

School Travel Plan Guidelines

A Reference for Communities



KEEP IT **SAFE**



WRITING YOUR SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN: A REFERENCE AND GUIDE FOR COMMUNITIES

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Portions of this Guide have been adapted from resources developed by:

The National Center for Safe Routes to School

www.saferoutesinfo.org

For questions about this Guide or for any questions related to developing your School Travel Plan, contact your District Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Coordinator. Find your coordinator by visiting the Ohio Department of Transportation’s Safe Routes to School web site: www.dot.state.oh.us/saferoutes and clicking on *SRTS Contacts*.

OHIO'S SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Ohio Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is funded by the Federal Highway Administration and administered by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). The program supports projects and programs that enable and encourage walking and bicycling to and from school. A summary of program features is below; for additional information please visit the ODOT SRTS website at www.dot.state.oh.us/saferoutes.

The Ohio SRTS Program funds two types of projects:

1. Infrastructure Projects

Infrastructure projects, or **engineering** projects, include operational and physical improvements that establish safer and fully accessible pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, such as crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways. All infrastructure projects must improve conditions for students walking or bicycling within two miles of the target school.

2. Non-Infrastructure Projects

Non-infrastructure projects include **education**, **encouragement**, and **enforcement** activities intended to affect student or driver behavior, and **evaluation** activities to monitor impacts of the SRTS program.

The Five Es of Safe Routes to School

- ➔ **Engineering strategies** create safer environments for walking and bicycling to school through improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools. These improvements focus on reducing motor vehicle speeds and conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists, and establishing safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways.
- ➔ **Education programs** target children, parents, caregivers and neighbors, teaching how to walk and bicycle safely and informing drivers on how to drive more safely around pedestrians and bicyclists. Education programs can also incorporate personal security issues, as well as health and environment messages.
- ➔ **Enforcement strategies** increase the safety of children bicycling and walking to school by helping to change unsafe behaviors of drivers, as well as pedestrians and bicyclists. A community approach to enforcement involves students, parents or caregivers, school personnel, crossing guards and law enforcement officers.
- ➔ **Encouragement activities** promote walking and bicycling to school to children, parents and community members. Events such as Walk to School Day, contests such as a Frequent Walker/Bicyclist challenge, or on-going programs such as a Walking School Bus or Bicycle Train can promote and encourage walking and bicycling as a popular way to get to school.
- ➔ **Evaluation** is an important component of SRTS programs that can be incorporated into each of the other Es. Collecting information before and after program activities or projects are implemented allow communities to track progress and outcomes, and provide information to guide program development.

OHIO'S SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANS

A School Travel Plan (STP) is a written document that outlines a community's intentions for enabling students to engage in active transportation (i.e. walking or bicycling) as they travel to and from school. A comprehensive STP is created through a team-based approach that involves key community stakeholders and members of the public in both identifying barriers to active transportation and using the 5 Es (a set of solutions) to address them.

By completing a STP, your community will have a guiding document to assist in improving walking and bicycling conditions for students, including strategies for promoting and encouraging active transportation to school. Serving as a foundation for your SRTS program, the STP can be updated and modified as needed to comply with community values and goals.

- ➔ STPs are a requirement for funding requests through the ODOT SRTS program, and must address all 5 Es.
- ➔ STPs can address the needs of either individual or multiple schools. Typically, up to four schools are allowed per STP, but consideration may be given to include more than four schools. Contact your ODOT District SRTS Coordinator for further information.
- ➔ Communities can complete STPs on their own or apply to ODOT for assistance in developing the STP. More information is available on the ODOT SRTS website under *Safe Routes to School Application*.

How do I find my ODOT SRTS District Coordinator?

ODOT SRTS District Coordinators are available to answer any questions you may have about the Ohio SRTS program. Contact information is available on the ODOT SRTS website (www.dot.state.oh.us/saferoutes) under *SRTS Contacts*.

All Ohio SRTS STPs *must* be reviewed and approved by your ODOT District SRTS Coordinator before you are eligible to apply for funding through Ohio's Safe Routes to School Program. Once your plan is complete, electronically submit a Word or PDF version to your ODOT District SRTS Coordinator - email addresses can be found on the ODOT SRTS website under *SRTS Contacts*. All Ohio approved STPs are stored electronically on the Ohio SRTS website under *ODOT Approved School Travel Plans*.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The purpose of this Guide is to assist you in completing the Ohio School Travel Plan (STP), a required component of any Ohio Safe Routes to School (SRTS) application. The plan will be your guiding document as you put your SRTS program into action.

This STP Guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the Ohio School Travel Plan Template (STP Template) to provide a step-by-step system for gathering and recording the information necessary for a STP. It lays out key steps in STP development and provides tools and resources to assist with those steps. The steps to develop a STP are presented in a logical order, and each step in the guide relates to a section in the STP Template. The STP Template can be found on the ODOT SRTS website under *School Travel Plan*.

Simply follow the steps in this guide, complete each section of the STP Template and then submit it to ODOT for approval.

NOTE: *Before starting the planning process, it may be helpful to review all sections in the STP Template to familiarize yourself with the information required.*

KEY STEPS IN DEVELOPING A SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

A school travel plan should be based on an understanding of the existing walking and bicycling environment at the school, including both barriers and supportive activities. It should be written with the input from a variety of key stakeholders who can provide knowledge to identify both issues and solutions encompassing all five Es of safe routes to school (education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering and evaluation).

This guide provides a detailed discussion of the key steps in developing a school travel plan. The seven steps summarized below are detailed in the remaining pages of this guide, along with additional resources to help you successfully move from one step to the next. Take a moment to review the steps before starting your planning process:

- ➡ **Step 1: Identify Target Schools and organize Safe Routes to School Team.** Identify the schools you will be targeting for the initiative, and bring together the right people. Select team members from a variety of disciplines (i.e. education, health, planning/engineering, law enforcement, etc.) who want to make walking and bicycling to school safe and appealing for children.
- ➡ **Step 2: Hold a kick-off meeting and set a vision.** The kick-off meeting has two main goals: to create a vision for SRTS at your school and to generate next steps. It's also a good time to get everyone on the same page in terms of understanding the 5 Es of SRTS, and review the process to develop a school travel plan. The group can then discuss the appropriate next steps and best way to work toward their vision.

- ➡ **Step 3: Gather information on current student travel.** In this step you will gather information regarding current student travel and expected behaviors. This step will include conducting a travel tally to determine how many students walk or bicycle to school and a parent survey to understand parent concerns, as well as gathering relevant information such as history of pedestrian crashes near the school. Tips and other guidance materials are provided in this Guide to help you.
- ➡ **Step 4: Identify key issues.** After gathering information on student travel you will conduct a walk audit and observe school arrival and dismissal. By exploring these processes a bit further and actually observing them first hand, you will be able to identify possible issues impacting student ability to walk or bicycle to school safely.
- ➡ **Step 5: Develop countermeasure recommendations.** After discussing and identifying your top 5 issues, your SRTS team should begin to identify specific non-infrastructure and infrastructure solutions. Solutions, or countermeasures, in your STP must address all Five Es (engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation).
- ➡ **Step 6: Gather public input.** Once the team has identified issues and solutions, the next step is to involve the greater community. It will be helpful to present the draft STP to the public to get feedback and input on priority strategies. This step of the Guide presents information on who to involve in the public review, how to present the draft STP, and how to gather input.
- ➡ **Step 7: Finalize the plan and get pledges of support.** This step outlines how the team will incorporate public input and get pledges of support from key community stakeholders. After finalizing the plan and getting endorsements, you can submit your plan to ODOT. Approval of your STP is required in order to apply for funding through Ohio's Safe Routes to School Program. Funding cycles are from the first Monday in January through the first Friday in March each year.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY TARGET SCHOOLS AND ORGANIZE A SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TEAM

This step will provide information to complete Section 1 of the STP Template: Our School/s.

1A. Target Schools

Before developing a STP, target schools must be identified for inclusion in the plan. Typically, up to four schools may be included in one school travel plan. If you wish to include more than four schools as a part of your plan, contact your ODOT District SRTS Coordinator.

Candidates for SRTS programs include schools that currently have walkers and bicyclists traveling in unsafe conditions, as well as those that have the potential to encourage or increase walking or bicycling to school if conditions were improved. Likewise, schools that already have walkers and safe conditions may be able to identify non-infrastructure strategies to increase the number of walkers and bicyclists.

When completing the template, be prepared to provide descriptive information from your school's Local Report Card, including:

Why do we need to provide demographic information?

The Federal SRTS Program guidelines call on State Programs to take measures to ensure that SRTS funds are accessible to diverse participants, including those with limited resources. For this reason, the Ohio SRTS program requires that school demographic information, including percentage of economically disadvantaged and percentage students with disabilities be provided for each school included in the plan.

- School name and address.
- School District.
- Grades served (i.e. K-5).
- Average daily student enrollment.
- School demographics (detailed in report card).

This information is readily available on the Ohio Department of Education Website at www.reportcard.ohio.gov. Here you may search for your school by name, district, or county. Once you find your school building report, you will be able to access a PDF of the Local Report Card, which contains the information needed for this plan in the form of a table entitled "Your School's Students" (see example in Figure 1).

Your School's Students 2010-2011										
Average Student Enrollment	Black, non-Hispanic	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Multi-Racial	White, non-Hispanic	Economically Disadvantaged	Limited English Proficient	Students with Disabilities	Migrant
472	82.5%	--	--	4.3%	7.2%	5.6%	92.9%	3.0%	9.8%	--

Figure 1: Example "Your School's Students" graph found in Local Report Card.

The STP Template contains a table that allows you to easily enter information from your schools' report card PDF into your STP Template. You can either type in the percentages, or simply cut and paste the entire table from your Local Report Card over the table provided. Information will need to be provided for each school included in the STP.

1B. Community Stakeholders and the Safe Routes to School Team

The most successful safe routes to school programs are led by a SRTS team and involve a variety of stakeholders who are concerned with safe travel to and from school, and have the ability to facilitate change.

Each community will find organizations and individuals specific to their community ready to be involved in SRTS. Some of these stakeholders will be willing to serve as the key drivers of the program (your SRTS team), while others may be able to make key contributions in various areas as requested or needed. It should be noted that some of Ohio’s most successful SRTS programs have teams that include schools and local government as equal partners.

What is a SRTS Team?

The SRTS team is the core group of people that commit to preparing, writing and following through with the School Travel Plan and its strategies. The team members will be those helping to implement the safe routes to school program.

The STP Template includes a blank SRTS team members table for you to customize.

IMPORTANT: Safe Routes to School teams **MUST** include at least one representative for each of the five Es, and **MUST** include a representative from each of the following categories:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School• Community• Local Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health• Education• Public Safety |
|---|--|

Potential SRTS Stakeholders

This list provides examples of common SRTS stakeholders representing a wide range of interests and expertise related to SRTS.

School:

- Principal and other administrators
- Parents
- Students
- Teachers
- PTA/PTO representatives
- School nurse or guidance counselor
- School district transportation director
- School improvement team or site council member
- Adult school crossing guards

Community:

- Community members
- Neighborhood or community association members
- Local businesses
- Local pedestrian, bicycle and safety advocates

Local Government:

- Mayor's office or council member
- Transportation or traffic engineer
- Local planner
- Ohio Safe Communities Coalitions
- Public health professional
- Public works representative
- Law enforcement officer
- State or local pedestrian and bicycle coordinator

What are Safe Communities Coalitions?

Safe Communities Coalitions work towards creating healthy and safe environments for children and can be good partners for SRTS programs. To find a Safe Communities Coalition program in your area, visit www.ohiohighwaysafetyoffice.ohio.gov On the right hand side of the page under "How Do I...", click on "Participate in Safe Communities?" to receive a listing of programs by county, including program contact information.



Tips and Helpful Information:

- Keep your Safe Routes to School Team to a manageable number of participants, up to 12 maximum. You will have an opportunity to consult the larger community as you work to identify issues and countermeasures.
- Think carefully about the specific knowledge base that each team member will bring.

1C. Lead contact person for your SRTS program and School Travel Plan

It is important that your SRTS team have a lead contact person to represent your SRTS program and your school travel plan. This person will likely be the one who organizes meetings, leads the development of the school travel plan and works directly with ODOT. In the STP Template, be prepared to include name, affiliation, phone number, email address and mailing address for this person.

STEP 2: HOLD A KICK OFF MEETING AND SET A VISION

This step will provide information to complete Section 2 of the STP Template: Our SRTS Vision.

Engaging all appropriate stakeholders is the key to accurately representing your community's priorities for student travel to school. The kick-off meeting has two main goals: to create a vision for the SRTS program (and ultimately the STP) and to generate a list of next steps. It's also a good time to get everyone on the same page in terms of understanding the five Es of SRTS, and review the process to develop a school travel plan. The group will then be prepared to discuss the appropriate next steps and the best way to work toward their vision.

A sample agenda for this meeting and links to helpful online resources such as handouts, flyers and PowerPoint presentations have been provided in **Attachment A**.

The kick-off meeting can help build a strong foundation for the STP:

- ➡ **Reinforce key stakeholder interest in and commitment to SRTS.** Ask the team members why they agreed to come to the meeting and what they hope to contribute. For example, a law enforcement officer may be very interested in reducing speeds in school zones and therefore may be willing to assume responsibilities for the Enforcement component of the SRTS program.
- ➡ **Establish a vision for the SRTS program (Template Section 2).** Ask your team to imagine what they would like the school and surrounding community to be like in five years. What does the team want to see? Common goals for SRTS programs include:
 - Increasing the number of student walkers and bicyclists.
 - Making walking and bicycling routes safer for students who are already walking.
 - Improving students' physical activity and health.
 - Creating a more walkable and bikeable community in general.
 - Improving air quality and reducing traffic congestion around the school.
- ➡ **Generate next steps.** Once your team has identified a vision, you can inform them that the next step will be to gather information on the current conditions related to SRTS.

The STP Template includes a blank text box for you to write your team's SRTS Vision in 100 words or less.

STEP 3: GATHER INFORMATION ON CURRENT STUDENT TRAVEL

This step will provide information to complete Section 3 of the STP Template: Current Student Travel.

The critical first step for any SRTS program is to become familiar with the current walking and bicycling environment at the school. In Step 4 you will hold meetings to identify and discuss specific barriers and solutions, but here in Step 3 you will paint a broader picture of the walk and bike environment:

- How many students live within walking and bicycling distance of the school?
- How many students are currently walking and bicycling to school?
- Does the school or district have any policies that affect walking and bicycling to school?
- What is your school's arrival and dismissal process?
- How do parents and caregivers feel about their children/students walking and bicycling to school?
- Have there been any specific safety incidents or concerns relative to students walking or bicycling to this school in recent history?
- Does the school currently conduct activities that support or encourage walking and bicycling to school?

Responses to the above questions are required to be included in your school travel plan, and provide important baseline data that can help you evaluate the impact of your SRTS program later on. The STP Template provides blank tables and text boxes to help you document your findings. The sub-sections below walk through the specific questions asked in the STP Template and highlight resources and tips on how to easily and efficiently gather this information. For multiple schools, each question will have to be answered for each school in your STP.



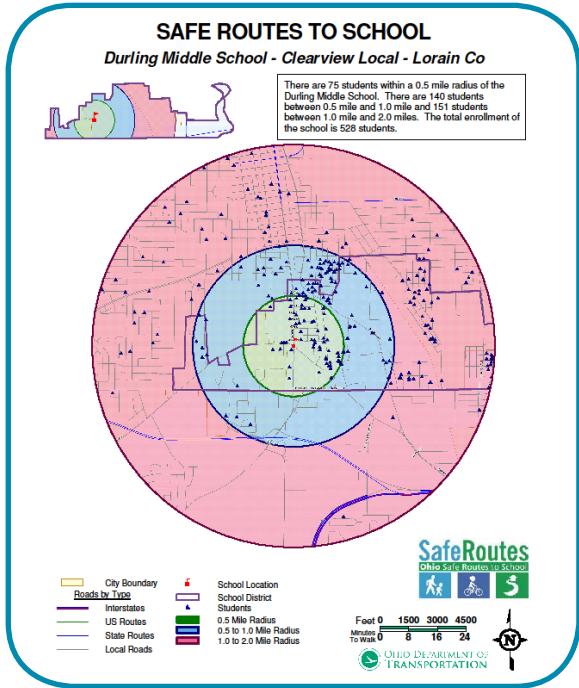
TIP: Don't be afraid to delegate to members of your SRTS Team! You may find that it is easier to collect the data with the help of others.

NOTE: A meeting of your SRTS team may not be required if one person is assigned to organize the information gathered and insert it into your STP Template.

3A. How many students live within walking and bicycling distance of the school?

If appropriate infrastructure exists, SRTS programs typically encourage students living within 1 mile of the school to walk to school and those living within 2 miles to bicycle to school. When developing your school travel plan, it will be important to know how many students live within walking and bicycling distance of the school and therefore have the *potential* to walk or bicycle to school. It will also be important to know where these students live in relation to the school as this information can help you prioritize certain travel routes to school in Step 4.

In your STP, you will be required to provide this information in the form of a map (see example in Figure 2). The map should include:



- Dots indicating student addresses
- School attendance boundary
- .5 mile, 1 mile and 2 mile radius

ODOT will create this map upon request for any community developing a SRTS school travel plan. You will need to provide ODOT with student addresses and attendance boundary information from the school. *Student names are not needed and should be removed from the address list in order to retain privacy.* Student addresses should be sent to SRTS.data@dot.state.oh.us, and ODOT will supply a map. To view existing school population maps, including any past maps developed for your school, visit www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/SPPM/SystemsPlanning/Pages/SRTSRadiiMaps.aspx.

NOTE: Typical turnaround time is approximately 4 weeks from the time you receive confirmation that your information has been received.

Figure 2: Example school population map.

3B. How many students are currently walking and bicycling to school? What are the primary walking or bicycling routes?

Student surveys will enable you to determine how children get to school. A quick daily show of hands during homeroom is often enough to get a feel for student travel habits at your school. ODOT **requires** the use of standardized Student Travel Tally forms provided by the National Center for Safe Routes to School (National Center) at www.saferoutesinfo.org/data-central.

NOTE: In addition to the forms, the National Center provides an online student travel tally compilation system and support services for data processing. Using this system and the summary report it provides will be important in helping you to complete your school travel plan. **It can take several weeks to receive your summary report so start the Student Travel Tally task early in the process.**

In addition to the surveys, talk with the school Principal and/or crossing guard(s) to get a feel for primary walking or bicycling routes that are currently being used by students.

3C. Does the school or district have any policies that affect walking and bicycling to school?

Individual school and district-wide policies can sometimes affect a student's ability or decision to walk to school. This section should summarize any school or district policies that encourage, discourage, or otherwise impact school travel decisions. Be sure to consider the following:

- **District bus policies:** Districts are not required to bus students who live closer than 2 miles to the school they attend. However, in certain instances, schools provide busing for kids who live within walking distance if the walking route has major barriers or hazards (e.g. busy roadway crossings). This is often called hazard busing. What is the bus policy and zone for your school? Is hazard busing provided?
- **School travel policies:** Does your school have policies that directly or indirectly encourage or discourage walking or bicycling to school? Cite any official or unofficial policies of the school relating to student travel, such as a ban on bicycling to school, early dismissal of walking/cycling students, age restrictions or special permissions related to walking/bicycling, etc.

3D. What is our school's arrival and dismissal process?

Check the school handbook, or talk with school administrators to find out the school arrival and dismissal process. The STP Template includes a short series of questions to help you briefly provide information such as:

- The location of parking lots, school bus and private vehicle pick-up and drop-off zones, bike parking areas, etc.
- Dismissal times and process. Is there a staggered dismissal or are all travel modes released at the same time?
- The number of school personnel involved and any special procedures involving teachers or staff.

NOTE: Look to the STP Template for a full list of school arrival and dismissal process questions.

3E. How do parents and caregivers feel about their children walking and bicycling to school?

Parent surveys can provide valuable information on parent attitudes toward and decisions regarding letting their child walk or bicycle to school. Similar to the Student Travel Tallies, ODOT requires the use of the National Center's standardized SRTS Parent Survey forms, available at www.saferoutesinfo.org/data-central.

NOTE: In addition to the forms, the National Center provides a Parent Survey compilation system and support services for data processing. Using this system and the summary report it provides will be important in helping you to complete your school travel plan. **It can take several weeks to receive your summary report so start the Parent Survey task early in the process.**

The standardized Parent Surveys will provide a lot of information to help you make decisions about your safe routes to school program. For the purposes of this school travel plan, please *only* provide the summary of issues affecting the decision of parents who currently DO NOT allow their children to walk or ride their bike to school. The Parent Survey summary report contains a bar graph of this information that can be used to create a simple list of issues. For example, your answer to this question could look as follows:

A parent survey was conducted in the fall of 2011 and provides good information on parent attitudes and behaviors. For example, parents of students who do not currently allow their children to walk or ride their bike to school cited the following reasons for doing so (in order of most cited):

- *Weather or climate.*
- *The speed of traffic is too high.*
- *Sidewalks are not present along entire walking route.*
- *Safety of intersections/lack of school crossing guards at key intersections along walking route.*
- *Time and convenience, i.e. driving is more convenient.*
- *Violence and crime in the area.*

3F. Have there been any specific safety incidents or concerns relative to students walking or bicycling to this school in recent history?

The summary of safety incidents or concerns should include both anecdotal information and actual crash statistics. Anecdotal information can be gathered by talking with school staff, parents and the school crossing guard/s. Information on traffic crashes should focus on pedestrian and bicycle related crashes occurring within two miles of the school within the past three years that information is available. Traffic crash information is available on the ODOT SRTS website at www.dot.state.oh.us/saferoutes under *School Crash Statistics*. The STP Template provides a short list of questions to help you provide this information.

3G. Does the school currently conduct activities that support or encourage walking and bicycling to school? How is your commitment to SRTS demonstrated?

Does your school participate in Walk to School Day, or provide traffic safety education or a bicycle rodeo? Briefly describe any activities or events at the school that support or encourage walking and bicycling to school, or that demonstrate your commitment to SRTS.

STEP 4: IDENTIFY KEY ISSUES

This step will provide information to complete Section 4 of the STP Template: Key Issues Impacting Safe Walking and Bicycling to School.

As was mentioned in Step 3, a critical first step for any SRTS program is to become familiar with the current walking and bicycling environment at the school. In Step 3 you gathered information that painted a picture of the current processes regarding student travel. Here in Step 4, you will explore these processes a bit further by actually observing them first hand, and discussing – both within your SRTS Team and with other stakeholders – possible issues impacting student ability to walk or bicycle to school safely.

To identify these issues, it is recommended that you bring your SRTS team together during a typical school day to conduct a walk audit and to observe either school arrival or dismissal. The meeting will accomplish three tasks:

- 1. Review information gathered.** It's a good idea to first review with the team the information gathered in Step 3 (contained in Section 3 of your STP Template) to make sure all team members have a good understanding of the current travel patterns and processes.
- 2. Conduct a walk audit.** By walking the area surrounding the school, particularly along known school walking routes, the team can identify infrastructure issues that could impact safe walking or bicycling, such as lack of sidewalks, crosswalks or bike lanes.
- 3. Observe school arrival/dismissal.** Finally, the team can split into groups to observe school arrival or dismissal from different vantage points, with the goal of observing the behaviors of the various travel modes (school buses, private vehicles, walkers/bicyclists) and how they interact. In doing so, the team can identify issues that could be addressed using education, encouragement or enforcement strategies. It is recommended that both arrival and dismissal processes are observed by at least some of your SRTS team so that differences can be noted.

See **Attachment B** for tips on how to conduct a walk audit and observation of school arrival or dismissal, including prompt lists of things to look for during both activities.

NOTE: *Involvement of the city/town engineer or planner in the walk audit is recommended.*

Identifying Key Issues

After conducting a walk audit and observing school arrival and dismissal, your team will have information to help you complete Section 4 of the STP Template: *Key Issues Impacting Safe Walking and Bicycling to School*. This section of the school travel plan should summarize the **top 5 issues** impacting a student's ability to safely walk or bicycle to your school and should include a mix of infrastructure and non-infrastructure issues. For example, a lack of sidewalks is an infrastructure issue, but motorists not complying with stop signs in the school zone may be a non-infrastructure issue.

The STP Template contains a blank *Key Issues* table you can customize. For multiple schools, a separate table would need to be created for each school in the STP. Below are two examples of how to write your issue summaries:

Issue: *Lack of safe crossing conditions at Marion Avenue and Barksdale Boulevard.*

- This intersection serves as a key crossing for many students living east of the school campus.
- This intersection currently lacks infrastructure to indicate pedestrian crossing, such as marked crosswalks and pedestrian signals.

Issue: *Motorists on Church Street do not yield to pedestrians crossing from Milster Street to the school entrance.*

- The intersection of Church Street and Milster Street does not have stop signs or traffic signals.
- A high-visibility crosswalk and crosswalk signs currently exist at this intersection.
- A crossing guard assists students crossing in both the morning and afternoon hours.
- Vehicles were observed rolling through or stopping in the crosswalk as students were crossing.

STEP 5: DEVELOP COUNTERMEASURE RECOMMENDATIONS

This step will provide information to complete Section 5 of the STP Template: Recommended SRTS Countermeasures.

After discussing and identifying your top 5 issues, your SRTS team should begin to identify specific non-infrastructure and infrastructure solutions. Your school travel plan will ultimately have two separate sections for your countermeasure recommendations:

➡ Your **Non-Infrastructure Countermeasure Recommendations** will address behavior-related school travel issues, and will include a detailed 12-month Activity Calendar to help your team plan and implement some of your education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation strategies.

➡ Your **Infrastructure Countermeasure Recommendations** will identify short, medium and long-term engineering treatments to make walking and bicycling to school safer for your students.

What is a Countermeasure?

A countermeasure is a safety treatment or corrective activity designed to alleviate a safety problem or a potentially hazardous situation.

5A. Developing your Non-Infrastructure Countermeasures

Your non-infrastructure countermeasures must address the 4 non-infrastructure areas of safe routes to school: education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation. The STP Template provides a framework for your SRTS team to summarize both short term and long term strategies, and includes a 12-month activity planning calendar to guide your decisions on timeframe and lead contacts for the short term strategies. You should also identify people, organizations or agencies that will help you implement each strategy.

An overview of each E and an example of how to write your summary is provided below. For information on current programs and services offered by the ODOT SRTS program, visit the ODOT SRTS website. For additional tips and ideas regarding education, encouragement, enforcement or evaluation strategies, visit the SRTS Guide, created and maintained by the National Center for Safe Routes to School, at <http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org>.

EDUCATION

SRTS education strategies often target pedestrian, bicycle and traffic safety, as well as personal security, but can also just be ways to create awareness about the benefits and goals of SRTS. Activities include safety assemblies, pedestrian and/or bike safety lessons, bicycle rodeos, and education for parents and students on personal security issues (bullying, personal violence, etc.).

In the STP Template, provide a summary of your primary strategies for SRTS education. Is your aim to provide students with pedestrian and bicycle safety education? Or maybe to make parents more aware of the benefits of active school travel? Be sure to consider what you've

learned about the current school travel environment through gathering information and the observation of behaviors at arrival and dismissal.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Encouragement strategies are about having fun – they generate excitement and interest in walking and bicycling to school. Special events, mileage clubs, contests and on-going activities can provide ways for parents and children to discover (or rediscover) the benefits of walking and bicycling.

In the STP Template, provide a summary of key encouragement strategies included in your plan that will help engage students and their parents in walking and bicycling to school. Consider hosting annual, monthly or weekly events such as Walk to School Day or Walking Wednesdays. Or maybe your SRTS program could help to organize Walking School Buses to make parents feel more comfortable letting their children walk to school. Be sure to consider any issues parents identified in their Parent Surveys.

ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement strategies can involve many people, not just law enforcement, and are used to reinforce correct behavior of all modes of transportation (walkers, bicyclists and motor vehicles). This can include obeying traffic laws or even following school dismissal procedures. Students may also be able to play a role in enforcement through student safety patrols.

In the STP Template, provide a summary of key enforcement strategies included in your plan that could help improve safety or processes related to school travel. Don't limit your strategies to law enforcement activities only – remember that everyone can play a role in reinforcing proper safety behaviors. Be sure to consider what you've learned about the current school travel environment through gathering information and the observation of behaviors at arrival and dismissal.

EVALUATION

Evaluation will help you measure the impact of your efforts. Evaluation will also help you keep track of the progress you are making toward your goals, and may also alert you to any changes or updates you may want to make to your STP. The two main indicators that your SRTS program is having an impact are increases in students walking and bicycling to school, and improved safety. ODOT requires that student travel tallies and parent surveys be conducted every year as a way to assess changes in travel mode and parent perception of safety. You may also assess any infrastructure improvements made over the year that improve the safety of the walk and bike environment.

In the STP Template, provide a summary of key evaluation strategies included in your plan that could help you monitor the impacts of your SRTS program. At a minimum, plan to conduct the required annual student travel tallies and parent surveys, but also consider monitoring the impact of various strategies you implement throughout the year.

5B. Your 12-Month SRTS Non-Infrastructure Activity Calendar

A 12-month Activity Calendar allows your team to identify non-infrastructure countermeasures that are important and feasible within the short term (i.e. a 12-month timeframe). It also encourages your team to think beyond the "idea" and consider the details of who is going to be involved, and how and when these activities might occur.

The STP Template contains a blank Activity Calendar for you to customize. For multiple schools, you may want to make separate activity calendars for each school in your STP. Below is an example 12-Month Activity Calendar (showing only a few strategies):

EXAMPLE COUNTERMEASURE		Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Participate in International Walk to School Day	PLAN												
Lead: Natalie Downs, P.E. Teacher	IMPLEMENT												
Conduct student travel tallies and parent surveys	PLAN												
Lead: Charlie Smith, Parent	IMPLEMENT												

Each countermeasure has 2 rows:

Row 1: Briefly describe your countermeasure, and shade in the cells that correspond to the months in which you intend to plan this countermeasure. *For example, for an event occurring in October that takes two months of planning time, shade the cells on this row for August and September.*

Row 2: Identify who will take the lead on planning and implementing this countermeasure, and shade in the cells that correspond to the months in which you intend to implement this countermeasure.

- The lead person will not necessarily implement the activity alone, but will be responsible for initiating planning and recruiting others to help. Provide this person's name and title as appropriate.
- If your countermeasure is an on-going activity, shade the cells for all of the months in which that activity will take place. *For example, if your team is implementing an on-going pace car program that is to begin in September, shade in cells from September to the end of the school year.*

Tips for Developing Your 12-Month Activity Calendar

1. Start your 12-month calendar on any month that works for you. It often makes sense to make the calendar start on the month after the plan is finalized.
2. Be conservative in estimating planning time. Especially the first time around, you'll want more time to plan than less.
3. Identify additional stakeholders who may be able to help implement your plan. Outside of your SRTS team, your community might contain a larger group of stakeholders who would be interested, willing and able to support the school's SRTS efforts. These other stakeholders may not be able to commit to serving on the SRTS team, but would be willing to provide resources or services upon request. Re-visit the potential stakeholder list presented in Step 1 and identify people and organizations that may be good matches with some of your specific countermeasures. Also check with your SRTS team to see if any team members have connections to these stakeholders.
4. In choosing implementation months, be aware of the school calendar and other events or activities that may conflict.
5. Once you have filled out the calendar, check to see if your plans are feasible.
 - Do you have too many activities planned for the beginning of the school year?
 - Is one person responsible for too many countermeasures?
 - Are some countermeasures more appropriate in a specific season but others can start at anytime?
6. Update your 12-month Activity Calendar each year and apply any knowledge you gained about specific planning and implementation strategies.



5C. Preparing Your Infrastructure Countermeasure Recommendations Table and Map

Your Infrastructure Countermeasures will identify and address specific infrastructure (i.e. engineering) issues that the Team identified during the walk audit in Step 4. For tips and ideas regarding Engineering countermeasures, visit the SRTS Guide, created and maintained by the National Center for Safe Routes to School, at <http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org>.

NOTE: *Involvement of the city/town engineer or planner in developing the infrastructure countermeasure recommendations table is highly recommended.*

Your STP should include two pieces of information related to infrastructure countermeasures:

- 1. A table summarizing the infrastructure countermeasures.** The STP Template contains a blank infrastructure countermeasures table for you to customize. For multiple schools, you may want to make separate tables for each school in your STP. Below is an example infrastructure countermeasure recommendation table (showing only a few countermeasures).
- 2. A map depicting the locations of all infrastructure countermeasure recommendations.** A sample countermeasure map, and additional information and tips on developing one, is included below

Example Infrastructure Countermeasures Recommendation Table

Map ID	Location	Issue	Countermeasure	Timeframe	Priority	Jurisdiction Responsible	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Source	Status
A	Intersection of Robey Road and Ethelwood Terrace	Students living west of the school must cross here to get to school. High traffic volumes make it difficult for students to cross safely.	Install a Rapid Flashing Beacon across Robey Road to help motorists see pedestrians attempting to cross the street.	Medium Term	High	City of Olney	Low	Olney CIP ODOT SRTS funds	
B	Robey Road between Ethelwood Terrace and Clark Street	Students walking to school must travel on Robey Road to access the school grounds. There are no sidewalks along the south side of the road where the school is located.	Construct a sidewalk on the south side of the road to provide a dedicated pedestrian path for students.	Long Term	High	City of Olney	Medium	Transportation Enhancement ODOT SRTS funds	

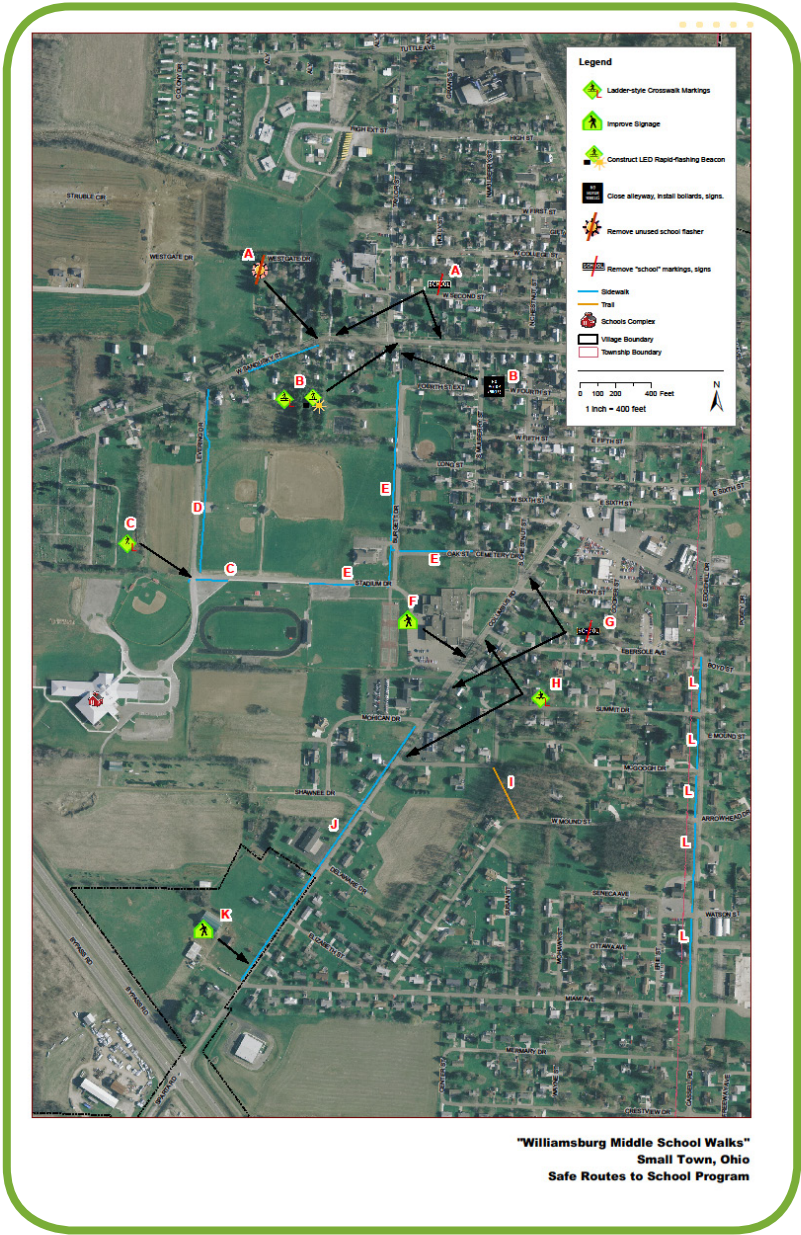
Tips for developing your
Infrastructure Countermeasure Recommendation Table



1. When describing the Issue, be sure to include the impact on students walking or bicycling to school. If possible, include an estimate of students impacted. Consider future walkers/bicyclists as well as current (i.e. reference your map of student addresses).
2. When describing the countermeasure, explain how it addresses the Issue.
3. Be sure to include an engineer or planner in estimating how long it might take to implement the countermeasure assuming design is approved. (Short term: 0-3 years, Medium term: 4-7 years, Long term: 8+ years).
4. Be sure to incorporate input from your public input sessions (Step 6) when determining the priority level of each countermeasure; in fact, you may want this column to be one of the last you complete. Typically, high priority countermeasures are those that impact immediate safety concerns.
5. Estimated costs can help a community determine priorities and inform potential funding pursuits. Work with an engineer and use the following guidelines to estimate the costs of each countermeasure, including design fees:
 - a. High cost: \$150,000 or above
 - b. Medium cost: \$20,000 to \$150,000
 - c. Low Cost: \$20,000 or below
6. In considering Possible Funding Sources, be sure to consider and include sources other than the ODOT SRTS program, such as Capital Improvement and Transportation Enhancement funds. Be creative in identifying other non-government funding sources as well. Many private foundations provide funding to support active and healthy living programs. Or consider approaching local businesses, hospitals and non-profit organizations as potential sources of support. *NOTE: Not all countermeasures may be eligible for ODOT SRTS funds. For more information, contact your District SRTS Coordinator.*
7. In order to keep track of program impacts and progress, use the "Status" column of the table to indicate the status of the countermeasure. Is it being planned? Has it been implemented? Include the date of the update (e.g. Planned, Fall 2010).

Example Infrastructure Countermeasures Recommendation Map

NOTE: As with the Infrastructure Countermeasures Recommendations Table, the involvement of the city/town engineer or planner in developing the infrastructure countermeasure recommendations map is highly recommended.



Updating your STP

The School Travel Plan – specifically the 12-month non-infrastructure Activity Calendar and the infrastructure countermeasure recommendation table – should be revisited routinely (at least annually) to update the status of each countermeasure and to add new countermeasures as needs arise. The SRTS Team should arrange regular meetings to discuss the progress of the STP. Updates are required if applying for ODOT SRTS funding.

STEP 6: GATHER PUBLIC INPUT

This step will provide information to complete Section 6 of the STP Template: Public Input.

Once your SRTS team has identified and documented what you have found to be key issues and countermeasures, the next step is to involve the greater school and community. By presenting your draft plan and recommendations to the public, you have the opportunity to generate broad support for your SRTS program while gaining additional perspectives on issues and priorities.

Public input can be gathered a variety of ways and can include a variety of information. A presentation to the PTA could confirm that issues along key walking routes identified in your plan are indeed a concern to parents. A meeting with a local bicycle advocacy organization could result in addition of an education or encouragement countermeasure that they could support. Or discussion with student walkers could identify additional concerns or countermeasures of interest to them.

The STP Template contains a blank public input table for you to customize. Briefly describe the process used to solicit public input and provide a bulleted summary of key input received. Below is a list of various public input processes and tips on how to manage them:

- **Host public meetings** – This involves a town hall style gathering where general members of the public are invited to participate and offer their opinions. Set a date, publicize the meeting and use the time to get the community’s input on the draft STP. ***Every public meeting should be followed by a public comment period.*** For more information on how to host a public meeting and public comment period, contact your ODOT District SRTS Coordinator. For an example public meeting agenda and sign in sheet, see **Attachment C**.
- **Interview key stakeholders** – Circle back to key stakeholders you may have gathered information from in Step 3 - Principals, crossing guards, parents, local traffic engineers and law enforcement are good people to review your draft STP.
- **Solicit student opinions** – Students often have a unique perspective on walking and bicycling to school. After all, they are the ones doing it! Find out what students think about your findings; suggested avenues for student input include the student council, during an assembly or as part of an essay assignment.

STEP 7: FINALIZE THE PLAN AND GET PLEDGES OF SUPPORT

This step will provide information to complete Section 7 of the STP Template: Final Plan – Pledge of Support.

Using information received during your public input sessions in Step 6, make updates to your Issues and Countermeasures sections and tables as appropriate. This is also a good time to revisit the Priority column of your Infrastructure Countermeasure Recommendations table.

NOTE: *The STP Template will not prompt you to make updates to your STP based on public input – incorporating public input simply consists of making edits to your STP as needed.*

Once public input has been incorporated and your STP is complete, make sure it is approved by officials responsible for implementing the plan. By receiving endorsements and pledges of support from key organizations, your STP and SRTS program has a strong chance of success. Endorsement documents can be as simple or as complex as you choose, but a one-page pledge of support is recommended. The STP Template includes an example pledge of support that you can customize to your school/s. Be sure to re-visit the vision and goals your SRTS team discussed in Step 2 and include them in the pledge.

People pledging support for your SRTS program should be in a decision-making role and have the authority to speak for the agency or organization they represent. Your SRTS Team Members, especially those representing the 5 Es, should be included in the pledge. People, agencies and organizations that could pledge support include:

- School Principal
- City Mayor
- County Executive
- City/County Council Members
- PTA/PTO President
- School District Superintendent

Congratulations! You have completed the seven key steps in developing a school travel plan. If your Ohio School Travel Plan is complete, you may electronically submit a Word or PDF version to your ODOT District SRTS Coordinator. Email addresses can be found on the ODOT SRTS website at www.dot.state.oh.us/saferoutes under *SRTS Contacts*.

