MPOs as Catalysts for Health:
Improving Community Health Through Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School

Carrie Turner, Southern States Coordinator
Safe Routes to School National Partnership

AMPO Conference
Atlanta, GA  October 23, 2014
Our mission is to advocate for safe walking and bicycling to and from schools and in daily life, to improve the health and well-being of America’s children, and to foster the creation of livable, sustainable communities.
What We Do

• Improve quality of life for kids, families, and communities
• Advance policy change
• Catalyze support for safe, healthy, active communities
• Share deep expertise
In 1969, nearly 50% of all children walked or bicycled to school. Today, just 13% walk or bicycle.

All kids and communities deserve access to safe, healthy streets and opportunities for physical activity.
Walking one mile to and from school is two-thirds of the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity a day.

Children who walk and bicycle to school are more physically active, have lower body mass index scores, lower obesity levels and are more likely to meet physical activity guidelines.

Children in neighborhoods with sidewalks and safe places to cross the street are more likely to be physically active.
Communities with Complete Streets have stronger real estate markets. Homes located near bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities are worth more and maintain their value.

Street design that is inclusive of all modes improves conditions for existing businesses and helps revitalize an area and attract new development.

Vehicle-dependent households devote 20% more income to transportation than households in communities with Complete Streets.

Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure create more jobs per million dollars spent than road repair and construction projects.
Resources Available at www.saferoutespartnership.org
Complete Streets in the South

Complete Streets policies improve transportation safety by requiring infrastructure that makes streets more accessible for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists and public transportation passengers. Complete
Innovative Collaborations: Case Studies

• Complete Streets in Tennessee
• Formalizing the Land Use/Transportation/Health Connection in Ohio
• Multi-State Collaboration: Southern States Forum
Tennessee has a total of 9 Complete Streets policies at all levels of government. Its five municipal policies cover 1,526,562 people, or 24% of the state population.

Tennessee’s state-level Complete Streets policy was adopted in 2003, updated in 2010 and is currently under review at TDOT.
August, 2013 - article printed “Chattanooga Deserves Complete Streets”

January, 2014 - Public Meeting to present Complete Streets concept

April 1, 2014 Chattanooga, TN passes a Complete Streets Ordinance
Key members of a Complete Streets Team

• Engineers with experience in local codes and existing policy

• Planners with a passion for active and/or multi modal transportation

• Champions from local businesses

• Elected officials

• Health Educators

• Citizens

• Bicycle and Pedestrian Advocates
The Complete Streets Ordinance in Chattanooga “... tells the public that a balanced approach to transportation is a driving force for how we plan our roads.” Bert Kuykendall, City of Chattanooga Department of Transportation
Complete Streets Outcomes In Chattanooga

- Extensive Bike Lane Plan
- 1.4 M Grant for protected bike lanes
- Bicycle and Pedestrian counts
- Safe Routes to School Grant
- Multimodal Access Grant Applications
- Funding for new bus route
- MAP 21 Grant Applications
- TIGER Grant Application

Credit: Chattanooga Times Free Press
Formalizing the Land Use/Transportation/Health Connection in Ohio

Ohio MPOs with Complete Streets Regional Policy:

• MORPC/Columbus area
• MVRPC/Dayton area
• NOACA/Cleveland Area
• TMACOG/Toledo Area

Other MPOs/RPOs are considering policy for their regions.
Ohio MPO: Safe Routes to School Support

- MORPC – SRTS Forums, supports Walk to School/Bike to School days, provides teacher toolkits and assistance, walk audits
- MVRPC – annual forum, provides community support and walk audits
- NOACA – participates in NE Ohio SRTS Forum
Ohio Safe Routes Network Health Benchmarks

- “Ohio’s Plan to Prevent and Reduce Chronic Disease: 2014-2018”

- Assisting the Ohio Department of Health’s Creating Healthy Community (CHC) program: in 16 counties in Ohio, health and economic inequity areas

- Assisting with first Health Impact Assessment (HIA) developed in conjunction with the development of a Safe Routes to School Travel Plan (Columbus)
Fostering Multi-State Collaboration: Southern States forum

Southern States Active Transportation Focus Groups

By the numbers:

• 4 calls
• 43 participants
• 8 states represented (FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX)
“A policy is a beginning, not an end.”
—Complete Streets Focus Group

“We need more Southern examples and success stories.”
—Complete Streets Focus Group

“It’s really important to provide training along with passing Shared Use agreements”
—Shared Use Focus Group

“We need to be discussing school siting policies and allowable land uses”
—Shared Use Focus Group
“Show active transportation is not dangerous.”
—Active Transportation Focus Group

“We need communities to be designed to walk and bike.”
—Leveraging Funding Focus Group

“How can we rethink how transportation happens in our community?”
—Leveraging Funding Focus Group

“Economic and health benefits help frame the argument.”
—Active Transportation Focus Group
Barriers & Challenges

- Public perceptions, myths and misconceptions
- Environment, climate, and topography
- Land Use, school siting, and sprawl
- Lack of access
- Project delivery and implementation challenges
- Political challenges
- Policy challenges
- Incomplete or unavailable data

Needs

- Funding
- Data and Technical Assistance
- Fact Sheets and Materials
- Innovation
Focus Group Input

Opportunities

- Show smart use of taxpayer funds
- Partner with sports league for maintenance and volunteer coaches
- Build bridges between public health, planners, and engineers
- Fund needed/desired infrastructure through private-sector/developer investment

Potential Partners

- Municipal leaders in rural areas
- Youth and adult sports leagues
- Cooperative Extension
- City agencies
- Habitat for Humanity
- AARP
- Transit agencies
- Businesses
- Private developers
- Transportation planning agencies (MPOs and RPOs/TPOs)
- Non-profits and other advocacy organizations
Best Practices

WALK with a DOC | Take a STEP toward better HEALTH

Dealing With Crime and Disorder in Urban Parks

Jim Hilborn

Transportation & Land Use Cycle

Increased Land Use

ARE YOU STREET SMART?

Go Wayne Go

Unlock the Doors™ and keep kids healthy.

Atlanta BeltLine
Next Steps

• Regular communication with Southern States practitioners and advocates

• Developing resources and webinars specific to the South

• Workgroups around specific needs that were identified by Focus Groups

• **Participant Recruitment!** If you are an advocate or practitioner in a Southern State, please join us!
Next Steps: Furthering MPO Involvement in Active Transportation

• Serve as local catalysts
• Ensure ongoing expenditure of funds (SAFETEA-LU, MAP-21)
• Establish a specific SRTS set-aside
• Incorporate Active Transportation or Safe Routes to School components into project prioritization
Contact Us

Carrie Turner
Southern States Coordinator
Safe Routes to School National Partnership
828/505-8422
carrie@saferoutespartnership.org
Asheville, NC

www.saferoutespartnership.org