Writing Your

ILLINOIS SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

A Reference and Guide for Communities

Illinois Department of Transportation

**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

The specific purpose of this guide is to assist you in completing the online <u>Illinois School Travel Plan</u>, a required component of any Illinois Safe Routes to School application.
This guide describes each of the Illinois School Travel Plan component areas in detail, what must be included, and how to go about finding the necessary information and writing the best possible plan.

What Is a School Travel Plan?

A School Travel 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 walking and bicycling and by making the walking and bicycling environment safer. It is often the first step in a successful Safe Routes to School program.

The plan is created through a team-based process that identifies the barriers to active transportation and formulates a set of solutions to address them. The School Travel Plan is developed in consultation with the whole 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 also address the needs of a single school or several schools in a district or community.

The Illinois Safe Routes to School Program

The Illinois Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) is a federal funding program administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation. The Illinois SRTS Program supports projects and programs that enable and encourage walking and bicycling to school.

The Illinois SRTS Program funds two types of activities:
1. **Infrastructure projects** improve the physical or 'built' walking and bicycling environment around schools. This can include many activities such as installing sidewalks or crosswalks, fixing hazards, or slowing traffic near schools.
2. **Non-infrastructure programs** are activities that educate or encourage safe walking and bicycling for students. These can include in-school safety education, public outreach activities, traffic enforcement, and other related activities.

A School Travel Plan is a required component of all applications for Illinois SRTS funds, and you must utilize the online Illinois School Travel Plan in order for your application to be eligible. Visit the Illinois SRTS web site at <u>http://www.dot.state.il.us/saferoutes/index.html</u> for complete program eligibility and guidance.

The Illinois School Travel Plan

The *Illinois School Travel Plan* is an online planning tool, accessible through the Illinois SRTS web site. It allows you to create a personalized Plan individual to your own school and community.

The Illinois School Travel Plan is designed using a 'check box' approach to school travel planning. It provides you with a variety of choices as you determine you school's particular travel situation, problems and solutions. You may also include items that do not appear on the checklist and qualify your school's individual issues. Wherever possible, include information that is specific to your school.

IMPORTANT NOTE: School Travel Plans can address the needs of either individual or multiple schools. The Illinois School Travel Plan is flexible and allows for planning at the single school level, the school district level, the municipal level and more. If your Plan addresses multiple schools, be certain to approach the planning process considering all schools collectively.

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.

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

How to Get Started

1. To begin writing your own School Travel Plan, you must create an account on the Illinois SRTS website. Go to the website (http://www.dot.state.il.us/saferoutes/index.html) and click on 'register'. Once you have completed the registration information, you will receive a verification email with a password and instructions on how to begin.

   By setting up an account, you will be able to:

- ✓ **write your School Travel Plan online;**
- ✓ **save your School Travel Plan as you go;**
- ✓ **update your School Travel Plan at any time;**
- ✓ **submit your School Travel Plan to the Illinois Department of Transportation;**
- ✓ **link your School Travel Plan to a funding application;**
- ✓ **directly link other information such as survey results**.

2. After your account is created, you can begin writing your School Travel Plan at any time. Go through each section, completing the required fields (as a general rule, required fields will be highlighted in yellow). If you fail to complete a required section, an 'error' message will appear at the top of the screen, notifying you of the missing information.

   At the end of each section, you can save your selections and move on to the next area, or save your work up to that point and exit. All information will be saved until you return to complete your Plan.

3. Once your Plan is complete, submit it to the Illinois Department of Transportation for approval. Approval of your Plan is required in order to access the Illinois Safe Routes to School funding application.

Tips for a successful School Travel Plan:
Writing a School Travel Plan 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 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 identified issues will include a combination of education, encouragement, engineering and enforcement strategies. Safety is the first consideration.

- ✓ **Write the plan:** Keep your plan clear, concise and prioritized and use the *Illinois School Travel Plan* format. Detail each strategy and create a realistic time schedule for the plan.

- ✓ **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, consider building additional program champions and letting people know about your successes.

School Travel Plan Contents

SECTION 1:
INTRODUCTION AND START OF THE PLAN

Summary: The introduction will explain your understanding of and motivation for completing a School Travel Plan. Your introduction will 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 that best suit your school's situation. Your selection will answer the question, "Why has our school chosen to write a School Travel Plan?" It will explain your school's main motivations for wanting to improve walking and bicycling to school.

Tips on completing this section: Engaging all stakeholders is the key to accurately representing your community's priorities for school travel. The questions stated above can be posed to the school community during your public input activities such as meetings, interviews and surveys. See the "School Travel Plan Process" section for ways to bring these important partners together.

SECTION 2:
PLAN TEAM MEMBERS

Summary: A Safe Routes to School Team is a core group of people that commit to preparing, writing and following through with the School Travel Plan and its strategies. The 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 and his/her affiliation using the fields provided. You may enter as many members as you like. Also choose a primary contact person for the Plan among the team members listed.

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. School officials have an intimate knowledge of how students travel to and from school. Neighbors can testify to the impact that school-related traffic congestion has on the community. Students can express what is important to them with respect to their journey to and from school. Local traffic engineers can contribute expertise related to physical improvements along school routes. By including a diversity of perspectives during the School Travel Plan process, you will ensure a more comprehensive Plan.

Keep your Safe Routes to School Team to a manageable number of participants. You will have an opportunity to consult the larger community as you work to identify issues and solutions.

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. Section Three asks you to report your public input processes.

What to include: The checklist provided identifies a number of ways to engage members of the public. The bulk of the public input process is designed to assist you with gathering both baseline data and information regarding barriers and obstacles to walking and bicycling to school. However, be sure to remember to bring your finished plan back to the public for review and approval.

Following is a summary of the types of public input processes included in the Section Three checklist, and ideas on how to carry them out:

- **Administer parent surveys** (**highly recommended**) – 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. Surveys can also gather information regarding problems along the walking route and how far students reside from school. A standard Parent/Guardian Travel Survey is available on the Illinois SRTS web site.

- **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. A Stakeholder Interview Sheet is available on the Illinois SRTS web site.

- **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, web sites and email and provide a feedback mechanism.

- **Conduct an engineering study** – Professional traffic engineers and planners have tools at their disposal to audit both the school zone and travel routes for the safety and access

of walking and bicycling students. Contact your municipal or county transportation office and see if they are available to study your school area.

- **Conduct a community 'walkabout' or 'bikeabout'** – Although traffic professionals are required for the planning and design of infrastructure improvements, citizens can participate in analyzing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and accommodations. Neighborhood walkabouts and bikeabouts are environmental analysis exercises used in many Safe Routes to School programs to raise awareness of the issues and conditions impacting walking and bicycling, to garner support for needed changes and to gather information needed to help create school route maps. Have participants use the Walkability and Bikeability Checklist to record their impressions during any community walking exercise.

- **Incorporate your town's existing bike or pedestrian plan recommendations** – Some communities may have approved bicycle or pedestrian plans in existence. These documents may already have accomplished some of the same work you are seeking to carry out through the School Travel Plan process. Consult your local jurisdiction to see if you have one of these 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 certainly other examples of public input processes not identified in the checklist. 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.

SECTION 4:
DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOLS

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

What to include: The scope of your School Travel Plan must be addressed. Does your School Travel Plan address the needs of a single school, a school district, a municipality, a county, a region, the entire state, or some other area?
Next, select the school(s) served by your Plan using the list provided. You may select all schools within the area you previously identified (eg all schools in the district, municipality, county,

etc.), only certain schools, or just one. If you do not see your school listed, you may fill in the information manually. Once selected, all schools will appear in a table at the bottom of this page, including school enrollment information and grades served..

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.

SECTION 4a: INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS

Summary: All the schools selected in the previous section will appear in a table. There will also be three new columns of data that you must complete: School Demographics (Section 5), Travel Environment (Section 6) and Barriers (Section 7).

What to include: If you have chosen multiple schools, the first line of this table will read, "Summary of all schools." *For Plans covering multiple schools, you are only required to complete a single set of collective data for all schools combined, indicated in the top row of the table.* As you go through the rest of the School Travel Plan pages, any information you submit should apply to all schools collectively. Where data is requested, use an aggregate of information that reflects the experiences at all schools together. If you would like to do individual data for each individual school, you may include this data using the areas in the table.

Click on the information in each column to access that section of the School Travel Plan. Complete these sections for the "Summary of all schools" line before moving on.

SECTION 5: SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

Summary: Next, complete the demographic information for the categories provided. Again, if multiple schools are being addressed, utilize aggregate data.

What to include: List percentages of students by race, income level, English proficiency and special education needs.

Tips on completing this section: Most schools or school districts have the information required for this section readily available. Check with your school officials, or visit www.greatschools.net to look for specific school statistics.

SECTION 6:
CURRENT SCHOOL TRAVEL ENVIRONMENT

Summary: Section Five 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, make a single estimate of the following information areas for all sites.**

What to include:

- **Current travel modes and numbers** - You will have to identify the types of travel mode currently being used by students for the trip to and from school, as well as how many students use each mode.

- **Distance lived from school** – Knowing how many students live within walking distance (under one mile) or bicycling distance (under two miles), or further is important in determining the type of approaches to use in your Plan.

- **Supports during student travel times** – Many schools have supports in place to assist with processes and procedures during student arrival and dismissal. These mechanisms can help with directing traffic, ushering students across busy streets or helping provide students with safe homes or businesses in case of threats to personal safety or security. Please detail any supports unique to your school that are not included in the checklist.

- **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 as best as possible.

- **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.

- **School Safety (or 'Hazard') Busing** – Communities in Illinois sometimes provide special bus service to students who do not qualify for regular bus service (living less than 1 ½ miles from school) yet experience a specific road or traffic hazard which prevents them from safely walking or bicycling to school. These hazards can be eliminated through a Safe Routes to School initiative. Check with your school district to find this information.

- **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.

Tips on completing this section: Use the Student Travel Tally Sheet (available on the Illinois SRTS web site) to determine current modes of student. The Student Travel Tally Sheet is a hand-raise survey completed in the classroom with students for one week that measures how each student travels to and from school each day.

To discover the distance students live from school, investigate whether your school district 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, discussed in the next section.

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 and the remaining portions of Section Five.

SECTION 7:
BARRIERS TO ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Summary: Section Six identifies the obstacles that hinder students' ability to 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 or street lighting, 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 provided identifies a number of common barriers to walking and bicycling, but is by no means comprehensive. It is important to note your community's own particular issues, as well.

Following is a summary of the types of barriers included in the Section Six checklist:

- **Traffic crashes** – You may or may not be aware of the crash history of your community, but a pattern of traffic crashes is often a strong indicator of areas needing improvements. Summarize the any available data regarding the number of traffic crashes of all types within 2 miles of the school. Describe the locations and conditions under which crashes occur, as well as the applicable years (e.g. crashes between 2003 and 2005, etc.) Your local police or public health department may be able to help with these statistics.

- **Missing or insufficient walkways** – Sidewalks and side paths are the primary pedestrian facilities that permit children access to school by foot. Many communities are missing this critical accommodation. Many others have 'start and stop' sidewalk networks with gaps along the way.

- **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, particularly children, from choosing to ride a bike in their community.

- **Crossing streets and intersections is difficult or dangerous** – Another common obstacle to walking and bicycling is the inability to cross streets due to a lack of safe crossing points. Some streets are extremely wide, creating an unreasonable crossing distance for children. Others have no traffic controls, preventing safe navigation. Yet other crosswalks are poorly marked or not visible to motorists.

- **<u>Major arterials and expressways act as dividers</u>** – Some roads are so busy, dangerous or wide, they effectively dissect parts of a community from each other. Multi-lane roads with high speeds can separate residential areas from schools. When major highways or expressways pass near a school, it can create difficult and dangerous situations such as exit and entrance ramps, overpasses and interchanges that are not navigable by foot or bike.

- **<u>Walkways are not accessible to students with disabilities</u>** – Students who utilize alternative mobility supports, such as wheelchairs, require curb ramps with a particular slope in order to navigate walkways safely. Additionally, visually disabled students require special accommodations and 'warning' features, to alert them of hazards along walkways.

- **<u>Distance to school is too far</u>** – 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.

- **<u>Bike parking at school is missing, insufficient or non-secure</u>** – Many students would choose to bicycle to school if bicycle racks or other parking facilities existed. Existing bicycle racks at schools are sometimes in disrepair. And bike racks often are not always situated in secure locations, leaving student bicycles vulnerable to vandalism or theft.

- **<u>Dangerous driving and speeding on streets</u>** – Reckless driving greatly impacts the safety 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 can contribute to extremely unsafe driver behavior.

- **<u>Drop-off and pick-up process creates congestion and unsafe behaviors</u>** – The amount of traffic on Illinois streets is increasing every year, and a major source is attributed to vehicle trips to and from school. Student arrival and dismissal times are often characterized by long lines of vehicle traffic, clogged streets and parking lots, and illegal parking. Many schools complain about impolite or even aggressive behavior by drivers – including parents.

- **<u>Public safety concerns</u>** – 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.

- **<u>School policies</u>** – Occasionally schools will enact a policy that dissuades or outright prohibits active student transportation practices. Bicycle bans can be found at some schools. Sometimes these policies have existed for years, with no one remembering why or when they were enacted.
- **<u>Local ordinances negatively impact pedestrians and bicyclists</u>** – 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. Check and see if any of these conditions exist in your area.

Tips on completing this section: Refer back to Section Three on public input processes, and see if one of these activities can assist you in gathering information on barriers. In particular, community walkabouts and professional engineering audits 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 locations. Check to see if they have any recommendations for areas you should pay particular attention to.

SECTION 8:
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: Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Encouragement and Evaluation. The five "Es" are strategies that describe specific activities:

➢ ***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 measures, including low-cost as well as high-cost capital measures.

➢ ***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.

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 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 as checklist items in the *Plan.* 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).

   You must choose at least one strategy from each of the following categories to be considered for Illinois SRTS funding: Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation. Engineering strategies may or may not be indicated for all School Travel Plans and are optional.

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. Click on any highlighted strategy for further explanation.

Due to the technical nature of Engineering strategies, also be sure to involve your local 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.

Make sure the solutions you choose are reasonable and achievable. Take into account the amount of energy, time and resources 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.

The National Center for Safe Routes to School's online guide (www.saferoutesinfo.org) goes into great detail about each of the 5 "E's", including specific activities. It is highly recommended that you utilize this as your first line of information.

SECTION 9:
IMPROVEMENTS MAPPING

Summary: It is important to be able to visually represent both the safe school travel routes you identify, as well as the kinds of infrastructure changes you plan to implement. The online *Plan* allows you to pull up a satellite-based aerial map of your school and the vicinity with a 2-mile radius. You will essentially be able to "draw" in all that you plan to do with regard to infrastructure improvements.

What to include: The directions for completing this section are detailed on the screen.Select the school at which the improvement is planned. Then select the Engineering strategy to be implemented. Then select the corresponding mapping tool and indicate on the map where the improvement is to be installed.

If your Plan seeks to outline infrastructure improvements at multiple locations, you must create a separate map for each site. You can record planned improvements to as many locations as are indicated by your Plan's scope.

Tips on completing this section: You may need the assistance of a professional traffic engineer or planner to help you plan for more in-depth infrastructure projects. Be sure to contact your local jurisdictional transportation office (municipal, county, regional) and seek their involvement and approval of your improvements map.

SECTION 10:
THE ACTION PLAN

Summary: This is the section where you put everything together into a single chart 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 automatically be filled in according to all of the strategies you chose in Section Seven. Each strategy, along with the type of strategy and any detail you included, will appear in the table. 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 and any potential funding sources. An example is depicted below:

Strategy	Strategy Type	Strategy Detail	Time-Frame	Responsible Party	Status	Funding Source

Teach pedestrian and bicycle safety skills	Education	Police presentation on walking and biking safely	3-6 months	Officer Rossi, Principal Jackson	Under Develop-ment	None required
Create on-street bicycle facilities	Engineering	Stripe lane on both sides of Main between King and Elm	12-24 months	Ms. Hoyne, Dept. of Roads	Not yet begun	Illinois SRTS Program – Current cycle
Initiate a mileage club	Encouragement	Prizes for every 10 miles walked or biked	6-12 months	Mr. Robinson, P.E. Teacher	Under develop-ment	Other funding - PTA

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 also remain simple, reasonable and achievable. Include only 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. Approach local businesses, hospitals and non-profit organizations as potential sources of support.

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

SECTION 11:
PLAN ENDORSEMENTS

Summary: Once your plan is completed, make sure the individual school(s) and the school district both provide their approval. If infrastructure, or Engineering, improvements are included in your Plan, the local jurisdiction (town, city, village, county etc.), especially with authority over the roadways,must also be on board. It is important for these 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. There may be other individuals who would like to approve the plan as well.

SECTION 12: UPLOADING SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Summary: Here you can upload electronic documents, files 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, plans for new infrastructure or even a school logo or mascot.

Additionally, you may include any formal or informal resolutions, letters of support or intergovernmental agreements that have resulted from the School Travel Plan process. Note that formal endorsements will be required to accompany any funding applications for the Illinois SRTS program, so planning to obtain these documents early is recommended.

ILLINOIS
SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN
WORKSHEET

YOUR SCHOOL/COMMUNITY'S NAME

DATE

Illinois Department of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

1. Introduction

(YOUR SCHOOL/COMMUNITY) is committed to ensuring that all our students can utilize *physically active transportation*, such as walking and bicycling, for a safe and enjoyable trip to school. This School Travel Plan aims to address the issues that impede active transportation and seeks to strategically solve these problems by implementing a Safe Routes to School program.

Our community is motivated to pursue Safe Routes to School because (check each that applies):

- [ ] we highly value student physical activity and health.
- [ ] we have a history of pedestrian or bicycle crashes around school(s).
- [ ] we wish to improve unsafe or insufficient walkways, bikeways, and crossings.
- [ ] we are committed to reducing speeding and reckless driving near school(s).
- [ ] our students are threatened by illegal behaviors near school(s).
- [ ] we want to improve the air quality and reduce fuel consumption around our school(s).
- [ ] we want to build better partnerships between school(s) and the community.
- [ ] other _____

2. The Safe Routes to School Team

We believe that a diverse Safe Routes to School Team develops the most successful School Travel Plans. Our Team is comprised of a variety of stakeholders, each lending their own unique perspective and expertise in order to make walking and bicycling to school more safe, accessible and fun for our students.

The members of our team include:

Name:_____   **Affiliation:**_____
Name:_____   **Affiliation:**_____
Name:_____   **Affiliation:**_____
Name:_____   **Affiliation:**_____
Name:_____   **Affiliation:**_____
Name:_____   **Affiliation:**_____

(CHOICES INCLUDE: school staff or official,   student, parent , PTA/PTO or Local School Council member, local official, traffic planner/engineer, police/sheriff's department, health professional, neighbor, community organization, senior citizens group, local business owner, bicycle/pedestrian advocate, other)

The primary contact person for our School Travel Plan is (include contact information):

3. The Public Input Process

Our Team worked to include the entire community in developing our School Travel Plan. To accomplish this, we (check each that applies):

☐ administered parent surveys   ☐ hosted public meetings

☐ interviewed key stakeholders   ☐ solicited student opinions

☐ publicized a public comment period   ☐ conducted engineering studies

☐ conducted a community 'Walkabout' or 'Bikeabout'

☐ incorporated our town's existing bike or pedestrian plan recommendations

☐ incorporated our School Wellness Policy objectives

☐ we have no public input process at this time

☐ other _____

Some highlights of our public input activities included:

_____

_____

_____

4. Description of School(s)

Our School Travel Plan addresses the needs of (check only one):

☐ an individual school   ☐ multiple schools in close proximity (2 miles or less)

☐ a school district   ☐ a city/municipality

☐ a county   ☐ a region (please describe: _____)

☐ statewide   ☐ other _____

NOTE: For plans serving multiple schools, all remaining sections of the School Travel Plan should address all schools collectively, using aggregate information.

The school(s) included in our School Travel Plan is/are:

5. School Demographics

Our student demographic information includes:

#% white   #% black   #%Hispanic   #%Asian   #%Native American

#% low income students   #% limited English proficient students

#% special education students

6. Current School Travel Environment

This is how our students travel to and from school:

Travel Mode	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Public Transit	Other
Number of Students							

These are the distances our students live from school:.

Distance lived from school	0 miles to ½ mile	½ mile to 1 mile	1 mile to 1 ½ mile	1 ½ mile to 2 miles	Over 2 miles
Number of Students					

We have the following supports or activities in place during student travel times (check each that applies):

☐ crossing guards ☐ student patrol
☐ parent patrol ☐ staff presence during drop-off/pick-up
☐ Walking School Bus ☐ Bike Train
☐ police department support ☐ crime or violence prevention program
☐ Neighborhood Watch program ☐ school traffic safety plan
☐ Other _____

Our school arrival and dismissal procedures include (provide detail):
FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS:_____
FOR SCHOOL BUSES: _____
FOR CARPOOLS: _____
FOR PRIVATE VEHICLE DROP-FF/PICK-UP:_____
FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF: _____

Other school travel policies include:_____

Our school ☐ does ☐ does not provide School Safety Busing service to students.
(If yes) The number of students provided this service is: _____

Our school is already engaged in activities that enhance safe and active student travel, including: _____

7. Barriers to Active Transportation

We have identified and prioritized the following barriers to walking and bicycling to school (check each that applies, and rate its importance as 'high', 'medium' or 'low'):

- [ ] significant traffic crashes within 2 miles of school over the last 3 years:
- [ ] missing or insufficient walkways (sidewalks and paths)
- [ ] no safe place to ride a bike to school
- [ ] crossing streets and intersections is difficult or dangerous
- [ ] a major roadway or expressway divides the school from residential areas
- [ ] walkways are not accessible to students with disabilities
- [ ] distance to school is too far
- [ ] bike parking at school is missing, insufficient or non-secure
- [ ] dangerous driving and speeding on streets
- [ ] drop-off and pick-up process creates congestion and unsafe behaviors
- [ ] public safety concerns (crime, violence)
- [ ] school policies ban or prohibit bicycling
- [ ] local ordinances negatively impact pedestrians and bicyclists
- [ ] other _____-

Following is some detail regarding <u>each</u> specific barrier we have identified, including locations and characteristics of specific situations:

8. Creating Solutions

Goals

Our primary goal(s) for active school transportation are (check each that applies):

☐ increase the number of students walking and bicycling to school
☐ improve the safety of walking and bicycling students

Strategies

We have identified strategies involving the 5 "E's" of Safe Routes to School to address the barriers to walking and bicycling in our school community and to achieve our stated goals. **We have selected <u>at least one</u> strategy from each of the categories of Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation**, in addition to any Engineering strategies that are indicated. The strategies we will use include:

a) Education Strategies (*check at least one*)

☐ create educational materials
☐ teach pedestrian and bicycle safety skills to students and parents
☐ organize a Bicycle Rodeo or training course to teach on-bike skills
☐ teach personal safety skills to students and parents
☐ teach the health, environmental and sustainable transportation benefits of walking and bicycling to students and parents
☐ educate parents and caregivers about safe driving procedures at the school
☐ train school and community audiences about Safe Routes to School
☐ other _____

Following is an explanation of each of our proposed education activities:

b) Encouragement Strategies *(check at least one)*

☐ start a Walking School Bus program
☐ start a Bike Train program
☐ host International Walk to School Day or other special event
☐ initiate a walking/biking mileage club or other contest
☐ create a park-and-walk program
☐ promote Safe Routes to School in the community
☐ initiate an incentive program for safe travel behaviors among students
☐ start a Neighborhood Watch initiative
☐ conduct a community safe driving awareness and education campaign
☐ other _____

Following is an explanation of our proposed encouragement activities:

Creating Solutions, continued

c) Enforcement Strategies *(check at least one)*

☐ create a crossing guard training program
☐ create a parent or student patrol program
☐ lower speed limits in school vicinity
☐ utilize speed feedback trailers or signs
☐ conduct increased warning and ticketing efforts that target motorists
☐ other _____

Following is an explanation of our proposed enforcement activities:

d) Engineering Strategies within 2 miles of schools (check each that applies)

☐ construct, replace, improve or repair sidewalks
☐ create on-street bicycle facilities (bike lanes, widened shoulders, etc.)
☐ build off-street walking/bicycling paths
☐ install street crossing improvements (crosswalks, curb extensions, median refuges, raised crossings, pedestrian bridges or tunnels)
☐ install new or improved lighting for walkways or bikeways
☐ install new or improved signage (school zone, speed limits, crosswalk)
☐ install new or improved pavement markings or legends
☐ make existing walkways accessible to disabled students
☐ install bicycle parking near schools (bike racks, bike lockers, covered shelters)
☐ install traffic calming or speed reduction measures (curb extensions, speed humps, traffic circles, raised crosswalks, narrowing lanes, street closures)
☐ install traffic control devices (traffic signals, pedestrian signals, flashing beacons)
☐ design pick-up and drop-off procedures to increase safety and access
☐ divert traffic away from school zone or designated routes
☐ other _____
☐ engineering strategies are not indicated at this time for our community.

Following is a brief explanation of our proposed engineering improvements:

Continued next page

Creating Solutions, continued

e) Evaluation Strategies *(check at least one)*
To gauge the success of our efforts, we will collect data **both before and after**
implementation of our strategies. We will measure the impact of our School Travel Plan by
(check at least one):

☐ counting the number of students who walk and bicycle to and from school
☐ tracking the number of crashes within 2 miles of school
☐ measuring parent/guardian perceptions of safety
☐ obtaining planning services for expanding or improving an existing Safe Routes to
   School plan.
☐ we have developed additional safety evaluation measures that include:

We will record our measurements in the following table:

EVALUATION METHOD	"BEFORE" MEASURE AND DATE COLLECTED
Count number of walking/ bicycling students	DATE: % WALKING: % BIKING:
Track number of crashes	TIME PERIOD: # OF CRASHES:
Measure parent perceptions of safety	DATE:
Your own method	DATE: Your own measurement

9. Improvements Mapping

NOTE: The online Illinois School Travel Plan will include an Internet-based map system in this section. This tool will enable you to identify the exact locations for any planned infrastructure improvements. This map only addresses infrastructure improvements to the built environment. Plans with only non-infrastructure strategies are not required to complete this section.

10. The Action Plan

The Safe Routes to School Team is committed to realizing our vision for a safe, enjoyable and accessible walking and bicycling environment for our students. We will utilize the following Action Plan to keep our efforts focused and on track:

NOTE: In the online version of the School Travel Plan, each strategy selected by your Team in Section 7 will appear in the first three columns of the table below. Complete the remaining columns, using the selections identified beneath the table.

Strategy Name	Strategy Type	Strategy Detail	Time-frame	Responsible Party	Status	Funding Source

CHOICES INCLUDE: Timeframe selections: 3-6 months, 6-12 months, 12-24 months;
Status selections: not yet begun, under development, being implemented, complete
Funding source selections: IL SRTS Program, current program cycle, IL SRTS Program, future program cycle, in-kind participation, other funding _____, none needed

11. Plan Approval

We believe that building a strong partnership between schools and local government is fundamental to the success of a School Travel Plan.

Our School Travel Plan has been endorsed by the following representatives:

REQUIRED: SCHOOL OFFICIAL
Name:
Title:
Representing:

REQUIRED: SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICIAL
Name:
Title:
Representing:

REQUIRED FOR PLANS WITH INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS:
LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL
Name:
Title:
Representing:

OPTIONAL: OTHER POLITICAL SUBDIVISION (Township, County, Regional Planning Council, etc.)
Name:
Title:
Representing:

OPTIONAL: PARENT ORGANIZATION (PTA, PTO or Local School Council)
Name:
Title:
Representing:

OPTIONAL: HEALTH ORGANIZATION (local public health agency, hospital, non-profit)
Name:
Title:
Representing: