

2021-2026

VIRGINIA SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN

September 2021



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INTRODUCTION



Introduction

The Virginia Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program has been active since 2007 and helps schools and communities make walking and biking to school safe, convenient, and organic activities. The 2012-2017 Five-Year Strategic Plan guided the program through some major changes, creating the program structure and elements that exist today. Over the years the program has been fortunate to have consistent funding, but the funding situation has changed.

VDOT intends to use this 2021-2026 Strategic Plan to secure dedicated funding and increase the effectiveness and reach of the program over the next five years.

What is Safe Routes to School (SRTS)?

Safe Routes to School is a movement that aims to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. The nature of the program is such that a community SRTS effort can be started by almost anyone interested in encouraging kids to walk or bicycle to school, including local government, school staff and administration, parents, PTA members, law enforcement, non-profit groups, advocates and students.

The first federally funded Safe Routes to School program was created in 2005 as a part of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) transportation legislation and has since undergone several legislative and policy transformations. The federal SRTS Program focuses on K-8 schools and was created with three goals:

- Enable and encourage students to walk and bike to school.
- Make biking and walking to school safer and more appealing.
- Facilitate projects and activities in the vicinity of schools that will improve safety, reduce traffic, reduce air pollution, and reduce fuel consumption.

From 2005 to 2011, state departments of transportation received SAFETEA-LU funds earmarked for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure SRTS projects. In 2012, a new transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) eliminated the stand-alone federal SRTS program but allowed SRTS infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects to compete for funding through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). In 2015, the passage of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, continued this funding structure.

What does Virginia's SRTS Program look like?

The 2012-2017 Five-Year Strategic Plan identified three goals to help the Virginia program meet the purposes set forth in the SAFETEA-LU federal SRTS legislation:

Goal 1: Create a greater awareness of SRTS throughout the state.

Goal 2: Provide technical support or assistance to schools that wish to participate in SRTS, with priority for underserved populations.

Goal 3: Progressively increase the percentage of students walking and bicycling to school by producing physical and programmatic changes that make it feasible, attractive, and sustainable.

With changes to federal funding in 2012, the Virginia SRTS Program stopped directly funding infrastructure projects, and has focused on increasing outreach, education, technical assistance, and providing local programs with funding for non-infrastructure programs. Increases in students walking and biking to school require more infrastructure projects to make walking and bicycling safe and appealing, but these projects must compete with other project types for limited funding under TAP.

Program Structure

The 2012-2017 Five-Year Strategic Plan helped establish the current four-tiered program structure which established a connection between the State Coordinator and all the schools, students, and communities that participate in the program (Figure 1). The State Coordinator is part of the Virginia Department of Transportation’s (VDOT) Transportation and Mobility Planning Division and is supported by part-time program staff (consultants) who serve as Regional Coordinators for the Blue Ridge, Piedmont, and Coastal areas of the state. Direct outreach to schools and families is mostly done by Local Coordinators.

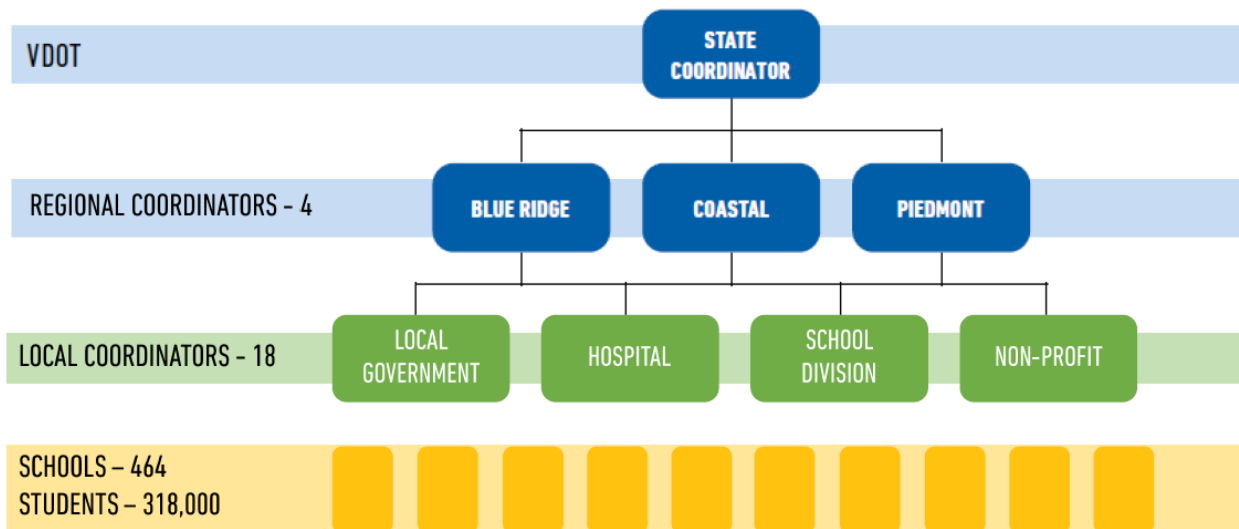


Figure 1 - Virginia SRTS Program Structure, 2020-2021

Since 2013, VDOT has used remaining SAFETEA-LU non-infrastructure money to fund full- and part-time Local Coordinator positions at school divisions, local governments, non-profits, and health organizations around the state. Unique to Virginia, the state-funded Local Coordinator program has grown from a cohort of 12 coordinators in 2013 to 18 coordinators during the 2020-2021 school year. Collectively, these Local Coordinators reach one-third of all elementary and

middle schools and one-fourth of all K-8 enrolled students the state of Virginia (464 schools and approximately 318,000 students).

Statewide Program Elements

While most SRTS activities take place at the local level, the Regional Coordinators are the core mechanism for providing state program resources and support, such as:

Outreach and Communication – The Virginia SRTS Program has a website with dozens of resources and distributes quarterly newsletters and regular e-blasts with information about grants and best practices from communities in Virginia and elsewhere. Regional Coordinators also reply to emails and telephone hotline calls requesting technical assistance.

Event Support – Virginia celebrates four SRTS-related events throughout the year: Crossing Guard Appreciation Day in February, Bike to School Day in May, Walk to School Day in October, and Student Travel Tally Week throughout September and October. The Regional Coordinators promote the events via the website and other communications, track local participation, and distribute school-level incentives.

Walkabout Mini-grants – These grants provide technical services to communities to support identification of infrastructure and non-infrastructure opportunities. Regional Coordinators facilitate a meeting with the school/applicant, conduct a walk audit of the area surrounding the school, and develop a report with infrastructure and non-infrastructure recommendations that can be used to support future grant applications.

QuickStart Mini-grants – These \$1,000 grants support local SRTS program activities; applications are available on the Virginia SRTS website. Past awardees have used them to purchase bicycle helmets and locks, pedometers, reflective gear, supplies for student safety patrols, and much more.

Local Coordinator Support – The Regional Coordinators provide support and manage the 20 Local Coordinators that work across the state. Support includes two annual trainings, monthly conference calls, and technical assistance with questions and resources.

Program Building Blocks

The mission of the Virginia SRTS Program is to have **more students safely walking and biking to school**. Program Building Blocks were developed in 2021 to provide a framework in which to organize the various strategies and activities needed to achieve this vision. The framework includes a foundation of an Equitable and Sustainable Program, and four pillars that collectively support more students safely walking and biking: Safe Streets, Welcoming Campuses, Safe Behaviors, and Supportive Culture. Each building block is described briefly below, and their relationship to each another is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2 - Virginia SRTS Program Building Blocks

An **Equitable and Sustainable Program** is the foundation of the Virginia SRTS Program and includes activities aimed at evaluating, institutionalizing, and building support for the program so it can continue from year to year. It also includes efforts to ensure that the program is equitable and takes proactive steps to reach out to and benefit students who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), students with disabilities, students who come from households with lower incomes, and other disadvantaged groups in the community.

Safe Streets includes efforts to improve the physical infrastructure of streets within 1-2 miles of schools, so they are safer places to walk and bike to school.

Welcoming Campuses includes crossing guards, arrival and dismissal procedures that support safe walking and bicycling, and on-campus amenities that serve pedestrians and bicyclists and make walking and bicycling to school feasible, such as bicycle parking.

Safe Behaviors includes driver safety education, driver pledge programs, pedestrian and bicycle safety/skills education, and other context-appropriate non-infrastructure methods for encouraging safe behaviors, such as progressive ticketing. It also includes efforts to address harassment, bullying, and other personal security concerns that are barriers to walking and bicycling to school.

Supportive Culture is dependent, to a large extent, on Safe Streets, Welcoming Campuses, and Safe Behaviors. It includes efforts to encourage students to walk and bicycle more frequently to school, including Walk and Bike to School Days, frequent walker programs, and similar efforts.

The recommendations in this 2021-2026 Strategic Plan support one or more of the Building Blocks and the program's overall mission to have more students safely walking and biking.

Accomplishments

In 2020, the Virginia SRTS Program drafted the Virginia Safe Routes to School Success Book, documenting the program’s history and accomplishments from 2005 to 2020. Some key highlights from this resource are included below:

High Rates of Walk and Bike to School Day Participation

Virginia has established a national reputation for high rates of Walk to School Day (WTSD) and Bike to School Day (BTSD) participation, ranking 2nd in the nation behind California in Walk to School Day events the past few years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 3).¹

	2017		2018		2019	
	BTSD	WTSD	BTSD	WTSD	BTSD	WTSD
California	372	709	376	1008	471	922
Virginia	226	328	286	364	313	386
Massachusetts	292	296	274	275	311	276

Figure 3 – States with the most Walk and Bike to School Day Events

Notably, there has been a steady increase in the number of events each year since the Virginia SRTS Program began funding Local Coordinators in 2013 (Figure 4). To encourage participation while students were engaged in virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Virginia SRTS Program encouraged flexibility, adopting the taglines “Any Way You Can!” for Walk to School Day and “Let’s Roll With It!” for Bike to School Day. Following national guidance, events could be registered by individual families, neighborhoods, or schools.

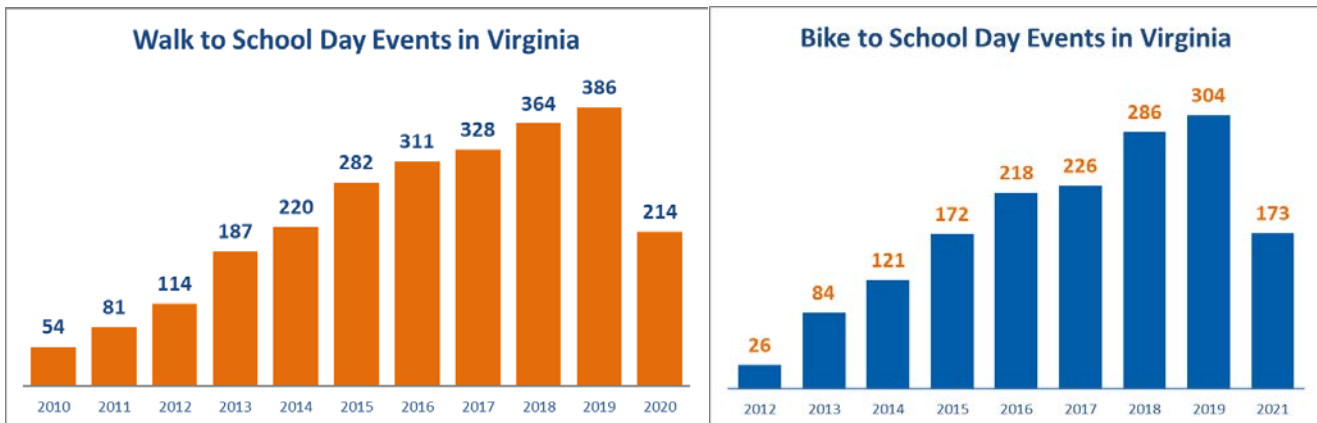


Figure 4 - Walk and Bike to School Day participation in Virginia

**NOTE: In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no BTSD events were recorded and registered WTSD events were relatively lower.*

¹ Data from walkbiketoschool.org

Effective Local Program Support

Both the QuickStart and Walkabout Mini-grant opportunities are popular and beneficial to communities across the state. Since 2012:

- Over **300 QuickStart Mini-grants** have supported local walking and biking events, purchased supplies to construct traffic gardens for safety education, provided students with bike helmets and lights, and much more.
- Regional Coordinators have conducted **27 Walkabouts** and several local SRTS programs have used the reports to support infrastructure grant applications.

Statewide Impacts

Since the beginning of the program in 2005, all nine VDOT Districts have benefitted from over \$37 million in grant funds for SRTS infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects (Figure 5).

Infrastructure			Non-Infrastructure	
No. of Awards	Total Award Amount	VDOT District	No. of Awards	Total Award Amount
2	\$800,000	Bristol	1	\$10,000
10	\$2,783,142	Culpeper	6	\$316,500
1	\$60,784	Fredericksburg	6	\$177,100
13	\$3,876,271	Hampton Roads	35	\$2,005,475
7	\$1,629,384	Lynchburg	5	\$256,400
20	\$6,764,027	Northern Virginia	38	\$2,465,826
20	\$5,688,160	Richmond	23	\$912,351
17	\$4,157,307	Salem	15	\$305,999
20	\$4,304,907	Staunton	16	\$659,072
110	\$30,063,982		145	\$7,108,723

Figure 5 – Total SRTS Grants by VDOT District, 2005-2019

Why create a 2021-2026 Strategic Plan?

Past funding sources for the Virginia SRTS Program are depleted or unstable, yet the demand for the SRTS program has never been higher.

VDOT has been using SAFETEA-LU funds to support SRTS non-infrastructure projects since 2007 and State Planning & Research (SPR) funds for state program support services since 2010. Beginning in 2013, all SRTS non-infrastructure projects awarded have included funding for Local Coordinator salaries and program supplies. These awards have totaled approximately \$1 million per year for the past seven years. However, following the 2021 awards this federal funding source will be depleted. State program support and services, including outreach and communication, event support, Walkabout mini-grants, and local program support, cost approximately \$200,000 per year. VDOT has allocated SPR funds to continue these program elements through the 2021-2022 school year but has not yet committed funds beyond this timeframe.

This 2021-2026 Strategic Plan outlines a vision for an expanded Virginia SRTS Program built on inter-agency coordination and focused on program sustainability. The following sections describe how this plan was developed and details recommended actions to fund, maintain, and expand the program in the future.

PLANNING & ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



Planning & Engagement Process

In developing this plan, VDOT consulted program stakeholders, including VDOT staff, grant awardees, and representatives from education, health, and advocacy organizations to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current program, inform the future direction of the program, and determine potential opportunities for funding, partnerships, and expanding the program in the future.

Program Assessment

The planning process began with a thorough assessment of the existing program in spring 2020. Program staff compiled 15 years of data and case studies from across the state to create the Virginia Safe Routes to School Success Book. The Success Book illustrates the value of SRTS-related projects for Virginia communities in relation to safety, community-building, health, and the transportation network. The document includes a summary and examples of infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects in each of the nine VDOT Districts from 2005 to 2020.

In fall 2020, the Regional Coordinators reviewed the content and structure of the 2012-2017 Five Year Strategic Plan to assess the progress that had been made towards its goals. The Program Assessment Memo identified which strategies had been completed, which were ongoing, and which were no longer relevant. The memo also addressed changes in program structure and funding since 2012.

Stakeholder Survey

An online survey was distributed in February and March 2021 to gather feedback on the current level of support provided to local SRTS programs and the value of existing programmatic and funding resources. The survey was intended for people who are involved or familiar with the Virginia SRTS Program, at any level. VDOT publicized the survey through the statewide website, SRTS mailing list, and VDOT communication channels. Local Coordinators were also asked to complete the survey and distribute the link to their networks. A total of 138 responses were received.

Survey respondents came from a variety of backgrounds. The majority were local or state government employees, school employees, or private citizens/advocates (Figure 6). Nearly 28% had been involved with SRTS for less than 3 years, and 35% had been involved for 3-7 years. Most respondents (62%) characterized their communities as suburban.

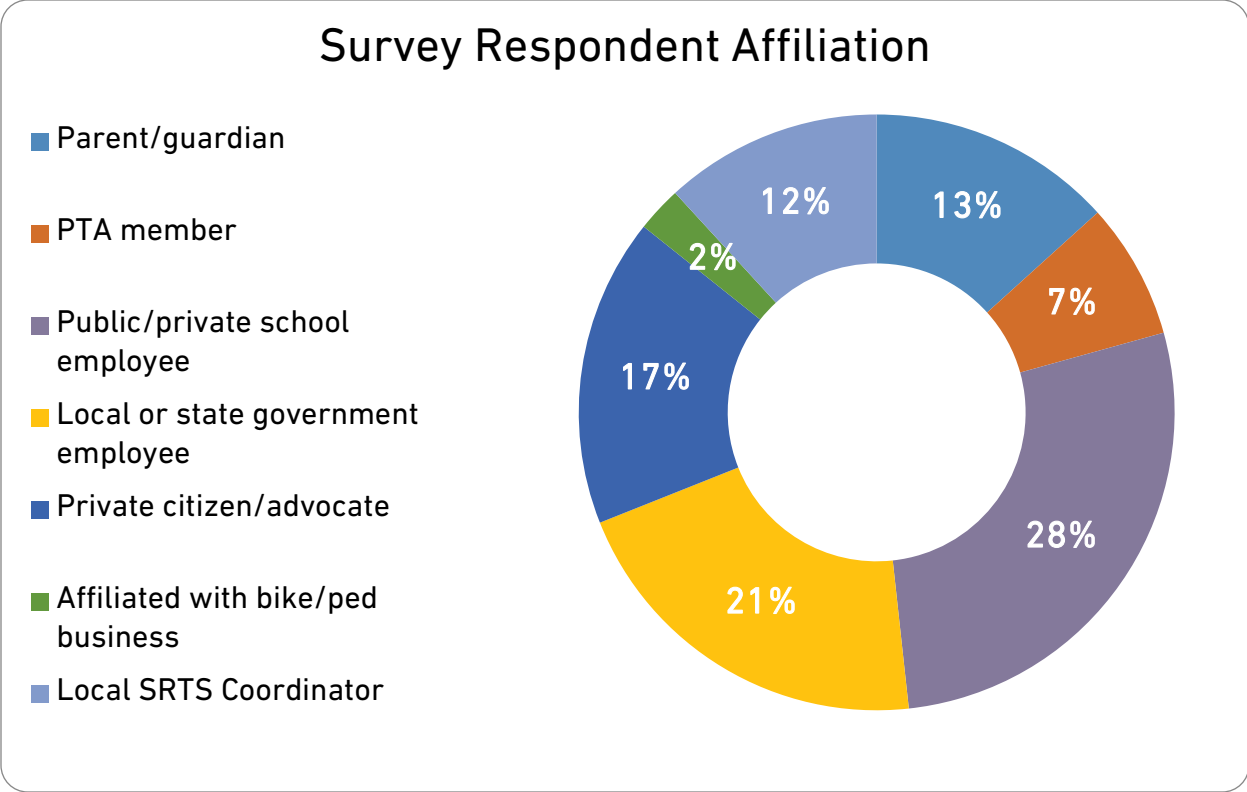


Figure 6 - Affiliation of Strategic Plan Survey Respondents

Strategic Planning Workshop

A virtual workshop was held over two days in April 2021 to involve state-level stakeholders in a discussion about the future of Virginia SRTS. The workshop was attended by 20 people, including representatives from VDOT, the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, the Federal Highway Administration, health non-profits, the Safe Routes Partnership, and program staff. Because many participants were unfamiliar with Virginia SRTS, the first day of the workshop introduced the history, structure, and successes of the program. Participants discussed the value of the program and identified several gaps that could be addressed in the future.

On the second day of the workshop, VDOT and program staff provided details about the status of program funding and facilitated conversation about potential partners, funding sources, and program structures that could maintain the Virginia SRTS Program. The workshop focused on the non-infrastructure aspect of SRTS, as the Virginia SRTS Program stopped directly providing funding for and supporting development of infrastructure projects in 2012. Schools with infrastructure needs are directed to work with their local government partners to pursue other funding sources like [TAP](#), [Revenue Sharing](#), and [Smart Scale](#).

SUMMARY OF INPUT



Summary of Input

Survey respondents and workshop participants provided valuable insights on the strengths and weaknesses of the current program and provided ideas of what the program might look like in the future.

Continued Stakeholder and Community Support

Stakeholders at the state-level expressed that SRTS is an important program for Virginia communities and should continue to operate. Virginia SRTS addresses safety as well as mental, physical, community, and environmental health and the program provides critical resources, including funding and information, to local SRTS implementers. Virginia SRTS also supplements other programs in the state by financing activities likely not to be funded by localities or school divisions.

Local implementers expressed similar views and indicated that their local SRTS program is supported by many people in their communities. In the survey, support for SRTS from local government, parents and caregivers, school administration, school board, and teachers rated an average of 3.6 out of 5 stars. School administrators were rated most supportive, at 3.8 stars.

Value of Current Program Elements

To understand priorities and future funding allocation, both survey respondents and workshop participants were asked to provide input on the current elements of the program. This includes communications, program and event resources, and Virginia SRTS funding opportunities. The value of the Local Coordinators was also investigated by workshop participants.

Survey respondents were asked to select program resources that they use regularly. The program website, event planning resources, and grant opportunity resources were selected most often; the hotline and help email were selected the least often (Figure 7).

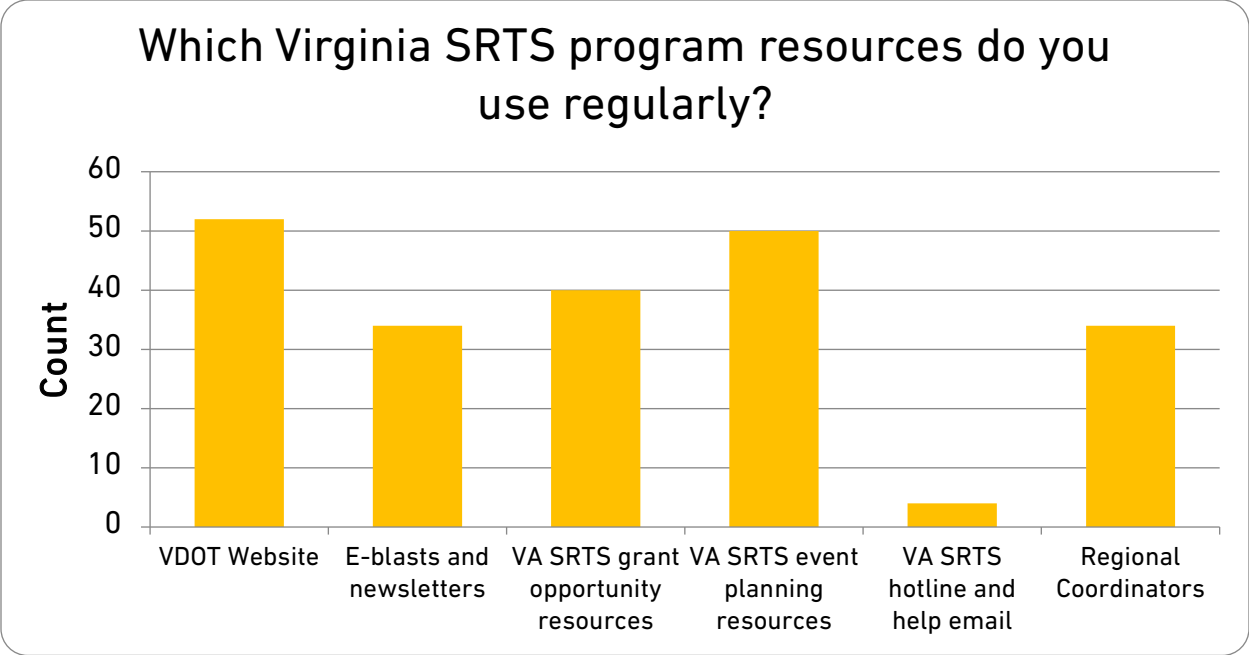


Figure 7 - Online Survey Responses Rating Program Elements

Workshop participants were asked to rank the program elements in order of their importance to the success of the program. The top five elements were: local program support (Regional Coordinators), Local Coordinators, QuickStart Mini-grants, Walkabout Mini-grants, and the program’s website and resources (Figure 8). While website resources rank lower on the list, several workshop participants mentioned the usefulness of the online materials for interested parties without a Local Coordinator.

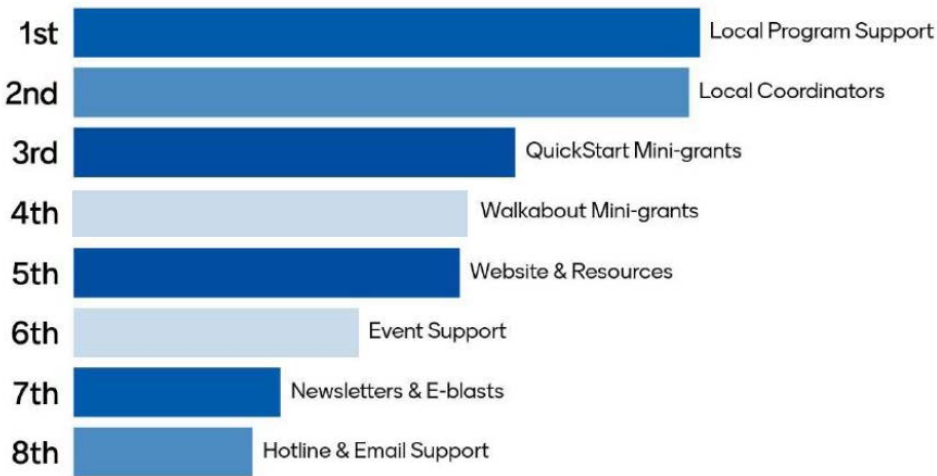


Figure 8 - Workshop Participants' Ranking of Program Elements

While these results can have some comparisons to the survey responses it is important to note that the survey asked about the resources that people familiar/involved with the program use regularly, not about their importance, and the question did not include funded Local Coordinators as a resource/response option.

Value of Local Coordinators

The Local Coordinators and their role in their communities were identified as one of the more valuable elements of the current program. Almost 70% of survey respondents who have been awarded a non-infrastructure grant (that funds Local Coordinator salaries and program supplies) found the grant “very valuable.” Workshop participants agreed that Local Coordinators are a resource to their community and are the foundation of the Virginia SRTS Program. While many of the program’s resources are available on a statewide level, the Local Coordinators provide a point of contact and play a significant role in connecting community members to these resources, which is especially useful for people who may not be aware or able to access resources online.

However, workshop participants expressed concerns that other areas of the state might be overlooked. SRTS activities are concentrated in areas with funded Local Coordinators; coverage is lacking in certain cities, Lynchburg and Roanoke for example, and in more rural areas. One suggestion was to investigate how certain roles of Local Coordinators could be allocated to other organizations or agencies, such as Planning District Commissions, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Health, the Department of Education, and local bicycle and pedestrian coordinators.

Benefits of Mini-Grants

The two Virginia SRTS Mini-grant opportunities were reported to be beneficial to communities and provide opportunities for communities to get started with SRTS. In the survey, 40% of respondents that received Walkabout Mini-grants rated the grant as “very valuable,” and 38% rated them as “valuable” (Figure 9). Workshop participants noted that the Walkabout Mini-grants help localities organize SRTS stakeholders and provide a level of service that VDOT is unable to provide through its district offices alone. The Walkabout reports have often been used in Transportation Alternative (TAP) grant applications and VDOT’s Local Assistance Division indicated the reports positively impact the grant’s evaluation because they show that fieldwork has been performed and community support exists.

Workshop participants also commented that the QuickStart Mini-grants are a fast and low-cost way to raise awareness for SRTS and provide resources for local programs. According to the survey, 63% of QuickStart Mini-grant awardees indicated that the grant was “very valuable” (Figure 10). Several alternative options for mini-grant funding were discussed during the workshop. Local stakeholders, such as PTAs, community groups, high school students, or college students could participate in fundraising for the QuickStart Mini-grants. Another participant suggested the mini-grants could be paused until more funding is secured.

QuickStart Mini-Grant Awardees: How valuable was the grant?

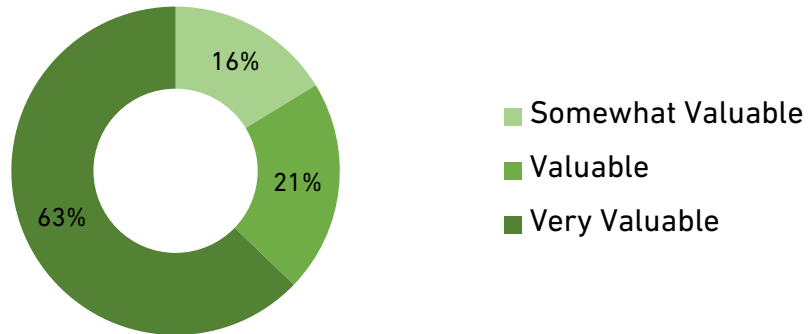


Figure 9 Value of QuickStart Mini-grants by Grant Awardees

Walkabout Mini-Grant Awardees: How valuable was the grant?

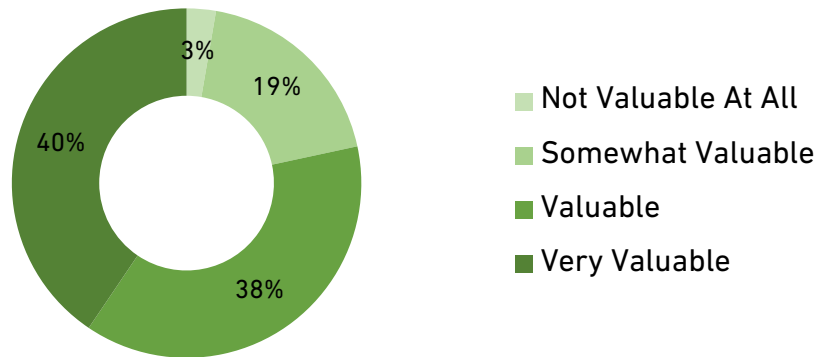


Figure 10 Value of QuickStart Mini-grants by Grant Awardees

Opportunities for Sustainability: Funding and Partnerships

Workshop attendees participated in targeted discussion on opportunities for sustainability that focused on funding alternatives and program partners. Examples of other state SRTS program funding mechanisms were discussed, including toll revenues or a surcharge added to moving violations in school zones. A workshop participant suggested the program investigate funding opportunities in the private sector, such as Transurban, Amazon, AAA, or hospital systems, but another participant noted that relationships with private corporations often end after a few years. Non-profits are another potential avenue for funding. See Appendix: Replacement Funding for Safe Routes to School memo for more information on other funding sources.

Participants also conveyed that Virginia SRTS should be integrated into systems outside of VDOT to improve the sustainability of the program. The Departments of Education and Health were identified as key stakeholders that may have the capability to lend their expertise and resources to the program. Participants expressed that the program could capitalize on health and wellness trends to ensure the continuity of the program. Vision Zero was also cited as an initiative that could be leveraged to help sustain SRTS in areas with Vision Zero commitments.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendations

VDOT is committed to getting more kids walking and biking along safe routes. Students who walk and bike get more physical activity, have more time to socialize with their friends, and develop a sense of independence and self-reliance. Some studies have shown a correlation between increased physical activity before school and improved academic performance.² Many Virginians want to get back to their roots and foster communities that are walk- and bike-friendly, have better air quality, and experience less traffic congestion.

The Virginia SRTS Program is one part of this effort. But it will take a broader coalition of state, regional, and local organizations and committed funding to fully realize the individual and community benefits of more walk- and bike-friendly communities. The effort must be equitable, with input from diverse voices across the state and additional resources allocated to the communities with the most needs.

Overview

The recommendations in this plan have a five-year timeline and are presented in three sections. The first section addresses the critical needs in Year 1 that must be addressed for the program to continue, even in a smaller capacity. The second section includes recommendations for Years 2-5 to *maintain and improve the program* with similar elements and level of reach as current operations. The third section includes recommendations for Years 2-5 to *grow the program*, introducing new elements and expanding its reach as funding allows.

Partners

The Virginia SRTS Program must be a collaborative coalition of agencies and partners to be successful. Today's program relies almost entirely on the State Coordinator at VDOT and a small team of consultants to manage program administration, implement activities, and monitor progress. With a dedicated funding source, this core team has proven effective in creating the program as it exists today; however, the team must expand to sustain, and eventually grow the program. Getting staff-level buy-in is a good place to start, but support from organizational leadership and elected officials will be necessary to secure funding.

Pulling from the list below, each recommendation includes potential partners that could lead or be involved in the effort. The list of potential partners is intentionally varied to help address the Program Building Blocks. Not all organizations listed participated in the development of this plan or have been involved in Virginia SRTS to date so additional outreach and relationship building is required.

- Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
- Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
- Virginia Department of Education (DOE)
- Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

² Martinez-Gomez, D., J. R. Ruiz, et al. (2011). "Active Commuting to School and Cognitive Performance in Adolescents: The AVENA Study." Arch Pediatric Adolescent Med 165(4): 300-305.

- Non-Profit Organizations
- Advocacy Organizations
- School Divisions
- Regional Planning Commissions (RPC)
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO)
- Local Governments
- Service Organizations (Rotary, Lions Club)
- Homeowner’s Associations (HOA)
- Civic Associations

Relationship with the Program Building Blocks

Each recommendation contributes to one or more of the Program Building Blocks. Dark circles are used to show a strong correlation with a program Building Block, and hollow circles show that the recommendation has the potential to support a Building Block depending on how it is implemented.

<p>Key</p> <p>● – Supports outcome</p> <p>○ – Potential to support outcome</p>
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Definition of Communities with High Needs

At the foundation of the Program Building Blocks is an Equitable and Sustainable Program. To work towards more equitable outcomes, many of the recommendations below include a focus on communities with high needs. This means taking proactive steps to reach out to and positively impact students who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), students with disabilities, students who come from households with lower incomes, and other disadvantaged groups in the community. It means providing resources that are accessible, relatable, culturally competent, and linguistically appropriate.

For implementation and evaluation purposes, this plan defines high needs as communities or schools with one or more of the following characteristics:

- High percentages of:
 - Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students and families
 - English language learners
 - Households with low incomes
 - Households with low car ownership
- Lacking physical infrastructure for safe walking and biking
- Schools designated as Title 1

Year 1: Actions to Sustain the Program

The recommendations for Year 1 help establish shared ownership of the Virginia SRTS Program and support efforts to find dedicated funding sources to allow the program to continue and expand in the future. Initiating and following through on these actions are critical to the survival of the program in Years 2-5.

Recommendation	Partners	Equitable & Sustainable	Supportive Culture	Safe Behaviors	Welcoming Campuses	Safe Streets
<p>1) Assemble a SRTS Task Force to meet regularly to support the State Coordinator in the pursuit of dedicated funding and decision making about the future of the program. Task Force participants should reflect the geographic and racial diversity of Virginia.</p>	<p>VDOT, DOE, VDH, DMV, Non-profits, School Divisions, Advocates, Local and regional governments</p>	●	●	○	○	○
<p>2) Secure dedicated funding for state program support. Input from the planning process demonstrates the value of resources and services provided by the state program, especially for areas without Local Coordinators.</p>	<p>VDOT, Task Force</p>	●	○	○	○	○
<p>3) Secure dedicated funding for local programs, including Local Coordinator salaries. Potential sources may include: SPR funds, TAP, Highway Safety Improvement Program funds, school zone traffic violation revenue, health organizations, etc.</p>	<p>VDOT, VDH, Task Force</p>	●	○	○	○	○
<p>4) Establish partnerships that advance the program's dedication to equitable access to safe walking and biking, help increase the reach of the program, and support additional activities by boosting messages through social media and other communications, offering complimentary programming, facilitating introductions to schools, etc.</p>	<p>VDOT, DOE, VDH, DMV, Non-profits, School Divisions, Advocates, Local and regional governments</p>	●	○	○	○	○

Years 2-5: Actions to Maintain and Improve the Statewide Program

Dependent on the ability to secure funding in Year 1, the recommendations in this section are aimed at maintaining the Virginia SRTS Program at the current level of statewide support. They include continuing outreach and communication activities, supporting statewide events, regularly evaluating the program, and providing QuickStart and Walkabout Mini-grants.

Recommendation	Partners	Equitable & Sustainable	Supportive Culture	Safe Behaviors	Welcoming Campuses	Safe Streets
5) Continue producing quarterly newsletters, e-blasts, website, and downloadable resources. Develop resources and feature stories that reflect the geographic and racial diversity of Virginia. Create content that embraces differences in physical and cognitive abilities, language, dress, hairstyles, etc.	VDOT, VDH, Non-profits, Advocates	○	●	○	○	○
6) Provide support and incentives for statewide events. Provide actionable guidance on how to hold events that are inclusive and accessible for students and families regardless of race, gender, income, or ability.	VDOT, DOE, VDH, Non-profits, Advocates		●			
7) Collect and analyze data, including travel tallies, grant applications and awards, crash data etc. to evaluate the program. Monitor allocation of SRTS resources across the state to understand the reach of the program and track progress towards more equitable outcomes.	VDOT, DMV, School Divisions	●	○			○
8) Continue to offer Walkabout mini-grants for walkability assessments. Review the application process and explore award criteria to provide special consideration to communities with high needs.	VDOT, Local and regional governments	●	○	○	●	●

Recommendation	Partners	Equitable & Sustainable	Supportive Culture	Safe Behaviors	Welcoming Campuses	Safe Streets
<p>9) Continue to offer QuickStart Mini-grants for walking and biking activities and small-scale infrastructure projects i.e., crosswalks, bike racks, and traffic gardens. Review the application process and explore award criteria to provide special consideration to communities with high needs.</p>	<p>VDOT, DOE, VDH, Advocates, Local and regional governments, Service organizations</p>	●	●	○	○	
<p>10) Update the Virginia SRTS Success Book on a regular basis with program achievements, including implementation of the Strategic Plan recommendations.</p>	<p>VDOT, Task Force</p>	●	○			

Years 2-5: Actions to Grow the Program

Dependent on the ability to secure funding and partnerships in Year 1, the recommendations in this section would expand the current program offerings to reach a broader audience, create new content, and strengthen partnerships at the state level.

Recommendation	Partners	Equitable & Sustainable	Supportive Culture	Safe Behaviors	Welcoming Campuses	Safe Streets
11) Host an annual or biannual SRTS meeting to recruit and build capacity among future partners.	VDOT, Task Force, DOE, VDH, Advocates	●	●			
12) Offer more webinars, trainings, and technical assistance based on the needs of local programs to reduce the barrier of entry to SRTS. Potential topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting a SRTS program/activity • School-based TDM practices • School siting policies and practices • Crossing guard programs • Identifying and pursuing infrastructure changes • Funding sources for infrastructure changes: TAP, Revenue Sharing, Smart Scale, local capital improvement budgets • Automated enforcement in school zones, etc. • Equitable and inclusive SRTS practices 	VDOT, VDH, DOE, Non-profits, Advocates, School Divisions, Local and regional governments, Universities	●	●	○	○	○
13) Expand coverage of Local Coordinators (or equivalent) to underserved areas of the state including rural counties and cities currently not involved in SRTS.	VDOT, VDH, Local and regional governments	●				
14) Develop Virginia-specific pedestrian and bicycle safety curricula that meet Virginia Standards of Learning. Work with partners to promote the curricula at teacher trainings.	DOE, School Divisions, Advocates		○	●		

Recommendation	Partners	Equitable & Sustainable	Supportive Culture	Safe Behaviors	Welcoming Campuses	Safe Streets
<p>15) Expand SRTS programming and outreach to high school students. Enhance driver’s education by teaching proper protocol when sharing the road with pedestrians and bicyclists. Encourage youth leadership and career development.</p>	<p>VDOT, DOE, DMV, State Police, School Divisions</p>	○	○	●		○
<p>16) Work with partners on safe driving campaigns that include SRTS branding. Target parents, neighborhood residents, and teen drivers.</p>	<p>VDOT, DMV, State Police, Advocates</p>		○	●	○	○
<p>17) Integrate SRTS with school-based health programs with a focus on physical activity and mental health.</p>	<p>VDOT, DOE, VDH, School Divisions, Non-profits</p>	●	○			
<p>18) Refresh brand to better reflect the updated vision, broader goals, and focus on equity.</p>	<p>VDOT, Task Force</p>	●				

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS



Conclusion & Next Steps

For the past 15 years, the Virginia SRTS Program has provided immense value to Virginia students, schools, and communities. Recommendations in this 2021-2026 Strategic Plan will build on past successes and enable the program to benefit Virginians for at least another five years.

Identifying partners and securing dedicated funding are the most critical near-term needs for the Virginia SRTS Program. This plan recommends that VDOT and the State Coordinator convene a Task Force as soon as possible and begin working on the Year 1 recommendations before current funding runs out.

With the help of a new SRTS Task Force, the State Coordinator will determine the amount of funding needed to support the program and advocate for new and innovative funding mechanisms that have proven successful in other states.

In addition, the State Coordinator will work with colleagues and program staff to create a near-term work plan of specific actions that are feasible within budget and staff constraints. This work plan should include appropriate performance measures to assess the implementation of this plan and will be modified in future years as appropriate to reflect opportunities provided by secured funding and partners.