

VIII. Program Sustainability

Maintaining enthusiasm for pedestrian and bicycling programs will require the support of the community and the diligence of local partners. On-going responsibility should be spearheaded by City and school staff, and members of the Safe Routes Task Force. After the SRTS Action Plan is implemented, the Task Force should revisit the plan often to identify any new barriers or community needs and develop solutions for possible additions or modifications to the program.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Evaluation

Evaluation of the Safe Routes to School program will focus on an annual assessment of effectiveness and level of community support. This can be accomplished by recording and tracking issues and concerns with program initiatives throughout the year via an on-line comment database. The results of this evaluation process can be used to determine the success of the program and also serve as a guide for modifications and/or additions to activities.

Other key tasks could include:

- Schools should repeat the Parent Survey and In-Class Student Tally Sheet survey each Spring to identify the new number of students walking and bicycling to school.
- The Task Force should monitor bus ridership and evaluate decreases in ridership to determine the effect of the City's walking and bicycling programs.
- Annual meetings should be hosted by the Task Force to gather input and feedback from parents, city and school staff, emergency responding agencies, partners and city officials.

Project-specific evaluation tasks should occur during and after projects are completed. Effective evaluation will require updating data and gathering relevant statistical data for each school. Using a comparison of before and after data will help to determine the effectiveness of each strategy employed.

Potential questions to ask during the evaluation process could include:

- Are the surveys reaching the target audience?
- Is the response rate of the parent survey enough to reflect an appropriate sampling of the student population? If not, are there any campaign strategies that can be deployed to encourage more participation in the survey i.e. giveaways, school fair etc.
- Is the data used during the evaluation from a reliable source, accurate and up-to-date?
- Is each project working effectively? If not, what changes should be made for future projects?

Other evaluation tools could include:

- Pedestrian counts
- Bicycle counts
- Visual observation of crosswalk and sidewalk usage
- Review of crash statistics
- Traffic monitoring including volumes and speed information
- Reduced traffic law violations
- Identifying changes that have occurred as a result of the program

The National Center for Safe Route to School website offers tally sheets, survey tools and other tools to assist with generating reports and results summaries. Evaluation procedures should involve school principals, program partners, students, parents and the SRTS program leader.

Monitoring

Throughout the program process, actions should be monitored and modified if necessary for maximum effectiveness. To this end, a task monitoring timeline should be developed. This timeline should include dates for travel plan updates, survey updates, data updates, and working group meeting dates for project review.

Potential Funding Sources and Partnership Opportunities

Funding Sources

Financial support for SRTS projects comes from both public and private resources. Funding is typically divided into capital (infrastructure) and operations (program management). Many of the potential capital expenses could be financed through the implementation of a local government's capital improvement program. Operations budgets could require annual or one-time contributions from the private sector and/or non-profit organizations. This will require ongoing cooperation with the state and respective local governments.

A combination of federal, state, and regional funding sources are available to finance capital improvements associated with SRTS. These could include:

- Federal Transportation Enhancement funds from the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).
- Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds from the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).
- Federal SRTS Program through allotments through NCDOT
- State bicycle and/or pedestrian funding accounts available on a competitive basis.
- State and Regional Air Quality Management Programs to protect and improve air quality, including competitive grant programs for which bicycle and pedestrian projects are eligible.

- State FIT Community Grants administered by Active Living by Design (www.fitcommunitync.com).
- North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund (www.hwtfc.org).
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) that act as conduits for distribution of federal transportation funds.
- Surface Transportation Program Direct Attributable (STPDA) funding through North Carolina Department of Transportation

Specific local capital funding sources could include:

- City and County Capital Improvement Programs through the grant application process
- Sales tax funding; requires voter referendum

Funding may also be necessary for support of the overall program, including operational budgets for employees, facilities, materials/supplies, and public outreach. Typically, these expenses require annual or one-time contributions from corporations, businesses, individuals, and/or foundations.

The following are potential sources of program funding:

- Corporations/businesses
- Transportation, health, environment, and community building foundations including:
 - The Bank of America Foundation
 - The Duke Endowment
 - Golden LEAF Foundation
 - The Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation
 - The Burroughs Welcome Fund
 - Foundation For The Carolinas
 - Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Inc.
 - The Duke Energy Foundation
 - Champion McDowell Davis Charitable Foundation
 - Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation
 - The Cannon Foundation, Inc.
 - North Carolina Community Foundation
 - Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Inc.
 - Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation
 - Progress Energy Foundation, Inc.
 - John Motley Morehead-Cain Foundation
 - Janirve Foundation
 - Cherokee Preservation Foundation
 - Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
 - The Joseph M. Bryan Foundation
 - North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation
 - Cape Fear Memorial Foundation
 - R.J. Reynolds Foundation
 - The Belk Foundation
 - The Thoresen Foundation
 - Weaver Foundation, Inc.
 - Blanche and Julian Robertson Family Foundation, Inc.
 - The Cemala Foundation, Inc.

- Broyhill Family Foundation, Inc.
- A.E. Finley Foundation, Inc.
- The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation
- Special Fund-Raising Events such as concerts, fitness competitions, bake sales, talent shows, etc.
- Parent Teacher Associations
- City and County operational budgets
- Federal Highway Safety Funds (“402 Funds”)

Partnership Opportunities

Solidifying local partnerships is a good way to ensure the success of SRTS programs that goes beyond the contribution of funds. Having safe routes to schools benefits the local business community both along the route and within the individual school’s district. Businesses are more willing to remain in and are more attracted to locations that provide efficient access and mobility for all modes of transportation. For this reason, SRTS programs can be leveraged through various organizations such as Wilson’s Downtown Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Council, and Weed and Seed Program. In addition, many cities, including Wilson, have neighborhood and community revitalization efforts underway within inner-city areas. Combining both financial and political resources associated with these efforts and the SRTS program can accomplish mutual goals and objectives.