

PUBLIC HEALTH-LED SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS:

EXPERIENCES FROM SIX HEALTH DEPARTMENTS



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	1
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	2
The National Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program	3
Safe States SRTS mini-grant program	6
Overview of Safe States SRTS sites	7
CHAPTER 2: STRENGTHS OF PUBLIC HEALTH-LED SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS	9
CHAPTER 3: KEY STEPS OF A SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM	11
Step 1: Bring the right people together & hold a kick-off meeting	11
Step 2: Gather information & identify issues	17
Step 3: Identify solutions	23
Step 4: Make a plan	25
Step 5: Implement the plan	29
Step 6: Evaluate the plan	40
CHAPTER 4: SUSTAINABILITY & EXPANSION	47
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	51
APPENDICES	
52 A: Descriptions of Safe States SRTS sites	
B: SRTS program resources	61

FOREWARD

The Safe States Alliance (formerly STIPDA) is proud to present *Public Health-Led Safe Routes to School Programs: Experiences from Six Health Departments*. This report provides lessons learned from the Safe States Safe Routes to School (SRTS) mini-grant program implemented in 2007-08.

Communities across the U.S. are using Safe Routes to School programs to encourage and enable more children to safely walk and bike to school. Public health professionals, specifically those working in the areas of injury prevention, physical activity, and chronic disease, can play a critical role in the success of these programs. With a coordinated multi-faceted approach, SRTS programs can improve safety for children and the wider community of pedestrians and bicyclists; provide opportunities for people to increase physical activity and reduce reliance on motor vehicles; benefit the environment through reduced vehicle emissions; and ultimately enhance a community's quality of life.

Through funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Safe States awarded six local health departments funding to engage the public health community and implement public health-led SRTS programs. Public health professionals carry a wide skill set and can bring multiple expertise to the SRTS program. They have the expertise in developing comprehensive interventions, conducting educational programs and providing training. They also have a strong history of bringing partners together and building collaboration. All of these are important aspects of any Safe Routes to School Program.

Throughout the mini-grant year, the six local health departments shared many successes, but also encountered many barriers to implementing their program. Safe States has collected all of these lessons learned into one report that shares the challenges, successes, and recommendations of these six sites. Safe States hopes that this report will be a starting point for more health departments, schools and communities to become engaged in the Safe Routes to School Program.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Public health professionals have an important role to play in Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs. In fact, in many communities across the U.S., public health is already a strong partner in state and local SRTS programs. This report was created to build upon this momentum and help public health professionals expand their role, become actively engaged in, and possibly lead SRTS initiatives at state or local levels.

While this report shares some common information with the national *Safe Routes to School Guide*, its focus is unique. This report compiles the experiences from six health departments in diverse settings among five states that were awarded one-year mini-grants to engage the public health community in SRTS programs. The mini-grants were funded through a cooperative agreement between the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the State and Territorial Injury Prevention Directors Association (Safe States).

By providing experiences, successful examples, challenges, and lessons learned in the context of public-health led SRTS programs, this report provides relevant, practical information for how public health professionals can get involved and work most effectively with schools and diverse partners to develop, deliver and evaluate SRTS programs. While public health professionals at all levels will find this report relevant, it is particularly useful for local-level efforts to develop and implement a Safe Routes to School program. Although the report is written with a focus on public health-led SRTS programs, it contains useful information for anyone who leads a SRTS initiative. Finally, while this report contains many examples of steps and activities for a SRTS program, the information provided is not all inclusive and represents only the experiences of these six Safe States SRTS health departments.

ENGAGING PUBLIC HEALTH IN SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS

“There couldn’t be a more ideal time for capitalizing on the fact that walking is healthy, it saves gas, and if we have safer routes to school, we can reduce injury, have safer routes for senior citizens, and have safer routes to walk to the store. Everyone wins. There is a lot of leveraging that can be done.”

The National Safe Routes to School program

Walking and biking to school can be a safe and enjoyable part of children's daily routine, and it has great health benefits. Just a few decades ago, many children walked and biked in their communities, including to and from school. But over time, rates of walking and biking to school have declined while barriers have increased. In many communities, traffic congestion around schools has worsened, distances to school have increased as the built environment has expanded, and parents are concerned about unsafe conditions, including a lack of sidewalks, crimes against children and crimes in neighborhoods.

As pedestrians, children are at risk of injury. Nearly one out of every five children ages 5-9 who died in traffic in 2007 were pedestrians.¹ Children in this age group have not developed the skills and experience to navigate traffic safely and judge speed and distance.

Children need safe routes to school. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) legislation enacted in 2005 created a new national Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program to provide \$612 million to states to develop SRTS programs during 2005-2009. Through this funding, schools across the country are developing SRTS programs affecting thousands of children. **The purpose of the SRTS program is to:**

- **Enable and encourage children (K-8) to walk and bike to school;**
- **Make biking and walking to school safer and more appealing; and**
- **Facilitate projects and activities in the vicinity of schools that will:**
 - **improve safety,**
 - **reduce traffic,**
 - **reduce air pollution, and**
 - **reduce fuel consumption.**

Fundamental to the SRTS program is the assertion that walking and biking safety programs must be comprehensive if they are to be effective. The SRTS approach uses a combination of education, encouragement, enforcement, and engineering strategies. Together, these strategies are often referred to as "the 4 Es." Evaluation is another critical piece of a comprehensive program. While sometimes referred to as a fifth "E", evaluation should be incorporated

KEY COMPONENTS OF A SRTS PROGRAM **THE 4 Es**

- **Education**
- **Encouragement**
- **Enforcement**
- **Engineering**

8 STEPS

- **Bring together the right people**
- **Hold a kick-off meeting**
- **Gather information & identify issues**
- **Identify solutions**
- **Make a plan**
- **Fund the plan**
- **Implement the plan**
- **Evaluate the plan**

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

- **Federal funding for SRTS engineering and enforcement efforts is limited to within a 1-2 mile radius from the participating school**

POPULATION FOCUS

- **Federal funding for SRTS is limited to students in Kindergarten through 8th grade**

For more information, see www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide

¹National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. National Center for Statistics and Analysis. *Traffic Safety Facts: Pedestrians, 2007 data.*
<http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/810994.PDF>

throughout a SRTS program and into each of the 4 Es. For more information on the 4 Es, go to the SRTS Online Guide at http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/introduction/elements_of_safe_routes_to_school_programs.cfm.

A *Safe Routes to School Guide* was developed by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) in collaboration with SRTS experts from around the U.S. and with support from NHTSA, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). The guide identifies major steps in a comprehensive SRTS program and is available online at <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org>. The steps are described briefly below. For a more detailed discussion of these steps in the context of the Safe States SRTS sites, see **Chapter 3: Key Steps of a SRTS Program**.

- **Bring the right people together & create a coalition**
Identify partners who have an interest in making walking and biking to school safe for children. Groups and organizations where a SRTS program is a natural fit may already exist. Include partners such as public health, state and local transportation agencies, state SRTS coordinator, local school system, local government, law enforcement, community members, businesses, and parents.
- **Hold a kick-off meeting**
Hold a kick-off meeting to determine a vision and generate next steps. Engage the participants and determine which school(s) or school system(s) to work with. *In this report, this step and the previous one ("Bring*

Overview of the 4Es

Education activities:

- target parents, neighbors and other drivers in the community with messages about safe driving and other actions to ensure children have safe routes to school
- teach students how to walk and bicycle safely and the benefits of doing so

Encouragement strategies:

- generate excitement about walking and bicycling safely to school
- focus on fun
- can often be started relatively easily with little cost

Enforcement activities:

- can help change unsafe behaviors of drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians
- increase driver awareness of laws
- improve driver behavior by reducing speeds and promoting yielding to pedestrians
- teach pedestrians and bicyclists to walk and bicycle safely and to pay attention to their environment
- involve law enforcement and other community members (e.g. students, parents, school personnel, adult school crossing guards) to make sure everyone follows the rules

Engineering strategies:

- address the built environment with tools to create safe places to walk or bicycle, while recognizing that a roadway needs to safely accommodate all modes of transportation
- can improve safety for children
- can encourage more walking and bicycling by the general public

Source: Safe Routes to School Online Guide (www.saferoutesinfo.org)

the right people together & create a coalition”) are combined.

- **Gather information & identify issues**

Determine the needed program elements and a means to measure the impact of the program. Activities might include creating a description of walking and biking conditions around schools; determining if traffic data for a given school and its surrounding neighborhoods already exist; collecting baseline data if no data exists; assessing how many students walk or bike to school and if they wear appropriate safety gear (e.g. helmets); examining walking and biking conditions within a two-mile radius of a school; and speaking with the school to determine arrival/dismissal times or other school policies.

- **Identify solutions**

Work with a coalition to identify solutions to the issues illuminated in the previous step. The solutions should be multifaceted and include strategies around education, encouragement, engineering, and enforcement (4 E’s).

- **Make a plan**

Develop a plan to implement program strategies.

- **Fund the plan**

Many parts of a SRTS program typically cost very little money. *However, because funding for the Safe States SRTS sites was provided by the Safe States mini-grant, this step is not included or discussed in this report.*

- **Implement the plan**

Implement the plan the coalition developed.

- **Evaluate the plan**

Evaluate the plan and activities that the coalition implemented. Determine what worked and what did not. Revise the plan to incorporate lessons learned for communities that will do this work in the future.

SRTS programs can be an effective starting point for communities concerned about the seemingly separate challenges of injury; decreased physical activity among children; chronic disease such as obesity; community safety; and environmental concerns. With a coordinated, multi-faceted approach, SRTS programs can improve safety for children as well as the wider community of pedestrians and bicyclists; provide opportunities for people of all ages to increase

physical activity and reduce reliance on motor vehicles; benefit the environment through reduced vehicle emissions; and ultimately enhance a community's quality of life.

The Safe States SRTS mini-grant program

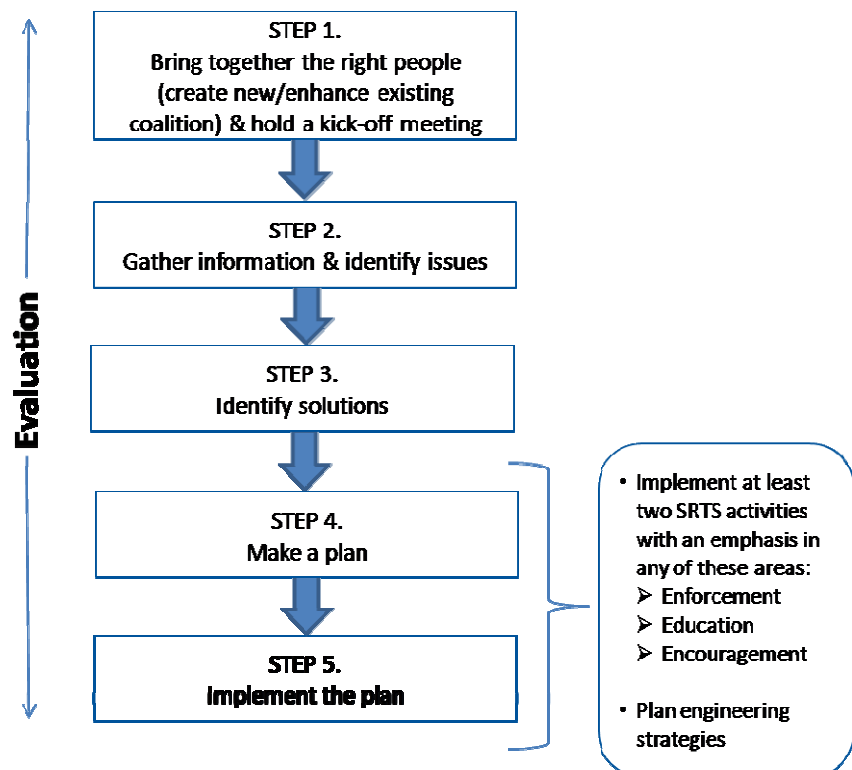
In 2007, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) funded the Safe States Alliance to administer a one-year mini-grant program to engage the public health community in SRTS programs and develop a model for public health professionals to help create successful SRTS programs within a school system.

State and local health department injury prevention programs competed for the mini-grants, and in June 2007, Safe States awarded mini-grants of approximately \$12,500 to each of six local health departments. The timeline for the mini-grant was 12 months (June 1, 2007 – May 31, 2008). Throughout this report, these health departments and the SRTS programs they implemented are referred to as Safe States SRTS sites.

Each Safe States SRTS site was to convene key stakeholders to design and begin implementation of a multifaceted program based upon the major steps outlined in the national *Safe Routes to School Guide*, described on pages 4-5. As shown in Figure 1, this included improving collaboration and coordination among various SRTS stakeholders in each site (e.g. public health, transportation, police, school, community officials); focusing on education, encouragement and enforcement strategies; and implementing two SRTS activities to increase awareness of the program and promote sustainability during the one-year grant.

Rather than implementing engineering strategies during this one year of funding, sites were asked to identify needed engineering changes and to begin working with appropriate partners to identify funding for these

Figure 1. Safe States SRTS program process



changes and include engineering strategies in future implementation plans. Additionally, sites were required to evaluate their programs throughout the year.

Overview of Safe States SRTS sites

Safe States awarded Safe Routes to School (SRTS) mini-grants to six local health departments across the U.S. The local health departments were located in Cleveland, OH; Comanche County, OK; Eastern Highlands Health District (Tolland), CT; Maricopa County, AZ; Mecklenburg County, NC; and Union County, OH. These health departments and the SRTS programs they implemented are referred to as Safe States SRTS sites throughout this report.

Key descriptive information on each site is presented in Figure 2. Each Safe States SRTS site started in a different place along the continuum of SRTS program development, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability. The sites differed in their context, goals, activities, and outcomes. This variation provides rich information on SRTS programs and makes the ideas, solutions and lessons learned gleaned from these sites applicable to many localities throughout the U.S.

Some health departments may have dedicated injury prevention funding and staff, while others have only one person to conduct injury prevention among other competing public health duties. The structure of the public health jurisdictions for the Safe States SRTS sites also varied. Four of the six funded sites were located within a

Safe States SRTS PROGRAM SITES

Safe States awarded mini-grants of approximately \$12,500 to each of six local health departments across the U.S.

- Cleveland, OH
- Comanche County, OK
- Eastern Highlands Health District (Tolland), CT
- Maricopa County, AZ
- Mecklenburg County, NC
- Union County, OH

Three sites received an additional \$3,000 each for activities that would develop their coalition, such as attending the National Safe

Figure 2. Overview of schools participating in Safe States SRTS sites

Site	# of schools	# of children	Grade levels	% eligible for free or reduced lunch
Cleveland, OH	1	208	K-5	100
Comanche County, OK	2	200	K-5	79
		310	K-5	46
Eastern Highlands Health District (Tolland) , CT	1	499	3 & 4	3
Maricopa County, AZ	1	860	K-8	100
Mecklenburg County, NC	1	502	K-5	51
Union County, OH	3	245	K-4	44
		600	K-4	12
		272	K-4	21

county health department. The fifth (Cleveland, OH) was located within a city health department, and the sixth site (Eastern Highlands (Tolland), CT) was located in a district health department that provides services to 10 towns that cross county boundaries. However, none of the sites stated that another health department had jurisdiction over the geographic area covered by its health department or over the geographic area in which the schools participating in the Safe States SRTS program were located. See **Appendix A** for a detailed description of each of the six Safe States SRTS sites.

The characteristics of schools among the Safe States SRTS sites varied widely (Figure 2). In total, nine schools were included among all Safe States SRTS sites.

- Eight of these nine schools included grades K-4, with five of these eight also encompassing higher grade levels. One school was comprised of students in two grades (third and fourth).
- The number of children attending these schools ranged greatly from 200 students to 860.
- A median of 46% of students enrolled in these schools were noted as being eligible for free or reduced price lunches, with a range of 3% to 100% of students.
- Five of the nine schools were comprised of student populations that were over 50% Non-Hispanic White, one school had a large Hispanic student population (over 50% Hispanic).

Substantial room for increasing the number of students who walk or bicycle to school was present at all Safe States SRTS sites. One school provided bus service to 100% of its students, while another provided this service to only 8% of students. Among all sites, a clear pattern emerged: in no instance was walking or bicycling the most frequently used mode of transportation for students getting to or from school. The most frequently used mode of transportation to get students to and from schools participating in the Safe States SRTS sites included the bus and a family member or adult driving the student. In three schools, walking and bicycling were ranked as the second most frequently used mode of transportation for children getting to and from school.

CHAPTER 2: STRENGTHS OF PUBLIC HEALTH-LED SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Public health professionals have an important role to play in SRTS programs. Prior to starting a program, schools and communities must understand where the need is greatest and where sufficient support exists for a program. Before children are encouraged to walk or bike to school, schools must understand how to identify and address walking and bicycling risks and then prepare children to effectively navigate traffic and other safety challenges on their way to and from school. Once a program is implemented, all program partners need to understand if and how the program was effective.

While these factors are critical to a SRTS program, schools may not be able to address them or carry out key steps in a SRTS program. School administrators and staff are often limited by severe time constraints, they may lack the experience in some areas of a SRTS program, and understandably, their primary focus is on the education of their students.

Public health professionals can help fill this gap. They bring diverse skills and expertise that are an ideal combination for contributing to SRTS programs, conducting each of the major steps of a SRTS program (as described in Chapter 1) and addressing the 4 Es of pedestrian and bicycle safety. For example, public health professionals can identify and serve at-risk populations and conduct surveillance. They have expertise in developing comprehensive interventions, conducting educational programs and providing training. Public health professionals also have a solid history of bringing partners together and building collaboration. At state and local levels, these professionals can help to bridge the many and diverse organizational players involved in developing, promoting and implementing SRTS programs.

Despite this potential, public health professionals are not always involved in SRTS programs, and if they are, their role is not always used as effectively or to the full extent possible. There is a need to better understand how public health professionals can work most effectively in partnership with diverse community partners and other pedestrian and bicycle safety professionals to deliver effective SRTS programs.

This need led to the development of the Safe States SRTS mini-grant program described in this report. One objective of the mini-grant program was to better understand the role of health departments in

leading SRTS programs, and to define the strengths, challenges and opportunities of these efforts. As part of the evaluation of the mini-grant program, the program evaluation interviewed Safe States SRTS site coordinators and coalition members about their experiences with the Safe States SRTS program, the potential value of health department involvement in SRTS programs and the challenges and opportunities for greater collaborative efforts among SRTS stakeholders. The information presented below was gathered through these interviews. This evaluation did not compare how public health versus other agencies or organizations is suited to coordinate a SRTS program.

Safe States SRTS site coordinators and coalition members gave several examples of how the role and goals of public health align well with those of SRTS programs.

- Public health and SRTS program goals fit seamlessly in addressing major health concerns, including safety, injury prevention, environmental health, obesity prevention, physical activity promotion, and chronic disease prevention. The emerging role of public health in addressing the built environment (e.g. healthy communities) and climate change also fit well with SRTS.
- Public health carries with it a legitimacy or credibility that is helpful in coordinating SRTS efforts.
- Public health takes a population-based approach to health, which is useful in assessing the populations of schools and nearby communities targeted by SRTS programs.
- Both public health and SRTS programs strive to facilitate change within communities and systems, such as designing and implementing policies and broad changes to workplaces and school systems.
- Because public health agencies lead or are involved in many community health programs, the relationships and partnerships needed for a SRTS program are often already in place. Public health can help to readily convene these partners around SRTS. Likewise, public health agencies have forged non-traditional partnerships, such as those with city planners, which are relevant to SRTS.
- Public health professionals are familiar with and trained in key skill sets needed for a SRTS program, such as data analysis, health education and capacity building.

Clearly, public health can make significant contributions to SRTS programs through expertise, partnerships and key skill sets. In making these contributions, public health must be mindful that SRTS is fundamentally a grassroots community effort that requires the involvement of other key players, starting with schools.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SRTS PROGRAMS ARE ALIGNED

- SRTS fits into the broad mission of public health.
- Goals of public health and SRTS programs align well, such as those addressing:
 - Safety/injury prevention,
 - Environmental health,
 - Obesity prevention,
 - Physical activity promotion,
 - Chronic disease prevention,
 - The built environment,
 - Climate change, and
 - Systems/policy changes.
- Public health agencies are aligned with and already involved in partnerships needed for SRTS programs, including those with non-traditional partners (e.g. city planners).
- Promotion of a SRTS program can be used to facilitate change within a community.
- Public health professionals contribute key skills and experience to SRTS programs (e.g. data analysis, health education, capacity building).

CHAPTER 3: KEY STEPS OF A SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

STEP 1: BRING THE RIGHT PEOPLE TOGETHER & HOLD A KICK-OFF MEETING

Identifying and bringing together partners with an interest in making walking and biking to school a safe activity for children is an important first step in a SRTS program. This section of the report illustrates how Safe States SRTS sites approached forming and managing a SRTS coalition, the challenges they encountered and solutions they recommended based on their experiences. Suggestions for an effective SRTS program kick-off meeting are also presented.

Potential stakeholders/partners

Given their recommended use of multi-faceted strategies and incorporation of the 4Es, SRTS programs inherently benefit from involvement of diverse stakeholders and partners. Among the six Safe States SRTS sites, all coalitions included parents. Other coalition members included principals or their assistant principals, teachers, parent/teacher organizations, community members (beyond parents), local pedestrian/bicycle/safety advocates, transportation or traffic engineers, medical professionals (e.g. ER physician), and police departments.

In retrospect, Safe States SRTS site coordinators identified additional coalition members and program partners they wish they had involved. These included school nurses, crossing guards, persons focused on safety in the school, residents of local neighborhoods, neighborhood/community associations, and generally more individuals outside of the school or public health system, such as law enforcement and persons responsible for or able to directly affect changes in infrastructure. Safe States SRTS site coordinators also suggested inviting individuals from other communities and neighborhoods to view SRTS activities at the program site in order to build capacity for future program sites. SRTS programs may also consider including more than one school in the program to allow for program comparisons and improved evaluation.

The role of public health in effectively and efficiently identifying SRTS program partners and bringing them to the table cannot be overstated. Because public health agencies conduct a variety of community health programs, relationships that health departments have already forged are often well aligned with the types of

BUILDING A COALITION

- Learn about the history of potential coalition members. What is the quality of existing or past relationships among agencies, organizations, and groups that may be key to SRTS?
- Which individuals does the community look up to and respect?
- Who is viewed as a credible source of information?
- Is there anyone who *must* be invited and be at the table in order for the community to participate?
- Have tailored messages ready for potential coalition members. Why should they be involved? How does SRTS fit their interests or needs? What would their role be?

INCLUDE DIVERSE COALITION PARTNERS

- Think outside the box when considering coalition members. One Safe States SRTS site included an animal control officer. If stray dogs are along the route to school, children may be afraid to walk to school.
- Also consider school nurses, crossing guards, school safety personnel, neighborhood residents/associations, and law enforcement.

partnerships needed for SRTS. These existing connections, as well as public health's traditional role of mobilizing communities, can be helpful in readily convening SRTS partners. Safe States SRTS site coordinators also noted that public health carries with it a legitimacy or credibility that is helpful in coordinating SRTS efforts.

Experiences of Safe States SRTS sites offer several considerations about the role of schools in a SRTS program. Schools and their principals have such an enormous workload and numerous, competing priorities, that most Safe States SRTS site coordinators concluded that schools were not able to take the lead role in coordinating and organizing a SRTS program. Yet site coordinators also indicated that involving someone who is intimately familiar with the school system, its politics and its schedule and is able to take an active role in the SRTS program is essential to the program's success. Working with the school district and its appropriate personnel may also help foster a broader acceptance of the SRTS program, its messages and its integration into the district's long-term plans. To promote joint ownership of the SRTS program between public health departments and schools, a SRTS program may also consider the Coordinated School Health model from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in which departments of health and departments of education collaborate on an eight-step model (<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/CSHP>).

Coalition/partnership structures

With stakeholders identified, a SRTS program must determine an effective "home" and structure for its coalition. Among the six Safe States SRTS sites, two sites formed new coalitions for the mini-grant while four sites established their program coalitions by modifying or building upon formalized partnerships that already existed within their communities. Specifically:

- The site in Cleveland, OH used an existing safety committee within the participating SRTS school as its Safe States SRTS task force. It also worked with a larger, existing SRTS coalition in the Cleveland area to inform activities proposed or conducted by this smaller, school-based task force.
- In Comanche County, OK, the Safe States SRTS site built its coalition by expanding upon an existing Fit Kids coalition in the community.
- In Union County, OH, a SRTS coalition was developed as a sub-committee of an existing Safe Kids/Safe Communities coalition.
- Maricopa County, AZ worked through an existing Site Council at the participating SRTS school to form its coalition. The Site Council included the principal, assistant principal, teachers, parents, and a

PUBLIC HEALTH EFFECTIVE IN BRINGING PARTNERS TOGETHER

- Public health carries with it a legitimacy or credibility that is helpful in coordinating SRTS efforts.

CONSIDER EXISTING COLLABORATIVE MODEL

- Consider the Coordinated School Health Model from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for coordinating SRTS efforts between public health departments and schools (<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/CSHP>).

neighborhood resident.

Safe States SRTS sites found varying coalition structures to be effective. Some coalitions formed workgroups as time passed and interests of their members became clearer. Workgroups at some sites gravitated toward a distinct focus, with one or more workgroups focused on developing strategies to create and pursue long-term/big picture goals, while another workgroup(s) focused on designing and implementing specific SRTS activities (e.g. Walk to School Day events, Walking School Bus). Other structure considerations are the potential contributions of persons outside the official SRTS program coalition.

For example, in some Safe States SRTS sites, school nurses and crossing guards were not members when the SRTS coalition was formed, but they made important contributions as they became involved and helped to identify solutions and assist in implementing SRTS activities.

Partner contributions

Safe States SRTS site coordinators reported that program partners contributed to the program in six key areas. These types of contributions and the program partners who most often made contributions in each area are presented in Figure 3.

Across all six sites, Safe States SRTS coordinators found that school principals or assistant principals were the most frequently involved among the programs' many partners. Principals or assistant principals contributed in all six key areas in at least half of the sites, and all Safe States SRTS sites received help from school principals or assistant principals in identifying or solving barriers to children walking or bicycling to and from school. Many other partners also contributed by providing or identifying solutions to barriers. Parents, teachers, PTA/PTO members, and members of

Figure 3. Contributions of Safe States SRTS site partners

<i>Type of contribution</i>	<i>Partners typically contributing</i>
Gathered data to identify barriers	• School principals/assistant principals • Parents • PTA/PTO members • Transportation/traffic engineers
Provided or identified solutions to barriers	• School principals/assistant principals • Parents • Teachers • PTA/PTO members • Local pedestrian/bicycle/safety advocates • Transportation/traffic engineers
Participated in implementing activities	• School principals/assistant principals • Parents • Teachers • Law enforcement
Provided meeting space or supplies	• School principals/assistant principals
Recruited members	• School principals/assistant principals • Parents • PTA/PTO members • Local pedestrian/bicycle/safety advocates
Took a leadership role	• School principals/assistant principals • Parents • Teachers • PTA/PTO members • Community members

the community (beyond parents) were active contributors in multiple ways among many Safe States SRTS sites.

Involving program partners: Challenges & strategies

Establishing and maintaining coalition member enthusiasm and involvement across a broad range of program partners is difficult, no matter what the cause or purpose. Safe States SRTS sites also faced these challenges. Typical challenges encountered by the Safe States SRTS sites, and the methods used or recommended for future use to overcome these challenges, are described below.

- **Challenge #1: Lack of partner ownership/investment in program**
Coordinators from some Safe States SRTS sites reported that SRTS program goals were set primarily by a small group of people – those who wrote the mini-grant application. Consequently, site coordinators said that coalition members were not as invested in working on and contributing to the program as they may have been if they were actively involved in the initial goal setting.

Potential solutions to Challenge #1

- ***Engage members from the start.*** Engage diverse coalition members and other community members early on in the process. Include them in the initial steps of setting program goals and designing an overall program implementation plan.
- ***Provide specific reasons to participate.*** One Safe States SRTS site coordinator recommended having a specific, concrete pitch for why a potential coalition member should be involved and identifying a tangible deliverable to engage them.

- **Challenge #2: Difficulties convening & maintaining the interest of coalition members**

Many Safe States SRTS sites noted difficulties convening meetings that the majority of their coalition members could attend and maintaining participation once a coalition was formed. School staff, parents and other coalition members were often available during similar times of day (particularly afternoons), but these times frequently conflicted with the availability of professionals outside of the school system, who typically were available during regular business hours. Other factors identified by Safe States SRTS sites were a lack of clear deliverables or objectives for the coalition, competing work and life priorities, and a lack of coalition members' direct interest or investment in current or future program activities.

Potential solutions to Challenge #2

Try a variety of strategies, including forming workgroups, assigning tasks and expanding communication methods.

FOSTER PROGRAM OWNERSHIP

"Get your coalition involved as soon as you possibly can and delegate as much work as possible to have the coalition take true ownership of the program. Get parents involved however you can. You don't want it to be just an initiative of the health department."

SCHEDULE MEETINGS LATER IN THE DAY

One coalition had trouble getting parents/community members and professionals at meetings at the same time because parents were at work and professionals wanted to meet during the day. Attendance increased when members compromised and met in late afternoon.

- **Form workgroups.** Some sites formed workgroups. Workgroups allowed for more flexibility in scheduling meetings—with a smaller group, finding common times to meet was easier. And because workgroups typically had a specific focus, coalition members were more likely to find something that matched their interests and motivated them to be involved. Similarly, the Cleveland site addressed the problem of conflicting schedules by forming its Safe States SRTS coalition as a task force within an existing safety committee at the participating school. Committee members (school staff, health department staff, parents, PTA/PTO members) were able to find common meeting times. When additional information or insight was needed, the task force tapped a larger, existing SRTS coalition in Cleveland for expertise from its members, which included the City Planning Commission, Mayor’s office, Division of the Chief of Academics at the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, and the American Lung Association.
- **Assign tasks.** To encourage attendance and participation at coalition meetings, one Safe States SRTS site assigned tasks to meeting attendees with the understanding that they would provide a status/progress report at the next meeting.
- **Expand communication methods.** Multiple sites also used email and/or periodic phone calls to provide updates and information. This enabled Safe States SRTS site coordinators to reduce the number of in-person coalition meetings and to maintain communication with coalition members who could not attend meetings but were still willing to assist. One site noted that communication through email correspondence kept a large, loosely formed coalition sufficiently connected and that many coalition members who had not attended any meetings still volunteered at a bike rodeo later in the year.

Keep coalition members connected

“Our coalition was very loosely associated, with local stakeholders as part of the coalition whether or not they came to meetings. We knew at some point they would be an important part of what we were doing, so we kept everybody informed during the year. When we did a bike rodeo, people who had not attended a single coalition meeting were there to help because that was where they felt they could make a difference. They stayed connected with us all year, and at the very end they found something that fit their interests and their schedule.”

ENGAGE COALITION MEMBERS

- Consider creating workgroups that allow individuals to be engaged with topics that are aligned with their interests.
- Consider alternatives to in-person meetings. Correspond through regular emails to keep people informed and request their assistance with specific tasks.
- Keep partners in the loop with regular communication, even if they do not attend meetings. Partners may have time or find something that peaks their interest in the future.
- Persons who are not formal coalition members may still be willing to help or provide valuable insight. SRTS program coordinators or other coalition members just need to be willing to ask them.

- **Challenge #3: Coalition members not completing assigned tasks**
Safe States SRTS site coalition members often were not able to complete assigned tasks and important programmatic activities in a timely manner, or at all. Reasons for this included coalition members turning over or dropping out entirely, busy schedules, competing priorities, and miscommunication between sites and their coalition members. Consequently, Safe States SRTS site timelines and plans were delayed and may have adversely affected community impressions of the program.

Potential solutions to Challenge #3

- **Make contingency plans.** Have back up plans in place in case coalition members or other program partners do not follow through with their commitments.
- **Use a formal reporting system.** Instituting a formalized reporting system may help. With this system, individuals who take on tasks are required to report to a specific individual by a specific date if they are unable to complete an assigned task and/or one for which they volunteered.

Hold a kick-off meeting

A kick-off meeting is a chance to communicate a vision for a SRTS program and engage coalition members and other interested community members in the effort. The first meeting of the SRTS coalition served as the kick-off meeting for some Safe States SRTS sites. At least one site used the school's welcome back to school night at the start of the school year to provide information on its SRTS program, collect some baseline data through a parent survey and officially kick-off its activities.

USE A REPORTING SYSTEM TO KEEP COALITION ON TASK

"If I had to do this all over again, when we first doled out responsibilities to coalition members, I would have set a date for when those tasks were to be accomplished and what to do if you can't get them accomplished. A reporting system would have helped, with when and who to contact by a certain date before you get to your deadline. Little things like that that can make such a difference and have such an impact."

HOLD KICK-OFF MEETING OR EVENT

"The overarching objective of our kick-off meeting was to introduce Safe Routes to School and what it could mean to the school. It also was a chance to allow all stakeholders to meet each other and identify what they could bring to the effort."

STEP 2: GATHER INFORMATION & IDENTIFY ISSUES

This section presents information and ideas on how to gather, analyze and share information relevant to a SRTS program. How Safe States SRTS sites used this information to identify issues is also included.

Gather information

Safe States SRTS sites found it important to gather a variety of information in multiple formats from numerous sources. Below is a summary of the combined methods used by these six sites.

- **Gather existing, relevant statistics**

To gather key data (e.g. motor vehicle crash, pedestrian injury, socioeconomic, crime), look online and contact state and local officials (e.g. health department, transportation, law enforcement). Health information such as the number of asthmatics or students deemed medically fragile may also be useful if addressing air quality and vehicle emissions.

- **Seek a mentor**

As part of the mini-grant, three Safe States SRTS sites were randomly selected and assigned to a mentor throughout the program. Participating sites found this mentorship to be invaluable. Even if an official mentorship is not possible, seek out someone in a nearby city, state or region with SRTS experience who would be willing to offer periodic support. A SRTS site coordinator – and the entire program – can benefit from the experience, ideas and support of someone who has already been through the development, implementation and evaluation of a SRTS program.

- **Talk with school officials**

To gather useful data and develop relationships that can be important to program support and implementation, talk with school officials. This may include district and county school officials as well as individual school principals or assistant principals.

- **Identify other persons knowledgeable of local schools**

Identify persons who are knowledgeable of the schools in the potential program area (e.g. district, county) and can help in comparing factors about each school that are relevant to developing and implementing a SRTS program. For example, a Coordinated School Health Program representative often has detailed knowledge of all or most of the schools in a particular district or county.

GATHER DATA FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES

Safe States SRTS program sites gathered the information they needed from a variety of sources, including:

- Safe States SRTS program coordinators
- Safe States SRTS coalition members
- School officials (principals, district officials)
- Teachers
- Municipal officials (Town Planner)
- Existing programs within a school (Coordinated School Health Program, cardiovascular health program)
- Health department staff (epidemiology, injury prevention, chronic disease prevention)
- Law enforcement
- Local businesses
- Community organizers
- Neighborhood residents
- Parents

- **Visit the schools and neighborhoods**

Drive and walk around the schools and neighborhoods to get a sense of the physical environment. Look for such things as walking paths leading to the school, where parents drop off and pick up their children, where bus routes go, and the presence and condition of sidewalks. Take a tour of the school, especially when children are being dropped off or picked up from school. These visits do not substitute for a walkability assessment (see below), but rather provide a starting point for gathering information.

- **Work with existing programs serving the school/neighborhood**

One Safe States SRTS site worked with a cardiovascular health program already established in a neighborhood being considered for the Safe States SRTS program. This existing program provided useful data and consultation in selecting a Safe States SRTS site school.

- **Work with local municipal officials**

One site worked with a town planner, who provided a map depicting a mile-wide circle around the school participating in the Safe States SRTS site. This work engaged the town planner in SRTS and established important communication at the municipal level.

- **Conduct walkability/bikability audits**

Some Safe States SRTS sites conducted walkability and bikability audits to assess potential routes for children to and from school and the positive and negative features of those routes. One site selected six main routes to the site's school and then assigned a route to six coalition members for the purpose of conducting walkability and bikability surveys. Some coalition members walked routes during lunch. A local business with a bicycle racing team was loosely associated with the Safe States SRTS coalition. The company never sent a representative to a coalition meeting, but it made a significant contribution early on in the program by conducting several bikability audits in the program area.

One site tailored a standard national walkability audit to collect data on issues or problems that could reasonably be addressed by the city's various departments (public service, traffic/engineering, housing, city planning, law enforcement).

In conducting these or similar assessments, one Safe States SRTS site emphasized the importance of gathering information about the routes that children are *actually* taking to school. One site worked with a development organization and community

IDEAS FOR ASSESSING WALKABILITY

"The development corporation and the organizers were out there with us, showing us how students were walking. We identified the routes that were most commonly traveled and where the cut-throughs were that the students used. The route you think students are taking is not always the one that they're actually taking."

"The next walkability maps we develop at the three new schools are going to be driven by the kids because they have a better perspective. Their perspective is without any personal gain and they don't hold back anything at all. We're going to try to recruit more kids in our coalition."

organizer to identify the most commonly traveled routes and short-cuts the children used.

Based on its experience with this mini-grant, one Safe States SRTS coalition determined that all future maps illustrating walkable routes to school would be developed by the students themselves for a realistic and frank assessment.

- **Conduct a parent survey**

Parent surveys may assess a variety of variables, including transportation methods to and from school, distance between home and school, and concerns, attitudes about and perceived barriers to their children walking to school. One site conducted a parent survey during its kick-off event at a welcome night the first week of school. The National Center for Safe Routes to School has a standard Parent Survey available online. (See the *Evaluation* section at <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/>).

- **Conduct a student survey**

Most Safe States SRTS sites conducted student surveys to track the number of students walking and biking to and from participating schools. The most commonly used instrument was the National Center for Safe Routes to School's Student Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet (also referred to as the Student In-Class Travel Tally; see the *Evaluation* section at <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/>). One Safe States SRTS site also used a survey tool based on a Michigan Safe Routes to School Student Survey to assess student travel preferences for and perceptions of walking or bicycling to and from school. To ensure its survey was appropriate for young children who could not read well, one site created a survey with pictures.

- **Conduct traffic & modes of transportation surveys**

Conducted during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up of school children, an observational traffic survey can help coalitions assess the level of traffic around schools. The in-class Student Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet (see above) can also be used.

- **Conduct a speed survey**

A Safe States SRTS site partnered with local police and city street departments to conduct speed surveys.

ONLINE SRTS DATA COLLECTION FORMS

The National Center for Safe Routes to School has developed a set of data collection forms and tools to help local and state SRTS programs collect and measure program, analyze data results and generate useful summary reports.

They include:

- **Student Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet**

A one-page form to collect information about student travel to and from school at the classroom-level (also referred to online as the Student In-Class Travel Tally)

- **Parent survey**

A two-page form to collect information about student travel, important issues and parental attitudes (also referred to online as the Survey About Walking and Biking to School – For Parents; also in Spanish)

Source:

<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/>

Identify schools

Identifying a school or schools to participate in a SRTS program is a critical step in gathering necessary program information. Numerous factors may be considered in this decision, from pedestrian injury rates and levels of traffic congestion to the degree of buy-in from the school principal. While statistics and other data must be considered, several Safe States SRTS sites emphasized the importance of selecting schools that are truly committed to working on the program.

Analyze & interpret data

The amount of data collected by most Safe States SRTS sites was extensive. In several sites, the data were analyzed by the Safe States SRTS site coordinator and other health department staff. Not only did health department staff already have the expertise and capacity to do this analysis, but at least one site found that its coalition members were more motivated to look at the data analysis and suggest tangible, action-oriented next steps than to conduct the analysis themselves.

However, one site reported that it analyzed program data as a coalition. If a review of the data raised any questions or concerns, the site coordinator added them to the agenda of coalition's next meeting for further discussion.

To reduce the time and personnel burden of data entry and analysis, one site recommended using the National Center for Safe Routes to School's data entry and analysis tools for the Student Travel Tally Sheet or the Parent Survey. Once data collection for these surveys is completed, data can be entered directly into a National Center for Safe Routes to School online database for immediate data access. Or, the data can be sent to the National Center, which will scan the forms, validate the data and transfer the data to the online database. Both options then allow SRTS programs to generate basic summary information in table and graphical forms online and cut and paste this information into other documents, such as program or progress reports. (See the "Evaluation" section at <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources>).

Identify opportunities & issues

The data collected and analyzed by Safe States SRTS sites helped to illuminate a variety of opportunities, concerns and issues. Below are some examples of how sites used the data to identify opportunities and issues.

IDENTIFYING SCHOOLS

"We chose the school because it was a school of need in a neighborhood of need, and also because the principal was stellar. We knew she would get involved."

"Have a meeting with the principal and assistant principal. Show them what you plan on doing, what you feel their responsibilities and your responsibilities would be, and see where the conversation goes from there. If things don't mesh, move on to another school."

"There are over 100 elementary schools in our county, but we could only focus on one. A member of our Coordinated School Health Team was really instrumental in helping us. She was familiar with a lot more of the schools than anyone of us at the table individually were."

- **Identify relevant problems**

Discussions with key Safe States SRTS coalition members and persons knowledgeable about the schools and surrounding neighborhoods helped sites identify potential schools to participate in the program and better understand underlying concerns in the community. Walkability audits helped identify numerous problems at Safe States SRTS sites, including issues regarding student drop off/pick up, inadequate sidewalks and the need for new or improved signage. Results for the speed survey described above was used to pinpoint times that high levels of traffic and speeding occurred around school zones and to establish more effective law enforcement presence in those zones.

- **Identify existing resources/programs**

While analyzing its survey data, one Safe States SRTS site identified a spike in the number of second graders riding bikes to school. When this issue was explored further, coalition members learned that the local police department had done bike training with all second graders. Without the survey data, the Safe States SRTS site would not have known about this resource.

- **Identify opportunities for collaboration/program overlap**

The experience of conducting walkability audits and identifying safe routes to school has spurred ideas for other connected, collaborative projects. One Safe States SRTS site plans to reduce signage for alcohol and tobacco along school routes and is starting a “corner store” project to help stores located along the route to offer healthy food choices and get linked to produce from local farmers’ markets. In another site, a route to school includes a trail along a stream, allowing the site to incorporate information about the environment and its protection.

IDEAS FOR SHARING DATA RESULTS

“We gathered our data, and then we had a couple of public meetings that we invited parents to. We presented what Safe Routes to School is about and shared our data and what the barriers to walking to school we know we have.”

“We did a student survey and then we did a whole article about the results and showed what our students wanted. We presented what the students would like to do and put together a list of how they wanted to get to school – because it’s much different than the way they are actually getting to school.”

Share the results

Several sites documented the data they collected and shared findings from the data analysis with the program coalition and the broader community. Some examples of how the sites shared this information are included below.

- **Hold public meetings**

Public meeting and coalition meetings were effective ways to share data findings with the community, including basic information about Safe Routes to School and barriers to walking to school that were identified through data collection.

- **Use media channels**

One Safe States SRTS site shared results from a SRTS survey conducted among students by writing articles that were included in an eight-page newspaper insert produced by the local Safe Kids coalition. The article included information on how students would prefer to get to and from school, which included methods of transportation very different from how they typically traveled to and from school.

- **Provide motivation to key program partners**

One site found that sharing results from the walkability audits with a local traffic engineer was helpful in establishing a solid SRTS partnership. With data in hand, the Safe States SRTS site coordinator and planner could work together to set realistic timelines for engineering-related SRTS program activities and, at

Partnership strengthened by sharing data

“The city has specific schedules – one day to fill potholes, another to fix sidewalks and curb ramps and lights. We were able to establish a relationship with one traffic engineer who sat down with me after we did these walkability audits and we looked at the results. He was able to say we will likely get to one project in three months, but he bumped up another one of our activities because this was a Safe Routes to School program.”

times, the speed in which these activities were addressed was increased.

STEP 3: IDENTIFY SOLUTIONS

Based on the data that they gathered and analyzed, Safe States SRTS sites were able to make informed decisions in determining solutions to the problems they had identified in their communities. Solutions included education, encouragement, engineering and enforcement strategies.

Process for identifying solutions

The process Safe States SRTS sites used to identify solutions varied. Some examples of strategies they used are provided below.

- **Make use of existing resources**

One Safe States SRTS site at a local school benefitted from resource-sharing with a large, existing SRTS program in the nearby metropolitan area. The state SRTS coordinator conducted a national SRTS training for the local coalition. Online resources are endless, but all Safe States SRTS sites found that information from the National SRTS Clearinghouse helpful for learning about the SRTS program, identifying resources useful for evaluation, generating program ideas, and providing materials to educate parents about SRTS. See **Appendix B** for a list of resources.
- **Use data to identify realistic solutions**

The extensive data collected by Safe States SRTS sites helped the sites to identify realistic solutions and develop focused, realistic plans. For example, after collecting data one site scaled back its original plans to reflect a more realistic approach.
- **Gather community input**

Community input was one method several Safe States SRTS sites used to identify solutions. One site held several public meetings to present data findings, an overview of the national SRTS program and examples of potential implementation activities, and then asked attendees to offer solutions to the identified barriers. Another site presented a program plan and schedule to parents for their review, and the site's coalition used the parents' feedback to inform the solutions they developed.
- **Hold small group discussions**

In contrast to a large community meeting, one site held informal, small group discussions via email and telephone as its process to identify solutions.
- **Consider consistency among participating schools**

Some Safe States SRTS sites implemented activities in more than

USING DATA TO IDENTIFY SOLUTIONS

"The data really helped identify what we could or couldn't do. The only way I could move forward with a Safe Routes to School program at this school would be with very organized Walking School Bus and Walking Wednesday programs. Every kid is still going to have access to the school bus, so the idea of reducing the number of buses busing kids wasn't realistic. The data helped all of us understand the scope of what we might be able to do at the school."

GATHER COMMUNITY INPUT ON SOLUTIONS

"We held public meetings to present our data. We presented what is happening across the nation with Safe Routes to School, from the pace car to the Walking School Bus and Walking Wednesdays. We asked 'What would you suggest as good solutions to the barriers we know we have?' We allowed the community to identify which of those solutions would be good. The coalition felt more empowered saying, 'Okay, let's do this one and this one.' We could wrap our hands around at least these two things to start."

one school. Therefore, in identifying solutions, one site considered SRTS program design and implementation options that would be feasible and appropriate for multiple schools and allow for unity and consistency among those schools. Consistency is also important to allow for evaluation across all participating schools.

One site's solution: Follow the 4 Es

To illustrate the kind of solutions a SRTS program may identify, an example from a Safe States SRTS site is presented in Figure 4. The solutions are organized around the 4 Es recommended by the National Safe Routes to School Program. Note that engineering solutions were intentionally modest given the relatively short, one-year grant period.

Figure 4. Applying the 4 Es to identify solutions: Example from one Safe States SRTS site	
<i>Education</i>	
• Educate students, parents and community to promote safety • Conduct education to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution	
<i>Encouragement</i>	
• Implement activities to increase the number of students who walk and bike to school • Implement the Walking School Bus system	
<i>Engineering</i>	
• Request local traffic commission to add signage, extend school zones and repaint crosswalks	
<i>Enforcement</i>	
• Reduce risk factors beyond traffic, to include abductions, assaults and bullying • Request local police department to: (1) monitor school zones more closely (2) issue warnings to speeders in order to increase community awareness of school zones	
<i>Note: Sometimes referred to as the fifth "E", "Evaluation" should be incorporated throughout a SRTS program and into each of the 4 Es.</i>	

STEP 4: MAKE A PLAN

During the mini-grant year, the Safe States SRTS sites designed school-specific, multifaceted programs that (1) focused on education, encouragement, and enforcement strategies, and (2) included implementation of two SRTS activities to increase awareness of the program and promote its sustainability beyond the mini-grant funding. These activities included developing neighborhood speed watches, developing volunteer crossing guard programs, conducting education in conjunction with enforcement efforts, and holding a special event such as a Walk to School Day. The process, experiences and suggestions of the sites in developing a SRTS program plan are presented in this section.

Develop short- & long-term goals

Although long-term goals could not be measured as a part of this mini-grant, Safe States SRTS sites were asked to develop short- and long-term goals. To address this part of the plan, at least one Safe States SRTS site found it effective to split the function of its SRTS coalition into two groups. One focused on short-term planning and implementation of Safe States SRTS grant activities, and the other focused on long-term planning, such as promoting the SRTS program within the county and encouraging additional schools to participate.

Develop an effective timeline

- **Work with a school's calendar/schedule**

Among factors to consider in developing a SRTS plan, understanding and then working with a school's calendar is critical. Grant and public health program timelines may not be aligned with a school-year schedule, requiring up front planning to account for these varied schedules and potential lags in program activity (e.g. during summer months). Program plans should also reflect school system vacations and testing periods.

SRTS activities are more likely to be successful if they are held at times convenient for students, parents and school staff. Understandably, the primary focus for the school is education of its students. SRTS partners need to work within the existing school system and its calendar to achieve program goals.

When developing a SRTS program, multiple Safe States SRTS site coordinators suggested starting the activities in February, March or April so there is time to meet with the schools and get some general plans on paper for the next school year. A program could then use the summer to put some things in place, and schools

UNDERSTAND A SCHOOL'S SCHEDULE

"The health department doesn't run on the school cycle. Take cues from schools about what is good timing for things. They have their own rhythm and we [the health department] need to work with it."

"Starting with the Christmas break before the first of the year, and extending into the new year with several long weekends during January, a 10-day break in February, a 10-day break in March, and an extended weekend during April (for Easter), the ability to schedule meetings around an already interrupted and busy school calendar was difficult at best."

could be re-engaged in October for International Walk to School Day once they were settled into the school schedule.

- **Consider activities for the summer months**

When school is out, program activities may slow. Plan for how to make the most of this time. For example, at least one site conducted walkability surveys during the summer months.

- **Consider linking activities with national events**

Implementing some program activities during International Walk to School Month in October is ideal, but the health department and SRTS coalitions must realize that this requires pre-planning with the schools during the summer or the spring semester of the previous school year.

Form workgroups to provide focus

To develop its SRTS plan, coalition members from one Safe States SRTS site divided into three planning workgroups. One focused on the Walking Wednesday program, another on the Walking School bus program, and a third on infrastructure and long-term planning. Another site also met in small groups to develop its plan. The plan emerged from the conversations with key stakeholders – the state department of transportation, Safe Kids coalition, local police departments, participating school(s), and a bicycle advisory council. The larger coalition meetings were used to pitch ideas, identify barriers that may have been overlooked, and solicit help in implementing activities.

Identify how coalition members can contribute

Each member brings unique expertise and perspectives to a SRTS coalition. When making a SRTS plan, make sure to ask each member how he or she can contribute. For example, at one Safe States SRTS site:

- law enforcement agreed to conduct school-based pedestrian and bicycle safety presentations;
- teachers and principals agreed to conduct classroom discussions on pedestrian and bike safety;
- schools agreed to hold neighborhood and parent meetings about SRTS concepts; and
- local media offered to publish articles and public service announcements about the local SRTS program and its activities.

At another site, the PTA president helped identify drop-off point locations where children who lived beyond the 1-2 mile radius of the elementary school could be dropped off and then participate in the Walking School Bus by walking the remaining distance to school.

Respect a school's desire for ownership & initiative

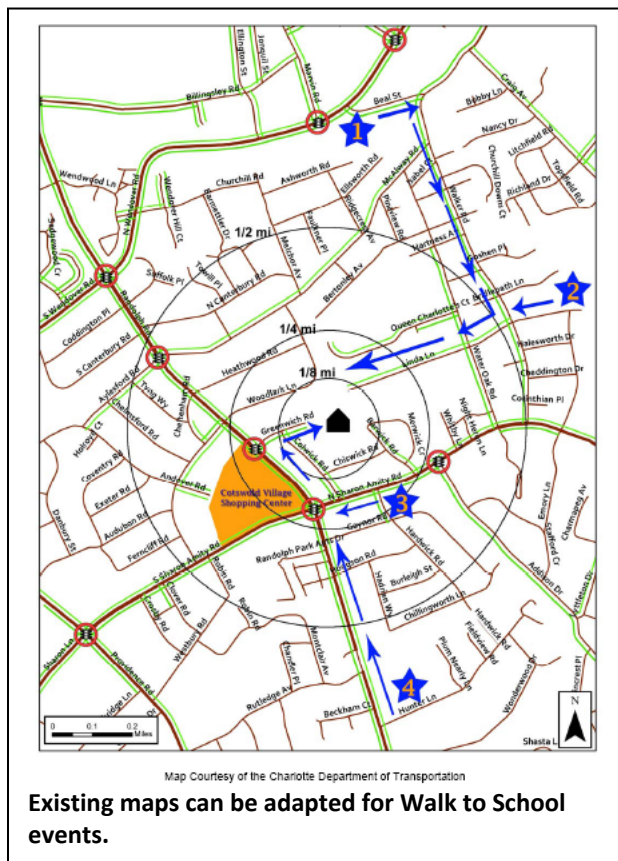
Part of working with coalition members is understanding when they prefer to, or must have, ownership of components of the SRTS program. For example, one Safe States SRTS site reported that the school's PTA wanted to be in charge of the program's school-related activities. The PTA did not want a group of community agency representatives to determine what and how the elementary school would participate in SRTS activities. Ongoing communication and opportunity for engagement and feedback are essential.

Build upon existing efforts

To better understand how to develop and implement SRTS activities such as a Walking Wednesday program that would be appropriate for a local program site, contact an existing SRTS program if one exists in a nearby town, city or county. This contact proved invaluable for one Safe States SRTS site, as a SRTS program in another city shared its program timeline, draft permission slips and other resources. At another site, Safe States SRTS coalition members were able to participate in the National Safe Routes to School Training Course funded by an existing SRTS program in a large, nearby city.

SCHOOLS MAY WANT PROGRAM OWNERSHIP

"The school needed time to see how the Walk to School program would work at their school and they needed time to develop their own ideas. We can serve as a guide and help brainstorm solutions, but the likelihood of success is increased when the school takes the initiative."



Adapt resources & materials

One site reported that although many resources for Walk to School events and other activities could be found on the Internet, most resources and materials (e.g. checklists, planning guides) needed to be adapted for and tailored to each local school. Maps can be adapted for Walk to School events by working with town planners. See **Appendix B** for a list of resources.

Address the 4 Es

Ideally, a SRTS program will address the 4Es of a comprehensive SRTS program: education, encouragement, enforcement, and engineering strategies (as described in **Chapter 1**). However, engineering changes often take more than a year to implement.

For this one-year mini-grant, Safe States SRTS sites were only required to *identify* needed engineering changes and begin working with state and/or local transportation agencies to incorporate those changes into a work plan. However, some Safe

States SRTS sites found ways to make progress in the area of engineering. In one site, the simple presence and perseverance of the Safe States SRTS program helped prioritize the program's engineering needs among other competing issues. Examples of achievable engineering activities included bringing sidewalks and curbs into compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and adding signage along the walk to school routes.



Encouragement strategies – such as the use of this Safety Hero mascot in Maricopa County, AZ – can generate excitement about walking or biking to school.

ADDRESSING ENGINEERING CHANGES

Engineering changes often take more than a year to implement. The Safe States SRTS mini-grant program focused only on *identifying* needed engineering changes.

STEP 5: IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

Implementing a SRTS program plan is an exciting and challenging step in a SRTS program. While each SRTS program plan is unique, implementing the plans among the Safe States SRTS sites generated many useful ideas, challenges and potential solutions for future program implementation. These findings focused primarily on responding to typical program implementation factors (e.g. timelines, inclement weather, coalition changes), participating in the National SRTS Training, and conducting Walk to School events, bike rodeos and a vehicle anti-idling program.

Implementation factors

▪ **Timeline & schedules**

As discussed in **Step 4: Make a Plan**, timeline considerations are essential to effective plan development and implementation. Understanding and working around a school's schedule is critical to successful implementation of a SRTS program.

For example, Safe States SRTS site coordinators found that participation of school officials during summer months was a challenge. Given this reality, one Safe States SRTS site reassigned program tasks to coalition members who did not function on a school system schedule and were available during the summer. The site also recommended (1) assigning tasks in April so school officials would know about them before the summer, (2) following up during the summer through email, and (3) scheduling the first meeting of the new school year in September, once school staff and students had acclimated to being back at school.

▪ **Weather**

While beyond anyone's control, inclement weather can impact the implementation of a SRTS program plan. Rainy or cold weather affected participation in Walk to School events and "snow days" delayed coalition meetings and even program data collection, as parent and student surveys could not be disseminated on time at school at one site. To the extent possible, make contingency plans for SRTS events and meetings. Anticipate that when the weather is less favorable (i.e. winter), the number of students walking or biking to school likely will decrease.

▪ **Coalition factors**

During plan implementation, Safe States SRTS sites encountered a variety of coalition-related challenges, but also some notable successes. Staff turnover affected several sites, from a change in the Safe States SRTS site coordinator, key coalition members or

COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

"The most significant remedy to program implementation delays was continued efforts to communicate with coalition members."

IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

- Work around a school's schedule
- Assign tasks to coalition members well before school ends (April)
- Follow up on assignments by emailing during the summer.
- Schedule a SRTS program meeting in September after school staff is acclimated to new school year.
- Make contingency plans for SRTS events and meetings, especially given inclement weather .
- School principals and assistant principals may find on-site visits helpful.
- Keep coalition members engaged by addressing (1) the long-term goal of establishing a local SRTS program and (2) the short-term goal of implementing specific SRTS activities in participating schools.

school administrators. While these changes made some implementation activities impossible to complete or significantly delayed their implementation, some sites were able to find other willing and able coalition members and other volunteers to step up and ensure that activities were completed and key events occurred as scheduled.

Several sites reported that while coalition member enthusiasm and participation were high at the beginning of the program, they waned and coalition members became disengaged as the focus moved to implementation of the plan. Several Safe States SRTS sites found that communication via email was an effective solution, as coalition members became re-engaged and began completing assigned tasks. On-site visits with school principals and assistant principals also helped, as these individuals often could not attend coalition meetings.

Another site found it challenging to keep all coalition members engaged because they were divided in their interests between the big picture/long-term goal of establishing the SRTS program in the county and the immediate picture/short-term goal of implementing specific grant activities in the participating school. The Safe States SRTS site coordinator kept all members engaged by addressing and encouraging discussion around both of these two major areas of interest at each coalition meeting.

SRTS National Course

Four of the six Safe States SRTS sites hosted the SRTS National Course. Another site sent a staff member to this training elsewhere in the state. Site coordinators reported that the training was helpful to:

- identify what others in the community were doing;
- practice conducting physical observations of school routes and identifying barriers along routes that children use to get to and from school;
- build knowledge of the SRTS program and get persons such as coalition members on the same page with the program and its approach; and
- establish credibility of their local Safe States SRTS programs.

For more information about the training, see the SRTS Online Guide (http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/training/national_course). Note: The SRTS Online Guide (www.saferoutesinfo.org) was designed to not only complement the SRTS National Course but also to serve as a stand-alone resource for persons unable to participate in the training.

Walk to School programs

Safe States SRTS sites implemented a variety of Walk to School programs, including regular events such as Walking Wednesdays, special events such as International Walk to School Day in October, and a Walking School Bus program. Many useful and creative ideas, solutions for responding to implementation challenges, and inspirational stories emerged from these events that formed the foundation of many sites' SRTS programs. For more information, see http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/walking_school_bus.

- **Get the word out (encouragement)**

Sites found creative ways to make children and parents aware of Walk to School events. Ideas include sending children home with flyers that announce the event; give information on SRTS and list drop-off locations; having the principal promote the event during end-of-day announcements the day before the event; and issuing an automated phone message to inform and remind parents.

One site held a pre-event assembly the week before the Walk to School event to build excitement, encourage attendance and deliver walking and biking safety messages. It also held drawing (elementary school) and writing (middle school) contests, prizes were given to winners at the Walk to School event, and teachers whose entire classroom participated were given small prizes.



A pre-event assembly can build excitement, encourage participation & deliver safety messages for Walk to School

TYPES OF WALK TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS

WALKING SCHOOL BUS

- A group of children walking to school with one or more adults
- Can be as informal as two families taking turns walking their children to school or as structured as a planned route with meeting points, a timetable and trained volunteers

WALKING WEDNESDAYS

- Designates one day per week (or per month) as a Walk to School Day, giving families the opportunity to break the driving habit
- Can be any day of the school week

INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

- Held annually in October
- Students and families can be part of a global event as they celebrate the many benefits of walking

- **Develop permission forms/waivers**

Permission forms or liability waivers for students to participate in Walk to School events may also include promotional information about the specific event. Existing materials from online or other sources may need to be adapted for a local program.

- **Use volunteers & remind them**

Walk to School events require involvement of parents or other adults to walk with the children. Law enforcement officers may also be needed if children must cross large or difficult intersections or other crossings.

One week before each Walk to School event, the coordinator at one Safe States SRTS site sent an email to the entire SRTS coalition asking for volunteers. A second email was sent assigning volunteers to drop-off locations along the route to school. After the event, a “thank you” email with positive anecdotes from the event was sent to all volunteers.

Consider contacting key volunteers to remind them the day before or morning of an event. When police officers scheduled to be present along the walking route did not show up the morning of the event, officers riding through the area were able to stop and stay at the main intersection to assist with children crossing.

MAKING WALKING WEDNESDAYS FUN

Once a month on Wednesday mornings, over 75 children and parents at one SRTS site walked to school together. All of the “bus captains” (parents) carried bright yellow signs and were welcomed by the principal when the group arrived at school. During another Walk to School event held in partnership with the city’s Safe Kids coalition, local organizations, businesses and other community volunteers greeted children as they arrived at school.



THEME WALKS

Comanche County, OK

To encourage participation and build excitement for its Walk to School events, Comanche County had themes for some walks. One theme reflected the town’s centennial celebration. Parents and teachers dressed up in period costumes and some rode on horses. Students carried old-fashioned lunch pails containing maps of the Walk to School routes.

- **Establish drop-off points (encouragement)**

Several Safe States SRTS sites used drop-off points where parents could bring their children to begin walking to school. In planning Walk to School events, examine where students live to determine if drop-off points are needed to give students who do not live near the school an opportunity to participate in the events. One Safe States SRTS site added drop-off points to its Walk to School event when it found that over half of the school's students were enrolled as magnet students and lived far from the school.

To identify drop-off points, one Safe States SRTS site asked for input from the school's PTA president. She helped find locations that were easily accessible (e.g. along roads used by most parents to get to school), had parking for parents wanting to walk with their children, and were set back from the road to accommodate a large group of walkers. The Safe States SRTS site coordinator then visited each site to seek permission to list the location as an "official" drop-off point. Before promoting these drop-off points, the site coordinator did a "dry run" of each route to identify any concerns, such as distance, traffic or sidewalks. Drop-off points also require help from parents or other adults as students arrive and congregate before starting to walk to school. See http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/dropoff_pickup.

- **Consider pros/cons of Safe Houses (encouragement)**

Some Safe States SRTS sites used Safe Houses along Walk to School event routes. Identified by the site, Safe Houses are homes where students can go in case of any problem or emergency along the route to school. There are pros and cons to this approach. Each person living in the home must voluntarily undergo a

PLANNING

DROP-OFF POINTS

"We always had volunteers walking with the students every day. We had four drop off points because there wasn't a cohesive neighborhood that this school was drawn from."

A SAFE HOUSE EXPERIENCE

"At one point, we had to utilize the safe house. That was really interesting because the little lady that was at the Safe House walked with the kids that day. Then she started walking and she got really involved in the program."



SAFE HOUSES

Union County, OH

Safe Houses are homes where students can go in case of emergency or any problem along a SRTS program route to school. Each person living in the home must voluntarily undergo a background check. The Safe States SRTS program in Union County, OH used signs such as this one to designate which homes were Safe Homes.

background check. A noticeable, permanent sign is displayed in the same general location at each Safe House along the route. Safe Houses can also serve as gathering points for students to begin walking to school or to wait for other students to join them and then walk to school. In one site, Safe States SRTS program funds were allocated to defray the cost of background checks for volunteers.

Some sites reported concerns with using Safe Houses. For example, Safe House residents were supposed to take down their sign if they were not at home or otherwise available during the morning walk to school. However, providing an indication that the resident is not at home raised the concern of potential robbery. During walks to school, instead of pointing out houses considered safe, the adults walking with students identified houses to stay away from, such as those that are abandoned.

- **Review safety tips before each walk (education)**

During the second Walk to School event in one site, some parents were not following pedestrian rules of the road, allowed children to walk in the streets and did not keep the group sufficiently together so all children could be easily monitored. The Safe States SRTS site created a short safety briefing for volunteers to review prior to each walk (e.g. walk on the sidewalk, stop at crossings to wait for the group). It also incorporated safety tips in the flyers for



ADDRESSING SAFETY

Mecklenburg County, NC

Safety is a common concern when doing a Walk to School event. This was the case in Charlotte, NC (Mecklenburg County) where children walking from two drop-off points had to go along one of the city's busiest roads. Children walking to school had to cross several busy business driveways and contend with traffic at two busy breakfast food chains.

Prior to the Safe States SRTS program's first event – International Walk to School Day in October – coalition members contacted most of the businesses along the route to inform them of the event, alert them to the increased pedestrian traffic that would occur that morning, and ask if the program could put a sign on their property to alert their customers who were driving. While no fast food was served during any of the Walk to School events, a local fast food chain sent its mascot to walk with the children. Not only did this get the children excited about walking, but it was a great way to get the attention of drivers.

future Walk to School events. Another Safe States SRTS site held a school-wide assembly to provide students with pedestrian safety and rules of the road information.

- **Conduct stranger danger programs (education)**

As part of the education and skill-building of Walk to School events, a local police department conducted stranger danger programs for students at the participating school.

- **Consider incentives (encouragement)**

School officials and the local health department worked together to develop and fund an incentive punch card program at one site.



Punch cards – like this one attached to a backpack – tracking how many times students walk or bike to school were popular incentives. Students could accrue punches to earn prizes.

Students' cards were punched when they walked or biked to school. They earned prizes such as tennis shoe charms and physical activity equipment. Another site created a Golden Sneaker Trophy (a tennis shoe spray-painted gold atop a trophy pedestal) that was awarded monthly to the school classroom with the highest

number of students walking or biking to and from school.



A GOLDEN INCENTIVE

Maricopa County, AZ

Maricopa County's Safe States SRTS program created the Golden Sneaker Trophy – a memorable, successful and inexpensive incentive for student participation in walking to school. The trophy – an old tennis shoe spray-painted gold – was awarded each month to the school classroom with the highest number of students walking or biking to school. The winning classroom was determined by collecting data through the Student Arrival and Departure Tallies. The Safe States SRTS coordinator reported that the trophy was very popular among students, who enthusiastically competed for it each month.

- **Anticipate liability concerns**

Safe States SRTS sites had to respond to frequent concerns about liability. The concerns focused mostly on the site's or school's liability of children walking to school, using Safe Houses and operating drop-off points. As mentioned above, some sites used permission forms and/or liability waivers signed by parents. One site navigated around liability concerns. Instead of the school sponsoring the event or requiring background checks for Safe House residents, the Walking School Bus program was operated as a grassroots effort among individual parents who agreed to walk with their children to school.

ADDRESSING LIABILITY

"The way that our school and our parents addressed liability with the Walking School Bus was that our school didn't sponsor it. The school didn't assume any liability because it was just a group of parents on this street agreeing to walk with their kids to school."

Real community heroes help children walking to school

"Our kids walk to school every day. The garbage collectors travel the same route the kids walk. They were picking up trash one day when there was a student walking to school and two cars behind the garbage men. The second car decides to pass the first car, which is behind the garbage truck. The students are walking in the road because at this part of our route, they have to get out and walk in the street because there is no sidewalk.

So the garbage men step off of the garbage truck, block the road, and scream at the driver, 'Watch out for our kids! Don't you know they're walking to school!' The little kids all cheered for the garbage men.

It was incredible. That story got published in the local newspaper, and we saluted our garbage men and our volunteers during our volunteer theme walk in April. All the kids had their picture taken with the garbage truck."

Bicycle rodeos

Bicycle rodeos provide active learning through a series of on-bike activities offered in a controlled environment. Several Safe States SRTS sites conducted bicycle rodeos as part of their efforts to increase the number of children using safe, active transportation to and from school. The example below describes how one site organized and held a successful bicycle rodeo.

BIKE RODEO

Eastern Highlands Health District (Tolland), CT



To promote safety while biking to and from school, the Safe States SRTS program in Tolland, CT (Eastern Highlands Health District) conducted a bike rodeo at the elementary school. To maximize participation, the rodeo was held on a spring evening in conjunction with the school's annual wellness fair, which is a popular and well-attended event. Features of the bike rodeo included:

- Diverse partners, including volunteers from the elementary school, a local Safe Kids coalition, a local bicycle shop owner, members of a local bicycle racing team, a local Boy Scout Troup, state transportation representatives, law enforcement, and health department staff;
- Free bicycle helmets, donated by the state's transportation institute, for children without a helmet or whose helmet did not fit;
- Helmet fittings, so children would know how to safely wear their helmets;
- Bicycle adjustments done by the local bicycle shop owner (who brought bicycle tune-up tools) and another seasoned bicycle repairman to make sure the bicycles were safe to ride and that children knew how to take care of them;
- Education on rules of the road and time to practice those rules on a small test course;
- Encouragement and expertise from the members of the local bicycle racing team;
- Incentive items, bicycle safety fliers from state troopers and the health district, and reflector zipper pulls; and
- Participation from over 300 students and family members, with about 150 students participating in rodeo activities.

Vehicle Anti-Idling Campaign

One site implemented a vehicle anti-idling campaign during afternoon student pick-up after school. As part of the local Safe States SRTS site's goal to promote a safe environment for children going to and from school, the campaign set objectives to improve the air quality around the school, encourage fewer parents to drive and reduce the potential of children getting struck by a vehicle, since parents may be in less of a hurry if they sit with their cars turned off.

Central to the campaign was an Anti-Idling Demonstration held in April during National Public Health Week. A letter and fact sheet titled "Idling Gets You Nowhere" was sent home with all students to let parents know that during school dismissal, students would be outside asking parents to turn off their cars while waiting to pick up their children. Students held anti-idling signs and passed out window clings with messages about the importance of not idling. If parents did not turn off their cars, the students knocked on the window and politely



ANTI-IDLING CAMPAIGN

Cleveland, OH

Students at this Cleveland Safe States SRTS program school had an unusual homework assignment one day: to tell their mothers and fathers to turn off their running cars when they dropped off and picked up their kids from school the next day. The homework assignment was part of an Anti-Idling Campaign developed by this local SRTS program to promote clean air as part of an overall safe environment for children going to and from school.

During student pick-up after school, a group of students equipped with signs declaring "No Idling: Young Lungs at Work" and "This is an idle-free zone!" walked up to parents' cars, knocked on windows, politely asked them to turn off their vehicles while waiting, and told them of the environmental and health dangers of idling their vehicles. They also handed out "Idle-free" window clings for parents to hang in their vehicle windows. Parents responded positively and shut off their vehicles.

The parents were informed ahead of time about the event. A letter and fact sheet were sent home several days before the event. The Anti-Idling Campaign was also timed to coincide with National Public Health Week.

reminded parents of the health and environmental hazards of idling vehicles.

The Anti-Idling Campaign also included a free workshop for parents entitled “Young Lungs at Work: Asthma & Air Pollution.” Held in the evening at the participating Safe States SRTS school, the workshop addressed the symptoms of asthma, how air pollution affects children with asthma and how to protect children from the dangers of air pollution and secondhand smoke. The presentation was given by a local physician/university professor.

Long-term goals

In addition to the above activities that reflect mostly short-term or grant-related goals among Safe States SRTS sites, several sites also worked on long-term goals as part of their program implementation. The goals often included fine-tuning short-term activities for ongoing inclusion at the school and growing the number of schools to the health department’s SRTS planned activities in future.

STEP 6: EVALUATE THE PLAN

Each Safe States SRTS site conducted its own program evaluation with the help of an external evaluator contracted through Safe States. The experiences and lessons learned from developing and implementing a comprehensive, focused program evaluation are presented below. Evaluated outcomes from each Safe States SRTS site are also presented.

Tips for a SRTS evaluation

- **Develop a tailored evaluation plan**
An external evaluator contracted through Safe States worked with each Safe States SRTS site to describe evaluation questions of interest for each site and craft an evaluation plan to help answer these questions. The questions were developed based upon the content of each site's original mini-grant proposal and discussions between site coordinators and the external evaluator early in the grant year. Each plan included key evaluation questions, data collection methods for answering each evaluation question and the frequency for collecting these data. Figure 5 compiles the evaluation questions of most interest to each of the six Safe States SRTS sites. These evaluation questions would likely be relevant to many other SRTS programs in the U.S. Not all sites used all of the questions presented in Figure 5, but rather focused on three or four key questions.

Safe States SRTS site coordinators reported many benefits of developing an evaluation plan prior to the start of program activities. These included keeping them on task, organized and knowing that they were moving in the right direction with program activities. Additionally, site coordinators reported a better understanding of the need for evaluation from the project's initiation to ensure accurate collection of baseline data.

BENEFITS OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

"It was a lot of work, but I think we got a lot out of it and it made me look at things that wouldn't have even been on my radar."

"The evaluation plan helped me stay on task and kept me organized."

"The evaluation plan helped me know that I was moving in the right direction."

Figure 5. Compiled evaluation questions from Safe States SRTS program sites**Coalition health**

- Have we included the “right” people on the SRTS task force/coalition?
- Is the coalition representative of the community and the resources within it?
- Are coalition members actively engaged in designing, implementing and sustaining SRTS in the participating school(s)?

Awareness

- Has community awareness of the benefits and goals of SRTS increased?
- Is the community aware of the benefits of SRTS and walking and bicycling in general? Has this awareness increased among key community subgroups (teachers, parents, students)?

Knowledge

- Did the level of knowledge about safe walking and bicycling practices to and from school increase among the student population at the participating school(s)?

Support

- Has the level of excitement around walking and bicycling to school increased among students attending the participating school(s)?
- Has support increased for:
 - the SRTS program among parents with children attending the participating school(s)?
 - walking and bicycling to/from school among parents with children attending the participating school(s)?
- Did the SRTS program establish community support for SRTS by informing parents, residents and community leaders of planned objectives and expected outcomes?
- Is the community engaged and receptive to SRTS activities?
- Did buy-in for a SRTS program increase within the community near the participating school(s)?

Behavior

- Did the number of students who walk and bicycle safely to school increase?

Environment

- Was traffic congestion reduced at each participating school during student drop off and pick up?

Resources

- What are the resources (monetary, staff time) required to implement the SRTS program in the participating school(s)?

Sustainability

- Do the long-term plan of action and SRTS program tool kit provide useful information for:
 - sustaining the SRTS program within the participating school(s)?
 - expanding the SRTS program into other schools?

Other

- Do differences emerge in program design, implementation and results of SRTS programs that take place in communities with varying socioeconomic status?

- **Use evaluation tools relevant to SRTS**

Safe States SRTS sites identified many evaluation tools that can help a SRTS program assess the many factors related to active

transportation and safe routes to school. Ideally, the assessments are conducted at the beginning (before any activities are implemented), middle and end of the program. Evaluation tools used by the Safe States SRTS sites include those listed below. Not all sites used all tools. They are:

- Walkability/bikability audits to identify potential routes to school, positive features or barriers to a safe route, problems to be addressed through the SRTS program (e.g. need for sidewalks, signage);
- A Parent Talley Form that assessed information such as the number of parents who allow their children to walk to school and reasons for not allowing children to do so;
- A Student Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet administered in student homeroom classes to assess variables such as if students walk to school, why/why not, students' knowledge of pedestrian and bicycle safety;
- Other student arrival/departure tallies to measure students' means of transportation during school drop-off and pick-up;
- Other observational surveys (e.g. traffic congestion);
- Counts of the number of students and/or parents or other adults participating in program activities such as Walk to School events and bike rodeos;
- A coalition assessment tool (Partnership Self Assessment Tool <http://www.cacash.org/psat.html>); and
- Anecdotal evidence was also collected by some sites.

See **Appendix B** for examples and links to these and other SRTS program evaluation tools.

- **Plan for data collection, analysis & reporting**

Identify how SRTS coalition members can help. For example, local law enforcement may be willing to complete traffic and/or speeding surveys. Health department staff may be willing to help with survey design and data analysis and reporting. In one Safe States SRTS site, the site coordinator sent electronic copies of the Parent Survey and Student Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet to the school principal, who would send the Parent Survey home with each student and include a cover letter explaining the importance of returning the completed form.

Analyzing the sometimes overwhelming amount of program data prompted one Safe States SRTS site coordinator to recommend using the standard Parent Survey and Student Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet, which can be faxed and analyzed from the National Center for Safe Routes to School website. In a national

effort to be able to share data across sites and states and allow for more comprehensive state and national program evaluation, the national center developed these standardized data collection and other forms for use by state and local SRTS programs. (See <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources>). Several site coordinators also emphasized the need to adapt and tailor existing data collection instruments and evaluation tools to be relevant and useful to local sites.

- **Consider incentives**

Creative incentives may encourage participation in school, teacher, parent, and student surveys throughout the program's timeline. Incentives helped students to return completed parent surveys to their teachers, and teachers were more likely to complete the Student Arrival and Departure Tallies that measure students' modes of transportation to and from school. One Safe States SRTS site gave pens and pencils for students, organized pizza parties through the school and gave gift cards to teachers to reward completed surveys and tallies. This site also created the Golden Sneaker Trophy (an old tennis shoe, spray-painted gold) that was awarded each month to the classroom with the greatest number of walkers and bikers to school. The winning classroom was determined by the Student Arrival and Departure Tallies.

Outcomes from Safe States SRTS sites

The program evaluation questions posed by each of the six Safe States SRTS sites varied, as did the desired outcomes. Desired outcomes ranged from changing individual and community level perceptions that walking safely to school is possible, to improving safety while walking along SRTS routes or expanding an existing SRTS program. While all sites approached the program evaluation with hard work and effort, some sites were able to implement their evaluation plans as intended, while others faced challenges or delays that made it difficult to conduct evaluation with the desired rigor. While it was not possible to effectively compare similar variables across the six sites, major success and outcomes – both intentional and unintentional – of the Safe States SRTS site were captured. This information was gathered by talking with the six site coordinators and several coalition members from each site to identify major program successes.

- **Major program successes**

Safe States SRTS site coordinators were asked to report their major program successes for the year, which are summarized in Figure 6. These successes were due in part to the extensive

planning that the sites and their coalitions conducted from the beginning and throughout their SRTS programs.

**Figure 6. Goals attained and major successes
among Safe States SRTS program sites**

Goal attained/success	Evidence
Cleveland, OH	
Implemented anti-idling campaign	Tallied media hits. Received positive response from parents and enthusiasm from students participating in program. Area planning group for Northeastern Ohio interested in partnering on future grant proposals and getting broader district involvement
Conducted National SRTS Training	Training was at capacity, received positive feedback, generated interest in bringing training to other neighborhoods
Comanche County, OK	
Reduced traffic congestion around school	Established alternative drop-offs for students to join Walking School Bus; traffic counts indicated reduced traffic at student drop off and pick up
Increased safety around school	Accomplished by having five parents walk with children in morning and afternoon
Conducted Walking School Bus and Theme Walks	Great parent and community support for theme walks
Eastern Highlands Health District (Tolland), CT	
Built community awareness and support	Schools, administrators, teachers, parents, and town administration came together around active transportation and how it involves schools
Conducted bike rodeo	Significant participation (300-400 children) at event, support from partners who had never attended coalition meetings
Maricopa County, AZ	
Conducted Walk to School events	300 students, parents, teachers, others participated in International Walk to School Day event
Conducted bike rodeo	100 students without proper safety equipment were fitted for/received bike helmets
Used Golden Sneaker Trophy	Continues to be a sustainable incentive to walk/bike to school
Mecklenburg County, NC	
Created permanent project in community with an active, engaged coalition that will not dissolve when funding ends	Coalition formed and a new position at the local health department was created for a SRTS coordinator
Conducted walking activities despite busy area	Carried out some walking programs at elementary school
Health department invested in a SRTS coordinator position	Hired health educator with primary responsibility to coordinate SRTS efforts
Union County, OH	
Participated in National SRTS Training	Training prepared coalition members to coordinate and conduct SRTS initiatives, brought them together as a coalition
Put key programs in place	Revitalized Safe Houses program

- **Unintended outcomes**

Many positive, although perhaps unintended, outcomes were reported by Safe States SRTS sites. The examples below illustrate the broad impact of the six public health-led SRTS programs.

- ***Among coalition members***

Some Safe States SRTS coalition members were able to apply knowledge and experience gained from the SRTS program to other aspects of their jobs. Some were employed in positions (e.g. health class instructor, injury prevention/safety) that enabled them to establish SRTS programs in other schools and apply lessons from the Safe States SRTS program to other aspects of their jobs.

Coalition members reported that the Safe States SRTS program provided them with opportunities for professional growth. For example, a person who worked for a large health promotion initiative said working with the program helped her better understand what factors contribute to readiness for and successful implementation of a SRTS program (supportive principal, parents who value the program, consistency in program implementation such as walking even when it is snowing). She plans to integrate this knowledge into her work with other schools.

Coalition members also reported benefitting in personal ways from the Safe States SRTS program. These anecdotes including living near the school where SRTS was conducted, learning more about their towns and gaining a renewed sense of hope from implementing a successful SRTS program and working together as a community.

- ***Among schools, parents & students***

Other unintended yet positive outcomes from Walk to School events were reported. Several elementary school principals noted:

- a new sense of safety in allowing children to walk to school (because they are accompanied by an adult);
- children getting to school on time and being ready to learn;
- an increase in attendance and on time arrivals;
- improvements in the relationships among teachers, students, parents, and the community;
- new relationships within the community (inside and outside of the school) that made the school environment safer;

UNINTENDED OUTCOMES OF SRTS INVOLVEMENT

- SRTS knowledge and experience applied to other areas of job
- Professional growth
- Personal growth
- Increased sense of safety for children walking to school
- Timely school attendance by students
- Improved relationships among students, teachers and parents
- Increased parent volunteerism
- Increased, improved school/health department partnerships

- an increase in volunteering at the school, since parents walked their children to school and then offered to help in other ways once there; and
- a good relationship with the health department that has increased access to a variety of public health information (e.g. on juvenile diabetes, heart disease, multiple sclerosis) that can be shared with parents and the community.

Safe States SRTS program improves relationships among key program partners

Safe States SRTS program sites reported that a successful SRTS program created or enhanced a sense of community and connection in the neighborhood.

In the community

“It improved the relationship between the teachers and students, parents and the community. Everyone liked the program—we had a lot of positive feedback. People would pull up in their cars and tell us what a great program it was and how much they enjoyed it. We had several people —grandparents, parents — who would walk on the route with us and it gave us a chance to get to know them.”

Between teachers and parents

“Some of our parents felt uncomfortable about coming to school because they had their own negative experience or they were intimidated, so we tried to take those barriers down. The same parents that we don’t see at school very often would meet us at the corner with their kids and we could at least say ‘How are you doing?’ and talk about what happened that day.”

Between teachers and students

“It was nice to have that time to bond with the kids. When you hit the doors at school in the morning, sometimes there are real pressing things that have happened at home the night before or something that the kids would like to talk about, but the teacher’s taking role, getting the class started. But on the Walking School Bus, the kids would have a chance to talk with someone before they got to school. Sometimes we would hear some pretty sad stories, but we got to be a part of their lives because we were right there in their surroundings.”

Among students

“A lot of the kids buddied up and bonded with each other—older kids and younger kids.”

CHAPTER 4: SUSTAINABILITY & EXPANSION

Another way to examine the outcomes of the Safe States SRTS program is the existence of viable, future plans for continuing or expanding the program. Indicators useful in assessing these outcomes include integration of SRTS concepts or activities into existing or new community programs, the receipt of funds to continue or expand SRTS efforts and the establishment of new personnel or positions to support SRTS.

Sustainability: No- and low-cost ideas

Key steps to building program sustainability do not have to cost a lot of money. Safe States SRTS sites identified many no- or low-cost ways to support sustainability of their programs during and after the mini-grant. The planning done by the six sites during the one-year grant was essential to increasing opportunities for program sustainability.

- **Include long-range planning from the start**

As part of their Safe States SRTS programs, many sites conducted long-range planning to maintain and continue developing the programs beyond the mini-grant funding period. As noted earlier in this report, some SRTS coalitions found it effective to have separate workgroups or sub-committees focus on short-term activities such as Walk to School events and long-term goals such as expanding the SRTS program to other schools, creating opportunities for active transportation in the community and/or seeking additional funding or other resources to sustain the program. Websites for the National Safe Routes to School Program, state and national departments of transportation or education, and the national PTA are good places to begin looking for funding opportunities.

- **Use SRTS program data to apply for other funding**

Safe States SRTS sites collected a wealth of useful data during the mini-grant year that can be useful for applying for other program funding. Baseline data from walkability audits and Arrival and Departure Tally Sheets can demonstrate need for improved walk to school routes and increased active transportation. Post-intervention data collected can provide evidence to a potential funding source of an existing SRTS program's ability to achieve measurable impact. In one site, the city health department and the Safe States SRTS site at a local school collaborated to submit an application to the state department of transportation for funding to support large-scale SRTS programming. Baseline evaluation data collected by the Safe States SRTS site were used to support the application and demonstrate need.

LASTING IMPACT OF SRTS PROGRAM

"As elementary as this sounds, laying the foundation for a SRTS program in this town was key to establishing a long-term presence of SRTS. A coalition was built, and the key stakeholders did come to the table. Because of the coalition-building efforts, the [town] administration, school and school district developed a common language regarding active transportation and how the town and school can work together to make walking and biking safe alternatives for school children."

- **Involve representatives from district, city and county levels**

In addition to parents and principals from individual schools, SRTS sites can build a foundation for sustainability by involving

Involving school district representative leads to policy changes

“When you talk about sustainability, in addition to the school principals, we also had a representative from the district on our coalition. We started to implement some policy and systematic changes in the schools. Had that person not been on our coalition, those things wouldn’t have happened.

For example, in the next school year, for every student who is within a two mile radius of the school – which is our non-bus zone – a statement about encouraging students to walk and bike to school will be written into his or her individual activity fitness plan. When the physical education teacher goes over their individual activity and fitness plan, it will be a topic of conversation. We can definitely talk about sustainability and I think that’s really going to move the program.”

administrators or other representatives at the school district, city and county levels. With this involvement, a single SRTS program is better positioned to expand to other schools and maintain broad, high level support over time regardless of the program’s funding status.

- **Include SRTS in community plans**

SRTS programs may be sustained by including them in existing or new community plans, initiatives or programs. For example, one school district included the general concept of SRTS in its strategic plan and plans to have community service officers assigned to elementary schools to ensure safe walking routes for elementary schools students. One city took great interest in SRTS while working with the Safe States SRTS site to create a walking map and proposed that the SRTS program could fit within the community’s proposed plan for bike-trail pathways.

- **Hold strategic planning meetings**

One site decided to hold a series of strategic planning meetings to add strength and direction to the coalition’s long-term goals of promoting the SRTS program and raising awareness of the coalition as a resource in the community.

SRTS PROGRAM LAYS FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE EFFORTS

“The participation of the school administration, the school district administration, and the town administration (including the town manager, town parks and recreation director, town planning director, town public works director, and the town social services director) this year has created a solid framework in the town for future year’s activities.”

SRTS PROGRAM INSPIRES LARGER COMMUNITY GOALS

“Our goal is we hope to eventually establish a wellness community. We want our community to be this big hip, fun, active place that people want to visit. I think Safe Routes to School has inspired a lot of people in the community.”

- **Find a home for the SRTS coalition**

To prevent a coalition from disbanding when grant funding ends, consider where the coalition may align with other groups and continue to thrive. An existing health department initiative (e.g. injury prevention, cardiovascular health) or a community-based organization may allow the SRTS coalition to function as a sub-committee or some other entity within its structure. When the mini-grant ended, one Safe States SRTS coalition was folded into the city's "Fit Kids" obesity prevention initiative to maintain quarterly meetings, keep SRTS efforts going in the community and reach additional community members with concerns relevant to active transportation. Another site incorporated its local SRTS program into a large, city-wide public health initiative at the beginning of its project, allowing for a smooth step toward sustainability when the mini-grant ended.

- **Provide resources for future efforts**

When the mini-grant ended, some Safe States SRTS sites provided the participating SRTS schools with information and materials that would help them continue and build upon their SRTS efforts. For example, several sites developed a SRTS Resource Guide to help schools start or continue a SRTS program in the future. The guide contained information on planning and implementing a variety of SRTS activities (e.g. walk to school events, bike rodeos) and lists contact information of local agencies and organizations that can support and/or assist with SRTS programs. One site left the resource guide with the SRTS school at the end of the school year for it to use, add to and improve upon, and then share it with other schools interested in participating in future SRTS programs. Another site worked with two elementary schools to ensure that Walk to School parental consent forms and a SRTS informational packet (a fact sheet, Walking School Bus map and information about the walks) would be distributed to parents during student enrollment for the next school year.

- **Involve businesses**

Businesses along Walk to School routes that participated in Walk to School events during the funded grant period may be willing to continue their support if asked. Businesses can continue to support these events with simple, no or low-cost activities such as posting a Walk to School sign in front of their business on future Walk to School day events.

SRTS PROGRAM INSPIRES LARGER COMMUNITY GOALS

"Our goal is that we hope to eventually establish a wellness community. We want our community to be this big hip, fun, active place that people want to visit. I think Safe Routes to School has inspired a lot of people in the community."

Sustainability: Ideas for securing funding and personnel

Several Safe States SRTS sites also built program sustainability by securing additional funding and establishing new personnel or positions to support SRTS efforts. Sites that demonstrated these types of sustainability are summarized below in Figure 7. The long list of future funding and personnel available for the Safe States SRTS sites indicates the benefit of time spent planning and developing a strong SRTS program foundation.

Figure 7. Building program sustainability through funding and personnel: Examples from Safe States SRTS sites	
Cleveland, OH	
• Cleveland Department of Health awarded Ohio Department of Transportation funds for infrastructure and non-infrastructure enhancements in three schools, one of which was a Safe States SRTS site • Full-time city wide community organizer for Cleveland Neighborhood Development Corporation will be hired to help spread SRTS messages citywide • SRTS will be a community-based intervention within the Cleveland STEPS to a Healthier U.S. program • SRTS will be included in school district strategic plans	
Comanche County, OK	
• SRTS will be included in the city's bike-trail pathways program • School will provide monetary support to maintain a crossing guard	
Maricopa County, AZ	
• Through Arizona Department of Transportation funds, Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) will conduct education of students, faculty, staff, and parents about benefits of active transportation at four sites • An intern is fully dedicated to the SRTS program	
Mecklenburg County, NC	
• The health department will support a full-time SRTS coordinator	
Union County, OH	
• The Safe Community Safe Kids Coalition received a Safe Kids International pedestrians grant for engineering and infrastructure activities • The Ohio Department of Transportation will fund the Marysville Exempted Village School District to develop active transportation plans for four schools • Marysville Police Department will use a law enforcement grant to help fund voluntary background checks for Safe Home Program volunteer residents	

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Safe States thanks the many individuals who contributed to the Public Health-Led Safe Routes to School Programs: Experiences from Six Health Departments document.

This document would not have been possible without the participation of six local health departments. These six sites participated in a one-year Safe States mini-grant program and shared their successes and barriers so that others might learn from their experiences. Safe States is grateful for the contributions of program coordinators at the six mini-grantee health departments.

Meghan Estes
Cleveland Department of Public Health (Cleveland, OH)

Janette New
Comanche County Health Department (Lawton, OK)

Ande Bloom
Eastern Highlands Health District (Tolland, CT)

Zoraida Ettrick, Toby Urvater
Maricopa County Department of Public Health (Phoenix, AZ)

Kerry Burch, MPH
Mecklenburg County Health Department (Charlotte, NC)

Shawn Sech
Union County Health Department (Marysville, OH)

Safe States also appreciates the funding support and insightful input provided on the document from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Resources available on the National Center for Safe Routes to School website were also consistently utilized by the Safe States mini-grant awardees.

Leslie Fierro, MPH, conducted an evaluation of the Safe States SRTS mini-grantee activities. Kristen Lindemer wrote and edited the document. Michelle Wynn, MPH, of Safe States, provided editorial comments. Jamila Porter, MPH, of Safe States, provided graphic design and layout of the final document.

APPENDIX A: Descriptions of Safe States SRTS Sites

A summary of the activities completed by the six Safe States SRTS sites is presented below.

Cleveland Department of Public Health (Cleveland, OH)

The Cleveland Department of Public Health (CDPH) is located in Cleveland, OH. This site was unique in that the school they chose to work with was a school located in a large metropolitan area. The school was chosen because of its historical SRTS work. The Safety Committee, one of many at the school, planned most of the SRTS activities. The committee included the principal, teachers, parents and students. As time progressed, a transition was made from a full committee to a taskforce.

The taskforce held a small kick-off meeting where their concerns for the students' safety were expressed. In 2006, there were over 700 school zone traffic citations issued in the city of Cleveland. The school is surrounded by busy intersections and main thoroughfares. These concerns reaffirmed the need to enhance SRTS activities.

A walkability audit was conducted and shared with other city departments to ensure that issues that could easily be addressed could be captured. They found that crosswalks needed repainting, new signals needed to be installed and the sidewalks and abandoned houses along the route to school posed a threat to the students. It was also discovered that a large percentage of students were asthmatic and were considered medically fragile. From this, a need for anti-idling efforts arose.

The Cleveland site also chose to plan their activities in direct connection to the SRTS 4 E's. The taskforce decided to participate in International Walk to School month (Education, Encouragement and Enforcement); develop a stranger danger course (Education); develop/enhance Walking School Buses (Education and Encouragement); and hold quarterly taskforce meetings and complete walkability audits (Education and Engineering). The CDPH, with their coalition, developed the Cleveland SR2S Travel Plan as a guide to implement the activities. They also received support from the American Lung Association for an anti-idling campaign. Promotional items were given out to parents to remind them to turn off their cars rather than sit at the school with the cars idling. Signage

was installed at the school to support the campaign.

Evaluating these activities was performed with audits, parent surveys and student tallies. Unfortunately, weather issues and high flu instances impacted some of the activities. There was, however, a decrease in tardiness noted. The principal believes this is due to the Walking School Bus.

Though there were barriers throughout the grant year, the CDPH received funding from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to support their future efforts, and SRTS activities will be implemented in multiple sites around the city of Cleveland.

Comanche County Health Department (Lawton, OK)

The Comanche County Health Department (CCHD) is located in Lawton, OK. When CCHD decided to apply for Safe States grant funds, they felt the best approach to forming a coalition to help carry out the SRTS activities was to form a committee in the previously existing Lawton Fit Kids Coalition (LFK). This coalition was able to identify a good cross section of key community stakeholders and felt their focus areas (childhood obesity and inactivity) could be addressed through activities implemented in the SRTS project. Comanche County was one of the sites that received the additional \$3,000 of funding and a mentor. This funding was used to host a national SRTS training in their area. The training helped engage other schools interested in starting a SRTS program, coalition members and Lawton City Planners. The funding also allowed the site coordinator to attend the “Walk/Bike California 2007” conference where she gained insight into the engineering process and learned how to advocate for policy changes for a safer walking and biking community.

CCHD carried out their SRTS activities at two elementary schools. The coalition began work on identifying solutions to the issues of traffic congestion and safety around these schools. The goal was to identify solutions that were not intrusive to the schools. As work continued, they discovered that the solutions could be found by using the 4 E’s as a guide. The Lawton Police Department (LPD) agreed to educate the students through presentations at the school on pedestrian and bicycle safety, and the teachers and principals agreed to implement classroom discussion on those topics (Education). School officials provided options on how to encourage students to walk and bike. This use of incentives helped in this area (Encouragement). In an effort to reduce potential risks in the environment beyond traffic, such as abduction, assaults, bullying and bad weather, each school identified “Safe Houses” along the route to school. Safe houses are

homes along the route to school where children can seek shelter if they feel they are in danger. They were also used as places to gather for a Walking School Bus. Homeowners and other occupants of the home received information requesting them to volunteer to be a designated Safe House, and each person living in the home voluntarily underwent a background check. Permanent, tamper proof signs were displayed at each home identified as a Safe House. The desired effect of this activity was that there would be a large number of students safely walking to school (in a Walking School Bus) and that there would be a decrease in traffic around the school. The SRTS committee also met with the city of Lawton to request additional signage to identify crosswalks and no stopping/standing/parking areas, to repair sidewalks, and to request a one-way street near the school. Though they were not able to get the one-way street, the city of Lawton did repaint crosswalks and install signage around the school (Engineering). The LPD agreed to increase their presence at the two elementary schools to monitor speed through school zones. They issued warnings to traffic violators including parents parked under the “No Stopping/Standing/ Parking” signs (Enforcement).

The CCHD and the LFK coalition also implemented innovative approaches to other SRTS activities. Perhaps the most notable initiative was their “themed walks.” These walks were designed to be interactive and to increase participation in walking activities. The first themed walk was the “Centennial Walk.” This was done in conjunction with the one-hundredth anniversary of Oklahoma’s statehood. The walkers dressed up in costumes from the 1900s and were given trail mix along the way. Walkers also participated in the “Volunteer Walk.” This walk was designed to say a special “thank you” to all of the volunteers that helped CCHD promote the SRTS message throughout the year. Cookies were given as a token of appreciation, and the volunteers were recognized for their efforts to keep the children safe. These volunteers included a group of sanitation workers that blocked the road one day as a car tried to illegally pass a group of students walking in a Walking School Bus. They shouted “watch out for our kids” as the children safely passed in the crosswalk. This showcased the impact SRTS was having on the community.

As a part of their evaluation efforts, the Comanche County Health Department conducted traffic counts and student tallies. A decrease in traffic congestion around the two schools and an increase in the number of students who walked to school were noted. Though there was no formal way to measure community buy-in, the program had media coverage at its events and numerous community and state

level presentation requests. There was also an increase in the number of schools interested in SRTS. With the help of Safe States's evaluator, CCHD also conducted the Partnership Self Assessment Tool (PSAT) with their coalition.

Future initiatives of the CCHD include the expansion of SRTS activities to additional schools and the use of Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) funding to build sidewalks at each of those schools.

Eastern Highlands Health District (Tolland, CT)

The Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD), located in Tolland, CT, selected an elementary school in Tolland to carry out its SRTS activities. This school was chosen because of the strong leadership at the school, and the long-term relationship between the school wellness committee and the EHHD health education program. Because there was no SRTS coalition in Tolland, EHHD had to develop a well rounded coalition to help tackle the issue of the informal, "no walker" policy the school had. There were representatives from the school, local public safety officers, regional and state representatives from Safe Kids, the state Safe Routes to School coordinator, as well as store owners. The coalition was developed during the summer which made it difficult to identify interested parents. Once school was back in session, there were several interested parents and students. This helped ensure the coalition would have good representation from the school and key stakeholders. The coalition held informal meetings in the beginning and later formed workgroups to work on various projects.

Plans were made for activities such as Walking Wednesdays, Walking School Bus and a bike rodeo. There was also a workgroup formed to work on long-range planning activities such as major infrastructure projects. The infrastructure/long-range planning work group met several times to review plans and funding sources to carry out these plans in the coming years.

The Safe States evaluator assisted the EHHD early in the project with the selection of various tools for evaluating its program. They participated in a walkability and bikability audit as well as a parent survey and the Partnership Self Assessment Tool (PSAT). Each SRTS activity was evaluated based on participation in the event. The site coordinator is confident that additional evaluation tools will prove helpful when walking and biking are approved means of arriving to school.

The EHHD and the coalition have long-range infrastructure plans though no other funding has been received or identified at this point. They also plan to, at some point, expand educational efforts to other schools and would like to implement walking and biking activities to all schools in the area.

Maricopa County Department of Public Health (Phoenix, AZ)

The Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) located in Phoenix, AZ, chose to work with an elementary school for its SRTS project because of a pre-existing relationship through the Promoting Lifetime Activity for Youth (PLAY) program within the Office of Health Promotion and Education. One of the first steps for the MCDPH was to form a community coalition to help carry out activities. The coalition, called the Site Council, was made up of several key school system employees, parents, a student and key public health department employees. This group of community members would be challenged with the task to plan and evaluate activities to address the lack of bike helmet usage among students.

Several events were planned to help address this issue. The MCDPH, the coalition and the school participated in events such as the International Walk to School Day, a bike rodeo and Walking Wednesdays. One of the first events held was a bike rodeo. MCDPH and the coalition purchased 100 bike helmets to be given away at the rodeo. This event captured a large population of students and teachers that were very enthusiastic about getting properly fitted helmets and other incentives given out at the event. Another event of the SRTS program at the school was Safety Night, which was done in conjunction with the school's annual carnival. MCDPH staff set up a booth that contained helmet fitting information, pedestrian safety light flashers, reflector stickers, safety coloring books, and pens and pencils. MCDPH engaged students, parents and faculty by asking them safety questions in order to receive their safety flashers and pen or pencil.

Planning and implementation of activities, with the help of the coalition, parents and students worked well, however, MCDPH realized the importance of evaluating programs to determine what impact they had on the community. The evaluation plan that was developed by the Safe States evaluator included observations, surveys, tallies, and the Partnership Self Assessment Tool (PSAT). Overall, the MCDPH staff found that incentives worked extremely well to ensure participation from parents, students and teachers.

The MCHD received additional SRTS funding from the Arizona

Department of Transportation and hopes to expand the program to other schools. There is a need to raise awareness about SRTS and educate the surrounding community about the importance of being more active while decreasing negative environmental effects and doing so as safely as possible. Realizing that there is a need for constant communication and more diversity on the coalition, MCDPH hopes that there will be continuing support of community events that reinforce safety messages similar to those disseminated during the mini-grant year.

Mecklenburg County Health Department (Charlotte, NC)

The Mecklenburg County Health Department (MCHD) is located in Charlotte, NC. When it was awarded the Safe States mini-grant, the MCHD met with the group responsible for writing the grant (the site coordinator, the injury prevention specialist and the epidemiology manager) and later with key stakeholders in the community to decide with which school they were going to work. After touring schools by car and on foot, an elementary school was chosen because of its demographics and because it had a good mix of children that walk, bike, ride the bus, and are dropped off by a parent or caregiver.

A kickoff meeting was held and representatives from key agencies in the community were in attendance. This group included BIKES Charlotte, the Carolinas Center for Injury Prevention, and Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation to name a few. The goal of the meeting was to bring together the key stakeholders to promote awareness of the program so that the “brand” of Safe Routes to School was recognizable as the program moved forward. MCHD was one of the sites randomly selected for an additional \$3,000 of funding for coalition sustainability activities and received the help of a mentor. They used this funding to host a national SRTS training for their coalition. Taught by Mark Fenton, the training helped increase awareness of the coalition and its activities and helped the site coordinator better communicate to the County Commission about future projects.

Mecklenburg kicked off their SRTS efforts with a Walk to School Day. A school assembly was held at the elementary school. The students were taught lessons on pedestrian and bike safety as well as how to make themselves visible to drivers. They were given goody bags with safety literature and reflective materials. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) was responsible for identifying drop off points and identifying major intersections that children would need help crossing. Pedestrian and bike safety was a concern for all, however, elementary school parents were more concerned about the safety of

their children. They felt the best way to address these concerns was to have a Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department presence at the school.

Early on in the planning process, the coalition decided that the best way to conduct business was to have short- and long-term subgroups of the coalition meet rather than hold large group meetings. The short-term subgroup focused on the proposed grant activities and the long-term subgroup focused on long-range planning. Long-range planning included how to promote the SRTS message within the county and encourage more schools to participate. The planning was done largely by email and key decisions were made with the help of the PTA at the school. The group decided that there would be a Walk to School Day each month, the school would also participate in a bike rodeo and develop a walking map that would highlight crossing signals, drop off points and sidewalks.

The primary method of evaluating the MCHD SRTS program was through the parent surveys. Though there was some negative feedback concerning safety of the students, the surveys showed that the students were very excited about walking, and the school staff noticed a marked difference in morning congestion. It was more difficult to evaluate the usefulness of the walking map they developed.

The Mecklenburg County Health Department successfully promoted the message of SRTS, and their efforts were rewarded with a fulltime staff person who will focus on SRTS activities in the county.

Union County Health Department (Marysville, OH)

The Union County Health Department (UCHD), located in Marysville, OH, decided the best way to form a coalition was to become a part of an already existing coalition. In the past, the Safe Community/Safe Kids Coalition (SCSK) of Union County had taken a lead role in implementing Walk to School Day events and the logical fit of the SRTS project was apparent. The newly formed coalition expanded a few months into the grant year and included new partners such as the Engineer's Office/Street's Department. Though parental involvement in the coalition was encouraged, few parents actually participated. A UCHD staff person served as chair of the 12 person coalition. They communicated via email when meeting face to face was not possible. Planning was slow initially, but coalition members were energized and became more engaged after the SRTS training that was held mid-year of the mini-grant.

Union County was one of the sites that received an additional \$3,000 of funding and a mentor. The additional funds were used to send two coalition members and a staff person to the National Safe Routes to School Conference in Michigan and to support expenses related to hosting a SRTS training in their area.

The mini-grant proposal had originally projected working with three elementary schools, however a fourth was added. Each was chosen because of its current infrastructure and close community ties providing the potential to expand the walkability and bikability of the students. UCHD also chose to plan their activities using the 4 E's as a guide. Though one of the school's infrastructure issues could not be solved by the coalition in one year's time, work will continue with the school administration on solving some of the current traffic congestion issues and on educational programs to allow some of those students in parent vehicles to walk and/or bike to school (Engineering and Education). The Safe Home Program (a program that identifies a home along the route to school where children can seek shelter if they feel they are in danger or gather for a Walking School Bus) was unveiled to the community. The Marysville Police Department was able to use funds from the Safe States SRTS site to levy additional matching funds through a law enforcement grant. Fifteen hundred dollars was set aside to offset the cost of federal background checks for interested volunteers in that program (Enforcement).

Walk to School Events took place at three of the project elementary schools as well as at additional schools throughout Union County. The events served dual purposes. At one of the events, a new stretch of sidewalk was unveiled. This sidewalk was built using funds from the Safe Kids International Safe Pedestrian Grant received by the SCSK Coalition. Materials on pedestrian safety were also distributed to all participants, and a short presentation was given by members of the coalition covering aspects of safe walking and biking (Education and Encouragement). A community bike rodeo event took place with the help of the SCSK and the Union County Health Department. Though most of the activities took place as planned, the coalition learned one of the challenges of working with schools is the school calendar. There were planned activities that could not take place because of school testing.

The evaluation tools utilized by the Union County Health Department included traffic studies, completed by law enforcement, and student tallies. The site coordinator stated that there needs to be an easier way to administer some of the evaluations. The web-based parent

surveys were not completed at all because of lack of promotion; however, some parent surveys were collected during the Kick Off Nights at the school. There was a high level of participation in the student tallies, but there was so much data that it became difficult to analyze. In future years, those numbers will be entered into the National SRTS database to decrease the work of the staff person and the coalition.

The Union County Health Department and the SCSK Coalition plan to expand the SRTS program to additional schools, repair sidewalks around those schools, and continue with walking and biking to school events. Though there were challenges with timing, weather and not being able to hire an intern, the efforts of the coalition were rewarded with additional funding to carry out their future plans. The UCHD and the SCSK Coalition were awarded Safe Kids International funding for infrastructure projects and to purchase additional incentives to encourage participation in SRTS activities. They also received Ohio Department of Transportation funds to hire an engineering consultant to develop walking routes for three of the schools in the district.

APPENDIX B: SRTS Resources

PARTNERSHIPS/COALITION

- Michigan SRTS- Who's Missing Checklist
<http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org/toolkit.htm> (Under- "Michigan's Safe Routes to School handbook: Additional Files"→SR2S Team→"Who's Missing Checklist")
- Partnership Self Assessment Tool
<http://www.cacsh.org/psat.html>

WALKABILITY CHECKLISTS

- Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center- Walkability checklist [SUGGESTED]
(<http://www.walkinginfo.org/cps/checklist.cfm>)
Available in print version
(<http://www.walkinginfo.org/pdf/walkingchecklist.pdf>) an online tool is also available
(http://www.rwif.org/files/newsroom/interactives/walkability/walk_app.html)
- WABSA- Walkability suitability assessment form
http://www.unc.edu/~jemery/WABSA/documents/walking_method_revised%20021003.pdf
WABSA Guidebook for using assessment forms
<http://www.unc.edu/~jemery/WABSA/documents/wabsa%20guidebook%2003-1029.pdf>
- Walk to School- Walkable routes to school survey
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/pdf/kidswalk.pdf> (Tool C- pp.57-58)
- Oregon SRTS- Physical Activity and Nutrition Program
<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pan/srts/walkform.pdf>
- Atlanta, SRTS- Walk- about checklist
http://www.atlantabike.org/Walk-About_Checklist.pdf
- California Walk to School- Walkability Checklist
http://www.cawalktoschool.com/files/2006/walkability_checklist.pdf (Please note, this checklist is available in 11 different languages at:
<http://www.cawalktoschool.com/toolkit.html>)

BIKEABILITY CHECKLISTS

- Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center- Bikeability checklist [SUGGESTED]
(<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/cps/checklist.htm>)
Available in print version
(<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pdf/bikabilitychecklist.pdf>) an online tool is also available
(http://www.rwif.org/files/newsroom/interactives/sprawl/bike_app.jsp)
- WABSA- Bicycle Suitability Assessment Form
http://www.unc.edu/~jemery/WABSA/documents/bike_method_revised%20101502.pdf
WABSA Guidebook for using assessment forms--
<http://www.unc.edu/~jemery/WABSA/documents/wabsa%20guidebook%2003-1029.pdf>
- Oregon SRTS- Physical Activity and Nutrition Program
<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pan/srts/bikeform.pdf>

AUDIT TOOLS

- School site assessment- Florida
(<http://www.dcp.ufl.edu/centers/trafficsafetied/Documents/Safe%20Way%20to%20School%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>) Found under Section B “Tools” of Safe Ways to School Toolkit
- Neighborhood site assessment- Florida
(<http://www.dcp.ufl.edu/centers/trafficsafetied/Documents/Safe%20Way%20to%20School%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>) Found under Section B “Tools” of Safe Ways to School Toolkit
- School Crossing Safety Audit- Phoenix, Arizona
http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/engineering/phoenix_school_crossing_safety_audit.pdf
- Marin County, SRTS- Safe Routes Checklist
<http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/pdfs/CheckList822.pdf>
- Physical Activity Policy Research Network & America Walks SRTS School Environment Site Assessment
http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/PDF/SCHOOL_SITE_AUDIT_FORM-PAPN_Dec6.pdf
- Santa Barbara, CA (COAST)- Safe Routes to School Checklist (for children and adults)
<http://www.coast-santabarbara.org/routes/index.php?page=routes#resources> (See links under “Safe Routes Checklist” section- English and Spanish versions available- for use with “Safety Matters Letter”)
- Michigan SRTS- School Property Assessment
<http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org/toolkit.htm> (found under “Michigan's Safe Routes to School handbook: Additional Files”→Safe Routes→School Property Assessment)

STUDENT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TALLY SHEETS

- National Safe Routes to School- Student in-class travel tally [SUGGESTED]
http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/evaluation_student-in-class-travel-talley.cfm
Instructions provided at:
http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/evaluation_instructions.cfm
- Michigan SRTS- Student Tally Form & Excel Spreadsheet for Data Entry & Calculations
<http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org/toolkit.htm>
 - Student Tally Form can be found under- “Michigan's Safe Routes to School handbook: Additional Files”→Behaviors & Attitudes→Student Travel Tally Behavior
 - Excel spreadsheet for data entry & calculations can be found under- “Michigan’s Safe Routes to School handbook: Additional Files”→Appendix K: Key the data and create reports→SR2S School Observation & Input Assistant
- Student travel survey- Florida
(<http://www.dcp.ufl.edu/centers/trafficsafetied/Documents/Safe%20Way%20to%20School%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>) Found under Section B “Tools” of Safe Ways to School Toolkit
- Green Communities Active and Safe Routes to School- Hands Up Student Survey (iWalk)
<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/iwalkclub/IWALK-Club-Hands-up-Survey-E.pdf>
- Green Communities- Active and Safe Routes to School- School Tally Sheet

(iWalk)

<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/iwalkclub/IWALK-Club-School-Tally-Sheet-E.pdf>

- Green Communities Active and Safe Routes to School- Sample Student Transportation Survey
<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/index.php?page=aszs> (select Sample Student Transportation Survey)
- Marin County, SRTS- Student Survey, How we traveled to school today
<http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/pdfs/StudentSurvey822.pdf>
- Atlanta, SRTS- Show of hands survey form
http://www.atlantabike.org/Show_of_Hands_Survey_Form.pdf
- Boston- Walk Boston- Quick Show-of-Hands Travel Survey
<http://www.walkboston.org/documents/ToolKitManual.pdf> (p.53)
- Santa Barbara, CA (COAST)- Mobility Survey
<http://www.coast-santabarbara.org/routes/index.php?page=routes#resources> (see link to "Student Mobility Hand Counts")
- Canada (British Columbia): "Way to Go"- Student Travel Survey
http://www.waytogo.icbc.bc.ca/framesets/toolkit/index_tool.html (form)
http://www.waytogo.icbc.bc.ca/framesets/toolkit/index_tool.html (general info)
- Alberta, Canada- Active & Safe Routes to School Resource Manual- Student Survey
http://www.goforgreen.ca/asrts/pdf/Shape_ASRTS_Manual.pdf (p.25)
- United Kingdom (Sustrans)- Student survey
<http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk/index.php?p=TK11>

PARENT SURVEYS, FOCUS GROUPS, INTERVIEWS, ETC

- National SRTS- Parent survey
http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/evaluation_parent-survey.cfm
(note: available in English and Spanish)
Instructions provided at:
http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/evaluation_instructions.cfm
- Michigan SRTS- Parent Survey & Excel Spreadsheet for Data Input & Calculations
<http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org/toolkit.htm>
 - Parent survey can be found under- "Michigan's Safe Routes to School handbook: Additional Files"→Behaviors & Attitudes→Parent Survey (Note- Available in English and Spanish & parent incentive letter is also available)
 - Data entry & Calculation spreadsheet can be found under- Michigan's Safe Routes to School handbook: Additional Files"→Appendix K: Key the data and create reports→SR2S Parent Survey Input Assistance
- Boston- Walk Boston- Parent Survey
<http://www.walkboston.org/documents/ToolKitManual.pdf> (pp. 51-52)
- Parent survey-Florida
(<http://www.dcp.ufl.edu/centers/trafficsafetyed/Documents/Safe%20Way%20to%20School%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>) Found under Section B "Tools" of Safe Ways to School Toolkit
- Parent discussion session (focus group)- Florida
(<http://www.dcp.ufl.edu/centers/trafficsafetyed/Documents/Safe%20Way%20to%20School%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>) Found under Section B "Tools" of Safe Ways to School Toolkit

- Parent survey- Walk to School Colorado
<http://www.cdph.state.co.us/pp/COPAN/resourcekits/walktoschool.pdf>
(Begins on p.10)
- Green Communities Active and Safe Routes to School- Parent Transportation Survey (aka- Sample Baseline Family Transportation Survey)
<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/index.php?page=aszs>
- Walk to School- Parent survey
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/pdf/kidswalk.pdf> (Tool B- pp. 54-56)
- Marin County, SRTS- Parent Survey
<http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/pdfs/ParentSurvey822.pdf>
- Atlanta, GA SRTS- Parent Survey
http://www.atlantabike.org/Parent_Survey.pdf (English)
http://www.atlantabike.org/Parent_Survey-Esp.pdf (Spanish)
- Canada- "Go for Green"- Example Parent Survey
<http://www.goforgreen.ca/asrts/pdf/RoadSafetyFormQuestions.pdf>
- Canada (British Columbia): "Way to Go"- Parent Travel Survey
http://www.waytogo.icbc.bc.ca/framesets/toolkit/index_tool.html (form)
http://www.waytogo.icbc.bc.ca/framesets/toolkit/index_tool.html (general info)
- United Kingdom (Sustrans)- Parent survey
<http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk/index.php?p=TK9>
- Alberta, Canada-Active and Safe Routes to School Resource Manual- Parent Survey (initial and follow-up)
http://www.goforgreen.ca/asrts/pdf/Shape_ASRTS_Manual.pdf (pp.26-29)

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS (similar to parent barriers survey but from child's perspective)

- Michigan SRTS- Student Survey & Excel Spreadsheets for data input & calculations
<http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org/toolkit.htm>
 - Student survey can be found under- "Michigan's Safe Routes to School handbook: Additional Files" → Behaviors & Attitudes → Student Survey (Note- Available in English and Spanish)
 - Calculation spreadsheet can be found under- Michigan's Safe Routes to School handbook: Additional Files" → Appendix K: Key the data and create reports → SR2S Student Survey Input Assistance
- Student activity- Florida
(<http://www.dcp.ufl.edu/centers/trafficsafetyed/Documents/Safe%20Way%20to%20School%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>) Found under Section B "Tools" of Safe Ways to School Toolkit
- Green Communities Active and Safe Routes to Schools- Student Walkability Survey
http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/guide/walkabilitysurvey_web.pdf
- Boston- Walk Boston- Student Travel Survey
<http://www.walkboston.org/documents/ToolKitManual.pdf> (pp.54-56)
- United Kingdom (Sustrans)- Student survey (individual students)
<http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk/index.php?p=TK10>

STUDENT SKILLS ASSESSMENT

- Boston- Walk Boston- Skills Assessment Sheets
<http://www.walkboston.org/documents/ToolKitManual.pdf> (p.63)

MILEAGE TRACKING FORMS

- Michigan SRTS- Bicycle Trip Mileage Log
<http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org/toolkit.htm>
 - Can be found under-“Michigan's Safe Routes to School handbook: Additional Files”→Appendix B: Bicycle Safety→5a. Bicycle Trip Mileage Log
- Michigan SRTS-Motor Vehicle Trip Mileage Log
<http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org/toolkit.htm>
 - Can be found under-“Michigan's Safe Routes to School handbook: Additional Files”→Appendix B: Bicycle Safety→5b. Motor Vehicle Trip Mileage Log
- Student travel log- Green Communities Active and Safe Routes to School
http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/guide/chapter4/chap4_wwwed_log1.pdf
- PEC Log It!- Online log to keep track of number of steps
<http://www.peclogit.org/flashpiece.html>
- America on the Move- AOM Website for Kids
“AOM's Website for Kids is a great way to put energy balance concepts into practice. Teachers can register their classes and ask students to join using a unique group registration code. Kids can then track their daily physical activity by steps or minutes, and enjoy monitoring their progress along interesting online trails.”
http://aom.americaonthemove.org/site/c.krLXJ3PKuG/b.1776821/k.9A5F/For_Schools.htm
- SRTS- Walk and Bike Across America-
<http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/walk/>
Guidebook can be found at:
<http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/Forms/WalkBikeGuide2006.pdf>

TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN OBSERVATION FORMS

- Marin County, SRTS- Traffic Count Form [SUGGESTED]
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/Safe-Routes-2002/forms.html#6> (scroll up to see actual form)
- Alberta, Canada-Active and Safe Routes to School Resource Manual- Pedestrian Count Form
http://www.goforgreen.ca/asrts/pdf/Shape_ASRTS_Manual.pdf (p.30)
- Alberta, Canada-Active and Safe Routes to School Resource Manual- Vehicular Turning Movement Survey
http://www.goforgreen.ca/asrts/pdf/Shape_ASRTS_Manual.pdf (p.31)



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