

Westchester County DOT Safe Routes to School and Walkable Communities Program Evaluation



NYMTC Brown Bag Lunch

January 20, 2010

SRTS and Walkable Communities Program Goals

- Encourage walking and biking
- Reduce traffic
- Improve air quality
- Enhance quality of life
- Encourage a healthy life style
- Include pedestrians and bicycles in transportation planning process

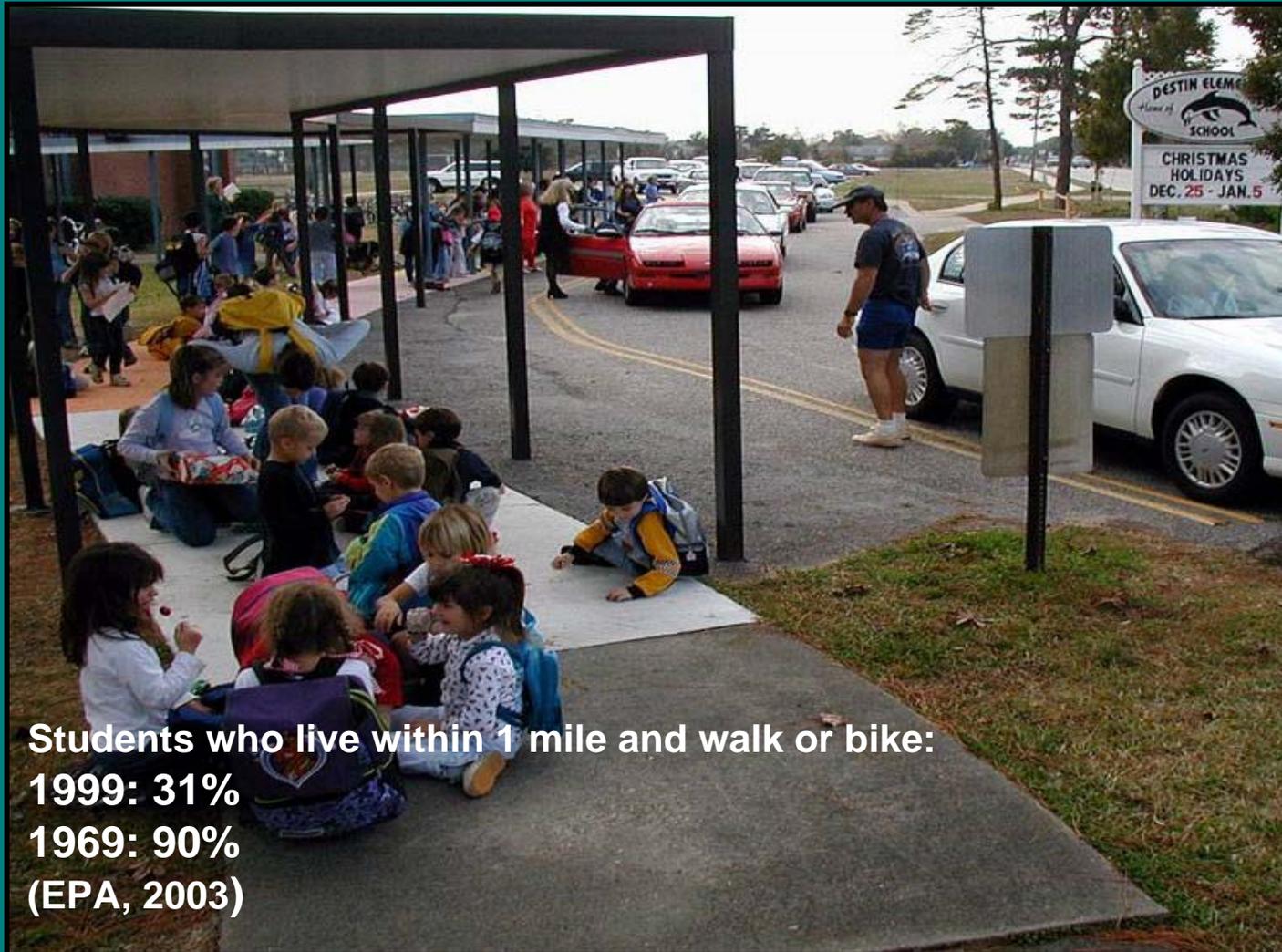


SRTS - Why Walk or Bike to School?

The Problem

- 25% of morning traffic is attributed to school-related trips in some communities
- Automobiles are a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions
- Over half of children arrive at school by automobile
- Only 16% of U.S. children walk or bike to school (2001), regardless of distance to school (42% in 1969)
- Approximately 18% of children 6-19 are overweight
- 33% of children are at risk for becoming overweight
- School buses account for 75% diesel engines on local roads

SRTS – The Problem



Students who live within 1 mile and walk or bike:

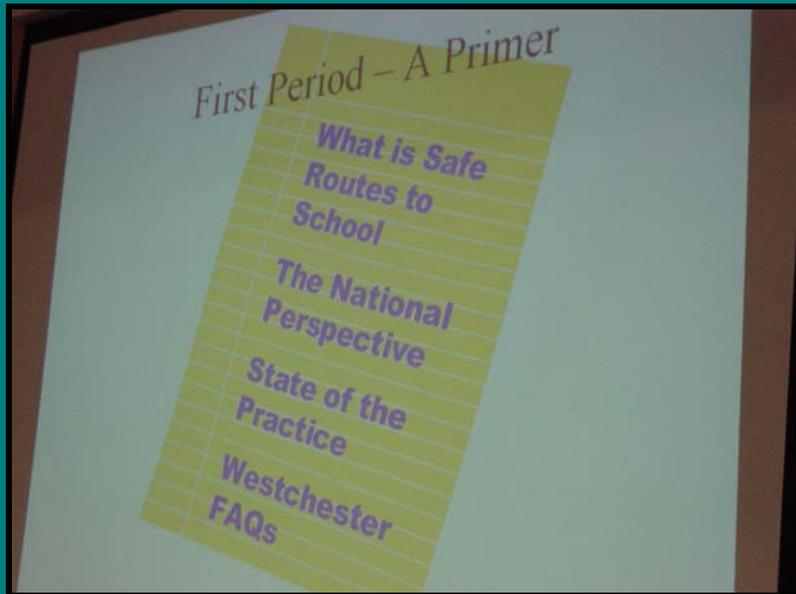
1999: 31%

1969: 90%

(EPA, 2003)

SRTS – WCDOT Approach

- Fall 2004 – Countywide workshop, explaining what SRTS is
- WCDOT developed “Road Show” for individual presentations to communities
- Fall 2006, presented “Road Show” at Mid-Hudson South Mobility Advisory Committee (subsequently Mobility Advisory Forum) meeting and to numerous school districts and municipalities



SRTS and Walkable Community Workshops

- Half-day event
- Site visit prior to the event to observe conditions
- Outside consultant
- Visioning Exercise
- Field visit
- Development of Recommendations



SRTS and Walkable Community Workshops

- Funded through NYMTC subregional planning program
- Other workshops throughout the NYMTC region

SRTS and Walkable Community Workshops

- Require broad base of support:

Municipal and elected officials, planning and engineering department representatives, law enforcement representatives

- In addition, SRTS workshops require:

PTA representatives, interested parents, school nurses, gym teachers, health teachers, principals, superintendents, Board of Education representatives, law enforcement representatives



Walkable Community and SRTS Communities Served

Since 2001:

- 13 Walkable Community Workshops
 - Ardsley, Bedford Hills/Village, Greenburgh Routes 119/100A, Hartsdale 4 corners, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Ossining, Pleasantville, Port Chester, Yonkers, Larchmont

Since 2005:

- 11 SRTS Workshops
 - Ardsley, Bedford, Mamaroneck, New Rochelle (2 schools), Ossining, Pelham Manor, Pleasantville, Rye, Mount Vernon, Tarrytown

Walkable Community and SRTS Workshops Program Evaluation

- Purpose - determine value in terms of:
 - 1) how workshops were perceived by participants, and
 - 2) level of follow up activity
- Individual, face-to-face interviews conducted
- Summary of interview prepared and shared with participants – 100% participation

Walkable Community Workshops – Summary of Follow-up Activity

- Tied into Comprehensive Plan or Broader Municipal Planning Effort (all communities)
- Capital Improvements Completed or Planned (9 communities)
- Basis of Funding Application (8 communities)

Mount Vernon – Petrillo Plaza Project



Major transit hub

- 3,600 Bee-line riders
- 1,500 Metro-North riders at Mount Vernon East

Center island median, new bus shelters, wider sidewalks, landscaping, seating



Walkable Community Workshops Summary of Capital Improvements Planned or Completed

- Mount Vernon - Petrillo Plaza Project
- Ossining - Route 9 road diet – from 2 lanes to one lane in each direction
- Hartsdale, Ardsley - Crosswalks, restriping, left turn prohibitions, speed table
- Pleasantville – Initiated study of Memorial Plaza
- Irvington – Basis of SRTS application
- Hastings-on-Hudson – Basis of Quality Communities application
- Greenburgh – Route 119/100A – Incorporated into NYSDOT project eliminating overpass

SRTS Workshops

Summary of Follow-up Activity - Engineering

Rye Road Diet – Boston Post Road



SRTS Workshops

Summary of Follow-up Activity- Engineering

- Quaker Ridge Road traffic calming – New Rochelle
- Signage, sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, speed zones, curb extensions, bike racks



SRTS Workshops

Summary of Follow-up Activity

Education and Encouragement

- Walking school buses
- Walking Wednesdays
- Golden Sneaker awards
- Poster/Video contests
- Crosswalk education
- PE curriculum tie in
- Safety assemblies



SRTS Workshops

Summary of Follow-up Activity

Education and Encouragement

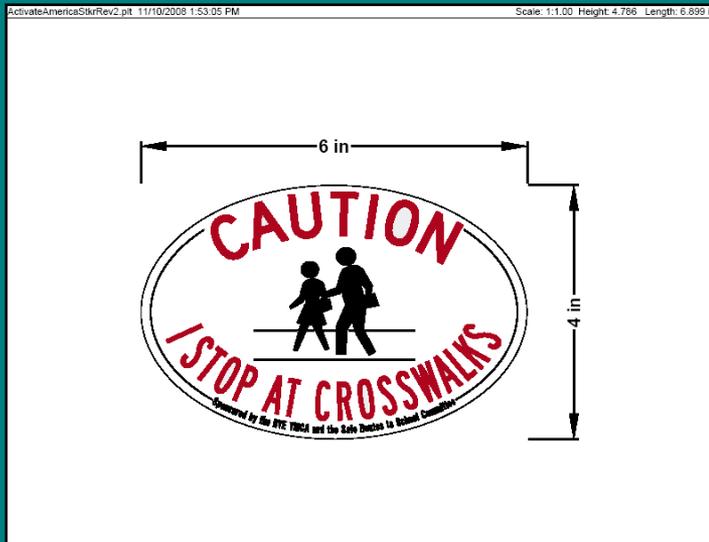


SRTS Workshops

Summary of Follow-up Activity

Education and Encouragement

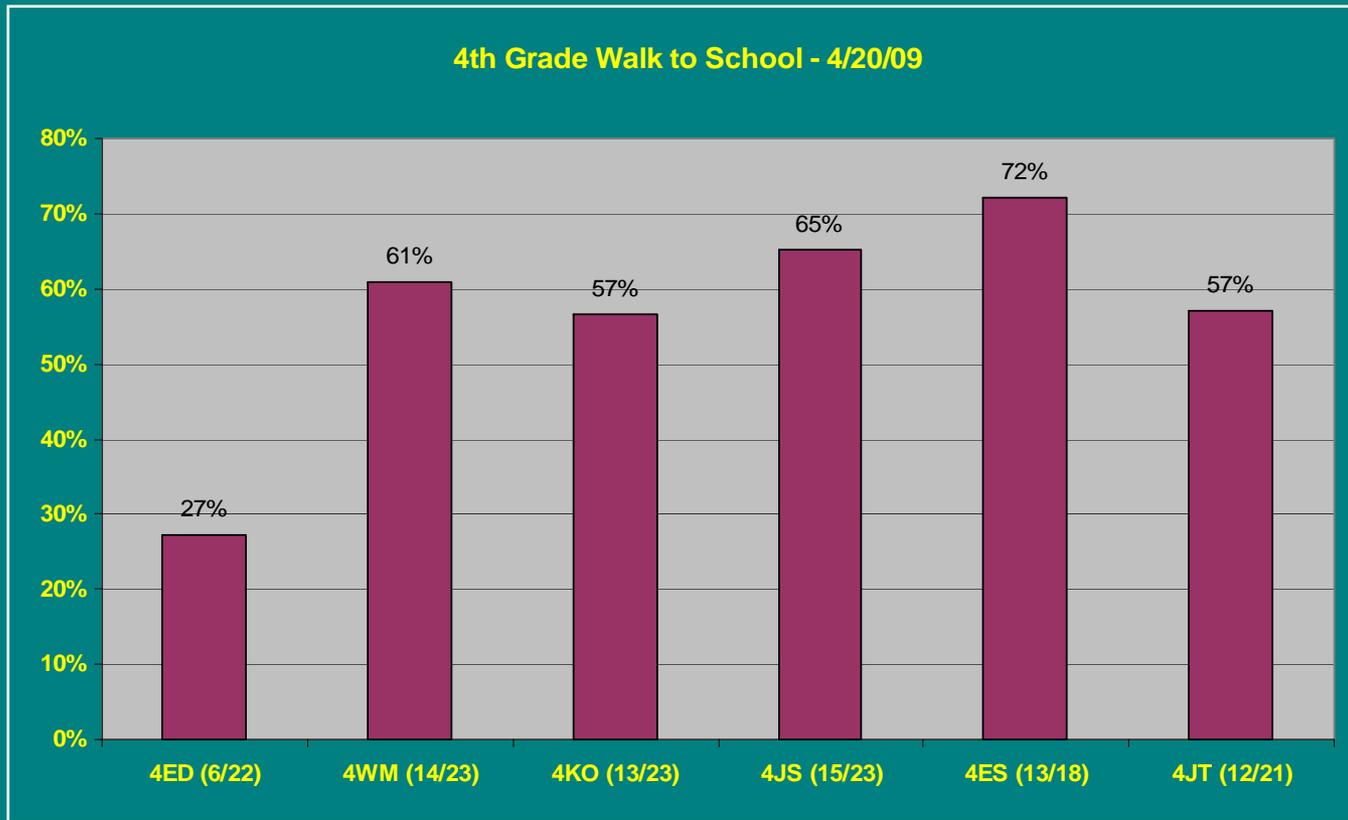
- Banners, Decals
- Educating Parents



SRTS Workshops

Summary of Follow-up Activity – Evaluation

- Classroom documentation



SRTS Workshops

Summary of Follow-up Activity - Enforcement

Additional crossing guards,
speed monitoring



Walkable Community and SRTS Workshops

Key Components to a Successful Workshop

- Bring people together around a common concern
- Obtain expertise from an outside professional
- Facilitate interaction among key stakeholders
- Make people feel they have a voice in the planning process

Conclusion:

Workshops can serve as the first step in the planning process.



SRTS Local Initiatives Conference

October 16, 2009

- Purpose: Allow communities and school districts to showcase accomplishments and share ideas
- Link between transportation and public health



SRTS Local Initiatives Conference

October 16, 2009

- 2 panel discussions: 1) Engineering; 2) Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation
- School districts and municipalities represented on panels
- Over 100 attendees



SRTS Local Initiatives Conference

- Exhibit tables – encourage information sharing and dialogue



Next Steps

Two SRTS workshops since Local Initiatives Conference; additional SRTS workshop scheduled in March 2010.



For More Information:

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