

Safe Routes to School Program

Program Overview

The Safe Routes to School Program was started to enable children to walk and bicycle to school in a safe built environment and to encourage them to make active and healthy lifestyle choices from an early age. The program combines elements of the 6Es: **equity, education, encouragement, engagement, engineering, and evaluation**, to achieve its goals.



The MnDOT State Aid for Local Transportation Division and the Office of Transit and Active Transportation (OTAT) share responsibilities for the administration and oversight of the program. State Aid administers the infrastructure funds on local roads and OTAT administers the non-infrastructure funds. Infrastructure funds are used for engineering studies and capital improvements such as sidewalks or paths to provide safe and accessible routes to walking and bicycling to schools. Non-infrastructure funds are used to support local SRTS programs through outreach, education, and encouragement activities such as planning, providing bicycle and pedestrian safety training or coordinate walk/bike to school day events.

SRTS implementation is supported with federal, state, and local funds.

- The federal program was created in SAFETEA-LU¹ in 2005 with set-aside funding for non-infrastructure and infrastructure implementation. In 2013, MAP-21² was passed where SRTS type projects are identified as eligible for funding in the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The FAST Act³ in 2015 replaced the TAP with the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) to provide funding for transportation alternatives.
- The Minnesota program was created in Minnesota Statutes 174.40⁴ in 2012 with accounts for non-infrastructure and infrastructure implementation.

Guidance, Eligibility and Criteria

Guidance

Schools, school districts, cities, counties, townships, and federally recognized tribes with communities that need capital improvements around schools for safer walking and bicycling conditions may apply for SRTS infrastructure funding. Schools, townships, and non-state aid cities need to partner with State Aid cities or counties to develop and implement SRTS projects.

¹ www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-109publ59/pdf/PLAW-109publ59.pdf

² www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ141/pdf/PLAW-112publ141.pdf

³ www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-114publ94/pdf/PLAW-114publ94.pdf

⁴ www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=174.40

Eligibility

Infrastructure projects eligible for both the state and federal program are designed to improve the safety and ability of students to walk or bicycle to and from school. The following are examples of eligible capital improvements:

- Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements: pedestrian curb ramps, intersections or midblock crossings, median refuges, raised crossings, raised intersections, speed humps and curb extensions.
- Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities: exclusive multi-use bicycle and pedestrian trails, sidewalks, and pathways that are separated from a roadway.
- On-road facilities: bicycle lanes, bicycle boulevards and cycle tracks
- Traffic control devices: signs, bicycle and pedestrian activated signals, flexible bollards, and pavement markings *Note: Electronic devices must be permanent - **not** mobile.*

Criteria

Projects are selected to address the local need for capital improvements and support the local program SRTS program. The following criteria may be used to select projects:

- SRTS planning process
- Support to existing SRTS program
- Demonstration of need and safety risks
- Potential to improve pedestrian and/or bicyclist safety
- Understanding of project improvements
- Geographical distribution
- Consideration of priority populations (*Definition of priority populations⁵*)

Infrastructure Funding

Below is a table that shows the amount of funding awarded for infrastructure projects and the number of selected projects from funding cycles since 2009.

| Year | SRTS Funds | # Projects |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 2009 ^A | \$1.9M | 13 |
| 2011 ^A | \$3.8M | 16 |
| 2013 ^A | \$3.5M | 13 |
| 2014 ^B | \$1M | 4 |
| 2017 & 2018 ^B | \$2M | 12 |
| 2020 ^B & 2021 ^B | \$7.5M | 23 |

Data Source: SRTS Legislative Reports

^ASAFETEA-LU (federal) funds only, ^BState Transportation Fund (GO Bonds & General Fund)

For More Information

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⁵ <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/saferoutes/equity-atlas.html>