

SRTS CASE STUDY: Dayton, Ohio

Dayton SRTS Program

SafeRoutes
National Center for Safe Routes to School



CASE STUDY

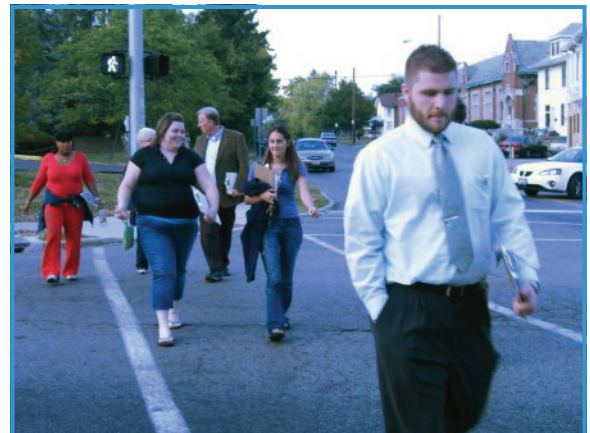
Background

In 2002, a federal judge ended a 25-year-old program of cross-town busing in Dayton, OH. As a result, pedestrian and bicycle safety has become one of the most critical issues facing the city because of the new emphasis on neighborhood schools. Many parents of the students attending these schools have expressed concern that walking to school is not safe. Since January 2007, Dayton's Department of Planning & Community Development has been working with five of Dayton Public Schools to implement a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program that addresses the pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns of the schools and the parents.

Details

The SRTS program focuses on five Dayton Public Schools designated as "Neighborhood School Centers" (NSCs). The five NSCs of focus are Edison, Fairview, Kiser, Ruskin, and Cleveland Public Schools. Each of these schools has a neighborhood planning committee to help shape the SRTS program through walking audits and a full-time site coordinator in charge of connecting each school with its neighborhood and organizational partners.

The schools' SRTS programs are in the planning and development stage. The first step of the planning process was completed when a school site coordinator was elected at each school to work with the community and the Department of Planning & Community Development. The school staff, the neighborhood planning committees, the parents and the school site coordinator are developing the components of each SRTS program. The program will consist of engineering improvements made to sidewalks, bicycle safety education taught by a volunteer or a police officer and walking school buses to encourage more students and parents to walk to school. Based upon conversations with parents, the SRTS program planners realized it would be difficult to encourage enough parents to volunteer to lead the walking school buses. Therefore, the planners modified the walking school bus approach to include neighborhood volunteers, who will sit on their front porches and monitor the children as they walk to school. Events will be held throughout the school year, and the children will get a card stamped by a neighborhood volunteer as a way for the two to meet and interact.



A neighborhood planning committee doing a walking audit

Results

Although no actual SRTS activities have been implemented, there have been many successes throughout the planning and development process. First, developing the SRTS program has created connections and working partnerships between school staff, parents and neighborhood citizens. Also, Kiser Elementary School has held three preliminary walks with an average of 25 participants.

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The work completed during the planning and development process will be combined into one comprehensive SRTS program plan. In January 2008, this plan will be submitted to the Ohio Department of Transportation as part of the SRTS funding application.

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For more resources and information on Safe Routes to School, please visit the National Center for Safe Routes to School Web site at www.saferoutesinfo.org.