



SAFE ROUTE NEWS

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Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

Steps to a Successful SRTS Application

Angela Olson SD SRTS Coordinator

Inside this issue:

Steps to a Successful SRTS Application	1
National SRTS Training Course	2
New School Site Planning	3
A Healthy Habit	4
Site's of Interest	5
What's Happening in SRTS	6
No Cost to Low Cost SRTS Activities	7

Safe Routes to School funding is a highly competitive process.

To create a successful Safe Routes to School program and increase your chance of being funded, the following steps may be helpful:

~Educate yourself about the program. Study the "How to Apply" section of the SD SRTS website <http://www.sddot.com/srts/apply.aspx>. The "Getting Started Tool Kit" is especially helpful.

~Create a SRTS Team that includes parents, students, teachers, city and school officials, law enforcement, PTA, health and safety advocates and other interested individuals.

~Request a SRTS presentation or the National SRTS Training Course and encourage your SRTS Team and community to attend.

~Follow the required evaluation process found on the application. Using the information from the evaluations, address the parental concerns and issues as part of your program planning.

~Address the "5 Es": Evaluation, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Engineering in your comprehensive SRTS plan.

~SRTS is about safety, health and changing life-long physical activity habits; address these issues in your comprehensive SRTS

plan.

~Evaluate your motives before applying for this program. If your main purpose is to fund engineering projects, this program will not be a good fit for your community.

~Be specific when listing the items you want funded on your project cost estimate sheet. Explain in your comprehensive SRTS plan how these items will be utilized as part of the program.

To ask questions or to request training see the contact information on the back of this newsletter.

All applications must be postmarked by 4/8/09

Dates to Remember:

November 17, 2008 SRTS applications available

April 8, 2009 SRTS applications due.

National SRTS Training Course Now Available

Angela Olson SD SRTS Coordinator

Recently Cliff Reuer (DOT Traffic and Safety Engineer) and Angela Olson (SD SRTS Coordinator) attended training from National Safe Routes to School to qualify them to teach the SRTS National

Course.

The National SRTS course is designed to help communities establish a common understanding of the comprehensive nature of SRTS that will enable them to increase sound programs

that are based on community conditions, best practices and responsible use of resources.

This one day course, developed by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center and main- (cont. page 2)



National SRTS Training Course Now Available cont. from page 1

tained by the National Center for Safe Routes to School, combines safety, health and transportation issues.

This course is designed for community and state-level audiences. The core content is blended with group discussions, field observation and identification of local problems and solutions. Participants gain experience in identifying problems and solutions in their communities.

The audience includes planners, parents, law enforcement officers, school

administrators, transportation engineers, local advocates and community leaders.

A sample of the course agenda includes:

- ~Why Safe Routes to School Matter: Safety, Health and Transportation
- ~Engineering Strategies
- ~Education and Encouragement Techniques.
- ~Local Issues
- ~Field Exercise at School: Observation of School Environment
- ~Identifying Problems and Solutions - Part 1

- ~Enforcement Strategies
- ~Strategies to Improve Pick-Up and Drop-Off
- ~Field Exercise at School: Observation of School Dismissal
- ~Identifying Problems and Solutions - Part 2
- ~Making it Happen in your Community

For more information and to schedule this training course in your community, contact SD SRTS Coordinator Angela Olson.

Contact information located on page 4

New School Site Planning Brad Remmich SD MPO Coordinator

Traffic and pedestrian safety in and around school areas is a major concern for the parents of children that attend the schools. This is a highly sensitive subject among the public, local and school officials and everyone needs to work together to find solutions to help with the issues. Many of the traffic problems around schools are related to the lack of good guidelines for new school locations, site layouts and the connectivity to the neighborhood it serves.

A number of factors have led to an increase in traffic congestion around schools and the decrease in children walking or bicycling to school. Schools that were built long ago were built in locations next to highways that are now major corridors which creates a safety issue when children attempt to cross busy streets. Another issue is the high cost of land on which to build new schools. To reduce costs, the school chooses cheaper land, which may not be in the most desirable location for children to travel to school.

Specific issues that result in a decrease of children bicycling or walking to school are:

- Increase in school population causes an increase in the school facility size
- School placement
- Traffic circulation and connectivity around the school
- Lack of sidewalks and bicycle paths
- Inadequate pick-up and drop-off areas
- Inadequate parking
- Curb space
- Parent attitudes
- Teenage drivers if close to a high school
- School security

Many of the issues can be solved for new school sites through proper planning; below are some questions that need to be addressed during the planning process:

1. Where should a school be located?

Elementary and Middle schools should be located in the center of the attendance boundary to minimize the walking distance to the facility. Elementary schools should not be located on arterial streets, but rather on collector or local streets. Arterial streets are the busiest streets and are designed to move traffic in an efficient manner. Children aren't comfortable

crossing these streets and it will deter children from walking or bicycling to school. Access to schools should be from more than one driveway and be placed to have minimal conflict

points. Bus drop off and pick up areas should be at a different location than the parent drop off point. This will decrease conflicts with busses, automobiles and pedestrians. The pedestrian crossings and access to the school site should be in a different area than where the automobiles are traveling to give a sense of comfort and less chance of conflicts.

2. How do we deal with traffic?

Schools should have access to a minimum of two streets and not be located on the end of a cul-de-sac. The more points of access you have, the more efficient traffic disperses. There needs to be adequate pick up and drop off areas for school (cont. page 3)

Many issues can be solved for new school sites through proper planning

New School Site Planning *cont. from page 2*

(cont. from page 2.) buses and parents. A plan should be implemented for efficient operation to minimize congestion.

3. How do we connect the new school to existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities?

One of the forgotten items when building a new school is the connection to the existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities. School districts need to work with the communities to ensure connectivity for pedestrians to and from the new schools. The South Dakota Safe Routes to School program

is in support of helping existing schools with connectivity, but when it comes to new schools, we support the connectivity planning during the planning process and will not fund new school infrastructure projects. Pedestrian and bicycle access points should be placed all around the school to minimize the walking distance.

A safe route to school is something that we all need to work together to accomplish. Some key points to remember when a new school is planned; always look at the pedestrian and bicycle routes for connec-

tivity, locate in the center of the neighborhood it serves and design for traffic safety and efficiency. If we follow these principles we will be able to provide safe and accessible schools for all children to walk or bike to.

When a new school is planned, always look at the pedestrian and bicycle routes for connectivity, locate in the center of the neighborhood it serves and design for traffic safety and efficiency

A Healthy Habit by Dan Clements SD Bicycle Coalition

Riding bicycles isn't just about fitness, fun, or getting from point A to point B. Riding is about spending time with yourself in the fresh air. It's about being outdoors and exploring new areas that weren't once available to you. Riding is a safe, fun, alternative form of transportation that should be in everyone's daily routine.

I started riding bikes seriously in college. It started as a social venture and morphed into a lifestyle. A couple of friends offered to show me the

SD Bicycle Coalition website
<http://www.southdakotabicyclecoalition.org/>

world of mountain biking and I was instantly hooked. Biking was an activity I lived without for the first 18 years of my life. Once exposed to the thrill of the ride, I started making up excuses to get on the trail.

Now that I'm a few years older and a few years wiser, I still find myself craving time on the bike. What started as a leisure weekend activity has now become an everyday necessity. It is so easy to hop on my bike and ride to the store, post office, or work. I can spend only a couple of minutes or the entire day riding around. It is serene, uplifting and a great way to get fresh air. Life moves fast enough the way it is, we should all learn to slow down, take a deep breath, and ride a bike.

Site's of Interest

SD SRTS

<http://www.sddot.com/srts/>

American Heart Association:

Winter Walking

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.ihtml?identifier=3058698>

Don't Thump Your Melon

<http://www.sdemsc.org/dytm.html>

SD Bicycle Coalition

<http://www.southdakotabicyclecoalition.org/>

Coordinated School Health

<http://doe.sd.gov/oess/schoolhealth/index.asp>

Healthy South Dakota

<http://www.healthysd.gov/>

What's Happening in SRTS

SRTS Applications for Round 2 of funding are now available by emailing: angela.olson@state.sd.us

Applications must be completed and postmarked by April 8, 2009. No exceptions.

SRTS National Training Course and SRTS Presentation available by request. Onsite National Training Course or SRTS Presentation is highly recommended at the beginning of your application process!



Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

Angela Olson
Safe Routes to School
Department of Transportation
700 E Broadway Avenue
Pierre SD, 57501

Phone: 605-773-2402
angela.olson@state.sd.us

We are on the Web
www.sddot.com/srts/

Where it's safe, get kids
walking and biking.
Where it's not safe,
make it safe.



February/March Newsletter Will Include:

“Safety” in Safe Routes to School
Walking School Buses and Bicycle Trains
Buying Kids Bikes
Physical Activity and Academic Performance

Please send pictures and news articles of your Safe Routes to School activities to: angela.olson@state.sd.us

Article ideas, comments and questions are also welcomed

No Cost to Low Cost Safe Route Activities

There are many activities that can be implemented in your school immediately, even before applying for Safe Routes to School funding.

The following are a few ideas that have been successfully used across the Nation:

1. Designate weekly Walk ‘n’ Wheel Wednesdays
2. Create frequent walker cards or frequent rider miles
3. Present a Golden Sneaker Award to the class that walks the most. (Golden Sneaker Award is a spray painted donated sneaker)
4. Designate a location for park and walk to school—drop off students at a designated location and walk the rest of the way to school under the supervision of an adult volunteer. This is a good way to involve



Students and teachers from White Lake participated in the October iwalk activity. "It was cold but we had a good time and we talked about safety." Betty Van Soest

5. Conduct Walkability/Bikeability Assessments around your school—Evaluate and identify school routes that are in need of improvements by gathering volunteers to walk designated routes with a walkability/bikeability checklist. Lists are found on the SRTS website.

6. Walk Across the U.S or World—Students accumulate miles collectively and learn about the States or Country's they travel through.
7. Hold a Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Quiz Show—modeled after the Jeopardy game show.
8. Hold a Bicycle Rodeo
9. Hold a Walk to School Scavenger Hunt
10. Walk a Morning Mile at School
11. Create a Walking School Bus or Bicycle Train

Remember—"Where it's safe, get kids walking and biking. Where it's not safe, make it safe."

More ideas can be found at:

<http://www.sddot.com/srts/docs/no.pdf>