

Starting a Local Safe Routes to School Program

Prepared By: East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning
Commission

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: Starting a Local Safe Routes to School Program Booklet

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SUBJECT: A step-by-step to starting a local safe routes to school program.

DATE: January 2010

LOCAL PLANNING

AGENCY: East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

SOURCE OF COPIES: East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
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Step 1: Schedule a Feasibility Meeting - Meeting #1

Feasibility Meeting

The first step in the development of a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program at your school or within your community would be to hold a feasibility meeting. The purpose of the feasibility meeting is to find out how much interest and support there is in developing a SRTS program. It is a good idea to invite individuals from a wide range of entities from throughout the community to attend this first meeting which could include one or more representatives from the following:

- School District Administration
- Representation From the Individual Schools
 - Principal
 - Assistant Principal
 - School Nurse
 - Teachers
 - PSL Officer
 - PTO/Interested Parents
- Representation From the Municipality/County/State
 - Public Works Director
 - Community Development Director
 - Local Law Enforcement
 - Parks Director
 - County Health Department
 - County Highway Department
 - County Sherriff's Department
 - Wisconsin Department of Transportation
 - Advocates or individuals interested in SRTS

If you are unsure of some of the topics to discuss at the feasibility meeting on page two is a very brief overview of the SRTS program and a list of sample questions that can be handed out at the feasibility meeting. Also, following the handout is a sample memorandum/invitation for the feasibility meeting and an example of an agenda from a recent SRTS meeting from the Hortonville Area School District.

Handout

The purpose of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is to enable and encourage children K-8th grade, including those with disabilities, to walk and bike to school. The goal is to make bicycling and walking to school safer and more appealing. The SRTS program is based on the principal of the 5-E's: Engineering, Encouragement, Education, Enforcement, and Evaluation. The program facilitates the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution. SRTS funds are limited to children K-8 and to projects located within 2 miles of a school.

Below is a list of questions to help facilitate some discussion about SRTS in your community.

1. What kinds of traffic issues are there at the school and in the surrounding neighborhoods?
 - a. High traffic speed or volume?
 - b. Dangerous intersections or crossings?
2. Are there any safety issues/concerns during pick-up/drop-off?
3. Is there a lack of pedestrian/bicycle facilities around the school or surrounding neighborhoods?
4. Have there been any past incidents or a history of close calls with students being struck by vehicles?
5. What percentage students currently walk or bike to school?
6. What are some of the reason parents' do not allow their children to walk or bike to school?
 - a. Traffic issues/safety?
 - b. Lack of pedestrian/bicycle facilities?
 - c. Stranger danger?
7. Are there any programs already present at the school that could tie into a SRTS program such as a wellness committee or healthy kids committee?



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MEMORANDUM

TO: **(Insert District Name)** Area School District Safe Routes to School Stakeholders

FROM: **(Insert)**

DATE: **(Insert Date)**

SUBJECT: Safe Routes to School Program

There have been some discussions regarding the creation of a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program within the **(Insert District Name)** Area School District. The Safe Routes to School Program is a program that encourages and enables communities to create safe routes for students (K-8) to walk and bike to school. Currently the SRTS Program is funded through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Safe Routes to School Grants. These grants can be used to develop a SRTS Plan, for infrastructure projects (i.e. bicycle and pedestrian improvements), and for non-infrastructure programs (i.e. educational, enforcement, and encouragement programs). More information regarding the WisDOT Safe Routes to School Program can be found at

<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/saferoutes.htm> and more information regarding the East Central Regional SRTS Program can be found at <http://www.eastcentralsrts.org/>.

I would like to invite you to an informational meeting on **(Insert Date, Time, and Location)** to discuss the Safe Routes to School Program and if this is a program that should be pursued by the communities and the school district. Please find an agenda enclosed for your review and let me know if you plan on attending by **(Insert Date)**. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give me a call at 920-751-4770 ext. 6828 or email me at mkbadtke@eastcentralrpc.org.

MEETING NOTICE

HORTONVILLE/GREENVILLE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, January 14th, 2010

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: Town of Greenville Town Hall

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Campus Issues and Concerns for each school (Bruce will bring copies of submitted issues/concerns as well as some correspondence from a parent/town official with some suggestions)
3. Update on student involvement on Hortonville/Greenville SRTS program
4. Update on the WisDOT Safe Routes to School Grant Applications
5. Recap of Regional SRTS Stakeholder Meeting
6. Resources available for Bike to School Day - Thursday, May 20th, 2010
7. Next Meeting
8. Adjourn



St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception
Greenville, WI



Next Steps

If there is a positive response at the initial feasibility meeting and the group decides a SRTS program is something they would like to pursue, the next step is the development of a SRTS task force. The task force can be comprised of individuals present at that initial meeting but other key people not present at the meeting from the list on page one should be invited to be on the task force. Below is the task force for the Hortonville Area School District SRTS program to give an idea of the type of people they included.

Bruce Carew, ChairGreenville Middle School
Harry Steenbock Hortonville Area School District
Dick HuebnerImmanuel Evangelical Lutheran School
J. Everett Mitchell Village of Hortonville
Angela Cottrell Greenville PTO, Parent
Janice Zuege..... Hortonville Elementary School
Dean Schiller Greenville Public Works Director
Jeff Herman..... St. Mary's, Parent
Sandra Schultz..... Hortonville Area School District
Andrew Hogan Town of Hortonville
Brian Bahr.....PSL, Hortonville PD
Matt HaladaWisDOT - NE Region
Melissa Kraemer Badtke East Central WI Regional Planning Commission

Regional SRTS Program

East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has received funds from Wis-DOT to implement a regional SRTS program. A great next step for your local SRTS program would be to join the regional program. There are many benefits to participating in the Regional SRTS program which include the following:

- Development of a **Local SRTS Action Plan** to be included in the Regional SRTS Plan - **this will fulfill the WisDOT requirement of having a SRTS plan in place and make your school or community eligible to apply for infrastructure and non-infrastructure grants**
- Incentives, guidebooks, and kits for Bike to School Day and International Walk to School Day
- SRTS workshops and webinars
- Public Service Announcements

- Staff assistance and resources

Any public or private schools or municipalities that are within the 10 counties of the east central region are eligible to join the program and it is free to participate. The school/task force must register to be a part of the regional SRTS program and the registration forms can be found in the Appendix (B-1, B-2). The only requirements for participating in the program are for each school participating to complete student and parent surveys which will be done the week of **April 19th, 2010** and also for each of the schools to complete bike and walk audits. The ten counties eligible for the program include: Calumet, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Marquette, Menominee, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara, and Winnebago.

Next Meeting

After all of these topics have been covered at the initial meeting and a task force has been organized it is important to set a date, time, and location for the next meeting to keep the ball rolling with the development of the SRTS program.

Step 2: Safe Routes to School Task Force Meeting # 2

Chair & Vice-Chair

The first order of business at the next SRTS meeting will be to elect a chair and vice-chair for the SRTS task force. The chair and vice-chair will be in charge of organizing and running the meetings, putting together meeting agendas, and keeping the task force informed and involved in SRTS activities.

Student Involvement

Another topic for discussion is student involvement in the local SRTS program. Students can offer a different perspective to a SRTS program as they have first hand experiences of many situations that are unique to students. By including students in the SRTS program not only does the program benefit from innovative and exciting ideas but the students also benefit from a great experience. Even though the SRTS program only includes students K-8 it is still a great idea to get high school students involved in the program. High school students have gone to the elementary and middle schools in the recent past and are aware of the issues in regards to walking or biking to school safely. Also, many times traffic around middle and elementary schools is made up of a large percentage of high school student drivers due to the proximity of schools and from high school students dropping off and picking up younger siblings.

Data Collection

A large part of developing a local SRTS program is the collection of data in the form of student and parent surveys. The student survey is simply a tally sheet filled out in the classroom by the teachers and the parent survey is sent home with students in their take home packets. An example of each type of survey can be found in Appendix A-1 and A-2 and both of these surveys are available online from the National SRTS website. The link for the parent survey is http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/evaluation/appendix_b_safe_routes_to_school_parent_survey.cfm and for the student travel tally the link is http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/evaluation/appendix_a_safe_routes_to_school_student_travel_tally.cfm. Both of these surveys can be returned to East Central WI Regional Planning Commission and will then be sent on to the National SRTS center for tabulation. After all the surveys are tallied a report is produced that can be

downloaded electronically to review the results. The student and parent surveys will both be conducted the week of **April 19th, 2010** in order to get a consistent set of data across the region. The surveys must be returned back to East Central WI Regional Planning Commission by **May 7th, 2010** in order for schools to receive their Bike to School Day toolkit.

Other items that can be put on the agenda for discussion at the second SRTS task force meeting are as follows:

Initial Concerns/Observations With Students Walking or Biking to School

Current Community or School Programs Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

Update on Future Trail/Sidewalk Projects

Schedule Next Meeting Time/Date/Location



Step 3: Safe Routes to School Task Force Meeting #3

Survey Results

At the next SRTS meeting the group can discuss the results from the student and parent surveys. There can be a wide range of results from each of the surveys at different schools based on the specific circumstances in place at each school. The survey results can start to give the task for a sense of direction about what are some of the key issues and concerns in their communities and start to spark some ideas about what could be done to resolve these issues.

Participation in Regional SRTS Activities

Schools that participate in the Regional SRTS program will be eligible to receive tool kits for Bike to School Day on **Thursday, May 20th, 2010** and for International Walk to School Day on **Wednesday, October 6th, 2010**. These kits will include student incentives, posters and flyers, along with guidebooks with ideas for different activities schools can have on those days. The guidebook will not only contain activities for students to get to and from schools on those days, but also different activities that can be held right at the school. Some schools do not feel comfortable holding events that would require students to travel to and from school due to hazardous situations such as high traffic speed/volume near the school or lack of pedestrian/bicycle facilities around the school. The deadline for schools to sign up for Bike to School Day is **Friday, March 19th, 2010** to allow time to order materials. More information on International Walk to School Day can be found at <http://www.iwalktoschool.org> which is the international site or at <http://www.walktoschool.org> which is the United States branch of the program.

Bike and Walk Audits for Each School

In order to have their action plans be included in the Regional SRTS plan each school participating in the program will need to conduct bike and walk audits. Each school will need to schedule and conduct their own bike and walk audits. Assistance in the form of training and materials will be available through the Regional SRTS program for the audits. Please contact East Central staff to schedule a bike and walk audit training session and to request the necessary materials to conduct the audits.

Other items that can be put on the agenda for discussion at this meeting are as follows:

Update on Future Trail/Sidewalk Projects

Schedule Next Meeting Time/Date/Location



Step 4: Safe Routes to School Talk Force Meeting #4

Bike and Walk Audit Results

The results of the bike and walk audits will give the task force a more detailed look at what is happening at and around each of the schools involved in the SRTS program. While the student and parent surveys provided important statistical data and give an overall view of concerns the audit results will give more precise locations and what the exact problems are at each of the locations. With all of this data compiled it will allow the SRTS task force to look at some potential ideas for solutions to these issues. When looking at solutions it is a good idea to look at the issues from different aspects and how they could be they relate the 5 E's that are included in the SRTS program:

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

After these different aspects are discussed the task force will be able to start to come up with some recommendations. These recommendations could include a variety of different issues such as ideas that would improve safety for students walking or biking, improved pick-up and drop-off procedures, educational and encouragement ideas for students and parents, along with many others. East Central Regional Planning Commission staff will be available for assistance on developing recommendations as some of the education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation recommendations will be done through the regional SRTS plan. These recommendations will be more general and can be used in the local SRTS action plans while the engineering recommendations for the local action plans will be more specific and detailed for each school.

Appendix A

+	+
<p>8. Has your child asked you for permission to walk or bike to/from school in the last year? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	
<p>9. At what grade would you allow your child to walk or bike to/from school without an adult? (Select a grade between PK,K,1,2,3...) <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> grade (or) <input type="checkbox"/> I would not feel comfortable at any grade</p>	
<p>Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box</p>	
<p>10. What of the following issues affected your decision to allow, or not allow, your child to walk or bike to/from school? (Select ALL that apply)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Distance.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Convenience of driving.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Time.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Child's before or after-school activities.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Speed of traffic along route.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Amount of traffic along route.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adults to walk or bike with.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sidewalks or pathways.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Safety of intersections and crossings.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Crossing guards.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Violence or crime.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Weather or climate.....</p>	<p>11. Would you probably let your child walk or bike to/from school if this problem were changed or improved? (Select one choice per line, mark box with X)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My child already walks or bikes to/from school</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure</p>
<p>Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box</p>	
<p>12. In your opinion, how much does your child's school encourage or discourage walking and biking to/from school?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Encourages <input type="checkbox"/> Encourages <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/> Discourages <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Discourages</p>	
<p>13. How much fun is walking or biking to/from school for your child?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very Fun <input type="checkbox"/> Fun <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Boring <input type="checkbox"/> Very Boring</p>	
<p>14. How healthy is walking or biking to/from school for your child?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very Healthy <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Unhealthy <input type="checkbox"/> Very Unhealthy</p>	
<p>Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box</p>	
<p>15. What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grades 1 through 8 (Elementary) <input type="checkbox"/> College 1 to 3 years (Some college or technical school)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grades 9 through 11 (Some high school) <input type="checkbox"/> College 4 years or more (College graduate)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grade 12 or GED (High school graduate) <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer</p>	
<p>16. Please provide any additional comments below.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>	

Appendix B



EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

A Program of the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
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2009/2010 REGIONAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM - Registration Form

School District: _____

County: _____ Town/City: _____

Chair of Task Force: _____ Phone Number: _____

Title of Chair: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email Address: _____

Vice Chair of Task Force: _____ Phone Number: _____

Title of Vice Chair: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email Address: _____

Task Force Members: (Please use an additional sheet if necessary.)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____



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Please fill out for each school that is participating (This form may be duplicated.)

School Name: _____ **Enrollment Number:** _____

Principal's Name: _____ **Principal's Phone Number:** _____

Mailing Address: _____ **City:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____

Principal's Email Address: _____

1. SRTS Plan Completed: ____ YES ____ NO If yes, date of completion: _____
If SRTS plan is completed, skip to question #4.

2. Student Surveys Completed: ____ YES ____ NO If yes, date of completion: _____

3. Parent Surveys Completed: ____ YES ____ NO If yes, date of completion: _____

4. Are you interested in receiving **staff assistance, guidebooks, and incentives for the following SRTS Events:**

Bike to School Day (May, 2010) ____ YES ____ NO

International Walk to School Day (October, 2010) ____ YES ____ NO

5. Will you be willing to facilitate student participation with your SRTS Program?

____ YES ____ NO

6. Would you like to receive staff assistance for your SRTS Program? ____ YES ____ NO