

DECEMBER 2010



## Missouri

### Safe Routes to School State Network Progress Report

#### **Overview**

[The State Network Project](#) brings together state leaders to remove barriers to walking and bicycling to and from school. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) State Networks in nineteen states and DC are working to increase physical activity, ensure that federal SRTS funds are spent on quality projects, work to leverage additional state resources for SRTS initiatives, and advocate to remove barriers to walking and bicycling to schools through [policy initiatives](#).

#### **Organizer**

Each contracted state organizer manages the daily operations of the State Network Project for the [SRTS National Partnership](#) and works with partners from around the state who are involved in health, equity, transportation, youth, environmental and smart growth issues to develop and implement an action plan.

The Missouri State Organizer is Brent Hugh, Executive Director of the Missouri Foundation for Bicycling and Walking, (816) 695-6736, [missouri@saferoutespartnership.org](mailto:missouri@saferoutespartnership.org).

Honorary Chair of the Missouri Network is former mayor of Columbia and nationally recognized SRTS champion Darwin Hindman, (573) 449-5227, [dhindman@socket.net](mailto:dhindman@socket.net).

Thanks to matching funds from the Missouri Foundation for Health, the Incarnate Word Foundation, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Region VII Office of Minority Health the State Network has funding to dedicate staff time to the project. These staff include co-organizers Sarah Shipley of the Missouri Foundation for Bicycling and Walking, (202) 577-7141, [sarah\\_shipley20024@yahoo.com](mailto:sarah_shipley20024@yahoo.com), and Eric Bunch of the Missouri Foundation for Bicycling and Walking, (573) 701-2492, [eric.bunch@mobikefed.org](mailto:eric.bunch@mobikefed.org).

#### **How To Get Involved**

Each state network holds a telephone meeting every month, and network action teams work to make changes to the policies listed below. If you are interested in participating in the Missouri Network, or want more information about it, contact the state network organizer listed above.

#### **Partners**

The Missouri Network includes approximately 75 organizations and agencies, all of which are working on SRTS state programs and policies. For a detailed list, go to: <http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/missouri>.

## **Achievements**

At the heart of the State Network effort is policy change—specifically working to remove policy barriers to walking and bicycling to schools by implementing complete streets, changing statewide school siting and other policies, and by implementing legislation that would result in funding or policy changes.

## **Achievements List**

Below is a selected list of the major achievements of the Missouri Network from January 2010. For more information about these achievements, please contact the state network organizer.

- **Building the Missouri SRTS Network:** Missouri has built a strong Network with over 75 organizations, agencies, and elected officials represented. We have convened twelve active Action Teams, each of which holds a monthly meeting to move forward their Action Items. Thanks to generous matching grants from the Missouri Foundation for Health, the Incarnate Word Foundation, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Region VII Office of Minority Health together with a highly qualified volunteer staff members, we have been able to bring out three more staff members, each working about ¼ time, which allows us to more than double the amount of staff time dedicated to the Network. Starting this summer, three MoDOT SRTS grants will allow the Network to dedicate even more staff time to promoting SRTS statewide and helping communities get ready to apply for SRTS funding.
- **Walk to School Day 2010 participation nearly triples:** The number of Missouri schools report Walk to School Day events on the International Walk to School web site went from 15 in 2009 to 44 in 2010. The increase is due to both better reporting of existing events and the creation of new events--both the result of Network members working together in support of Walk to School events across Missouri. Missouri Governor Jay Nixon issued a proclamation in support of Walk and Bicycle to School Month in Missouri that highlighted the work of the Safe Routes to School Partnership and the Missouri Safe Routes to School Network.
- **Walk to School Day Event with Mayor Mark Funkhouser of Kansas City:** The Network participated in a Walk to School event October 8th, 2010, at Academie Lafayette in Kansas City. During a ceremony at the school, Mayor FunkHouser handed out certificates to dozens of students who had walked to school at least three times this week.
- **Presentation to Missouri Planners:** On October 6th, 2010, MoDOT Safe Routes to School Coordinator John Schaefer and Missouri SRTS Network Organizer Brent Hugh gave a joint presentation at the annual meeting of the Missouri Chapter of the American Association of Planners. The presentation outlined MoDOT's SRTS program, the Missouri SRTS Network, and how the two work together to make Safe Routes to School happen in Missouri.
- **Bicycle/Pedestrian Curriculum & Large Scale Instruction:** Through the Missouri Foundation for Bicycling and Walking, the Network applied for and was awarded a MoDOT Safe Routes to School non-infrastructure grant to create a pilot program to take an intensive three-hour bicycle skills education class and program to encourage more students to bicycle to school, to thousands of Missouri students. This program will be implemented in March 1st, and an evaluation of the pilot, including

recommendations, will follow by May 1st.

- **School Bus Funding/Transportation Funding Formulas:** The Network convened an Action Team on this issue early in 2010, recognizing the potential of transportation funding decisions to impact how school districts approach trips to and from schools. The Action Team requested and received a detailed analysis of existing Missouri Transportation Funding Formulas from the National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN). The analysis gives four specific policy changes the Missouri Network can work to implement, which will fundamentally change the culture of school transportation to encourage and favor more bicycling and walking, rather than disincentivizing bicycling and walking, as current policies do. The Network plans to create materials and introduce these ideas into the state's public policy discussion about school transportation funding in Missouri and work with a few key school districts to create pilot projects to showcase the policy changes in the real world.
- **Low-Income Communities:** Recognizing the need to ensure that the state Safe Routes to School program is reaching low-income communities in Missouri, the Missouri Network convened an Action Team earlier this year. Key partners on this action team include: the state SRTS coordinator, The Whole Person, a Kansas-City based disability rights organization, a retired teacher from the Kansas City School District, and the Metro St. Louis Coalition for Equality.

In summer 2010 the Missouri Network also began an intensive research project to identify how SRTS is or is not currently serving low-income and minority populations. Members of the Low-Income Communities Action Team have assimilated low-income and minority data related to each of the MoDOT SRTS award recipients and International Walk to School Day participants. Data from this project will be analyzed and written into a report, coupled with a one-page summary, and released in December 2010. The Action Team will present the data and a list of policy recommendations to MoDOT SRTS program and other Network partners. Initial findings indicate that low-income schools are not applying for and receiving Safe Routes to School funding in Missouri at the same levels as moderate- to high-income schools and that schools with greater than average minority populations are not applying for and receiving Safe Routes to School funding in Missouri at the same levels as schools with average or lower-than-average minority populations.

Data shows that schools with a free-or-reduced lunch population above 50% have received \$3.1 million in SRTS funding whereas they would have received \$4.4 million in SRTS funding if funding were distributed equally according to school population. Schools with greater than 50% minority population have received \$0.4 million in SRTS funding whereas they would have received \$1.9 million in funding if funding were distributed equally according to school population.

The Low-Income Communities Action Team has been meeting with local leaders to determine some of the barriers to funding in Missouri's low-income and minority communities, and is currently working on tactics for improving outreach and funding to low-income and minority communities in Missouri.

- **SRTS Communications:** The Network has worked to create lively monthly meetings with special guests sharing their expertise on topics of interest. The Network has created

a Facebook page, Twitter account, monthly email newsletter list, and has its own Safe Routes to School web site with regular news and updates at [www.MoBikeFed.org/saferoutes](http://www.MoBikeFed.org/saferoutes).

- **MoDOT SRTS Program Sustainability:** The Network Organizers have a close working relationship with the MoDOT Safe Routes to School Coordinator. Upon the request of the Coordinator, the Network provided significant input on the Missouri SRTS grant application in the recent round of SRTS Non-Infrastructure grants. MoDOT is working internally to improve its process and help communities that receive grants be able to complete them successfully.
- **MoDOT working with Network to create strategic plan and framework for SRTS Noninfrastructure funding:** A Network Action Team headed by MoDOT SRTS Coordinator John Schaefer is creating guidelines for more efficient and effective use of Missouri's SRTS funding. The first tangible result will be a framework for efficiently creating and funding SRTS programs to cover the entire state or large regions. This will allow Missouri to more easily continue and expand some of its most successful SRTS programs like Walking School Bus Training Seminars and SRTS Minigrants. It will allow regional programs that will reach underserved students in both rural small towns and underserved areas in the large metropolitan areas.
- **School Siting:** The Network has convened a School Siting Action Team and is working with key contacts from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to develop a strategy for Missouri. In June 2010 the Network held a webinar about school siting, preserving neighborhood schools, and the importance of these topics for creating walkable community schools.
- **Media Coverage:** Creation of the Missouri SRTS Network was covered in Kansas City infoZine, StLouisMo.com, the Kansas City MetroGreen newsletter, PedNet's newsletter, TrailNet Health, Active & Vibrant Communities blog, MoBikeFed News, the St Joseph News-Press, MoDOT's Express Lane newsletter, the MoDOT Minute video news report, and MoDOT's social media sites. The Network's involvement in the 2010 Walk to School Day was reported on the Treehugger blog and on Ozarks First/KOLR10. Walk to School Day 2010 received wide media coverage around Missouri,
- **Complete Streets:** The creation of the Missouri Safe Routes to School Network is included in Complete Streets Resolution, HCR 67, sponsored by Rep. Mike Sutherland of Warrenton and co-sponsored by 21 other representatives, as one of the supporting reasons for including Complete Streets policies at the municipal, metropolitan, statewide, and national levels. HCR 67 passed the Missouri House on the final day of the legislation session. In 2010, one Metropolitan Planning Organization and five Missouri cities passed Complete Streets policies--more than doubling the number of Complete Streets policies in Missouri.

### **Missouri Network Priority Policy Progress:**

1. **Complete Streets Policies:** Missouri has made considerable progress in moving Complete Streets forward.

- Seven cities and four Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) have now adopted Complete Streets policies.
- In 2010, the Mid-America Regional Council (Kansas City area MPO) and the cities of St Louis, Lee's Summit, Festus, Herculaneum, and Crystal City adopted a complete streets policy. Kansas City is considering Complete Streets language in the revision of its major streets plan underway in Fall 2010.
- The full Missouri House passed a Complete Streets Resolution in May, 2010.
- MoDOT adopted a new and greatly improved pedestrian policy in January, 2010, and is currently working to improve its bicycle policies.
- MU Extension has hired a planner, Trevor Harris to work toward statewide complete streets awareness. Cindy Deblauw, the original point of contact for this project and SRTS Network member, updated our action item goals and tasks to match MU Extension's plan and timeline. The project is now called The Missouri Livable Streets Initiative.

Members of the network's Complete Streets action team have been very actively involved in the Missouri Livable Streets Initiative. Network organizer, Brent Hugh and co-organizer, Eric Bunch, as well as a number of SRTS Network partners, are members of the Livable Streets advisory team.

2. **SRTS Champions:** The network has successfully finished the action plan and devised the idea to include Champions as an action item. Cindy Mense of Trailnet provided a presentation on the regular SRTS Network monthly call that included information about TrailNet's work to foster local champions in schools in the St Louis area. Action Team members are working to create a pilot program in the Raytown school district to integrate SRTS and sign-up for Walking School Buses into the district's student registration process. Cindy Cantrell of TrailNet and Sarah Shipley are in the process of creating a short Power Point presentation for members to present to local PTA/Os. This should be finished before Oct 6, 2010. In addition we are working on targeting various champions on our Facebook page to motivate our current champions. The Action teams next target is tasking various network members to address local PTS/O and expanding our network to include more members that are established in the school system (school nurses, counselors, clergy)
3. **Bicycle/Pedestrian Curriculum & Large Scale Instruction:** Following the top item in our Action Plan for this item, the Missouri Foundation for Bicycling & Walking applied for and MoDOT has awarded a grant for a mass bicycle skills instruction program that will reach over 1000 middle schoolers with three hours of intensive, on-bike instruction. This will be a pilot program with the aim of replicating the program across the state.
4. **SRTS Statewide Non-Infrastructure Plan, Application Guidelines, Obligation Rates:** Meetings have taken place with John Schaefer, MoDOT SRTS Coordinator, and other stakeholders; they have developed the main goals and timeline for creating a structure within MoDOT for handling large-scale statewide or region-wide non-infrastructure projects. In addition to developing the pilot bicycle safety program, the network is currently working in partnership with The PedNet Coalition to develop a bicycle and pedestrian curriculum toolkit. This toolkit will match Missouri's Grade Level Expectations with lesson plans to make it easier for PE and Health teachers to bring bike and pedestrian safety programming to the classroom. The estimated completion date for



the toolkit is January 2011.

In the most recent funding round (Spring 2010), MoDOT listened to applicants and potential applicants and made several key improvements to streamline the SRTS application and process.

MoDOT is internally tracking projects and monitoring the speed at which the state's SRTS funding moves from authorization to award to obligation and project completion.

5. **SRTS Mass Communication:** MoDOT SRTS grants have been awarded to create a website, e-newsletter, print newsletter, SRTS guidebook, and promoting Walk/Bike to School Days statewide. However we are still waiting on notice to proceed. Press releases have been started, facebook groups, website framework are in place. In addition the group has created a set of templates and branding guidelines for the network to use. These templates and guidelines will create consistency throughout the network.
6. **Underserved Communities & Personal Safety:** The Action Team has refined its goals and has begun an intensive research project to identify how SRTS is serving low-income and minority populations. Members of the action team have assimilated low-income and minority data related to each of the MoDOT SRTS award recipients and International Walk to School Day participants. Data from this project will be analyzed into a report and one-page summary. A list of recommendations will be submitted to MoDOT SRTS coordinator, John Schaefer.
7. **School Wellness Policies:** Conversations between team members has been strong. Another group is working to update Missouri's wellness policy; our group is set to improve SRTS portions of the policy when that happens. Group has done substantial research on school wellness policies all over Missouri in public and private institutions. The group is in the process of reviewing the best practices in Missouri and writing its policy document which will be ready before November 1, 2010.
8. **Educate key policy makers and groups about SRTS:** Working to create powerpoint presentations and printed materials to summarize each Action Item. Working to incorporate Michelle Obama's Let's Move Campaign into the materials. In addition to making summaries of all the action teams the education group is reaching out to make the network larger and stronger. We have invited many organizations to participate in the monthly meeting and various action teams. WE are also strengtining the network by reminding organizations who have signed up for the network but not participated the benefits of participating in the network.
9. **Joint Use Agreements & School Siting Policies:** Network member Amy Eyley has located a grad student who will research these items and move this Action Item. She is writing a one pager and presenting her findings to the group which will be included in a Missouri handbook.
10. **School Bus Funding/Transportation Funding Formulas:** Sarah Zimmerman from NPLAN provided a detailed description and analysis of Missouri's school bus funding policy. Her research was compiled into a paper and she summarized the findings in a conference call with Missouri Network partners. Next step is putting the findings into the form of a white paper and one-page summary sheets, then working to create pilot projects to prove the value of the policy changes.

**Missouri Network Secondary Policy Progress:**

1. **SRTS Data Gathering & Analysis:** Missouri's Department of Health & Senior Services may be willing put a question regarding Bicycling/Walking or SRTS in the MO DHSS periodic surveys of Missourian's health. This would generate the first solid, statewide data on SRTS in Missouri and track that data over time. St Louis firm Transtria has offered to help with data gathering and/or analysis of SRTS-related data.
2. **Strategic Highway Safety Plans:** SRTS Network partner Sharee Galnor is on the Missouri State Highway Safety Committee. Policy research has been completed.

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