



Safe Routes to School in Action

City of Oregon, Ohio



Background

Approximately 50% of the Starr Elementary School students live within one mile of school, located on Starr Avenue in the City of Oregon, Ohio. Starr Avenue has not always had sidewalks for kids to walk to school, but this did not stop the kids from walking. Students would walk in bike lanes along Starr Avenue, a road with a 35 mph speed limit. Parents and school officials recognized this dangerous activity and began developing a comprehensive Safe Routes to School Program for the City of Oregon. In less than two years, the Oregon Safe Routes to School Program was awarded the first Safe Routes to School funding in Ohio and has completed infrastructure improvement projects that provide safe routes for the students of Starr Elementary to continue walking to school.

Details

In 2008, the Ohio Department of Transportation SRTS Program granted the City of Oregon with \$150,000 to support the Starr Avenue and Fassett Middle School Sidewalk Improvement Project. Enthusiasm for the SRTS program began with a logo contest. The star SRTS logo (located in upper right corner) represents the significance that the initial infrastructure project has had on the community. The new sidewalks, improved signage, and pavement markings were completed and celebrated in the fall of 2008 with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Teachers at Starr Elementary School tallied school travel behaviors of their students in October 2007, and again in May 2009, after the infrastructure projects were complete. Results show that the number of students walking to and from school increased by more than 50% and the number of students bicycling doubled. Now, approximately 10% of students walk or bicycle to school, and approximately 15% walk or bicycle home from school. Since the program began, more than 50 students who did not previously walk or bicycle to or from school have started doing so, providing them with much-needed physical activity.

What's Next

2009 grant funding will continue to develop the success story of the Oregon Safe Routes to School program. Coy Elementary School, also located on Starr Avenue, currently enforces a walking ban because of incomplete sidewalks and unsafe infrastructure. A \$250,000 grant will fund the construction of a connector sidewalk and continued pedestrian and sidewalk improvements along Starr Avenue. The Oregon Safe Routes to School program hopes that improved sidewalks will allow Coy Elementary School to lift the ban on walking.

Contact information:

Vicki Laurell
Oregon City Schools
(419) 693-0996
vbl@nwoca.org

Rodney Shultz, P.E.
Deputy City Engineer, City of Oregon
(419) 698-7015
rshultz@ci.oregon.oh.us