

Strategies to Support Safe & Accessible Active Transportation



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Introduction

Decades of research and data show that active transportation contributes to increased physical activity levels, which are associated with numerous health benefits.^{1,2} In this resource, active transportation refers to human-powered ways of getting around, such as walking, wheeling, biking, or scootering, including travel to and from public transit.^{3,4} Active transportation can be easily integrated into daily activities such as commutes to school and work, travel to complete errands, and trips for leisure when it is safe and accessible. It can also help create more equitable communities because it is more affordable than owning and driving a car and is feasible for people of a wide range of ages and abilities. Priority communities (e.g., children and young adults, older adults, communities of color, people with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, people who are unhoused, low-income communities) are typically more reliant on active transportation and are at a higher risk of traffic collisions because of inadequate safe infrastructure and a long history of policies and planning practices that resulted in car-centric transportation systems and disinvestment in these communities.^{5,6,7}

To provide opportunities for safe and accessible active transportation, communities must have adequate infrastructure and funding. Complete Streets, Vision Zero, and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) are three key approaches that communities can use to create plans, policies, and projects that support active transportation funding and infrastructure. Although planning and transportation practitioners often lead these efforts, public health partners can also play an important role in supporting this work.

This resource offers guidance on how local health departments (LHD) can support active transportation plans, policies, and projects in their communities through Complete Streets, Vision Zero, and SRTS and helps build a deeper understanding of how these approaches interact.

Overview of Key Transportation Planning Approaches

Complete Streets, Vision Zero, and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) are approaches that communities can use to support active transportation. The following explains the differences between these approaches.

Complete Streets is an “approach to planning, designing, and building streets that enables safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.” Smart Growth America developed a Complete Streets Policy Framework, which identifies ten key elements of a strong Complete Streets policy:⁸

1. **Establishes commitment and vision:** How and why does the community want to complete its streets? This specifies a clear statement of intent to create a complete, connected network and consider the needs of all users.
2. **Prioritizes underinvested and underserved communities:** Requires jurisdictions to define who are their most underinvested and underserved communities and prioritize them throughout.
3. **Applies to all projects and phases:** Instead of a limited set of projects, [it] applies to all new projects, retrofit or reconstruction projects, maintenance projects, and ongoing operations.
4. **Allows only clear exceptions:** Any exceptions must be specific, with a clear procedure that requires high-level approval and public notice prior to exceptions being granted.
5. **Mandates coordination:** Requires private developers to comply, and interagency coordination between government departments and partner agencies.
6. **Adopts excellent design guidance:** Directs agencies to use the latest and best design criteria and guidelines, and sets a time frame for implementing this guidance.
7. **Requires proactive land-use planning:** Considers every project’s greater context, as well as the surrounding community’s current and expected land-use and transportation needs.

8. **Measures progress:** Establishes specific performance measures that match the goals of the broader vision, incorporate equity considerations, and are regularly reported to the public.
9. **Sets criteria for choosing projects:** Creates or updates the criteria for choosing transportation projects so that Complete Streets projects are prioritized.
10. **Creates a plan for implementation:** A formal commitment to the Complete Streets approach is only the beginning. It must include specific steps for implementing the policy in ways that will make a measurable impact on what gets built and where.

Source: The 10 policy elements we list are sourced from [Smart Growth America's The Complete Streets Policy Framework](#).

Vision Zero is a “strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.”⁹ Vision Zero uses the Safe System approach, which is a human-centered approach to traffic safety that prioritizes the “use of vehicle or roadway design and operational changes rather than relying primarily on behavioral changes” to ensure safety.¹⁰ The needs of all users – including pedestrians, bicyclists, older people, young people, and people with disabilities – are integrated into the transportation system, and the system anticipates human error and considers human injury tolerance to increase safety. The Safe System approach applies the following principles:^{11, 12}

- **Traffic-related deaths and serious injuries in crashes are unacceptable.**
- **Humans make mistakes that are preventable.**
- **Humans are vulnerable.**
- **Responsibility for decreasing traffic-related deaths and severe injuries is shared by all road users.**
- **Safety requires road users, engineers, and transportation planners to be proactive.**
- **Safety systems redundancy is a crucial component of a safe transportation system.**

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national movement that aims to make walking and biking to school safer, easier, and more accessible for students. SRTS uses the Six E's framework to guide the development and implementation of comprehensive SRTS programs. The Six E's are:¹³

1. **Engagement:** All [SRTS] initiatives should begin by listening to students, families, teachers, and school leaders and working with existing community organizations, and build intentional, ongoing engagement opportunities into the program structure.
2. **Equity:** Ensuring that [SRTS] initiatives are benefiting all demographic groups, with particular attention to ensuring safe, healthy, and fair outcomes for low-income students, students of color, students of all genders, students with disabilities, and others
3. **Education:** Providing students and the community with the skills to walk and bicycle safely, educating them about the benefits of walking and bicycling, and teaching them about the broad range of transportation choices
4. **Encouragement:** Generating enthusiasm and increased walking and bicycling for students through events, activities and programs
5. **Engineering:** Creating physical improvements to streets and neighborhoods that make walking and bicycling safer, more comfortable, and more convenient
6. **Evaluation:** Assessing which approaches are more or less successful, ensuring that programs and initiatives are supporting equitable outcomes, and identifying unintended consequences or opportunities to improve the effectiveness of each approach

Source: [The 6 E's of Safe Routes to School are from Safe Routes Partnership.](#)

How These Approaches Complement Each Other

All three of these approaches prioritize *vulnerable road users*: people who are not protected by an outer shield on the road, such as pedestrians, bicyclists, individuals using mobility devices, scooter riders, and young children, and are therefore at a higher risk of severe or fatal injury resulting from a collision with a motor vehicle. Some people may be at an even higher risk because they depend on modes of travel other than a motor vehicle.

No single policy or approach can create a safe and accessible active transportation system. Multipronged approaches that combine multiple policies, plans, and funding streams are most effective. For example, Complete Streets focuses on balancing the needs of all road users through street design, an important component of safety. Complete Streets policies apply at the city level (or, in some cases, across larger jurisdictions such as counties or regions), including to streets that surround schools, which are the geographic focus of SRTS. Vision Zero is focused on safety, and the Safe System approach involves similar partners as those involved in Complete Streets. SRTS emphasizes both safety and multimodal transportation options, with a more focused geographic area and target population. In the last decade, SRTS has also expanded to include safe routes to other places where people of all ages go, such as parks, libraries, and food retail outlets.



Starting at Square One?

The following steps can help LHDs get started on their active transportation efforts.

Research

- **Are Complete Streets, Vision Zero, and/or SRTS approaches already in place in your jurisdiction?** Do a quick search on city, county, or regional planning agency websites to determine whether your jurisdiction already has these policies.
- **Check when plans (e.g., general plans, transportation plans) expire and when the next plan update is scheduled.** This can help identify opportunities to get involved with task forces, community workshops, and other groups or events, as well as plan for future staff capacity needs.

Build Momentum

- **Build or leverage relationships with transportation and planning partners to explore how you can support efforts already underway.**
 - ▶ **PRACTICE TIP:** If your scan of the local landscape reveals minimal momentum, consider connecting with national organizations such as the [National Complete Streets Coalition](#), [Vision Zero Network](#), or [Safe Routes Partnership](#) to harness insights from their active transportation strategies.

Strategize

- **Decide how and where to best channel your efforts.** This can depend on community and health department priorities and strategic goals – which are often informed by community health assessments, Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIP), and other strategic planning documents – as well as staff capacity and expertise. Consider the knowledge, skills, and experiences staff members bring to the table and the value they may provide to active transportation efforts.
- **Identify near- and long-term goals.** Consider whether training or additional staff are needed, whether internal structures should be changed to facilitate collaboration, and whether other resources are required.

Process Overview

From Development & Adoption to Implementation

Once LHDs have taken initial steps to learn about active transportation work in their community, the next stage is to understand the broader policy process. This section describes the policy development, adoption, and implementation process for each approach and identifies the roles of various partners at every phase.



Complete Streets

The phases and steps described below are adapted from [Smart Growth America's Adopting a strong Complete Streets policy](#).

Phase 1: Policy Development & Adoption

The policy development and adoption phase is typically led by transportation and planning departments and legislative bodies (e.g., elected officials on city or county councils) and supported by advocates, other government departments, and community members. LHDs can provide additional support by contributing data and content to inform the preamble part of the policy and offering input to help ensure policy commitments support equitable health outcomes.

Step 1: Identify a diverse set of partners & build a coalition.

When considering which partners to engage, reflect on the following questions:

- Who cares about this work (e.g., local transportation advocates, neighborhood-based groups, public health agencies)?
- Who makes decisions about this (e.g., transportation agencies, elected officials)?
- Who shares similar goals but may not be obvious partners (e.g., disability advocates, health care partners, real estate associations, community development groups, public safety agencies)?

Additional CDPH resource:

- [Recruiting and Engaging Coalition Members \(PDF\)](#)

Step 2: Determine the best policy format.

Complete Streets policies can be adopted through a variety of policy formats, including resolutions, ordinances, and executive orders. Jurisdictions should consider factors such as political climate, policy goals, and feasibility when deciding which format is most appropriate.

Step 3: Consult local government partners & elected officials on the steps needed to adopt the policy in your jurisdiction.

Ensure you have adequate time and staff capacity to complete the steps required to adopt the policy. For additional policy guidance and technical assistance, jurisdictions can also consult national organizations such as the [National Association of City Transportation Officials \(NACTO\)](#) and [Smart Growth America](#).

Step 4: Draft the policy.

When drafting the policy, refer to [Smart Growth America's Complete Streets Policy Framework](#) to help ensure it reflects the ten elements of a strong Complete Streets policy. It should seek to ensure streets are safe for people of all ages and abilities, balance the needs of different modes of transportation, and support local land uses, economies, cultures, and natural environments.

Additionally, under California's 2011 Complete Streets Act, localities were required to adopt Complete Streets policies as part of their general plans. Therefore, any major amendments to local Complete Streets policies must follow the process for general plan amendments under Cal. Gov't Code Secs. § 65350 et seq. However, policymakers may have discretion to adjust the implementation or enforcement of existing policies in ways that advance equity without needing to amend the general plan.

Additional ChangeLab Solutions resources:

- [California Complete Streets Policies](#) (includes California-specific model law, resolution, and general plan language)
- [Complete Streets Policies at the Local Level](#) (includes a model local resolution and ordinance)
- [Complete Streets Policies at the State Level](#) (includes model state legislation and state/regional resolutions)

Step 5: Adopt the policy.

Remember to celebrate the win with partners and community members! Passing the policy is the first step in the process – implementation, which is up next, is equally important.

Additional ChangeLab Solutions resource:

- [A Guide to Building Healthy Streets](#)

Key Terms for Policy Development & Adoption

Resolution

Resolutions are generally used to set official government policy; issue commendations, direct internal government operations; establish a task force or committee . . . suggest actions for those not subject to city directives; or accomplish other short-term tasks. Usually, a resolution is procedurally easier to enact than an ordinance. While resolutions do not become part of a municipal code, they do memorialize government intent on a particular issue.

Ordinance

Ordinances are binding legislative acts. In general, local governments use ordinances when required by state law or charter to impose laws that are binding on their citizens or to appropriate funds. The benefit of enacting an ordinance is that the regulation will be binding and have the force of law until the ordinance is repealed or amended. . . . In some jurisdictions, an ordinance may be necessary to authorize the lead agency or department to direct other departments' actions.

Executive order

Executive orders or directives may be used to bind agencies, departments, and appointed officers to certain methods of implementation in the execution and enforcement of laws, rules, and policies.¹⁴

Source: These key terms for policy development and adoptions are from [ChangeLab Solutions' Model Health in All Policies Ordinance](#).

Phase 2: Integration of the Complete Streets Approach Into Other Plans & Practices

This phase is typically led by transportation and planning departments or consultants. LHDs can get involved by participating in task forces and advisory groups, reviewing and providing feedback on drafts of the plans, and helping identify appropriate evaluation and monitoring metrics.

Step 1: Adopt or develop design guidelines.

The sixth element of the [Complete Streets Policy Framework](#) is adopting excellent design guidance. In other words, the policy should “[direct] agencies to use the latest and best design criteria and guidelines, and [set] a time frame for implementing this guidance.”¹⁵ Design guidelines help engineers determine appropriate dimensions and characteristics of streets (e.g., lane widths, speed limits, turning radii) in order to design streets that reflect the vision and goals of Complete Streets. Design guides are typically issued by national organizations and agencies such as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), and NACTO. Jurisdictions should refer to these organizations and agencies when developing and implementing Complete Streets policies to ensure they are using the most recent design guidance. Jurisdictions can also revise or adopt their own internal design guides.¹⁶

Step 2: Integrate Complete Streets projects & priorities into other plans.

As previously mentioned, a safe and accessible active transportation system requires a combination of multiple policies and plans. Complete Streets projects can be incorporated into the transportation portion of general plans, bicycle and pedestrian master plans, climate action plans, zoning codes, Vision Zero action plans, SRTS programs, and other planning efforts. These types of plans are updated on a regular basis (approximately every two to ten years) and provide opportunities to engage in the process to help ensure LHD and community priorities are reflected.

Additional resources from Smart Growth America:

- [An Active Roadmap: Best Practices in Rural Mobility \(PDF\)](#)
- [Complete Streets Policy Framework](#)
- [From Policy to Practice: A Guide to Measuring Complete Streets Progress](#)

Vision Zero

The phases and steps described below are adapted from [NC Vision Zero's Implementation Milestone Checklist \(PDF\)](#) and [FHWA's Vision Zero Toolkit \(PDF\)](#).

Phase 1: Policy Development & Adoption

Similar to Complete Streets policies, the Vision Zero policy development and adoption phase is typically led by transportation and planning departments and legislative bodies (e.g., elected officials on city or county councils) and supported by advocates, other government departments, and community members. LHDs can get involved by participating in or leading the coalition, contributing data to inform the preamble part of the policy, and offering input to help ensure policy commitments support equitable health outcomes.



Step 1: Identify a diverse set of partners to build a coalition & identify potential champions.

Convene diverse professional and community stakeholder groups to establish a Vision Zero coalition and identify potential champions. This may include local government departments (e.g., transportation, planning, public health, parks and recreation), transit agencies, bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups, advocates for families of victims of traffic violence, parent groups, and local businesses. For guidance on identifying partners, refer to [this worksheet \(PDF\)](#) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC Vision Zero, and the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program. This coalition can be led or co-led by any partner, including LHDs.

Step 2: Establish a safety culture across professional agencies & in the community.

FHWA defines safety culture as “the shared values, actions, and behaviors that demonstrate a commitment to safety over competing goals and demands.”¹⁷ Building a strong safety culture is essential for effectively making internal institutional changes, as well as building momentum with the public in support of the Safe System approach. Strategies to build a safety culture include safe driving pledges, training for fleet vehicle users, and educational campaigns.

Step 3: Determine the best policy format.

Vision Zero policies can be adopted through a variety of policy formats, including resolutions, ordinances, and executive orders. Jurisdictions should consider factors such as political climate, policy goals, and feasibility when deciding which format is most appropriate.

Step 4: Consult local government partners & elected officials on the steps needed to adopt the policy in your jurisdiction.

Ensure you have adequate time and staff capacity to complete the steps required to adopt the policy. For additional policy guidance and technical assistance, jurisdictions can also consult national organizations such as [NACTO](#) and [Smart Growth America](#).

Step 5: Draft the policy.

At a minimum, Vision Zero policies should commit to a goal of eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries by a specific date. They can also include additional commitments to ensure equity, transparency, and accountability in both the policy process and policy outcomes. For example, a Vision Zero policy can specify strategies for equitable community engagement, establish a task force and advisory group, prioritize vulnerable road users, set standards for equitable enforcement, and require monitoring and evaluation activities.

Additional ChangeLab Solutions resource:

- [Vision Zero Model Resolution and Implementation Toolkit](#)

Step 6: Adopt the policy.

Remember to celebrate the win with partners and community members! Passing the policy is the first step in the process; much of the work still lies ahead in developing and implementing the action plan.

Phase 2: Action Plan Development

With the policy in place, the next step is to develop a Vision Zero action plan. This process is typically led by transportation and planning departments and consultants, with support from LHDs and other partners. LHDs can contribute by participating in task forces and advisory groups, reviewing and offering feedback on drafts of the plan, supplementing collision data with additional public health data, providing health data to help inform priorities, and helping identify evaluation and monitoring metrics.

Step 1: Establish any necessary task forces or advisory groups.

Task forces and advisory groups are helpful for engaging partners and community members (who may also be part of the coalition) in the process of developing and implementing the Vision Zero action plan to ensure diverse voices and perspectives are reflected. Vision Zero policies may also mandate the establishment of a task force or advisory group. Section 4 of [ChangeLab Solutions' Vision Zero Implementation Toolkit](#) provides guidance on the roles and responsibilities and composition of task forces and advisory groups.

Step 2: Analyze safety data to create a High-Injury Network.

A High-Injury Network is a map showing where high rates of traffic collisions have occurred within a jurisdiction. Collision data is typically collected by police departments, though transportation departments or other local government departments may also collect and provide it. Hospitals and LHDs can supplement this data to provide a more complete picture of collisions and resulting injuries or fatalities. Collision data is then analyzed to identify patterns and contributing factors. Collision data can also be overlaid with sociodemographic, environmental justice, or other data, as well as social vulnerability indexes, to identify overlaps in priority populations and vulnerable road users. These analyses are then used to develop and prioritize strategies in the action plan.

Step 3: Identify priorities & key strategies.

In addition to data analyses, priorities and strategies in the action plan should be informed by ongoing engagement with partners and community members throughout the process to share information, gather feedback, and help ensure the plan aligns with their priorities.

Step 4: Adopt the action plan.

Similar to other policies and plans, the Vision Zero action plan will likely need to be formally adopted by the city or county council.

Additional resources:

- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 - [Database of Vision Zero Action Plans](#)
- Vision Zero Network
 - [Prioritizing Health Equity in Vision Zero Planning](#)
 - [The central role of public health in Vision Zero \(PDF\)](#)

Phase 3: Action Plan Implementation

As with phase 2, the implementation process is typically led by transportation and planning departments and consultants. LHDs can offer support by guiding and implementing evaluations and participating in other planning processes to provide continuity.

Step 1: Begin planning, designing, & constructing projects identified in the action plan.

This may require reallocating existing funds or applying for new federal, state, or local funding. It can also be helpful to reach out to the partners responsible for implementing the strategies in the action plan to begin collaboration.

Step 2: Integrate Vision Zero projects & priorities into other plans.

Vision Zero policies and action plans can be integrated into the transportation portion of general plans, bicycle and pedestrian master plans, climate action plans, zoning codes, Complete Streets policies, SRTS programs, and other planning efforts.

Step 3: Evaluate & report on progress on a regular basis.

Evaluation procedures and performance goals and metrics should be codified in Vision Zero policies and action plans. Possible performance metrics include the following:

Traffic safety

- Number of collisions, disaggregated by mode of transportation, location, and sociodemographic characteristics of parties involved, with a focus on priority populations and vulnerable road users (Comparisons of recent and historical data and updates to the High-Injury Network may be particularly valuable to stakeholders.)
- Progress toward infrastructure improvements (new construction and repairs)
- Funding allocated to Vision Zero efforts, disaggregated by intended purpose (e.g., infrastructure, community engagement, education programs) and communities reached
- Number of policies and plans that align with Vision Zero strategies
- Perceptions of safety

- Number or types of traffic stops or citations for safety and speed violations, disaggregated by sociodemographic factors (to evaluate whether enforcement is being equitably implemented)
- Number of safety upgrades to fleet vehicles

Health

- Changes in use of active transportation modes
- Changes in physical activity levels
- Changes in prevalence of chronic disease and mental health issues
- Emergency medical services (EMS) response times and changes in EMS equipment

Community engagement

- Methods used to engage community members and partners in policy development and planning processes, including number of community-facing events and meetings with community representatives
- Number of participants in, or responses to, community engagement activities, disaggregated by sociodemographic characteristics
- Satisfaction with the community engagement process (i.e., whether community members and stakeholders feel they had a voice in the process)
- Satisfaction with the outcomes of Vision Zero strategies (i.e., whether community members and stakeholders feel that benefits are equitably experienced and that inequities were not created or exacerbated)



Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

The phases and steps described below are adapted from [Safe Routes Partnership's Building Blocks: A Guide to Starting and Growing a Strong Safe Routes to School Program](#).

Phase 1: Support Building

This phase is typically led by the institutional home for the program, which may be the LHD. If the LHD is not the institutional home, the team can still provide input on goal setting, support planning and implementation events and activities, and help connect key partners with whom they have existing relationships.

Step 1: Set goals.

Reflect on what is driving the effort to create an SRTS program (e.g., improving public health, improving walking and biking conditions for students). Clear, well-defined goals provide a foundation for the program by helping partners align priorities, guide decision-making, and establish benchmarks for measuring progress and success over time.

Step 2: Make plans.

Determine basic elements of the program, such as the budget and other resources that the school, city, or other partners can contribute. This is also a good time to identify the institutional home for the program. This can depend on several factors, including the primary funding source, agency or organizational capacity, broader agency or organizational goals, and the focus of planned program activities. Potential institutional homes include local or regional transportation agencies, nonprofit organizations, schools or school districts, LHDs, police departments, and other local government departments or agencies.

Step 3: Kick off SRTS education & encouragement activities.

Starting with small events like a Walk to School Day or a walking school bus is a good way to build momentum or pilot the program. These activities also require less preparation and long-term commitment than other efforts, such as walk audits.

Step 4: Build relationships with key partners.

Reach out to key partners (e.g., city staff, the school district, school board, parent–teacher association [PTA], community groups) to let them know about the SRTS program goals and plans. This lays the groundwork for community engagement and could lead to future collaboration opportunities, such as conducting needs assessments or creating a task force.

Phase 2: Action Plan Development

Action plan development is typically led by the institutional home for the program, which, as noted above, may be the LHD. If the LHD is not the institutional home, the team can still support the effort by participating in the task force and helping develop the action plan.

Step 1: Engage the community to identify needs.

Engage with residents, families, students, and other community leaders and partners to understand their goals, challenges, and concerns related to using active transportation to travel to and from school. It may be helpful to conduct a survey asking families, teachers, and students how they get to school and what barriers they may face regarding using active transportation.



Step 2: Create a task force.

The purpose of the task force is to bring together key stakeholders involved in enabling students to safely walk and bicycle to school. Members should represent diverse perspectives and expertise, as well as a range of roles and levels of influence in issues related to SRTS. This can include the following individuals:¹⁸

- School personnel, including administrators, teachers, and other engaged staff
- School district administration, including transportation staff or even the superintendent
- PTA or parent–teacher organization (PTO) members
- Parents and other family members
- Students
- Local elected officials
- City or county engineering, planning, and public works staff
- Law enforcement staff
- LHD personnel
- Community organizations representing youth or neighborhood interests, including environmental advocates and safety advocates
- Local biking or walking group members
- Local business leaders

The task force should also coordinate with other task forces or committees that might already be in place at schools (e.g., Vision Zero task forces, school wellness committees).

Additional resource from the Safe Routes to School National Partnership and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department:

- [Building Momentum for Safe Routes to School: A Toolkit for School Districts and City Leaders](#)

Step 3: Develop an action plan.

The action plan will help prioritize mid-to-long-term activities and goals. The Six E's framework can be used to help outline actions and activities needed to achieve community goals.

Phase 3: Implementation & Sustainability

Similar to phases 1 and 2, this phase is typically led by the institutional home for the program, which may be the LHD. If the LHD is not the institutional home, the team can still support the effort by contributing funding or helping apply for new funding sources and providing staff support for events and activities.

Step 1: Consider expanding activities or extending them to additional schools.

Take time to reflect on and assess whether there is interest and capacity to scale the program and whether any changes should be made. Scaling may involve expanding activities to take a more comprehensive approach or extending the program's reach to other schools. This may require hiring more staff, such as a dedicated SRTS coordinator, or securing additional funding.

Step 2: Find long-term funding sources.

Funding is crucial to the sustainability of the program. Jurisdictions should explore federal, state, and local funding opportunities.

Step 3: Collaborate with city or county government staff to implement infrastructure improvements.

Walk audits, surveys, and other SRTS activities can help identify key infrastructure improvements that would make using active transportation to travel to and from school safer and more accessible. Planning, engineering, and transportation staff in local government can help address these needs in their work.



Phase 4: Policy Development

The policy development phase is typically led by school districts, schools, or transportation and planning departments, depending on the type of policy or plan. LHDs can support the effort by participating in other planning processes to provide continuity, contributing data and content to inform the preamble part of the policy, and offering input to help ensure policy commitments support equitable health outcomes.

Step 1: Integrate SRTS into other policies & plans.

SRTS can be integrated into school district policies, school wellness policies, general plans, bicycle and pedestrian master plans, Complete Streets policies, Vision Zero policies and action plans, and other planning efforts.

Additional resources:

- ChangeLab Solutions
 - [Incorporating Safe Routes to School into Local School Wellness Policies](#)
- Safe Routes Partnership
 - [Teaming Up on Road Safety: Actionable Guidance for Integrating Safe Routes to School and Vision Zero Programs \(PDF\)](#)

Step 2: Develop & adopt a standalone SRTS policy.

Although an SRTS policy is not mandatory for an SRTS program, policies support the sustainability of SRTS efforts by “institutionalizing supportive practices, providing more consistent program implementation, creating accountability, and establishing formal relationships and responsibilities.”¹⁹

Additional ChangeLab Solutions resources:

- [Model General Plan Language Supporting Safe Routes to Schools](#)
- [Model MPO Resolution Supporting Safe Routes to School](#)

Conclusion

Creating and sustaining a safe and accessible active transportation system requires combining and aligning many different plans and policies and collaborating with a range of partners. This resource provides general process information on three key transportation planning approaches, but every community is unique and should adapt this guidance to fit its own context.



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