



Florida SRTS Updates
By Pat Pieratte
Florida SRTS Coordinator
October 3, 2008



Florida Updates: State

Register your Walk to School Event: With just a few days left before International Walk to School Day (next Wednesday, October 8, 2008), 199 Florida Walk to School events are registered on the national website, out of 2,739 events nationwide (8% from Florida). The numbers grew from 185 in Florida and 2,500 nationwide, in one day, so there may still be other events which have not yet been registered. If your school is holding a Walk to School event in October, please be sure to register the event at www.walktoschool.org/register. The event does not have to be on Walk to School Day (Wednesday, October 8) or walk to School Week (October 6-10) to qualify. Any Walk to School event in October qualifies. Registration gives you access to additional downloadable materials, assists media in identifying events for potential coverage and helps us understand the growing interest in walking and bicycling to school. For more information, go to the Walk to School web site at www.walktoschool.org. There is also a customizable press release for Walk to School Day at: <http://www.walktoschool.org/resources/press-releases.cfm>

Florida Updates: Local

Winter Park Workshop: On Tuesday, September 23, Joan Carter from District 5 and I presented at a SRTS workshop presented by the Winter Park Health Foundation, entitled "How to Help Kids Walk and Bike to School Safely. It was a wonderful workshop, and it was exciting to see and hear from people doing great SRTS work on a local level. One of the featured speakers was Kathie Carothers, School Safety Coordinator from the Chicago Police Department, and organizer of their very successful *Walking School Bus* Program.

Training Opportunities: Florida (repeated in future updates until events are held)

Community Traffic Safety Team Coalition meeting: The next CTST Coalition meeting will be held at the Thomas Center in Gainesville on Monday, October 13, from 10:00 am till 2:00 pm. After general business and reports from all the District CTST Coordinators and the Safety Office, the meeting will break into four workshops. One of these is Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety (the others are Crash Data Management, Grant Writing and Motorcycle Safety). The Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety workshop will consist of presentations by Pat Pieratte on Florida's Safe Routes to School program; Michael Moule on Federal Highway Administration's Pedestrian Safety Action Plans, and Providance Nagy on the Florida School Crossing Guard Training Program. If you are not able to attend the Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Florida Conference this year (or even if you are), this is an excellent way to get an update on key pedestrian issues in Florida.

Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Florida Conference: Due to travel restrictions, FDOT personnel will not be as well represented at this conference this year. But we hope you will encourage your local contacts to attend this excellent conference, to be held in St. Petersburg on October 21-23. There will be several sessions specifically focused on Florida's SRTS program, several others which feature programs which are or can be funded by SRTS funds, and many other excellent sessions. For more information, see <http://www.probikeprowalkflorida.com/>

St. Petersburg "City SRTS" Workshops: Last November I saw a presentation on City SRTS at the SRTS National Conference in Michigan, and was excited about the possibility of bringing some of these workshops to Florida. City SRTS workshops are presented by the National Center for Bicycling and Walking, and are tailored for the urban situation, where conditions are often not the best and where volunteers are often hard to come by. During the last year we have been exploring ways to bring these workshops to Florida. I am pleased to announce that there will be a series of City SRTS Workshops held right before the Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Florida Conference. I hope that some of the FDOT District SRTS Contacts who are close enough to attend can come for at least some of the workshop series. I can also invite some key local people who are involved with SRTS, to attend as well. Interested people should call me at 850-245-1529 or e-mail me at pat.pieratte@dot.state.fl.us, and I'll include as many as I can without overwhelming the locals involved with the two sponsoring elementary schools. Please let me know which of the following events you are interested in attending. If you will be arriving in the early afternoon Sunday, there may be an opportunity to join the walking audit to be held at both

schools at that time. Below is the proposed schedule, (still in draft form):

- Sunday night, October 19, 6-8 pm: A community workshop at School #1, which will introduce City SRTS, help the school set goals for SRTS, discuss local conditions, map problems and propose solutions.
- Monday, October 20, 8:00-12:00: observe arrival of students; hold City SRTS workshop with school personnel, students and local representatives.
- Monday, October 20, 1:00-4:00: Meet with representatives from School 2: Safety Patrol (possibly do a Walking Audit with them); principal or vice principal and interested teachers to discuss local conditions & set goals for the SRTS program (this part may be more difficult for visitors to join, but let me know if you are interested); observe school dismissal.
- Monday, 6:00-9:00 pm: Community Meeting at School 2. The agenda will be similar to Sunday night's meeting at School 1, but will go into more specifics since a complete workshop will not be held at the school.

The instructors will be Mark Plotz and Sharon Roerty (new Executive Director) from the National Center for Bicycling and Walking. In addition to conducting the workshops, they will also be taking notes on ideas coming from the workshops, and following up with a report for each school. They will also do a presentation on City SRTS and the St. Petersburg workshops during the PBPWF Conference, during the SRTS Statewide Perspective Panel. They encourage others to come and see how the workshops are conducted, and then use their materials in other appropriate urban areas of Florida.

Training Opportunities: National

Pennsylvania Safe Routes to School Academy Online Training: Pennsylvania has created a Safe Routes to School Academy with online training, available by clicking on the slide under Safe Routes to School Academy Training (June 17, 2008) at: <http://www.srtsacademy.org/training/index.cfm>. The training shows both the speaker and the Powerpoint slides. While some of the training is Pennsylvania-specific, other parts are more generic and may be helpful to local SRTS programs. A helpful hint: there is a speed control, and you can set it to "fast" during the parts that are Pennsylvania-specific, to get to the generic SRTS information.

Skills For Local SRTS Program Development Online Training: The Penn State Hershey Center for Nutrition & Activity Promotion, which created the SRTS Academy online training, also worked with the National Center for SRTS to create an online version of the live training which FDOT District Non-Infrastructure contacts and many local partners were able to attend in Orlando in August 2007, in conjunction with the 2007 Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Florida Conference. You can access this excellent training at http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/training/local_program_skills/index.cfm. The training walks you through each step of the process of bringing together a local SRTS task force, creating and implementing an action plan and sustaining momentum.

News from Other States

Oregon's "Roundabouts - Another Safe Intersection" Educational Activity Book: This activity book was designed to introduce 3rd through 5th grade students to roundabouts. With roundabouts becoming more popular throughout the United States, students need to know how to walk and bike safely through and around them. You may find this to be a helpful resource for your SRTS program: http://www.ci.bend.or.us/roundabouts/docs/Activity_book.pdf

An inspiring story from Alaska's SRTS Coordinator, Steve Soenksen:

In Naknek Alaska, a local SRTS program is being started by an 8 year old girl (3rd grade) who took it to heart, when during "Career Day" she heard about Planning and Zoning and City Council Meetings and the kids all got an invitation to come and observe a meeting. She came prepared to make a presentation and stated that she wanted a safe route to get to school for kids to walk or bike. One thing led to another and students signed a petition, the community signed one, letters of support came in from PTA, School Health Nurse, the Borough and many other partners and supporters. She also applied to NPS RTCA [National Park Service's "Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance"] program for Technical Assistance to develop not only a walking route to school but also a 10 stop fitness station on a walking loop around the school. The loop around school property went by the elders center, (senior center) and an elder housing area. Her goal was for kids and elders to share the same space and have a place to get physical activity. RTCA likely will grant the application and Nov 1-2 we will go to Naknek, AK to deliver a SRTS Presentation. Advocates come in all shapes and sizes, age is not a limiting factor. One person can make a difference here in starting something truly amazing.

I echo Steve's sentiment: You are very important to advancing the SRTS cause in your area! Thanks for all you do!



Florida SRTS Updates
By Pat Pieratte
Florida SRTS Coordinator
October 10, 2008



Florida Updates: State

International Walk to School Day in Florida: Florida's participation in this important event grew quickly in the last week, from 175 to 226 participating schools. One District estimated over 10,000 children would be participating. If participation is that high across the state, an estimated 70,000 students in Florida would have walked to school on Wednesday! Congratulations for all your efforts to promote this important day! It seems my earlier estimate was much too low (See the attached press release), but at least the press release should help raise awareness of Walk to School Day. If you did not get a local press release on your events out this year, consider using the customizable press release from the SRTS Clearinghouse next year: http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/wts_press-releases.cfm. This will let you tell about your local partners, unique aspects of your event, and other SRTS projects scheduled for the future.

Reports are coming in from around Florida telling about very successful events and high participation levels. Please send me information on how your District's or local Walks went, so I can share it in a future Update. Below are a couple of examples I've received:

- Check out the "Photo Gallery" at: www.allkids.org/walk, for some photos of the walks sponsored by All Children's Hospital in Pinellas County. More will be added to this site later. (FDOT employees may have to request a Surf Control Exemption from their supervisors to view these photos).
- See pictures attached to the e-mail, for photos taken of Walk to School Day at Mintz Elementary School, Hillsborough County, taken by Gary Tait.

New Laws: Districts should refer to the memorandum from Fred Heery to District Traffic Operations Engineers for a more thorough discussion of these new laws. Florida DOT's design standards are being updated accordingly:

- Section 316.1895, F.S. - Paragraph (6) now includes: Beginning July 1, 2008, for any newly established school zone or any school zone in which the signing has been replaced, a sign stating "Speeding Fines Doubled" shall be installed within the school zone.
- Sections 316.075 & 316.130, F.S. now require motorists to stop and remain stopped for pedestrians (instead of just yielding), at red lights, to pedestrians crossing in their half of the roadway. At unsignalized midblock pedestrian crosswalks, motorists should continue to yield to pedestrians, unless a "Stop Here for Pedestrians" sign directs them to stop.

Florida Updates: Local

Winter Park Workshop: Last week I shared some information on the recent Winter Park workshop entitled "How to Help Kids Walk and Bike to School Safely". To see a brief summary of this workshop, as well as links to the Powerpoint presentations and the SRTS Resources page which I helped put together, see: <http://www.thinkactbehealthy.org/saferoutes/saferoutes.html> See also the attached Resources list in Word. If you come across other resources which we should add, please let me know. I'll try to get the Resource list our website after the updates I've been waiting for are completed.

News from Other States

International Walk to School Day News: Below are a couple of news clips or photos and commentaries on Walk to School Day from other states:

From Little Rock, Arkansas:

http://www.fox16.com/news/local/story.aspx?content_id=43537a02-f9d6-4101-8e60-897ecee99fca

From Rye, New Hampshire:

http://www.nh.gov/dot/bureaus/planning/Rye_WTS_day_100808.htm

National News

International Walk to School Day: A week or so ago, there was a concern that the number of schools participating this year was down from last year. But thanks to efforts to get participating schools to register on the website:

<http://www.walktoschool.org/who/index.cfm>, the numbers rose to 2,955, which is more than last year. The website will continue to accept events all month, since schools can opt to walk any day; October is Walk to School Month.

NBC News Story: If you missed the NBC news Sunday night on More Kids Walking to School, here is the excellent video clip: <http://www.mefedia.com/entry/more-kids-walk-to-school/11791681/> The news story features Walking School Buses in New Jersey and Massachusetts, and lists reasons behind the trend as ranging from obesity concerns to school bus funding concerns. It also discusses the benefits of Walking School Buses.

New Educational Brochure: The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has just released a new, colorful brochure called "A Kid's Guide to Safe Walking", which should be appealing to children. I am attaching the pdf of this brochure to this e-mail.

Put the Brakes on Fatalities: Today, October 10, is National Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day. As part of Safe Routes to School, we certainly want to reduce speeding and other dangerous driving behavior, and reduce or eliminate as many child fatalities and injuries as we can. See the Florida proclamation attached to this e-mail.

Drive Safely Work Week: This safety initiative, October 6-10 is sponsored by the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS), to promote safe driving both on and off the job. This year's campaign theme is "*Take the High Road. Share the Road. It Belongs to Everyone.*" This theme addresses the special needs and considerations of vulnerable roadway users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, truck drivers, senior and teen drivers. Children walking or bicycling to and from school are certainly among those we want to create awareness of and protect. You can download educational materials at: <http://www.trafficsafety.org/dsww.asp>

National Bullying Prevention Week: This is a busy week! October 5 - 8, 2008 is also national Bullying Prevention Week. Too many children returning to classrooms this fall are faced with difficult situations of bullying. This October, communities nationwide are encouraged to work together to increase awareness of the prevalence and impact of bullying-verbal or physical harassment that occurs repeatedly over time, is intended to cause harm, and involves an imbalance of power between the child who bullies and the child who is bullied. National Bullying Prevention Week is a great time to get involved by using the resources of the Stop Bullying Now! Campaign. They are free and easily accessible through the website (<http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp>). The campaign offers tip sheets for adults and children: (<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/adult/indexAdult.asp?Area=preventiontips>) and cartoon "webisodes" for youth: (<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp?area=webisodescharacters>), to unite and inform communities about the importance of bullying prevention. Get involved! Bullying prevention is everyone's business!

Florida & National Calendar of Events & Training Opportunities

(Repeated in future updates until events are held)

Community Traffic Safety Team Coalition meeting: Thomas Center, Gainesville, Monday, October 13, 10:00 am- 2:00 pm. One of four workshops to be held is Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety (the others are Crash Data Management, Grant Writing and Motorcycle Safety). The Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety workshop will consist of presentations by Pat Pieratte on Florida's Safe Routes to School program; Michael Moule on Federal Highway Administration's Pedestrian Safety Action Plans, and Providance Nagy on the Florida School Crossing Guard Training Program. If you are not able to attend the Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Florida Conference this year (or even if you are), this is an excellent way to get an update on key

pedestrian issues in Florida.

St. Petersburg “City SRTS” Workshops: If you are involved in Safe Routes to School and want to attend this series of workshops and events, please call me at 850-245-1529 or e-mail me at pat.pieratte@dot.state.fl.us, and I'll include as many as I can. Please let me know which of the following events you are interested in attending. If you will be arriving in the early afternoon Sunday, there may be an opportunity to join the walking audit to be held at both schools at that time. Below is the proposed schedule, (still in draft form):

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- Monday, October 20, 8:00-12:00: observe arrival of students; hold City SRTS workshop with school personnel, students and local representatives.
- Monday, October 20, 2:30: observe school dismissal at School 2
- Monday, 6:00-9:00 pm: Community Meeting at School 2. The agenda will be similar to Sunday night's meeting at School 1, but will go into more specifics since a complete workshop will not be held at the school.

The instructors will be Mark Plotz and Sharon Roerty (new Executive Director) from the National Center for Bicycling and Walking. In addition to conducting the workshops, they will also be taking notes on ideas coming from the workshops, and following up with a report for each school. They will also do a presentation on City SRTS and the St. Petersburg workshops during the PBPWF Conference, during the SRTS Statewide Perspective Panel. They encourage others to come and see how the workshops are conducted, and then use their materials in other appropriate urban areas of Florida.

Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Florida Conference: St. Petersburg, October 21-23. There will be several sessions specifically focused on Florida's SRTS program, several others which feature programs which are or can be funded by SRTS funds, and many other excellent sessions. For more information, see <http://www.probikeprowalkflorida.com/>



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By Pat Pieratte
Florida SRTS Coordinator
October 17, 2008



Florida Updates: State

Latest statewide figures on SRTS: Yesterday I finished looking at the Work Program reports and other documents to figure out numbers to report to the National Center for Safe Routes to School, for their quarterly Tracking Report. As of September 30, we have programmed \$30.7 million in local SRTS programs and projects. Our numbers increased to 209 local SRTS projects and programs, involving an estimated 850 schools throughout Florida! Most of the increase in schools is due to the fact that our District Two's Districtwide Non-Infrastructure education program has reached about 600 schools! They work through their Community Traffic Safety Team partners and have volunteers go into the schools to deliver bicycle and pedestrian education programs. Good work, District Two, and everyone!

SRTS Presentation at the CTST Coalition Meeting: A Pedestrian workshop was one of four held at the Community Traffic Safety Team Coalition Meeting in Gainesville on Monday, October 13. There were three presentations at this workshop, all well done and well received. Pat gave a presentation on Florida's SRTS program. Next was a presentation by Michael Moule, President of Livable Streets, Inc., on FHWA's Pedestrian Safety Planning Workshops which are being held around Florida and the US. Two are scheduled for Miami-Dade County in December and January. The third presentation was by Providance Nagy, Florida School Crossing Guard Training Program Administrator, covering an overview of the training course, and recent updates to the Guidelines. For those who have not yet heard, Providance's Marine Reserve Unit is being called up to serve in Iraq for 18 months, and we are looking for an OPS replacement while she is gone. Attached to this e-mail is the job announcement. We are certainly going to miss Providance, and we wish her well in her journeys, and a safe return to us.

International Walk to School Day in Florida: Below is more news from this year's Walk:

- Check out the video on Highlands City Elementary School, one of 22 schools which took part in Polk County. Over 350 students (more than half the student body) and 150 parents took part, using the Fort Frazier Trail: <http://www.theledger.com/article/20081008/VIDEO/810080358>
- Dr. Toni Moody from Health Masters Club in Orlando reported on their Walk to School participating schools. They had 80, 100 and 240 participants (children and parents) at the three schools. Several of these were first-time events, so these numbers are very good.
- Update on the "Photo Gallery" at: www.allkids.org/walk, for some photos of the walks sponsored by All Children's Hospital in Pinellas County. These are on a Flickr website, which is not open to FDOT employees. You can e-mail the link to your home e-mail account to view them.
- One of the many Walks which Jean Shoemaker from All Children's Hospital helped to coordinate, was for Osceola Middle School. This school includes a number of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Their teacher, Cindy Parramore, wrote this note of thanks:

It was an honor to be included in the Safe Kids 2008 Walk This Way Walk and Roll to School Day. What a great experience for my students with autism spectrum disorder! It was amazing to see the variety and quality of resources that were pulled together to benefit student health and safety. In addition to the great activities, the spirit, enthusiasm and compassion exhibited by each community member involved in sponsoring the event was inspiring!

We look forward to continuing a relationship with your organization and thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

SRTS website update: I'm pleased to report that we have finally completed an update to Florida's SRTS website:

www.srtsfl.org. Included are a reordering and update to the text which begins with “**General Information, Tool Kit, Guidelines and Application Information**”, including the addition of a SRTS Resources List: http://www.dot.state.fl.us/safety/SRTS_files/SRTS%20Resources%20List.pdf and Walk 'n Roll Punch card: http://www.dot.state.fl.us/safety/SRTS_files/Walk%20n%20Roll%20Punch%20Cards,%20pdf.pdf and updated contact lists.

Important Safety Messages: It has come to my attention recently that we really need to stress to children the importance of not being distracted while walking or bicycling. There was a recent tragic incident where a Florida middle school child who was text messaging and not paying attention, stepped into traffic and was killed. When we walk or bike, we need to be paying attention to our surroundings, just as we do when we drive. By including this message in our educational materials and presentations, we will be saving lives and ultimately training better drivers as well. Let's teach children to beware of “Weapons of Mass Distraction”—cell phones, I-Pods, radios, etc.

Mileage Clubs: A question came up recently about whether Mileage Clubs qualify for SRTS funds. The answer is yes, if they include at least some walk or bike to school elements, instead of being confined to the school campus for all students and events. Under these programs, punch cards such as the one on our website, www.srtsfl.org or other means are used to keep track of the number of times a child walks or bikes to school, or the number of miles he or she walks or bikes. Another variation is to have the whole classroom or school work together to complete a virtual walk within the state or across several states. Often this is combined with history, geography or other lessons about the locations the group reaches along the way. You can use websites such as: <http://www.mapmywalk.com/> or <http://www.mapmyride.com/> to map your virtual walks or rides.

Many schools prefer to open these programs to all students, so they provide time before or after school, or during PE classes or recess, when students who live too far away can walk for credit toward the program. Schools can also work with their transportation directors to plan events when the bus drivers drop students at a location such as a church or community center, a half mile to a mile away from school, and adults accompany them the rest of the way to school.

With Mileage Clubs, students earn small prizes when their cards are filled or as they achieve certain milestones, and may be entered into a drawing for a larger prize. The Delaware SRTS Coordinator reports that they have an elementary school which has a once a month “fitness night” where walking opportunities are available as well. The schools use the in-school walking times to teach about pedestrian safety, which is related to and primarily benefits those who walk to and from school but is an important life skill for all. For more information about Mileage Clubs, see the Encouragement section of the SRTS Guide: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/encouragement/index.cfm>.

News from Other States

The New Mexico Safe Routes to School Handbook has just been completed, and is available at this link: http://nmshtd.state.nm.us/upload/images/Safe_Routes_to_School/NM%20SRTS%20Handbook.pdf. It leads schools through a step by step process to form a committee, identify problems, propose solutions and implement them. Although the steps are very similar to those in the Florida Safe Ways to School Toolkit: http://www.dcp.ufl.edu/centers/trafficSafetyEd/html_safe-ways.html, New Mexico's Handbook contains many good digital photos of possible solutions as well as updated resources. It's worth reading, to help Florida schools too.

National News

Oberstar Award Applications: This year's award is for local programs or schools that have evidence of success related to that program's or school's goals and that have received Federal funding. Evidence of success can be either quantifiable or anecdotal, since the Federal SRTS program is still fairly young. More information on this year's award can be found at: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>. If your SRTS program is intending to apply for this award but hasn't been able to do so because of Walk to School Activities, read this note from Pam Barth at the National Center for SRTS (919.962.8717):

We have heard from several programs that are celebrating Walk to School month activities and that would also like to apply for the Oberstar Award. These programs have expressed concern that their month-long celebrations could conflict with the Oberstar Award's October 22nd deadline. In response, the National Center is allowing an extension to complete the Oberstar Award application. Applicants must apply for the extension by October 22nd, 2008. The extended deadline will be Monday, November 3rd, at 5:00pm EST. Please note: applicants must apply for the extension by the original deadline of October 22nd.

Florida & National Calendar of Events & Training Opportunities

(Repeated in future updates until events are held)

St. Petersburg “City SRTS” Workshop: If you are involved in Safe Routes to School and want to attend this series of workshops and events, please call me at 850-245-1529 or e-mail me at pat.pieratte@dot.state.fl.us by 4:00 Friday, October 17, so I will know how many to expect. If you can't reach me, just show up at the Sunday afternoon site audit or Sunday night meeting at the hotel.

Note: The schedule has changed since earlier announcements. We were not able to arrange the evening community meetings, so here is the revised schedule:

- **New: Pre-Workshop Site Audit:** for those of you who will be arriving early and are interested, meet us in the lobby of the Hilton at 3:30 to visit North Shore Elementary School for a site audit. Bring your digital camera if you have one.
- **New: City SRTS Briefing Sunday night, October 19, 7:00-9:00:** at the Hilton Hotel, Harborview Room. This will give interested participants an overview of what will happen on Monday, and an opportunity to ask questions.
- **Monday, October 20, 8:00-9:00 (Optional):** Observe arrival of students at North Shore Elementary School; discuss what was observed
- **Monday, October 20, 9:00-12:00:** City SRTS Workshop at North Shore Elementary School with school personnel, students and local representatives. Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Florida attendees may observe.
- **Monday, October 20, 12:00-1:00 (Optional):** Lunch at a local restaurant to continue discussions with those interested.

The instructors will be Mark Plotz and Sharon Roerty (new Executive Director) from the National Center for Bicycling and Walking. In addition to conducting the workshop, taking notes on ideas coming from the workshops, and following up with a report for the school. They will also do a presentation on City SRTS and the St. Petersburg workshop during the SRTS Statewide Perspective Panel (3:30-5:00 pm Tuesday, October 21) at the PBPWF Conference. They encourage others to come and see how the workshops are conducted, and then use their materials in other appropriate urban areas of Florida.

Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Florida Conference: St. Petersburg, October 21-23. There will be several sessions specifically focused on Florida's SRTS program, several others which feature programs which are or can be funded by SRTS funds, and many other excellent sessions. For more information, see <http://www.probikeprowalkflorida.com/>



Florida SRTS Updates
By Pat Pieratte
Florida SRTS Coordinator
October 24, 2008



Florida Updates: State

City SRTS Events: Several City SRTS events were held this week as both pre-conference and conference events, in conjunction with the Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Florida Conference in St. Petersburg. All events were led by two staff members of the National Center for Bicycling and Walking, Sharon Roerty (new Executive Director) and Mark Plotz. Although there were last-minute logistical challenges, all events turned out successfully.

Sunday afternoon, October 19, several of us did an onsite inspection of the school grounds to identify and photograph infrastructure problems to use in the upcoming Workshop. One participant described the inspection as a Road Safety Audit for schools. That evening we held a City SRTS Briefing at the St. Pete Hilton for interested conference attendees and other interested partners from the area. This was an introduction to what City SRTS involves. Basically, it is a simple introduction to SRTS concepts designed for a particular urban area school, to identify specific challenges, possible solutions, resources and next steps, and to help the school get started toward addressing bicycling and walking issues at their school.

Monday, October 20, we observed the school arrival process, then held a 3-hour City SRTS Workshop at the school, which included several school personnel as well as those who attended the Briefing and additional local partners. Even though the workshop didn't include as many school personnel as we would have liked, we achieved the goal of creating an awareness of some of the walking and bicycling challenges at the school, and an interest in taking these issues to the PTA to continue the process of beginning a SRTS program. Some of the problems identified were inconsistent and confusing signage, missing and misplaced crosswalks, and a school zone which ended a half block before the end of the school property. Although the school was traditionally a neighborhood school, for about the last five years, the school has been part of Pinellas County's school choice program, which has resulted in only about 20-30 walkers and bikers, out of about 600 students. But this is the first year of a transition back to neighborhood schools, so this is an ideal time to start the planning process and make improvements so that more children can walk or bicycle in the coming years.

We also got an opportunity to talk to the 4th and 5th grade safety patrols, who help with the pickup process at the end of the day. Several of the safety patrols told us they enjoy walking because it gives them time away from parents, with no one telling them what to do, when they can just think. Children today are so heavily programmed, and time alone to think is a vital part of growing up and gaining independence, which we as adults may forget. We also got to observe the pickup process at the end of the day, which showed there are opportunities to educate both the students and the parents on safety procedures.

On Tuesday afternoon, October 21, Mark Plotz did a presentation on the principles behind the City SRTS program and the St. Pete Workshop, as part of the SRTS Statewide Overview session at the Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Florida Conference. Mark and Sharon encourage people to use their ideas and put together similar workshops in their areas of the state. Those who attended the City SRTS events found them to be very valuable, and were inspired to continue the work. For more information on the City SRTS Program, see: <http://www.activelivingresources.org/saferoutestoschool8.php>

Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Florida Conference: This annual conference, held this week in St. Petersburg, Florida, was a wonderful learning and networking opportunity. Although only about 100 people were able to attend due to travel restrictions, it was a very worthwhile and stimulating conference. There were usually 3 breakout sessions going concurrently, and the small groups gave the conference a more interactive tone, and allowed participants to discuss topics much more than would have been possible in a larger conference. I will try to include more details in next week's update.

Florida County maps on FDOT website: Black-and-white and color maps of every county are available at this link: [FDOT's county highway maps available online](#). These may help in local SRTS planning efforts.

Florida Ped/Bike Resource Center Coming Soon: For those of you who have not yet heard, the University of Florida,

Technology Transfer Center will soon be re-establishing a Ped/Bike Resource Center under a Traffic Safety (402) grant. We look forward to having a one-stop location for pedestrian and bicycle educational and promotional items, as well as research. It will probably take a couple of months for them to gear up and be ready to take orders. We will provide an update and more details at that time. They will be developing a website which will be linked to their home page. You can also watch this website: <http://t2.ce.ufl.edu/> for further developments; it already includes an announcement of the Center:

National News

Survey of Walk to School organizers: Nancy Pullen-Seufert from the National Center for SRTS writes:

If you organized a Walk to School event, we'd like to hear from you. Would you please take a few minutes to complete a brief survey at www.walktoschool.org/survey? This information helps us learn how we can better support your work. It also means we can report back on trends in event activities and walking and bicycling in general, resulting in more visibility and support for these issues. As an incentive, we'll be giving away 15 National Center for Safe Routes to School bags to randomly selected survey respondents. Don't worry if you've already completed a survey – you'll be in the drawing, too! Thank you to those who have already responded. Please feel free to email us at walk@walktoschool.org if you have questions or comments.

October issue of Safe Routes to School E-News: To view the latest issue, which includes some valuable information, please visit: <http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/mediacenter/6621/181988>.

Walk to School Day: According to the International Walk to School in the US website: <http://www.walktoschool.org/who/index.cfm>, 2,997 schools in the US participated, from every state in the US. Florida had 226 registered schools, or 7.5% of the total! Thanks again to all the FDOT District and local people who helped make this annual event a huge success!

Florida & National Calendar of Events & Training Opportunities

(repeated in future updates until events are held)

FHWA Pedestrian Safety Design/Planning workshops: Two of these workshops, which were mentioned in the last Update, are currently scheduled for Miami/Dade County for December 1-2, 2008, and January 5-6, 2009. A workshop is also being planned for District 3 (the Florida Panhandle) for early 2009. There is a possibility of holding additional workshops in 2009. If you are interested in hosting such a workshop, contact Florida's Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator Dennis Scott, dennis.scott@dot.state.fl.us or 850-245-1527. Holding a workshop like this is an excellent way to start your local SRTS planning. You will be taught what to look for, who to work with, and many solutions to bicycle and pedestrian problems, which translate easily to the school and neighborhood environment for SRTS programs.



Florida SRTS Updates
By Pat Pieratte
Florida SRTS Coordinator
October 31, 2008



Florida Updates: State

Active Living Research Center's (ALRC's) City SRTS Pilot Program Visits St. Petersburg, FL: Mark Plotz, Program Manager for the National Center for Bicycling and Walking (NCBW), writes in the October 29 issue of Centerlines:

NCBW Executive Director Sharon Roerty and I just wrapped up a three-day visit to the St. Petersburg area. While there, we facilitated a City Safe Routes to School workshop at North Shore Elementary School. Taking place about the same time was the Florida Bicycle Association's ProWalk/ProBike Florida conference. Thanks to the efforts of Pat Pieratte, Florida's Safe Routes to School Coordinator, several of the Florida DOT's district Safe Routes to School personnel who were already in town for the conference were able to take part in some or all of our SRTS activities.

Now in its third year, the ALRC's City SRTS pilot program has transitioned to its next phase: working with MPOs and DOTs to build their capacity to work with urban schools and establish SRTS programs. The decision to move beyond our highly localized technical assistance, which defined years 1 and 2 of our pilot program, is thanks -- in large part -- to people like Pat, a state coordinator who has numerous large urban areas in her purview. A recent policy change by the Pinellas County School District -- in which North Shore ES is located -- also made St. Petersburg an ideal candidate; the District is returning to neighborhood schools after years of school choice.

We kicked off our visit with a walking audit of the North Shore's school zone. This field exercise was followed by a two-hour clinic for SRTS practitioners on our experiences working with urban schools. (You can read about some of those experiences on the Active Living Resource Center website at: <http://tinyurl.com/ytcpcb>) Day 2 was devoted entirely to field work; North Shore hosted a half-day SRTS workshop, and workshop participants observed arrival and dismissal of students. We also interviewed students, parents, crossing guards, and bus drivers about school transportation. Day 3 was a debriefing of our St. Petersburg visit for the benefit of ProWalk/ProBike Florida conference participants.

Quick Tip:

Got a speeding problem in your school zone? Before you call in law enforcement, take a look at the signs around the school to determine whether the school zone is properly marked. Our walking audit of North Shore revealed some startling deficiencies and inconsistencies -- including two END SCHOOL ZONE signs that were posted well before the school property even ended!

The safety consequences of improperly marking a school zone are obvious; less obvious are the implications for enforcement. Recently, in Manatee County (FL), a judge threw out four speeding tickets, finding the Florida DOT had not followed its own policies in marking the school zone in question. The ruling of the judge is good news for a class action lawsuit involving the 350 drivers who have been ticketed in that particular school in the past school year.

For more about the Manatee County school zone controversy:

<http://tinyurl.com/6oqb8z>
<http://tinyurl.com/5slrcx>
<http://tinyurl.com/6dpwd4>

Our report on the North Shore Elementary School workshop will be issued shortly. If you simply cannot wait, contact me at (202) 974-5103 or mark@bikewalk.org to discuss NCBW's City Safe Routes to School program.

ProBike/ProWalk Florida Conference: (Note: the national conference has now shifted its emphasis toward more

pedestrian topics and is now ProWalk/ProBike, but Florida's conference is put on by the Florida Bicycle Association, which has kept the original name).

State SRTS Coordinator Pat Pieratte organized and presented at three panel breakout sessions on SRTS. The first was a statewide overview of SRTS. Pat gave background on the federal program and an overview of how Florida is implementing the program. Pete Olson from FSU's Florida Center for Interactive Media, gave an overview of changes to the Florida School Crossing Guard Guidelines (which our office worked on) and new curriculum and website (which his office worked on). Mark Plotz from the NCBW gave an overview of the City SRTS program, our visit to the St. Petersburg elementary school, and ideas on how participants could use the same approach to helping urban schools in their areas begin SRTS programs with a school-based workshop and analysis of the school's challenges and strengths.

The second SRTS panel focused on Non-Infrastructure programs. Pat presented many ideas for how to implement the four Non-Infrastructure E's: Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation. Sarita Taylor from District One then gave an overview of how her District is implementing the Non-Infrastructure programs. Two large-scale programs being implemented are the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Education Program (FTBSEP) and Mileage Clubs. Sarita hosted a FTBSEP training in her District, assessed interest, and is ordering bicycle trailers, bicycles, helmets, cones and necessary educational materials, so that each County which is interested and has been trained will have a complete trailer to use throughout their county for their bicycle and pedestrian education programs. The Mileage Club (see: <http://www.fitnessfinders.net/default.asp>) is being implemented by the Hendry and Glades County Health Departments, and they are already seeing significant increases in the number of children walking and bicycling. The third presenter was

Jason Jackman from University of South Florida's Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR), which has a SRTS grant to develop Walking School Buses and Bike Trains at five schools in Hillsborough County. Jason has been working hard doing the necessary presentations and coordination to get these programs started, and hopes to see them really take off early next year. The final speakers were Dr. Toni Moody and her husband Ivan Fennell, giving an update on their Health Masters Club at a number of schools in the Orlando area. This program stresses balancing energy in and energy out as the key to maintaining a healthy weight and lifestyle, so they teach about both nutrition and exercise (walking to school) as the two important components of health. We had a very lively discussion on the options for Non-Infrastructure programs.

The third SRTS panel focused on Infrastructure projects. After a quick overview by Pat on how Florida is handling Infrastructure projects, we heard from two additional speakers. Carlos Sarmiento, who helps with the District Six Infrastructure program, explained the process his District goes through to review and rank submitted projects, based on both a review of the applications and a site review of the proposed improvement. Finally, Ginger Hoke, President of Hoke Design, presented some of the work she has done with Volusia County, inspecting school sites for problems and working with the schools, government organizations and others on the school-level planning which results in well-researched SRTS applications. This session was also very interactive and educational.

Florida Updates: Local

Joan Carter in District Five has ordered 25 Walking to School Kits for schools in her District. These consist of a large garden cart for holding backpacks, (see photo attached to this e-mail), 2 reflective vests for the adult leaders, 2 golf umbrellas, and backpacks and other promotional items for participating children. These kits will be a big help to encourage new Walking School Buses in District Five. Local people in the District Five area can contact Joan to see if there are any kits which have not yet been spoken for. Other Districts may consider this idea in the future. You can let your Non-Infrastructure contact person know if it sounds like something you could use to support a Walking School Bus. See www.srtsfl.org for contact info).

News from Other States

Two-Wheel Commute Catches on in Palo Alto (Excerpted from the [Palo Alto Daily News](#)). Although high schools are currently not eligible for federal SRTS funds, this shows that encouragement programs can catch on and create a major shift in school transportation modes.

Years ago, Gunn High School, in Palo Alto, Calif., started a program encouraging students to bike to campus, handing out treats and prizes to cyclists on randomly selected days. Fed by similar programs in Palo Alto's middle schools, the concept gradually caught on, and last year the 1,900-student school broke 500 cyclists on a single day for the first time. That record was shattered last month, when program organizers counted 632 bikes on campus on Sept. 11.

National News

Halloween Pedestrian Safety Tips: The Pedestrian/Bicycle Information Center sent out a News Brief with tips for safe walking on Halloween: <http://www.walkinginfo.org/newsroom/2008-10-28.cfm>. The concepts covered are similar to general pedestrian safety tips, with the added challenges of darkness, costumes and masks, candy, excitement and more pedestrian and vehicular traffic. If you have young children, accompany them when they go Trick or Treating, and use this as an opportunity to assess their pedestrian skills, which they will need whether walking to and from school, or anywhere. These tips, from the Children in Traffic video, are especially important to keep in mind:

Remember children are not miniature adults:

- *They often act before thinking.*
- *They have one-third narrower side vision.*
- *They can't judge speed.*
- *They are shorter than adults and can't see over cars and bushes.*

Lowering Residential Speed Limits: On a related note, below is a testimonial from Jason Crawford, a traffic engineer with the Texas Transportation Institute, commenting on the Texas "Kyle's law", named after a young boy who was killed by a motor vehicle on Halloween five years ago:

"My community - Coppell, Texas - made headlines two years ago as it tackled this issue (of lowering the residential speed limit). As a traffic engineer by training, I was hesitant of Keep Kids Alive Drive 25 and the lowering of the speed limit, and lobbied the City Council to consider other engineering, enforcement, and education alternatives so that 'mobility' was maintained. I have to say that since Keep Kids Alive Drive 25 was adopted and the speed limits on our streets lowered (5 mph) I do feel like I am keeping my village's children safer, that I am more alert, that I am more in control of my vehicle, that I do share those streets with pedestrians, that my 'mobility' has not been greatly impeded, and that streets are not for the sole purpose of drivers in vehicles trying to make their way as quickly as they can in our hurried world."

"Active Transportation for America" report: The following announcement was received on October 20 from the Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC) about their new groundbreaking report, Active Transportation for America. This report explores similar issues to those related to the SRTS program (inactivity, obesity, pollution, dwindling oil supplies, and increasing transportation costs), and applies them to all bicycling and walking, making the case for more support for bicycling and walking in the next Transportation Act:

"[Active Transportation for America](#)" quantifies for the first time the profound benefits our nation would see with increased walking and bicycling. Never before has the case been made so clearly that relatively modest federal investment in bicycling and walking can save Americans tens of billions of dollars each year.

Earlier today, RTC presented the report to Rep. Oberstar (D-Minn.) at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Rep. Oberstar, Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, accepted the report on behalf of Congress and spoke of his support for RTC's goals.

The report pulls success stories from communities across the country that are actively engaged in improving their active transportation networks. These stories come from community [case statements](#) that are part of their participation in RTC's [2010 Campaign for Active Transportation](#).

For more about the report, including access to hard-hitting graphs, summaries and opportunities to take action, visit the report Web site: www.railstotrails.org/ATFA

The report includes three short SRTS success stories, including this one from Burlington, Vermont:

C.P. Smith Elementary School's walking school bus has operated since March 2005. Before the walking school bus began, approximately six children walked this route to school. Now on Walking Wednesdays there are between 25 and 40 children and the traffic congestion along the route has all but disappeared.

The list of case statements includes Miami-Dade County. Jacksonville and Volusia County will submit their case statements soon.

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