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KING COUNTY METRO

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL COALITIONBUILDING GUIDEBOOK





King County Metro Transit

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL COALITION-BUILDING GUIDEBOOK

A guide to creating, implementing, and sustaining a local SRTS program at your school.

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INTRODUCTION

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs promote healthy, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to walk, bike, and carpool to and from school. SRTS is a proven approach to making kids healthier and saving lives.

King County Metro provides countywide and regional support, and resources for community members to encourage and enable school children to walk, bicycle, carpool, or take the bus to school. King County Metro's support and resources help to create fun and engaging activities that improve children's health, well-being, and safety while reducing traffic congestion and emissions caused by school-related travel.

Coalitions lead local SRTS efforts in King County; organized and engaged volunteers representing schools and school districts, local governments, health departments, community-based organizations, and parents identify transportation safety issues and generate travel options solutions.

This workbook provides volunteers with a step-by-step process for forming a SRTS School Coalition. Materials have been adapted from several other resources, which are included in "Further Coalition Building Reading."

Why Safe Routes to School?

Walking, biking, and carpooling are good for everyone!

Reducing a single driving trip to school results in:

- Cleaner Air and Water More sustainable ways to get around, like walking, biking, carpooling and rolling, don't
 produce as much air pollution.
- Less Traffic Less congestion around schools is safer and healthier for everyone.
- Increased Social Interactions Talk with neighbors and meet other families by getting outside for the trip to school.
- Cost-Effective Save money on gas by walking, biking and carpooling.

Being active on the way to school also benefits families through:

- Healthy Living Walking and rolling are great ways to get more physical activity.
- Better Educational Achievement Students who are active in the morning arrive at school focused and ready to learn.

The Six E's: Equity, Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Evaluation, Enforcement

SRTS is a comprehensive program to make school communities safer by combining improvements to sidewalks and streets with enforcement and education about safety, and activities to enable and encourage students to walk, bicycle and carpool to school.

SRTS PROGRAMS CONSIDER THE "SIX E'S":

- Equity: Incorporating equity considerations to ensure overall efforts are reaching all populations by including communities of color and immigrant and refugee families, addressing the needs of children of different genders, religions, and physical abilities, and reaching low-income communities.
- Education: Classes and activities that provide students and families with bicycle, pedestrian and traffic safety skills, and information about the benefits of walking, biking, carpooling and bussing, and the positive impacts these activities have on personal health and the environment.
- **Encouragement:** Events and activities that spark families' interest in walking, biking, carpooling and bussing to school, with programs that reward participation.
- **Engineering:** Street infrastructure improvements (signage, crosswalks, lighting, signals, etc.) designed to improve the safety of people walking, biking, and driving along school routes.
- **Evaluation:** Surveys and other tools that evaluate and track progress of projects and programs of each of the other "E's" to determine which programs and projects are most effective.
- **Enforcement:** Strategies to deter unsafe behavior of drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians and encourage all road users to obey traffic laws and share the road safely around schools and on school routes.

All school communities are unique and have different needs, so SRTS programs in one community may look very different from one another.

Forming a SRTS Coalition

A SRTS Coalition is a group of individuals and/or organizations who share a common goal of creating healthy, convenient, and fun opportunities for students and their families to walk, roll (bike, skate, wheelchair, etc.), and carpool to school.

This Guidebook outlines strategies for convening a SRTS Coalition in your school or community. The chapters include:

- STEP 1: BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER
- STEP 2: GATHER INFORMATION, IDENTIFY ISSUES & SOLUTIONS
- STEP 3: SUSTAIN THE COALITION

Coalitions work together to create alliances and open channels of communication among individuals and groups who might not otherwise work together.

Safe Routes to School Coalitions can:

- Address safety concerns
- Identify walking, biking, carpooling and bussing needs around schools
- Seek SRTS funding for infrastructure improvements and programs
- Coordinate with other groups working with vouth
- Host community-wide events, such as Walk to School Day
- Create long-term, significant, and permanent change



STEP 1: BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Begin by gathering team members who can help plan events at your school, and people who can enact programs and policies.

Identify Potential Coalition Members

Table 1. SRTS Coalition Roster lists representatives you should reach out to when forming your Coalition. Also think about who else should be involved in planning, administration, outreach, and implementation. Make sure to involve people reflecting your community, including people with disabilities and from racial, religious, or ethnic groups.

- 1. Enlist a few core partners. Get buy-in from school administrators and districts up front, because they can secure meeting spaces, encourage others to participate, and support your efforts.
- 2. Develop an invitation list using **Table 1. SRTS Coalition Roster** and your knowledge about people in your community.
- 3. Contact everyone in Table 1. SRTS Coalition Roster that you already know.
- 4. Ask the people you know to contact other people in agencies and institutions, and to suggest additional people to invite.

 Ask people to attend the initial meeting to learn about the effort and discuss their potential role and level of commitment.



Table 1. SRTS Coalition Roster

	Name	Contact (phone/email)	Attending First Meeting?	Joining Coalition?
Principal or Other Administrators:				
School PTA Leader(s):				
Parent/Family Member(s):				
PE or Health Teacher/ Wellness Coordinator:				
School District Representative(s):				
Local Government Representative(s):				
Health Representative(s):				
Others:				

How to Involve Specific Groups

People are more likely to get involved if they feel like participation benefits their goals and will be time well-spent. Consider how involvement in the SRTS Coalition benefits each participant and try to make it relevant for everyone.

Parents, families, and PTAs/PTOs	SRTS activities should address families' concerns about transportation safety while feeling fun and being easy to get involved in. Parents and extended family members are ideal volunteers to spread the word about meetings and events, to set up a meet-and-greet table during drop-off or pickup to share resources, and to identify walking, biking, carpooling and bussing facility needs. Families benefit from SRTS through reduced traffic congestion near schools, healthier children, and more opportunities for physical activity and socializing.
School district staff	The district can support multi-school events, providing staffing, meeting space, and printing. The district can integrate walking and biking safety curricula, and the impact of reducing vehicle trips by carpooling and bussing, into regular lessons. Staff should eliminate policies that deter SRTS efforts and establish supportive policies. School districts benefit from SRTS through academic improvements from healthier students.
Principal's Office	Support from the principal or assistant principal can create momentum, investment, and a can-do attitude for SRTS. Key roles include sending official communications to families, strategizing about appropriate activities and events for the school, providing insight into hurdles and how to overcome them, and taking actions to improve traffic flow and increase safety during arrival and dismissal time. Principals benefit from SRTS through the opportunity to address safety concerns, better engagement with families, and healthy and focused students.
City or local jurisdiction staff	Local jurisdictions can help find funding for SRTS personnel, coordinate citywide activities and events, pass supportive policies, and prioritize SRTS issues. The jurisdiction should take the lead on identifying engineering needs and solutions around your school. Identify a point of contact at the City Planning or Public Works Departments you can work with consistently. Local jurisdictions benefit from SRTS through reduced congestion and carbon emissions at rush hour, and SRTS infrastructure funding, improvements, and programs that make streets safer for students and other residents.
Law enforcement	Police can provide enforcement around schools and contribute to education efforts. At a minimum, the Coalition should bring relevant concerns to their attention and suggest appropriate ways for police representatives to be involved in SRTS efforts. The action plan should only include specific police action after identifying activities which the police support. Law enforcement benefit from SRTS through increased traffic safety through changing behaviors. There are more opportunities to educate students about traffic and transportation safety and build positive relationships with the students and SRTS community.

Hold a Kick-off Meeting

The kick-off meeting will get everyone on the same page and determine how Coalition members will work together. First convene your closest partners to set an agenda and establish a tone for an engaging meeting that will start the Coalition off right.

KICK-OFF MEETING LOGISTICS

Use **Table 2. Kick off-Meeting Logistics Worksheet** to plan your first meeting. You will likely need two hours (not including set up and cleanup time). Send out an agenda two to four weeks in advance for maximum attendance.

Table 2. Kick off-Meeting Logistics Worksheet

Logistics	Person Responsible	Your Plan
When (date, time):		
Location:		
Materials Needed (handouts, projector, etc.)		
projector, etc.)		
Food/Refreshments:		
Meeting Facilitator:		
Note Taker:		

KICK-OFF MEETING AGENDA

The content or agenda of the kick-off will depend on your community, but should include the following elements.

Introductions	Everyone gives a brief statement of who they are, their organization, if any, and their interest in SRTS.
Introduction to SRTS	Background presentation about SRTS programs, including issues and strategies for the Six "E's". The King County Metro SRTS Six E's Toolkit provides information about activities and events to support active and shared transportation modes to school, and to promote transportation safety.
SRTS Coalition Goals	Each participant can share a goal for what the Coalition could accomplish. Focus on a specific activity, such as: starting a walking school bus, developing an action plan, educating families about SRTS, etc.
SWOT Analysis	Conduct an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) to understand and agree on Strengths and Weaknesses and to identify available Opportunities and Threats your team faces in advancing Safe Routes to School. See Table 3. SWOT Analysis Worksheet.
Values and Vision	Agree on shared values for the direction of the Coalition. This is the first step toward the vision and action items that will guide the Coalition's work. You can also introduce the idea of the Action Plan, to be developed at subsequent meetings.
Next Steps & Wrap-Up	Summarize the tasks to be done before the next meeting and agree on who will do them. Schedule the next meeting.





Create a SWOT Analysis

A SWOT Analysis is a tool that helps a group assess their situation by thinking through the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Through this analysis, the Coalition should agree on the needed changes that may be easy to achieve, changes that will require longer-term thinking, and potential stumbling blocks. You can complete a SWOT analysis using Table 3 on the following page during the kick-off meeting to see where you are and where you can go with your work.

Strengths	These are internal characteristics and resources of the Coalition that will help it achieve successful outcome(s) or reach goals. This section can answer the following questions: What does or will the Coalition do better than others? What makes the Coalition unique? What resources can the Coalition draw upon that others can't? What do or will others in your community see as strengths of the Coalition?
Weaknesses	These are internal characteristics of the Coalition that might hinder successful outcome(s) or the Coalition's ability to reach goals. This section can answer the following questions: On what can the Coalition improve? What should the Coalition avoid? What are things others might see as weaknesses of the Coalition?
Opportunities	These are external factors, such as political, economic, socio-cultural or technological factors, that might influence or contribute to successful outcome(s). This section can answer the following questions: What is the need for the Coalition? What are anticipated changes in government policy, street infrastructure, school siting, etc. that could support the Coalition's work? What are funding opportunities available the Coalition could pursue?
Threats	These are external factors, such as political, economic, socio-cultural or technological factors, that might prevent successful outcome(s). This section can answer the following questions: What are the challenges this Coalition could face? What are anticipated changes in government policy, street infrastructure, school siting, etc. that could hinder the Coalition's work?

Table 3. SWOT Analysis Worksheet

	HELPFUL	HARMFUL
	To achieving the objective	To achieving the objective
	Strengths	Weaknesses
INTERNAL ORIGIN		
Attributes of the organization		
	Opportunities	Threats
EXTERNAL ORIGIN		
Attributes of the organization		

Kick-off Follow Up

Identify someone to follow up and make sure the good work can continue:

- Distribute meeting minutes and reminders about the next meeting.
- Invite potential new members to the next meeting.
- Offer help to people working on tasks, attend committee or task force meetings, involve others with relevant skills or knowledge, and make sure tasks are accomplished.

STEP 2: GATHER INFORMATION, IDENTIFY ISSUES & SOLUTIONS

Next you need to gather and assess information to document and prioritize what needs to change. You can then identify activities and efforts to pursue as you begin work on your action plan.

Collect Existing Conditions Data

Your Coalition will need to collect information to understand the existing conditions for walking, biking, carpooling and bussing, and your school's context for implementing SRTS activities and facility improvements. Documenting your concerns will help you make the case for change to policy makers and other influencers.

Data Collection Methods

Mapping Travel Distance	You may be able to get data about where students live to identify how many students are within walking and biking distance, or have parents mark-up a map of the school area themselves. This helps determine whether the Coalition should focus on walking-and-biking only issues, or if people live further away and you should focus on carpooling and bussing to reduce vehicle trips. You can also use these route maps to locate potential routes for people to gather and walk, bike, carpool or bus together to school.
Community & School Staff Input	Solicit input from the school community about student attitudes, unsafe behaviors, and other concerns. You can present and have a discussion at a school staff or PTA/PTO meeting. These meetings are good times to find volunteers to host events, lead SchoolPools, or integrate a curriculum into the classroom.
Traffic Counts	Choose a good weather day in the middle of the week to do a baseline traffic count. Station a volunteer or two at each school entrance and count every bicyclist, pedestrian, and vehicle entering the school zone. Perform a follow-up count to determine if your programs are reducing traffic in the school area.
Parent Surveys	This survey asks about parents' perceptions of walking, biking, carpooling or bussing to school and what improvements might change their transportation decisions. Use the results to focus education and outreach activities, as well as messaging, on parents' concerns. You can learn how to administer the survey and create reports here: http://saferoutesdata.org/downloads/Parent_Survey_English.pdf
Student Travel Tallies	Use this form to record how children arrive and depart from school for two days during one week. This data can be used to track the success of your SRTS program over time. You can tabulate your results and create a summary report. Download the form at http://saferoutesdata.org/downloads/SRTS_Two_Day_Tally.pdf.

At an early Coalition meeting (potentially the kick-off), discuss how the Coalition will collect information to guide your decisions. You can use a variety of data collection strategies, depending on your community, your time, and available resources. Even doing one or two of these is a great start!

Planning Documents	Read your most recent Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, ADA Transition Plan, and the Circulation Element or Transportation Chapter of your city's general plan. These documents typically detail your area's history, challenges, vision, transportation network, and plans for the future. Align your program with the recommendations to attract members, political support, and funding.
Traffic Collision & Crime Statistics	Collision, injury and crime data can build support to make a case for funding for your efforts. You can obtain collision data from the Washington State Department of Transportation. You can get crime data from your local and/or state police department.
Walk Audit/ Assessment	These on-the-ground assessments of the school area give insight into the walkability, bikeability and congestion of a neighborhood. Convene staff people from the school, district, and local jurisdiction, as well as parents and community members, to observe drop-off or pick-up behaviors and circulation. Planners or engineers can record audit results in an improvement plan that identifies problem areas and recommends possible infrastructure solutions.
Policy Scan	School or school district policies can either hinder walking, biking, carpooling and/or bussing to school, or be supportive. Ask your principal if the school has any policy relating to walking or biking, remote drop-off sites for parents, or any other transportation-related guidelines. At the city level, Complete Streets policies, Vision Zero policies, and SRTS Resolutions may demonstrate your city's commitment to making streets safer and more comfortable for children and adults on foot or on bicycle. Conduct a policy scan to identify existing policies and set out recommendations for policy improvements and adoption.

Share the Data

Present the data you have gathered at a Coalition meeting and discuss ideas for next steps. The list of ideas may be overwhelming at this stage, but later steps will help you prioritize and manage your strategies with the help of additional experts. You can begin by organizing your list in order of priority.

- Are some issues more critical to address than others?
- Are there "quick wins" that the group can identify that would help to generate additional enthusiasm early in the program?

The best solutions will probably use a combination of education, encouragement, enforcement, and engineering strategies. It is often necessary to begin advocating to get a longer-term engineering solution while also beginning a walking school bus or holding a bicycle rodeo.

MAKE AN ACTION PLAN

Developing a clear action plan will enable your Coalition to achieve SRTS-specific goals and grow over time.

The SRTS action plan is like a blueprint for change for your school. The action plan does not need to be long but should include goals for each of the Six "E's;" specific activities for the encouragement, education, enforcement, and engineering approaches; a timeline for planning and implementation for these activities; an equity assessment that considers how the strategies will overcome obstacles specific to certain student demographic groups and an explanation of how the program will be evaluated. Implementing activities early helps the group feel successful and can build momentum and support for long-term activities.

VISION (THE DREAM)

Your vision communicates your ideal conditions for the school and community in a one-phrase statement. A vision statement clarifies the Coalition's beliefs and governing principles to the community, Coalition members, and volunteers.

Here are two examples of vision statements:

- "We envision a city of safe and active school communities, where walking and biking are seen as safe, convenient and fun." (Seattle Safe Routes to School Action Plan)
 - "The Akron Safe Routes to School program, working with Akron Public Schools, strives to establish a world-class, student-focused community-based learning system and to create a community that supports and enhances safe walking and biking to school by focusing on equity through engineering, enforcement, evaluation, education and encouragement." (Akron Public Schools District-Wide Travel Plan)

King County Metro's Vision Statement

The King County Metro Safe Routes to School program, working in partnership with cities and schools in King County, envisions a county where students and families choose walking, biking, carpooling and bussing as safe, fun, healthy, and convenient transportation modes to and from school and beyond.



GOALS (HOW MUCH OF WHAT WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY WHEN)

The next step is to develop clear, defined, and measurable goals for achieving your vision. The King County Metro Safe Routes to School Six E's Toolkit lists common SRTS activities. Each goal should include the following information:

- What actions or changes will occur?
- Who will carry out these changes?
- By when will they take place and for how long?
- What resources (money and staff) are needed to carry out these changes?
- Communication (who should know what?)

Example goals:

- Hold two yearly SRTS school-wide education events by 2022.
- Increase the number of students who walk, bike, bus and carpool to school each year by 10%.

Remember that an action plan is a work in progress. As your team grows, you will want to revise your action plan to fit your community's changing needs.

You may implement many low- and mid-cost solutions in a relatively short time. A few targeted projects can often have large-scale community impacts. Examples of "quick win" projects include the following:

- Training adult crossing guards
- Implementing a Walking School Bus or a Bike Train
- Hosting Walk and Roll to School Day, highlighting walking, biking, bussing and/or carpooling
- Hosting a school-wide assembly to showcase walking, biking, bussing and/or carpooling to school
- Leading small group walk audits
- Submitting success stories to local media

- Reinforcing your messages in a newsletter or on a social media page, tagging other organizations
- Providing (and fitting!) bicycle helmets for students
- Purchasing and installing bike racks
- Purchasing and installing a bicycle maintenance station equipped with tools and tire inflation pump
- Attending and tabling at already-scheduled school events and activities

Table 4. Goal Setting Worksheet

Goal	Timeline	Support/Resources Needed	Person Responsible
Example: Hold a bike rodeo with at least 10 families participating.	By June 2019	Location (blacktop) 1-2 certified trainers 3-5 volunteers Equipment: chalk, STOP sign Outreach materials: flier, announcements Student permission slips	School district PE teacher/health teacher SRTS coordinator

Act on the Plan

Your next step is to assign tasks to accomplish your goals. At Coalition meetings you can coordinate among members and divvy up actions and responsibilities.

Implement your action plan through the following steps:

- Get volunteer help with specific tasks by a specific time
- Check in with volunteers by phone, email, or text, asking how they are doing with their tasks or if they need assistance
- Distribute the action plan in writing to all members, with names attached to specific tasks
- Ask members to report accomplished tasks at regular Coalition meetings
- Celebrate task completion!
- Share your victories with neighbors, businesses, the local media, and social media

Early success is important in building credibility. You can use a small project such as an education or encouragement activity to score a quick win and build momentum for more challenging tasks. Remember that expensive infrastructure changes will take time and lots of support and funding, but treat small victories as stepping-stones to achieve bigger goals.

At the end of your first year, you may want to develop a report card that you can share with elected officials, PTA, school districts, and other audiences.



STEP 3: SUSTAIN THE COALITION

Starting a Coalition requires planning, commitment, relationships, timing, and persistence. When a Coalition functions well and becomes stable, members continue striding toward goals.

Sustain

After the Coalition is established, you can maintain momentum, speed it up, or slow it down. You can also maintain or change the direction of the Coalition as members see fit.

Your action plan can remain a working document. You may try, test, and revise it as needed. Add and subtract plan elements based on member and community feedback.

In the meantime, keep several questions in mind for yourself and other Coalition members. You can address these informally (ask yourself, chat with friends, and contact others), and formally through surveys and other evaluation methods. This will help you evaluate later.

- Are we doing what we said we would do?
- Is what we are doing working?
- Are our actions advancing our vision?
- What might work better?

Fund the Plan

Be creative in thinking of how to accomplish your funding goals. Capital projects such as sidewalk construction or street and signal improvements can be expensive, but still lower cost than larger projects like adding new sidewalks or bike paths.

For small activities or low-cost engineering audits or improvements, consider fundraising or seeking private sponsorship. Many companies have community giving goals or philanthropic foundations that may fit with your efforts Crowd sourced projects are becoming popular and effective, as well as auctions, sales events, etc.

Local Funding	Cities update their budget every one to five years and list their projects in an annual or semi- annual budget or in a separate Capital Improvement Program (CIP) list. Cities generally provide matching funds for projects like SRTS that improve traffic safety
State Funding	The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Pedestrian & Bicycle Program and Safe Routes to School Program is a potential funding source. Selection criteria emphasize need and the quality of the project, among other considerations. Mini grants may also be available from the Washington Traffic Safety Commission to reimburse schools for minor equipment purchases.
County Funding	Counties can acquire funding from the State for a variety of projects. The State of Washington Transportation Improvement Board established the Urban Sidewalk Program to improve pedestrian safety on federally classified routes. Health departments also provide a range of funding related to SRTS such as those that encourage balanced nutrition and increased physical activity.

Evaluate, Improve & Continue

An important piece to any SRTS effort is continually monitoring how efforts have changed behavior—are more kids safely walking, biking, bussing, or sharing the ride and/or have there been noted improvements to traffic flow or more efficient/safer student drop-offs and pick-ups. You also want to gauge if you have met Coalition program goals you set at the beginning of the effort and then look for ways to enhance or modify them if needed.

To evaluate how a specific improvement/process worked or how your overall SRTS program is working you should repeat data-gathering tactics used at the beginning of SRTS efforts.

- Continue traffic and pedestrian counts. Conduct mid or year-end evaluations by counting each bicyclist,
 pedestrian and vehicle entering the school zone and compare the numbers to the baseline traffic count gathered
 at the beginning of the Coalition's SRTS effort.
 - a. Are there more families sharing the ride, bussing, walking or biking?
 - b. Is the traffic and travel situation improving? Are student drop-offs and pick-ups going more smoothly?
- Repeat the parent survey. Send out the parent survey again and compare results to data gathered during the
 first survey.
 - a. The results should provide a snapshot on whether your efforts have made a difference on parent attitudes about walking, biking or sharing the ride to school—or created more awareness of school traffic and transportation safety.
- **Identify additional program champions.** Members will cycle in and out during the life of the Coalition so continue to recruit new members.
- Continue to publicize successes. Gain visibility for activities through local media and school communications.
- Make the work relevant, fun and positive. The more relevant and engaging strategies and activities are, the
 more others will want to become involved.
- Make the Coalition permanent or create a larger community-wide SRTS task force. A permanent community-wide inter-agency task force staffed by the school district, public health department, local hospital, city police, fire, or public works department will provide your group with attention, energy and sustainability.

Further Coalition Building Reading

- Community Tool Box Coalition Building, http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/promotion-strategies/start-a-coaltion/main
- Colorado Safe Routes to School, Community Coalition Building Toolkit,
 https://www.codot.gov/programs/bikeped/safe-routes/training-curriculum/community-coalition-building-toolkit/view
- Santa Clara Public Health, Building Momentum for SRTS, http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/resources/toolkit/building-momentum-safe-routes-school

Additional Resources

- National Center for Safe Routes to School: saferoutesinfo.org
- Safe Routes to School National Partnership: <u>saferoutespartnership.org</u>
- Safe Routes to School Guide: guide.saferoutesinfo.org/
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/Safe-Routes-2002/overview.html
- ChangeLab Solutions & Safe Routes to School National Partnership: Safe Routes to School District Policy Workbook: http://www.changelabsolutions.org/safe-routes/welcome

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