Safe Routes to School Program

Dwight Cunningham, Local Programs Bureau
Local Project Construction Workshop
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REFERENCES

- NYSDOT’S *SRTS Guidebook* is available at
  [www.nysdot.gov/srts.html](http://www.nysdot.gov/srts.html)

- National SRTS guidance can be found at
NYSDOT SRTS - Main Office

The SRTS Program is centrally administered by staff from the NYSDOT’s **Local Programs Bureau (LPB)**.

“Policy” considerations, and all SRTS Advisory Committee activities, are managed by NYSDOT’s **Office of Regional Planning and Program Coordination**.

Statewide SRTS Coordinator – Dwight Cunningham, [dcunningham@dot.state.ny.us](mailto:dcunningham@dot.state.ny.us)

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Safe Routes to School Program Overview
Overview SRTS Program

- Section 1404 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users Act (SAFTEA-LU)
- Allocated $611 M to State DOT’s
- New York’s share $31.6 M.
- Based on pro-rata share of K-8 students in NYS versus total nationwide.

New York State Department of Transportation
Safe Routes to School Program
The SRTS Program was created:

1. To enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school;
2. To make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and
3. To facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.
FHWA recommends that SRTS efforts incorporate – directly or indirectly – five components, often referred to as the “5E’s”. The 5 E’s are:

A. Engineering
B. Education
C. Enforcement
D. Encouragement
E. Evaluation
Engineering – Create operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speed and potential conflicts with motor vehicles, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and shared use pathways.
SRTS Program – The 5 E’s

- **Education** – Teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycle and walking safety skills, and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.
SRTS Program Overview

- **Enforcement** – Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools, (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crossings, and proper walking and bicycling behavior), and initiating community enforcement such as a crossing guard program.

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Safe Routes to School Program
SRTS Program Overview

- **Encouragement** –
  Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.
Evaluation—Monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of data before and after the intervention.
SRTS Program Overview

Federal Program Structure

- Between 70 – 90 percent of SRTS funds to be used for infrastructure projects, and between 10 - 30 percent for non-infrastructure projects (state mandate – not project specific);
- The SRTS program is to be administered by each State’s department of transportation;
- Each state is required to have a full-time Safe Routes to School coordinator position:
  - Each DOT Region has appointed a part-time SRTS coordinator.

New York State Department of Transportation
Safe Routes to School Program
SRTS Program Overview

Funding Maximums and Minimums

- Maximum SRTS infrastructure award: $400,000
- Minimum SRTS infrastructure award: $25,000
- Maximum SRTS non-infrastructure award: $150,000
- Minimum SRTS non-infrastructure award: $25,000
SRTS Program Overview

Supplement Existing Programs

- SRTS Program supplements, rather than replaces, current funding streams that support bicycling and walking.
- Existing state and local bicycle and pedestrian safety programs should be sustained and coordinated with the Federal SRTS program.
- Existing program receiving Federal SRTS funds must satisfy the requirement and purpose of the SRTS program.
Section 2
Project Eligibility

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Safe Routes to School program
Project Location

- For infrastructure project, SRTS funds must be used on eligible projects:
  - Within the public right-of-way;
    - Includes lands owned by public school districts or individual public schools.
  - Within two mile radius of a primary or middle school (K-8);
    - Schools with grades that extend higher than Grade 8, but include K-8, are eligible.

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Safe Routes to School program
Ineligible Expenses

- Any costs incurred prior to Federal authorization approval; (e.g. Application preparation.)
- Work conducted outside of the public ROW;
- Do not specifically promote the stated purpose of the SRTS program; and,
- Reoccurring expenses;

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Safe Routes to School program
Ineligible Expenses

- Maintenance and operation expenses (e.g. sweeping, snow & ice removal, etc.);
- Pay crossing guard or law enforcement salaries (salaries for first two years only);
- Projects that reorganize pickup and drop-off areas near bus stops;
- Improvements to bus stops; and,
- Bus safety education programs.
Infrastructure projects funded under the SRTS program must be accessible to the public;

Joint public / private projects – SRTS funds are limited to the public ROW; and,

Infrastructure funds may only be used to support the intended purpose of the program, (e.g. initiatives which promote safety, or bicycling and walking to school).
Must Benefit the Public Interest

- The Failure to comply with SRTS Program requirements may result in the repayment of all or a portion of the Federal funds received for the project.
Section 3
Roles and Responsibilities of the Sponsor, Applicant, & NYSDOT
SRTS Program

- Each project must have a sponsor and an applicant;
- It is permissible for the sponsor and the applicant to be the same entity.
The sponsor is an appropriate governmental agency that is willing to assume responsibility for all aspects of an approved SRTS project.

Eligible sponsors:
- County, city, town or village;
- A public School District; or
- An individual public school.
A project can only have one sponsor;
NYS DOT will enter into a formal agreement with each sponsor;
The sponsor is responsible for the development and implementation of the project; and,
The sponsor is the lead agency for State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requirements.
A project applicant may be:

- A county, city, town or village;
- A public school district;
- A charter, private or parochial school; or,
- A not-for-profit organization.

The role of the applicant and sponsor should be:

- Clearly describe both the sponsor – applicant responsibilities (i.e. resolution or agreement); and,
- Agreement /resolution must be in place prior to initiating any SRTS work.
A project sponsor (i.e. a municipalities, school districts, or individual school) which is awarded a SRTS project, but who may be unfamiliar with the Federal-aid process, has the option to enter into an agreement with NYS DOT for engineering services on infrastructure projects.

The sponsor must have a Federal-aid project agreement in place with the NYSDOT prior to project implementation.
If requested, NYS DOT will provide engineering, and landscape architecture services to municipalities awarded a SRTS infrastructure project.

Services include:

- Preparing design approval documents;
- Preparing final Plans, Specifications, & Estimate (PS&E) package and contract documents; and,
- Completion of the NEPA process.
Section 4
Financing Projects

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Safe Routes to School program
The SRTS Program is a reimbursement program, not a grant program.

The SRTS program will reimburse for 100 percent of eligible costs:
- No local match is required; and,
- SRTS program monies cannot be used as a match for another federal agency’s funds.
General Information

- The SRTS program has minimum and maximum project participation limits is:

  - Infrastructure minimum fixed total cost; $25,000.
  - Infrastructure maximum fixed total cost; $400,000.

  - Non-infrastructure minimum fixed total cost; $25,000.
  - Non-infrastructure maximum fixed total cost; $150,000.

  - The maximum amount for combined infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects is $550,000.
The SRTS infrastructure funds may be used for:

- Design and environmental studies;
- Construction; and
- Construction inspection.

NYSDOT expects each SRTS project to be delivered in compliance with the approved scope.
General Information

- SRTS funding for a project is capped at approval.

- All proposed modifications to the scope of a project must be approved by the NYS DOT.
Responsibilities of Project Sponsor

Once a SRTS application has been approved, the sponsor responsibilities include:

- All costs incurred prior to Federal authorization of the project; (e.g. Application preparation, and preliminary engineering design, etc …)
- All costs that exceed approved SRTS funds, regardless of when the sponsor becomes aware of the cost increases;
- All costs associated with the project scope increases or additional elements added to the project after SRTS funds are approved;
- All costs for construction and construction inspection.
Every SRTS project is expected to progress through development in a reasonable time frame:
- With in 1 yr. of approval for Non-Infrastructure projects; and
- With in 5 yrs. of approval for Infrastructure projects.

The failure to deliver SRTS project within a reasonable time frame may result in a withdrawal or repayment of Federal funds for the project.
Project Progress Information

Implementation expectations for SRTS Infrastructure project include:

- The NYS DOT and Sponsor agreement is to be executed within one year of the project award funding approval;
- NYS DOT should complete the development and design work within 2 years of project award and funding approval; and,
- The total project is to be completed within five years of funding approval.

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Safe Routes to School program
Where private investment of joint-use activities are part of the proposed SRTS project:

- SRTS funds are limited to the portion of the project that benefits the public interest;
- Privately owned or commercially used portions of a project must be paid for with private investment;
- SRTS funds may be used to improve privately owned facilities, provided there is an enforceable agreement that an improvement will function as a public facility for the useful life of the project.
Project Rating Criteria

1. Evaluation of Safety Benefits;
   - The ability of the project to reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities.

2. Proximity of SRTS Project within a 2 mile radius of a school;
   - Proposed SRTS projects which are located in close proximity to a school building increase the likely use by more students.
3. Community support for the proposed SRTS project;
   - Does the project have broad financial and community support from the local municipality, school district, non-profit organizations and public?

4. Proposed relationship to the 5 E’s
   - Does the project include all 5 E’s or as many as may be practically applied?
5. **Sponsor / Applicant Competency**
   - Does the project sponsor / applicant have the ability to successfully comply with all aspects of the SRTS Federal aid requirements, and deliver the project?

6. **Utilizing Related Funding Sources**
   - Does the project sponsor / applicant propose to utilize related funding sources to supplement a proposed SRTS project?
Appendix A
SRTS Coordinators

New York State Department of Transportation
Safe Routes to School program
NYSDOT SRTS Coordinators

► Region 1
Balraj Malhotra  (518) 388-0420

► Region 2
Sharon Heyboer  (315) 793-2648
Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Madison, Montgomery and Oneida Counties

► Region 3
Julie Bednar  (315) 428-4408
Cayuga, Cortland, Onondaga, Oswego, Seneca and Tompkins Counties

► Region 4
Steve Beauvais  (585) 272-3466
Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Wayne and Wyoming Counties

► Region 5
Matthew Balling  (716) 847-3233
Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara Counties

► Region 6
Brent Rauber  (607) 324-8431
Allegany, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, and Yates Counties
NYSDOT SRTS Coordinators

► Region 7  Nancy Catalina  (315) 785-2300
Clinton, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties

► Region 8  Greg Hart  (845) 431-5724
Columbia, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Ulster and Westchester Counties

► Region 9  Barbara H. Thomas  (607) 721-8577
Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Schoharie, Sullivan and Tioga Counties

► Region 10  Lanny Wexler  (631) 952-6122
Nassau and Suffolk Counties

► Region 11  Ed Mark  (718) 482-6520
Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens and Richmond Counties

Note: E-mail addresses for all SRTS Coordinators are first initial then last name (all one word) followed by @dot.state.ny.us
WHAT’S HAPPENED SO FAR

► Applications have been reviewed by Regions and MPOs;

► Regional recommended projects have been forwarded to NYSDOT M.O. Local Programs Bureau for review.
WHAT’S NEXT

► Local Programs Bureau (LPB) reviewing regional submissions;
► LPB forwards recommended projects to Office of Regional Planning & Program Coordination (ORPPC) by July 1rst;
► ORPPC forwards recommended projects to Commissioner’s Office by August 1rst;
► Governor’s and/or Commissioner’s Offices announce project awards around September 1rst.
Questions?
Thank You for Your Interest in the Safe Routes to School Program!

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