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

Source: CDC Survey
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

An initiative from the Rye YMCA and our Activate America partners
SRTS Workshops
Summary of Follow-up Activity – Evaluation

• Classroom documentation

![4th Grade Walk to School - 4/20/09](chart)
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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