



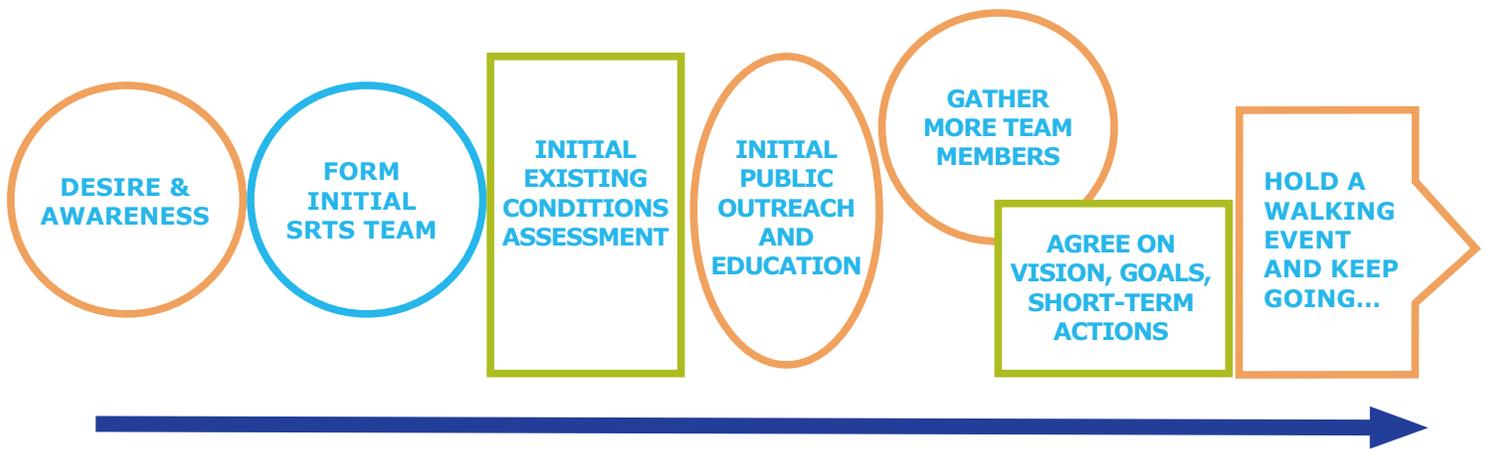
# TIPSHEET



## STARTING A SRTS TEAM TIP SHEET

### WHAT IS SRTS?

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) movement helps kids walk and bicycle to school more often, through education and promotional activities and infrastructure improvements. Fostered by groups or organizations at the school or community level, SRTS is a comprehensive strategy to instill life-long habits that support physical activity and health. Walking and bicycling to school helps families stay active and healthy, and helps kids arrive to school more focused and ready to learn. SRTS is part of other community initiatives, programs and projects such as transportation, health, safety, and well-being that affect people today and for generations to come. This Tip Sheet provides guidance on how to start an SRTS Team at your school. The graphic below shows how many local SRTS programs get started.



### GET STARTED WITH A TEAM OF INTERESTED VOLUNTEERS

Your SRTS team should start with anyone who is interested in encouraging bicycling and walking to your school and within your community. The most important thing is to establish a core team of people who are passionate about the work and who see opportunities for improvement.

As your program gets underway, you may want to add other interested individuals to your team, especially if they can bring a specific knowledge or resources to the effort. As you start to identify your SRTS goals and action plans, be sure you have a well-rounded team of supporters and participants. Ask yourself if you have the people with the knowledge, skills, and experience to implement the elements of SRTS.

#### Core team:

- School principal or assistant principal
- Parents
- Community volunteer(s)
- Students
- Teacher(s)
- Local planners
- Law enforcement officer/School Resource Officer
- Local road authority (department of public works, county engineer, MnDOT)

#### Assess the Situation

Before you choose activities to implement, it's important to understand existing behavior and attitudes in your school. Look for opportunities for and barriers to walking and bicycling to school. Research if there are existing policies or programs that support your work.

## Collect basic data about the school, neighborhood, and community:

- The boundaries of the school walk zone and how many students live in the walk zone
- The number of students who currently walk or bicycle to school
- An assessment of the physical environment around the school, including any barriers
- An assessment of the drop-off and pick-up zone, including buses and parent vehicles
- Whether there are bike racks and if there is enough space in the racks
- Whether there are school crossing guards or student safety patrols and where they are posted
- Parent and student attitudes about walking and bicycling to school – major reasons people do or don't walk and bicycle, which routes they use, and what concerns they have
- Existing school policies, such as a school wellness policy, that support - or could support - SRTS
- Existing city policies, such as Complete Streets, an 'active living' resolution, comprehensive plans or area transportation plans, that could support SRTS

## Determine Your Vision and Goals



**Vision:** A vision statement describes what your community will look like after you have achieved success. A vision statement is usually one to five sentences long and written in the present tense. To set a vision for your SRTS program, gather your core action team and ask them to envision what the community will look like after success has been achieved. You can decide how far into the future to go: five to 20 years is a good time range to choose from.

You can ask your team to share their vision verbally or ask people to write down their thoughts. Look for common themes that the group agrees upon. Then, have one person refine the statement for the group to approve.

Good vision statements follow the ABCs. They are: attractive, bold, compelling, doable, and energizing.

**Goals:** Goals project out one to three years and describe specific changes that will help realize your vision. To set your goals, look back through the results of your assessment to identify your community's greatest barriers and opportunities for bicycling and walking to school.

## Questions to find your goals:

- What are the biggest barriers to walking and bicycling to school (physical barriers, attitudes, information, etc.)?
- Are there areas of the community where walking and bicycling is particularly difficult? What would make it safer and easier?
- What are the biggest opportunities for walking and bicycling to school (partnerships, physical assets, etc.)?
- Are there areas of the community that are relatively safe and convenient for walking and bicycling?
- What would encourage more people to walk and bicycle in these areas?

After you have summarized your community assessment, identify three to seven goals that address your community's unique situation and that will help achieve your vision. The more specific and measurable your goals, the easier it will be to track progress.

## Identify Action Steps

For each goal, identify a number of action steps that will help you achieve the goal. To make sure you have a well-rounded approach, be sure to consider the five Es in your action plan: engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation.