



walkBoston

March 25, 2008

Dear Potential Community Safe Routes to School Partner:

WalkBoston is very pleased to extend an invitation to Massachusetts municipalities to submit proposals to participate in a Community Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. The program will include funding for a community coordinator and technical assistance from WalkBoston SRTS staff. Details about the program and how to apply are provided in the request for proposal that is attached to this letter.

The Community Safe Routes to School Project (Community SRTS) is intended to increase elementary student walking through community organizing and school-based efforts. The opportunity to participate in the Community Safe Routes to School Project is open to municipalities who are ready to engage in serious and enthusiastic walking programs, and have already demonstrated a commitment to such an effort by initiating some walking programs in their schools or community, and who will become participants in the Statewide SRTS Program managed by MassRIDES if they are not already participating.

The Community Safe Routes to School Project will be led and managed by WalkBoston. Funds for the Project are provided by the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation, with matching contributions from the State Executive Office of Transportation and the State Department of Public Health. Representatives of these three organizations are members of the Community SRTS Project leadership team that will work closely with WalkBoston to support the project's implementation. A Project Advisory Board with a representative of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards, and the Harvard School of Public Health will join these agencies and WalkBoston to provide oversight and expert advice for the initiative. WalkBoston will manage the project and provide direct funding for community coordinators.

WalkBoston looks forward to hearing from potential partners and to working with you to get Massachusetts children moving! Questions should be addressed to Karen Hartke at khartke@walkboston.org or 617-367-9255.

Very truly yours,

Wendy Landman
Executive Director

Request for Proposal

Community Safe Routes to School Project - Getting our Children Moving Again

Background¹

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national and international movement to create safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to walk and bicycle to and from school. The program has been designed to reverse the decline in children walking and bicycling to school. SRTS can also play a critical role in reversing the alarming nationwide trend toward childhood obesity and inactivity.

In 1969, approximately 50% of children walked or biked to school, with approximately 87% of children who lived within one mile of school walking or bicycling. Today, fewer than 15% of schoolchildren walk or bike to school. As a result, kids today are less active, less independent, and less healthy. As much as 20 to 30% of morning traffic can be generated by parents driving their children to schools, and traffic-related crashes are the top cause of death and major injury for children in the U.S. ages 1 to 17.

Concerned by the long-term health and traffic consequences of this trend, in 2005 the U.S. Congress approved funding for five years of state implementation of SRTS programs in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. SRTS programs are built on collaborative partnerships among many stakeholders that should include educators, parents, students, elected officials, engineers, city planners and engineers, business and community leaders, health officials, and bicycle and pedestrian advocates.

The most successful SRTS programs incorporate the five E's evaluation, education, encouragement, engineering, and enforcement and evaluation. The goal of SRTS is to get more children walking and bicycling to schools safely on an everyday basis.

Project Purpose

The **Community Safe Routes to School Project** (Community SRTS) is intended to increase elementary student walking through community organizing and school-based efforts. The opportunity to participate in the **Community Safe Routes to School Project** is open to municipalities who are ready to engage in serious and enthusiastic walking programs, and have already demonstrated a commitment to such an effort by having some walking programs in their schools or community.

The **Community Safe Routes to School Projects** to be developed by the selected municipalities will draw on the national experience around evaluation, education, encouragement, engineering, and enforcement, and will complement Massachusetts' existing SRTS program that is provided by the state's Executive Office of Transportation/ MassRIDES office.

The **Community Safe Routes to School Project** will offer 4-6 Massachusetts municipalities the opportunity to receive funding to hire a part time SRTS Coordinator to develop a robust community program to encourage children to walk to school and to incorporate walking into their daily activities. The programs are to be focused on building local partnerships among a variety of community stakeholders, who will develop local programs and projects. The Project is designed to extend partnerships beyond the school building and into the health, transportation, recreation, public safety, planning, and community organizations that form the leadership and organizational strengths of every Massachusetts community. The municipalities to be selected will reflect diversity in location, size,

1 Background adapted from the website of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership - WalkBoston is a Board Member of the Partnership.

socio-economic characteristics, and land use patterns.

Community SRTS Project Leadership Team

WalkBoston introduced SRTS to Massachusetts more than seven years ago, and continues to be a leader in implementing programs and creating new ways of encouraging children to walk to school. WalkBoston is a non-profit membership organization whose mission is to encourage walking throughout Massachusetts for transportation, health and vibrant communities. Our education and advocacy programs give voice to citizens to make their communities walkable. We work to make walking and pedestrian needs a basic part of all transportation planning and decision-making.

The **Community Safe Routes to School Project** will be led and managed by WalkBoston. Funds for the Project are provided by the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation with matching contributions from the State Executive Office of Transportation and the State Department of Public Health. Representatives of these three organizations are members of the Community SRTS Project leadership team that will work closely with WalkBoston to support the project's implementation. A Project Advisory Board with a representative of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards, and the Harvard School of Public Health will join these agencies and WalkBoston to provide oversight and expert advice for the initiative. WalkBoston will manage the project and provide direct funding for community coordinators.

Community Resources to be Provided by the Project

WalkBoston will select up to six communities each of which will be provided with a part-time Community SRTS Local Project Coordinator (LPC) for the period June 2008 through December 2008. The LPCs will be based in the community. Each community will also receive 4 - 6 hours per week of guidance and advice from existing WalkBoston staff. Materials for school activities will be available from the MassRIDES Safe Routes to School Program.

Each Coordinator will be eligible for a stipend of \$4,000 - \$6,000 from WalkBoston. The LPC will be paid directly by WalkBoston to simplify the hiring and employment process, but will be recruited in close consultation with each community task force (described below), and will work within the community. Depending on project outcomes and evaluations, the selected communities will be eligible to reapply for additional funds to be allocated for the program period January 2009 - December 2009, not to exceed \$8,000 per grantee, contingent on the availability of further funding.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicant communities must meet the following requirements to be considered for funding:

- Mid-sized or small municipality with not more than twenty elementary schools.
- The community must have a fairly complete walking infrastructure of sidewalks and crosswalks.
- At least one school must be an established partner with the state MassRIDES Safe Routes to School Program, or be engaged in an independent Safe Routes to School effort. Preference will be given to municipalities where multiple schools will participate, but not every school in the applicant's district must be involved in order to qualify for funds. Those schools that will participate should apply to become a MassRIDES partner before the proposal deadline for this project. (The MassRIDES process is very straightforward; see www.commute.com, and click on the Safe Routes to School logo).
- Preference will be given to schools with a high proportion of students living within walking distance of their assigned schools. Communities are urged to provide the best information available about the percent of the students who live within one mile of the schools that are proposed for inclusion in the SRTS program.

- Interest and ability to continue participation in project for at least one year beyond December 2008 (with extended funding) and interest in continuing the project after funding has expired.
- Identified Lead Partner Organization (LPO) within the community. Eligible LPOs include municipal departments, such as a school department, public health or recreation department, or a local non-profit, such as a bike/pedestrian advocacy group, youth empowerment organization or YMCA.
- The LPO will have demonstrated capacity and willingness to perform in these areas:
 - Experience advocating on behalf of youth, the environment, physical activity, public health, alternative transportation or another social issue
 - Work collaboratively with diverse community stakeholders
 - Convene and lead a Project Task Force (PTF) consisting of key decision makers and community stakeholders that will provide vision, expert assistance and leadership for the program
 - Project stewardship, creative problem solving, strategy development, data collection and overall project management
 - Prepare required program evaluations and financial reports
 - Work closely with a local Project Coordinator (hired and funded by WalkBoston)
 - Commit to continue working on the SRTS program for at least one year beyond December 2008 (with funding to be provided by state and foundation sources).
- Local Project Coordinator (LPC): The proposal must describe the role for a part-time local coordinator who will carry out detailed program tasks as necessary in collaboration with the LPO. (Resumes will be accepted but not required as part of the proposal; candidates should be solicited between the proposal deadline and acceptance dates.)
- The LPC will have demonstrated interest and willingness to participate in the program, and:
 - Ability to communicate with a diverse group of people
 - Available to work early mornings and summers
 - Participate in all planning meetings and most major school events
 - Act as a liaison with WalkBoston; submit reports and correspondence.
 - Make a personal commitment to walk to school or for daily transportation.
 - Willingness to travel across the local town/district for meetings and program activities; travel to Boston or other state locations one to two times per year for cross-project meetings and conferences
 - Have access to high speed internet and be familiar with standard email and word processing operations

Proposal Content

The most critical element of the proposal will be evidence of the strong local commitment to the project. This should be demonstrated through a Letter of Commitment from the chief local elected official or chief administrator/manager describing his/her support for the program and how local staff will be engaged with the project. ***This letter of commitment should be the lead page of the proposal package.***

Proposals should be no longer than five pages of 12-point type, including a one-page program budget. We suggest the following guidelines for the length of each section of your proposal. Please try to address as many of the following components that are appropriate for your community and program.

- **Program Summary (1-2 pages)**
 - Explain existing community conditions or evidence for pursuing your proposed program, and how your program will alleviate or overcome current obstacles and lead to improvements in rates of walking to school.
 - The summary should identify your broad vision as well as reasonable program outcomes and the

activities to be undertaken during the pilot phase of the program (June 2008 - December 2008). This should include summer planning and school activities that will commence at the start of the 2008-2009 school year.

- Identify the geographic area, school community and/or demographic populations your program will target and why.
 - Explain current walking advocacy efforts, walking conditions and/or rates of walking and driving to and from school for your target areas.
 - It is helpful if the summary indicates an understanding of the connection between walking and its positive impact on personal health, environmental conservation, traffic reduction, fuel savings and community livability.
- **Descriptions of organizations, key staff and other participants (1 page)**
 - Describe the Lead Partner Organization and its capacity to implement the program, as well as key staff that will be dedicated to the project.
 - List at least four key members of the Local Project Task Force and how or why they were selected and what their role will be in the program.
 - It is helpful to include examples of successful current collaborations between the organizations, and examples of successful community organizing and public education endeavors.
 - **Outcomes (1 page)**
 - Explain the expected measurable outcomes of your program and how they will be achieved.
 - Describe the evidence you will use to show improvement, and how baseline and outcome data will be gathered and compared. The survey forms for parents and children that have been developed by the National Center for SRTS should be included as one form of data (the forms are attached to this RFP).
 - Describe how the project will address or alleviate racial, ethnic, gender, economic or any other social disparities, if appropriate.
 - Describe ways in which the project may be sustained past the pilot phase for at least one additional year.
 - **Budget (1 page)**
 - Provide a one page, six-month budget for staff, expenses, and other activities.
 - **Letters**
 - Letter of Commitment from the chief elected official (such as the City Mayor or Board of Selectman Chairman) or Chief Manager/Administrator indicating how and why the municipality will support the effort.
 - Two letters of support from the following:
 - Lead Community Partner Organization (if other than the applicant)
 - Public School District office indicating full support of the School Committee and School Superintendent.
 - Additional letters of support from such participants as the Chief of Police, Head of Public Works, Chair of Town Planning Board, Board of Health, Executive Director of YMCA, etc. will also be helpful.

It will be crucial to provide strong evidence of commitment from the elected officials and key municipal agencies to participate in the program - including any contribution of staff time to the project.

- **Community Site Visits**

WalkBoston (and possibly representatives of the Project Advisory Board or leadership team) will conduct community visits with applicants and their participating organizations to discuss the proposed programs and tour the local program site. These will take place between May 5 and May 14. Applicants who submit an Intent to Apply letter and meet the deadline for Early Selection will be scheduled for a site visit first. All finalists must complete a site visit for consideration. WalkBoston will utilize findings from the visit to help select grant recipients.

Program Activities

Applicants are encouraged to submit unique program models and/or to build upon existing SRTS program components. Successful SRTS programs utilize a combination of strategies commonly referred to as the “5-Es”. The description of these elements are included as a guideline for applicants and not as a limit as to what types of program proposals will be accepted for grant awards.

- Education: Classroom lessons, community presentations, safety training and other community information and marketing campaigns.
- Encouragement: Events and activities that entice participants to walk.
- Engineering: Efforts to assess and improve the built environment in ways that increase pedestrian safety and encourage walking.
- Enforcement: Appealing to drivers through education, reminders, warnings, citations or fines to heed existing safety laws and regulations regarding pedestrian safety.
- Evaluation: Data collection and comparison to measure SRTS outcomes and success.

Funding

WalkBoston will hire a part-time program coordinator for each selected community (in close collaboration with the applicant). Each coordinator will be funded out of grant recipient funds. A reasonable allowance (beyond the \$8,000) will be made for direct expenses such as out-of-district travel, materials, and meeting expenses and will be administered by WalkBoston.

Proposal Selection Criteria

- All components of proposal submitted and complete.
- Demonstrated capacity to carry out program and experience with advocacy and community organizing.
- Evidence of local commitment to sustain program through at least the 2008-2009 school year – and longer if continued funding is made available.
- Ability to facilitate a broad and inclusive community process.
- Commitment to goals of increasing walking to and from school.
- Clear and reasonable program rationale, objectives, and plan of action.
- Clear idea of outcomes and how they will be evaluated and reported.
- Ability to commit the time necessary.
- Budget reasonably relates to program objectives and activities.

How to Apply and Questions:

Questions should be addressed to Karen Hartke at KHartke@walkboston.org
E-mail is the preferred form of communication for questions.

The RFP will be posted on WalkBoston’s website: www.walkboston.org Any additional information or general communication will also be posted. A link can be found in the upper right hand corner of our website’s front page.

Proposals should be sent to the attention of Karen Hartke by email, fax or mail. Mail proposals need to be postmarked no later than 4:00 on April 18 to be considered for early selection, and May 2 as the final deadline for application. Send to:

Email: KHartke@walkboston.org

Fax: 617/367-9285

Mail: WalkBoston, Attn: Karen Hartke; 45 School Street, Boston, MA 02108

Important Dates and Deadlines:

April 9: Submit Intent to Apply

Please submit a one paragraph description of your intent to submit a complete proposal no later than 4:00 pm by this date. These can be sent by email, fax or mail to the attention of Karen Hartke (see above).

April 18: Submit Proposal for Early Selection

Submit your complete proposal by this date for Early Selection. WalkBoston will begin reviewing and selecting applicants who meet this deadline.

May 2: Final Deadline to Submit Proposal

All proposals must be submitted by this date in order to be considered for funding. Proposals received or postmarked after 4:00 pm on this date WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.

May 5 - May 14: Community Site Visits

May 20: Applicants Notified of Awards

June 6: Acceptance Agreement filed by Applicant, Grant Begins

June 16 – July 11: Kick-off Events in Local Communities

July – September: Summer planning meetings; Lead Partner Organization and Project Task Force meet with WalkBoston

August: Outreach to School Communities; Media Relations

September: Schools Begin Activities

Required information

Contact Information

Applicant

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Lead Participating Organization (LPO) (if different from applicant)

Number of staff: _____

Length of operation: _____

Operating budget: _____

Executive Director

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Lead staff member(s) participating in program (If diff. from above)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Letter of Commitment – Contact Information for Signature

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Letter of Support – Contact Information for Signature

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Letter of Support – Contact Info

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Optional: Potential Local Project Coordinator

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____