

Memo



Metro

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Date: Thursday, June 13th, 2019
To: Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation and Interested Parties
From: Noel Mickelberry, Metro Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator
Subject: Metro Safe Routes to School Program Update

In 2016, JPACT & Metro Council allocated \$1.5 million through the 2019-2021 Regional Flexible Fund Allocation to create a regional Safe Routes to School program. The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on program development to date, and what to expect over the next three years of implementation.

What is Safe Routes to School?

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national movement that aims to make it safer and easier for students to walk and roll to school. The most successful Safe Routes to School programs incorporate the Six E's: Evaluation, Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, and Equity. While Equity stands alone as its own E, it's also critical to build equity into each aspect of a comprehensive Safe Routes to School program.

Background + Policy Direction

Since 2015, there has been growing support for increased investment in Safe Routes to School in the Portland Metro region. This is in part due to a decrease in federal funding for the program nationally, as well as a recognition that active school trips are a key component of student success and contribute to a healthier and more connected community for all.

In response to the \$1.5 million funding allocation within the 2019-2021 Regional Flexible Funds, Safe Routes to School was incorporated into the 2018 Regional Travel Options Strategy. The RTO Strategy policy direction includes implementation of a regional Safe Routes to School program (non-infrastructure) with the following program elements:

- Grant funding dedicated to local, community-based Safe Routes to School activities that connect youth to education and encouragement opportunities related to school travel, with an emphasis on Title I schools or equivalent¹.
- One full-time Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator at Metro to manage grants and collaborate with local coordinators, state partners, and community groups across the region to advance SRTS.
- Technical assistance funds to support program development, implementation, and evaluation. These funds will be prioritized based on local SRTS program needs and an analysis of needs in school communities without dedicated SRTS staff. Funding may support the creation of template materials, best practice research, or data collection support.

Metro SRTS Program Development

In addition to the RTO Strategy, Metro developed a Regional SRTS Framework that analyzed the existing programs and funding in the region, the needs & gaps identified by local programs, and an analysis of all schools in the region based on safety, equity & impact. Based on this Framework and the policy direction of JPACT & Metro Council, Metro staff have developed the following SRTS Program Vision & Goals to guide program activities over the next three years:

¹ Title I schools receive federal funds to support low-income student educational goals. Many schools may not fully qualify for federal funds, but serve a similar population of students. Metro's SRTS Program Goals broaden this to include a focus on students of color and students with disabilities.

Metro SRTS Program Vision: We envision a region where all kids and youth are able to safely, affordably and efficiently access school & their community by walking and rolling².

Metro SRTS Program Goals:

- SRTS programs in the region are effective, inclusive & sustainable.
 - Strategies to reach this goal include developing a coordinated communications plan, supporting networking & collaboration between SRTS coordinators, and prioritizing technical assistance funding.
- SRTS programs prioritize equitable outcomes for students of color, low-income students, and students with disabilities.
 - Strategies to reach this goal include reducing barriers to accessing SRTS funding, developing relationships in target school communities & supporting grantees in developing culturally appropriate programming.
- SRTS is integrated into state, regional, and local policy priorities to support programs and invest in safety improvements
 - Strategies to reach this goal include integrating SRTS into education standards & practices, facilitating policy development with local coordinators & supporting investment in infrastructure that improves safety for kids walking and rolling.

19-22 RTO SRTS Grantees

As a part of the Regional Travel Options Grant process, \$900,000 was dedicated to Safe Routes to School. Metro's Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator will serve as grant manager and work with grantees on the implementation of their program in alignment with the goals listed above.

² 'Walking and rolling' is language used to be inclusive of all types of active trips, including the use of mobility devices, bicycles, busses, scooters, skateboards, etc.