



# THE VIRGINIA SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

## *Reference Guide*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
What is a School Travel Plan (STP)? .....	1
The Virginia Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program .....	1
The Benefits of School Travel Plans.....	2
Tips for Creating a Successful SRTS Program.....	2
Putting Together the Plan.....	3
School Travel Plan Contents	
Section 1: Introduction .....	3
Section 2: The Safe Routes to School Team .....	5
Section 3: The Public Input Process .....	5
Section 4: Description of School(s).....	7
Section 5: Current School Travel Environment.....	7
Section 6: Barriers to Active Transportation.....	8
Section 7: Creating Solutions.....	11
Section 8: Mapping .....	13
Section 9: The Action Plan.....	14
Section 10: Plan Endorsements.....	15
Section 11: Supporting Documents .....	15
Submission Guidelines .....	16

### **Portions of the material in this guide have been adapted from:**

*The National Center for Safe Routes to School:*

[www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

*Illinois SRTS School Travel Plan:*

[www.dot.il.gov/saferoutes/SafeRoutesSchoolTravelPlanContent.aspx](http://www.dot.il.gov/saferoutes/SafeRoutesSchoolTravelPlanContent.aspx)

*School Travel Plan Guidelines by Ohio Department of Transportation:*

<http://www.dot.state.oh.us/SafeRoutes/Default.htm>

*For questions about this guide, and available resources including a Glossary of Terms, contact the VA SRTS Coordinator at (804)371-4868 or by visit the Virginia Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School website:*

<http://www.virginiadot.org/saferoutes>



# Virginia School Travel Plan – *Reference Guide*

## ***Introduction***

The specific purpose of this guide is to assist you in creating a School Travel Plan, which is a required component in advance of any funding application to the Virginia Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. This guide describes each of the Virginia School Travel Plan components in detail, what to include, and how to find the necessary information to write the best possible plan. If you would like to find out more information about getting started on SRTS planning, a good resource is the SRTS Guide at the National Center for Safe Routes to School at <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/>

## ***What Is a School Travel Plan?***

A School Travel Plan, or Safe Routes to School Plan, is a written document that outlines a school community's intentions for making travel to and from school more sustainable and safe. This is accomplished by reducing individual car trips, increasing active transportation, and making the walking and bicycling environment safer. It is often the first step in a successful Safe Routes to School program. **The plan will be the school community's guiding document for putting its SRTS program into action.**

The plan is created through a team-based process that identifies the barriers to biking and walking and formulates a set of solutions to address them. The School Travel Plan is developed in consultation with the entire school community and is an important tool in improving student and community health, safety, traffic congestion and air quality. It is the first step in preparing schools to make important changes in their school travel environments. It can address the needs of **a single school or many schools** in a division or region.

## ***The Virginia Safe Routes to School Program***

The Virginia Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) is a federally-funded program administered by the Virginia Department of Transportation. The Virginia SRTS Program supports projects and programs that enable and encourage walking and bicycling to school. **A School Travel Plan is a required component of all applications for Virginia SRTS funds.** Visit the Virginia SRTS website at <http://www.virginiadot.org/saferoutes> for more information on deadlines and how to submit School Travel Plans, program eligibility, guidance documents, and resources to assist in the initial creation of School Travel Plans.

The Virginia SRTS Program funds infrastructure activities for the implementation of School Travel Plans. **Infrastructure projects** improve the physical or ‘built’ walking and bicycling environment around schools. This can include many improvements such as installing sidewalks or crosswalks, fixing hazards, or slowing traffic near schools.

## ***The Benefits of School Travel Plans***

School Travel Plans are not just about school travel. They also address the goal of creating livable communities. Neighborhoods that promote and facilitate walking and bicycling are attractive to residents and support healthy lifestyles. And to reach this ideal, a solid planning process is needed. The School Travel Plan process results in many benefits for schools, including:

- Greater community awareness and involvement around travel issues;
- A prioritized set of needs and targeted resources;
- A mechanism for securing funds for projects and programs;
- School Wellness Policy fulfillment by planning for increased student physical activity;
- Continuity of action when leadership and participation levels change;
- A plan for evaluation that tracks progress and outcome;
- Creation of new partnerships between the school, families, local officials, transportation professionals, police, health advocates and the community at large; and

By engaging in the School Travel Plan process, a community commits to the vision of a better place for its children and, ultimately, all its residents.

## ***Tips for Creating a Successful Safe Routes to School Program***

Writing a School Travel Plan and creating a Safe Routes to School Program requires some effort, but with forethought and good organization the process can be smooth and efficient. The following steps provide a framework for gathering the information you need and putting the School Travel Plan together:

- ✓ **Bring together the right people:** Forming a School Travel Plan team or committee is the first step in beginning work. Identify a diverse set of people who want to make walking and bicycling to school safe and appealing for children.
- ✓ **Hold a kick off meeting and set a vision:** A goal of the first Team meeting is to create a vision and generate next steps for the group members. Gather participants’ input on priorities for school travel and get a commitment from the group to continue working together on the School Travel Plan.

- ✓ **Gather information and identify issues:** Collect information regarding the current travel situation as well as the barriers that exist for walking and bicycling travel.
- ✓ **Identify solutions:** Solutions to challenges and barriers will include a combination of the “5 E’s”, education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement and evaluation strategies. Safety is the first consideration.
- ✓ **Write the plan:** Keep your plan clear, concise and prioritized. Detail each strategy and create a realistic time schedule for your program.
- ✓ **Get the plan and people moving:** Host an initial event to start building enthusiasm for your efforts. Participate in International Walk to School Day or celebrate a Walking Wednesday. Distribute your plan to local officials and publicize it in the media.
- ✓ **Evaluate, adjust and keep moving:** to sustain the program, identify and encourage additional program champions and let people know about your successes.

## ***Putting Together the Plan***

This reference guide includes a worksheet with the recommended layout for the School Travel Plan. When you are ready to finalize the plan have local government and school officials endorse it and submit the plan to the Virginia SRTS Coordinator (see contact information and information regarding deadlines for submission at <http://www.virginiadot.org/saferoutes>.) Formal resolutions are not required at this time; if you are interested in using the plan to apply for funding from the VA SRTS Program, you will need to provide resolutions and other support documents at that time.

## ***School Travel Plan Contents***

There are 11 sections and each section has details on how to complete it. The sections in this guide correspond to those on the School Travel Plan worksheet. You may choose to use the worksheet or to create your own plan using the worksheet as a model. In either case, use this general format when writing a School Travel Plan.

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### **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

**Summary:** The introduction will explain your understanding of and motivation for completing a School Travel Plan. Your introduction should be brief and should encapsulate the essence of what your community hopes to accomplish through the plan.

**What to include:** Choose a name for your Plan, and the reasons for creating a Safe Routes to School program that best suit your school's situation. Your selection will answer the question, "Why has our school/community chosen to create a Safe Routes to School program?" It will explain your school's main motivations for wanting to improve physically active transportation for the trip to school.

**Tips on completing this section:** Engaging all stakeholders is the key to accurately representing your community's priorities for school travel. The question stated above can be posed to the school community during public input activities such as meetings, interviews and surveys.

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## SECTION 2: THE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TEAM

**Summary:** A Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Team is a core group of people that commit to preparing, writing and following through with the School Travel Plan and its strategies. In order to ensure communication across disciplines, the SRTS Team includes representatives from a range of stakeholder groups. In this section you will identify each member of your Team.

**What to include:** List each member of your Safe Routes to School Team according to their affiliation by School/Community/Government and title. You may have as many members as you like. Specify a primary contact person for the Plan among the team members listed. Please include representatives from each of the stakeholder categories: School, Community and Local Government.

**Tips on completing this section:** The most successful School Travel Plans are created by a variety of stakeholders who are concerned with safe and active school travel in the community. Engaging all appropriate stakeholders is the key to accurately representing your community's priorities for school travel. This list is intended to provide examples of a well-rounded group with a wide range of interests and expertise related to SRTS.

### **School:**

Principal and other administrators	School nurse
Parents	School division transportation director
Students	Adult school crossing guards
Health/physical education teachers	
PTA/PTO representative	

### **Community:**

Community members	Local pedestrian, bicycle and safety advocates
Neighborhood association members	
Local business	

### **Local Government:**

Transportation planner or traffic  
engineer  
Neighborhood planner  
Public health professional

Public works representative  
Law enforcement officer  
Local pedestrian and bicycle  
coordinator

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## SECTION 3: THE PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

**Summary:** In addition to building a great Safe Routes to School Team, your efforts should include consultation with the larger school community and public. There are many ways to accomplish this efficiently while still gathering critical information.

**What to include:** The public input process is intended to assist you with gathering both baseline data and information regarding obstacles and solutions to walking and bicycling to school. For each type of public input, please include a very brief description including the dates, and the level of participation. However, be sure to remember to bring your finished plan back to the public for review and comment. There are other examples of public input processes not identified in the checklist provided in the School Travel Plan Worksheet. Make certain you note these activities in your plan.

**Tips on completing this section:** The different processes for consulting the public require different levels of participation. Some processes reach a targeted group of people; others reach a wide variety of individuals. Similarly, some processes capture the input of many people; others only consult a handful. Utilize the processes that best suit your school's availability of time, energy and resources.

Following is a summary of the types of public input that may be included, and ideas on how to carry them out:

- **Administer Parent Surveys** – The National Center for Safe Routes to School recommends using a parent survey to capture critical attitudes of parents and caregivers regarding walking and bicycling to school and opinions of both real and perceived dangers. Parent Surveys, available online from the National Center for SRTS (under “Evaluation” at <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/index.cfm>) can also gather information regarding problems along the walking route and how far students reside from school.
- **Host public meetings** – This involves a town hall style gathering where general members of the public are invited to participate and offer their opinions. Set a date, publicize the meeting and use the time to discover the community's vision for walking and bicycling to school and brainstorm obstacles and solutions.
- **Interview key stakeholders** – Talking individually with those directly involved with student travel can provide valuable insight into the issues at hand. Principals, crossing guards, parents, local traffic engineers and law enforcement are good people to contact for interviews.

- **Solicit student opinions** – Students often have a unique perspective on walking and bicycling to school. After all, they are the ones doing it! Find out what students think by including them as members of the Safe Routes to School Team and in other general public input activities. Or you can specifically ask students what they think through the student council, during an assembly or as part of an essay assignment.
- **Publicize a public comment period** – One simple way to gather public opinion is to announce a public comment period. Pose a single question to the public: How can we improve walking and bicycling to school in our community? Publicize the question through newsletters, websites and email and provide a feedback mechanism.
- **Conduct a community “walkabout” or “bikeabout”** – Although traffic professionals are required for the planning and design of infrastructure improvements, citizens can participate in evaluating pedestrian and bicycle facilities and accommodations along common routes or prospective routes to school. Neighborhood walkabouts and bikeabouts are exercises used in many Safe Routes to School programs to raise awareness of the issues and conditions impacting walking and bicycling, to gather information about safety concerns and route deficiencies, to help create school route maps, and to garner support for needed changes. Have participants use checklists to record their impressions during these evaluations.

Walkability checklist:

<http://drusilla.hsrb.unc.edu/cms/downloads/walkabilitychecklist.pdf>

Bikeability checklist: <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pdf/bikabilitychecklist.pdf>

- **Incorporate existing bike or pedestrian plan recommendations** – Some communities have approved bicycle or pedestrian plans in existence. These documents may already have accomplished some of the work you are seeking to carry out through the School Travel Plan process. Consult your local jurisdiction to see if there are existing plans, see where your goals overlap, and tailor your plan to include any strategies that serve both sets of needs.
- **Incorporate School Wellness Policy objectives** – All schools participating in the National School Meals Program are required to develop and adopt a local School Wellness Policy, including student nutrition and physical activity goals. Check your school’s Wellness Policy to see if these goals correspond to any Safe Routes to School activities.

There are other examples of public input processes not identified in the checklist. Make sure to include any such public input activities that you have utilized.

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## SECTION 4: DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOLS

**Summary:** In this section, you will provide some background information about your school(s) and community.

**What to include:** Describe the scope of your School Travel Plan. Does your School Travel Plan address the needs of a single school, a school division, a city, a town, a county, or a region? List the names of the schools covered in the plan, street addresses, school enrollment and grades served for each. Also, is there other relevant information about the student population and community not included elsewhere in the plan; for example: are these neighborhood schools, a city-wide academy, or does it draw from a zone and also the entire locality? Do many students and their families have limited English proficiency? is this a Title One school?

**Tips on completing this section:** Think strategically about the size and breadth of your School Travel Plan, and how many schools will be included. Some communities may wish to do a large School Travel Plan, covering the needs of as many schools as possible. Others may wish to start with a single pilot school to test out strategies and evaluate effectiveness before broadening the effort. Those schools that will be part of an infrastructure application must be included in separate travel plans, except in cases where a single project would impact adjacent schools.

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## SECTION 5: CURRENT SCHOOL TRAVEL ENVIRONMENT

**Summary:** Section 5 paints a picture of how students and families currently make the trip to and from school. This includes important baseline data that will help your school determine the impact of your initiatives and also measure success. If your plan includes multiple schools, utilize aggregate data for the following information.

**What to include:** Provide as much detail as possible about the factors that affect how students regularly travel to school. You will need to include:

- **Student travel modes** - The number of students traveling to school broken out by various travel modes (walk, bike, bus, family vehicle, carpool, public transit, etc.)
- **Distance from school** – Knowing how many students live within walking distance (under one mile), bicycling distance (under two miles), or further is important in determining the type of approaches to use in your Plan. Distance from school of students in grades K-8:
  - Number living within ½ mile of school
  - Number living more than ½ mile and less than 1 mile
  - Number living 1 mile to 2 miles from school

- Number living more than 2 miles from school
- **What your school is doing already** – This section should also include anything your school is currently doing or has done in the past that promotes physically active transportation, health lifestyles, traffic safety, etc.
- **School travel policies** – Cite any official or unofficial policies of the school relating to student travel, such as bicycling bans, early dismissal of walking/cycling students, age restrictions or special permissions related to walking/bicycling, etc.
- **Busing Service** – Communities in Virginia sometimes provide bus service to students who are eligible based on the distance they live from school or because of hazardous street/road conditions. These hazards may be eliminated through a Safe Routes to School initiative. Check with your school division to find information on who does and does not qualify for bus service and include a brief description in this section.
- **Arrival/dismissal procedures** – Explain the process by which students arrive and leave the school each day, whether by foot, by bike, on a bus or via family vehicle. Include any special procedures involving teachers or staff. Details may include the time periods for each, which/how many doors are used, number of personnel involved, morning line-up procedures, etc. Describe the location of parking lots, school bus and private vehicle pick-up and drop-off zones, bike parking areas, etc. For multiple school locations, summarize the information.

**Tips on completing this section:** For student travel modes, use the Student Travel Tally Sheet to determine current modes of student travel. The Student Travel Tally Sheet is a simple hand-raise survey completed in the classroom with students for 2-3 days that measures how each student travels to and from school each day. (For Student Travel Tally Sheets and Parent Surveys, see “Evaluation” at <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/index.cfm>)

To discover the distance students live from school, investigate whether your school division transportation office has a map that plots student addresses and make estimates from there. You can also gather distance information by administering the Parent/Guardian Travel Survey and use the online tools to help complete portions of this section: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/tracking/>

If your school has specific travel policies, they may be included in a parent handbook. Interview the school principal or other school officials to obtain information about these items.

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## SECTION 6: BARRIERS TO ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

**Summary:** Section 6 identifies the obstacles that hinder students’ ability to safely walk or bicycle to school. Obstacles can come in many forms and can include physical

barriers (missing or poor walkways and bikeways, distance, lack of access, difficult crossings), traffic problems (driver recklessness, vehicle volumes and speeds), public safety issues and attitudes toward walking and bicycling. Knowing which problems to address first will help you make progress toward true change.

**What to include:** The checklist in the School Travel Plan Worksheet identifies a number of common barriers to walking and bicycling, but is by no means comprehensive. Identify the importance of physical and other barriers to walking and biking to school along likely routes of travel, and rate the importance of each as High, Medium or Low. For location-specific barriers or deficiencies, don't forget to include a street name, including cross-streets.

- **Traffic crashes** – A pattern of traffic crashes is often a strong indicator of areas needing improvements. This information may be available from your local police department in the case of cities or from VDOT in the case of state maintained roads in most counties. Summarize any available data regarding the number of traffic crashes of all types within two miles of the school, especially those involving children in grades K-8.
- **Missing or insufficient walkways** – Sidewalks and side paths are the primary pedestrian facilities that permit children access to school by foot. Some communities are missing this critical accommodation. Some others have sidewalk networks with gaps along one street or a route.
- **No safe place to ride a bike** – People tend to bicycle more when they have a safe, comfortable space in which to ride. But crowded streets, high traffic speeds, poor connectivity and broken or rough pavement can prevent people from choosing to ride a bike in their community.
- **Crossing streets and intersections may be difficult or dangerous** – Another common obstacle to walking and bicycling is the inability to cross streets due to a lack of safe crossing points. Streets may be extremely wide, creating an unreasonable crossing distance for children, or may have no traffic controls, preventing safe navigation. Crosswalks may be poorly marked and/or not visible to motorists.
- **Major arterial roads and streets act as dividers** – Roads may be congested, dangerous or wide, and they effectively bisect parts of a community. Multi-lane roads with high speeds can separate residential areas from schools. When major highways or expressways pass near a school, it may create difficult and dangerous situations such as exit and entrance ramps, overpasses and interchanges that are not easily navigable by foot or bike.
- **Walkways may not be accessible to students with disabilities** – Students who utilize alternative mobility supports, such as wheelchairs, require curb ramps in order to access walkways safely. Additionally, visually impaired students require special accommodations and warning features, to alert them of hazards along walkways.

- **Distance to school(s) may be too far** – More and more, schools are being built outside of residential areas on fringe property, several miles away from students' homes. This effectively prevents many students from walking or bicycling to school.
- **Bike parking at school(s) may be missing, insufficient or non-secure** – Students might choose to bicycle to school if bicycle racks or other parking facilities existed. Existing bicycle racks at schools may be in disrepair or may not be situated in secure locations, leaving student bicycles vulnerable to vandalism or theft.
- **Dangerous driving and speeding on streets** – Motorists can greatly impact the safety and comfort of walking and bicycling students. Many communities grapple with the difficult task of calming traffic and increasing adherence to traffic laws. High posted speed limits and poor street design may contribute to unsafe driver behavior. This is a problem that may benefit from an educational program and enforcement or engineering strategies.
- **Drop-off and pick-up process may create congestion and unsafe behaviors** – A major source of rush hour trips is attributed to vehicle trips to and from school. In some cases, student arrival and dismissal times are often characterized by long lines of vehicle traffic, clogged streets and parking lots, and illegal parking. This may cause an unsafe situation for children attempting to use active transportation. Some schools complain about impolite or even aggressive behavior by drivers – including parents. Many idling vehicles in the vicinity of a school degrades air quality and contributes to an unhealthy environment for children.
- **Public safety concerns** – Anxiety surrounding public safety and security can also impact student walking and bicycling. Fears of crime and violence can range from gang activity to stranger abduction to stray dog attacks. Whether real or perceived, peoples' level of confidence in the safety of their community can act as a powerful barrier to walking and bicycling among students.
- **School policies** – Occasionally schools will enact a policy that dissuades or outright prohibits active student transportation practices. Bicycle and walking bans can be found at some schools. Sometimes these policies have existed for years, with no one remembering why or when they were enacted.
- **Local ordinances negatively impact pedestrians and bicyclists** – Some communities prohibit the construction of pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure along certain types of roads. Planning commissions, zoning departments and other agencies can often create environments that favor motorized vehicles over pedestrians and cyclists.

**Tips on completing this section:** Refer back to Section 3 on public input processes, and see if one of these activities can assist you in gathering information on barriers. In particular, community walkabouts may prove extremely valuable, as well as conducting the Parent/Guardian Travel Survey.

Assign a small group to observe student drop-off and pick-up times. It can be an eye-opening experience for those who are not familiar with the procedures. Videotaping

these scenarios to be shown later at public sessions or Safe Routes to School Team meetings can provide a meaningful context to your School Travel Plan process.

Your local police department or district often keeps information on crime hot spots and crash numbers and locations. Check to see if they have any recommendations for areas you should pay particular attention to.

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## SECTION 7: CREATING SOLUTIONS

**Summary:** You will no doubt have developed a varied and diverse list of barriers to walking and bicycling. Similarly, your solutions will be multi-faceted, addressing barriers on a variety of different levels. You will also require the participation of experts and stakeholders from several different groups and with different perspectives to make your plan as effective as possible.

Safe Routes to School programs utilize the five “E’s” in seeking to improve the school walking and cycling environment: Education, Enforcement, Encouragement, Evaluation and Engineering. These include:

### Non-Infrastructure

- **Education:** Education activities include teaching pedestrian, bicyclist and traffic safety and creating awareness of the benefits and goals of SRTS.
- **Enforcement:** Enforcement strategies act to deter unsafe behaviors of drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists, and to encourage all road users to obey traffic laws and share the road safely.
- **Encouragement:** Encouragement strategies are about having fun — they generate excitement and interest in walking and bicycling. Special events, mileage clubs, contests and ongoing activities all provide ways for parents and children to discover, or re-discover, that walking and bicycling are do-able and a lot of fun.
- **Evaluation:** Evaluation will help you measure the impact of your efforts. The two main categories for measurement are changes in travel mode (increases in walking/bicycling) and safety (decreased crashes, improved safety behaviors and knowledge). Evaluation will also help you keep track of the progress you are making toward your goals, and will inform any changes or updates to the Plan.

### Infrastructure

- **Engineering:** a broad term that describes physical changes to the walking and bicycling infrastructure. Engineering solutions include the design, implementation, operation and maintenance of traffic control devices or physical accommodations/improvements, including low-cost as well as high-cost capital projects.

**The National Center for Safe Routes to School has an excellent online guide that provides detail and resources on 5 “E’s” activities.** Visit their website at <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>.

**What to include:**

1. **Goals** – The goals of your plan are general, broad statements that express the overall focus of your School Travel Plan. Goal statements answer the question, “What do I want to achieve?” You may choose one or both goals listed in the Plan worksheet. Some schools may desire higher levels of walking and bicycling among students. Other schools already experience high levels of walking among students, and are primarily concerned with improving safety.
2. **Strategies** – Strategies are specific, measurable activities that answer the question, “How will I meet my goal?” Your strategies should directly address the barriers identified in the previous section. They will be framed using the 5 “E’s” approach, with “evaluation” being expressed as a measurable target and timeframe for implementation. Select as many strategies as you like to help you achieve your goal(s).

**Your School Travel Plan must include at least one strategy from each of the five “E” categories in order to receive VDOT approval.** The goal is to encourage multi-faceted, holistic plans and approaches to school travel. If you go on to submit a SRTS funding proposal, you do not need to pursue funding from VDOT for all the strategies you identify. For engineering solutions, it’s best to identify and prioritize projects along routes that will be important to many walkers/cyclists. For strategy details, include each project location by street and block number or intersections. Please note which hazard, barrier or problem(s) is being addressed by each strategy.

Section 7 of the worksheet is subdivided to include specific strategies for each of the 5 “E’s” as follows:

- 7a: Education Strategies
- 7b: Encouragement Strategies
- 7c: Enforcement Strategies
- 7d: Evaluation Strategies
- 7e: Engineering Strategies

**Tips on completing this section:** Your team will be called upon to truly work together and pool its expertise. The number of strategies listed in “Creating Solutions” may seem overwhelming, and you may not be familiar with all of them. Many of the strategies are self-descriptive: constructing sidewalks, teaching safety skills, training crossing guards. However, many others involve more ‘jargon’, particularly with regard to engineering solutions.

Due to the technical nature of engineering strategies, also be sure to involve a traffic engineer or planner for this phase of plan creation. Even if they are not regular members of your Safe Routes to School Team, their expertise can assist you in proper selection and cost estimation for any construction projects. Be sure to contact your local transportation office (municipal, town, county, or state) for their involvement and approval of recommended infrastructure improvements. Consider prioritizing improvements on an existing route that students already travel or one that may improve the opportunity for the most students to be able to walk or bike to school.

**Make sure the solutions you choose are reasonable and achievable.** Take into account the amount of energy, time and resources that will be required of school staff, volunteers and others. Try and identify activities that correspond with other community efforts and programs, such as existing police enforcement projects and planned infrastructure improvements. With regard to engineering improvements, choose low-cost projects wherever possible. Many of the most effective improvements are the least expensive to implement, such as improved crosswalks and traffic calming measures.

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## SECTION 8: MAPPING

**Summary:** It is important to be able to visually represent existing walking and bicycling routes, as well as the kinds of infrastructure changes you would like to implement. You should obtain a map or an aerial photograph of the area for inclusion in the plan.

### What to include:

Map A: School Overview Map, show and label: 1) location of target school(s); 2) a two-mile radius around school; 3) attendance zone boundary for each school or a note that boundary is city-wide, for example; 4) any major streets/roads; and 5) location of proposed engineering strategies.

Map B: Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure within a half mile radius, show and label: 1) existing sidewalks, multi-use paths and bike lanes within 1/2 mile of each school; 2) identified barriers; 3) neighborhoods or student clusters ; 4) location of any traffic signals and crossing guard locations; and 5) location of proposed engineering strategies. (For School Travel Plans with multiple schools, it may be necessary to create several maps to show the pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure around the schools.)

Map C,D,E etc: Infrastructure Improvement Map (only if infrastructure changes are planned) In these maps, you denote the location of schools and planned improvements. Show and label the following: 1) proposed strategies and surrounding street names, for example within three or four block radius; 2) stop, yield signs and traffic signals; 3) school flashing beacons; 4) speed limit on

roads/street; 5) vehicle counts on road (i.e. AADT, and peak hour); and 6) school entrances, when nearby. If your Plan seeks to outline infrastructure improvements at several locations, create a separate map for each site.

**Tips on completing this section:** Mapping is very important to locating the hazards and barriers and proposed improvements you are planning. If GIS support is not available, consider using Google Maps, or a similar tool, to show aerial views. Sketch-maps to scale should show all of the information listed above. You may need the assistance of a professional traffic engineer or planner.

## SECTION 9: THE ACTION PLAN

**Summary:** This is the section where you put everything together into a single chart or similar format that details a schedule for each plan objective, as well as which team member is responsible, when the objective will be completed and how the activity will be funded.

**What to include:** The first three columns of the Action Plan will consist of each strategy, identified in Section 7, along with the type of strategy and any detail you included. You must then complete the following columns for **each strategy**, including the amount of time for implementation, the person or persons responsible for that strategy, the status of the strategy, the percentage of students affected by the program or project, the estimated cost, and any potential funding sources. An example of a chart is depicted:

Strategy Type (which of The 5 E's)	Strategy Name	Strategy Detail	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Status	<u>% of Students Affected</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>	Possible Funding Source
<i>Encouragement</i>	<i>Walking Wednesdays Program</i>	<i>Expand Program to include....</i>	<i>6-12 months</i>	<i>Bill Smith (PE staff)</i>	<i>Being Implemented</i>	<u><i>40%</i></u>	<u><i>\$1,000</i></u>	<i>VA SRTS Current Funding</i>

**Tips on completing this section:** By now, you will have most of the information you need to complete the Action Plan. It is very important for the Safe Routes to School Team to consult with each of the partners that are responsible for implementing the various strategies before setting timeline targets. Your Action Plan should remain simple, reasonable and attainable. Be descriptive, and include as much strategy detail as you require. Be creative with your funding sources. Many private foundations provide grants to schools to support active and healthy living programs. Your activities may make you eligible for other federal education and transportation funding programs.

The School Travel Plan should be revised routinely to reflect the current implementation status of each strategy. The Safe Routes to School Team should arrange regular meetings to amend, update and discuss the progress of the Plan.

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## SECTION 10: PLAN ENDORSEMENTS

**Summary:** Once your plan is completed, make sure the individual school(s) and the school division both provide their approval. If infrastructure improvements are included in your Plan, the local jurisdiction (town, city, county etc.), especially those with authority to implement locally-administered projects on roadways, must also be on board.

What to include: It is important for all parties to agree on the Plan so that expectations are shared, methods are sanctioned and commitments are gained. The people signing the plan should be in a decision-making role and have the authority to speak for either the school or jurisdiction. If it is not possible to obtain signatures on one document, attach emails or letters endorsing the completed plan. There may be other individuals or organizations who would like to approve the plan as well.

Note that formal endorsements including resolutions will be required to accompany any funding applications for the Virginia SRTS Program, so planning to obtain these documents early is recommended.

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## SECTION 11: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

**Summary:** Supply any documents or images that support or enhance your School Travel Plan. Examples of supporting documents could include School Wellness Policies, local bike or pedestrian plans, school safety plans or sidewalk network completion projects. You may also wish to include images of existing infrastructure or plans for new infrastructure.

Additionally, you may include any formal or informal resolutions, letters of support or intergovernmental agreements that have resulted from the School Travel Plan process.

Once your Plan is complete, submit it to the Virginia Department of Transportation for approval. Contact information is located under the Table of Contents at the beginning of this document. Approval of your Plan is required in order to be able to submit a Virginia Safe Routes to School funding application.

## **Submission guidelines**

Travel plans, as well as any inquiries, should be directed to Robert Williams, VDOT SRTS Program coordinator at [RobertJ.Williams@vdot.virginia.org](mailto:RobertJ.Williams@vdot.virginia.org) . When possible, travel plans should be submitted via email in pdf format. If you need to make alternate arrangements, contact the coordinator.

Please see [www.virginiadot.org/saferoutes](http://www.virginiadot.org/saferoutes) for a schedule of dates for preliminary and final submission of travel plans and the grant application.