Todays Presenters

Dr. Timothy Gates
Michigan State University – Civil & Environmental Engineering

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Michigan State University – School of Planning, Design, and Construction

Julius Suchy
Village of Sparta

Ginger Ogilvie
East Lansing Public Schools – Safe Routes to School
What is Safe Routes to School?

Encourage and enable all school children, to walk and bicycle to and from school when distance is reasonable and routes are safe

Make walking and bicycling routes to school safer

Promote lifelong habits of physical activity

Reduce traffic and pollution around schools
mini vs. MAJOR
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL GRANT

mini Grant:
A programming (non-infrastructure) only grant, administered by the Michigan Fitness Foundation. Funds available average up to $10,000/school or up to $100,000 for district applicants with 10 or more schools. Annual call for application proposals in January.

MAJOR Grant:
A federal grant, administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation. Generally, up to $200,000/school in funds to help you build infrastructure (sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.) around your school plus up to $10,000/school in programming funds. On-going rolling deadlines for applications.

Getting Started
The Planning Process

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REGISTER YOUR SCHOOL
Submit a proposal during the January application period. Hear back by May on awards.

Submit application for our rolling deadline, enter an 8-week review process, & receive award notification roughly two months after the final review.

Complete the SRTS planning process, including: gathering a SRTS team, collecting surveys, conducting walking/biking audits, & completing an action plan.
Safe Routes to School & MSU partnership

Meet
Provide design assistance. This process involves at least three local meetings attended by MSU professional designers and community planners along with professional traffic engineers.

Analyze
Provide analysis of school route site(s), traffic analysis, and schematic engineering drawings for proposed physical improvements such as new sidewalks, shared use pathways, bike lanes, crosswalks, ADA ramps, and signage.

Publish
Publish the final SRTS Action Plan and provide electronic and report copies of the final products.
SAFE ROUTES ACTION PLANNING
Best Practices and Lessons Learned
Transportation Bonanza
February 13, 2020
Lansing, MI

WAYNE R. BEYEA, J.D., AICP, MSU (Planning)
TIMOTHY J. GATES, PH.D., P.E., MSU (Engineering)
JUN-HYUN KIM, PH.D. (Design)

Photos: saferoutesmichigan.org
Thinking back to your elementary school days, how many of you walked or biked to school?

How many of you live in communities now where children in your neighborhood can walk to school?

Photo: saferoutespartnership.org
Safe Routes to School Team

Provide oversight on grant application process, help develop action plan and provide technical services

Develop action plan and provide technical services

Provides infrastructure recommendations and preliminary engineering drawings that visualize improvements to the community

Provides non-infrastructure recommendations with information regarding the concerns, implementation, and before & after images along with organizational support
The Distribution of SRTS School
MSU TEAM Involved

Since 2011, MSU TEAM has worked with 68 schools, representing 12.2% of SRTS participating schools in Michigan.
Why walk/bike to school?

Negative Health consequences of using non-active modes of transportation:

- Insufficient physical activity
- Increase in obesity rates
- Developmental health
- Environmental health

Positive aspects of children using active modes of transportation:

- Healthier students
- Improved academic performance
- Reduced traffic congestions
- Lower transportation costs for school districts and families
Parents and Students Survey Differences On Barriers to SRTS

Parents’ Highest Concerns:
- Amount of traffic
- Speed of traffic
- Safe crossings at intersections

Students’ Highest Concerns:
- Friends to walk/bike with
- Sidewalks present all the way to school
- Sidewalks clear of snow
Recommendations

Non-Infrastructure Recommendations

- Safety Education
- Activities to encourage walking/biking
- Volunteer coordinator hours
- Bike racks that are ‘Buy America’ compliant
- Walk or bike to school groups

Infrastructure Recommendations

- Sidewalks, trails, bicycle lanes
- Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements
- On-street/off-street bicycle facilities
- Traffic diversion improvements around school
- Traffic calming and speed reduction measures

Adapted from: Michigan Fitness Foundation
The Planning Process

1. Build A SRTS Planning Team
2. Collect In-class Tallies And Student /Parent Surveys
3. Map Student Addresses And Conduct Walking/Biking Audits
4. Develop An Action Plan Using Survey And Audit Data

Adapted from: Michigan Fitness Foundation
The Planning Process contd.

- Organizational Meeting
- MEETING ONE (Visioning)
  - Conduct Walking Audit
  - Feedback
  - Conduct Survey
- MEETING TWO (Alternatives)
  - Feedback
  - Draft Report
- MEETING THREE (Presentation)
  - Feedback
  - Publish Draft Report
  - Prioritizing Projects
- GRANT APPLICATION

Source: MSU SPDC
Community Input in SRTS Planning Process

Public participation at community meeting at Miller Elementary School, Dearborn.

Source: MSU SPDC
Concern: Students want to bike, and realize that biking is healthy.

Solution: Initiate a bike rodeo.

Quick Steps:
- Develop an obstacle course using the SHINES curriculum where the students can assess their skills.
- Have a small work area and tools for students.

BIKE RODEO S.H.I.N.E.S.

Source: Norte.org
Concern

Parents are concerned about their children walking to school alone.

Solution

Implement a Walking School Bus program where students can move in a moderated group to get to school safely.

Quick Steps

Identify event coordinators and volunteers.
Publicize the events on school website/newsletter and social media outlets.
SRTS Programmatic Recommendation Example 3- Vassar Public Schools

Encouragement

REMOTE DROP-OFF

Concern
Students live too far away to use non-motorized transit.

Solution
Introduce a Remote Drop-off site.

Quick Steps
Designate a remote drop-off spot for parents who carpool.
Engage adult/parent volunteers.

Source: saferoutasmichigan.org
Concern: Motorists drive at very high speeds down routes surrounding the school.

Solution: Institute a pedestrian decoy program with officers disguised as pedestrians to observe motorists failing to yield to pedestrians.

Quick Steps: Coordinate with the police department to begin the process.
Developing Infrastructure Improvements for Safe Routes to School Funding

Tim Gates
Associate Professor
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Michigan State University
Steps to the Infrastructure Planning Process

1. Assemble local team with appropriate stakeholders
2. **Determine what’s working and what’s not**
3. Obtain addresses
4. Determine priority walking routes (& biking if desired)
5. Identify affected roadway jurisdictions
6. Perform site visits and field audits
7. Develop recommendations, **concept** drawings, B&A imagery
8. **Present recommendations to local team/public for vetting**
9. Revise and finalize recommendations
Local Team

- City/Village/Township Official from Lead Act 51 Agency
- School Administrators
- Teachers
- Engineer/Planner from Affected Act 51 Agencies (engage early/often)
  - City DPW
  - County Road Commission
  - MDOT (engage TSC rep regardless of whether MDOT routes are affected)
- Parents
- Neighborhood Association
  - Engage affected residents early in the process!
- Public Safety
- Consultant
Information Needed Before Field Audits

- Start and dismissal times for the school
- Bussing boundaries for the school
- Location of crossing guards
- Pickup/drop-off location and circulation patterns (parents and buses)
- Pupil entry/exit points to school
- Potential remote drop-off location
- Map student addresses to determine routes (1-1.5 mi)
- Primary walking/biking routes to/from school
  - Including crossing locations

See Next Slide....
Using Student Addresses to Identify Priority Routes

East Lansing

Student Address Map

School Priority Routes
Using Student Addresses to Identify Priority Routes

Sparta
Field Audits - What to Look for

- Primary routes without pathways (or gaps in the pathway network)
  - Look for trails in the grass or people walking in the street
- Adequate signage and pavement markings (school zones, crossing areas)
- Absence of proper sidewalk landings
- Pick-up/drop-off chaos
- Busy intersections
- Lack of ped signals
- Improper signal timings
- Lack of pathway lighting
- Unsafe roadway crossing locations
- Roadways with speeding issues
Considerations when Developing Recommendations

- Develop multiple alternatives for major crossings or problem areas
- If sidewalk is desired for a route, it MUST be added on both sides unless
  - Shared use path (10 ft min) is used OR
  - No residential land uses
- Pathway lighting is fundable
  - Does not require lighting study
- Infrastructure MAY go on school or private property
  - Easements are necessary
  - Bike racks on school property are fundable within non-infrastructure grant
- Consider local ordinance when recommending use of R1-6 in-street sign
  - No state law governing yielding at mid-block crosswalks
Example Recommendations
Example Midblock Crosswalk Enhancements
Existing Midblock Crosswalk
Proposed Traditional Flashing Sign (Alternative 1)
Proposed RRFB Sign (Alternative 2)
Example Hybrid Ped Signal on Multilane Midblock Crosswalk
Existing Multilane Midblock Crosswalk
Proposed High Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK)
Example Pathway Thru Private Property (with Easement)
Existing
Proposed Pathway (Thru Private Property)
Parent Remote Drop Off – On School Property
Proposed Parent Drop Area
Remote Bus Drop Off - on Private Property
Example School Bike Plan

Requires separate biking audit!
Existing
Proposed Bike Lane
Developing Infrastructure Recommendations – Key Takeaways

- Involve appropriate stakeholders on local team
  - Act 51 agency, school, MDOT, parents, etc.
- Develop multiple alternatives for high-priority locations
- Ensure appropriate vetting of recommendations
  - Affected property owners in addition to local team
- Sidewalks on both sides
- Obtain necessary easements
- Communication is key
- Don’t be afraid to ask

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THE VILLAGE OF SPARTA AND OUR EXPERIENCE WITH MSU AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

Julius Suchy, Village Manager
A LITTLE ABOUT SPARTA

- Population 4,233
- Staff: 16 FTE, 12 PTE (Including Police)
- $1.9 Million General Fund Budget
- 1.9 Square Miles
SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE

- Building the Team – Fall 2016
- Kickoff Meeting – Fall 2017
- Engage MSU – Summer 2018
- MSU Presentation – Summer 2019
- Apply for Grant – Summer 2020 (Strategic Decision to Wait)

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW SLOWLY YOU GO ... AS LONG AS YOU DO NOT STOP.
Benefit to the Village of Sparta

Why we benefited from MSU’s services

- Engaging with MSU for our Safe Routes to Schools Project was a win-win. The Village wasn’t able to be as focused as MSU was utilizing only our existing staff. Often times the needs of the Safe Routes to School project fell behind immediate pressing issues that came up everyday in the office.

- Our project had taken a long time and it was hard to motivate the same small group of volunteers. However when we engaged with MSU it provided a boost to the group and allowed us to get to the finish line.

- They provided a technical resource that our committee had not yet seen. The conversation was greatly improved when talking about potential options when involving MSU.

Before

After

Location: 12 Mile east of Appleview driveway, looking west
East Lansing Public Schools

East Lansing SRTS Stakeholders:
East Lansing Public Schools – Superintendent, K-8 Principals, Facilities & Curriculum Director
City of East Lansing – Police Department, PACE, Dept. of Public Works
Meridian Township – Police Dept. & Dept. of Public Works
East Lansing SRTS – Coordinators and Core Team Volunteers
MSU Safe Routes Team
MFF/Michigan Safe Routes to School
+ Parent councils, Neighborhood associations, & Crossing guards!
Please join us after school on Monday, May 21st, at Marble Elementary School, in the Markle Heights, Lantern Hills, and Bailey neighborhoods.

We will meet at Marble Elementary, a walk in teams, on pre-determine 1.5 mile radius of the schools, to assess our city’s existing infrastructure. We will use tools, such as provided by Safe Routes to School.

We need your help! This is a great activity for kids to see community improvement in action. They will gather about broken or missing sidewalks, crosswalks in need of repair, and other needs will be priorities for Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Grant application.

For more information, visit https://safe routes to school.org/walking audit/
East Lansing – Proposed Improvements

PRIORITY 1: Refuge Islands

PRIORITY 2: Sidewalk Installation
Thank you