



Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission involvement with the SRTS Program will consist of Base Mapping and Geographical Representation, Assessing Walk/Bike Route Adequacies and Deficiencies, Traffic and Pedestrian Studies, Identification of Solutions for Deficiencies, Cost Estimates, Education and Encouragement, and Gathering Public Input and Involvement.

While Safe Routes to School plans largely prioritize improvements in areas where children predictably congregate, such as school zones and major transportation links between the school and residential areas, it is important to remember that children are a part of every community. Adequate facilities are therefore necessary everywhere where people walk or can be expected to walk. Streets that allow children to walk and bicycle to school safely will better accommodate all users and create a more vital pedestrian environment.

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SAFE ROUTES to SCHOOL



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SRTS Overview

Walking and bicycling to school is important not only in helping to address and perhaps reverse the national trends identified above, but walking and biking to school gives children time for physical activity and a sense of responsibility and independence, allows them to enjoy being outside, and provides them with time to socialize with their parents and friends and to get know their neighborhoods. Parents have often noted that they relish their time walking or biking with their children to school because it gives them a chance to catch-up with their kids without distractions.

Safe Routes to School programs are sustained efforts to improve the health and well-being of children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school. The SRTS effort begins by understanding why kids are not walking and bicycling to school safely. Safe Routes to School programs audit conditions around the school and conduct surveys of parents, teachers and students to determine existing attitudes and facility conditions surrounding the school. SRTS programs then identify opportunities to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation choice, thus encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age.

The Five E's

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) refers to a variety of multi-disciplinary programs and facility improvements aimed at promoting walking and bicycling to school. SRTS largely centers around five areas, called "The Five E's". They are Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, and Evaluation, and are described below.

 **Engineering** is a broad concept used to describe the design, implementation, operation, and maintenance of traffic control devices or physical measures. It is one of the complementary strategies of SRTS, because engineering alone cannot produce safer routes to school. Safe Routes to School engineering solutions may include adequate sidewalks or bike-paths that connect homes and schools, improved opportunities to cross streets (such as the presence of adult crossing guards, raised medians, or pedestrian signals), and traffic calming measures (such as reduced speed limits, speed bumps, or stanchions.)

 **Enforcement** includes policies that address safety issues such as speeding or illegal turning, but also includes getting community members to work together to promote safe walking, bicycling, and driving.

 **Education** includes identifying and promoting safe routes, teaching students to look both ways at intersections, obey crossing guards, how to handle potentially dangerous situations, and the importance of being visible to drivers. Education initiatives also teach parents to be aware of bicyclists and pedestrians and the importance of practicing safety skills with their children. SRTS education efforts alert all drivers to the potential

presence of walkers and bikers and the need to obey speed limits, especially in school zones. Additionally, the Safe Routes to School plan educates local officials by identifying regulatory changes needed to improve walking and bicycling conditions around schools. This strategy is closely tied to Encouragement strategies.

 **Encouragement** combines the results of the other "E's" to improve knowledge, facilities and enforcement to encourage more students to walk or ride safely to school. Most importantly, encouragement activities build interest and enthusiasm and help ensure the program's continued success. Programs may include "Walk to School Days" or "Mileage Clubs and Contests" with awards to motivate students.

 **Evaluation** involves monitoring outcomes and documenting trends through data collection before and after SRTS implementation to identify methods and practices that work and those that need improvement.



Any questions or concerns in regards to the Safe Routes to School Program, Please feel free to call Casey Mai at (563)-382-6171 Ext. 212.