



December 2017



### Coordinator's Corner

This fall was another one for the SRTS record books. Throughout Virginia, 328 schools participated in International Walk to School Day, exceeding our goal of 325 schools and last year's turnout of 311 schools.

As fall turns into winter, I encourage students to keep walking and biking. This newsletter provides suggestions for encouraging winter walking and biking, along with other important SRTS program information, such as Crossing Guard Appreciation Day and the next round of Non-infrastructure grants.



Crossing Guards are an important part of many school communities. We'll show you how to nominate your crossing and provide materials to say thank-you to your school's crossing guard on the February 14, 2018 - Crossing Guard Appreciation Day.

The Virginia SRTS Program offers several types of funding aimed to help bolster your SRTS efforts at the local level. This newsletter lists the projects which received Quickstart Mini-grant funding during the fall. Review these ideas and consider submitting your own application this spring!

We also highlight how impactful walkabouts can be and provide a recap of the Elkton Elementary School Walkabout, which was funded through a Walkabout Mini-grant. Finally, we provide details on the Non-infrastructure grants, which are used to fund local coordinators throughout the state, with 18 coordinators currently working in 15 areas..

If you have questions or would like more information on any of the topics included here, please call the Virginia SRTS Hotline at **1-855-601-7787** or send an email to [info@virginiasrts.org](mailto:info@virginiasrts.org).

Regards,  
Rob Williams  
Virginia SRTS Coordinator

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### CALENDAR

#### DECEMBER

1: Most Outstanding Crossing Guard Nominations Open

#### JANUARY

26: Most Outstanding Crossing Guard Nominations Close

#### FEBRUARY

2: QuickStart Mini-grant and Walkabout Mini-grant applications due  
7: Non-infrastructure grant application opens  
14: Crossing Guard Appreciation Day  
All month long... Crossing Guard Appreciation Month

### **Friends & Faces - Jim Durham**

*Jim Durham chairs the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and has been a strong advocate for safe routes to school. We talked with Jim shortly after he attended this year's Youth Bike Summit, held in Arlington in October.*

**You are currently the chair of the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). What led to your involvement in the BPAC?** I was appointed to the BPAC in December 2012 after I retired from full-time employment. I wanted to make an impact locally and saw an opportunity to combine this desire with one of my recreational pastimes, bicycling, by promoting walking and biking in the City of Alexandria.

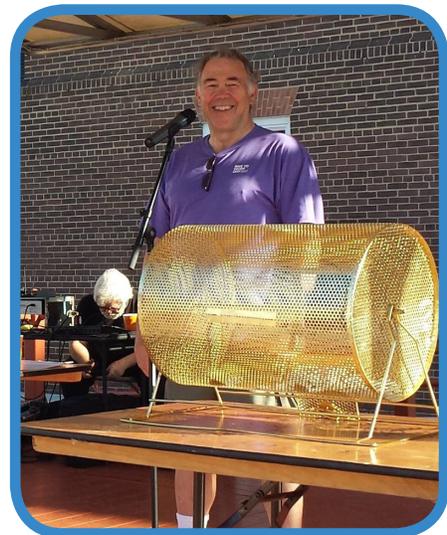
**What type of projects is the BPAC currently involved in?** The Committee has changed a lot since I joined. It has transitioned from an organization with a few active members to a larger organization with a greater reach, including our efforts in Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). BPAC's origin focus on advocating for expanding the City's trail network has changed over time to focus on expanding the network of on-street bicycle infrastructure, improving bicycle safety, and engaging directly with the public through volunteer opportunities. Our current priorities are safety for all users, bicycle safety education, and for Vision Zero.

**BPAC was the driving force behind the City's non-infrastructure application for a SRTS Coordinator. Could you explain how BPAC assisted in the application, which resulted in funding for the new coordinator?** BPAC was involved with the development of the ACPS' Strategic Plan (ACPS 2020: Every Student Succeeds) by providing input on section 5, which focused on health and wellness. This included an objective to form a Safe Routes to School Program as well as promote physical fitness, recreation, and play. In 2015, Mike Humphries became

the school system's Instructional Specialist for Health, Physical Education and Family Life Education, shortly after the City's unsuccessful application for a SRTS Coordinator. Mike has helped champion SRTS efforts, coordinating with the BPAC volunteers to teach bicycle safety classes at each school and help conduct bike rodeos.

With more volunteer opportunities and more buy-in from ACPS, we submitted another application in early 2017, which was successful. Our new part-time SRTS coordinator, Tracy Lupient, began working in September.

**How do you see the new SRTS Coordinator helping to advance goals for the City and BPAC?** Tracy is going to be a huge resource for us! We've met with her a few times already and having someone working on SRTS efforts within the school system will be invaluable. Tracy's background as a PE teacher will help us to get more students walking and biking. From reaching out to PE teachers at each school to helping organize events at the school division level. She has experience designing curriculums, understands the role of Standards of Learning, and more importantly



*Jim Durham assisting with Bike to Work Day 2017*

has experience working directly with kids! We are extremely excited to see the impact she'll make.

For more information on BPAC, please visit: [www.alexandriabpac.wordpress.com](http://www.alexandriabpac.wordpress.com)

### **2018 Non-Infrastructure Grants**

VDOT is pleased to announce another round of Non-Infrastructure Grants for 2018. The success of Virginia's SRTS program is due in large part to the dedicated local coordinators funded by the Non-Infrastructure Grants. The program began with 10 coordinators for the 2013-2014 school year and has grown to 18 coordinators working in 16 jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth.

Here are the key dates for the next round:

**February 7, 2018:** Online application system opens.

**March 23, 2018:** Last day to complete and submit the full application.

**20% match:** School divisions that have received full funding for at least three years will be asked to match a portion of VDOT's grant funds with local funds or donations.

**Activities and Programs Plan Review:** First time applicants are encouraged to submit a draft Activities and Programs Plan (APP) for review. APPs submitted by February 14, 2018 will be guaranteed a review and response by no later than March 1.

**Online application system access:** The final APP must be submitted in order to have full access to the online application system.

Consult our [Non-Infrastructure Grants webpage](#) for more information about purpose of the grant, funding limits, eligible activities and other pertinent details.

### **Fall QuickStart Mini-grant Awards**

Congratulations to the following 24 schools receiving a QuickStart Mini-grant this fall for bike rodeos, frequent walk programs, walk to school day incentives, balance bikes, bike racks, and more.

- Vienna Elementary, Vienna; Frequent Walker Program
- Chalkley Elementary, Chesterfield; Bicycle Repairs for School Bicycle Fleet
- Patrick Henry ES, Thomas Jefferson Middle, Arlington; Bike Rodeo
- Randolph Elementary, Abingdon Elementary, Arlington; LED Stop Paddles for Crossing Guards
- Gunston Middle, Kenmore Middle, Arlington; U-locks for Earn-a-Bike Program
- Thomas Harrison Middle, Harrisonburg; Pop-up Bike Path
- Fairfield Elementary, Richmond; Walk to School Day Incentive Items
- Oak Grove-Bellemeade Elementary, Richmond; Walk to School Day Incentive Items
- Mary Munford Elementary, Richmond; Walk to School Day Incentive Items
- Chimborazo Elementary, Richmond; Walk to School Day Incentive Items
- JEB Stuart Elementary, Richmond; Walk to School Day Incentive Items
- Luray Elementary, Luray Middle, Luray; Walk to School Day Incentive Items
- South River Elementary, Grottoes; Balance Bikes for Bicycle Education Program
- Ginter Park Elementary, Richmond; Walk to School Day Incentive Items
- Seldens Landing Elementary, Leesburg; Bike Rodeo Incentive Items
- William Perry Elementary, Kate Collins Middle School, Waynesboro; Walking Incentive Items
- Berkeley Glenn Elementary, Wrennongah Elementary, Waynesboro; Walking Incentive Items

- John C Myers Elementary, Broadway; Monthly Walk to School Day Support
- Hillsboro Charter Academy, Hillsboro; Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program Support
- Stuarts Draft Elementary, Verona; Bicycle Safety Program Support
- W.W. Gordon Elementary, Richmond; Bike Rack and Bike Helmets for Bike Safety Unit
- Spotswood Elementary, Harrisonburg; Bike Rack
- Westbriar Elementary, Vienna; Monthly Walk to School Day Incentive Items
- Pinebrook Elementary, Aldie; Monthly Walk to School Day Incentive Items



Nearly half of all students living within walking distance to Elkton, yet only a few walk. So, in addition to recommending new sidewalks and intersection improvements, the Walkabout report recommends ways to encourage more students to walk and bicycle to school.

The Elkton Elementary School Walkabout Report should be available in late 2017.

Want to learn more about the walking and bicycling conditions in the area around your school? Read the next article for information on how to organize a walkabout or view past walkabout reports and a map showing walkabout locations [here](#). Walkabout Mini-grant recipients receive a hands-on walking and bicycling infrastructure survey and written [Walkabout Report](#) coordinated by the Local Technical Assistance Coordinator serving their region.

Apply for a [Walkabout Mini-grant](#) by February 1, 2018 to be considered for the Spring 2018 award. The successful applicant will be notified by the end of February, and the Walkabout is expected to occur in March or April.

## QuickStart Mini-grants

[QuickStart Mini-grants](#) can help fund incentives and projects that encourage walking and biking at your school. Start thinking about ideas for the spring application cycle, with due dates of February 1, March 1, and April 5, 2018.

### **Elkton Walkabout Recap**

In early September, the Local Technical Assistance Coordinator (LTAC) serving the Blue Ridge Region (Kyle Lukacs) joined the Rockingham County Public School's Safe Routes to School Coordinator (Kyle Lawrence) and school staff, parents, students, VDOT representatives, and town representatives to conduct a walkabout at Elkton Elementary School. The walkabout included a discussion of existing walking and biking travel patterns, safety concerns, and school policies followed by a dismissal observation and survey of surrounding infrastructure.

## **Bringing People to the Table: How a School Walkabout Can Save Your Community**

SRTS programs pride themselves on involving a good mix of community members in its programs and activities. It's easy to see why, since SRTS can benefit lots of folks in a community. Some SRTS activities are easy for people to say 'yes' to, such as helping with a walk or bike to school event. Community members -elected, appointed and residents alike -- often feel good about donating food or walking with students, then being part of or cheering at the at-school media event.

What's tougher sometimes, is to come to agreement about changes to the transportation network in areas where students are not well served. While safety should always be the priority, agreeing on how to get there can take time. Common areas of concern center on real or perceived 'trade offs,' such a change in travel time for motorists (due to reduced speeds or a route change) or building a sidewalk on a portion of someone's yard that is in the public right-of-way.

The best place to start may be an informal walkabout with participation from school and community members, transportation professionals, law enforcement and students. It should be planned



around two achievable desired outcomes: a way to allow participants to see and experience walking and bicycling conditions together; and to begin to discuss possible changes. Keep the following in mind:

**Someone needs to organize and invite participants.** Invitations can go to anyone interested, or to a more defined group. Either way, the person organizing should keep track of who plans to attend. The walkabout should be on a day and at a time that is optimal for participation and also allow the team to observe drop off or pickup times. If participation is high, consider holding more than one, varying the day and time of day. You'll need a few more people to help shepherd groups.

**You'll need a place to meet and a route to walk or bicycle.** Plan to meet with everyone ahead of time to review the schedule, the route, provide a guide on what they should look for, and review safety. The walkabout route should begin at or close to the school. It should also be one that students currently use or one they could use 'but for...' Ask participants to take photos and notes to share afterwards. Afterwards, a debriefing meeting should be held to review what everyone saw, highlight where there is agreement, and decide what comes next.

**Use a gathering technique, such as food, to ensure participation.** Consider offering a light breakfast or snack, or a hot drink in the winter and a cool drink in warm weather.

Here are some resources you may find helpful:

- [Walkabout Mini-grants](#)
- [Walkabout Audit Guide](#)
- [Arrival and Dismissal Observation Field Guide](#)
- [Safe Routes to School: Helping Communities Save Lives and Dollars](#)

### ***Don't let your SRTS Program Hibernate***

Just as excitement for your Safe Routes to School Program is growing on the heels of fall weather and Walk to School Day, the days get shorter and temperatures colder. Don't let your program go into hibernation during the winter months, but instead look to keep excitement building through increased marketing and encouragement activities. See below for a few ideas on how to promote winter walking at your school:

Distribute winter walking safety information through social media posts or flyers. Examples of safety information include:

- Always check the forecast to properly prepare for the weather and to avoid days that will be too cold, windy, wet, or snowy
- Help your body regulate its temperature by layering up
- Keep your feet warm by wearing winter boots or wool socks
- Keep your head and hands warm by wearing hats and mittens or gloves
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, even though it's cold
- Wear bright reflective clothing and avoid dark colors

Consider supplement encouragement programs to keep students walking during the winter. Encouragement programs could include:

- Winter Walk to School Day: Consider hosting a Winter Walk to School Day event at least once during January, February or March. This could launch a Winter Walking Club (read on).
- Winter Walking Clubs: Consider hosting a weekly or monthly "Polar Bear" walking club to encourage people to walk on designated days. Walking

events can be indoors at school during extra cold days to encourage physical activity.

- Winter Incentive Items:
  - Reflectors and reflective tape can help improve student visibility
  - Hot chocolate or apple cider could be a special treat for those who walk to school day on extra cold days
  - Special tokens or other incentive items for winter walkers will help instill a sense of pride in kids who choose to "brave the elements."
- Keep 'em warm: Keep a stash of winter coats, socks, scarves, ear muffs, beanies and gloves or mittens that girls and boys can use when needed. Some students may not have these items, so keeping a supply on hand can be a huge help. Start your own program for donated new or slightly used items, or tap into an organization such as [Operation Warm](#), which works with clothing manufacturers.
- Make sure to encourage parents to use their own judgement on when walking or biking to school is discouraged, such as in icy conditions.

### ***Student Travel Tally Week 2017***

The Virginia SRTS Program encourages schools to take Student Travel Tallies during any week of September or October that works for them. 252 schools participated this fall.



Look for a summary of the fall 2017 tallies on the website's Student Travel Tally webpage in late 2017. In addition to the statewide report, we also post reports from selected school divisions with high rates of participation.

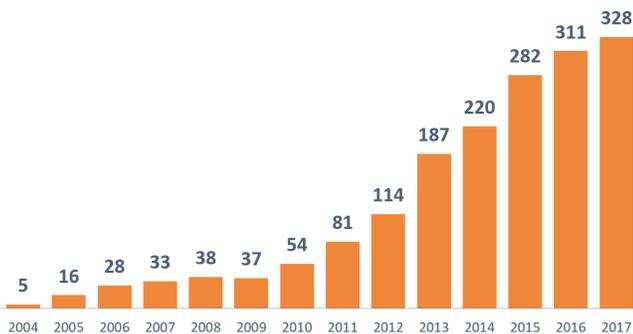
Don't see your school division listed? Find everything you need for a successful Student Travel Tally Week on the same webpage and contact your LTAC for additional support.

A Student Travel Tally is a quick, in-class survey that provides valuable information on student travel patterns. Collecting tallies on an annual basis is a great way to track the impact of your SRTS program, and helps us make the case at the state level for continued funding.

### Walk to School Day 2017

It was another record-breaking year for Walk to School Day in Virginia. We set the ambitious goal of having 325 schools register their events on the national [walkbiketoschool.org](http://walkbiketoschool.org) site. When registration closed on October 31, there were 328 Virginia schools registered -- 17 more schools than in 2016.

Registered iWalk Events in Virginia



Virginia has come a long way since 2004, when the first Walk to School Day events were held. In the past decade alone, the number of participating schools has grown almost ten-fold. A big thank you to everyone who planned and participated in events; keep up the great work!

### Virginia's Most Outstanding Crossing Guards of 2017 Nominations Open December 1

Does your crossing guard go above and beyond? Does she wear a smile even in the snow? Does he know everyone's name?

Nominations are open now through January 26, 2018 for Virginia's outstanding crossing guards. Complete out a [short online nomination form](#) and be sure to upload a

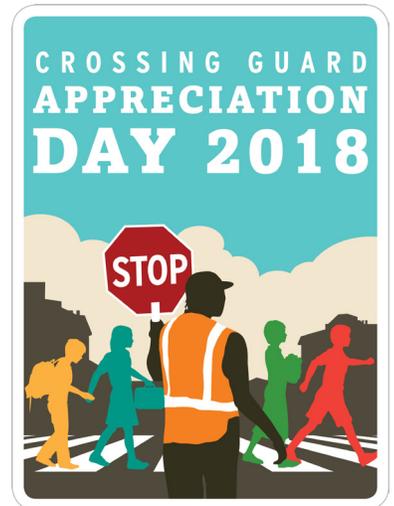


photo. Last year the Virginia Safe Routes to School program recognized six exemplary guards for their service in keeping kids safe on their way to and from school. Now is also a great time to plan for Crossing Guard Appreciation Day. The official day is February 14, 2018, but plan your celebration on the day that works best for your school community. Crossing Guard Appreciation Day is a great opportunity for you to say thank you to these local heroes and to educate the school community about what crossing guards do. Looking for ideas on what to do and how to plan it? Check out our [Crossing Guard Appreciation Day Learn it. Do it. Live it!](#) We also have [thank you cards, flyers and stickers](#) that you can use for the event.

**Did you know?**

SRTS coordinators working throughout Virginia want SRTS to be part of everyday business, rather than something that only happens for one or two special events each school year. Check out these two recent examples of how the state’s local SRTS coordinators are making this happen:

Two schools in Rockingham County organized walk to school days without any input or direction from the local SRTS Coordinator (Kyle Lawrence) thanks to the leadership of the Principals and PTAs.

The TA Set-Aside grant application for this round in Williamsburg-James City County is the result of building a collaborative network based on a parent’s response to the Safe Routes to School survey three years ago that lead to the Walkabout grant application at Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School. Local SRTS Coordinator Darlene Dockery worked with the local VDOT office, the James City County Planning Department, and WJCC School Operations to complete the grant application.

**Coordinator Welcome**

Local SRTS Programs continue to grow in over 15 school districts throughout Virginia, with three new coordinators starting work this fall.

**Tracy Lupient (Alexandria City Public Schools)**

Tracy Lupient, a mother of two and former health and physical education teacher, is now leading the Alexandria City Public School’s SRTS program. Tracy walked to school as a kid, including when she lived in Seoul, South Korea, and walks her daughter to school every morning. Tracy is a certified Spin Instructor and teaches classes at the YMCA and Gold’s gym when she is not enjoying Alexandria’s trail network with her children.



**Danyel Smith (Fit4Kids and Richmond City Public Schools)**



Danyel Smith is ecstatic to be able to work with students to increase their access to health knowledge and improve their overall wellness through the SRTS program. She looks forward to maintaining and building relationships with community partners, students, and teachers to help reduce concerns about personal safety given many target schools are in high crime areas. Danyel enjoys cooking and dancing outside of work.

**Theresa Pusateri (Norfolk Public Schools)**

As a three-sport athlete (field hockey, basketball, and softball) at Michigan State University and the former Director of Basketball Operations for Old Dominion University’s Women’s Basketball Team, Theresa Pusateri is more than familiar with the benefits of physical activity. Theresa looks forward to making a positive difference in the lives of Norfolk students, who she hopes will enjoy the feeling of adventure and independence she gained from walking to school as a kid during Chicago’s chilly winters.

