

CITY OF OAK CREEK

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



ACTION PLAN



SUMMER 2018



**Oak Creek-Franklin
Joint School District**
BUILDING SUCCESSFUL FUTURES TOGETHER



OAKCREEK
— WISCONSIN —



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Joint School District**
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CITY OF OAK CREEK SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN



Executive Summary

Walking and biking to school are healthy, affordable and empowering behaviors that contribute to physical and mental health, support social and academic success, and provide a foundation for life-long healthful habits for our children.

In 2016 the Oak Creek - Franklin Joint School District and the City of Oak Creek embarked on a year-long effort to develop Safe Routes to School Action Plans for all nine public elementary and middle schools in Oak Creek - with the goal of making it safer, easier, more convenient and inviting for students and their families to choose to walk or bike to school more often.

Safe Routes to School (“SRTS”) - a proven, multidimensional, and global movement - addresses not only the immediate traffic safety concerns that create barriers to safe student travel in many of our communities, but also the longer-term issues of physical inactivity, diminished health outcomes, and social disconnection for our students.

The benefits of SRTS are many: from actual improvements in safety for students walking and

biking to school, to real, measurable increases in the number of students who walk or bike daily as part of their school travel, to improved student fitness and health and increased academic achievement.

The Oak Creek Safe Routes to School Action Plans that are included in this project identify current barriers to student walking and biking to school and offer concrete, implementable and prioritized action steps for addressing those barriers through programming and infrastructure solutions.

We are grateful for the leadership and participation of the school officials, city staff, school administrators, teachers, parents and volunteers who have helped make these Action Plans a reality.

We look forward to the implementation of the plans’ robust programs and infrastructure recommendations, to measurable increases in student walking and biking at each of the project schools, and to an even healthier, more connected and more livable Oak Creek.



THE 6 ES OF SRTS

Safe Routes to School planning is based on a framework known as the Six Es, which provides a way of thinking about and organizing improvements in and around a school. The 6Es include:



Education

Education programs and initiatives provide information to children, parents, and community member on safe walking and biking practices.



Encouragement

Encouragement programs inspire families to try walking or biking through fun and inviting activities such as friendly competitions and incentive programs.



Engineering

Engineering includes upgrades to and upkeep of the physical landscape in and around the school such as sidewalks, bikeways, intersections and signs.



Enforcement

Enforcement programs often include participation from police with a focus on enforcing traffic safety laws, like speed limits, in the vicinity of a school.



Evaluation

Evaluation measures conditions before, during, and after implementation, helping guide priorities and goals and ensuring efficient use of resources.



Equity

Equity focuses on distributing resources fairly throughout a community to ensure all students and families have equal access to high quality programs and infrastructure.

SRTS QUICK FACTS:

WHAT IS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS)?

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national and worldwide movement offering a robust set of approaches and initiatives to make it safe, convenient, inviting, and fun for children (and their parents) to choose to walk and bike to school.

The movement started in Denmark in the early 1970's. Within a few years, pilot programs were started up in several cities around the United States. Successful outcomes from these pilot initiatives were so well established that by 2005, funding for Safe Routes to School initiatives in all states was included as part of the federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU. Inclusion of the Safe Routes to School program in the federal bill helped to disseminate SRTS initiatives throughout the nation.

WHY DO WE NEED IT?

Dramatically fewer students walk or bike to school today than even one generation ago. Some reasons for this downward trend include parent concerns about traffic safety, low availability of sidewalks and trails along routes to schools, parent fears about their children's personal safety, and changes in school siting priorities that result in more students living farther away from school.

As more students are driven to school in personal vehicles, congestion and traffic safety concerns in school zones increase, resulting in conditions that further deter students and their parents from walking or biking to school.

By addressing these issues and concerns, SRTS initiatives can increase the number of students who are able to walk and bike to school, bringing significant benefits to the students, their school, and their community at large.

For more information on Safe Routes to School:

You can find additional resources and information about the SRTS movement and programs online at:

National Center For Safe Routes to School

www.saferoutesinfo.org

Safe Routes to School National Partnership

www.saferoutespartnership.org

THE ACTION PLANS

This document includes SRTS Action Plans for the seven elementary schools and two middle schools in the Oak Creek-Franklin Joint School District. The plans provide analysis and recommendations and are based on local and national SRTS best practices that fit the individual needs and context of each school.

The planning process began in September of 2016 when the consulting team met with city staff and Oak Creek school administrators to provide an introduction and overview of the project. Over the following months several site audits were conducted to outline the assets and challenges for each school's existing SRTS related programming and infrastructure.

The following vision was created to guide the purpose of the Oak Creek Safe Routes to School process:

The Action Plan Vision:

Oak Creek students and families can safely, comfortably and conveniently walk or bike to school in a safe and inviting environment. Parents, school staff, local officials, community volunteers, and local law enforcement work together to provide the infrastructure and programs necessary to keep kids safe and active and to invite them and their families to choose to walk or bike to school more often.

HOW TO USE THE PLANS

The Action Plans are a guide and toolkit for improving the safety, health, and well-being of students in the Oak Creek-Franklin School district. They include tailored recommendations for each school as well as an appendix with detailed programming and infrastructure guidance.

The recommendations included in each of the Action Plans are intended to support improvements in programs and infrastructure over the next five years, and are structured to offer guidance for both short- and long-term improvements.

The projects and programs listed in each plan should be reviewed every year as part of the overall and ongoing Safe Routes to School strategy for each school.

Although not all of these projects and programs need to be (or can be) implemented right away - some projects will require more time, planning, support, and funding than others - it is important to achieve shorter-term successes that energize your school community and lay the groundwork for progress toward the larger and more complex projects.

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