

Cobb County Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan

DRAFT Safe Routes to School Plan

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Introduction

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program in general, makes walking and bicycling to school safer for children, while also achieving a wide range of associated benefits for students, schools, and communities. Created by the federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, SRTS's goal is to *"enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; to make walking and bicycling to school safe and more appealing; and to facilitate the planning, development and implementation of projects that will improve safety, and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of school."* Georgia's SRTS program is managed by the GDOT and is actively participating in implementing many of the program's goals. Georgia is also one of ten jurisdictions nationwide participating in the SRTS National Partnership's State Network Project. The Safe Routes To School (SRTS) program is designed to fund comprehensive programs that include the 5 Es (Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation, and Engineering) throughout Georgia to encourage and facilitate more children to walk and bike to school safely. The funds are intended to start an SRTS program in communities and assist community members in sustaining successful SRTS programs.

An estimated 31% of all elementary students in Georgia live within 1 mile of their local elementary school and are able to walk to school. (Data provided by GA Tech, from a GA Division of Public Health funded study, published in the American Journal of Preventative Medicine, Oct. 2007). However, only 13% bike or walk nationally, compared to 66% thirty years ago (Centers for Disease Control). By incorporating the SRTS program in Cobb County, the percentage of children walking and bicycling to school should improve which will not only benefit the children, but the communities involved in the program as well.

The Program's enabling legislation instructs that implementation should be carried out by increasing awareness, developing locally-driven and supported programs, improving bicycling and walking conditions near qualifying schools, and evaluating at the project and program levels. This can be accomplished by incorporating the 5 E's:

Encouragement - Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling

Education - Teaching the school community about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important life-long safety skills and offering school-bound and school area driver safety campaigns

Engineering - Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and establishing safer crosswalks, walkways, trails and bikeways

Enforcement - Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure drivers obey traffic laws, initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs and ensuring that policies are enforced

Evaluation - Monitoring and researching outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of mode share before and after the program intervention(s)

By incorporating the 5 E's Cobb County will have a framework for establishing a SRTS program based on what has worked in other communities.

Purpose and Goals

Cobb County's SRTS program will result in building a physical environment and encouraging a social climate that supports children's ability to walk and bike to school. Specific goals of the program reflect the many benefits SRTS has to offer, including:

- Reducing traffic congestion in the area of schools;
- Reducing the speed of traffic in school zones;
- Increasing accessibility for walkers and bikers at every school;
- Increasing street connectivity to improve accessibility to schools;
- Increasing the level of safety for children who walk and bike to school;
- Increasing drivers' awareness of pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Increasing children's physical activity; and
- Fostering partnerships among schools, governments, communities and businesses to create sustainable programs

All the goals should be made measureable for evaluation purposes through specific objectives. For example, Cobb County may want to measure its success at decreasing speed in school zones in 2 years by setting its objective to decrease speeds within school zones by 10% at schools within 2 years.

Program Implementation

Brief Elected Officials

The concept of a SRTS Program should be introduced to the County Commission. This introduction, in either a one-at-a-time format or to the assembled Commission, will allow the County staff to present the benefits of a countywide SRTS program to the citizens of Cobb County and to garner the support of the Commissioners. Their input should be sought and encouraged. Perhaps they may wish to participate in the SRTS or have input into who should serve on the SRTS Task Force.

Briefings should also be held with members of the School Board, again focusing on benefits of the program. The School Board will likely have special insights into potential opportunities and potential obstacles for the SRTS Program. Ideally, they may wish to designate a specific liaison or coordinator for the SRTS Program.

Collaborate with the Cobb County School District

The Cobb County School District is the second largest in Georgia with over 106,000 students in 67 elementary and 24 middle schools. Since there is such a large population of school-aged children, it is important to build relationships with people at the schools locally, as well as district-wide to mobilize a Safe Routes to School program among such a large population of school-aged children. According to the Cobb County School System, building relationships is a critical component of the District's focus. The district takes pride in its demonstrated success in Parent Teacher Association (PTA) participation. In addition to the PTA, each school also has its own School Council that includes the school's principal, teachers, parents and business representatives. These councils are an integral part of the school improvement process and help bring community concerns to school leadership. The District's relationship with the Cobb Chamber of Commerce has yielded a variety of programs supporting students and teachers, as well.

The school board is in essence its own government, which is why educating key leaders within the school system about the importance of pedestrian and bicycle safety is so important. This type of education can be done by drafting a letter to key leaders, such as the superintendent, which would articulate the potential for kids to walk and bike to school and the associated benefits. This letter can also be used as an invitation to meet with the superintendent and other personnel of his or her choice so that a more visual presentation can be made using graphs, charts, and pictures of best practices. Gaining support from the school board will help leverage support from the principals of individual schools.

Collaborating meetings with the school districts can be done by scheduling informative meetings for the superintendent and other school board staff, principals, PTA groups, and school councils in each of the six cities: Acworth, Austell, Kennesaw, Marietta, Powder Springs, and Smyrna. School staff and parents should also be given the opportunity to request meetings to discuss the needs and potential opportunities as it relates to the Safe Routes to School program at their individual schools.

It is important to consider the needs of the schools within the Districts when introducing the Safe Routes to Program. Schools do not seem to favor "the outsider coming in", it is important to conduct interactive meetings. The focus should be more on how the program can assist schools in improving conditions, rather than implying that the program is the only way to solve the school's problems. Allow school representatives to voice their concerns regarding various modes of transportation and proceed to explain how the Safe Routes to School can help eliminate some of those concerns with their participation.

While conducting workshops at two inner-city Atlanta schools, it became apparent that crime was a concern for school board representatives, principles, and parents alike. Implementing Safe Routes to School increased the number of eyes on the street as a direct result of children walking to school in the early morning and late afternoon. Safe Routes to School indirectly addressed one of the schools' major concerns, which served as an incentive for the schools' continued participation in the program. During a meeting with a DeKalb County school and school board representative, one of the main topics of concern was recruiting more school donations for the year. The school received tremendous response from local businesses by promoting a major event that addressed childhood obesity and safety—International Walk to School Day. Relationships between those donations and the sponsors were formed as a result of the event, and the donations continue to assist the school with Safe Routes to School related activities to date.



The information provided in these schools' meetings enabled the Safe Routes to School Coordinator to address their needs and the schools' individual needs while improving conditions for walking and biking. School districts will most likely have specific concerns, some of which are not related to walking and biking to school. However, taking their concerns into consideration will enable Cobb County to build relationships that will ultimately contribute to the sustainability of the program. The following questions should be asked during the initial meeting between Cobb County and the Cobb County and City of Marietta School Districts:

- What topic of concern(s) is at the top of the school district's agenda? Can Safe Routes to School help address this concern?
- What reservations (if any) does the school district have about the program? What steps can you take to eliminate these reservations?
- What are the reasons why the school district is in favor of the program? How can you capitalize off of these reasons?
- What responsibilities are the school districts willing to take on, concerning the program?
- Are there any components of the program that the school districts are not willing to help implement?
- Are the school districts willing to allocate any of its resources to help implement and sustain the program?

Create a Cobb County Safe Routes to School Task Force.

Taking into account the input received during the elected officials briefings, Cobb County SRTS Task Force should be created. The creation of a countywide Safe Routes to School Task Force is fundamental to creating and sustaining a successful program. Bringing the appropriate leaders to the table will help to ensure that every aspect of the program, including all 5 E's, are addressed and implemented .

The following key leaders and community members should be taken into consideration when developing a Safe Routes to School program:

Key Safe Routes to School - Leaders

- Key Safe Routes to School team members
- Cobb County Department of Transportation
- Cobb County Police Department
- School Board
- Cobb County Schools Department of Transportation
- Marietta Schools Department of Transportation
- School Principals
- Wellness committees
- Parents/Representatives from Parent Teacher Associations

The last, PTAs are particularly important. Utilizing existing school relationships, such as PTA groups and School Councils, will help gain support for Safe Routes to School program within individual schools. School principals are also more likely to participate if parents and the local community at large have a keen interest in the program. Most every parent is concerned about the speed of traffic and congestion in their neighborhood. Having an open discussion with PTA groups about these concerns and how the Safe Routes to School program can help them tackle these problems will almost ensure some type of involvement with the school principal.



Like most parents, teachers and members of the community are also concerned about the health and safety of the kids in their schools and neighborhoods. In fact, many successful Safe Routes to School programs are implemented by Physical Education Instructors with the support of their principal. As required by The A+ Education Reform Act of 2000 (House Bill 1187), all regular Cobb County schools installed school councils. These school councils are intended to provide advice and recommendations to the principal, the superintendent and potentially, the Cobb County Board of Education. As an advisory body, the council is made up of the principal, two certified teacher members, two parents/guardians, and two members of the business community. Council members may study a wide range of issues, including those that involve school and the community. Meeting with school councils about the Safe Routes to School program and its benefits may be beneficial in soliciting support from both the school principals, as well as the Cobb County Board of Education.

Other potential Safe Routes to School – Community Members

Local departments of transportation
Local police departments
County commissioner or City council representative
School staff
Wellness committees
Neighborhood associations
Local health departments
Local bicycle and pedestrian clubs or advocacy groups
Local businesses
Local planning/ government staff
Local media outlets such as newspapers, television stations, and radio stations

Each agency selected should be emailed an invitation the kickoff meeting. If responses to the initiations are light, then follow up phone calls should be made to personally invite people to the kickoff meeting.

Inclusion of media outlets in the Task Force will provide opportunities to advertise special events through news articles, promote the SRTS Program through news items, and obtain public recognition of the efforts and successes of the program. All of these can result in increasing support for the program from the public, agencies, and elected officials.

Hold SRTS Task Force Kickoff Meeting.

A SRTS Task Force Kickoff Meeting is an important step in the implementation of a Cobb County SRTS Plan. At this kickoff meeting, the County should present the concept of the SRTS Program and the SRTS Programs objectives. Perhaps a County Commissioner could make a statement in support of the SRTS effort. Additionally, at this meeting the benefits to the partnering agencies and individuals of the SRTS Program should be made clear.

The final point cannot, showing benefits, be overemphasized. A implementing and sustaining a SRTS program requires a commitment from those involved; to obtain this commitment it will be necessary to show the potential leaders and members “What’s in it for me?” By showing that participation in the SRTS Program they will realize tangible benefits, the County can obtain a greater level of commitment from partnering agencies and individuals.

Comments from attending individuals and agencies should be solicited. Discussions during this meeting will help the County staff identify additional potential resources for and barriers to implementing the SRTS Program.

Hold First SRTS Task Force Action Meeting.

The kickoff meeting’s purpose is to provide an introduction to the SRTS Program for agencies and individuals. It is intended to identify the proper individuals to participate in the Task Force and to identify potential assets or roadblocks associated with implementing the SRTS Program.

It is likely that all of those individuals who attend the kickoff meeting will not be the same individuals who will (or should) participate in continued activities of the SRTS Task Force. Consequently, following kickoff meeting a subsequent email should be sent out confirming the commitment to continued participation of the individual or agency who attended kickoff meeting. Agencies should be requested to provide a specific contact person for this effort. These confirmed participants will represent the initial core of the SRTS Task Force.

A second meeting should be held to begin the actual “nuts and bolts” implementation of the SRTS Program.

Organizational Issues

Certainly, at this first Action Meeting of the SRTS Task Force the Task Force will discuss organizational and logistical issues concerning the management of the committee. It is envisioned that this Task Force would function much as like County Advisory or Technical Committees in that it would have an elected Chair and officers. This format provides for individual members taking immediate ownership of the SRTS program and promotes a “lets get things done” attitude. The structure of the committee, however, should be less formal. While there may be a formal membership roster, any voting actions should be kept to a minimum and consensus decision making should be the usual order of business. Attendance at and participation in meetings by interested parties should be encouraged. It is also recommended that the meetings be held in a presentation, rather than an around the table format.

Action Items

While committee logistics will be addressed at this first meeting, this first meeting should be an Action Meeting. That is, the participants must leave the meeting with assignments. This SRTS Plan is being prepared for the Cobb County Department of Transportation, but they cannot implant the plan. Cobb County DOT will certainly be one of the participating entities, but it cannot be the only one. It must be a collaborative effort of the individuals and agencies involved. Therefore, it is important to involve all the interested parties as soon as possible – get them used to working on this effort. While a work plan will not have been developed prior to this meeting¹, some project tasks are likely to be identified; it is likely that some background information will be needed. Develop the Agenda for this meeting so that specific meaningful tasks – even if it is just obtaining basic information, looking into data sources, or finding identifying existing programs in schools – can be assigned to the participants.

¹ While this SRTS Plan has been developed for Cobb County, it is not expected that all aspects of this plan will be found to be doable in the order or way identified. Additionally, this is and will likely be perceived as Cobb County’s Plan, not the SRTS Task Force’s Plan. It is critical that the Task Force participants be involved in identifying specific tasks and approaches to implementing the SRTS Program. They must take ownership of the plan. Quite possibly a first task might be to refine this SRTS Plan and set specific agency action items.

Beyond the First Meetings

Delegate Tasks.

Cobb County DOT will be responsible for implementing many SRTS tasks at the county level, which will require using resources that are specific to Cobb County, such as its engineers and GIS analysts, in addition to collaborating with the necessary other departments to implement a countywide program. The delegation of various tasks will affect everything from the organizational flow to the program budget, which is why it is important to delegate the right tasks to the right people. Consequently, at one of the first Task Force meetings, the Task Force should delegate specific tasks to the appropriate agency or group. When making these decisions, the following questions should be considered:

- What does the task entail?
- Why is it important that the task be carried out?
- How should the task be carried out?
- Who is best qualified to carry out the task?
- Where does the task need to be carried out?
- When does the task need to be carried out?
- Would the cost of carrying out a task vary according to the type of personnel?

By involving the Task Force in the delegation process, you reinforce their importance to the process and bolster their buy-in for the SRTS Program.

Potential Tasks

The following 5 E's and their associated objectives are examples of what could be implemented as part of the Safe Routes to School program:

Encouragement

The encouragement component of the program will require a collaborative effort between the county, school boards, and individual schools and include such tasks as:

- Promote Walk and Roll to School Day events
- Promote contests and activities that encourage walking and biking to school
- Provide incentives to students who participate in SRTS-related activities and events

Education

Education is a multi-faceted component of the SRTS program that involves all areas of expertise, including educators, engineers, planners and law enforcement. Tasks include:

- Making SRTS presentations
- Providing technical assistance to schools
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety training
- Creating bicycle and pedestrian safety training material
- Providing maps of walk/bike routes to schools
- Creating a webpage and newsletters

- School-bound and school area driver safety programs.

Engineering

Engineering is usually implemented by engineer and planners, and includes tasks such as:

- Improvements to the operational and built environment to benefit walking and biking to school
- Conducting Walking/Biking Assessments

Enforcement

Enforcement is almost always carried out by the local police departments and include such Tasks as:

- Ticketing and traffic violations
- Conducting crosswalk stings
- Providing speed trailers
- Directing traffic during Walk and Roll to School day events
- Establishing crossing guard programs

Evaluation

The evaluation component will enable Cobb County to assess its progress in both implementing the program, as well as the outcomes of the program itself. Tasks include:

- Distribute Student Arrival and Departure Tally Sheets
- Distribute and Conduct Parent Surveys
- Conduct Walking/Biking Assessments before and after interventions
- Conduct Traffic Counts
- Conduct Crash Data Analysis
- Reduce and Analyze

Program Budget

The program's budget will be determined by the following:

- Types and methods of services provided
- Personnel appointed to carry out services
- Number of schools expected to participate in program
- Materials and distribution (how often distributed x number of schools)
- School responsibility vs. County responsibility
 - Cobb County will provide most of its material online; schools will be responsible for printing and distributing online materials

The 5 E's chart in Appendix 1 provides examples of how and where to delegate the tasks associated with each of the E's. This chart will help the County determine the cost of various tasks and what it should budget. Using the 5 E's chart will help the County decide what tasks they should include and should not include in the budget. For example, Cobb County might decide that the distribution and collection of parent surveys will be the responsibility of the school districts. In this case, Cobb County would not budget for parent surveys.

Recruit Schools: Identify Existing Conditions

It is likely that through the steps of briefing elected officials, working with the school board, holding the Task Force kickoff meeting, and the first real Task Force meeting, you will already have identified some potential schools who have both an interest and a need for a SRTS program. These schools should be encouraged to begin data collection and to begin identify appropriate program components as quickly as possible. Implementing SRTS components at these schools that show an interest and a need can result in quick success stories to use to support continuing efforts and further implementation of the SRTS Program.

If however, no school has yet been identified for implementation of a SRTS Program, then identifying such schools should be one of the tasks delegated in the previous step.

Assessment of Schools and Students

A general assessment of schools, their location, number of students enrollment, and school policies and procedures should be conducted before collecting more strategic data.

See the maps of Cobb County Elementary and Middle Schools and Marietta City Schools in Appendixes 2-4. Appendix 5 includes a density map of all Cobb County Schools.

Other data should include:

- Number of schools elementary and middle schools within Cobb County, including City of Marietta Schools
- Number of children grades K-8 residing in Cobb County
- Number of students attending school within the Cobb County school district (including Marietta City Schools)
- Population density in areas near Cobb County Schools
- Number of students enrolled in each individual school
- Identify bussing policies
- Crossing guard placement, training and policies
- Projected future school developments or expansions.

Identifying Schools and Collecting Data

Collecting data will help determine the extent to which each school can participate in the Safe Routes to School program (i.e. Tier 1 or Tier 2), as well as help to identify conditions in need of improvement for walking and biking to school. Data should be collected for an area up to a 2 miles radius surrounding each school, taking into consideration that students who bike to school may travel further distances than those who walk.

Appendixes 6 and 7 depict the location of sidewalks in relation to Cobb County schools, and the areas near schools where traffic counts have been conducted.

Other existing conditions include:

- School district boundaries;
- Projected transportation and sidewalk projects;
- Existing and potential walking and biking routes;
- Posted speed limits within school zones and other school zone treatments;
- Location of the schools in relation to character areas (i.e. corridors, activity centers, residential redevelopment, etc.)

- Type and location of standard traffic control devices, such as signals and push buttons;
- Traffic/directional signage used in school zones;
- Location and conditions of sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and multi-use trails;
- Location and conditions of crosswalks and curb ramps;
- Connectivity of roads and sidewalk systems.
- Ordinances that promote or hinder walking and biking;
- Average traffic counts during school rush hour;
- Average speeds in school zones and along existing and potential walk/bike routes;
- Crash data analysis within school zones and along potential and existing walk/bike routes;
- Assessment of parent needs and concerns related to walking and biking to school.

Many of the factors listed above can be identified by school personnel, parents, or residents within the community if provided with user-friendly tools for example. The assessment of speeds and conducting traffic counts can also be carried out by the school community by utilizing speed radar guns and tracking tools as seen in Appendix 8.

Understanding Existing Policies

Existing policies and procedures can influence the direction of the Safe Routes to School program, as well as the program's ability to improve the overall conditions for walking and biking, and increase the number of children who walk and bike to school.

Cobb County encourages “non-motorized accommodation (i.e., bicycle, pedestrian, etc.) design in accordance with routes designed on the adopted Cobb County Bicycle Plan”. As noted below, Cobb County already has several policies and procedures in place that also support walking and biking to school:

Cobb County Technical Standards for

- Sidewalk Requirements
 - Sidewalk Location
 - Sidewalks to be located on both sides of the street for arterial, major collector or minor collector.
 - Sidewalks are required for both residential and commercial frontage along improved rights-of-way.
- Sidewalk Specifications
 - Sidewalks shall be 4' width along interior streets
 - Sidewalks shall be 5' width for exterior and non-residential streets, or as required by ADA.
 - Sidewalks shall be 3' from the back of curb
 - Sidewalks shall be concrete
- Community Design
 - Street lights are required for new developments with streets
 - Cobb County will not accept alleys on the County system. However, they are encouraged as an element of the Walkable Community.
 - The maximum block length is 1,200'

- For roads with bikeways 3-4 feet of pavement on both sides are required to be added.
- The Cobb County Bicycle Plan shall be reviewed by developer and his engineer and incorporated into the concept stage of the plan preparation.
- Policy Recommendations & Opportunities
 - Require sidewalk widths of 5' along interior streets and 6' along residential and commercial frontage
 - Improves usability of sidewalks
 - Require sidewalks along both sides of street in multi-family developments and in single family developments with average lot sizes of less than 1 acre
 - Improves sidewalk infrastructure coverage
 - Increase planting strip size to 5' along residential and commercial frontage
 - Improves safety and perception of safety for pedestrians
- Hindering policies
 - It appears that there are no zone specific sidewalk requirements
 - Children are not permitted to ride bicycles on sidewalk
 - Crossing guards are not considered pedestrians in sidewalk

While all SRTS schools are expected to participate in all 5 E's, also known as a comprehensive SRTS program, some schools are limited to certain components of the program due to existing unsafe walking and biking conditions. For example, schools in rural areas with no supporting infrastructure for walking and biking might be encouraged to participate in contests related to SRTS rather than events such as Walk and Roll to School Day. It might also be sufficient for these schools to receive educational material rather than hands-on bicycle and pedestrian safety training. Cobb County should implement a 2-tier Safe Routes to School Program to ensure that all schools benefit from the program's services in a cost and time-efficient manner.

Figure 1.

**Cobb County Safe Routes to School program:
Tier 1 and Tier 2**

	Tier 1	Tier 2
Education		
Technical Assistance	X	X
SRTS presentations	X	X
Bicycle and pedestrian safety training in schools		X
Create and distribute bicycle and pedestrian safety material for students and parents	X	X
Maps of walk and bike routes to schools		X

Cobb County SRTS webpage and newsletter	X	X
Encouragement		
Promotion of Walk and Roll to School Day events		X
Create and promote countywide contests and activities	X	X
Order and distribute incentives for students at participating schools	X	X
Enforcement		
Ticketing	X	X
Crossing guard training	X	X
Crosswalk stings		X
Implementing speed radar guns		X
Implementing speed trailers	X	X
Engineering		
Improvements to the built environment that benefit walking and biking to and from school		X
Walk/bike assessments	X	X
Evaluation		
Implement Student Arrival and Departure Travel Sheets	X	X
Conduct parent surveys	X	X
Conduct walk/bike assessments		X
Traffic counts	X	X
Crash data analysis	X	X

Cobb County Schools DOT

- Cobb County Schools DOT
 - Services 80,000-90,000 students across the county by school bus
 - Elementary students must live at least ½ mile from the school to receive bus transportation
 - Middle schools students must live at least 1 mile from the school to receive bus transportation
 - Exceptions to bus transportation requirements include:
 - Lack of paved sidewalks
 - Home is located off of a major highway

Understand the Problem - Case Studies

Mountain View Elementary, a Cobb County School, and Burruss Elementary, a Marietta City school are both participants of Safe Routes to School, yet the conditions surrounding both schools are completely different.

Mountain View Elementary

Mountain View Elementary is located at 3448 Sandy Plains Rd. The school has approximately 700 students and is within a mile of three major subdivisions. The majority of kids at this school ride the bus or carpool to avoid crossing Sandy Plains Rd,

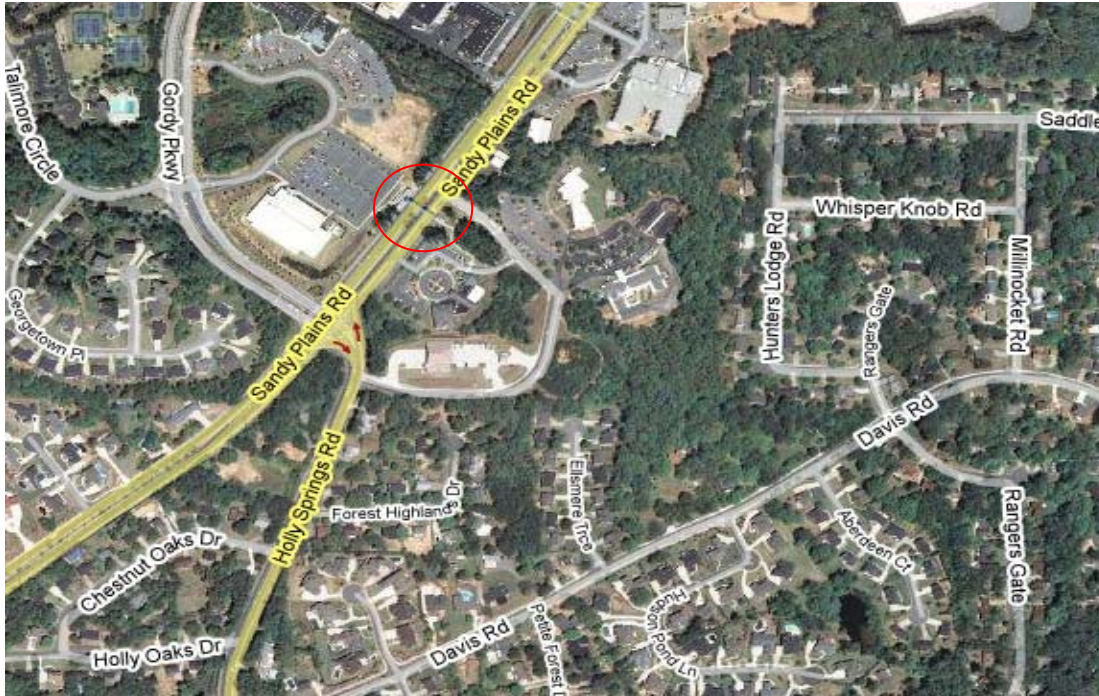
which has 7 lanes total (including a turning lane), and is known for its high speeds. At first glance, it seems impossible for kids to get to school by foot. However, a pedestrian bridge serves as a safe-haven for walkers who wish to cross this dangerous road. Although, parents and school staff are not completely comfortable with the idea of kids riding their bikes across the bridge, they have long recognized the potential for walkers. In fact, over 400 kids participated in the school's first Walk to School Day event in the fall of 2007.

A 5 ft. wide pathway connects the school property to a pedestrian-friendly public learning center which includes an art building, library, and senior center. This is also where the pedestrian bridge begins. Sidewalks are easily accessible upon exiting the bridge on both sides of Sandy Springs. Two out of three of the subdivisions located at the intersection of Sandy Springs and Holly Springs have sidewalks on one side of the street. A high-visibility crosswalk is also located at this intersection. While no sidewalk exists directly in front of the school, the short path from the learning center enables students to easily access the campus. Two high-visibility crosswalks also assist pedestrians in crossing safely onto the front campus.

The school's main concern is the speed along Sandy Plains Road. Although the posted speed is 45 mph, they sometimes experience speeds of more than 55 miles per hour, even during school zones hours. Furthermore, no advanced pedestrian crossing signs exist at the crosswalk located at the intersection before the school. Another concern is the school's steep driveway, which makes some of the kids invisible to drivers pulling into the school's entrance.

Figure 2. Mountain View Elementary





Burruss Elementary

Burruss Elementary, located at 325 Manning Rd., is much more of a neighborhood school. It is ideal for walkers and bicyclists in that it is surrounded by neighborhoods and residential developments, has sufficient sidewalks, and has decent connectivity. It is also important to note that where connectivity is lacking, there is plenty of opportunity for increasing connectivity.

The speed limit on Manning Road is 30 mph. The school zone is accompanied by flashing beacons on both sides of Manning Road. While the sidewalk on Manning Road is only 3 ft. wide, it leads directly onto the school grounds. A subdivision is located directly in front of the school, as well as to the east of the school, which makes it obvious to drivers that they are driving through a neighborhood and helps to reduce speed. Laurel Park, located to the east of the school, also gives walkers and cyclists an advantage in that its small trail enables several students to use the park as a cut through on their route to school. Some students are



able to walk on the school grounds by cutting through their neighbors' yards. The crosswalks in the neighborhood also make walking and biking to school a safer experience.

One of the biggest challenges to walkers and cyclist at Burruss is actually rare--a creek that separates the homes behind the school from the school itself. Kids residing in these homes don't typically walk or bike to school.

Figure 3. Burruss Elementary



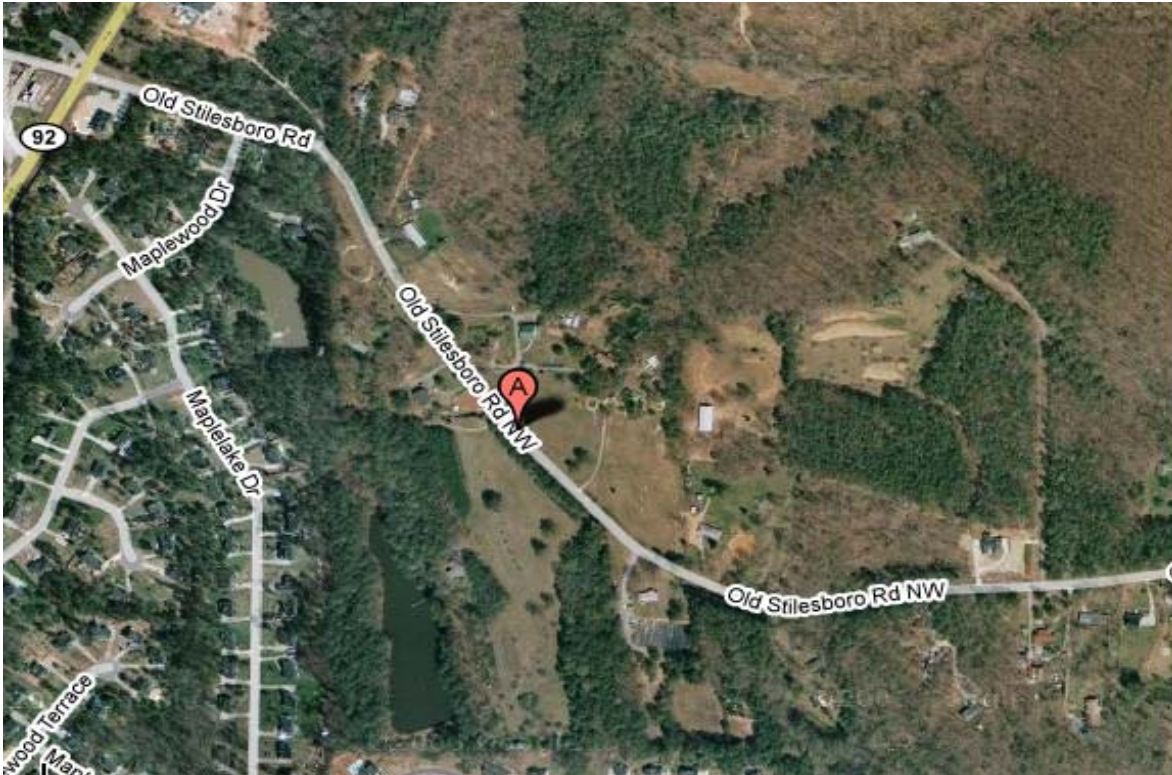
Examples of Schools with Common Barriers

The most common dilemmas for schools wanting to implement a Safe Routes to School program include the lack of sidewalks and connectivity, and dangerous speeds. Schools that most often lack the infrastructure or safety for a comprehensive Safe Routes to School program include those that are:

- Located in rural areas
- Near major activity centers
- Near major corridors

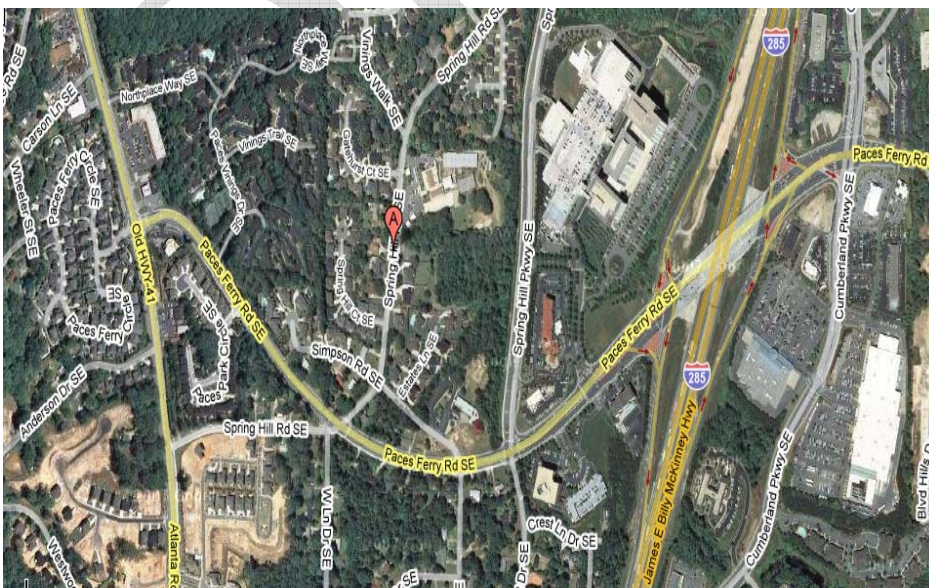
Figures 4-6 depict Cobb County schools that are affected by the dilemmas mentioned above.

Figure 4. Pickett's Mill Elementary



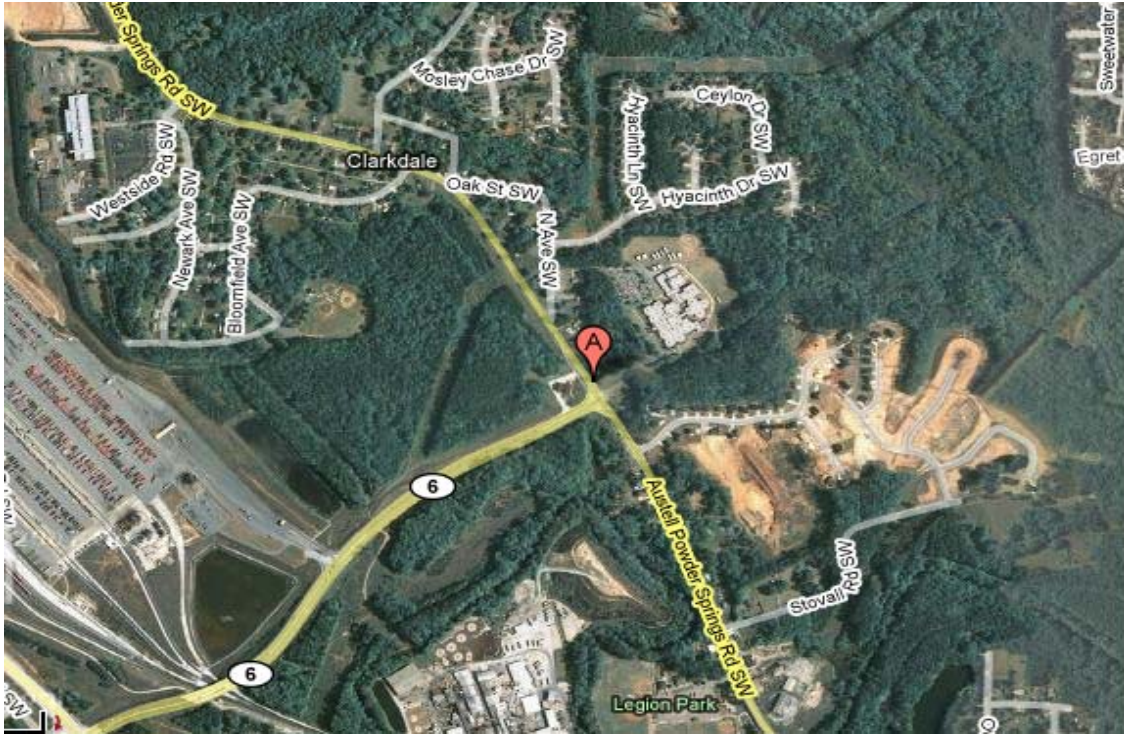
Pickett's Mill Elementary, located on Old Stillsboro Road in unincorporated Cobb in a rural area near Acworth, has little to no connectivity.

Figure 5. Teasley Elementary



Teasley Elementary, located in the southeast region of unincorporated Cobb near the city of Smyrna, is surrounded by a massive activity center.

Figure 6. Garrett Middle



Garrett Middle, located in Austell Powder Springs Road in the City of Austell, is near a major corridor, which contributes to high speeds on 45 mph road. Schools surrounded by these types of conditions typically are not successful at implementing a comprehensive Safe Routes to School program.

Schools that are most successful at implementing a comprehensive Safe Routes to School program typically have ample sidewalks, are located in a neighborhood with a posted speed limit of 35 mph or less, and have great connectivity.

Quick Fix Solutions

Most schools only need minor infrastructure, also known as “quick fixes” to improve conditions for walking and biking. Quick fixes are both time and cost-efficient in that they are relatively cheap and quick to implement in a short time frame. The most common safety concerns can usually be addressed with quick fix solutions.

Figure 7.

Quick Fix Solutions

No safe place for kids to cross	Instal pedestrian crossing
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Not enough time for kids to cross the street at signalized intersections	Re-time lights
Turning cars pose a threat to children crossing the street	Implement no right on red
Broken signals, walk lights, or beacons	Repair traffic signals, walk lights, and beacons
Broken street light	Repair broken street lights
Uneven or cracked sidewalk	Repair uneven and cracked sidewalks

Sometimes, repositioning or eliminating previous safety measures can actually improve the safety of walkers. Burrell Elementary in Marietta once had a mid-block crossing located in front of the school in the curve of the road. While this crosswalk made it convenient for children to cross, it posed a great danger to children because it wasn't very visible to drivers. The crosswalk was removed as a result, forcing children to cross at the main intersection where the crossing guard was stationed. The school principal had this to say: "Our crossing assistant now only has one crosswalk to manage and the situation is far more safe!"

Quick fix solutions can also be used to tackle enforcement issues. One of the most common forms of quick fix solutions with regard to enforcement is the speed trailer. Evidence shows that these devices are successful at deterring and decreasing speed (Federal Highway Administration). These devices can be used periodically or consistently until a more permanent solution becomes available, such as permanent speed radar signs or assigned officers.

The National Center for Safe Routes to School has developed user-friendly walkability and bikability checklists, which can be found in Appendixes 9 and 10. These checklists can be used by schools to quickly assess conditions for walking and biking in their area. These tools also provide quick fix suggestions for barriers to walking and biking to school.

Build Leadership for Your SRTS Program

Train Physical Education Teachers and Students

Pedestrian and bicycle training will be implemented by promoting a combination of in-class and hands-on lessons. Cobb County should encourage schools to have pedestrian and bicycle safety training implemented as a part of Physical Education class. Physical education teachers will shadow safety instructors while children are being trained. The train the trainer method will enable teachers to educate other staff and volunteers on how to conduct pedestrian and bicycle training, as well as how to conduct safety trainings.

Key components of teacher training should include:

- Pedestrian right away
- Bicycle rules of the road
- Conducting walk/bike audits

- Identifying problems and solutions
- How to report problems
- Sidewalk and crosswalk safety
- Bicycle and helmet safety
- Traffic rules
- Sample lesson plans
- How to teach Safe Routes to School and make it fun

This training will enable teachers to instruct children on safety measures as it relates to walking and biking. It also presents the opportunity for schools to designate the supervision of walkers and bicyclists to its staff, similar to the way in which bus duty or car pool duty is designated.

Cobb County will work with the schools districts to develop formal recognition for schools participating in this training. One recommendation would be for the County to recognize Safe Routes training as a formal certification so that schools are certified as “Safe Routes” schools upon completion of the training.

The Federal Office of Highway Administration suggests that the following lessons are taught to students regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety:

Pedestrian Safety

- When you walk, run, inline skate, skateboard or ride a bike, stop at the curb or the edge of the street before you cross.
- Look left, look right, and look left again, turning your head to see over your shoulder, before you step into the street to cross to the other side.
- Be aware that cars may not stop even if you have the right-of-way.
- Step into the street only if you do not see any moving cars.
- Never go for a walk with a stranger. Only walk with someone who your parents say is okay.
- Walk on the sidewalk or a walking path. When there is no sidewalk, always walk facing traffic.
- Listen for the sound of car motors, car doors, sirens, and horns before you step into the street.
- Never run into the street to catch a ball or chase a toy, a friend, or a pet.
- Never run across the street; walk when crossing the street.
- Do not cross in the middle of the street unless there is a crosswalk and signal or a crossing guard.
- Cross at corners and use crosswalks whenever possible; always stay within the lines of the crosswalk.
- Use intersections with signals and pedestrian buttons whenever possible.
- Know what the different signs and signals mean and always follow them.
- Be careful around parked cars; stop, look left, look right, and look left again before stepping out from between parked cars.

- Early in the morning or in the evening and at night, wear reflective and/or light colored clothing, carry a light, and/or wear a flashing light.

Bicycle Safety

- Wearing a helmet that fits properly and is correctly positioned
- Riding in a smooth, straight and predictable manner
- How to be in control of their bicycle at all times
- How to scan the road by looking ahead, side to side and over the shoulder, to see from behind without swerving
- Riding at a safe speed
- How to stop quickly and remain in control
- Traffic signs and signals
- Right and left hand turn signals
- Signaling to slow and stop
- Proper bike fit
- Bicycle mechanical safety checklist
- Identifying and avoiding high-risk situations and behaviors
- How to keep control of the bicycle when reacting to hazards
- How to recognize and interpret communications from other road users and the importance of making eye contact
- Safety equipment
- Bicycle theft prevention

Examples of in-class and hands on activities for students include:

- “Walking School Buses”
- Mapping Walk/Bike Routes
- Bicycle Rodeos
- Participating in traffic counts
- Creating songs and games regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety

Details for implementing some of these activities can be found in [Appendix 11](#).

In addition to teachers and students, drivers and parents should be educated about traffic and pedestrian right away rules, as well as the importance of speed reduction. This can be done through signage, fliers, newsletters, and even workshops. The Governor’s Office of Highway Safety, for example, created a [Kill Speed not Kids flyer](#), which was distributed by the PEDS organization across the metro Atlanta region to make drivers aware of the dangers of speeding in neighborhoods where kids are often at play. A copy of this flyer can be found in [Appendix 13](#).

Use Crossing Guards

The Cobb County police department currently has 47 crossing guards stationed among 39 Cobb County Elementary schools and 30 crossing guards stationed among 17 Cobb County Middle schools. The Special Operations Department is responsible for placement and training of crossing guards. The procedures for crossing guard placement are as follows:

- Approximately 65 crossing guards in Cobb County schools
- Protocol for assigning crossing guards is as follows:
 - School administrator must request crossing guard
 - Assigned officers evaluate number of pedestrians at the site and whether or not a traffic problem exists over 3 to 4 days
 - Department of education hires off duty officers to direct traffic if needed
 - Crosswalks are not a requirement for the placement of crossing guards
 - Majority of crossing guards are located at driveway intersections of school driveways; few are located at major intersections

The Cobb County Police Department requires all crossing guards to shadow a crossing guard supervisor or officer during a normal crossing guard shift, which for elementary schools is 7:20am - 7:50am and 2:20pm - 2:50pm. Middle school shifts are from 8:45am - 9:15am and 4:00pm - 4:30pm. There is currently no set number of days or even hours as to how long field training lasts for crossing guards. Training is considered to be complete once it appears that the new guard has adjusted to his or her responsibilities. This determination is made by the observing officer or crossing guard supervisor, which can be made in a matter of hours or a couple of days.

The Cobb County Police Department has developed its own crossing guard training manual, which has been reviewed by the County's attorney. However, it is recommended that the Cobb County Department of Transportation host at least 2 crossing guard training workshops in collaboration with the Cobb County Police Department, making it mandatory for every crossing guard to attend at least 1 of the 2 workshops.

The National Center for Safe Routes to Schools suggests that the following topics are covered during any adult crossing guard training:

- Basic traffic laws
- School zone signage and pavement markings
- Proper use and purpose of traffic signs and signals
- Crossing procedure and ways to teach them to children
- Hiring agency rules and regulations (i.e. name of supervisor, etc.)
- Proper attire and behavior
- Proper use of safety equipment
- Procedures for crashes involving crossing guards and children walking/biking to and from school and other emergency procedures

Recruit and Support Champions

While Cobb County will collaborate with the schools boards and the necessary departments to provide its services to the schools, the schools' parents and community will need to be actively involved in all five E's for a successful program. The person(s) responsible for implementing the Safe Routes to School program within his or her own individual school is classified as the Safe Routes to School Champion.

Identifying and Recruiting School Champions

Once you've decided on which schools are appropriate for comprehensive Safe Routes to School programs with regard to infrastructure, it is important to identify potential school champions. Helping schools to identify the people who will implement the program within the school is equally as important as identifying schools with the proper infrastructure. It is possible for a school with ideal infrastructure to fail at sustaining a Safe Routes to School program without a dedicated Champion. Champions are the persons who implement the program within the school. The County may choose to designate several schools within the district to one champion or assign a champion to each individual school. The following factors are beneficial when selecting school champions:

- Parent or neighborhood resident
- Teacher or school staff
- PTA member
- School volunteer
- Community leader or advocate
- Skilled at mobilizing people
- Skilled at planning and hosting events

Duties of the champion typically include:

- Promoting SRTS activities and events to parents and students
 - Including notices in parent newsletters and by email
 - Creating and posting flyers
- Keeping the principal up-to-date with SRTS activities and events
- Reporting to Cobb County's SRTS team or leader
- Recruiting volunteers
- Recruiting sponsors
- Planning and implementing Walk and Roll to School Days
- Distribute and collect student and parent surveys
- Distribute SRTS material and incentives
- Serves as the community liaison for SRTS
 - Represents the SRTS program at public meetings

The following 5 E's objectives should be implemented by Safe Routes to School Champions:

Engineering

- Conducting Walking/Biking Assessments

Enforcement

- Utilizing speed radar guns
- Issuing mock parking tickets

Education

- Including SRTS in physical activity classes
- Including SRTS in the curriculum
- Distributing pedestrian and bicycle safety material to students and parents
- Hosting parent meetings regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety
- Include bicycle and pedestrian safety articles in school newsletter or website

Encouragement

The encouragement component of the program will require a collaborative effort between the county, school boards, and individual schools. Tasks include:

- Promote Walk and Roll to School Day events
- Promote contests and activities that encourage walking and biking to school
- Provide incentives to students who participate in SRTS-related activities and events

Evaluation (Change in chart)

The evaluation component will enable Cobb County to assess its progress in both implementing the program, as well as the outcomes of the program itself. Tasks include:

- Distribute "Student Arrival and Departure Tally Sheets"
- Distribute and collect "Parent Surveys"
- Conduct walking/biking assessments
- Conduct traffic counts

Champions volunteer to manage Safe Routes to School programs because they genuinely care about children's health and safety. PED's KidsWalk program, a Safe Routes to School program for the metro Atlanta region for more than 10 years, has been most successful at recruiting champions by giving presentations about the program at PTA meetings. The presentations are designed to persuade parents to get involved in issues such as speed enforcement, traffic calming, and promoting walking and bicycling as forms of physical activity.

Other successful champions include physical education teachers, school health counselors, and community leaders. Like most parents, school teachers and staff have a genuine concern for the health and safety of their students. Teachers and staff can sometimes be the most efficient champions because they are already familiar with protocol specific to their school (i.e. when newsletters or printed, what types of activities



need a signature of approval and by whom, etc.). Once champions have successfully been recruited, it is important that they are provided with the proper training. It is suggested that Cobb County hold up to 2 workshops per school year to train Safe Routes to School champions and volunteers. The champion training summary demonstrates how to implement a workshop for Safe Routes to School Champions.

Champion Training

(2 hour Workshop)

Topics:

What is KidsWalk!
Getting started
Involving police
Program standards
School involvement
Volunteer recruitment
Planning a successful kick-off event
Soliciting donations from local businesses
Training volunteers

Materials:

Flipchart
Markers & pens
Whistles
Name tags
KidsWalk Binders
Stop signs
T-shirts
Sign-in sheets
PACE & Speedbusters info
Membership forms
Donation jar

Setup:

Sign-in sheet
Nametags
Flip chart page entitled “Why do we need KidsWalk?”
Markers
KidsWalk Binders

Have participants sign-in, make a nametag, and write why they’re interested in Safe Routes to School.

Introduction (5 min.): Introduce self and have participants introduce themselves. Post the “Why do we need SRTS” sheet and go over what everyone wrote. Explain what SRTS is, for example:

Safe Routes to School is a program designed to get kids to walk or bicycle to school in groups, supervised by adults. Purposes are: healthy lifestyle, reduce traffic congestion and smog, safer neighborhoods...

Getting Started (15 min)

Survey the walk routes to your school. Do sidewalks exist? Do crosswalks with pedestrian signals exist? Do drivers speed? What other dangers exist? Let participants brainstorm potential barriers to walking safely to or from school. Point out Walkability Survey in binder. Some examples of items to identify include:

No sidewalks, broken sidewalks, closed sidewalks, no crosswalks, no pedestrian signals, no crossing guard, speeding drivers, crime, loose dogs, long distance

What can we do to alleviate parents’ fears about any of the above concerns? Address each concern participants come up with. Talk about police involvement (see below). Police escorts, letters to the County/City to fix/open/build sidewalks and crosswalks, neighbors as “eyes on the streets”, volunteers trained to stop traffic with whistles and stop signs, volunteers with first aid and CPR training, volunteers trained to handle emergency procedures, traffic calming...

Involving Police (5 min.) Ask if participants are familiar with their police district or zone. Does anyone know if they have a community liaison officer (there are many different titles for this position)? They can find out and meet with this person or talk with them on the phone about the program and their needs for police escorts, speed monitoring, etc. Be sure to point out specific hazards along the walk and bicycle routes.

Have list of police zone for each school with contact name & numbers on hand.

Program Standards (10 min.) Go over program standards. Make sure to go over “Emergency Procedures” in detail. What do we do in bad weather? If there is an emergency? Talk about CPR and First Aid training—if volunteers are not already certified, encourage them to take the certification classes or recruit someone who is certified. Make sure to point out ratios of children to adults and ways to get more “eyes on the street” by having residents who live along the walk routes stand on their front porches while children are walking. Designate “safe houses” along the route.

School Involvement (5 min) Find out if your school has a pedestrian safety curriculum or program. If not, ask if they would be interested in our material. The school can use pedestrian safety workshops toward the County/State-mandated amount of **Health credit!**

Volunteer Recruitment (10 min) Break large group into smaller groups and have them brainstorm recruitment ideas for volunteers and children. Have each group share 1-2 ideas with everyone. Some ideas include: Fun flyers, big kick-off event, contests with incentives, peer pressure, teacher/staff “buy-in”.

Show them the sample flyers.

Kick-off event (15 min): Have the small groups “plan” a kick-off event. Have each group share their ideas.

Point out items that each group came up with that fit in “Things to remember when planning a program” list below and go over the entire list.

- Budget
- Publicity
- Food
- Logistics
- Number of volunteers needed
- Supplies needed
- Sponsors and thanking/recognizing sponsors
- Police involvement
- School Administration/Teacher participation

Soliciting Donations (5 min.) Ask and Keep Asking! Make sure to put your requests in writing, on school letterhead if possible. Explain exactly what you need, who and what it’s for, and what will the sponsor get out of it? Community recognition? Be as specific as possible. Ask in person. Leave the letter if requested, or if the manager is not

available. Write thank you notes! Have participants sign a thank you poster/display of some kind the store can post.

Training Volunteers (45 min.) This training seeks to teach champions how to use the volunteer curriculum. Several training models exist. This curriculum uses the experiential learning cycle, which employs experience to teach new ideas and skills.

When training, involve the participants—ask questions, brainstorm, have them plan activities or role-play. This involves them in the process and may provide ideas for improving the training. The handouts provide more specific training techniques and tips.

For example, this is a method to train **“KidsWalk”** Program Volunteers

Maintain year-round interest: Brainstorm ways to maintain year-round interest in walking.

- Playing games along the route;
- Singing and/or making up songs along the way;
- Contests: who can pick up the most trash along the way, who walked the most days this month;
- School-wide contests: classroom with the most walkers, most creative song or game from a walking school bus;
- Incentives: t-shirts for children, who walked all semester, breakfast on the lawn, appreciation breakfast for volunteers.

Teach pedestrian safety to children: Make sure the school administration knows about the pedestrian safety curriculum that teachers can use in the classroom. If the school does not plan to teach pedestrian safety before the “Walking School Buses” hit the streets, use the handouts yourself. Use the “Prevent Pedestrian Accidents” handout and the safe street crossing handouts to teach pedestrian skills to your group.

Remember, children see and hear the world differently than adults (see handout).

Use language they will understand, get down on their level, and ALWAYS practice what you preach! Saying, “do what I say and not what I do” DOES NOT WORK. Children will imitate your behavior.

Brainstorm other ways to teach pedestrian safety to children:

- Make up a song or game about pedestrian safety;
- Have children make up a song or game about pedestrian safety.

Remember, children under 9 are generally not ready developmentally to walk or cross streets alone safely. The best way to ensure our children’s safety is to educate the drivers as well as the children! See the PACE CAR and Speedbusters materials in the **Appendix** for more information. Talk to your local police about not only monitoring speed and ticketing in neighborhoods and school zones, but about handing out the “Kill Speed not Kids” brochure. Take every opportunity to educate drivers about slowing down and watching for children.

How to walk safely with children: Brainstorm how to walk safely with children. Make sure participants list everything in the Volunteer Training Curriculum under “Walking Safely with Children.”

Crossing the street safely: Brainstorm crossing the street safely with children. Go outside and demonstrate whistle blowing—and using stop signs. Have each participant role-play the adult while the rest role-play the children and cross a street safely.

Make sure all champions are comfortable with the Volunteer Training Curriculum.

Questions? Answer any questions the participants have and ask them to plan standard procedures for the program at their school.

Hold Events or Activities to Promote SRTS

Every opportunity should be taken to promote the SRTS program. Media should be invited to report on the major successes of the program. School and PTA newsletters should recognize all SRTS program successes - parents need to be kept abreast to foster support and enthusiasm for the program.

Walk and Roll to School Day Events

Walk and Roll to School Days are perhaps the most visible and media friendly components of a SRTS program. They are designed to encourage walking and biking to school by creating excitement and a sense of accomplishment. These events enable students, parents, neighborhood residents, community leaders, and local businesses to come together to celebrate the benefits of walking and biking, as well as create a sense of awareness among drivers. Schools may choose to participate in Walk and Roll to School Days yearly, monthly or even weekly. The most popular Walk and Roll to School Day event is International Walk and Roll to School Day, which takes place every year in the month of October. Parents, volunteers, and the general community are all important to ensuring the safety and success of a Walk and Roll to School Day event.

Walk and Roll to School Day events can be implemented on small or large scale, depending on how extravagant each individual school desires their event to be. For example, Mountain View Elementary of Cobb County invited the Fire Department to its first Walk and Roll to School Day event in 2007. The school promoted the event using parent letters and fliers. Approximately 400 students participated in their first event; 355 participated in 2008 as a result of the same promotional method. Other schools have issued t-shirts, invited local grocers, and even mascots from various organizations as promotional methods. Schools that participate in weekly or monthly events



sometime promote walking/biking logs, which enable kids to keep track of the number of days they walk or bike to school. Incentives are given to students at the end of every month, according to the number of days they walk or bike.

Appendix _

Event Planning: "Walk and Roll to School Day"

Budget:

- What will we need money for? *Food, decorations, contest prizes, signs, flyers, etc.*
- Can the school or PTA provide funding?
- Does the school have a corporate sponsor who might be willing to fund the event or donate supplies?
- Which businesses should we target for donations?

Publicity: What?/When?

- Recruit volunteers and community sponsors: *Begin at least a month ahead of time*
- Invite public officials: *Get on their calendar as early as possible.*
- Send flyers home to parents announcing the large one-day event: *Start a month ahead of time.*
- Put up posters at the school: *Two weeks prior to the event*
- Send press releases to the media: *2-3 weeks ahead of time. Follow up 2-3 days before the event*
In the press release, be sure to:
 - Identify who, what when, where, and why
 - Describe what makes your event unique
 - Describe visual activities that create photo opportunities.
- Send a reminder flyer home with the children: *2-3 days before the event.*

Food:

- Decide whether or not to provide food, and if so who to provide it for?
- All participants? Volunteers only?
The size of your budget and the number of donations you solicit may determine your answer.
- Solicit donations from local grocery stores, coffee shops, bakeries, deli's, etc.
- Request donations 2-4 weeks ahead of time—since stores may need to get approval from a corporate office.

Logistics:

- Where will walkers start out?
- Will more than one route exist?
- Where should public officials go to take part in the walk?
- Where volunteers should be placed?
- What time should walkers plan to arrive at school?
- Where will walkers gather at the school to separate themselves from other students?
- Do we need tables, a Public Address system, a stage, chairs etc.?
- Do we need a jury to select contest winners? When will the jury make the decision? When will prizes be awarded?
- How many volunteers do we need? *The answers to the questions above--number of walkers and walk routes, provision of food, prizes, etc. will help you determine this.*

Supplies to consider:

- Volunteer recruitment flyers
- Event flyers
- Reminder flyers
- Posters
- Walking School Bus signs
- Stop signs
- Whistles
- Food
- Tables
- Contest prizes (optional)
- Program incentives: t-shirts, stickers, sashes (optional)
- Solicitation letters to sponsors on School, PTA, or other letterhead
- Sponsor Thank You Posters for participants to sign
- Markers or pens to sign Thank You Posters
- Hand-written thank you notes

Police involvement

Call your local precinct/zone office to learn who you need to contact—probably either a community liaison officer or a special operations officer.

- Call a month in advance to inform them of the event.
- Determine the best walk routes to place the officers along:
 - *Do routes require crossing any major roadways?*
 - *Do routes pass through high crime areas or other pedestrian hazards?*
 - *Do drivers drive faster on some streets than on others?*
- Let parents know police patrols will escort walkers and/or monitor and ticket traffic.



School Administration/Teacher participation

Talk with your principal about school participation. Let them know the pedestrian safety curriculum may be used toward the state's mandated health credit. Ways they can help make this event successful include:

- Implementing the pedestrian safety curriculum;
- Holding a poster and/or song contest;
- Asking teachers to conduct show of hands travel surveys and to complete the survey form;
- Asking staff to park a mile away from the school and walk with children, or else to meet children at designated intersections and walk the rest of the way with them;



- Promote the health and safety benefits of the program and the educational impact of the one-day event.

Other Considerations in Planning

Schools with Special Needs

Children with disabilities

It has been long recognized that children with disabilities should not be excluded from participating in the Safe Routes to Program. In fact, participating in the program can be very beneficial to children with disabilities. For example, students with mental and psychological disabilities gain social interaction skills by participating in Walk and Roll to School Day events. Socializing with other students by participating in these types of events is just as important to students with physical disabilities. Being able to walk and/or bike to school not only serves as a form of physical activity for students, but fulfills growth and social needs for children with disabilities (The National Partnership for Safe Routes to School). This can also help send a signal to drivers that The National Center for Physical Activity and Disabilities suggests that schools promote “Walk and Wheel” to School Days so that walkers, bicyclist and students in wheel chairs alike can participate in the program. The following are examples of how to involve children with disabilities and their families in the Safe Routes to School program:

- Promote “Walk and Roll” to School Day events
- Educate caregivers on how to identify and address infrastructure that is noncompliant with ADA

Schools in Low-income Neighborhoods

Without an active PTA, implementing and sustaining a successful Safe Routes to School program can be challenging. It is often times difficult to recruit champions in low-income schools as they often lack parental involvement. Community participation is particularly important in these schools. Many community based organizations have volunteers that are willing help implement program within neighboring schools, such as the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA. An after school program coordinator might also be willing to oversee children walking and bicycling home in the afternoon. The Community in Schools (CIS) program has proven to be a success at championing the Safe Routes to School program in a number of schools throughout the Metro Atlanta area. With over 200 local affiliates in 27 states, CIS is the largest dropout prevention organization in the United States. The program identifies and addresses unmet needs of children and families in an effort to prevent kids from dropping out of school. CIS provides the link between educators and the community by bringing caring adults into the schools to address children’s needs. CIS coordinators are always looking to invite programs into their assigned school that present an opportunity for community involvement and strengthening community capacity for the benefit of the children within their community.

Schools in low-income areas often have more walkers than car-riders, and little to no bicyclists. In this case, it’s usually more of a matter of improving conditions for walkers than it is encouraging them to walk. The U.S. Census Bureau’s Small Area and & Income Poverty

Estimate Model estimates that of the 112, 603 children ages 5-17 enrolled in the Cobb County School District during the 2005 school year, 9,418 of them belonged to families in poverty.

The concerns of low-income schools regarding Safe Routes to School are relatively different than those in more affluent neighborhoods. For example, many of the parents in low-income areas are more concerned with addressing the drug trafficking in their neighborhoods than the lack of crosswalks. However, studies have shown that the appearance of a neighborhood is closely related to its level of crime. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is the proper design and effective use of the built environment to promote reduction in the fear and incidence of crime. Its theories contend that law enforcement officers, architects, city planners, landscape architects and interior designers and resident volunteers can work together to create a climate of safety in a community. This method has been implemented in communities across the country. According to the National CPTED association, some CPTED communities have seen a decrease in crime by as much as 40 percent.

The four strategies of CPTED include:

1. Natural Surveillance - A design concept directed primarily at keeping intruders easily observable. Promoted by features that maximize visibility of people, parking areas and building entrances: doors and windows that look out on to streets and parking areas; pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and streets; front porches; adequate nighttime lighting.
2. Territorial Reinforcement - Physical design can create or extend a sphere of influence. Users then develop a sense of territorial control while potential offenders, perceiving this control, are discouraged. Promoted by features that define property lines and distinguish private spaces from public spaces using landscape plantings, pavement designs, gateway treatments, and "CPTED" fences.
3. Natural Access Control - A design concept directed primarily at decreasing crime opportunity by denying access to crime targets and creating in offenders a perception of risk. Gained by designing streets, sidewalks, building entrances and neighborhood gateways to clearly indicate public routes and discouraging access to private areas with structural elements.
4. Target Hardening - Accomplished by features that prohibit entry or access: window locks, dead bolts for doors, interior door hinges.

CPTED's goal is to prevent crime through designing a physical environment that positively influences human behavior – people who use the area regularly perceive it as safe, and would-be criminals see the area as a highly risky place to commit crime. Cobb County planners should collaborate with law enforcement and architects to achieve the goals of CPTED in an effort to make it safer for kids in underserved communities to walk and bike to school.

Evaluation

It is important to evaluate both the implementation of the program and the outcome. When evaluating the implementation of the program, the following should be considered:

- Effectiveness of implementation methods of the program and individual tasks
- Efficiency of departments and personnel responsible for implementing program
- Sufficiency of the program budget
- Sufficiency of timelines

The success or failure of any one given area can often be a direct result of another area. For example, the ability to meet your timeline may be the direct result of the efficiency of your staff, or the department responsible for managing certain tasks. Likewise, your ability to remain within your budget can be directly related to whether or not your timelines are met.

When evaluating the outcome of the program, the following should be considered:

- Whether or not the goals and objectives of the program were met
- Whether or not goals and objectives of individual tasks were met
- Did results meet, exceed or fall short of the set goals and objectives?

Figure 8 can be used as a tool to evaluate both implementation and program outcomes. The tool in Figure 9 enables you to rate the success of the outcomes noted in Figure 8. This tool can also reveal which areas are flourishing or in need of improvement. This tool can also be useful in indicating the effectiveness of various departments or personnel, or even the method of implementation. The examples in Figure 9 indicate that the program has exceeded its objective of increasing students' safety knowledge while the outcomes of decreasing the number of crosswalk violations and training crossing guards are satisfactory. These results indicate that the program outreach is doing exceptionally well. However, there is obviously room for improvement in the area of crossing guard training. Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each area of the program is also important to the sustainability of the program.

Safe Routes to School Outcome Rating

1=Poor 2=Needs improvement 3=Satisfactory 4=Good 5=Exceeded expectations

[illegible]

Understanding Success

Parent Surveys

Evaluating the concerns and perceived success of the program at the community level is also important. Parent surveys, for example, are a great way to assess parents' attitudes and beliefs about walking and biking to school. It is useful to track whether or not parents' perceptions about walking and biking to school change over time. For example, if the issue of speed becomes less of a concern for parents each year the SRTS program is implemented at their child's school, one can assume that the SRTS program is in some way responsible for the decline in speed—perhaps because of the implementation of traffic calming measures or driver education. These surveys are also useful in identifying the needs of individual SRTS schools.

Parents are typically willing to participate because it gives them the opportunity to share their concerns about their children's safety. The National Center for SRTS created a parent survey, as seen in Appendix 14, that instructs parents to indicate their child's mode of transportation, as well as those issues that hinder or encourage walking and biking to school. Mountain View Elementary implemented parent surveys created by the PEDS organization, as seen in Appendix 15, in the spring of 2008. With more than half the parents of children enrolled at Mountain View Elementary participating in the Parent Survey, it is apparent that parents are genuinely interested in improving conditions for walking and biking to school. Many of them are already refraining from using their cars as a mode of transportation. In fact the majority of parents prefer to have their children ride the bus to school. Parents' top 3 concerns about having their children walk and bike to school at Mountain View are the speed of traffic, the lack of adult supervision, and strangers.

Figure 11.

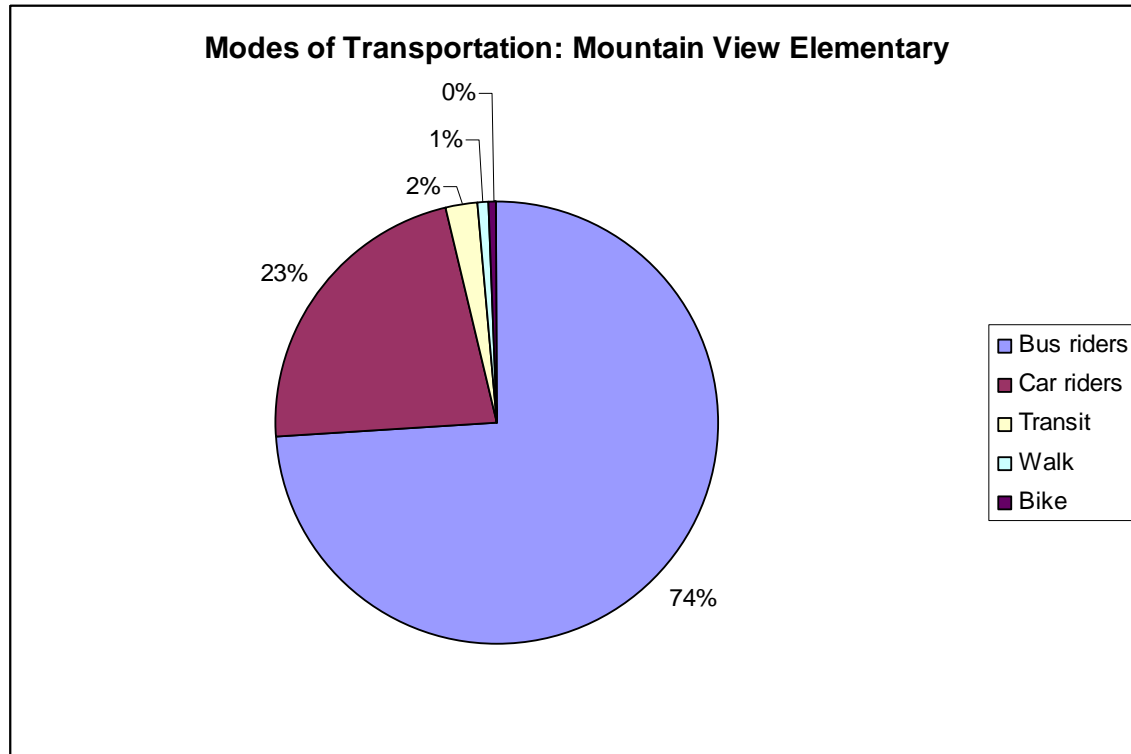
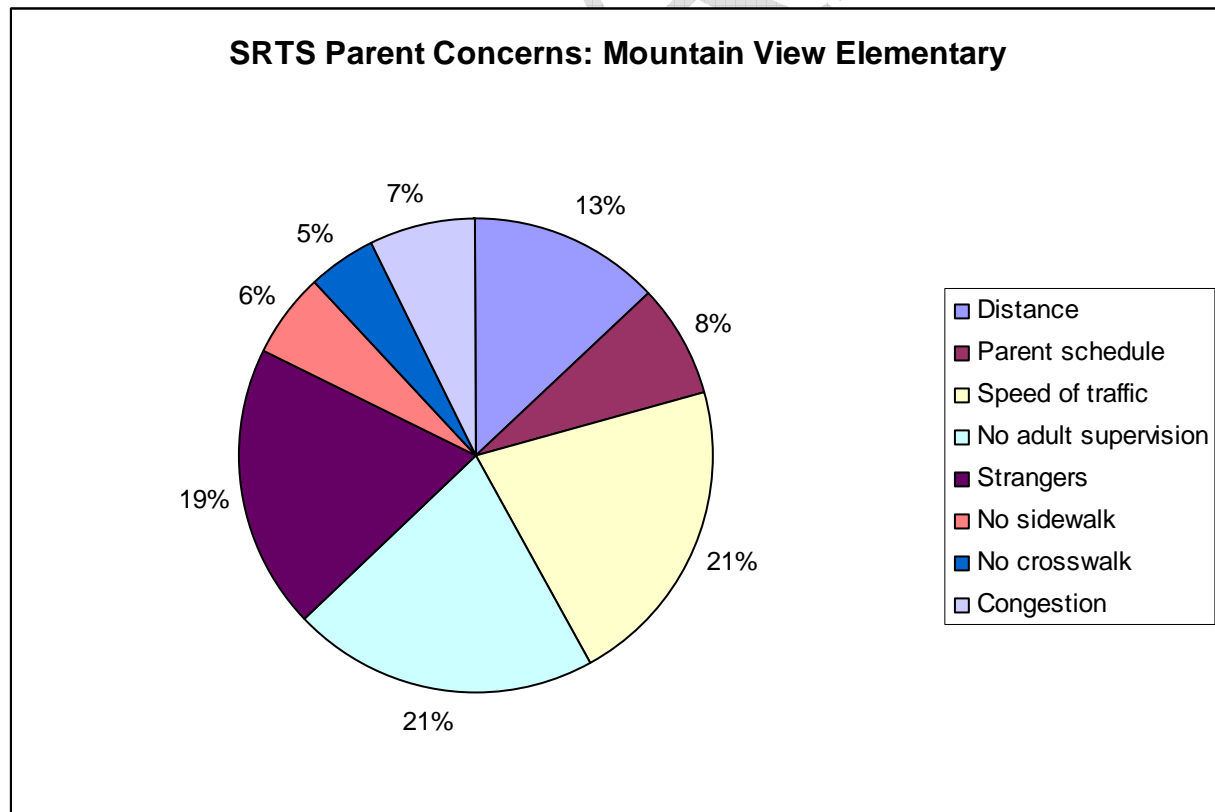


Figure 12.



The survey results show that a lack of sidewalks and crosswalks is a minor issue among parents, which indicates that the majority of parents feel that the infrastructure in the area of the school is sufficient for walking and biking. However, speeds and the perceived notion of “stranger danger” prevent most parents from encouraging their children to walk and bike to school. Mountain View is currently developing ways to get more parents and volunteers involved in the program at their school to increase adult supervision and provide some assurance to those who are concerned about strangers. International Walk to School Day, for example, has drawn over 300 students in 2007 and 2008 as a direct result of the number parents who volunteer to participate in this event, not including the police officers and firefighters. The school is also hoping to work with the Cobb County Department of Transportation to improve traffic calming in the area of the school.

Sustainability

The National Center for Safe Routes to School suggests that key strategies for sustaining SRTS programs include:

Identifying additional program champions

Champions often need to be replaced given the nature of their position. For example, most parent champions take on the responsibility because they have a child attending the school where the program is being implemented. However, these champions usually resign when their children graduate or move to another school. Other champions assume more responsibility at the school over the years, leaving less time for Safe Routes to School. There are also schools that simply have a high turnover rate among champions because of the lack of parental or community involvement.

It's important to note that some schools require more than one champion because of the size of the school. For example, a school with an enrollment of 300 would have a better chance of success with one champion than a school with an enrollment of 900.

Letting people know about the successes

Getting visibility for activities through local media and school communications can spark the interest of parents and community members. Publicizing fun and positive activities and successes makes it more likely that people will want to continue and others want to become involved.

Encouraging policy changes

Advocating for policy change that supports walking and bicycling to school at the school, school district and local government levels can help to sustain the Safe Routes to School program.

Creating a permanent committee

Creating a permanent committee is the first step to sustaining the Safe Routes to School program. However, it is important the Cobb County's committee meet regularly to assess the program's progress and plan for the future of the program. It is suggested that these meetings occur monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly.

Funding and Resources

Securing funding is also an important factor of sustainability. The Georgia Department of Transportation's (GDOT) Safe Routes to School program is a new source of funding for infrastructure improvements that benefit children who walk and bike to school. The first call for applications was released in October of 2008. GDOT plans to release a second call for applications in 2009. Schools must be participants of Safe Routes to School in order to be eligible. Furthermore, applications can only be submitted by school boards or districts and local governments. GDOT also plans to implement a Resource Center which will provide technical assistance, training, and material to schools across the state of Georgia. All schools are eligible for assistance from the Resource Center; the only requirement is that interested schools register on the Resource Center's website.

In addition to federal SRTS funds, states and municipalities such as New Jersey, rely on local and federal projects and programs to support their SRTS programs, such as:

- Comprehensive Traffic Safety Programs
- County Aid Program
- Developed-Provided Facilities
- Discretionary Aid Program
- Federal Community Development Block Grant Program
- Green Acres Program
- Hazard Elimination Program
- Local Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning Assistance
- Local Scoping and Local Lead projects
- Locally Initiated Bicycle Projects
- Municipal Aid Program
- Municipal Development Impact Fee Authorization Act
- National Highway System
- National Recreation Trails Fund
- Pedestrian Safety Grant
- Section 402 Safety Funds
- Smart Growth Community Schools Planning Grants
- Smart Growth Planning Grants
- Surface Transportation Program
- Transportation Enhancements

Safe Routes to School Resources**Local:**

American Heart Association
1101 Northchase Parkway
Suite 1
Marietta, GA 30067
phone: (678) 224-2000
fax: (678) 224-2001
<http://www.americanheart.org>

Atlanta Bicycle Campaign
PO Box 5525
Atlanta, Georgia 3117
404-881-1112
<http://www.AtlantaBike.org>

Clean Air Campaign
55 Park Place
Suite 250
Atlanta, GA 30303
phone: 404-817-7762
fax: 678-244-7740

<http://www.cleanaircampaign.com>

Cobb County Safety Village
1595 County Services Pwy.
Marietta, GA 30008
(770) 528-8335
<http://www.cobbcounty.org/safetyvillage>

Communities in Schools
316 Alexander Street Suite 5 Marietta, GA
30060
Tel (678) 503-0901
Fax 678-503-0902
<http://www.cis.org>

Green Communities
Atlanta Regional Commission
40 Courtland Street, NE
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404.463.3100
Fax: 404.463.3105
<http://www.atlantaregional.com>

Phone: 404.463.3100
Fax: 404.463.3105
<http://www.atlantaregional.com>

PEDS

57 Forsyth Rd. NW
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-522-3666
Fax: 404-522-3686
<http://www.peds.org>

Safe Kids

Wellstar Health System and Cobb Public
Health Dept.
330 Kennestone Hospital Blvd
Marietta, GA 30060
770-793-7181
<http://www.safekidscobbcounty.org>

School and Communities Task Force
Atlanta Regional Commission
40 Courtland Street, NE
Atlanta, GA 30303

America WALKs

PO Box 29103
Portland, OR 97210
503-222-1077
Fax: 503-228-0289
<http://www.webwalking.com/amwalks>

Bikes Belong

1368 Beacon St.
Brookline, MA 02446-2800
617-734-2800
Fax: 617-734-2810
<http://www.BikesBelong.org>

The Bike Hub

National Bicycle Safety
www.cdc.gov/ncipc/bike/default.htm

CA State Automobile Association

Traffic Safety Dept.
150 Van Ness Ave., 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 565-2305

Nationwide:

1-800-637-2122
info@ottoclub.org
Federal Highway Administration
61 Forsyth Street, SW
Suite 17T100
Atlanta, GA 30303-3104
404-562-3630
Fax: 404-562-3703
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/index.html>

Kidswalk-to-School Guide

CDC
Division of Nutrition & Physical Activity
4770 Buford Hwy NE
Mailstop K-46
Atlanta, GA 30341-3717
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/aces/htm>

League of American Bicyclists

1612 K Street, NW, Suite 401
Washington, DC 20006

202-822-1333

Fax: 202-822-1334

<http://www.bikeleague.org>

National Center for Bicycling and Walking

1506 21st St., NW, Suite 200

Washington, DC 20036

Fax: 202-463-6625

<http://www.bikefed.org>

NHTSA Regional Office

Region 4

Atlanta Federal Center

61 Forsyth St., SW

Atlanta, GA 30303

404-562-3739

Fax: 404-562-3763

Region4@nhtsa.dot.gov

Partnership for a Walkable America

National Safety Council

1121 Spring Lake Dr.

Itasca, IL 60143-3201

630-285-1121

Fax: 630-285-1315

<http://www.nsc.org/walkable.htm>

Southern Bicycle League

PO Box 870387

Stone Mountain, GA 30087

770-594-8350

<http://www.bikesbl.org>

Appendices

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Appendix A 5E's Tasks and Potential
Responsible Agencies

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Education						
Tasks	Personnel	Department	Objective	Measure	Evaluation	Cost
Technical Assistance	Administrator, Planner, Engineer, or SRTS Coordinator	Cobb County Planning and Engineering Divisions or Consultant	Assist 100% of all interested schools with starting and implementing SRTS programs	Number of schools provided with technical assistance	Number of schools that implement a SRTS program	
SRTS presentations	SRTS Coordinator	Cobb County Engineering and Planning Division, Cobb County Police Department, or Consultant	Enroll at least 20% of Cobb County schools in the SRTS program	Number of presentations and people in attendance	Number of schools enrolled in the SRTS program yearly	
Bicycle and pedestrian safety training in schools	Bicycle and Pedestrian safety trainer or SRTS Coordinator	Cobb County Police Department, Cobb County Engineering and Planning Division, or Consultant	Increase kids' safety knowledge at 20% of participating schools	Number of trainings, number of schools and children provided with training	Number of schools that report an improvement in bicycle and pedestrian safety behavior among students	
Create and distribute bicycle and pedestrian safety material for students and parents	Marketing staff or SRTS Coordinator	Cobb County Marketing Department/Public Relations or Consultant	Increase student and parent knowledge of safety behavior at 20% of participating schools	Number of material distributed	Number of schools that report an improvement in bicycle and pedestrian safety behavior among parents and students	
Maps of walk and bike routes to schools	GIS analyst or SRTS Coordinator	Cobb County Engineering and Planning Departments	Increase number of walkers at 20% of participating schools	Number of maps created and provided to schools	Number of schools that report use of maps and an increased number of walkers	
Cobb County SRTS webpage and newsletter	Administrator, Public relations staff or SRTS Coordinator	Cobb County Marketing Department/Public Relations or Planning and Engineering Division	To provide information to at least 20% of the general public within Cobb County	Number of updates to webpage and number of newsletters created	Number of visits to webpage and number of newsletters received	

Encouragement						
Tasks	Personnel	Department	Objective	Measure	Evaluation Method	Cost
Promotion of Walk and Roll to School Day events	Administrator, Public relations staff or SRTS Coordinator	Cobb County Marketing Department/Public Relations or Planning and Engineering Division	20% of schools participate in at least one Walk and Roll to School Day event per year	Number of events promoted	Number of events implemented at schools	
Create and promote countywide contests and activities	Administrator, Public relations staff or SRTS Coordinator	Cobb County Marketing Department/Public Relations or Planning and Engineering Division	20% of all participating SRTS schools implement at least one contest/activity per year	Number of contests and activities created	Number of schools that implement contests/activities	
Order and distribute incentives for students at participating schools	Purchasing agent and Administrator or SRTS Coordinator	Cobb County Procurement Department and Planning and Engineering Division	100% of all SRTS schools participating in contests, activities, and/or Walk and Roll to School Day events receive incentives to distribute to 100% of participating students	Number of incentives distributed to schools	Number of schools and students that receive incentives	

Enforcement		Department	Objective	Measure	Evaluation Method	Cost
Tasks	Personnel					
Ticketing	Police officer	Cobb County Police Department	Decrease speeding by 15% within .5 miles of all participating schools; decrease illegal parking by 15% within .5 miles of all participating schools	Number of schools provided with patrol officers for ticketing	Reduction in speed and illegal parking among schools provided with patrol officers within .5 miles	
Crossing guard training	Police Officer or Crossing guard supervisor	Cobb County Police Department	Provide training to 100% of all crossing guards	Number of trainings provided	Number of crossing guards trained	
Crosswalk stings	Police officer	Cobb County Police Department	Decrease violation of crosswalk laws by 20% among all participating schools	Number of schools provided stings	Reduction in crosswalk violations among schools provided with stings	
Implementing speed radar guns	Police officer or parent volunteers	Cobb County Police Department or Schools	Decrease speed by 20% among all participating schools	Number of schools provided with speed radar guns	Reduction in speed among schools utilizing radar guns	
Implementing speed trailer	Police officer	Cobb County Police Department	Decrease speed by 30% among all participating schools with speed trailers	Number of schools provided with speed trailers	Reduction in speed among schools provided with speed trailers	

Engineering Project	Personnel	Department	Objective	Measure	Evaluation Method	Cost
Improvements to the built environment that benefit walking and biking to and from school	Engineer and planner	Cobb County Planning and Engineering Division	Make improvements to the built environment that benefit walking and biking to and from school at 30% of all schools in need within 2 years	Number of improvements made to the built environment that benefit walking and biking to and from school	Number of walkers and bikers; level of perceived safety in parent surveys	
Walk/bike assessments	Engineer and/or planner	Cobb County Planning and Engineering Division	Provide professional walk/bike assessments to 100% of all participating tier 2 schools within 1 year	Number of walk/bike assessments provided	Number of tier 2 schools that receive professional walk/bike audits	

Evaluation									
Tasks	Personnel	Department	Objective	Measure	Evaluation	Cost			
Implement Student Arrival and Departure Travel Sheets *See appendix*	School Champions or teachers	School board or individual schools	Assess modes of transportation among at least 50% of all participating schools	Number of surveys distributed to schools	Number of surveys administered				
Conduct parent surveys	Schools Champions	School board or individual schools	Assess 30% of parents at participating schools regarding their attitudes about their children walking and biking to school, as well as their safety knowledge	Number of surveys distributed to schools	Number of parents who receive and complete surveys				
Conduct walk/bike assessments	SRTS champion, Engineer/planner, or schools	Planning and Engineering Division, Consultant, or schools	Assess 100% of all interested schools before enrolling them in the SRTS program; improve the built environment at 20% of all participating schools	Number of assessments conducted	Number of schools enrolled in program after receiving assessment; number of schools where improvement of the built environment occur				
Traffic Counts	Police officer or parent volunteers	Cobb County Police Department or Schools	Identify reductions of traffic and congestion in at least 50% of all participating schools	Number of schools that receive traffic counts	Number of traffic reductions identified				
Crash Data Analysis	Police officer	Cobb County Police Department	Identify reductions in crashes near 50% of all participating schools	Number of analysis conducted	Number of reductions identified				

Appendix 2 School Location Map

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