Florida Safe Routes to School Program:

**Purpose:**
- To increase the number of students walking and bicycling to school
- To improve the safety of those who are already walking and bicycling in less than ideal conditions

**Decentralized Program:**
- SRTS Coordinator: overall direction & review
- Districts receive applications & implement projects & programs
- District Safety Engineer oversees program & implements infrastructure projects
- District Bike/Ped Coordinator or CTST Coordinator implements non-infrastructure programs

Five E’s:
- Education
- Encouragement
- Enforcement
- Engineering
- Evaluation
Funding & Applications

Funding:
• $27.8 million, 2005-2009 + $9.7 million for 2010
  + $9.7 million for 2011 = $47.2 million
• most funds distributed to 7 Districts:
  • based on federal formula
  • 70-90% infrastructure ($42.5 million)
  • 10-30% non-infrastructure ($4.7 million)

Applications:
• follow procedures on website: www.srtsfl.org
• Infrastructure:
  • Call for Applications each fall
  • applicants: School Bd, private school, CTST
  • partner with maintaining agency
• Non-infrastructure:
  • less formal; open until funds committed
  • applicants: also schools, non-profits, universities and government entities

More information:
www.srtsfl.org
Pat Pieratte
Pat.pieratte@dot.state.fl.us
850-245-1529
Types of SRTS Projects

Infrastructure (Engineering):
- sidewalk projects
- bike facilities
- traffic engineering
- bike racks

Non-Infrastructure:
- Encouragement: support for programs that challenge students & encourage them to bike & walk more
- Education: classroom and on-foot/ on-bike classes, & bike trailers, bikes & training equipment
- Enforcement: not funded, but law enforcement should be SRTS partners, to do selective enforcement & educate
- Evaluation: not funded but required at application and implementation stages
SRTS is a very broad program which addresses many current concerns

Safety:
- Pedestrian
- Bicycle
- Other traffic
- Personal

Health:
- Inactivity & resulting:
  - Obesity
  - Diabetes
- Air Pollution & resulting:
  - Asthma
- Lack of independence

Transportation:
- Congestion
- Depletion of oil
- Rising fuel prices
- Rising school busing costs
- Cuts to school bus services
Transportation and Safety Issues:

Congestion

Rising costs/cuts to busing
Unsafe/illegals behaviors

Lack of independence

Lack of or unsafe facilities
Two Programs Supporting Florida SRTS

• **Florida Safe Routes to School Network**
  - a SRTS National Partnership Project
  - implemented through NACDD (National Association of Chronic Disease Directors)
  - funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

• **Florida Communities Putting Prevention to Work Program (CPPW)**
  - a federal stimulus project
  - implemented through the FL Department of Health
  - funded by the CDC
SRTS Network Project Goals

- Increase physical activity in children in grades K–8
- Improve safety
- Increase the number of children walking and bicycling to schools
- Help to ensure success of the federal SRTS program
- Institutionalize the SRTS program at the state level so that it is not dependent on (and does not end after) one short burst of federal funding
Florida SRTS Network Project

- creates state networks that bring together advocacy groups, government agencies and other leaders to ensure that the SRTS federal program succeeds
- works to leverage additional resources, remove barriers to walking and bicycling to schools, and create an institutional framework for generating long-term policy changes.

Priority Policy Areas

- Complete Streets
- School Siting and Site Design Guidance

SRTS National Best Practices --
http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/bestpractices/schoolsiting

- Wellness Policies
Florida Communities Putting Prevention to Work 2010 - 2012

13 Regional Coordinators spending 1/3 of their time creating & supporting Walking School Buses

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Miami & Pinellas have CPPW grants which include SRTS
Parents Identified Barriers to Walking and Bicycling to School

- Long distances 62%
- Traffic danger 30%
- Adverse weather 19%
- Fear of crime danger 12%

(CDC, 2005)
Long Distances:
School siting issues: a generation ago

- Small (average of 127 students)
- Located in center of communities
- 42% of kids walked or biked to school

School siting issues: today

- Mega-schools (av. 653 students)
- 40% of high schools have 1500+ students
- Schools located on 10 to 30+ acres of fringe land
- Lowest-cost construction
- School consolidation
- 16% walking to school
How Policy Drives Mode Choice in Children’s Transportation to School

*Physical Activity through Active Transportation*

For additional information, contact Dr. Ruth Steiner

rsteiner@dcp.ufl.edu

Research was performed with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Active Living Research Program and the Florida Department of Transportation
Background

What affects a parent’s decision about how his/her child will travel to school each day?

The location of the school
The location of the residence
The characteristics of the roadway network
The location of major roads and highways
The walking environment, including perception of safety and risk

What combination of factors offers the most opportunities for the safe movement of children?
Background

Optimal situation for student transportation to school:

A continuous bicycle and pedestrian network with the most direct connections between residences and schools

How can this be achieved?

Coordination among

• Land use planning
• School planning
• Transportation planning
Policy Areas Influencing School Transportation

Three areas of coordinated planning:
Guiding Principles:

Multimodal Planning:
- Complementary mix of land uses
- Appropriate density and intensity of development
- High level of network connectivity
- Good urban design connecting complementary land uses

Coordinated School Siting:
- Seeks to locate schools near residential areas where students will live
- School concurrency: Adequate school facilities must be in place within three years of construction of residential development

Safe Routes to School:
- Designed to empower communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity
- SRTS programs may consist of building safer street crossings or establishing programs to encourage walking and bicycling
Focus of the Research

How are these coordinated planning policies (multimodal planning, coordinated school siting, and SRTS) affecting mode choice in children’s travel to school?

Context:

– 32 Elementary and middle schools in Hillsborough, Orange, Pasco, and Seminole School Districts
Methodology

Areas of analysis for each school district:

1. Relevant policy
   - Policy relating to school location
   - Interviews with district superintendents and school facilities planners

2. Potential for walking and bicycling
   - GIS analysis

3. Actual levels of walking and bicycling
   - In-school transportation surveys at a sampling of schools
School District Characteristics:

Hillsborough:

* Pilot community for coordinated school planning
* Administrators committed to creating neighborhood elementary schools & incorporating walking safety considerations into school site plans
* Hazardous and Courtesy Busing a big issue: 11,000 courtesy bused

Pasco:

* Population boom lead to school enrollment boom and backlog of facilities
School District Characteristics:

Orange:

* School board and local governments have maintained formal partnership in school planning for at least the past 10 years
* 1996 school siting ordinance
* Began tying residential development to school capacity in 2000

Seminole:

* Very little undeveloped land
* Commitment to coordinated school planning since the early 1990s
Pedestrian Route Directness (PRD): The ratio of network distance to straight-line distance between two selected points. A value nearing 1.0 represents a more direct path and may represent better connectivity. Values between 1.2 and 1.5 have been recommended as acceptable standards (Dill, 2004)
Aerial view of selected pedestrian sheds

Legend
- One Mile Pedestrian Network Shed
- One Mile Pedestrian Shed
- Elementary School
- Roads
- Residential Parcels

Pre-1950
Historical School:
PRD ratio: 1.5
Intersection Density: 232.4
Road Density: 28

1950-1985
Pre Growth Management:
PRD ratio: 1.9
Intersection Density: 59.6
Road Density: 10.8

1986-1995
Pre School Coordination:
PRD ratio: 2.1
Intersection Density: 18.1
Road Density: 5.9

Post-1995
Post School Coordination:
PRD ratio: 1.9
Intersection Density: 70
Road Density: 12.4

General decline in connectivity  Slight rebound
In-school transportation survey results

Actual Levels of Walking and Bicycling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Walking</th>
<th>Bicycle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hillsborough</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasco</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminole</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall comparisons

Potential walkability indicators tended to fall in line with survey results

Walking or bicycling more prevalent in Orlando-area

Suburban counties have somewhat higher walk rates than more urban counties

Hillsborough has the lowest actual levels of walking and bicycling

Seminole and Orange have the highest actual levels of walking and bicycling
Discussion

Walkability is currently not necessarily a priority in the decision-making process for determining new school locations.

School siting and attendance zone boundaries decisions should utilize a methodology that maximizes all relevant factors, including walkability.
Potential Implications

School Boards and Local Governments

– Findings may encourage agencies to add walkability to their list of school siting requirements
– Determine policies that are working to maximize walkability and encourage their implementation

Adding to the knowledge base

– Help identify or create a set of policies and decision-making processes that would maximize the ability of children to walk to school
Summary:

- Florida’s SRTS program is off to a great start
- Research is showing us how to progress more
- It is possible to have a big impact with a small investment
- We are on our way to bringing back walking and bicycling to school as normal and fun activities.
Contacts for More Information

• Florida SRTS Program: Florida SRTS Coordinator Pat Pieratte, Pat.Pieratte@dot.state.fl.us, www.srtsfl.org

• Research information: Dr. Ruth Steiner, rsteiner@dcp.ufl.edu

• Florida SRTS Network: Heather Murphy, florida@saferoutespartnership.org

• Florida Communities Putting Prevention to Work Program: Emily Fritz, Emily_Fritz@doh.state.fl.us
Interagency School Transportation Planning in Hillsborough County

Or

How we learned to get along
Do Transportation Meetings with Local Government Feel Like This?
Do you feel like you are all alone in the world with your transportation issues?

“If we do not hang together, we will all hang separately”

Benjamin Franklin
Many families drive their children to school even if bus service is available or it is practical to walk or ride a bike.

Traffic around schools infuriates the public.

Schools become the scapegoat for all traffic problems in a community.

Many members of the public, including elected officials fail to understand the difference between private development that is “voluntary” and school development that is Constitutionally mandated.
What is making the difference in Hillsborough County

One word:

LEADERSHIP
Who are the Heroes

Cathy Valdes, Chief Facilities Officer
Hillsborough County Public Schools
District Seven Staff

Road Safety Assessments

Peter Hsu, District 7
Safety Engineer

District 7 RSA Efforts
Bike Rack Grant

Buckhorn Elementary

76 bike racks for 37 schools = $60,164.64
96 Solar Powered Flashers and 48 speed feedback signs have been installed in Hillsborough County costing approximately $500,000.
Gary Tait, Bicycle, Pedestrian, and School Safety Coordinator
A Valuable Problem Solving Resource
School Access Projects
Safe Routes to School Tampa Bay

Jason Jackman
Center for Urban Transportation Research, USF
Join us for International Walk and Bike to School Day Wednesday, October 27th

Parents and students are invited to walk to school with friends and family in walking and biking groups. The walk and bike parade will meet at:
113th Ave. Soccer Fields behind Lewis Elementary
The Parade will leave the parking lot at 7:10am sharp

*Prizes will be available while supplies last.

Safe Routes
National Center for Safe Routes to School
Safe Kids Hillsborough

Bevin Maynard
Coordinator
Safe Kids Walk This Way

The main goal of the program is to increase students walking or biking to and from school.
Adult Community Bicycle Rodeo Course
Teaching interested adults how to conduct Bike Rodeos.
You can’t do it alone and there is help out there if you look hard enough.

- Get to know your Safety Staff at the DOT District Office serving your area.
- Seek out the organizations in your Cities and Counties that have an interest in promoting safety education for children, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
- Set up a regularly scheduled forum to discuss safety and transportation issues related to schools.
- Encourage your local government agencies to apply for infrastructure grants from SRTS.
- Look for opportunities to use SRTS funding for educational programming and studies.
Questions?
Pedestrian Safety & School Assessments
Orange County Public Schools:

- 89 Elementary Schools
- 25 Middle Schools
- 14 High Schools
- Pedestrian Safety Initiative
Worst First / Pedestrian Crashes

- 2004  249 crashes
  7 fatal
- 2005  217 crashes
  9 fatal
- 2006  228 crashes
  14 fatal
- 2007  115 crashes
  4 fatal
  5 months
Orlando, Kissimmee most dangerous area for pedestrians

Orlando-Kissimmee ranked No. 1 on a list of most dangerous cities for pedestrians by Transportation for America, a coalition lobbying Congress for sustainable transportation solutions.

The worst four areas for walkers, in fact, are all in Florida with Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Miami-Ft. Lauderdale-Pompano Beach and Jacksonville following Orlando.

Orlando had the highest pedestrian danger index with an average of 2.8 annual pedestrian deaths per 100,000 capita and 1.3 percent of workers walking to their offices.

The group points out that most states are still constructing roads for speed, which often creates unsafe intersections. This study is especially interesting in light of an ongoing discussion in Orlando about converting Orange Avenue through downtown to a two-way road and other measures that will slow down traffic and make downtown more appealing to pedestrians, which in turn, will benefit businesses. See my previous column on this topic here.
Pedestrian Improvements

- 1000 Count Down Pedestrian Clocks installed
- Pedestrian signals added to 8 Intersections
- 30 Miles of Sidewalk built
Pedestrian Improvements

- Pedestrian Islands
  - Pine Hills Road
  - Chickasaw Trail
  - Oakridge Road
Pedestrian Bridges

- Eliminates Vehicle/Ped. Conflicts
  - Cady Way Trail
  - West Orange Trail
School Safety Improvements

- School Assessments conducted at 80 Elementary Schools
- Two Middle Schools
- Two High Schools
School Assessments

Evaluation of Existing Conditions

- Independent Consultant Professional Engineer
- Pedestrian Count Data
- Existing Crossings - Guards
- Field Observations
- Crash Records
- Aerial Base Maps
School Assessments

Recommendations

- Executive Summary
- Summary of Auto, Pedestrian & Bicycle counts
- Recommendations for improvements
  - Pedestrian Crossings
  - Traffic Signals
  - Guarded Crossings
School Assessments

Posted Online

- All Assessments posted on Orange County Web Site:
  http://www.ocfl.net/YourLocalGovernment/CountyDepartments/PublicWorks/TrafficEngineering/SchoolAssessments.aspx
- Parents comment on results
School Assessments

Responses

• Parents & SRTS groups can review online and print
• Have made ongoing improvements based on needs lists
• Went to schools to review assessments with parents and administration
• Some Schools very active in process
September 14, 2006
Dear SAC Committee:

Attached please find a copy of your School Assessment completed this year by Orange County Government. In the Assessment there are studies of existing conditions, a recommended needs list and a recommended walking path to the school from neighborhoods within the 2-mile walk out.

We have contracted with H.N.T.B. to complete these school assessments, to bring a fresh eye to the issue of school and pedestrian safety. We at Orange County Traffic with our partners at HNTB are committed to pedestrian safety. We offer to meet with your SAC Committee to discuss the school assessment. If your Committee is interested in this please call Kevin Miller, School Safety Coordinator at 407 836-7862.

Sincerely,
Kevin Miller
School Safety Coordinator
School Assessments

Next Steps

- Assess New Schools As they are built
- Update Assessments due to changes
School Siting
National Best Practices

• School Siting Considerations
• State SRTS Network Projects
• State Best Practices
• National School Siting Resources
School Siting Considerations

• Average school size has grown & new schools have been increasingly located on large sites away from the families in the neighborhoods that they serve.

• Ideally, schools are centers for the community and are located within walking and bicycling distance of the students they serve.

• Instituting policies that encourage increased coordination between school districts & local governments on school facilities and land use planning (joint-use) benefits the whole community.
School Siting Considerations

• Only about 35% of students in the US live within two miles of their school.

• Statewide policies on school siting, acreage requirements, joint-use, and renovations can vastly impact the percentage of students who live within walking/bicycling distance of their school.

• State and local-level policies regarding school siting, construction, and design have significant impacts on whether homes are located within walking and cycling distance of schools.
School Siting Considerations

School Siting Health Outcomes

• By implementing improved school siting policies we provide opportunities for increased physical activity & reductions in vehicle emissions, which can help prevent or manage health-risk factors for chronic diseases and conditions.
State SRTS Network Projects
2010-2011 Participants

19 states & Washington, D.C.
many are working on School Siting
SRTS Network Goals

- Increase physical activity in school-aged children grades K–8 by improving safety and increasing the number of children walking and bicycling to schools
- Help to ensure success of the federal SRTS program
- Institutionalize the SRTS program at the state level so that it is not dependent on (and does not end after) one short burst of federal funding
SRTS Network Methods

Create a network of partners including government agencies, non-profits & policy-makers

Research state policies; identify best practices

Evaluate progress (policy and funding opportunities & Revise state action plan regularly)

Prioritize policies based on need & opportunities

Develop & Implement state action plan
SRTS Network Results

Grants from National Trust for Historic Preservation to Develop & Implement Best Practices

School Siting Summits:

• Louisiana: to develop best practices on school siting and community-based schools

• Oklahoma: to research policies and formulate & promote best practice policies in school siting & preservation of neighborhood schools
SRTS Network Results
Grants from National Trust for Historic Preservation to Develop & Implement Best Practices

• Tennessee: to survey planners in schools & local governments to develop best practices

• Illinois: to promote community-centered schools as anchors for smart growth & school transportation
Florida SRTS Network

Monthly calls occur the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Tuesday of each month at 10am ET

School Siting and Site Design Guidance Action Team Calls are scheduled as needed

For more information contact:
Heather Murphy, State Network Organizer

florida@saferoutespartnership.org
State Best Practices

• *Reduce or eliminate minimum acreage requirements* - Maryland, South Carolina, and Oregon have eliminated minimum acreage requirements for schools, making it easier to locate schools near population centers.

• *Require that schools be located in areas with sufficient existing infrastructure* - New Jersey integrates school siting into its land use planning process.

• *Revise school funding formulas to promote renovation or expansion of existing sites* – Maryland reinvests in existing schools instead of constructing new ones.
CEFPI has often been cited as the source of minimum acreage standards.

But...the 2004 revision of CEFPI’s influential Guide for Planning Educational Facilities no longer contains minimum acreage recommendations for school sites.

Current CEFPI view: Communities should evaluate and decide what size makes sense.
National School Siting Resources

National Trust for Historic Preservation
Resources and Best Practices

National School Siting Resources

EPA Resources and Best Practices

• *Travel and Environmental Implications of School Siting*, October 2003.

• EPA Draft Voluntary Guidelines for Selecting Safe Locations for New Schools
National School Siting Resources

Additional Resources

• Planning for Schools & Livable Communities, The Oregon School Siting Handbook, Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program, June 2005

• Salvesen, Sachs and Engelbrecht, Intergovernmental Collaboration and School Facility Siting, The Center for Urban and Regional Studies, August 2006

National School Siting Resources

Additional Resources

- *School Site Planning, Design and Transportation*, ITE Technical Committee TENC-105-01, September 2007


Summary

• It is important to consider how children will get to school:
• Strive to make it possible for them to bike and walk
• Consider all costs of a potential site (including transportation costs), instead of just the land costs
• There are many resources and best practices available to help with these efforts
Council of Educational Facilities Planners International

- CEFPI has often been cited as the source of minimum acreage standards. But...the 2004 revision of CEFPI’s influential *Guide for Planning Educational Facilities* no longer contains minimum acreage recommendations for school sites. Current CEFPI view: Communities should evaluate and decide what size makes sense. [http://www.cefpi.org/](http://www.cefpi.org/)

National Trust for Historic Preservation


EPA


General Resources

Safe Routes to School Panelists

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