



Safe Routes to School: Creating an Action Plan

Instructions

Please read these instructions before completing the Action Plan.

Creating the Action Plan is the first step in the application process for Oregon Safe Routes to School funding, for both Infrastructure (engineering) and Non-Infrastructure (education and outreach, enforcement and evaluation) projects and activities for schools serving any grades from kindergarten up to 8th grade.

Who develops the Action Plan?

The Action Plan is created through a team-based process. With the conclusions drawn from the collected information, the team will be able to recommend priority projects and activities that the school, municipality and community can advance to promote safe walking and bicycling to school.

The template begins on Page 8.

SECTION 1: School information (for schools K-8)

The Plan is site-specific for your project. This section includes basic information about the school, including location, enrollment, and contact information for the Safe Routes to School Action Plan.

SECTION 2: Forming the School Team

The team is made up of a minimum of *three key partners*: the school principal; a parent who represents or has the endorsement of the school parent organization; and city, county or state staff representing the local road authority. An additional member should be a member of the local traffic safety committee, if one exists.

Additional community partners, whose backgrounds and affiliations represent a wide range of interests and expertise related to SRTS, should be included later in the planning process:

School representatives – PTA/PTO/site council member; principal and/or other school staff such as nurse and/or PE teacher; students; district transportation coordinator; district facilities management *especially* if school property/buildings/maintenance will be an issue; school board member; safety patrol coordinator; bus driver; school crossing guard; etc.

Local government -- Council or commission member; transportation or traffic engineer; public works representative; traffic safety committee member; local planner; law enforcement, emergency medical services or fire department; bicycle/pedestrian advisory committee; municipal or regional transit agency if applicable; etc.

Community representatives -- neighborhood or community association members; chamber of commerce or business associations; bicycle/pedestrian advocates; public health professionals; local stakeholder community groups and non-profit organizations; rail, trucking industry representatives, if applicable; media or marketing representative; etc.

SECTION 3: Assessing the modes of student travel

There are a variety of possible activities that have provided past grant recipients with valuable information about the ability of students to walk and bike to and from school. These are the assessments required for the Oregon process:

- Mapping
- Walking and biking the routes within 1 mile of the elementary school (1.5 miles of the middle school)
- Surveying students and parents

Note: additional support information may be needed to support the projects proposed in your Infrastructure Application (e.g., traffic counts, crash data, speed studies, etc). The team should rely upon the recommendations of local experts to determine what information may be needed.

Mapping

To understand the conditions around or on the school property, bring the team together to a mapping and brainstorming session where they can give input on conditions and possible solutions, in addition to helping to determine the best current and/or future routes (within one mile walking distance from residential neighborhoods to the elementary school, 1.5 miles of the middle school).

In preparation for the session, work with your school district and/or the local public works department to create **scatter maps** that indicate concentrations of where students live. Scatter maps provide useful information about the numbers of students living within the quarter-mile, half-mile, one-mile, and two-mile distances from the school site. They also bring forward where students live in relation to physical barriers (e.g., state highway, local roads, bridges, train tracks), shopping and food outlets, playing fields and community centers.

You may wish to include others who understand the travel habits of the students, such as the school crossing guards, law enforcement, school bus drivers, and other parents and students.

City maps may be found at: <http://egov.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TDATA/gis/CityMaps.shtml>

Maps may also be found at your school district website; Google.com; earth.google.com; Yahoo.com; Mapquest.com; or from your local public works department. **Please include copies of the maps as a supplement to this Plan.**

Walk and Bike Assessment

Once the team completes the mapping exercise, the team should walk and/or bike the routes to identify physical barriers. The team may want to follow their own format in assessing the “walkability” and the “bikeability” of the immediate school neighborhoods, or they may wish to use the linked checklists on the National SRTS Program website, under “Education:” <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/sites/default/files/walkabilitychecklist.pdf> and <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/sites/default/files/bikabilitychecklist.pdf>. Concentrate on streets you believe are critical to walking or bicycling to school, including parks, bike lanes, walkways or trails, and other public right-of-way facilities if they are or could be used by students to travel to and from school.

Walkability questions to consider: Are the sidewalks, paths and/or trails on school property connected to logical residential neighborhood access points? Is there room to walk? Are there sidewalks, or shoulders where there were no sidewalks? Are you able to cross safely where you can see and be seen by drivers? Does it feel safe to walk? Can students safely and conveniently reach unlocked school entry doors from these locations?

SECTION 3: Assessing the modes of student travel, continued

Pedestrian safety questions to consider: Does the school provide safety information and/or participate in events that promote safe walking and physical activity such as International Walk and Bike to School Day or walk-a-thons? Is there pedestrian safety guidance given to students who cross with the School Patrol or Adult Crossing Guard?

Bikeability questions to consider: Do you have safe bicycle routes? Are there paths, trails, wide sidewalks, low-traffic streets, bike lanes or good shoulders to ride safely with traffic? Does it feel safe riding with traffic? How was the surface that you rode on? How were the intersections that you rode through?

Bike safety and security questions to consider: Are visibly-placed bicycle racks available to students at the school? Are there enough to accommodate an increase in bicycles? Can students easily and safely access them? Are they sheltered from the weather? Are bikes in a secure location? Are there opportunities for students to learn about bicycle safety? Are students involved in after-school bike clubs or teams? Is helmet use encouraged?

Data Collection

It is vital to understand the travel patterns of the students at the school. An initial step in the assessment process will be to query the students and their parents about how their students arrive and depart from school. In order to collect consistent data, the Oregon SRTS Program has adopted two forms from the National Center for Safe Routes to School, the Student Travel Tally and the Parent Survey.

Detailed information and instructions for using the forms are found at <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/data-central/data-collection-forms>

Student Tally

Teachers or volunteers will use this form to record specific information about how children arrive and depart from school. It is a hand-raise tally, conducted in each classroom (takes about 5-7 minutes to complete) for two days within one week (not on a Monday or Friday). The form for the tally can be downloaded from the National SRTS Program website: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/evaluation-student-class-travel-tally>

If you need assistance in setting up an account, contact Julie Yip, Oregon SRTS Manager, 503-986-4196. Once data is entered, a downloadable summary report is immediately available at the same site.

Parent Survey

The Parent Survey collects information about factors, beliefs and attitudes that affect parents' decisions about their children walking and bicycling to school. The survey results will help your Team determine how to improve opportunities for children to walk or bike to school. Not only will the collected information allow comparison with the student tally results, but parent comments and identified concerns can lead to more involved discussion (potentially through focus groups) and evaluation (utilizing school team members such as from public works, health department, neighborhood associations, law enforcement).

For online and downloadable options of the Parent Survey, visit <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/evaluation-parent-survey>. If you need assistance in setting up an account, contact Julie Yip, Oregon SRTS Manager, 503-986-4196. Once data is entered, a downloadable summary report is immediately available at the same site.

SECTION 3: Assessing the modes of student travel, continued

Optional work to Section 3:

Additional Data Collection Activities

The following list includes other activities that have provided past grant recipients with valuable information about the ability of students to walk and bike to and from school. Please provide the results of any optional assessments conducted for the Plan.

Photographs and / or videos – tell the story that students do walk and/or bike to and from school. Take pictures or footage during BOTH arrival and departure times at the school. Decide in advance where the best vantage points will be to shoot the pictures to capture the representative images. Record locations and street directions, time of day, date. Present the pictures in an order that confirms your narrative and tells the story.

Interviews

School patrol or adult crossing guards; pupil transportation providers (school bus drivers, bus dispatchers); local law enforcement; local traffic or roadway engineers familiar with the transportation system around the school

Observational survey

The School Team may wish to confirm the results of the Student Tally or may wish to do actual on-site observations of how students arrive and leave school.

This is a simple “tick mark” tally done by volunteer observers with clipboard and survey sheet at these areas:

- the school’s bike rack area, if one exists
- at the crosswalks or pathways adjacent to the school
- at the bus and/or auto pick-up/drop-off area.

It is recommended that observations be made at least 15 minutes before the start of school until ten minutes after the bell rings. Reverse the process for after school. The observers record tick marks for each student observed as a Walker, Bicyclist, Other (for scooter, skateboard, in-line skates, wheelchairs), school or public bus rider, or motor vehicle rider. This should be repeated the same day at the end of school when children are leaving. Make sure the survey is dated, location noted, weather conditions noted, and the time periods of the survey.

This could be conducted for at least two days during a single week, not on Monday or Friday. The street assessments may bring up questions about the motoring environment on certain streets.

Traffic volume counts, posted speeds and actual speeds may be obtained from law enforcement or the local public works department to track motorist speeds and monitor traffic volume counts.

Traffic crash data may be obtained from your local public works department or the ODOT Transportation Safety Division Traffic Records Program. Crash data may also be available from your local law enforcement agency.

Crosswalk information may also be obtained from the School Safety Supervisor, school patrol members or adult crossing guards.

SECTION 4: Summarizing the findings

Using the information gathered in Section 3, it is now time for the School Team to analyze the collected maps, walking and biking audits and survey evaluation results to identify the barriers and hazards to children walking and bicycling to the school. Include:

- A list of physical barriers and hazards. (Examples: broken and uneven sidewalks; overgrown vegetation; narrow gravel shoulders and no bike lane or sidewalk on approach to school; in crosswalk from school, left or right-turn conflicts when pedestrians have the signal; school parking lot needs better pedestrian flow; bike racks in bad shape, not enough...)
- Evidence that there are households with students enrolled at the school who live within the mile walking distance for elementary school, or the 1.5 mile distance for middle school, who will benefit from proposed infrastructure enhancements. (Examples: printed scatter map, a map with hand-applied stickers showing enrolled students, correspondence from Pupil Transportation regarding households within the catchment area of school, etc.)
- A list of education/encouragement/enforcement barriers and hazards. (Examples: no crossing guard or school patrol at crosswalk across busy street; traffic exceeds 20 mph of school zone; walkable neighborhoods but parents prefer to drive students to school; no pedestrian safety information provided at school; no local enforcement.)

SECTION 5: Identifying the solutions and creating the Action Plan

Now that the issues have been identified, the School Team is ready to recommend solutions that make up the Action Plan. The expertise of the different School Team members and other interested parties and stakeholders will be especially valuable.

Careful consideration must be given for each SRTS component:

- *Engineering* – Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways. Engineering strategies are best used in conjunction with the remaining E's. Engineers typically like problem statements, not solutions. Your team identifies the problems; let the professionals suggest operational fixes.
(Resource: National Center for Safe Routes to School website, <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/search-resources> ; search the keyword, "engineering.")
- *Education* – Teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills, proper walking and bicycling behaviors, and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.
(Resource: the Oregon Safe Routes to School website, <http://www.oregonsaferoutes.org/> and the National Center for Safe Routes to School website, <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>.)
- *Encouragement* – Creating events, activities and ongoing programs to promote walking and bicycling and providing safe opportunities for parents and students to travel together and inspire each other.
(Resource: the Oregon SRTS webpage, www.oregonsaferoutes.org ; at the national level, the National Center for Safe Routes to School website, <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/search-resources> and search under the keyword, "encouragement.")

- *Enforcement* – Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure traffic laws are obeyed within the 2-mile vicinity of schools (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians and bicyclists on the road and in crossings) and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs.
(Resource: visit the Oregon Safe Routes to School website, <http://www.oregonsaferoutes.org/> for local examples; visit the National Center for Safe Routes to School webpage, <http://apps.saferoutesinfo.org/lawenforcement/> .
- *Evaluation* – Monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of data before and after the intervention(s).
(Resource: visit the National Center for Safe Routes to School website, <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/search-resources> and type in keyword “evaluation.”)

Guidance on the 5 E’s is available online from the National Center for Safe Routes to School, <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/index.cfm>

SECTION 6: Submitting the Action Plan

Submit this completed document and all supplemental materials along with the Application for the Oregon Safe Routes to School Funding.

Implementation

Now that the School Team has completed and submitted the Action Plan, it is time to take action.

The process through which the Action Plan was created has given your new Safe Routes to School Task Force a chance to find out what resources and stakeholders are available to help achieve success. Even before your application is reviewed and possibly funded, there are undoubtedly activities that can begin immediately using existing staff, volunteers and resources.

In addition, the Safe Routes to School funds currently available from the federal government are most likely not enough by themselves to solve all of the needs of every Oregon community. They are intended to be a catalyst to build relationships, complete demonstration projects and show success, which will then inspire communities to find other resources.

Below are some of the tactics other communities have used to start a program without a large budget, or before acquiring dedicated Safe Routes to School funding:

Engineering

While there may be large projects that need to be funded, there are certainly smaller projects and activities that can be done without major funding. In fact, Safe Routes to School practitioners have found that it is often the smaller projects that can lead to early success, since they do not require lengthy planning and design phases, and can be integrated into a short program timeline.

Examples include: curb and crosswalk striping, minor repairs, pruning, signage, walking/biking route maps, arrival/departure improvements, bike racks, advanced limit lines, school zone changes, etc.

Various resources may already be accessible through local and state agencies. If agency staff are members of the School Team, they may have already offered help with certain projects.

Sometimes it is a matter of the “squeaky wheel getting the grease.” Some projects may have already been planned, but just need to be fast-tracked.

(Resource: visit the National Center for Safe Routes to School website, <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/search-resources> and search the keyword, “engineering.”)

Encouragement

If physical improvements are needed before children can safely walk or bike to school on a particular route, promote and/or organize fun walking and biking activities before, during or after school right on the school grounds or to/from an area nearby. These events and activities will help build excitement for walking and biking, so that when physical improvements are completed, there will be a ready audience of users.

Encouragement events will provide opportunities for students, parents and others to better understand local conditions, and to experiment with route options. This information can be used to develop a system of routes which can help define where engineering and enforcement work should take place. Maps can be created and made public when improvements are made.

Many parent barriers to walking and biking are based on personal safety, convenience and time. Also, with the rise in childhood obesity, walking and biking to school can be promoted as a solution to an inactive lifestyle. Encouragement activities are ideal for addressing these issues, in addition to creating community cohesiveness by bringing parents and neighbors together to help walk or bike kids to and from school. There is safety in numbers, especially when kids are accompanied by a trusted parent or other adult volunteer.

(Resource: for examples of local encouragement, visit the Oregon SRTS webpage, www.oregonsaferoutes.org , and at the national level, visit the National Center for Safe Routes to School website, <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/search-resources> and search under the keyword, “encouragement.”)

Education

Classes or safety events such as bike rodeos, Safety Town, etc. are relatively inexpensive, and can be provided by school teachers, local volunteers or community groups such as bike clubs or university students, and by agencies such as police, health and fire departments.

Education events can also encourage students and parents to walk and bike to school.

(Resource: Oregon Safe Routes to School website, <http://www.oregonsaferoutes.org/> ; National Center for Safe Routes to School website, [http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/.](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/))

Enforcement

Local police officials who are members of the School Team may be able to provide police services, or even additional services to help the Safe Routes to School effort. They may also be able to tell you how to get services from their department, or may advocate for services on behalf of the School Team.

Police services may not need to be funded through the Oregon Safe Routes to School program, since they may already have a local dedicated funding source.

More information on the Safe Routes to School and the 5E's of Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement and Evaluation can be found on the National Safe Routes to School website: <http://apps.saferoutesinfo.org/lawenforcement/>



Safe Routes to School: Creating an Action Plan Template

Note: This document can be protected to prevent unintended changes to the form. If you wish to protect the template, go to the Forms toolbar (under VIEW, Toolbars, check the Forms toolbar). On the Forms toolbar, click on the LOCK symbol to enable protection. Click on the LOCK symbol to remove the protection.

SECTION 1: School information

School name:	Sweet Home School District and Oak Heights Elementary: District plan with focus / case study on Oak Heights Elementary. ACTION PLAN DATE: 9/30/15			
Street address:	Oak Heights Elementary, 605 Elm Street			
City:	Sweet Home	State:	OR	ZIP: 97386
County:	Linn	School district:	Sweet Home School District	
Type of school:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public school <input type="checkbox"/> Private school <input type="checkbox"/> Charter school			
School Web site (if any):	http://www.sweethome.k12.or.us and http://www.sweethome.k12.or.us/elementary/oakheights			
Total student enrollment:	280 at Oak Heights Elementary; 275 at Foster Elementary; 315 at Hawthorne Elementary; 140 at Holley Elementary; 345 at Sweet Home Junior High; 2,348 total in the district including elementary, junior high, the high school, a program for 5th-year high school students, and a charter school.	Grades served:	K-6 at Oak Heights Elementary; K-12 in the district plus a 5th-year high school program.	
Percentage of total enrollment for each grade:	At Oak Heights Elementary: K = 13%, 1 = 15%, 2 = 15%, 3 = 16%, 4 = 14% 5 = 14%, 6 = 12% In the district: K = 6.6%, 1 = 7.3%, 2 = 7.0%, 3 = 7.8%, 4 = 5.9%, 5 = 8.5%, 6 = 6.1%, 7 = 9.0%, 8 = 7.9%, 9 = 8.1%, 10 = 8.4%, 11 = 9.8%, 12 = 7.6%			
Contact for Action Plan:	Tarah Campi		Phone:	541-924-8480

E-mail:	tcampi@ocwcog.org
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SECTION 2: Forming the School Team

1. The key partners of the School Team are (Instructions, Page 1):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principal or designated school staff representative endorsed by the school district: 	<p>Courtney Murphy, Principal, Oak Heights Elementary School</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A parent who represents or has the endorsement of a recognized school/parent organization or site council: 	<p>Brandy Duncan, Parent Teacher Club member. We have reached out to parents via fliers sent home, and via the Parent Teacher Club, and via postings on the school website and in the school newsletter.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City or county staff or representative endorsed by the local road authority: public works, planner, roadway engineer, etc. 	<p>Joe Graybill, Engineer, City of Sweet Home Public Works and member of Sweet Home Economic Development Group.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of the local traffic safety committee (if one exists): 	<p>Chief Jeff Lynn, Sweet Home Police Dept.</p> <p>Gina Riley, Community Services Officer, Sweet Home Police Dept.</p> <p>Geoff Hamlin, School Resource Officer, Sweet Home Police Dept.</p>

2. Identify all other participants of the School Team (Instructions, Page 1):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School or district representation: facilities, maintenance, pupil transportation, etc. 	<p>Cathy Hurowitz, Director of Student Achievement, Sweet Home School District</p> <p>Mike Reynolds, Sweet Home School Board member</p> <p>Cheryl Hicks, Transportation Supervisor, Sweet Home School District</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local government representation: council, commission, planner, law enforcement, EMS or fire department, bike/pedestrian advisory committee, transit agency, etc. 	<p>Laura LaRoque, Planning Manager, City of Sweet Home and member of the Sweet Home Active Revitalization Effort (SHARE)</p> <p>Tarah Campi, Transportation Options Outreach Coordinator, Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community representation: neighborhood association, chamber of commerce or business association, bike/ped advocates, public health, community groups, non-profit organizations, rail, trucking industry, media, marketing, etc. 	<p>Donna Short, Santiam Spokes Bike Club member</p> <p>Doug Robin, Santiam Spokes Bike Club member</p>

SECTION 3: Assessing the modes of student travel

- Briefly describe the school attendance area. Boundary maps may be available from the school district or can be downloaded and printed from the school website. If available, please include as supplemental information:

INTRODUCTORY NOTE: This Action Plan for the Sweet Home School District incorporates recommended Safe Routes to School policies for all 4 elementary schools in the district (Oak Heights, Foster, Hawthorne, and Holley), as well as Sweet Home Junior High. This plan follows the successful 2014 development of an Action Plan specific to the Sweet Home Junior High. In addition to district-wide policy-level recommendations, this plan focuses on on data collection, recommendations, and evaluations specific to Oak Heights Elementary. With additional future engagement, the policy-level recommendations discussed in this Action Plan could be operationalized at other schools within the district. Data collection, infrastructure evaluations, and other site-specific efforts also could be carried out at additional schools.

Oak Heights is sited in a very walkable and bikeable neighborhood with high visibility, low traffic volumes, good sidewalk connectivity, and even terrain. It is bordered by Elm Street to the north, 7th Avenue to the east, Dogwood Street to the south and 5th and 6th Avenues to the west (see Google map included with this document). The Oak Heights

attendance area includes a broad area of the west side of Sweet Home, including neighborhoods on both sides of Highway 228 (see the boundary map included with this document). Scatter maps showing the Oak Heights attendance area and clusters of student home-locations also are included with this document. The maps were created by City of Sweet Home Public Works staff in summer 2015 and show that there is a significant concentration of students living within 1 mile of the school, which is particularly amenable for the successful implementation of walking school buses and bike trains.

2. What is the school or the school district policy regarding students' mode of travel to school? Is there a "preferred method of travel" recommended by the school or the district's pupil transportation office? Are there any travel modes not allowed? Why?

Sweet Home School District policy states: School transportation by bus will be provided for students to and from school and for transporting students to curricular and extracurricular activities sponsored by the district. Transportation will be provided for homeless students to and from the student's school of origin as required by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. These services shall be provided throughout the regularly scheduled school year and during the regular school day as determined by the district. Elementary students who live more than 1 mile from school and secondary students who live more than 1.5 miles from school will be transported by bus. Elementary students living less than 1 mile and secondary students living less than 1.5 miles from the school are not eligible to ride the school bus and are permitted to walk or bike, or be dropped off by vehicle; no mode is preferred over another mode.

3. Does the school have a Supplemental Plan in place that allows students to be bused to school who live within the mile walking distance of the elementary school, or 1.5 miles for the middle school? If so, what are the health or safety reasons for the Plan?

Mileage exceptions for health, safety, and disability will be made in accordance with the district's approved supplemental plan.

4. Mapping and brainstorming session held. Include copies of maps, including Scatter Maps, with Action Plan write-up.

We identified (check the statements that apply):

- the residential areas where students are known to walk and/or bike, within the one mile walking distance for elementary students or 1.5 mile distance for middle school students.
- the routes taken by students to and from school.
- the difficult street crossings and discussed possible alternate routes.
- off-road paths that are available for walking/biking to school.
- areas where School Patrol or Adult Crossing Guard assistance occurs or where it could be beneficial if provided.
- streets where heavy traffic congestion may be hazardous to walking and/or biking.
- the areas where School Bus transportation is available.
- the areas where Supplemental Busing for hazardous busing is available.
- the arrival/departure zone (for bus, staff and parent vehicles) and how the flow of traffic influenced the safety and convenience of students walking and biking to school.

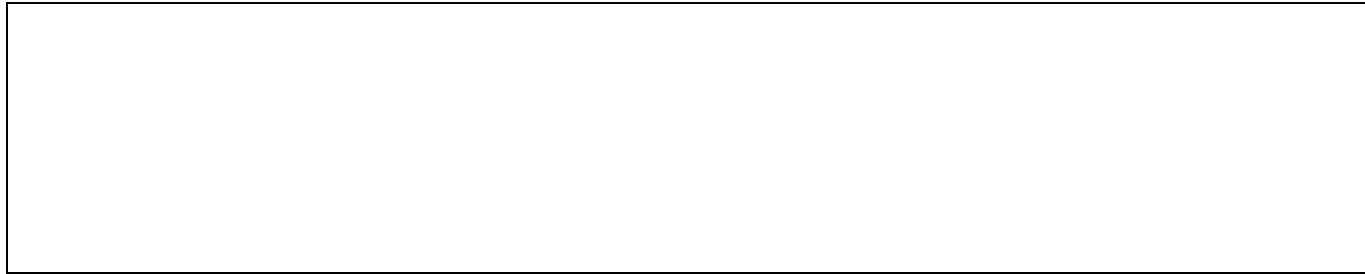
5. We walked (or biked) around the routes students take to and from school (see Instructions, Page 3.):

- a. What generalizations may be drawn from the information gathered on the “walkability” of the area around the school site?

The neighborhoods in the direct vicinity of Oak Heights are very walkable. The area features well-connected sidewalks, well marked crosswalks, relatively flat terrain, and good visibility (see photos #2-3). The team conducted a Walkability Audit on June 22, 2015. The only concerns were a few patches of rough sidewalk or areas where sidewalks had varying widths, and a few instances when trash cans or other items impeded the sidewalks. Generally, however, the sidewalk conditions, intersections, visibility, and traffic volumes were observed to be very accommodating for pedestrians. We did notice that a curb-cut is needed at the SW corner of the intersection of 5th Avenue and Elm Street, as well as the SW corner at the intersection of 3rd Avenue and Elm Street, and the SW corner of the intersection at 7th Avenue and Ironwood Street.

The presence of traffic congestion around the school during pick-up and drop-off times hampers walkability to some degree. According to Action Plan team members, including police officers, drivers often are seen failing to stop at stop signs near the school, among other areas of town. Drivers also are observed to be speeding near the school.

Sweet Home's City Engineer participated in the walkability audit and assessed the area with a score of 22 out of 30 on the National Center for Safe Routes to School Walkability Checklist.



b. In what ways does the school promote pedestrian safety?

At Oak Heights, crossing guards are stationed at the intersection of Elm Street and 6th Avenue directly in front of the school, during arrival and departure. The principal says that staff enjoy this role. Other elementary schools in the district often have a staff presence in the parking lot as well.

At Sweet Home Junior High, the school promoted Walk and Bike to School Day in May 2014 with safety-related giveaways and materials in the library, as well as healthy snacks and free coffee for parents. Throughout the school year, staff at the junior high are on duty before and after school to monitor students as they arrive and leave school grounds. Students are required to walk their bike/skateboard when on campus. Students are instructed on proper before- and after- school procedures during Homeroom each year.

- c. What generalizations may be drawn from the information gathered on the “bikeability” of the area around the school site?.

Access points from the north, south, east and west of Oak Heights include moderate-traffic-volume residential streets with good visibility and flat terrain, however drivers in the area are known to speed and run through stop signs. There are no bike lanes or plans for bike lanes near Oak Heights because most streets are residential. The major nearby collector, Elm Street, does not have the width to accommodate a bike lane, according to the City Engineer. Team members have observed that sometimes people park in the bike lanes in various areas around town.

- d. Evaluate the bicycle facilities provided for the students’ use:

An uncovered bike rack is placed prominently in front of Oak Heights (see photo #1). It's a "wheel bender" style bike rack, which is not the current standard. According to school staff, it is used by about 10 students per day.

As mentioned at the beginning of this document, Safe Routes efforts in the future could focus on a bike infrastructure evaluation at other schools. In 2009, Donna Short of the Santiam Spokes bike club -- who also is a member of the Safe Routes team at Oak Heights currently -- conducted a bike facilities inventory at all schools in the district. That document is included with this Action Plan. Donna's work could provide a template for future updates and could help lay the groundwork for funding proposals to support the purchase of equipment, for example.

- e. In what ways does the school promote bicycle safety?

Oak Heights recently provided free bikes to 4 students in a raffle promoting good attendance (see photo #4). This has become an annual effort, and the bikes (with helmets) are donated by a community member. The principal has noted that in her opinion, students in town and at Oak Heights tend to have more interest in video games than in physical activity, and the school works to promote a culture that values the fun and fitness of physical activity. She said the students who win the bikes can often be seen riding them in the community, and to school, when in general most students do not have / use bikes regularly.

The school district representatives involved in this Action Plan are not aware of bike education promotion efforts at other schools in the district, but a more thorough analysis could be conducted in future efforts.

6. We conducted the In-Class Student Tally (see page 3 of Instructions) and this is how our students travel to and from school:

Travel Mode	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Public Transit	Other
% of Students	Morning 13%	Morning 3%	Morning 20%	Morning 65% Afternoon 55%	Morning 0%	Morning 0%	Morning 0%

7. We conducted the Parent Survey (see page 3 of Instructions).

Of the surveys that were returned, these are the TOP 5 Issues of parents whose students do NOT walk/bike to school:

- Distance
- Convenience of driving
- Time
- Before / after-school activities
- Traffic speed along route to school
- Traffic volume along route
- Adults to walk / bike with
- Sidewalks or pathways
- Safety of intersections & crossings
- Crossing guards
- Violence or crime
- Weather or climate

Section 4: Summarizing the findings

1. List the physical environmental barriers and hazards. (See Instructions, Page 5.)

Traffic speed and safety is a concern around Oak Heights, including congestion from pick-up and drop-off. The school is fenced at the south, east and west which funnels traffic to the front (north) of the school. The fence is visible in photo #4. Police and other team members have observed cars running stop signs and speeding in the neighborhood near the school, including parents.

According to district staff and other team members, the traffic patterns / concerns / congestion level at each school is different, but Oak Heights has a particular difficulty with congestion because of the fact that all traffic is funneled to the north side of the school.

As another note, none of the pedestrian crossings in town have pedestrian-activated signage, although there aren't locations in the direct vicinity of Oak Heights where a need for one is identified, according to the City Engineer.

ADA ramp improvements are needed at the southwest corner of 5th Avenue and Elm Street, as well as at 3rd Avenue and Elm Street, and 7th Avenue and Ironwood Street. Some older ramp locations are non-standard, according to the City Engineer, and need reconstruction, along with the modifying of some stormwater catchbasin inlets with wheel-friendly and bicycle-friendly grates.

The crossing of Highway 228 and 1st Avenue is hazardous; this is a location where many students cross the busy highway. See the student-distribution map included with this document, which shows that several student who attend Oak Heights live in the area near this intersection. Walking School Buses can help mitigate this concern, since students are crossing in a group with approved adult leaders, emphasizing the need for being visible, following the rules of the road, etc.

2. List the education/encouragement/enforcement barriers and hazards.
(See Instructions, Page 5.)

At Oak Heights, driver behavior is a concern, including speeding and running stop signs, and idling in the loading zone. Driver education is needed among road users in general and parents in particular. The principal says cars can be heard screeching to a stop frequently near the school because they are speeding.

The community tends to value video games and TV over physical activity, according to the Oak Heights principal. (The principal also has noted that some families have unsafe cars -- for example, cars that lack seatbelts-- which is another reason that promoting safe walking/biking is a good idea).

There currently are no Walking School Buses and Bike Trains in the district. Policies addressing Walking School Buses and Bike Trains could be helpful in institutionalizing and promoting the concept district-wide. There is no formal bike and pedestrian education in the district currently, either.

In the Oak Heights parent survey conducted in September 2015 (see data included with this document), distance was cited as a top concern among not only parents who don't currently permit their students to walk or bike to school, but also among those who do. Conveniently located meet-up locations as described below in this document can help mitigate these concerns. The Oak Heights principal has commented that the concerns about distance among parents whose children already walk to school could be due to the fact that the school district is strict about its policy that only elementary students living more than 1 mile away from the school are permitted to be transported by bus. Families with students living closer must provide their own transportation. As a long term strategy, the team recommends that the district consider policies to address transportation efficiencies for students within the 1-mile radius. For example, expanded use of crossing guards.

Section 5: Identifying the solutions and making the Action Plan

See Instructions, Pages 5-6, for details on how to complete this section, and consider the “Five E’s” in your response.

- A. List the physical improvements and possible strategies for implementation. Provide evidence that there are students who live within the proposed project area who will benefit from proposed improvements

At Oak Heights:

- 1) Signage and striping in the loading zone area could be helpful to direct traffic to enter from 5th Avenue and depart using 6th Avenue.**
- 2) An upgraded and covered bike rack or bike cage could be pursued.**
- 3) Speed trailers could be helpful at the intersection of 5th Avenue and Ironwood Street, as well as 2nd Avenue and Holley Road.**
- 4) Curb ramps are needed at the SW corner of the intersection 5th Avenue and Elm Street, as well as the SW corner at 3rd Avenue and Elm Street, and 7th Avenue and Ironwood Street.**

Citywide: There have been proposals for pedestrian-activated crossings at 22nd Avenue, 40th Avenue, and 49th Avenue, at the intersections with Main Street. Cost has

been a significant factor in placement, according to the City Engineer.

- B. List the needed safety enforcement/educational/encouragement programs and possible strategies for improvement:

Encouragement:

1) Walking School Buses and Bike Trains: Pilot a few times per year, then increase to monthly or more frequently when volunteer sustainability is achieved.

From a public health perspective, increased emphasis on walking and biking is crucial. For example, according to the 2013 Linn County Community Health Assessment spearheaded by the Linn County Department of Health Services and Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital, the childhood obesity rate in the county is 27.4%, compared with an average of 26.8% statewide. Also according to the report, 19.7% of Linn County residents under age 18 live at or below poverty level, compared with 19.4% in Oregon overall. Socioeconomic challenges are linked to higher obesity rates.

In addition to the benefits of increased physical activity and community connectivity, walking school buses also can help reduce absenteeism, which is a goal of the Oak Heights principal. According to a 2014 report by the Safe Routes to School National Partnership and Attendance Works, walking school buses can help overcome attendance barriers such as sick or unavailable family members, and busy morning routines at home, helping make regular and timely school attendance not only an expectation but a habit. Walking school bus programs also foster a culture of shared accountability among students, families, schools, and volunteers. Walking school buses also provide safety from crime and bullying. The effects of chronic absenteeism are well documented, including more need for reading intervention, and increased drop out rates. Walking school buses can be part of low-cost early-intervention strategies to mitigate the effects of absenteeism, according to the 2014 report.

The report also includes a case study of a walking school bus program in Rhode Island that began in 2012 with 6 students and soon grew to over 20, with a wait-list. Staff time and supplies were funded through federal non-infrastructure Safe Routes to School dollars, via the state Department of Transportation, and the program features specific routes at various elementary schools, with volunteers assigned on a weekly basis. In the first year, 79% of participants had improved school attendance.

In Sweet Home: Community volunteers such as police department volunteers, bike club members, parents, and members of local churches could be recruited to facilitate walking school buses in the district. Oak Heights and other schools can target chronically absent students by personally inviting them and building a roster of students scheduled to attend the walking school bus along a given route.

School staff have cited that they sometimes receive reports from parents that the parent overslept so they are keeping their child home from school that day, for

example, or school staff members become aware that there is illegal activity / instability in the home environment. Walking school buses can help foster a routine and put some level of accountability in the hands of the student. Starting in fall 2015, staff also are providing alarm clocks to children so they can initiate their morning routine if their parents are unavailable. Walking school buses can be timed to occur on low-attendance days, such as Mondays. Currently 13% of students walk to school in the mornings, according to a snapshot of data presented on page 15. Walking school buses are a particular interest of the school principal; many students do not have bicycles / helmets, so bike trains are not as feasible currently. Staff should communicate with the police department regarding increased traffic enforcements to correspond with these events.

Other Encouragement strategies:

2) Continue participation in events such as the national Walk and Bike Challenge / Walk and Bike to School Day in May/October annually. The Junior High participated in 2014, and Oak Heights plans to pilot walking school buses on 10/7/15 during the national event.

3) Pursue funds for incentives to distribute at events. Safety items such as reflective flashers, pedestrian lights, bright shoelaces, and safety vests can promote safety / visibility for the walking school buses and other pedestrian/bike activities. In September 2015, Oak Heights procured flags and hand-held stop signs from the Oregon Department of Education for use with walking school buses / crossing guards, and also purchased reflective vests and rain gear through an ODOT-funded Safe Routes to School mini-grant.

4) Promote the police department's annual summer safety fair and National Night Out to students, and consider having police department safety fairs located at schools within the district.

5) Consider conducting a survey of students / parents to find out how many students are in need of a bike / helmet, then pursue funding for bike fleets and helmets. Some helmets for students in the district have been purchased via McKinney-Vento homeless-outreach funding, which may or may not be an option in the future. In spring 2014, the district was a recipient of 20 helmets via a Safe Kids Oregon mini-grant, which were provided free to students at Sweet Home Junior High, Oak Heights Elementary, and Kidco Head Start. Other helmets are available from the police department during its annual summer safety fair.

Enforcement:

1) Speed trailers at the intersections of 5th Avenue and Ironwood Street and 2nd Avenue and Holley Street, and enforcement of stop-sign violations: Enforcements by police could be particularly targeted to the days when walking/biking activities (such as walking school buses) are taking place.

2) Regarding traffic violations and safety: Student-dropoff education and driver education is needed, and can be pursued through parent meetings, newsletter articles, school website / Facebook postings, back-to-school information packets, etc.,

promoting traffic safety. (Messaging can include education/encouragement too). This could be a policy throughout the district with coordinated messages. Messaging was provided by Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments staff for a back-to-school newsletter in fall 2015, and a Santiam Spokes bike club member, Donna Short, also has expressed interest in providing content.

3) The team has expressed interest in traffic-activated speed signs. Future conversations with the City of Sweet Home could be considered.

Education:

1) Include bike/pedestrian safety education classes during PE, including potentially using a bike fleet borrowed from Philomath or Albany, or purchasing one with future funding. Train teachers in bike/pedestrian safety curricula (Cycle Safe and Neighborhood Navigators, for example, developed by the Bicycle Transportation Alliance and used statewide). Training is available from the state Safe Routes to School program.

2) Partner with all local elementary schools for outreach: For example, host a community bike rodeo. Middle schoolers or high schoolers could help teach the younger students.

3) Work with the City to provide information to residents living near the school regarding maintaining good sidewalk access, clearing debris, etc.

C. Prioritize the strategies. Assign a time schedule for implementing these strategies. If there are areas earmarked for improvements, include maps identifying those areas:

Short term: 2015-16 and 2016-17 school year:

1) Parent outreach, especially timed around back-to-school. Consider newsletter items / Facebook postings, etc. focusing on safety and wellness. Coordinate among various schools in the district. One topic to address is drop-off safety, related to congestion and speeding around the school entrance. Messaging / maps also are needed specifically related to instructions about traffic flow at Oak Heights: Vehicles are asked to approach the school on 5th Avenue and depart on 6th Avenue. Note: Starting in summer 2015, Oak Heights already is pursuing safety-related newsletter items for parents for the 2015-16 school year. Messaging by the city to nearby residents about clearing debris and maintaining good sidewalk access also could be considered.

2) Implement the first Walking School Buses on October 7, 2015 (Walk and Bike to School Day), with the goal of establishing them monthly. Meet-up locations for the inaugural event are: Hillside Fellowship (1.4 miles NW of the school), Elm Street Baptist Church (0.3 miles East of the school) and Sweet Home City Hall (0.7 miles NE of the school). Volunteers include members of the Sweet Home Police Department and the Santiam Spokes Bike Club, as well as School District staff members. Sustainability can be supported through collaborations with volunteers from the police department; local churches; Santiam Spokes bike club; and recruited from among the school's volunteers and through the school's active Facebook page, featuring parents and

community members (1,500-2,500 regular visitors). This policy can be expanded district wide, perhaps with staff to manage it at the district level through future Safe Routes to School funding. This goal also is relevant to the goal in the 2014 Junior High plan of creating walk/bike meetup sites.

3) Work with the police department for traffic enforcement, including stop sign enforcement and speed enforcements. Consider speed trailers in the vicinity of walking school buses and at key intersections including 5th Avenue and Ironwood Street as well as 2nd Avenue and Holley Street. According to the police chief, the department is considering moving the stop sign at the intersection of 5th Avenue and Ironwood to stop traffic from a different direction in the intersection, which could help mitigate the concern at this intersection.

4) Promote the police department's annual summer safety fair through distributing fliers to students and posting information on the school's Facebook page. Consider hosting similar fairs at schools during the academic year.

5) Continue to pursue funding for safety-related incentives (lights, reflective stickers, etc.) as well as bikes and helmets. Distribute via safety fairs, walking school buses, bike rodeos, in classes or etc.

6) Host a district-wide Neighborhood Navigators pedestrian safety curriculum training for interested teachers, and encourage incorporating lessons into PE classes (coordinate with state Safe Routes staff and district about timeline). Network with other programs in the region regarding possible collaborations on trainings.

Long-term:

1) Pursue ODOT funding for a half-time district-level Safe Routes to School coordinator to manage walking school buses (grants are announced at www.oregonsaferoutes.org). Set annual goals for increases in the percentage of students walking and biking to school, and pursue programs to meet those goals. Oak Heights is a fitting first school for implementation, given the amenable walking/biking infrastructure in the area and the high level of administrator support. Goals can subsequently be set at other schools. From the Eugene/Springfield 2012 Safe Routes Regional Strategy: "The SRTS program requires active management based within school districts to be effective. Coordinators gather data; organize and conduct events; recruit volunteers; promote activities; work with school staff, students, and parents; develop school improvement plans, evaluate walk/bike route conditions; seek partnerships to help conduct SRTS classes, events, and raise funds; and evaluate program effectiveness."

2) With funding as described in #1, expand survey/tally data gathering and infrastructure evaluations to other elementary schools. Create scatter maps showing student locations similar to the ones created for the Junior High in 2014 and Oak Heights in 2015, which can be useful in establishing walk/bike recruitment areas and walking school bus routes. Promoting these maps empowers families to walk/bike on their own as well, and they can be used as a baseline for creating preferred-routes maps.

3) Pursue funding opportunities for an upgraded and covered bike rack or a bike cage at Oak Heights. Conduct a bike rack inventory at other schools to determine rack/cage needs, then apply jointly for funding if applicable.

4) Add language to School Board policy supporting active transportation. For example, see the Corvallis School District Wellness Plan is at: http://web.csd509j.net/district_information/departments_and_services/wellness/local_wellness_nutrition_program.html. In Section III, Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education: Item G: Safe Routes to School: "When appropriate, the district will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts. The wellness council will explore the availability of federal 'safe routes to school' funds, administered by the state department of transportation, to finance such improvements." Also consider language about the consideration of walk/bike facilities when remodeling or resiting a school.

A School Board member who also is a member of the Safe Routes team is interested in pursuing SRTS policies with the School Board and Superintendent. The timeliness of this project is bolstered by Sweet Home's recent participation in a two-year Livability Initiative funded by the Federal Highway Administration. The initiative focuses on identifying opportunities to enhance community development, with a particular focus on transportation as a key component of enhancing livability. Sweet Home is one of 4 communities across the U.S. chosen for this initiative.

5) Consider having Junior High students who are members of the Outdoor Club help teach bike safety to elementary schoolers via a bike rodeo, etc.

6) Host a district-wide training in Cylce Safe bike safety curriculum for interested teachers, and encourage incorporating lessons into PE or other classes (coordinate with state Safe Routes staff and district about timeline). Philomath or Albany bike fleets could be borrowed for class(es), and class(es) could culminate with a bike rodeo and/or maintenance fair. Review best practices from the Albany school district's robust bike education program. Use bike fleets to ensure students aren't left out if they do not own bikes / helmets.

7) Continue communicate with the City of Sweet Home Path Program regarding funding for construction and upgrades to ADA ramps, missing sidewalk segment links, signage, etc.

8) Investigate district-level policies for transportation efficiencies for students living within a 1-mile radius of their schools, especially elementary students. For example, expanded use of crossing guards.

The top concerns expressed in the parent survey in Sept. 2015 (see report included with this document) were: distance; amount of traffic along route; speed of traffic along route; weather/climate; and safety of intersections/crossings. Planning the locations, routes, and timing of walking school buses-- which have been identified as a priority project for the team-- can help mitigate all of these concerns.

We believe the priorities detailed in this document would provide tangible safety

benefits for the school and community, resulting in increased walking and biking among students.

Section 6: Submitting the Action Plan

Submit this completed Action Plan Template and all supplemental materials including any optional collected information, along with the Safe Routes to School Application.

Optional Assessments Page – Not Required

You may use this page to record additional information for the school team's use.

1. Pictures and/or video footage were taken to document the barriers and hazards.
2. If information was gathered by interviewing additional sources, check all that apply:
 - school patrol or crossing guard or safety supervisor
 - law enforcement
 - school bus driver or dispatcher
 - local roadway or traffic safety engineer
 - city or county planner

Highlight information learned:

All of these members were active in the Action Plan team. The City of Sweet Home also produced scatter maps showing student residence locations in proximity to the school. The maps are included with this report.

3. Check here if Observational Survey was completed.

This is how our students travel to and from school:

Travel Mode	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Public Transit	Other
# of Students							

4. Record any additional information gathered, such as traffic volume data, speed study data, etc.

The police chief plans to gather traffic speed and volume data near the school sometime around the start of the 2015-16 school year.