Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan Update Fact Sheet

Purpose and Goals

The Billings Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan Phase 11 Update aims to recommend policy and programmatic changes, as well as identify and prioritize infrastructure projects, to improve safety and accessibility for children walking and biking to school in Billings. Additionally, it seeks to increase the number of children using these active modes of transportation. The plan wants to ensure that all students have safe and accessible routes to school, regardless of where they live.

Summary of Findings

The plan found that many students and their families do not feel safe walking or biking to school because of busy streets, lack of sidewalks, and unmarked crossings. It also identified areas where improvements can be made, such as adding more crosswalks, sidewalks, and bike paths. The plan emphasizes the need for ongoing community involvement and collaboration to achieve these goals.

Methodology and Strategies

The development of the SRTS Plan involved data collection, public surveys, and meetings with stakeholders, including school principals and crossing guards. Strategies include prioritizing projects that improve safety and accessibility, creating educational campaigns, and leveraging partnerships with local organizations. The plan also recommends regular evaluation to ensure the program's effectiveness.

How the Topic Impacts Community Health

Safe Routes to School programs improve community health by encouraging walking and biking, which reduces traffic congestion and air pollution. They also promote physical activity, which can help reduce obesity and other health issues in children. Safer routes make it easier for students to walk or bike to school, leading to healthier and more active lifestyles.

Community Engagement

Community engagement was crucial in developing the SRTS Plan. Public input was gathered through surveys, meetings, and workshops, and this feedback helped shape the plan's goals and strategies. The planning team worked with local schools, government agencies, and community organizations to ensure the plan meets the needs of the community. Ongoing engagement will be essential to the plan's success.

Implementation Timeline Summary

The implementation of the SRTS Plan is divided into low-, medium, and high-impact lists. Projects were prioritized by 4 categories, including traffic safety, feasibility, demand, and equity. Regular reviews and updates will ensure the plan remains relevant and effective

Results and Next Steps

The plan aims to create a safer and more connected community by increasing the number of students who walk or bike to school. The next steps include securing funding, planning and designing projects, and beginning construction. Continuous monitoring and evaluation will track the plan's progress and guide necessary adjustments. Collaboration with community partners will be vital for successful implementation.

Proposed Project Types

1. **Sidewalk Improvements Near Schools**: Fill in gaps and repair existing sidewalks around schools to ensure safe walking routes for students.
2. **Crosswalk Enhancements**: Install high-visibility crosswalks at key intersections near schools to improve pedestrian safety.
3. **Traffic Calming Measures**: Implement measures such as speed bumps and signage to reduce vehicle speeds in school zones.
4. **Educational Programs**: Launch safety education programs for students, parents, and drivers to promote awareness of pedestrian and bicycle safety.

For more details about short-term projects as well as mid and long-term projects, please visit the [full document here.](#)

Walking school buses allow children to walk to school with friends and trusted adults (pg 116 of original report)

This factsheet is a joint initiative of Healthy By Design and the Billings-Yellowstone County Planning Division. It aims to enhance awareness of local long-term documents, plans, and policies within the community.