

Champaign-Urbana Safe Routes to School Project 2012-2014



Final Report
June 2014

Summary

The C-U SRTS Project completed its work for the 2012-2014 \$76,000 Safe Routes to School Grant in June 2014. Over two years, the program provided bike and pedestrian education and safety promotion in two cities, two school districts, and in collaboration with several area agencies, University of Illinois students, and volunteers. In the Urbana School District, activities expanded to include three new programs: an after-school bike education class, a bicycling and walking incentive program, and a Walking School Bus. These activities, combined with C-U SRTS Project's work in both school districts through Walk n' Roll to School Day, Bike to School Day, community bike rodeos, and billboard safety campaigns among others, reached thousands of students. Parents also participated by providing feedback in 674 parents surveys.

Included in this report is a brief background of Safe Routes to School and details of the work accomplished over the grant period including challenges and lessons learned. Information about the C-U Safe Routes to School Project including this report can be viewed online at <http://cu-srtsproject.com/>.



Figure 1: Urbana Middle School student participating in bicycle rodeo as part of after-school and safety class, fall 2013.
Photo: Robin Scholz (The News-Gazette, 10/14/13)

Table of Contents

Summary	1
Federal Legislation for Safe Routes to School.....	3
Safe Routes to School Solutions.....	4
Background on C-U Safe Routes to School Project.....	7
Partnerships	8
Program Accomplishments.....	10
Data Collection.....	19
Challenges	20
Lessons Learned	20

Federal Legislation for Safe Routes to School

In July 2005 Congress established a national Safe Routes to School program through the transportation bill titled SAFETEA-LU. The bill dedicated \$1.1 billion to SRTS from 2005 to 2012. The bill distributed funds to states based upon school enrollment. Projects eligible for funds use included both infrastructure projects like sidewalk and street projects and non-infrastructure projects centered on education and encouragement. The July 2012 transportation bill Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) moved the federal SRTS program to the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Currently, TAP funds safe routes to school infrastructure and non-infrastructure activities.¹



Figure 2: City of Urbana staff volunteer at Market at the Square Bike Rodeo, fall 2012.

¹ National Center for Safe Routes to School Talking Points. Retrieved June 16, 2014 from <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/sites/default/files/resources/srts-talking-points-2013.pdf>.

Safe Routes to School Solutions

Health

Nearly 34 percent of children ages 10-17 and 30 percent of low-income children ages 2-5 are overweight or obese in Illinois.² Nationally, the average has been nearly one in three although recent studies show these numbers may be declining.³ Children with an unhealthy weight are at risk for health problems that include heart disease, high-blood pressure, stroke and diabetes. Children with an unhealthy weight also risk suffering additional health problems in their adulthood as well.⁴

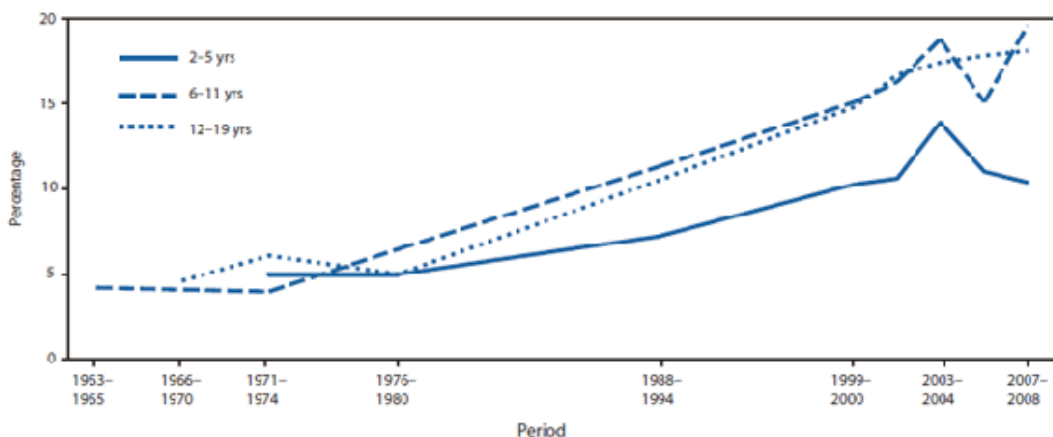


Figure 3: Childhood Obesity
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Physical activity helps kids maintain a healthy weight and protects against health risks. In fact, when continued into adulthood, “reaching the recommended minimum level of physical activity compared with no activity was found to lead to a reduction in all-cause mortality of 19 percent” and a reduction of “24 percent if an hour a day is spent.”⁵ Children who walk to school are significantly more active through the day.⁶ In this way, physical activity in one’s youth promotes habits of physical activity and health later in life.

² 2011/2012 NSCH National Chartbook Profile for Illinois vs. Nationwide. Retrieved June 16, 2014 from <http://www.childhealthdata.org/browse/snapshots/nsch-profiles?rpt=16&geo=15>.

³ Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Kit BK, Flegal KM. Prevalence of Childhood and Adult Obesity in the United States, 2011-2012. *JAMA*. 2014; 311(8):806-814. Retrieved June 30, 2014 <https://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1832542>

⁴ Penedo FJ, Dahn JR. Exercise and well-being: a review of mental and physical health benefits associated with physical activity. *Curr Opin Psychiatry*. 2005;18(2):189-193.

⁵ Woodcock, James, et. al. “Non-vigorous physical activity and all-cause mortality systematic review and meta-analysis of cohort studies.” *International Journal of Epidemiology* 40.1 (2011): 121-138.

⁶ Cooper, AR, AS Page, LJ Foster and D Qahwaji. “Commuting to school: Are children who walk more physically active?” *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* 25,4 (2003).

Researchers tie physical activity not only to physical health but positive mental, emotional, and academic outcomes as well. In a review of literature by the Center for Disease Control “eleven of the 14 studies found one or more positive associations between school-based physical education and indicators of academic performance.”⁷ Although strained school budgets may seek to eliminate PE, eliminating physical activity from the school day may have consequences for student achievement.



Figure 4

Lastly, child health outcomes are also correlated to environmental health and air pollution. All children and adults, whether sitting in a car, bus, or walking or biking to school are exposed to harmful air pollutants and efforts to “reduce exposure to and the concentration of traffic pollution will benefit all children on the trip to and from school, regardless of their selected way of getting to school.”⁸

Safety

Child pedestrian and cycling safety is threatened by a lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, and street design that encourages driver speed and reduces visibility of other road users. Low-cost infrastructure improvements like sidewalks, bike lanes, traffic calming, crosswalks, signage, as well as traffic law enforcement can reduce pedestrian and cycling accidents. A sidewalk “reduces the risk by more than 50 percent that a pedestrian will be struck by a car.”⁹



Figure 5: Urbana Middle School students utilize lanes on Washington in Urbana, IL.

Over the course of the 2012-2014 C-U SRTS grant, two accidents involving child pedestrians and motor vehicles spurred community and school action. When a vehicle hit a South Side Elementary student crossing Prospect Avenue in Champaign, the City of Champaign paid for pedestrian crossing flashers, pavement markings, and signs at the intersection where the incident occurred. Champaign Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) assisted with funding for Champaign Urbana Urbanized Area Transportation Study (CUUATS) to perform an analysis and write a Safe Routes to School Plan (anticipated completion summer 2014). Wiley School in Urbana redesigned drop-off and pick-up lanes after a vehicle hit a student during school arrival. Education and outreach to school and government officials as well as parents about the impact of low-cost infrastructure improvements enables communities to prevent cycling and pedestrian accidents rather than react to them.

⁷ The Association Between School-Based Physical Activity, Including Physical Education, and Academic Performance. Retrieved June 26, 2014 from http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/pa-pe_paper.pdf.

⁸ Ibid 6.

⁹ Knoblauch, R, B Tustin, S Smith and M Pietrucha. “Investigation of Exposure-Based Pedestrian Accident Areas: Crosswalks, Sidewalks, Local Streets, and Major Arterials.” Washington DC: US Department of Transportation, 1987.

In 2012 the City of Urbana received a \$199,000 Safe Routes to School (SRTS) infrastructure grant to install 2.2 miles of bike lanes, 0.5 miles of shared bike/parking lanes, 5.6 miles of bike routes, and 112 new bike spaces at schools. Installation of the network began in spring 2013. The infrastructure will connect the Urbana Middle School and five elementary schools. The City of Champaign also received an infrastructure grant to improve the intersection and install a median and sidewalk at Stratton Elementary; work on this project is anticipated to begin fall 2014.

Environment

The impact of traffic generated by school traffic can be significant. When schools lack ‘no idling’ policies, parents waiting in their vehicles during arrival and dismissal increase air pollution around schools.

The EPA has taken efforts to reduce ‘toxic air pollutant’ or ‘air toxics’ like gasoline around schools.¹⁰ Sources of air toxics include cars, trucks, and buses as well as others. Children and adults ‘exposed to air toxic pollutants at sufficient concentrations and durations may have an increased chance of getting cancer or experiencing other serious health effects’ (U.S. EPA).¹¹ A family that walks to school helps to address this problem by leaving their car at home, thus saving that amount of fuel emissions from entering the air. According to the EPA, a year of walking to school rather than driving saves 39 tons of greenhouse gas emissions.¹²



Figure 6: Parents and students enjoy biking to school for Bike to School Day, spring 2013.

Economic

Families and communities who shift from vehicle to walking or biking trips to school also receive economic benefits from fuel and health savings. Researchers examined mode shift of half of all car trips to less than five miles of biking in six Midwestern states (Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin). The model predicts the improved air quality resulting from reduced less pollution from traffic combined with the health benefits of the physical activity would result in savings of approximately \$8.7 billion in the region.¹³ The additional income saved from fuel and health expenses could not only provide additional income to families and increase local spending but impact family quality of life and economic mobility.

¹⁰ US Environmental Protection Agency. (2013). About Air Toxics. Retrieved June 16, 2014 from <http://www.epa.gov/air/toxicair/newtoxics.html>.

¹¹ Ibid 12.

¹² US Environmental Protection Agency. (2008). Climate Change – What You Can Do. Retrieved November 21, 2012 from <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/road.html>.

¹³ Grabow, Maggie, Scott N Spak, Tracey Holloway, Brian Stone, Jr, Adam C Mednick and Jonathan A. Patz. ‘Air Quality and Exercise-Related Health Benefits from Reduced Car Travel in the Midwestern United States.’ *Environmental Health Perspectives* 120 (2012): 68-76.

Background on C-U Safe Routes to School Project

C-U SRTS Project began its efforts to improve walking and bicycling for students in the Champaign-Urbana community in 2004 in partnership with SafeKids Champaign County. Four elementary schools participated the first year, two in each school district, in International Walk n' Roll to School Day events. Walkability checklists were provided to all participating schools and participation in the event has grown over the years.

In July 2008, C-U SRTS Project was awarded \$25,500 Safe Routes to School grant through the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. The purpose of the grant was to "educate community audiences on pedestrian and bicycle safety issues, and to encourage safe walking and bicycling to schools in Champaign-Urbana." In 2009 C-U SRTS Project was awarded a \$62,000 SRTS grant to "train and educate school and community audiences about Safe Routes to School, pedestrian and bicycle safety." With the 2012 \$76,000 SRTS grant, C-U SRTS Project expanded and improved upon pedestrian and bicycle safety in partnership with area agencies, local bike clubs, educators, administrators, and student and community volunteers.



Figure 7: Urbana Middle School students in after-school class bike skills and safety class prepare for bike rodeo, fall 2013.
Photo: Robin Scholz (The News-Gazette, 10/14/13)

Partnerships

As the fiscal agent for the 2012-2014 SRTS grant, Champaign Urbana Mass Transit District (CUMTD) provided intense support by providing staff time to administrate and implement the project programs. CUMTD managed record keeping, wrote quarterly reports, purchased items, managed website and email correspondence, and organized events. SRTS activities were also enabled by staff time contributions from Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, Champaign County Public Health District, Champaign County Bikes, and law enforcement officers, planners, and engineers from the City of Champaign and the City of Urbana. Significant contributions to SRTS work also came from The Bike Project, who donated volunteer hours as well as bikes to students in the after-school bike class, and Neutral Cycle, a local bike shop. In addition to the support of key agencies, programs would not be possible without the everyday support from educators, parents and law enforcement. ***Members of the C-U SRTS Steering Committee currently include:***

- City of Champaign
- City of Urbana
- Champaign County Bikes (CCB)
- Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)
- Champaign County Public Health District (CUPHD)
- Champaign Urbana Mass Transit District (CUMTD)



Figure 8: Champaign County Regional Planning Commission and Champaign Urbana Public Health District staff members provide regular volunteer hours for C-U SRTS events.



Figure 9: Parents at South Side Elementary walking to school on International Walk n' Roll to School Day, fall 2013.

Parents and PTAs

Parents participated in events such as Walk and Bike to School Day in addition to pressuring school districts to implement Safe Routes to School programs. For example, the PTA at South Side Elementary helped to create pressure for a Safe Routes to School Plan following an accident when a student was crossing Prospect Road. Most recently, in Urbana, the members of the PTA spoke to C-U SRTS and asked for a Park and Walk program. Steering Committee members use public events like bicycle rodeos, public planning meetings, or Walk n' Roll to School Day to inform parents about the importance of data collection through walk

and bikeability checklists and parent surveys. In 2012-2013 C-U SRTS collected 338 parent surveys, and 336 in 2013-2014.



Figure 10: Teachers at Barkstall Elementary in Champaign, IL welcome students on International Walk n' Roll to School Day in fall 2013. Arrangements were made for school buses to drop students off a quarter-mile from the school.

Educators

Educators play a critical role in the success of C-U SRTS programs because of their direct relationships to students and families. Some educators, informally known as ‘SRTS champions,’ take initiative on SRTS causes in their schools. For example, a PE teacher at Dr. Howard Elementary organized a new curriculum unit on walking and organized a school-wide Walk-a-thon; at Carrie Busey, a PE teacher continued a frequent walker program using foot charm incentives; at Booker T. Washington, Barkstall, and Robeson Elementary Schools, teachers have organized walking field trips, and cheered for students participating in Walk to School Day

or Bike to School Day. Teachers at Urbana Middle School were instrumental in the success of the bicycling incentive program which expanded to include walkers in fall 2013.

Support from school administrators has been enormously important for SRTS promotion and action. Urbana administrators have enabled the growth of SRTS activities in the Urbana School District (USD); both the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent attended the Walking School Bus training in November 2013. Urbana Middle School (UMS) administrators of the after-school SPLASH program helped C-U SRTS set-up a bicycle skills and safety class for thirteen students.

Law Enforcement

Successful implementation of C-U SRTS programs would not have been possible without the support of law enforcement. Officers from both cities serve on the Steering Committee and provide invaluable assistance on Walk and Bike to School Days, bicycle rodeos, and helping to enforce and educate the public about traffic laws that protect all roadway users, especially in school zones.

Between 2012-2014 the City of Urbana and the City of Champaign Police Departments began ticketing cyclists who did not obey traffic laws. Although some cyclists are dissatisfied with the new enforcement, the first fee can be reduced after completion of a bicycle safety course.

Elected Officials

Elected officials helped to draw media attention to SRTS events and increase visibility of SRTS objectives and events. City Council members and Mayors participated in Walk n' Roll to School Day events in both 2012 and 2013 and made Walk and Bike to School Day proclamations.



Figure 11: Law enforcement serves on C-U SRTS steering committee and volunteers for C-U SRTS events.

Program Accomplishments

C-U SRTS program expanded over the course of the grant to include a walking and bicycling incentive program; six-week bicycle skills and safety after-school class; and a Walking School Bus program. Planning for a park-and-walk stop for families from north of the Interstate is underway with help from the Leal PTA. C-U SRTS also continued to host community bike rodeos, a public safety campaign on billboards and busboards and increased access to resources on its website.

Bicycle Rodeos

C-U SRTS organized ten bike rodeos over the grant period enabling more than 370 kids to experience the course. Over 120 helmets were sold to the public at the reduced \$10 price. Nearly 100 volunteers from various agencies helped to staff these community events. Staff recorded participants, helmet sales, and volunteer information for eight of the ten events (Figure 9).



Figure 12: Garden Hills Elementary Bike Rodeo, spring 2014

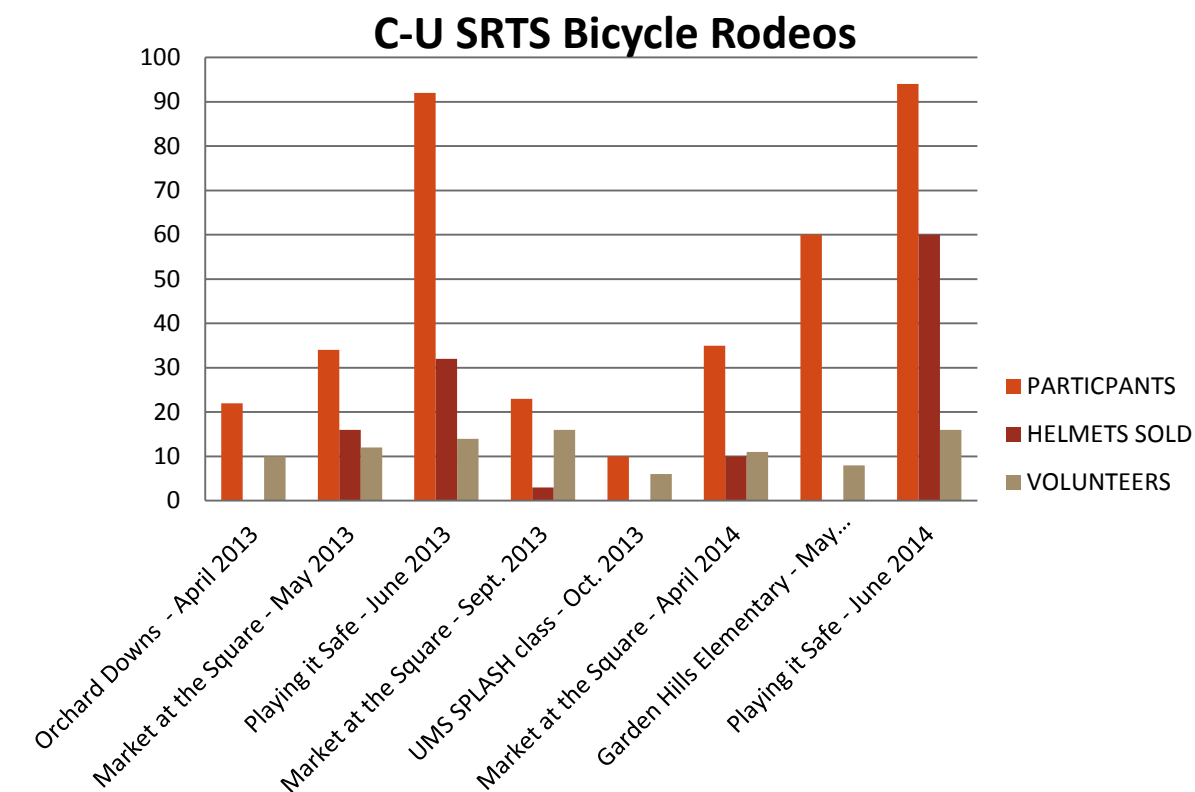


Figure 13



Figure 14: Reflective zipper pulls distributed on Bike to School Day, spring 2014

participation in Bike to School Day does not accurately reflect the number of children actually biking to school. For example, travel tally data collected from Prairie Elementary in Urbana, IL indicates that between seven and 15 percent of students either bike to or from school on a daily basis however no students from Prairie Elementary registered for Bike to School Day in 2014. Therefore, Bike to School Day registration numbers are useful, but if data is to be used for decision making it must be complimented by additional data collection.

Although there were more registrants in 2014, they were biking to fewer school destinations, particularly in Champaign. In 2013, registrants biked to 16 different public schools; nine of these were in Champaign. In 2014, registrants biked to four Champaign public schools (three elementary and one middle school) and five Urbana public schools (all elementary).

Although public school registration decreased, St. Matthews's registration increased significantly to 56 students in 2014. The principal at St. Matthews is known to be vocally supportive of Bike to School Day; this is an example of the impact and importance of administrator support.

Bike to School Day

Champaign County Bikes (CCB) and Regional Planning Commission (RPC) provided critical support in 2013 and 2014 for the Bike to School Day website registration and calendar of events for CU Bike Month. Staff from CUMTD and Champaign Public Health District (CUPHD) also helped with the ordering and sorting of reflective zipper pulls, which volunteers distributed to students who biked on Bike to School Day.

Participation in Bike to School Day is estimated using registration numbers from the CU Bike Month website. Organizers acknowledge that registration numbers and



Figure 15: Bike parking at St. Matthews, spring 2013

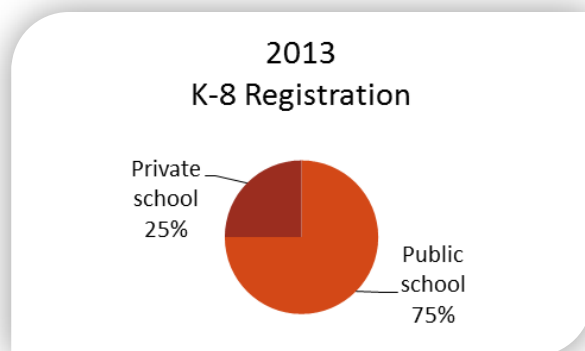


Figure 16

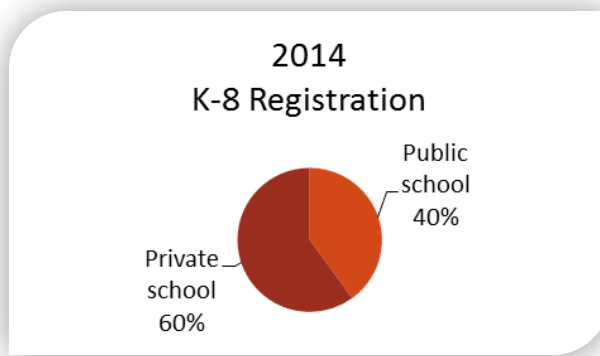


Figure 17

Six-Week Bicycle Skills and Safety Class

With help from SRTS program models around the country, C-U SRTS developed a six-week bicycle skills and safety curriculum for an after-school class at UMS. The class, which included both classroom and on-street instruction included bike and helmet fitting, rules of the road, basic bicycle maintenance, and a group ride. The class met Wednesdays September 18 - October 23, 2013 from 2:50-4:20 p.m. Staff from the C-U SRTS Steering Committee, CUMTD, and partner agencies assisted. The Bike Project (TBP) helped make the class accessible to all students by offering to donate a refurbished bike to any student. TBP donated seven refurbished bikes to students who did not own their own bike.

All students received a bike helmet, bike light set, and spoke reflectors for participating. The class featured special bicycle, health, and transportation professionals each week. Visitors from Neutral Cycle, Champaign County Bikes, CUMTD, CUPHD, Regional Planning Commission, and the City of Urbana Police, helped teach lessons on bike skills, safety, and maintenance. The curriculum was documented and uploaded to the C-U SRTS website for public access.

Class 1: Bike history, types, parts, and bike fit

Topics:

- What did the first bicycle look like and when was it invented?
- How many types of bikes are in use today all over the world?
- How many different parts of bikes can you name?
- How do I determine if my bike fits me?

Class 2: Helmet fitting

Topics included:

- How to fit your helmet to your own or your friend's head
- Melon drop activity

Class 3: Bike Maintenance

Topics included:

- How to replace a tube
- How to fill a tire with air
- How to clean and maintain your chain
- How to adjust seat height

Class 4: Safety and Visibility

Topics included:

- What causes people to crash while on their bicycle?
- Is the bike considered 'a vehicle' under the law?
- Where should you ride your bike?
- What are the rules of the road?
- What are the legal hand signals for bicyclists?
- How can I make sure cars see me if I am bicycling at night or in the winter?
- Where is the 'bus danger zone' or blind spots?



Figure 18: Urbana Middle School students learn about recumbent bikes, fall 2013.

Class 5: Bicycle Rodeo

Topics included:

- Practice scanning, signaling, turning, and lane positioning at intersections with bike lanes
- What is a good type of lock to use?
- Where do you install bike lights on your bike?

Class 6: Neighborhood Ride

Three different routes allowed students to receive on-bike instruction in various neighborhood environments appropriate to their skill level.



Figure 19: Neutral Cycle teaches Urbana Middle School students about bicycle maintenance, fall 2013.

Billboard Campaign

C-U SRTS continued a pedestrian and cycling safety education and awareness campaign using billboards located at various intersections through Champaign and Urbana. Billboard messages included messages targeting pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Additionally, Adams Billboard donated a free billboard for every billboard purchased, increasing the impact of this campaign. The billboards are stored by Adams Billboard Company.



Figure 19: Billboard paid for by C-U SRTS Project grant 2012-2014

Boltage

Boltage is an active transportation incentive program for kids using a solar-powered RFID reader. Students receive an RFID card that they wave underneath the computer every day they walk or bike to school. The computer tracks trips, mileage, and calories burned and students receive prizes based upon these values. In early spring 2013 C-U SRTS installed the Boltage equipment at Urbana Middle School and with help from CUPHD held focus groups to determine students' interest in particular incentives. A pilot month of the program ran from May 1-24, 2013 and included 28 students. At the end of 2013-2014 academic year, the program grew 93 percent to 50 students, including walkers and bikers. CUMTD, UMS, and CUPHD staff organized kick-off and end-of-the-year events for students to celebrate their accomplishments together and collect incentives. Two UMS teachers were integral to the success of the pilot and its expansion. Teachers printed flyers and registered students as well as encouraging students through their own participation in the program.



Figure 20: Urbana Middle School Boltage participants receive wrist bands and other incentives, spring 2014.

Staff determined incentive schedule based on an estimated number of 'bikeable' calendar days. The months of December, January, and February, holidays, and parent teacher conference days were excluded. Staff determined students could likely bike to school approximately 103 days in the 2013-2014 academic year.

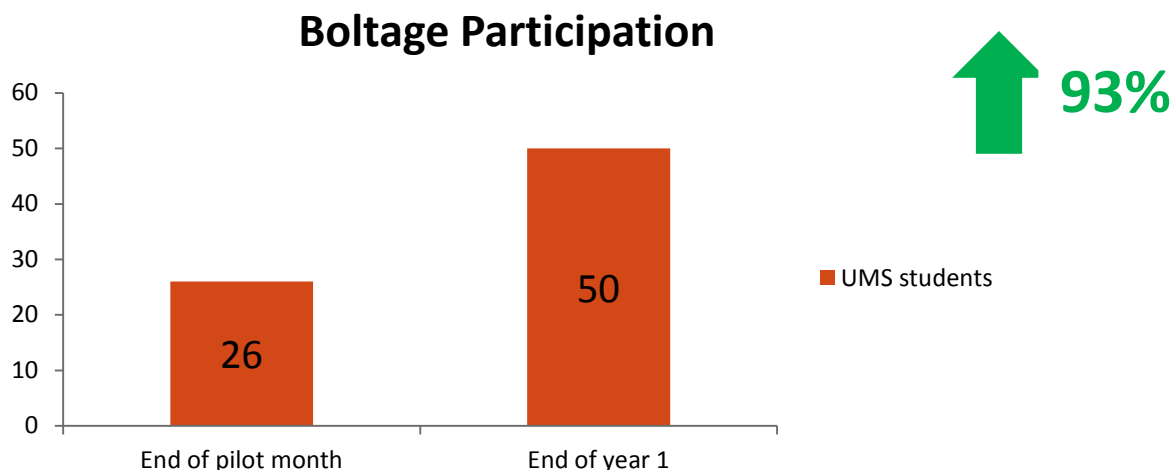


Figure 21

Crossing Guard Appreciation

Crossing Guard Appreciation Day took place on May 6, 2013. Gift certificates to Einstein's Bagels were distributed to four crossing guards nominated by four schools. One guard was featured in the News-Gazette. A banner ad was run in the newspaper for Crossing Guard Appreciation Day in May 2013.

Presentations, Conferences, Health and Safety Fairs

C-U SRTS Project participated in a number of health fairs and school wellness events, conferences and press conferences between 2012 and 2014 including:

- Active Transportation Alliance Built Environment Working Group, July 2013
- City of Urbana Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission, 2014
- Illinois Bike Summit 2013 and 2014
- Illinois Voices for Children Press Conference 2014
- Playing it Safe 2013 and 2014
- Risk Watch Symposium, 2014
- Urbana School District Spanish Speaking Family Safety Fair

International Walk and Roll to School Day

International Walk to School Day was celebrated twice over the course of the grant. Both cities also recognized the day with Walk to School Day Proclamations. Elected officials, University of Illinois athletes (Figure 22), teachers, administrators, police officers, and other volunteers greeted students on their way to school and distributed reflective zipper pulls to all students. C-U SRTS increased school participation by 37 percent between 2012 and 2013 (Figure 23).



Figure 22: University of Illinois football players greet Barkstall Elementary students walking to school on International Walk n' Roll to School Day, fall 2013.

Organizing also took place for three Champaign schools on a balanced calendar. In September 2013 this was organized with help from CUPHD and staff from partner agencies.

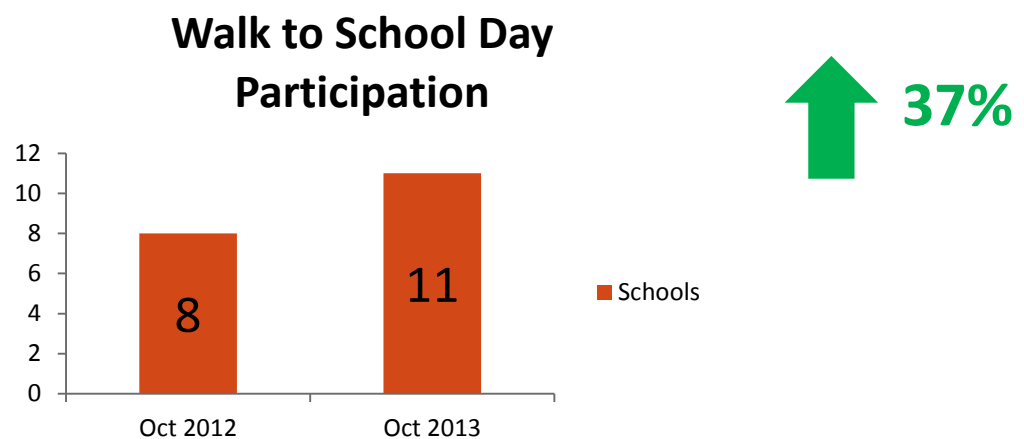


Figure 23



Figure 24: Kids and families decorate bikes on July 4, 2013.

July 4th Bike Decorating

C-U SRTS purchased supplies to host a bike decorating contest for kids on July 4, 2013 (Figure 24) followed by the opportunity to ride in the Champaign County Freedom parade with the local bicycle organization, Champaign County Bikes. 15 kids ages 5-14 participated and received prizes and a few rode in the parade afterwards. Judges for the contest included elected officials, members of the C-U SRTS Steering Committee and local bike community.

Snow Removal Encouragement Campaign

Over the course of the grant period, C-U SRTS delivered 90 snow removal encouragement yard signs and over 2000 flyers to elementary schools. From January-March in both 2013 and 2014, the grant paid for radio ads and billboards to promote snow removal on sidewalks.

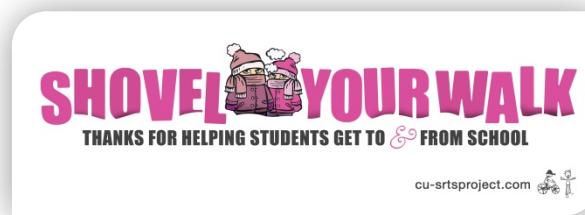


Figure 25: Example of snow removal encouragement billboard and yard sign, 2012-2014.

Prairie Safe Routes to School Plan

C-U SRTS contracted with CUAATS to write a Safe Routes to School Plan that will be finished in summer 2014. The plan utilized travel tally and parent survey data collected by the C-U SRTS Project in 2010-2013. Prairie School has some of the highest reported numbers of students who walk or bike; 80 percent of Prairie families qualify as low-income.¹⁴ According to the student travel tally report in October 2013, approximately 27 percent of students walk to school in the morning and 34 percent walk home; 7 percent of students reported biking to school and 15 percent said they biked home. The plan will provide recommendations to the school for how to make the site more accessible and safer for students, caretakers, and school staff that use alternative modes of transportation.

¹⁴ Prairie Schoolwide Plan (2011). Retrieved June 30, 2014 from http://www.usd116.org/files/SIP2010-11_prairie.pdf

Walking School Bus Program

The public reaction to the loss of three crossing guards at Leal Elementary in fall 2013 helped incentivize Urbana School District (USD) administrators to support a Walking School Bus (WSB) pilot program. In November 2013 C-U SRTS Project contracted with PedNet consultant Robert Johnson to conduct a Walking School Bus Training. Robert provided marketing materials, route planning and volunteer/student volunteer recruitment assistance, and 25 hours of technical support throughout the development of the pilot in May 2014. USD also paid a \$1,000 stipend to hire a University of Illinois graduate student to serve as the WSB Coordinator for the semester. The position required about ten hours of work per week reaching out to parents, teachers, university students, and community groups between April and June. C-U SRTS also purchased a cell phone and monthly minutes for use by the WSB coordinator as well as 50 safety vests for WSB volunteers and 75 pedometers for participants.



Figure 26: Leal Walking School Bus students prepare to cross Vine St. in Urbana, IL.

Nine children ranging from grades K-5 participated in the six-week long Walking School Bus pilot. Five university students and one parent comprised the volunteer pool in spring 2014. All volunteers went through a mandatory volunteer training and background check. Volunteers operated three routes Monday through Friday, although each route did not run every day.

In fall 2014 the program will operate in collaboration with a class of 4-20 University of Illinois students through a program called Learning in Community (LINC). In addition to volunteer and operations assistance, University of Illinois students will also evaluate the program effectiveness in promoting health behaviors. The program will expand to Prairie Elementary and King Elementary School if enough volunteers are recruited.

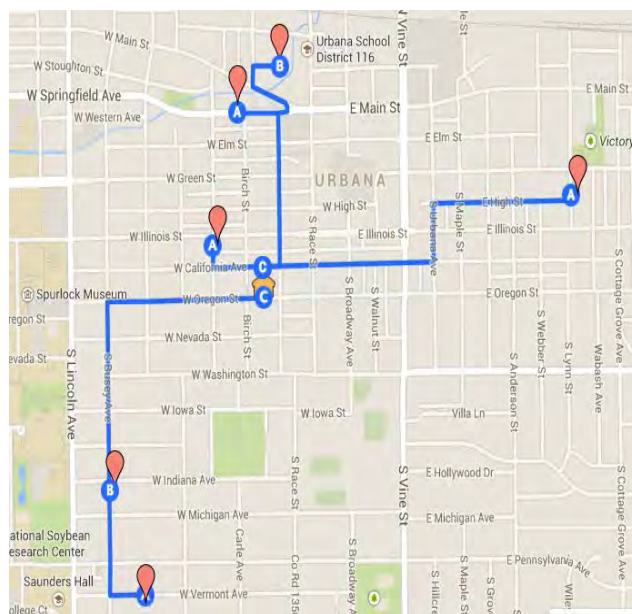


Figure 27: Leal Elementary WSB routes, spring 2014*

Note: The northernmost route was canceled after a parent volunteer was no longer available to operate it.

Website

In spring 2013, the C-U SRTS Project website was redesigned using the free version of the web design platform, Weebly. The website domain www.cu-srtsproject.com is still owned by Blue Host. Content on the website has grown to include all components of the program as well as resources targeted specifically for educators, parents, and kids. Resources are also provided in Spanish and a Google Translate feature makes the site accessible in 80 languages. Web traffic has increased significantly from spring 2013 when it was created to spring 2014 (Figure 27).

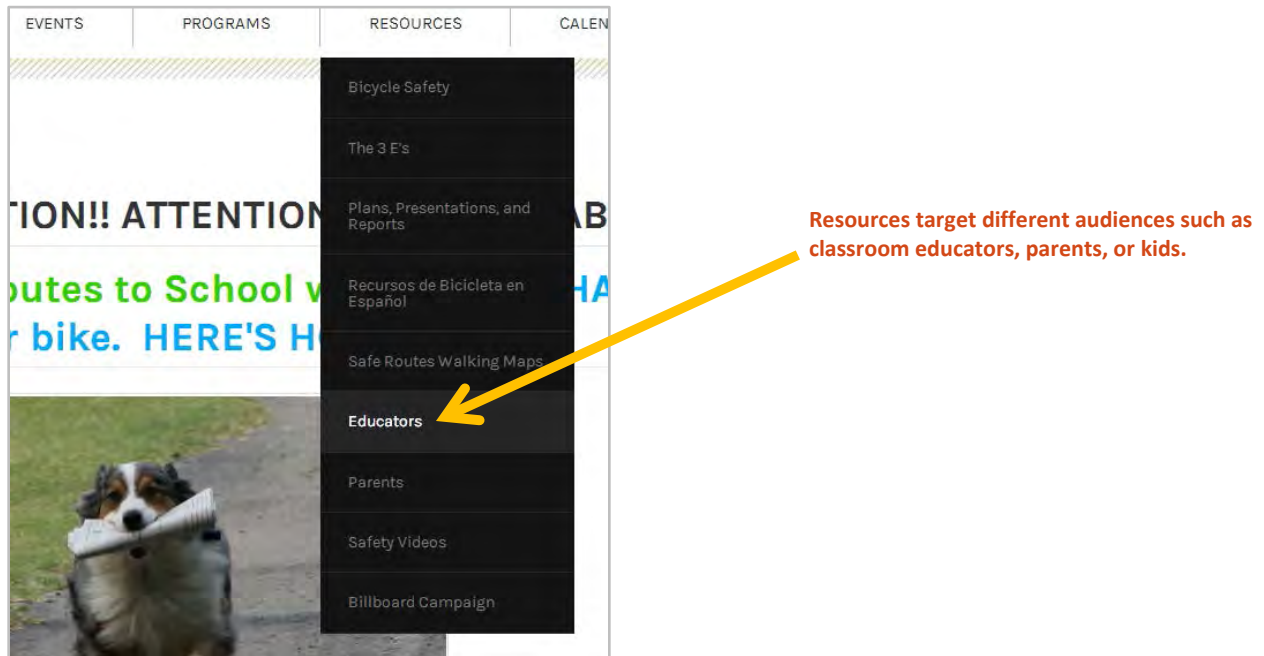


Figure 28: Screenshot of 'Resources' tab on C-U SRTS website, June 2014

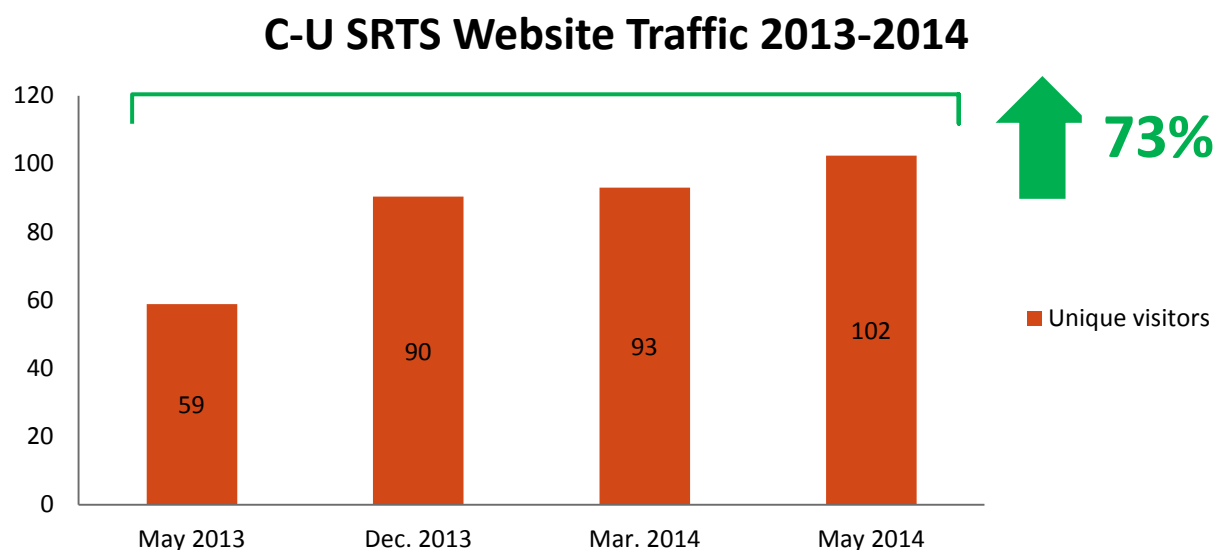


Figure 29

Data Collection

C-U SRTS Project distributed and collected travel tallies, parent surveys, as well as walkability and bikeability checklists over the grant period. Grant funding enabled the printing of travel tallies and walk and bikeability checklists in 2012-2014 to be distributed to every classroom in schools that wanted to participate. C-U SRTS staff switched to distributing parent surveys electronically in 2013-2014 to save paper. It is important to note that this does negatively impact households that do not have easy computer or internet access. Some schools, such as Dr. Howard engaged parents by creating a station for surveys to easily be filled out and returned. All data was sent to the National Center for Safe Routes to School for analysis.



Figure 30: City Council member Carol Ammons and other King Elementary School parents complete parent surveys on Walk n' Roll to School Day, fall 2013.

Travel tally data can viewed on pages 23-24 of this report.

Data Collection 2012-2014

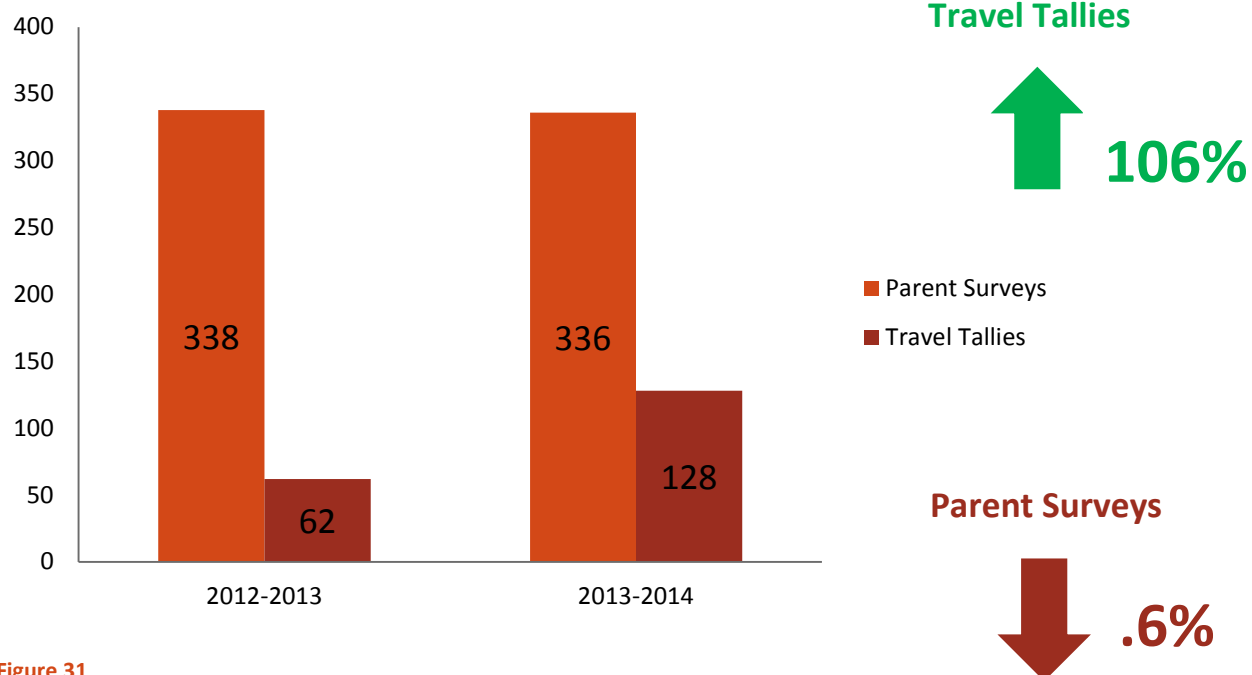


Figure 31

Challenges

C-U SRTS Project identified and utilized numerous opportunities to network and leverage SRTS grant funding and activities by working with local organizations, public officials, schools, PTA's, the University of Illinois, C-U Public Health District, local bike clubs, and the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (CUMTD). CUMTD provided staff support by paying for the consulting services of a transportation planner (Cynthia Hoyle, FAICP, LCI), sustainability planner (Jane Sullivan), and marketing staff (Jan Kijowski and Amy Snyder) and maintenance and storage and maintenance of the bike rodeo trailer. Although the grant provided funding for assistance from a graduate student intern, Rebecca Nathanson, when CUMTD hired Rebecca full-time in spring 2014 her time allocated to SRTS decreased, however administering and implementing the grant still demanded significant time. The Regional Planning Commission and CU Public Health District also contributed numerous hours of volunteer time in addition to city planners, engineers, law enforcement, and elected officials from the cities of Urbana and Champaign. CUPHD also provided storage space for SRTS equipment.

A consistent challenge to implementation remains staff time and resources. Because of these challenges, and with the goal of sustainable and institutionalized changes, C-U SRTS Project has held discussions with both school districts about incorporating SRTS programming into grades K-8. The Urbana School District has responded by budgeting \$2000.00 per semester to support a Walking School Bus Coordinator to expand this program to additional elementary schools next year. The \$2000.00 was also used as part of the local match to apply for the next round of SRTS grant funding. SRTS activities will be much more limited in the future in the Champaign School District due to no funding having been contributed by the district toward SRTS programming or the 2014 SRTS grant application.

Lessons Learned

Success in working with local school districts is significantly enhanced when support for SRTS programming occurs at all levels. The Urbana School District Board, administrative staff, and many of the school principals and PTAs were enthusiastic supporters of SRTS programming. In the Champaign School District, despite some support from parents, teachers, and principals, engagement with the School Board and Administrators proved more challenging. These leadership positions have a critical impact on the culture of walking and bicycling; if efforts are not encouraged with support from the top down, program sustainability, and reach, particularly to students who come from families with few resources, will remain difficult. Support from classroom teachers, staff, principals, and district level board members and administrators are critical for successful programming.

Teachers were also instrumental in impacting changes. At the Urbana Middle School, where the new Boltage walking and bicycling incentive program was introduced, two teachers informed students about the program, answered questions, registered students who needed help, and served

as models by registering and bicycling to school. Although C-U SRTS has provided handouts to teachers on how to integrate walking and bicycling education into all areas of curriculum, finding individual teachers who are passionate or already bike or walking commuters significantly increases SRTS influence.

Creating partnerships and working constructively with city staff and officials is an imperative if improvements to infrastructure are to occur. In both cities, the school crossing guards are employed through the police departments. Significant improvements in training and equipment for crossing guards occurred due to the increased awareness through crossing guard appreciation campaign. Partnerships with the local public health district and public media station have provided long term and sustainable programming toward increasing active transportation in our community, particularly for students in our local schools. Local bike clubs and organizations provided expertise and volunteer efforts toward improving safety for students who bicycle to and from school.

Additional accomplishments include the Boltage active transportation incentive program. The pilot in May 2013 included 28 students who commuted to school by bike (no minimum frequency required). In the pilot month, participants biked an average of 26 miles in an average of 10 trips. Cumulatively students biked nearly 650 miles. In the 2013-2014 academic year, C-U SRTS expanded Boltage registration to students who walked or biked to school. SRTS celebrated Boltage's first full year in May 2014 with a total of 50 registered participants, a 93 percent increase over the pilot month. Cumulatively, students made 2,304 trips to school on bike or foot and traveled over 4,000 miles. CUMTD, UMS, and CUPHD staff awarded wristbands, bike locks, bike lights, pedometers, cinch packs, and \$10 iTunes gift card depending on how many trips a student accumulated at the end of each semester. Plans are for the program to continue in fall 2014.

The 2013-2014 academic year also included the pilot of a Walking School Bus (WSB) program at Leal Elementary in Urbana, IL. C-U SRTS Project and Urbana School District (USD) had previously tried to implement a WSB program at King Elementary School however the program failed due to a lack of volunteers. With the 2012-2014 SRTS grant funding C-U SRTS hired Robert Johnson, a consultant with PedNet to guide and advise the planning of a WSB program. Planning of a WSB program was also supported again by USD, however this time motivated by public reactions to a reduction of crossing guards at Leal Elementary.¹⁵ Training and consulting from PedNet guided the planning team through early conception of a WSB program to the hiring of a WSB Coordinator, paid for with a small stipend from the Urbana School District. The

¹⁵ Note: The City of Urbana, who had previously funded six crossing guards for Leal Elementary, reduced funding availability to three crossing guards in November 2013.

consultant emphasized early on the importance of picking the *right* WSB Coordinator, and this advice proved highly beneficial, since much of the success (and planned expansion) of the WSB pilot is owed to the consistent and professional efforts of the WSB Coordinator. PedNet advised the planning team to find a stipend to incentive the WSB Coordinator's work, citing examples of programs that failed when managed by a volunteer. The WSB Coordinator is now working with USD to expand the WSB program to two additional, majority low-income, schools next fall assuming enough volunteer recruitment.

In fall 2013, C-U SRTS taught a six-week after-school bicycle skills and safety class through the Urbana Middle School (UMS) after-school SPLASH program. Curriculum and lesson plans were drawn from previous workshops by C-U SRTS and from the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA) in Oregon. C-U SRTS worked with The Bike Project to offer free bikes to students who wanted to take the class but did not own a bike. The SRTS grant also allowed helmets, bike lights, and reflectors to be provided free of charge to all 13 students. Volunteers from CUMTD, Champaign County Bikes, The Bike Project, Regional Planning Commission, and the Public Health District, enabled students to experience on-bike instruction appropriate for their skill level. The bike class also received media coverage and created positive relationships with UMS and USD administrators. In particular, the class benefited from the donation of refurbished bikes from The Bike Project (TBP) as well as time from TBP volunteers who worked with kids one-on-one at the bike rodeo and neighborhood ride. This program demonstrated the benefit to engaging the university students who were not only passionate about biking but enjoyed bonding with and teaching the middle school students.

Lastly, access to SRTS reports, videos, websites, and activities in multiple languages through the new SRTS website has provided additional platforms for distribution of bike and pedestrian safety information for the community. The website is geared for consumption by a variety of audiences including non-English speakers, children, parents, and educators. The website URL has been included on all publicity and most incentives. Website traffic has grown from 59 average daily visitors in May 2013 to 102 in May 2014, a 73 percent increase. Although it should be noted that C-U SRTS does not know if the site visitors are local Champaign-Urbana residents and additionally, how many are robots. Surveying parents at community or school events could be helpful for increasing as well as measuring the impact of the website on the local community.

Overall, we feel our SRTS program, made possible by the SRTS grant, is a model for other communities to use to create a successful SRTS program.

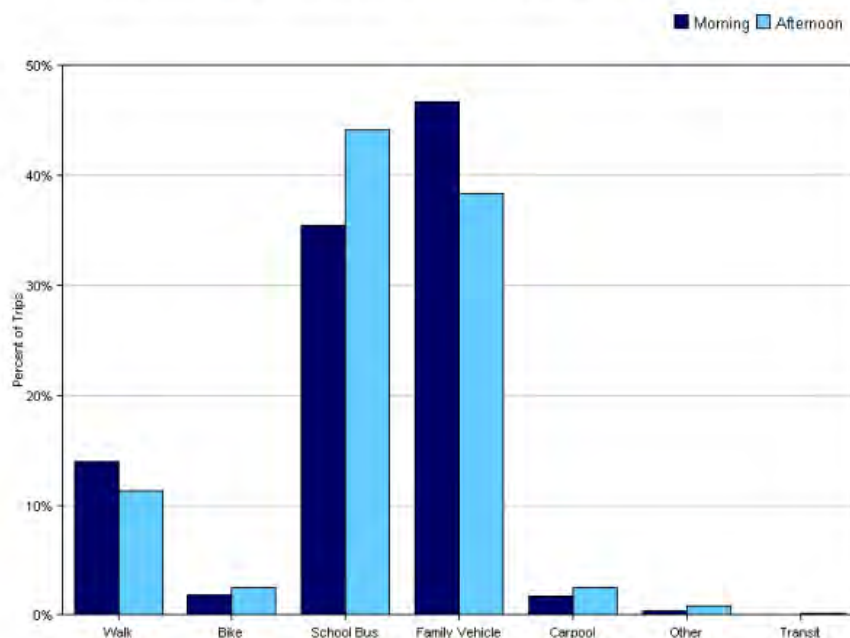
Walk and Roll to School Day Reporting*

Data reflects school reporting, not student participation.

C4 Fall 2012

Two schools; 975 students

Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison



Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	1125	14%	2%	35%	47%	2%	0%	0.4%
Afternoon	1137	11%	3%	44%	38%	3%	0.2%	0.9%

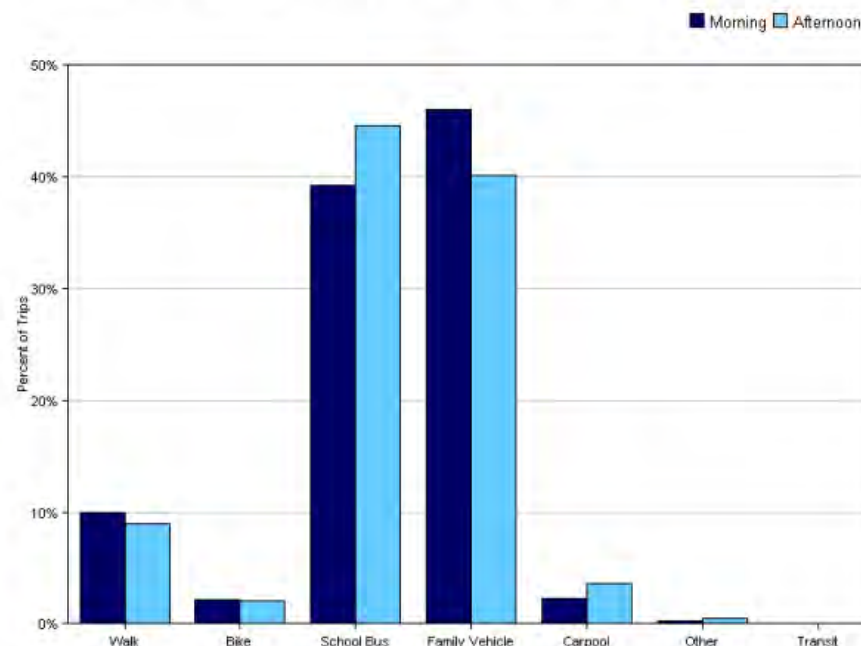
Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

C4 Fall 2013

Four schools; 1,701 students

Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

 **74 %**



Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	3506	10%	2%	39%	46%	2%	0%	0.2%
Afternoon	3409	9%	2%	45%	40%	4%	0.1%	0.5%

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

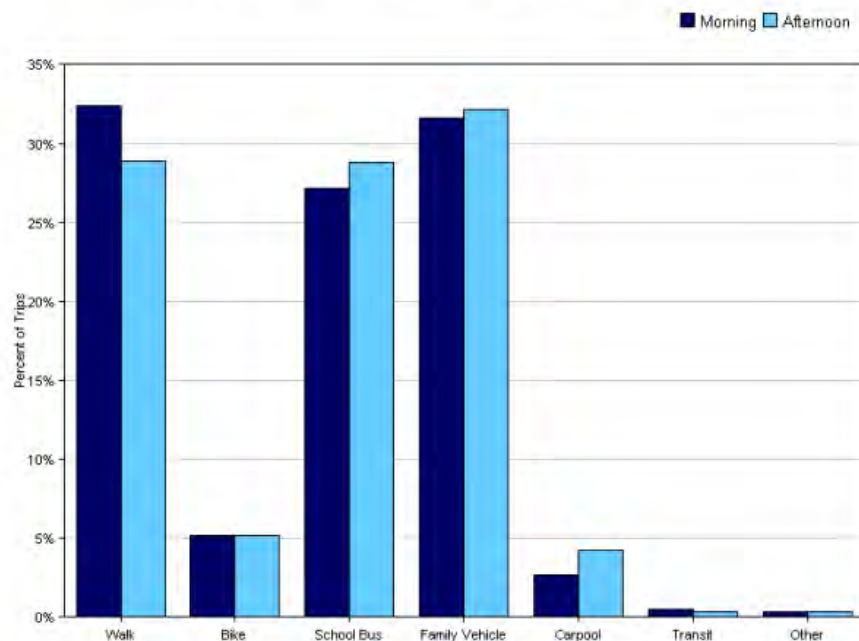
Walk and Roll to School Day Reporting*

Data reflects school reporting, not student participation.

USD 116 Fall 2012

Five schools; 1,675 students

Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison



Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	1835	32%	5%	27%	32%	3%	0.5%	0.4%
Afternoon	1829	29%	5%	29%	32%	4%	0.4%	0.4%

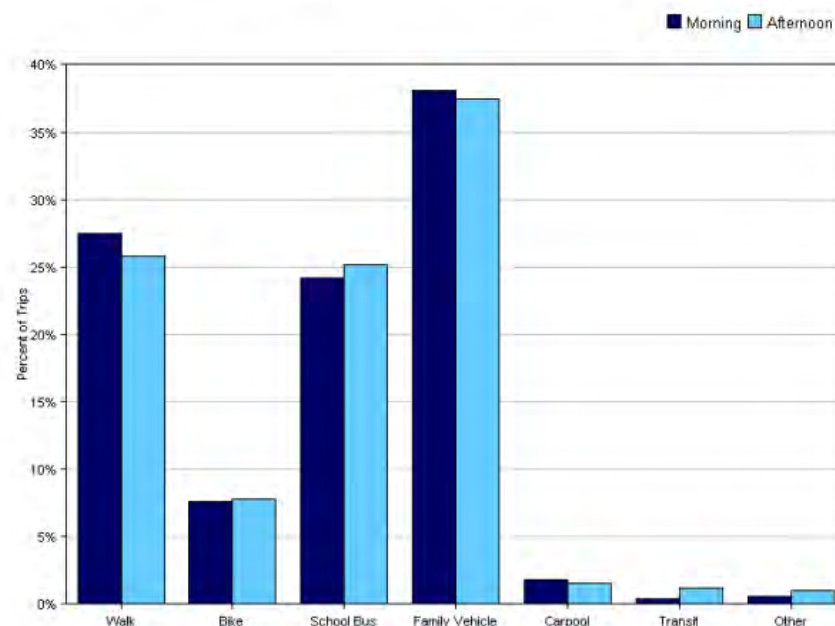
Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

USD 116 Fall 2013

Four schools; 1,436 students

Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

14 %



Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	2013	27%	8%	24%	38%	2%	0.4%	0.5%
Afternoon	1810	26%	8%	25%	37%	2%	1%	1.0%

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.



Contact:

Rebecca Nathanson
Planner, Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit
Co-Chair, C-U Safe Routes to School Project
rnathanson@CUMTD.com
(217) 384-8188

Cynthia Hoyle
Transportation Consultant, Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit
Co-Chair, C-U Safe Routes to School Project
choyle@CUMTD.com
(217) 278-9059