



Active Living Resource Center City Safe Routes to School Program

Post Workshop Report and Follow-up

Workshop Location
**810 Palace Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota**

Focus School
**Monroe Achievement Plus
Community School**

Workshop Date
**Wednesday, December 2,
2006**

Workshop Time
7:45 am - 4 pm

Local Coordinators
**Sara Merz
Active Living Ramsey County**

**Jeni Snyder
St. Paul Public Schools
(SPPS)**

**Raymond Yu
Director of Student Services
SPPS**

Background

Monroe Achievement Plus Community School is a K-8 school in West St. Paul. Enrollment is 440 students with over 80 percent receiving free and reduced lunch. Many of Monroe's students are bused or driven. For those students who walk, the school has organized a School Safety Patrol. The Patrol functions similar to a Walking School Bus with one difference: it is led by older students instead of adults. Four routes have been designated, but at the time of our visit only one

was active. (Lack of interest and lack of students along the routes were the reasons given for the decline in participation.)

This City SRTS workshop differed from the other four pilots in a number of ways that are important to mention.

- a) **Format.** The Monroe workshop represents the first pairing of the City SRTS workshop with the ALRC's new Community Assessment Tool (CAT). The CAT was developed in partnership with the University of Oregon. Due to this addition the program included two segments: a morning session designed for a general audience on City SRTS; and an afternoon session that included training on the PDA tool, a field exercise with data collection, and the debriefing session with a mapping of barriers around the school.
- b) **Participation.** Due to a limited number of PDAs only 18 persons participated in the afternoon field exercise. Nine teams of two were formed. One team member was tasked with assessing the barriers at intersections; the other with assessing the walkability of the streets. Each team was responsible for assessing all streets and intersections within its area.
- c) **Audience.** The majority of attendees either represented the City of St. Paul, or the St. Paul Public School system. This was by design. The local workshop sponsors were interested in the dual goals of assembling a more competitive SRTS application for 2007 and in evaluating a data collection tool—like the CAT—for assessing existing conditions around the city's schools.
- d) **Enrollment.** The City of St. Paul practices School Choice. That is, students may attend a school of their choosing within the city and may be given free school busing.

Attendees

Participating in the workshop were personnel from: St. Paul Public Schools, Monroe Community School, Ramsey County, City of St. Paul Department of Public Works, City of St. Paul Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota, Active Living Ramsey County, and Transportation for Livable Communities. An estimated 25-30 persons attended all or part of the workshop.

Existing Conditions

Monroe does not have a large number of students that currently walk to school; reportedly this varies from year to year. Though we were unable to obtain official estimates on the number of students walking, Sharon Roerty and Mark Plotz visited the school on Thursday, December 1 to observe dismissal and noticed that the majority of students were riding the bus.

Few neighborhood barriers to walkability were observed. The neighborhood around Monroe has streets with sidewalks on both sides of the street (with some exceptions), traffic is relatively light, and blocks are short (the streets are on a grid pattern). Highway 7 is a busy road within half a mile of the school. Students who must cross that road are, provided bus service – this is generally known as "Hazard Busing."

Note: In prior years the School Safety Patrol was equipped to cross Highway 7. Patrol leaders were supplied with keys to activate a Walk phase at the signalized intersections along the road. This route is no longer active.

Citywide, St. Paul is interested in Safe Routes to School. The State of Minnesota has already funded one round of SRTS projects. The City of St. Paul applied, scored high, but was denied its request for funding in 2006. For 2007 it will reapply, and it sent a number of its staff (Engineering, Public Works, Public Schools) to this workshop for training in City SRTS.

Commitment to Action

Workshop participants expressed interest in the following initiatives and actions especially in the creation of a district wide approach to SRTS.

- ✓ Street signs with effective wording and/or universal icons
- ✓ Awareness and training programs for parents, students, crossing guards and school monitors to make it safer and encourage more students to walk to school.
- ✓ Engaging the school community in creating a SRTS plan for each school

The St. Paul School District will be reapplying for a SRTS funding from the Minnesota, Department of Transportation.

Workshop Facilitators

Sharon Z. Roerty, AICP/PP
Active Living Resource Center & National Center
for Bicycling & Walking
sharon@bikewalk.org

Gary MacFadden
Active Living Resource Center & National Center
for Bicycling & Walking
gary@bikewalk.org

Mark Plotz
Active Living Resource Center & National Center
for Bicycling & Walking
mark@bikewalk.org

Marc Schlosberg, PhD
University of Oregon

Jake Callister
University of Oregon

Internet Resources

The Active Living Resource Center supports a web site that includes valuable SRTS information on it
<http://www.activelivingresources.org>