



**Oregon
Department
of Transportation**

Overview of Safe Routes to School Program, Action Plan Process, and Funding



Safe Routes to School

Purpose

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs are part of the solution to increase physical activity and improve unsafe walking and bicycling conditions.

Safe Routes to School

Goals

- To increase the ability and opportunity for children to walk and bicycle to school;
- To promote walking and bicycling to school;
- To encourage a healthy and active lifestyle at an early age; and

Safe Routes to School

Goals

- To facilitate the planning, development and implementation of projects and activities that improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution within two miles of the school.

Safe Routes to School

Program Information

The Oregon Safe Routes to School Program has \$3.5 million over 2005-2009 for projects at schools, serving grades K-8. The program administers funds received from the 2005 SAFETEA-LU transportation bill for Safe Routes to School programs.

Safe Routes to School

Funding

Two groups of funding are available through the SRTS program:

- a. Infrastructure projects within two miles of the school; and
- b. Non-infrastructure activities; education and encouragement, and traffic enforcement activities within two miles of the school.

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Funding

The funds are distributed by the ODOT Transportation Safety Division (TSD) as a reimbursement program through an open and competitive process, with the guidance of a Safe Routes to School citizen's advisory group. Costs incurred prior to TSD project approval are not eligible for reimbursement.

Safe Routes to School

Funding

The Safe Routes to School funds currently available from the federal government are most likely not enough by themselves to solve all of the needs of every Oregon community. They are intended as a catalyst to build relationships, complete demonstration projects and show success, which will inspire communities to find other resources.

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Potential Applicants

1. **School districts, schools (public, private, parochial, charter or alternative education program offering instruction levels K-8) in cooperation with the governing body (or bodies) with jurisdiction over the affected roadways and properties.**

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Potential Applicants

2. Units of state and local government in cooperation with a school district or a qualifying school.
3. Non-profit organizations in partnership with any of the above to perform education and enforcement activities that directly benefit a qualifying elementary or middle school.

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Project Selection

The Safe Routes Advisory Committee will serve as the selection committee. Members individually score the applications based on established criteria. They then meet to discuss projects and jointly develop a prioritized list with funding recommendations.

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Creating the Action Plan

An approved Action Plan must be received for every school K-8 that is affected by the project proposal at the time of application. The Plan initiates evaluation and community involvement activities that prepare the school to seek SRTS project funding through the state program, or to implement SRTS projects and activities with other funding sources.

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Creating the Action Plan

Section 1: School Information (for schools K-8)

This section includes basic information about the school, including location, enrollment, and contact information for the Safe Routes to School Action Plan.

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Creating the Action Plan

Section 2: Forming the School Team

The development of the Plan is through a coalition of interested parties. Successful School Teams embrace the goal of the SRTS Program to enable children to walk and bicycle to and from school safely. The Team gathers the necessary information needed to assess current attitudes and existing conditions.

Safe Routes to School

Creating the Action Plan

Section 2: Forming the School Team

Teams should be made up of required key partners (school representatives, local government, community representatives) whose backgrounds and affiliations represent a wide range of interests and expertise that are related to SRTS.

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Creating the Action Plan

Section 2: Forming the School Team

The Team size should be manageable, yet allow for community-wide collaboration, distribution of tasks and ease of individual efforts.

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Creating the Action Plan

Section 3: Assessing modes of student travel

The School Team will need to develop an understanding of the routes by which children travel to school. Information may be gathered from the school or school district, by surveying the students and parents, from observational studies, by gathering information from crossing guards, or other sources.

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Creating the Action Plan

Section 3: Assessing modes of student travel

You are asked to conduct a student in-class tally. The form for the tally and the tabulating spreadsheet can be downloaded from the National SRTS Program website:

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

under the Evaluation tab

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Creating the Action Plan

Section 3: Assessing modes of student travel

The Student Tally is an in-class tally that teachers or volunteers are to administer. Use this form to record specific information about how children arrive and depart from school each day for a week for at least two days out of one week (not Monday or Friday).

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Creating the Action Plan

Section 3: Assessing modes of student travel

The Parent Survey collects information about factors, beliefs and attitudes that affect parents' decisions about their children walking or bicycling to school.

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Section 3: Assessing modes of student travel

The survey results will help your Team determine how to improve opportunities to walk or bike to school. Go to the National SRTS Program website for the downloadable form:

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

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Creating the Action Plan

Section 3: Assessing modes of student travel

Conduct a Walking and Bicycling Audits with students and parents, neighbors, school staff and other stakeholders. Visit the National SRTS Program web site, under “Education” to help determine the “walkability” and “bikeability” of the area.

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

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Section 3: Assessing modes of student travel

Concentrate particularly on a one-half mile radius for an elementary school, or a one-mile radius for a secondary school. Evaluate those streets you believe are critical to walking or biking to school.

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Section 3: Assessing modes of student travel

Walkability questions to consider: Are there sidewalks, paths or trails on school property connected to logical residential neighborhood access points? Is there room to walk? Are there shoulders where there are no sidewalks? Can you safely cross streets and be seen by drivers? Does it feel safe to walk?

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Section 3: Assessing modes of student travel

Pedestrian safety questions to consider: Does the school provide safety information and/or participate in events that promote safe walking and physical activity? Is there pedestrian safety guidance given to students who cross with the School Patrol or Adult Crossing Guard?

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Section 3: Assessing modes of student travel

Bikeability questions to consider: Are there safe bicycle routes? Are there paths, trails, wide sidewalks, low-traffic streets, bike lanes or good shoulders to ride safely with traffic? Does it feel safe riding with traffic? How was the surface? How were the intersections?

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Section 3: Assessing modes of student travel

Bike safety and security questions to consider:

Are visibly-placed bicycle racks available to students? Are there enough to accommodate an increase? Are they easily and safely accessible? Are they sheltered from the weather? Are bikes in a secure location? Are there opportunities to learn bicycle safety? Are helmets encouraged?

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Section 3: Assessing modes of student travel

Invite the local community or the School Team to a mapping and brainstorming session where they can give input on conditions and possible solutions, in addition to helping to determine the best current or future routes within two miles from residential neighborhoods to the school.

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Section 4: Summarizing the Findings

Using the information gathered in Section 3, the School Team should come together to analyze the survey evaluation results, collected data and maps. They should identify the barriers and hazards to children walking or bicycling to the school.

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Section 4: Summarizing the Findings

Include a list of physical environmental barriers and hazards. Also, make a list of educational, encouragement and enforcement barriers and hazards.

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Section 5: Identifying the solutions and creating an Action Plan

Now that the issues have been identified, the Team is ready to recommend solutions. The expertise of the different members and other interested parties and stakeholders will be especially valuable. Careful consideration must be given to each component.

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Section 5: Identifying the solutions and creating an Action Plan

Engineering – Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways.

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Section 5: Identifying the solutions and creating an Action Plan

Education – Teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills, and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.

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Section 5: Identifying the solutions and creating an Action Plan

Encouragement – Creating events, activities and ongoing programs to promote walking and bicycling and providing safe opportunities for parents and students to travel together and inspire each other.

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Creating the Action Plan

Section 5: Identifying the solutions and creating an Action Plan

Enforcement – Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs.

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Section 5: Identifying the solutions and creating an Action Plan

Evaluation – Monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of data before and after the intervention(s).

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Creating the Action Plan

Section 6: Submitting the Action Plan

Submit the completed document and all supplemental materials along with the Application for the Oregon Safe Routes to School Funding.

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Implementation

The process through which the Action Plan was created has given your new Safe Routes to School Task Force a chance to find out what resources and stakeholder are available to help achieve success. Even before the application is reviewed and possibly funded, there are undoubtedly activities that can begin immediately using existing staff, volunteers and resources.

Safe Routes to School

Implementation

Engineering – Smaller projects can lead to early success since they don't require lengthy planning and design phases. They can be integrated into a short program timeline. These include curb and crosswalk striping, pruning, signage, bike racks, school zone changes, etc. Various resources may be accessible through local and state agencies.

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Implementation

Encouragement – Promote and organize fun walking and biking activities before, during or after school right on the school grounds or to/from an area nearby. These activities help build excitement for walking and biking. It also provides opportunities to better understand local conditions and to experiment with route options.

Safe Routes to School

Implementation

Encouragement – Parent barriers are based on personal safety, convenience and time. With the rise in childhood obesity, walking and biking can be promoted as a solution to an inactive lifestyle. Plan activities to address these issues. There is safety in numbers, especially when children are accompanied by a trusted parent or other adult volunteer.

Safe Routes to School

Implementation

Education – Classes or safety events are relatively inexpensive and can be provided by school teachers, local volunteers or community groups such as bike clubs and by agencies such as police or fire departments.

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Implementation

Enforcement – Local police officials who are members of the School Team may be able to tell you how to get services from their department or may advocate for services on behalf of the School Team. Police services may not need to be funded through the Oregon Safe Routes to School program as they may already have a local dedicated funding source.

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Application Process

A completed Oregon Action Plan Template with required supplemental documents must be received at time of application for every school K-8 that is affected by the proposed activities. The template may be downloaded from the Oregon Safe Routes web site:

www.oregon.gov/saferoutes

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Application Process

An application that is late, incomplete, or does not follow the prescribed format will be disqualified. Contact ODOT staff in advance if there are questions about preparing or submitting the application. Do not expect time to make corrections after the due date.

