Montana Safe Routes to School

Encouraging Active Lifestyles

Safe Routes to School

National Center for Safe Routes to School
SRTS Coordinator

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Call me!
It’s my job to help you.
The need for Safe Routes to School

Student Health
- encourage active lifestyles
- increase physical activity
- reduce pollution

Student Safety
- reduce accident potential
- educate students on safety

Transportation System
- reduce congestion
Fewer kids are biking and walking

1969: 42% walked

2001: 16% walked

(CDC, 2005)
Most common barriers to walking and bicycling to school

• Long distances 62%
• Traffic danger 30%
• Adverse weather 19%
• Fear of crime danger 12%

Note: Sum of percentages is more than 100% because respondents could identify more than one barrier.

(CDC, 2005)
School Siting

A generation ago we had more, smaller schools, located in community centers

(EPA, 2003)
Today we have large schools, built on the edges of towns and cities.
School Siting

The result of school consolidation is longer distances between home and school and therefore more driving.
It’s not just distance

Students who live within 1 mile and walk or bike:

1969: 87%

2001: 63%
Traffic danger

Parents driving children to school account for 20%-25% of morning traffic

(NHTSA 2003; Dept. of Environment)
Adverse Weather
Additional Barriers

- Fear of crime
  - real and perceived
- Infrastructure
  - Missing or deteriorated
  - Seasonal maintenance
- Community specific barriers
What are the consequences of less walking and bicycling?

Individual Health

- decreased physical activity
  - increase in obesity
  - affects on learning
- reduced independence
What are the consequences of less walking and bicycling?

Environmental

- reduced air quality
- increased traffic congestion
Idling cars, trucks and busses around schools can significantly lower air quality in and around schools.

Air quality is measurably better around schools with more walkers and bicyclists (EPA, 2003)
Physical inactivity

• Most kids aren’t getting the physical activity they need

• Recommended 60 minutes on most, preferably all, days of the week

(US Depts. of Health and Human Services and Agriculture, 2005)
Goals of Safe Routes to School Programs

• Get more children walking and biking to and from school
• Encourage active, healthy lifestyles
• Increase community involvement and safety
• Improve air quality and decrease traffic congestion
How do we start?

• Bring together the right people
• Hold a kick off meeting and set a vision
• Gather information and identify barriers
• Identify solutions
• Make a plan
• Get the plan and people moving
• Evaluate, adjust and keep moving
Elements of SRTS programs

- Evaluation
- Education
- Encouragement
- Enforcement
- Engineering
Evaluation

What are the barriers?
Who already walks or bikes?
How can we make changes?
Is our program making a difference?
What did we learn?
What should we do next?
Education

- Imparts safety skills
- Creates safety awareness
- Fosters life-long safety habits
- Includes parents, neighbors and other drivers
Encouragement

- Emphasizes fun
- Increases popularity of walking and bicycling
- Great start to a successful SRTS program
Enforcement

- Increases awareness of pedestrians and bicyclists
- Improves driver behavior
- Helps children follow traffic rules
- Encourages positive interaction with law enforcement
Engineering

- Creates safer conditions for walking and bicycling
- Can influence the way people behave
- Can improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion
Successful Safe Routes to School programs…

... increase physical activity

... improve safety around schools

... help establish lifetime habits

... teach pedestrian and bicyclist skills

... increase child’s sense of freedom

... improve air quality in and around schools

... are a long term investment in our community
Montana SRTS Application

Montana’s Application and Guidebook are available online.

http://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes/
Project Sponsor

• The sponsor must be the person with budget-setting authority

• Contracts will be sent to project sponsor

• Sponsoring agency will be responsible for fronting cost of the project and submitting for reimbursement

• The named person is often a mayor, county commissioner, tribal chair, city manager, director, or school superintendent
Project Description

- Identify the goals and measurable objectives of the project
- Infrastructure, non-infrastructure, or both
- Clearly describe the project scope
  - Be specific with regards to the planned activities and how they relate to the goals of the program
- Identify assessment methods used for identifying barriers that the project sets to mitigate
Budget and Narrative

- Framework for contract between MDT and sponsor
- Specifically identify how budget items address identified barriers and meet stated project goals
- Relate budget items to 5Es
- Demonstrate how the budget items further the goals of the Action Plan
Reimbursement Program

• Project sponsor is responsible for paying for program costs and submitting for reimbursement

• Program is flexible to encourage innovative solutions

• Certain projects are specifically ineligible

• Any costs incurred before a project is authorized in writing are not eligible for reimbursement
Community Involvement

- Critical component of successful program
- Helps to improve a program’s longevity
- Helps with identifying complete list of barriers as well as solutions
- Can be an effective method for leveraging local in kind contributions
- Demonstrate existing efforts as well as outreach to improve broad based involvement
  - Include letters of support
Critical Program Components

- Fiscal sponsor
- Action Plan that includes all 5 “Es”
- Broad support: school, parents, local officials
- Professional expertise (infrastructure projects)
  - Needs to meet Federal design and bidding requirements
Non-Infrastructure Grants (Soft Side Projects)

- Planning
- Evaluation
- Education
- Encouragement
- Enforcement
Non-Infrastructure Ranking Considerations

- Is there coordinated support?
  - School officials, parents, students, community, law enforcement
- How will project success be evaluated?
- Does it enhance an existing program or close a defined gap?
- How will the program be maintained for the long term?
- Is it enhancing a SRTS infrastructure project?
Infrastructure Grants
(Administered by MDT through CTEP)

- Infrastructure Improvements
- Equipment Installations (bike racks, fencing, etc)
- $250,000 project limit
Infrastructure Ranking Considerations

- Is the project identified in a community developed walkability assessment or local plan?
- Does it close a gap in a bike/ped sidewalk or trail that serves K-8 schools?
- What programs are planned or in place to encourage walking and biking to and from school?
- What is the community’s commitment to encouraging walking and biking to school?
- How will the facility be maintained?
Project Selection

- Competitive Process
- Evaluation team includes individuals with experience in engineering, education, changing attitudes and behaviors, and bicycle and pedestrian safety
- Evaluation team ranks all projects and then makes funding recommendations to the Director of MDT
Selection Process Timeline

• Application deadline December 31, 2009
• Review by State SRTS Coordinator and State Bike/Ped coordinator
• Present to Evaluation team late January 2010
• Recommendations passed on to Director Lynch in early to middle of February 2010
• Anticipate funding decisions by the first week of March 2010
Web Sites

http://mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes/

http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/

http://www.deq.mt.gov/Recycle/CleanAirZone.asp
I am glad to review and discuss draft applications. It’s my job to help you.