

BUILD YOUR SAFE ROUTES TEAM

The Team: Champions and Stakeholders

Implementing an SRTS Travel Plan requires pro-active interest of several community members with diverse backgrounds and interests who will form a team. The team will collaborate to reach one common goal: increasing the number of students walking and biking to school. The team will initiate and oversee activities that improve bicycle and pedestrian conditions and educate parents on the benefits of walking and biking to school. Your SRTS Team will consist of champions (coordinators) and stakeholders (the Task Force).



CHECKLIST: **Building Your SRTS Team**

- ☑ Identify team champions to lead and coordinate your SRTS efforts.
- ☑ Make a commitment to build and maintain an SRTS program.
- ☑ Hold two coordination meetings.
 - Identify SRTS goals
 - Develop initial target dates
- ☑ Hold a Task Force kick-off meeting.

You've built your team.

Now, take action!

The Champions

First, your SRTS Team must have champions – two to four people who will be dedicated to leading and coordinating the team's efforts in building an effective SRTS Program. The champions will lead the efforts to develop and evaluate SRTS goals for your community and will help monitor the program's effectiveness in the future. Champions might be:

- PTA/PTO Representatives
- Principals
- Teachers
- Local Bicycle/Pedestrian Advocates
- School District or Board of Education Representatives
- Communications/Marketing Representatives (from school district, municipality, etc.)
- SRTS Regional Program Coordinators

This core group of individuals will make a commitment to improving active travel to and from school by generating excitement now and maintaining momentum later.

The Stakeholders

One of the primary responsibilities of the champions in building an SRTS Team is to reach out to stakeholders who represent the interests of the school and community. These stakeholders can share insight into town-specific policies that might help shape your school's program. By participating in a SRTS Task Force, stakeholders will broaden the team's influence and relay their expertise as part of the overall goals of SRTS. The Task Force can be comprised of

students, parents, teachers, school administrators, local government officials, law enforcement officers, crossing guards, local business owners, municipal engineers, urban planners, and county representatives. The Task Force may also include members of community organizations that advocate for:

- Traffic Safety
- Obesity Prevention
- Physical Activity
- Bicycling/Walking
- Children’s Health/Public Health
- The Environment

Team Meetings

The champions and the stakeholders together comprise a *team* whose members want to realize the benefits of an SRTS Program. Your team should be flexible and allow for members to work together or separately depending on what is most practical or convenient. However, it is important that some face-to-face time take place at the beginning of the process. Schedule at least two meetings with your team champions to coordinate your efforts. In these meetings, you should review SRTS concepts and benefits and begin to identify goals specific to your school or community. You should also plan to establish your Task Force, make preliminary decisions on SRTS actions to initiate, and agree on a calendar of tentative meeting dates. Next, call a kick-off meeting with your Task Force to inform the stakeholders of the SRTS goals and proposed actions. Depending on your goals, your meetings may take on varying forms and venues. In addition, as some of the best input comes from the students, their ideas can be collected through surveys, classroom exercises and/or art projects, and then presented to the SRTS team at a meeting.

SRTS Team Roles and Responsibilities

The following tables outline typical roles of SRTS Team members.

Parents – Ultimate Decision-Makers	
School Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aid in identifying obstacles to walking and bicycling along the routes to school • Provide insight into factors affecting parent(s)’ decision to allow their children to walk and bicycle to school • Garner support for the SRTS program from the school and the school district as a whole • Educate and encourage other parents to participate

School/School District Representatives – Program Facilitators	
Superintendents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage district-wide support for the program by encouraging SRTS in the classroom and at events • Oversee engineering and physical infrastructure projects on school property • Ensure that district policies support the mission of the SRTS program
Board of Education and Other District Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know facts and figures for finances, busing • Adopt policies supporting a SRTS program



School/School District Representatives - Program Facilitators	
Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage support for the program by integrating SRTS into the curriculum and special events • Manage engineering and physical infrastructure projects on school property • Ensure that school policies support the mission of the SRTS program
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate SRTS-related lessons into the classroom • Rally support for SRTS from school faculty and staff
English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate SRTS education into their curriculum, educating both the students and parents in communities where students speak a language other than English at home
Other Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide insight into the students' attitudes toward walking and bicycling (i.e. Guidance Counselor)
Communications Specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use their knowledge of local/regional media outlets to publicize the SRTS program to various target markets
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify routes to school and perceived obstacles to walking and biking

Municipal/County Government Representatives - Community Partners	
Mayor/Council/Freeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate political support for SRTS, conveying that the municipality will work to advance SRTS
Police Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide traffic safety information (i.e. crash data) • Address personal safety issues and enforcement
Crossing Guards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe first-hand experiences with motorists' interactions with pedestrians and cyclists
Traffic Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaborate on the impact that infrastructure design can have on improving the safety of walking routes • Coordinate physical improvements to the transportation infrastructure
Planning Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the area-wide land use context and how bicycles/pedestrians can be integrated • Prepare master plan provisions for cyclists/walkers • Provide relevant maps
Parks/Recreation Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information about how local parks can be integrated into a walking/bicycling network • Provide information on events that can include SRTS
Environmental Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide insight into various environmental efforts that complement SRTS efforts (i.e. reducing bus emissions)
Economic Development Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on local demographics • Provide information on how the bicycle/pedestrian network can accommodate workers who walk/bike



Community Representatives – Knowledgeable and Supportive Neighbors	
Bicycle/Pedestrian Advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on bicycle/ pedestrian issues and expertise on how they have been remedied in the past
Other Local Advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment specifically on the benefits and hindrances of developing safer routes (health, environment, etc.)
Regional Advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a broader perspective of how your SRTS program fits in with other pedestrian/bicycle projects in the region
Business Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide insight into how local businesses can be involved in financially supporting SRTS programming (e.g. coupons for contest winners) • Provide insight into how businesses can take advantage of a bicycle-pedestrian network for both their customers and employees

Take Action

Once you have formed your SRTS Team, you can begin to develop and implement your Safe Routes to School Program. Use the NJ SRTS Toolbox as a guide. The Toolbox provides resources to support a successful SRTS Program including this step, *Build Your SRTS Team*. Other useful resources you'll find in the Toolbox include Fact Sheets on:

- SRTS Implementation Costs
- Engineering Solutions for Safe Routes
- Planning a Walk and Bike to School Event
- Planning a Walking School Bus

Funding

Throughout the development of your program, the SRTS team can apply for funding. Applications for funding will require a basic Travel Plan (see *Create a School Travel Plan*). The location of proposed improvements will determine which organization will submit the funding application. For example, the municipality should be in charge of submitting applications if proposed improvements are along local streets, while the school district should be in charge if proposed improvements are on school property. Your SRTS Team can coordinate a wide range of improvements and activities that, together, will get New Jersey's kids walking and biking!

Funding for SRTS activities is available through New Jersey's Safe Routes to School Program. Information on how to apply is available at <http://www.saferoutesnj.org/resources/funding/>. For further assistance on Building Your SRTS Team, contact your Regional Coordinator at <http://www.saferoutesnj.org/about/regional-coordinator-tmas>



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