event to raise awareness of bicycling as a mode of transportation. Check out the tips and register your event at http://www.walkbiketoschool.org. Prizes can be given for the longest distance biked, the most kids bicycling from one neighborhood, etc.

A monthly ***Walk to School Contest*** is another way of providing incentives to children to walk to school. Rewards in the form of extra credit, awards, etc., could be given out as part of this contest.

Walk or Bike Across America – Students in Marin County, California, keep track of the miles they spend walking and biking to school by calculating how far they live from school and multiplying that by the number of times they walk and bike. Each week at a designated time, the students add up the distance the whole class has traveled and plot it on a map. Then they "travel" to a destination chosen by the class within those miles. Students become aware that they can travel great distances on foot or bike. Each new destination can be researched by the class to find out more about other parts of the country. At the end of a designated time, the class that has traveled the farthest gets a special reward like a movie or extra recess. For more information, see http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/walk/teacherLessonPlan.pdf.

Classroom Activities are a great way to raise awareness, encourage kids to walk to school, and teach safe walking and bicycling behaviors. Bicycle Indiana has prepared a Bicycle Safety and Education program for use in local schools throughout Indiana (www.bicycleindiana.org). In addition, many organizations such as

AAA and local police and fire departments have curricula designed for use in elementary and middle school classrooms. In addition to safety lessons, classroom involvement can also include activities such as mapping routes to school as part of a geography lesson and writing letters to local transportation and elected officials about safety concerns in the school neighborhood.

Enforcement Recommendations

As you looked at existing conditions and gathered input from the school and local community, you may have found that you need increased law enforcement to reduce speeding, illegal turns, and increase patrols for crime control. Hopefully, you've kept your local police or sheriff's office involved, or at least informed, of your Safe Routes to School program.

Talk to them about the possibility of doing some "spot" enforcement or a "pedestrian sting" operation to help enforce some of the traffic laws that help protect pedestrians. Keeping in mind that the police too often have limited resources for enforcement, here are some additional ways to help improve adherence to traffic laws and reduce crime along the school route.

Find parents/guardians or other citizens who are willing to simply set up a chair on the corner of a school route. Their presence alone will increase the safety and security of children walking to school. This can be enhanced with a "uniform" that can be as simple as a pre-arranged high visibility shirt and hat color (like orange) or may involve pre-printed t-shirts with logos.

Police often spend time in their vehicles completing paperwork. Consider asking police to park in front of local schools to complete this paperwork. Even though they may not actively ticket, their presence often helps reduce speeding. Request that your school be one of these locations.

Speed Trailers – Many communities use speed trailers as an educational device that also helps slow speeds. Speed trailers can be parked near a school to show passing motorists their current speed in comparison to the posted speed limit. This encourages motorists to drive the speed limit; however, it usually only has a temporary effect. Ask your local police about locating a speed trailer near your school.

IN Traffic Laws: In Indiana, traffic laws require the driver of a vehicle to yield and let any pedestrian who is in the crosswalk pass. Ind. Code 9-21-8-36. Indiana's Official Drivers Manual also states that a motorist must "always yield the right-of-way to pedestrians."

Pedestrian Sting

In a "pedestrian sting" local law enforcement focuses on ticketing motorists who fail to follow laws that help protect pedestrians, such as stopping at stop signs, driving the speed limit and stopping or yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks. In Indiana, a motorist is required to yield to a pedestrian in the crosswalk if the pedestrian is in the same half of the road as the motorist or approaching so closely from the other half as to be in danger of being struck by the motorist. In addition, vehicles turning right or left must yield to pedestrians who are legally in the crosswalk.

Spot Enforcement – Occasional or "spot" enforcement can be helpful in reinforcing traffic safety laws and new rules such as a new drop-off pattern at a school. Talk to your local law enforcement about providing such enforcement on an occasional basis.

Set Priorities and Short- and Long-Term Goals

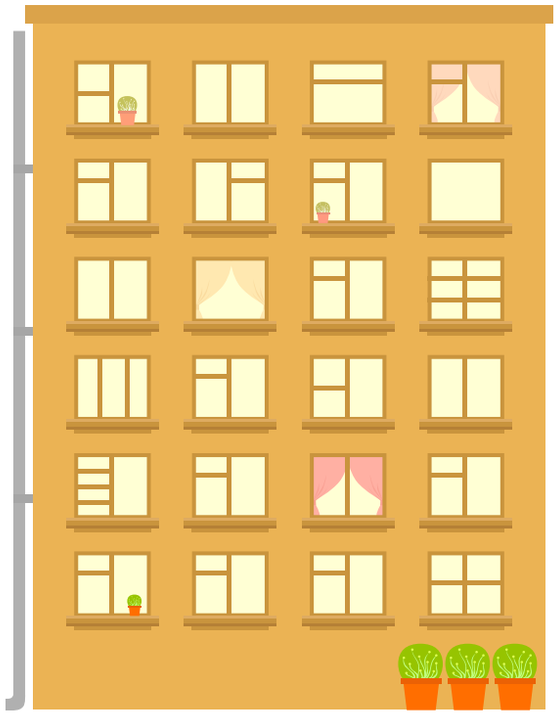
At this point in the process, there is likely to be some consensus on your committee about which projects are needed most. The next step is to prioritize which projects are needed the most and should be pursued first. Keep in mind that some projects will take longer to put in place than others. It is, therefore, important at this stage to set short-term and long-term goals. Your list of short-term goals is likely to include such things as increasing community awareness about the importance of walking and biking and getting some of the education, encouragement, and enforcement activities started.

There may also be opportunities to make "quick-fix" type improvements that are not as costly as major physical improvements but that would yield great benefit for a relatively low cost (examples: reducing pedestrian/vehicle conflicts at the school entrance by changing drop-off patterns, adding painted crosswalks and warning signs at midblock crossings, or minor traffic calming projects). These "quick-fix" opportunities should be given a high priority and placed on the list of short-term (or intermediate) goals because they will enable the community to see some immediate results and will help build support for larger, long-term projects.

The list of long-term goals is likely to include some high-priority physical improvements that will require time to gather political support and funding such as redesigning an intersection, constructing new sidewalks, or undertaking major neighborhood traffic calming projects. These projects will take longer to put in place because they usually have to wait in line behind other similar projects that communities have requested. Even though they belong on the list of long-term goals, it will be important to start building community support and seeking funding. For these larger projects, it may also be useful to contact your local council member or state legislator to make sure he or she is informed of the need and support for the project.

Quick Fixes

At Montebello Elementary School in Baltimore, Maryland, parents/guardians were dropping off kids directly in front of the school on a very busy street. This drop-off pattern created congestion and confusion and often resulted in children crossing in the middle of the block and darting between parked and moving cars. To solve this problem, the Safe Routes to School Team at the school worked with the school administrators, the City's Transportation Office, the Baltimore City Public Schools Transportation Department, and School Facilities Department to create a "quick fix" solution. A parking lot behind the school was striped to become a new drop-off area, signs indicating the change were installed around the school, the administration sent home flyers to inform parents/guardians, police helped with initial enforcement and directing traffic, and volunteers from the SRTS Team formed the Montebello Parents on Patrol to help guide parents/guardians to the new drop-off and assist the crossing guards in directing walking children to crosswalks and safe crossing points. The result: The change reduced traffic and congestion in front of the school and helped build enthusiasm among parents/guardians and administrators for the SRTS Program.



STEP 6: FUND THE PLAN

Approach Potential Partners

It's a good idea at this stage in the process to make some phone calls to those people who you've been keeping informed about the Safe Routes to School program, but may not have been actively involved. Now that you have a list of programs and improvements and short- and long-term goals, you'll want to make sure that everyone knows what they are.

Many of the educational and encouragement activities will require little or no funding but lots of volunteer time from parents/guardians, teachers, and community members. Talk to local businesses about the program and solicit their help in providing incentives such as small prizes, bumper stickers, or healthy snacks. Be sure to contact organizations such as bike shops, AAA, fire/police, and health departments. They often have incentives they can provide to you at little or no cost. As discussed previously, talk to local law enforcement about providing additional enforcement around the school if needed.

Additional Funding and Related Programs

Additional funding

Safe Routes to School

The Indiana Safe Routes to School Program through INDOT provides funding for infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects.

For information about the guidelines and funding cycles, contact:
Michael Cales
Local Programs Specialist
Indiana Department of Transportation
☎ 317-232-5021
Email: mcales@indot.in.gov

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The Transportation Alternatives Program funds projects that increase multimodal transportation alternatives that enhance communities and the environment. Federal funds administered through this program provide up to 80% of costs for a wide variety of projects including "provision of facilities for bicycles or pedestrians" and "provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists." Projects must meet federal and state requirements. Local governments with taxing authority, state agencies, and Indian tribes are eligible for funding. A project sponsor must pay for a project and then seek reimbursement for the project from the state. Federal funds will provide up to 80% of project costs, while the sponsor must provide at least the other 20%.

For more information, visit: www.in.gov/indot
or contact:
Michael Cales
Local Programs Specialist
Indiana Department of Transportation
☎ 317-232-5021
Email: mcales@indot.in.gov

Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program encourages transportation alternatives that improve air quality. It includes efforts to enhance public transit, bicycle/pedestrian facilities, ridesharing programs and facilities, and technologies that improve traffic flow and vehicle emissions. The funds are available only in certain areas.

For more information, visit: www.in.gov/indot
or contact:
Michael Cales
Local Programs Specialist
Indiana Department of Transportation
☎ 317-232-5021
Email: mcales@indot.in.gov

Recreational Trails Program

Funding for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is provided through federal gas excise taxes paid on fuel used by off-highway vehicles. Towns, villages, cities, counties, tribal governing bodies, school districts, state agencies, federal agencies, and incorporated organizations are eligible to receive reimbursement for development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. Eligible sponsors may be reimbursed for up to 50 percent of the total project costs.

For more information, contact:
Bob Bronson
Division of Outdoor Recreation
Department of Natural Resources
☎ 317-232-4075
Email: bbronson@dnr.in.gov

Bikes Belong

Bikes Belong accepts requests for funding of up to $10,000 for facility, capacity, and education projects.

For more information, visit:
http://peopleforbikes.org/our-work/community-grants/

Other Resources

Safe Kids Worldwide

Safe Kids Worldwide is a national nonprofit organization dedicated exclusively to the prevention of unintentional childhood injuries (motor vehicle crashes, fires, and other injuries), which is the number-one cause of death of children under the age of 14. Their aim is to stimulate changes in attitudes, behavior, and the environment. Since its inception in 1998, the organization has focused on developing injury prevention strategies—conducting public outreach and awareness campaigns, stimulating hands-on grassroots activity, and working to make injury prevention a public policy priority. Safe Kids Worldwide and program sponsor FedEx developed Walk This Way in 2000 to bring national and local attention to pedestrian safety issues. The Walk This Way program involves Walk to School Day events, data collection, school pedestrian safety committees, and community pedestrian safety task forces. Safe Kids Worldwide relies on the support of more than 300 grassroots coalitions in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to reach out to local communities.

For more information, visit:
http://www.safekids.org/

School Wellness Policy

With the passing of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, school districts participating in federally subsidized child nutrition programs (e.g., National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program, and After School Snack Program) were required to establish a local school wellness policy as of the beginning of the 2006–07 school year. Part of Indiana's School Wellness Policy requires schools to set goals for physical activity for their students. *Safe Routes to School Programs* will help meet these goals.

For more information, visit:
http://www.doe.in.gov/
or contact:
☎ 317-232-6610
Email: webmaster@doe.in.gov

Bicycle Indiana

Bicycle Indiana (previously Indiana Bicycle Coalition) is a statewide, nonprofit bicycle advocacy organization working to make Indiana a better place to bicycle. Bicycle Indiana is actively involved with SRTS Programs. Bicycle Indiana promotes safe bicycling (including a Traffic Skills 101 Seminar), educates roadway users on Indiana bicycling law, and advocates for the rights of all bicyclists in Indiana.

For more information, visit:
www.bicycleindiana.org.

Health by Design

Health by Design works at the intersection of the built environment and public health, collaborating across sectors and disciplines to ensure Indiana communities have neighborhoods, public spaces, and transportation infrastructure that promote active living for all. Staff and partners work to increase equitable, safe, accessible, convenient, and connected options for walking, biking, and public transit and encourage responsible land use. Health by Design provides guidance, resources, and technical support for Safe Routes to School initiatives.

For more information, visit:
www.healthbydesignonline.org
☎ 317-622-4820
Email: info@hbdin.org

Indiana Action for Healthy Kids

Action for Healthy Kids is the nation's leading non-profit and largest volunteer network fighting childhood obesity and undernourishment by partnering with schools to improve nutrition and physical activity to help our kids learn to eat right, be active every day, and be ready to learn. The Indiana Action for Healthy Kids Team continues to provide resources to Hoosier schools to create viable wellness initiatives in their schools, including access to annual grant opportunities for physical education and nutrition, breakfast and parent initiatives.

For more information, visit:
http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/
or contact:
Ashley Green
Midwestern Regional Manager
☎ 317-753-3292
Email: agreen@actionforhealthykids.org

Active Living by Design

Active Living by Design is a national program of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and was established to create and promote environments that make it safe and convenient for people to be more physically active. The goal of Active Living by Design is to encourage changes in design, transportation, and policies to cultivate and support active living, a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines.

For more information, visit:
https://healthyplacesbydesign.org/project/robert-wood-johnson-foundation-active-living-by-design/

Kid Power

Kid Power is a program that works to develop a wide range of upbeat, effective community violence prevention and self-esteem building services.

For more information, visit:
www.kidpower.org.

Active Schools

Active Schools provides individual champions with a clear roadmap to meet their goals in five key areas: physical education, physical activity during school, physical activity before and after school, family and community involvement, and staff involvement. After signing up at www.activeschoolsus.org/, school champions are guided through a simple, six-step process that helps them build a team; make a plan; and access free resources and tools, including in-person trainings, program materials and activation grants, and direct, personal assistance from certified professionals. Once they've achieved their goals in the five areas, schools will be publicly recognized and celebrated.

For more information, visit:
https://www.activeschoolsus.org/

Girls on the Run

Girls on the Run is a nonprofit prevention program that encourages preteen girls to develop self-respect and healthy lifestyles through running. Girls on the Run International (GOTRI) is the parent organization of more than 120 Girls on the Run councils across the United States and Canada. GOTRI establishes, trains, and supports a network of community-level councils with local volunteers. The volunteers serve as role models to the girls through coaching the 12-week, 24-lesson curricula. The curriculum is delivered through after-school programs, recreation centers, and other nonprofit settings.

For more information, visit:
www.girlsontherun.org.

STEP 7: ACT ON THE PLAN

Determine if Your Project Ideas Can Be Incorporated into the Adopted Transportation Plans of Your State, County or Local Jurisdiction

As described earlier, a variety of government agencies at the state, county, and local levels have jurisdiction over our streets and highways. During the early phases, you will have identified who owns and manages the roads near your school, as well as any improvements scheduled in the near future. As you begin the implementation process, you will want to return to those sources to request assistance in getting your projects built—either independently or in conjunction with other road improvement projects already planned.

The agencies may commit to doing some of these improvements in the near future; others will be longer term; and still others they will respond to as "infeasible" for various reasons.

A little creative thinking will be necessary here. Just because a particular roadway needs sidewalks (or a bike lane) and the roadway department doesn't plan on adding them or have the money to do so at your request, that does not mean you should give up on that particular project. There are other avenues open to you. For example, safety funds are available from a variety of government agencies, as are grants to address just these types of needs. Also, the local programs specialist at the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) will likely be able to further guide you toward available funding sources, as these often change. The school board also may have funds available. If these alternative funding sources are not sufficient to cover the anticipated costs for a particular project, they might be available for use as matching funds to the agency with jurisdiction over the roadway, thereby making the project possible.

Phase 4 – FOLLOWING UP ON THE PLAN

The key to successful implementation of your safe routes to school plan will be taking deliberate and strategic action steps along with conducting ongoing evaluation of your efforts. Tracking long-term goals and recording the results will enable you to understand the successes and challenges you have faced. The lessons learned from these ongoing efforts will help to maintain momentum and increase the effectiveness of the overall program.

Follow up on Long-Term Goals

For some of your long-term physical improvement goals, it will be important to maintain momentum, sometimes over a period of several years. The best way to do this is to work on building a broad base of community support (the more people who support the project, the more energy your project will have) and to focus on small successes along the way. Work closely with the neighborhood and community groups, and regularly follow up with the local engineers and planners involved in the physical improvement project.

Getting Community Buy-in for Sidewalks

If your SRTS Plan includes installing new sidewalks on residential streets, it will be important to build support among the affected landowners. This is sometimes difficult—for a variety of reasons, people may be opposed to a new sidewalk in their front yard. They might be ambivalent about the need for sidewalks. Residents sometimes resist installing sidewalks because they think it will change the rural appearance of their neighborhood. As the champion for your SRTS project, part of your job is to win over these people. If possible, meet with affected landowners face-to-face—especially those you think might be opposed to sidewalks. Clearly explain your purpose and bring along supporting evidence—photographs of children walking in the street, pictures of attractive sidewalks, child safety statistics, and information about likely sources of funding.

STEP 8: EVALUATE, MAKE IMPROVEMENTS, AND KEEP MOVING

Identifying Issues, Improving activities and Understanding Results

Evaluation is an important component of any SRTS Program. Evaluation is used to determine if the aims of the strategies are being met and to ensure that resources are directed toward efforts that show the greatest likelihood of success. Also, evaluation can identify needed adjustments to the program while it is under way. This information describes how to conduct an SRTS Program evaluation that is tailored to that program's objectives and strategies.

Benefits of Evaluation

Every SRTS Program, no matter the size, can benefit from evaluation. For local programs, evaluation allows for:

- Making sure that the underlying problem is identified so that proper strategies to address the problem are picked. Sometimes a SRTS Program begins without a good understanding of the underlying issues resulting in a less successful program.

- Setting reasonable expectations about what the program can do. By knowing the starting point, SRTS Programs can set specific and reasonable objectives.

- Identifying changes that will improve the program. Part of evaluation is monitoring what happens throughout the life of a project so that mid-course corrections can be made, if needed, to improve chances of success.

- Determining if the program is having the desired results. This is a primary purpose of any evaluation and can be used to inform funding sources, the media, and the public to help build support for SRTS.

There are benefits that extend beyond an individual program.

Data collected and shared by local programs can influence future funding at the local, state, and national level. Today's SRTS exists in part because of the evaluations of earlier programs. In the 1970s, Odense, Denmark, initiated SRTS efforts to combat the high rate of pedestrian and bicyclist injuries. Over a 20-year period, the number of injured school children in Odense decreased 30-40 percent. That success helped lead to the establishment of SRTS programs in the U.S.—first in the Bronx in New York City, then Congressionally-funded pilot programs in Arlington, MA, and Marin County, CA, and then state-level programs in Texas and California, as well as others. Evaluation of the success of those early programs in increasing walking and bicycling to school and reducing the numbers of parents/guardians driving their children to school, combined with strong demand, spurred Congress to establish the $612 million National Safe Routes to School Program in 2005. Findings from evaluations conducted by local programs will play a similarly important role when policymakers at the national, state, and local levels decide whether and how to continue SRTS Programs.

Your Call to Action

Safe Routes to School Programs are already under way in many Indiana schools and communities both large and small. Some schools are just starting by holding a Walk to School Day event, while others are already making infrastructure changes and holding events throughout the year. What these communities have in common is a desire to increase the safety of children walking and biking to school and to increase the number of children who are walking and biking.

Bicycling and walking are important elements in a complete community-wide transportation system. Constructing sidewalks, installing bicycle parking, and—**first and foremost**—teaching children to walk and bicycle safely all contribute to safety and mobility in your community.

Schools are in a unique and powerful position to create policies and an environment that can make walking and bicycling to school easy and fun for students. By establishing a Safe Routes to School Program, schools and communities can improve the physical activity of Indiana's children, help them learn lifelong healthy habits, improve community cohesion, and improve the learning environment.

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

Walk (and Bike) to School Day Tips and Ideas *(http://walkbiketoschool.org)*

Each October and May, millions of children, parents/guardians, teachers, and community leaders across the globe walk or bike to school to celebrate International Walk to School Day (October) or Bike to School Day (May). It is an energizing event, reminding parents/guardians and children alike of the simple joy of walking and biking to school. It also serves as an opportunity to focus on the importance of physical activity, safety, air quality, and a more walkable community. Once children and parents/guardians discover the joys of walking and biking through such events, they are more motivated to continue on their own. This is why Walk to School or Bike to School events can be a great way to jumpstart a Safe Routes to School Program in your community. Here's how:

Implementing a Walk/Bike to School Day

Getting Started

Find parents/guardians, teachers, local police, and other key community leaders and supporters who will help organize and promote the event. Potential partners include PTA/PTO members, physical education teachers, school nurses, public health department staff, or other community members with an interest in physical activity, safety, or pedestrian issues.

Planning

Working with your partners, decide what type of event fits your school and community. Then choose a focus for the walk or ride, such as promoting physical activity, pedestrian safety, or a cleaner environment, and determine whether the event will last one day or a week. Consider involving local businesses, as they may be able to sponsor the event and provide participants with incentives.

Registering

Register your event online. By registering, you make the event known to media, your community, and other participants. In addition, you demonstrate a commitment to changing transportation habits and provide an opportunity for data collection. You'll also get access to additional materials and information and the chance to win money for your event! Register at www.walkbiketoschool.org.

Promoting your event

Let students, parents/guardians, and others know about your event and how they can participate. Make announcements at school, publish school newsletter articles, and send flyers home. If possible, post signs along the route a few days ahead to let the community know about the event. Business sponsors may want to hang signs in their stores. Media coverage of the event brings visibility to the event's purpose and can help build support for any changes that need to be made to make it safer for kids to walk and bike to school. When media cover your event, they help spread the word of the great health, safety, environmental, and social benefits of more children walking to school every day. Colorful signs held by smiling, walking children and adults creates a perfect photo opportunity.

Safety First: Convincing the Parents/Guardians

Many parents/guardians are reluctant to allow their children to walk or bike to school on their own because of safety issues, and many parents/guardians do not have time to walk or bike with them. Below are activities that put walking and biking safety first.

Walking School Bus

Alleviate parents'/guardians' concerns for safety by organizing a walking school bus. By inviting adults to walk along with a group of children, parents/guardians will feel less concerned about their children walking to school. (For more information on how to start a walking school bus, visit *www.walkingschoolbus.org.)*

Bike Trains

A bike train is like a walking school bus except students ride their bikes to school. Bike trains; however, require students to learn and know bike safety rules and wear a helmet. Hold a workshop on bike safety before the event to teach bike safety rules. Also, there must be a smaller parent to student ratio for a bike train, because more attention is needed to ensure student safety.

Alternative Drop-offs

For students that live too far away to walk or bike to school, an alternative drop-off location can be designated so that these children still have the opportunity for walking and biking to school. A good drop-off location must be big enough to allow safe drop-offs, be near to the school and have safe sidewalks connecting to the school. From the alternative drop-off location, parent volunteers walk or bike with the children to school.

Events and Contests: Convincing the Children

Convincing children to walk and bike to school on Walk to School Day or Bike to School Day can be easily achieved if you are creative. Below is a list of events and contests that create enthusiasm for Walk to School Day, Bike to School Day, or any day.

Class Competition

Classes can compete against each other based on walking- and biking-related activities. For example, schools can reward the class that has the highest percentage of students walking and biking to school, the most miles walked or biked to school, etc.

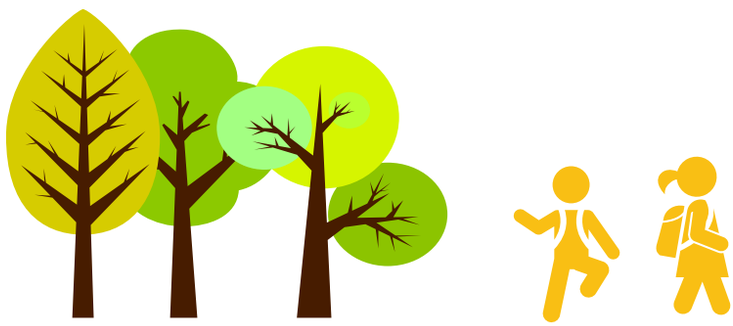
Frequent Rider Miles

This contest rewards students for personal transportation choice. A student receives a tally card to mark his or her points. Students earn two points every time they walk or bike to school and one point every time they carpool or take the bus. When they earn 20 points, students turn in their card for a small prize and get another card. At the end of the contest, hold a raffle drawing of all the completed tally cards for prizes. Contact local businesses and ask them to donate prizes.

Poster Contest

Poster contests let children to be creative and have fun while learning about better walking and biking safety practices. Use themes such as pedestrian safety or best biking practices, and allow for students to complement their artwork with creative slogans. Display copies of the winning poster around the community to advertise Walk to School Day or Safe Routes to School.

Harrison Parkway Elementary, Fishers, Indiana



Walk and Bike Across America

This contest allows students to get a broader perspective on the freedom provided by walking and biking. Students keep track of the distance that they walk and bike to school by calculating how far they live from school and multiplying that by the number of one-way biking and walking trips. If children are dropped off at alternative drop-off points near the school, they calculate the distance they travel from there. Similar counts are made from home to the bus stop. Children could also be given pedometers for this project. Each week at a designated time, the students add up the distance that the whole class traveled during that week and plot it on a map. Then they "travel" to a destination chosen by the class within those miles. Students become aware that they can travel great distances on foot or by bike. As the class continues to accumulate miles, the students can research new destinations around the country. At the end of a designated time, the class that has traveled the farthest gets a special reward, such as a movie or class party.

Hold an Assembly

Hold an assembly with speakers on safe walking and biking. Have local celebrities attend to emphasize the importance of physical activity. Invite parents/guardians to attend so they receive the message as well. You could also invite local bike clubs or teams to come speak about biking. Have them bring inexpensive, lightweight bikes to show the kids, and have them wear their local club or team jersey. Racers can talk about what it takes to compete in bike racing and train over long distances and answer questions about how it works. If your local area has long-distance cyclists, invite them to show the children how they hauled their clothes, tent, and other belongings by bike. No matter what, have them stress the importance of always wearing a helmet. They may even have a cracked helmet to show the children.

Going Beyond a Day

Safe Routes to School

Increasing physical activity among children, teaching safe walking and biking skills, reducing traffic, and improving the environment around schools cannot be achieved in one day. Addressing all these problems takes time. Walk to School Day is only the beginning, yet it is a great way to start a long-term program.

A Walk to School Day event can bring attention to existing obstacles for biking and walking as well as build community enthusiasm to make changes. Turn Walk to School Day into "Walking Wednesdays." Use the momentum from the Walk to School Day to continue building a Safe Routes to School Program.

Indiana example:

To show Tell City residents what they can expect from the new sidewalks, William Tell students participate in International Walk to School Day with the help of local law enforcement and have done so since 2006. In October, hundreds of students and multiple parents/guardians meet at the public library in preparation to walk to the elementary school. School officials and parents/guardians allow the students who ride the bus to school to be dropped off at the meeting point. The law enforcement officers block off the street, and the police lead the students to school along the roads that would eventually be retrofitted with the new sidewalk system.

Appendix

See below on how to promote your Walk to School or Bike to School Day efforts.

Appendix: Example Documents

Walk to School Day Materials

- **Invitation**
- **News Release**
- **Walking School Bus/Bike Train Information**

SRTS Plan Development Materials

- **Kick-off Meeting Letter**
- **Brief Instructions for Surveys**
- **SRTS Parent Survey**
- **SRTS Student Tally**
- **Walking and Bicycling Audit Materials**
    - **School Site Audit Form**
    - **Neighborhood Site Audit Form**

Walk to School Day Invitation

Dear Parents/Guardians, Children, and Community Members:

[Name of your school, city, county, or area participating in event] will be joining schools from around the world to celebrate **International Walk to School Day** on [date of event].

Not long ago, walking or biking to school was the norm. Over the last 30 years, the percentage of children biking and walking to school has declined from 50% or more to now closer to about 15%. Walk to School Day gives our children the opportunity to once again start their day with physical activity while taking part in a fun celebration of walking and biking.

You are invited to join with students, teachers, and other parents/guardians in Walk to School Day. [Include specific information on where and when your school's activities will take place.]

Thank you for your support. If you have any questions, please contact me, [Name] at [Contact Information].

Sincerely,
[Name]

Walk to School Day News Release

[Title]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: [Name and number]

[Name of your school, city, county or area participating in event] Participates in International Walk to School Day

[Your Town], Indiana—Walk to School Day at [Name of your school, city, county or area participating in event] takes place on [date of event] at [time]. [Name of school] joins schools around the world celebrating International Walk to School Day by bringing parents/guardians, children, and community members together to experience the fun of walking to school together.

Not long ago, walking or biking to school was the norm. Over the last 30 years, the percentage of children biking and walking to school has declined from 50% or more to now closer to about 15%. Today, parents/guardians drive as many as 50% of children traveling to school. School bus trips account for an increasing share of the rest. The purpose of Walk to School Day is to start to reverse these trends.

[INCLUDE A QUOTE FROM THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF WALK TO SCHOOL DAY TO THE SCHOOL.]

International Walk to School Day energizes parents/guardians and children, reminding them of the simple joy of walking and biking to school. It also serves as an opportunity to focus on the importance of physical activity, safety, air quality, and building bicycle and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods.

However, increasing physical activity among children, teaching safe walking and biking skills, easing traffic, and improving the environment around schools cannot be achieved in one day. Addressing all these problems takes time. Walk to School Day is just one part of a Safe Routes to School Program. Safe Routes to School is an international movement that promotes walking and biking to school to improve health, safety, and the environment.

Join us on [date of event] as we walk and bike to school to promote physical activity, safety and a clean environment. To learn more about [School Name]'s Walk to School Day, contact [Organizer's Name] at [Contact Information].

SRTS Kick-off meeting Letter

Example Safe Routes to School Task Force Invitation Letter
[Date]
Dear (Name),

You are invited to join [community or school name] in starting a Safe Routes to School Program. Safe Routes to School Programs across Indiana and the country have helped create safer walking and bicycling routes near schools, so parents/guardians feel comfortable allowing their children to walk and bicycle to school. This allows children to lead more active and healthier lifestyles. It also helps reduce traffic volume and congestion near schools.

Your assistance is needed to start a Safe Routes to School Program here. Join other interested school and community members for an informational meeting on [date] at [time]. The meeting will be held at [location]. For more information and to RSVP, please contact [name] at [phone number] or [email address]

Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,
[Name]
[Address]

Overview of the Parent Survey [7]

What does the parent survey do? The survey asks for information about what factors affect whether parents/guardians allow their children to walk or bike to school, the presence of key safety-related conditions along routes to school, and related background information. The survey results will help determine how to improve opportunities for children to walk or bike to school and measure parental attitude changes as local SRTS Programs occur.

How is the survey administered? Surveys can be administered as take-home surveys or distributed as part of parent-teacher conferences.

Who gets surveyed? Parents/Guardians of all K-8 graders at your school should be asked to complete the survey.

When should the surveys be administered? Surveys should be completed at the beginning of the school year and at the end of the school year. This survey is also offered in Spanish and as an online survey.

- **Baseline: 2nd, 3rd, or 4th week of school year**
- **Midyear (optional)**
- **End of year: last 3 weeks of school year**

[7]Safe Routes: National Center for Safe Routes to School. (2013). *Evaluation: Parent survey.* Retrieved from http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/evaluation/appendix_b_safe_routes_to_school_parent_survey.cfm

Overview of the Student Tally[8]

What does the tally form do? The form will help determine how students get to school and whether the Safe Routes to School Program affects trips to and from school.

Who administers the form? Teachers in each classroom

Who gets tallied? K-8 graders at your school

How many days are students tallied? The tallies should be conducted on a Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (or at least two of those days) during the same week in each classroom.

When should the tallies be taken? The tallies should be completed at the beginning of the school year and at the end of the school year. Midyear counts are optional but helpful.

- **Baseline: 2nd, 3rd, or 4th week of school year**
- **Midyear (optional)**
- **End of year: last 3 weeks of school year**

Where do I send completed forms? Teachers could give the forms to the local SRTS Program manager, who would enter the information from each classroom into an easy-to-use database or spreadsheet. That completed spreadsheet or database can be used by the local program for basic analysis, sent to the state SRTS Program for progress reporting, and/or submitted to the National SRTS Program Tracking Project.

[8]Safe Routes: National Center for Safe Routes to School. (2013). *Evaluation: Student in-class travel tally.* Retrieved from http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/evaluation/appendix_a_safe_routes_to_school_student_travel_tally.cfm

Safe Routes to School Students Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet

CAPITAL LETTERS ONLY – BLUE OR BLACK INK ONLY

School Name:

Teacher's First Name:

Teacher's Last Name:

Grade: (PK,K,1,2,3...) 0 2

Monday's Date (Week count was conducted) M M D D Y Y Y Y

Number of Students Enrolled in Class: 1 5

- Please conduct these counts **on two of the following three days Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. (Three days would provide better data if counted)**
- **Please do not conduct these counts on Mondays or Fridays.**
- Before asking your students to raise their hands, please read through all possible answer choices so they will know their choices. Each Student may only answer once.
- Ask your students as a group the question "**How did you arrive at school today?**"
- Then, reread each answer choice and record the number of students that raised their hands for each. **Place just one character or number in each box.**
- Follow the same procedure for the question **"How do you plan to leave for home after school?"**
- You can conduct the counts once per day but during the count please ask students both the school arrival and departure questions.
- Please conduct this count regardless of weather conditions (i.e., ask these questions on rainy days, too).

Step 1.
Fill in the weather conditions and number of students in each class

Step 2.
AM – "**How did you arrive at school today?**" Record the number of hands for each answer.
PM – "**How do you plan to leave for home after school?**" Record the number of hands for each answer.

Key	Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
	S= sunny R= rainy O=overcast SN=snow	Number in class when count made	-	-	-	Only with Children from your family	Riding with children from other families	City bus, subway, etc.	Skate-board, scooter, etc.
Sample AM	S N	2 0	2	3	8	3		3	1
Sample PM	R	1 9	3	3	8	1	2	2	
Tues. AM									
Tues. PM									
Wed. AM									
Wed. PM									
Thurs. AM									
Thurs. PM									

Please list any disruptions to these counts or any unusual travel conditions to/from the school on the days of the tally.

Parent Survey About Walking and Biking to School

Dear Parent or Caregiver,

Your child's school wants to learn your thoughts about children walking and biking to school. This survey will take about 5 - 10 minutes to complete. We ask that each family complete only one survey per school your children attend. If more than one child from a school brings a survey home, please fill out the survey for the child with the next birthday from today's date.

After you have completed this survey, send it back to the school with your child or give it to the teacher. Your responses will be kept confidential and neither your name nor your child's name will be associated with any results.

Thank you for participating in this survey!

+ CAPITAL LETTERS ONLY – BLUE OR BLACK INK ONLY +

School Name:

1. What is the grade of the child who brought home this survey? ☐☐ Grade (PK,K,1,2,3…)

2. Is the child who brought home this survey male or female? ☐ Male ☐ Female

3. How many children do you have in Kindergarten through 8th grade? ☐☐

4. What is the street intersection nearest your home? (Provide the names of two intersecting streets)

and

Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box.

5. How far does your child live from school?

☐ Less than ¼ mile ☐ ½ mile up to 1 mile ☐ More than 2 miles

☐ ¼ mile up to ½ mile ☐ 1 mile up to 2 miles ☐ Don't know

Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box. +

6. On most days, how does your child arrive and leave for school? (Select one choice per column, mark box with X)

Arrive at school	**Leave from school**
☐ Walk	☐ Walk
☐ Bike	☐ Bike
☐ School Bus	☐ School Bus
☐ Family vehicle (only children in your family)	☐ Family vehicle (only children in your family)
☐ Carpool (Children from other families)	☐ Carpool (Children from other families)
☐ Transit (city bus, subway, etc.)	☐ Transit (city bus, subway, etc.)
☐ Other (skateboard, scooter, inline skates, etc.)	☐ Other (skateboard, scooter, inline skates, etc.)

+ Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box +

7. How long does it normally take your child to get to/from school? (Select one choice per column, mark box with X)

Travel time to school	**Travel time from school**
☐ Less than 5 minutes	☐ Less than 5 minutes
☐ 5 – 10 minutes	☐ 5 – 10 minutes
☐ 11 – 20 minutes	☐ 11 – 20 minutes
☐ More than 20 minutes	☐ More than 20 minutes
☐ Don't know / Not sure	☐ Don't know / Not sure

+ +

8. Has your child asked you for permission to walk or bike to/from school in the last year? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. At what grade would you allow your child to walk or bike to/from school without an adult?

(Select a grade between PK,K,1,2,3…) ☐☐ grade **(or)** ☐ I would not feel comfortable at any grade

Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box

10. What of the following issues affected your decision to allow, or not allow, your child to walk or bike to/from school? (Select ALL that apply)

11. Would you probably let your child walk or bike to/from school if this problem were changed or improved? (Select one choice per line, mark box with X)

	My child already walks or bikes to/from school		
☐ Distance	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Convenience of driving	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Time	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Child's before or after-school activities	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Speed of traffic along route	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Amount of traffic along route	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Adults to walk or bike with	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Sidewalks or pathways	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Safety of intersections and crossings	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Crossing guards	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Violence or crime	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Weather or climate	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box

12. In your opinion, how much does your child's school encourage or discourage walking and biking to/from school?

☐ Strongly Encourages ☐ Encourages ☐ Neither ☐ Discourages ☐ Strongly Discourages

13. How much fun is walking or biking to/from school for your child?

☐ Very Fun ☐ Fun ☐ Neutral ☐ Boring ☐ Very Boring

14. How healthy is walking or biking to/from school for your child?

☐ Very Healthy ☐ Healthy ☐ Neutral ☐ Unhealthy ☐ Very Unhealthy

Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box

15. What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?

☐ Grades 1 through 8 (Elementary)
☐ Grades 9 through 11 (Some high school)
☐ Grade 12 or GED (High school graduate)
☐ College 1 to 3 years (Some college or technical school)
☐ College 4 years or more (College graduate)
☐ Prefer not to answer

16. Please provide any additional comments below.

Walking and Bicycling Audit Materials

Example School Site Audit Form

The following site audit should be conducted to help determine walking and bicycling conditions on/adjacent to school property. This audit will help the school to discover potential areas for design improvements and increased safety. Members of the School Traffic Safety Team and the Principal should complete the following audit during prime school hours in order to see how students get to and from school. Please take a map of the school grounds with you on the audit for orientation and note taking. If a map is unavailable, please construct one as you go to help you identify areas for improvements later on in the Safe Routes to School process.

Date: _____ Day: _____ Time: _____ Weather Conditions: _____

1. Student Drop-Off Areas	**YES**	**NO**	**NA**
a. Are they designed so that students exiting or entering cars are protected from other vehicles?			
b. Do they have a continuous raised curb separating vehicles from pedestrians?			
c. Are there accessible curb ramps for wheelchair access?			
d. Do the ramps have tactile warning strips or textured concrete?			
e. Are there posted vehicular signs?			
f. Are there posted pedestrian signs?			
g. Is the area lighted?			
h. Does traffic seem to move freely without congestion and backup?			
i. Please describe additional problems within the student drop-off area in the space provided below.			

2. Bus Loading Zones	**YES**	**NO**	**NA**
a. Are bus driveways physically separated from pedestrian and bicycling routes by raised curbs or bollards?			
b. Are bus driveways physically separated from parent pick-up/drop-off areas?			
c. If the buses are "double-stacked" for drop-off/loading areas, are measures taken for safety of students needing to cross in front or behind the bus?			
d. Is traffic in the bus loading zone one-way?			
e. Does the bus zone meet the minimum width of 24' for drop-off/pull-out lanes?			
f. Is there a continuous curb and sidewalk adjacent to the drop-off/loading area leading into the school site?			

g. Is the bus loading/unloading zone lighted?

h. Please describe additional problem areas regarding the bus loading zone in the space provided below.

3. Sidewalks and Bicycle Routes **YES NO NA**

a. Are current pedestrian and bicycle routes separated from motor vehicles by the use of sidewalks or separated pathways?

b. Are the bicycle routes designated by signage?

c. Are marked bicycle lanes present?

d. Are sidewalks and bicycle paths regularly maintained (free of debris, cracks and holes)?

e. Are there accessible ramps for wheelchair access?

f. Are the sidewalks continuous and without gaps?

g. Do the ramps have tactile warning strips or textured concrete?

h. Are the sidewalks lighted?

i. Are the sidewalks used regularly?

j. Please describe additional problem areas regarding the school's sidewalk system and existing bicycle routes in the space provided below.

4. Adjacent Intersections (intersections near school property) **YES NO NA**

a. Are there high volumes of automobile traffic?

b. Are there high volumes of pedestrian traffic?

c. Are there painted crosswalks for all crossing directions?

d. Are there curb ramps located at all adjacent intersections?

e. Is there appropriate vehicle signage?

f. Is there traffic control, such as a stoplight or stop signs?

g. Are there pedestrian walk signals?

h. Please describe additional problem areas regarding these intersections in the space provided below.

5. Sight Distance (clear views between motorists and pedestrians) **YES NO NA**

a. Are desirable sight distances (visibility is free of obstructions) provided at all intersections within the walking zone?

b. Do cars park or wait, blocking the vision of other motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians?

c. Have the placement of fences, walls, dumpsters and the location of parking areas for service vehicles been carefully considered in view of sight distance requirements on the school site?

d. Are there any barriers present that block the viewing of pedestrians and bicyclists (e.g., dumpsters, utility boxes, landscaping, parking areas, ground-mounted signage, building walls)?

e. Please describe additional problem areas that have sight distance obstructions in the space provided below.

6. Traffic Signs, Speed Control, Signals and Pavement Markings **YES NO NA**

a. Are there any School Advance signs, School Crossing signs, School Speed Limit signs, flashing beacons, and No Parking or No Standing signs?

b. Is there an effective school targeted program of traffic enforcement?

c. Is there a designated school zone?

d. Are there any school pavement markings located on roadways adjacent to or in the vicinity of the school grounds?

e. Are there currently traffic/speed control measures used, such as different pavement surfaces, non-white paint, speed bumps, and speed tables?

f. Please describe additional information regarding adjacent traffic signs, speed control, signals, and pavement markings in the space provided below.

Example Neighborhood Site Audit Form

The following neighborhood audit is designed to help you evaluate walking and bicycling conditions in your school's neighborhood by taking an inventory of intersections, streets, and sidewalks. There are separate forms for evaluating intersections and mid-block crosswalks versus roadway segments. Please use only one form for each intersection or roadway segment. Make additional copies of the audit sheets to evaluate all of the neighborhood streets. Some information will need to be collected beforehand, such as average daily traffic counts provided by the local municipality and a base map of neighborhood streets.

Instructions:

Step 1: Establish a boundary for assessment

On your base map, identify the school location and outline an area (or perimeter) from which children could walk or bicycle to school. A good rule of thumb is 1 mile in all directions from the school.

Step 2: Identify where students live

On your base map, identify where students live. This could be done by having students mark their home locations on a large map with push pins, by using a GIS database (if available), or by using best estimates of parents/guardians and school staff.

Step 3: Identify projected walkable routes to the school

Draw on the map and identify possible routes that children may follow to walk or ride their bikes to school. Try to identify a major route in each direction (north, south, east, west).

Step 4: Inventory of existing facilities

Locate and inventory all major features within the one-mile radius. Locate streets, intersections, sidewalks, problem areas, and other security and safety items. Identify all of these items on the map with either text or symbols.

Step 5: Fieldwork

Now that you have completed the base mapping and initial analysis, it is time to go in the field. Using your initial analysis, you can map an efficient course to evaluate all of the streets and major routes that you identified. Use the attached audit sheets to begin collecting information.

Step 6: Compile, prioritize and rank findings

When your fieldwork is complete, organize your audits by highlighting the most important aspects noted by the audit team. List and rank these potential improvements in order of importance, giving special consideration to safety issues and immediate need. Report the findings to the School Transportation Department.

Acknowledgments:

Maryland's Safe Routes to School Guidebook

Wisconsin's Safe Routes to School Toolkit

Minnesota Safe Routes to School Handbook

National Center for Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School National Partnership

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Change Lab Solutions

Health by Design

Indiana Department of Transportation

Bicycle Indiana

Websites/Resources:

National Center for Safe Routes to School – http://saferoutesinfo.org

Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day - http://walkbiketoschool.org

Safe Routes to School National Partnership – http://saferoutespartnership.org

Health by Design – www.healthbydesignonline.org

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Indiana State Department of Health

Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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