



## **Active Living Resource Center City Safe Routes to School Program**

### **Post Workshop Report and Follow-up**

Workshop Location

**Lawson State College**

Focus School

**Wenonah Elementary  
School**

Workshop Date

**Wednesday, November 8,  
2006**

Workshop Time

**9 pm - Noon**

Local Coordinators

**Tom Maxwell, Regional  
Planning Commission of  
Greater Birmingham**

**Paula Stanton, JCCEO – the  
Community Action Agency of  
Birmingham**

### **Background**

A City Safe Routes to School Workshop was held at Lawson State Community College on November 8, 2006 to look at the conditions and travel patterns around the college, Wenonah Elementary School and the adjacent High School. The campus of Lawson State Community College surrounds both Wenonah Elementary and High Schools.

Tom Maxwell (RPCGB) and Paula Stanton (JCCEO) served as the local coordinators for this workshop as well as for the workshop that was held on

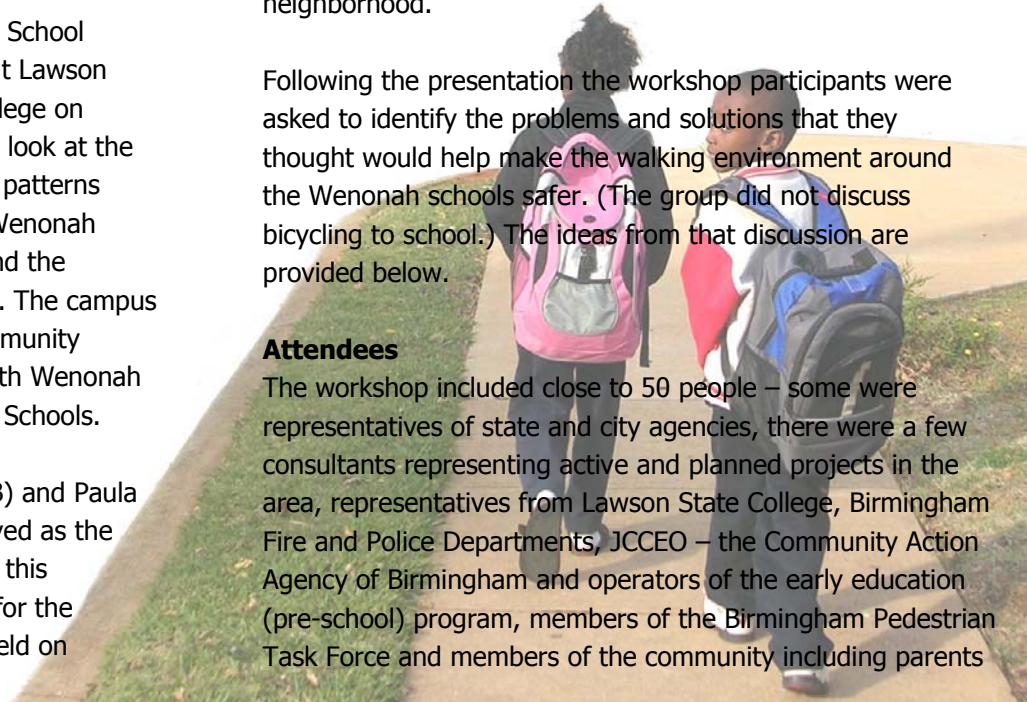
November 7<sup>th</sup> in the Ensley Neighborhood. The City SRTS presentation was made by Sharon Roerty, Director of the Active Living Resource Center with Mark Plotz, ALRC/NCBW Program Manager. The Active Living Resource Center (ALRC) is a program managed by the National Center for Bicycling & Walking and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The presentation focused on the benefits of SRTS programs; the common problems and barriers that school children confront on their walk to school. Workshop participants were given a worksheet to complete to identify the problems that the Wenonah Elementary school children face or would face if they walked or cycled to school. A copy of the worksheet is provided at the end of this report. The completed worksheets were collected. Ronald Jackson (Executive Director of Birmingham's *Citizens for Better Schools*) took them to review and promised to summarize the participant responses. The presentation also provided information and slides (photographs) to demonstrate low cost remedies to the problems. A copy of the Power Point presentation was provided to Tom Maxwell. On the same CD as the presentation, we also included all of the photographs that were taken around the elementary, high school and nearby neighborhood.

Following the presentation the workshop participants were asked to identify the problems and solutions that they thought would help make the walking environment around the Wenonah schools safer. (The group did not discuss bicycling to school.) The ideas from that discussion are provided below.

### **Attendees**

The workshop included close to 50 people – some were representatives of state and city agencies, there were a few consultants representing active and planned projects in the area, representatives from Lawson State College, Birmingham Fire and Police Departments, JCCEO – the Community Action Agency of Birmingham and operators of the early education (pre-school) program, members of the Birmingham Pedestrian Task Force and members of the community including parents



and grandparents of children who attend Wenonah Elementary School, members of the Alabama Bicycle Coalition, American Heart Association and many more. Tom Maxwell from the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham has the meeting registration list.

The purpose of the SRTS workshop is in-part to provide information and education on SRTS programs and initiatives. The other part is to help jump start a local program – to get a commitment from a group of concerned local people who are willing to form a local task force or committee to work through a series of steps to make the walking environment around the school and the routes leading to the school safer and better for the students; and to invite and engage others in the community to work with them. In short to give life to the thoughts and ideas shared at the workshop.

In the Wenonah SRTS Workshop the following people volunteered to be on the Wenonah SRTS Task Force with their contact information as listed on sign-up sheet.

### *EXISTING CONDITIONS*

- ✓ Fines are doubled in constructions zones--why not for schools?
- ✓ Access to the school for all users is a problem (drivers, buses, walkers, community members)
- ✓ Road sightlines are a problem: hills, valleys, curvy road.
- ✓ Traffic on Wilson Road is very heavy.
- ✓ Sidewalks are too narrow near schools. What will happen at the new High School?
- ✓ The sidewalk problem just isn't limited to the schools. Back in the adjacent neighborhoods the sidewalk network is incomplete.
- ✓ Railroad crossings are a problem. Lots of kids are crossing... but there are few crossings and the railroad divided the neighborhood/community.
- ✓ Oil tankers on Wilson Road are a problem.
- ✓ School buses are not extending stop arms when dropping off kids. This means that cars are passing the buses.
- ✓ The fence at the Elementary School is a barrier (makes the school look like a prison).

### *SOLUTIONS*

- ✓ Take down fence by the Elementary School
- ✓ Enforcement (speed, double parking, illegal use of center lane)
- ✓ Drop off zones are needed at new High School, Elementary School, JCCEO/Headstart
- ✓ Traffic calming on Wilson Road.
- ✓ Consider adding a crosswalk near the High School (only crosswalk is by Elementary School)
- ✓ Improve the existing crosswalks. They should be brighter with better signs.
- ✓ Sidewalks do not connect to crosswalk near the Elementary School.
- ✓ Meet with the construction company (building new High School) to find about sidewalk plans/widths
- ✓ Solution: Contact Alabama Operation Lifesaver for safety education classes on railroad crossings at high school, elementary schools (Denise from Pedestrian Task Force)



## Initial Commitments

Ronald Jackson volunteered to be the Chair of this group – at least at the beginning to get it going. Sharon Roerty (ALRC/NCBW) promised Ronald that she would provide him with the following documents so that he could share them with the group.

In response to a suggestion that Sharon made, Ronald said he would speak to the Mayor about the group and suggest that a media event might be held to announce Birmingham's first SRTS Task Force.

Felicia Watkins and Joseph Rucker committed to reaching out to the Principals and Parent Teacher Organizations of Wenonah Elementary School and Wenonah High School. They will ask them to participate on the task force or to appoint a representative to the task force. They will also ask the Principal for names of parents and staff members who might be interested in participating on the task force.

Dequinda Horn committed to reaching out to the Wenonah Neighborhood Association to get interested members to volunteer and contribute to the efforts of the task force.

- Bill Luckerson of the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) serves as the SRTS Coordinator for Alabama and committed to being an adviser to the group and working with them to secure funding for their action plan.
- Alicia Rudolf, a consulting engineer with Volkert & Associates, Inc. working on a nearby project with the City of Birmingham and the Birmingham School Board asked to be kept informed so that she could consider the groups goals in her project.

## Workshop Facilitators

Sharon Z. Roerty, AICP / PP  
Active Living Resource  
Center Director & National  
Center for Bicycling and  
Walking  
[sharon@bikewalk.org](mailto:sharon@bikewalk.org)  
973.378.3137

Mark Plotz  
Program Manager, Active  
Living Resource Center &  
National Center for  
Bicycling and Walking  
[mark@bikewalk.org](mailto:mark@bikewalk.org)  
301.656.4220

## Internet Resources

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