

Fond du Lac Safe Routes to School Plan Update

SRTS Team Meeting #1
October 20, 2020, 10:00 a.m.
Zoom Video/Audio Conference

AGENDA

Introductions

Russell Habermann, Senior Planner at ARDC Planning, welcomed everyone and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Attendees: Jamie Adams (FDL Planning), John Babineau (Fond du Lac Ojibwe School, Physical Education Teacher), Conor Henneberry (FDL/AmeriCorps VISTA), Jason Holliday (FDL Planning), Alexandra Houchin (FDL Planning), KaRee Lockling (FDL Human Services), Samantha Martin (FDL SHIP Coordinator), JinYeene Neumann (Carlton County Highway Department, Engineer), Valerie Tanner (Fond du Lac Ojibwe School, Principal), Maren Webb (MnDOT D-1), Russell Habermann (ARDC Planning)

Safe Routes to School 101

Habermann shared about Safe Routes to School and the potential benefits the program has. He then asked the SRTS Team what benefits they see for the Fond du Lac community specifically. SRTS Team members mentioned helping young people learn to appreciate and dress for the season, learning about the community and how the world around you works, and learning about the environment around the school and the services Fond du Lac provides near the school campus.

Habermann also shared about roles and expectations of SRTS Team members (refer to slide deck) and outlined the program's 7-“E” framework (Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering, Equity, Evaluation, and Engagement).

He then outlined the tentative SRTS planning project schedule as follows:

- October: Kick-off Meeting (Meeting #1)
- November: Data Collection (Ongoing Work/Assistance)
- December: Data Assessment
- January: Action Plan Development (Meeting #2)
- February: Plan Development
- March: Public Plan Review (Meeting #3)
- April: Final Revisions
- May: Plan Completion (Meeting #4)

Habermann then shared what to expect in the completed plan document, which is outlined below. He shared that he would provide a Word document version of this final plan to Jamie Adams, as the SRTS Team Leader, and encouraged the SRTS Team to revisit the plan periodically and make necessary changes.

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Vision
- Existing Conditions
- Issue Identification
- Action Plan
- Implementation Steps
- Evaluation Plan
- Appendices

During a check-in to answer any questions, the SRTS Team confirmed that the school is currently all-virtual due to COVID-19. Also, a demonstration project to test out pedestrian improvements at key intersections in Fond du Lac was installed last week; many drivers have provided their feedback already, but the SRTS Team questioned if any feedback was coming from people using the temporary installations while walking, which is the mode the project was designed to improve.

Development of SRTS Team Vision Statement

Habermann asked the SRTS Team to brainstorm about what they would like to see in the Fond du Lac community as a result of their work. The SRTS Team brought forward the following:

- “Own it” – be proud of SRTS plan and committee
- There’s buy-in from the community – more students walking and biking that wouldn’t have before
- Infrastructure around school that makes it bike-friendly (bike rack) – support!
- Bike buses/trains – adult-supervised group bike pick-up/drop-off before and after school – support!
- Opportunity to translate kids who were bussed previously to have them join a bike bus
- Kids earning points that will get them better gear (SHIP can help?) for walking and biking – incentives and feeling of accomplishment – make walk/bike to school day every day
- Remote bus drop and walk (for those who live farther away from the school)
- Work around community centers (new trails)
- More events/field trips where walking and biking is included in the activities
- Provide food with events (SHIP can help, too) – promote school breakfast program, invite larger community to participate during special walking/biking events (bike and walk to school days – spring and fall)
- Utilize adult role models that walk and bike – and make it look cool! – male role models? “We’re tough. We’re getting out there. We’re doing hard things.”
- Trail connecting to Cloquet Forestry Center
- Edible landscaping policy – along walking/biking routes
- Getting Big Lake Trail to go into Cloquet/into larger regional trail system
- Workout stations along trails
- Tie-ins to mountain biking culture?

Habermann will take these ideas and create a draft Vision Statement for the SRTS Team to react to at the next meeting.

Coordination of Data Collection

Habermann shared that the SRTS planning assistance grant requires a number of data collection methods, listed below. The SRTS Team went through the data collection methods and guided how each of these would be carried out, particularly considering COVID-19; notes for each are outlined below.

- School Environment and Policy Assessment – Habermann will call Valerie Tanner, and they will fill out this assessment together in the coming weeks.
- School Hazard Observation – Since school is not in-person currently, there is no distinct hazards at drop-off or pick-up time to observe right now. If school goes to in-person learning later this year, this observation could take place then.
- Caregiver Survey – MnDOT Central Office has provided a digital survey for distribution via email, but the SRTS Team voiced concern about the response to a virtual survey and asked about the possibility of doing paper surveys that would be distributed with lunches. Habermann will check with MnDOT about if they have a paper version of the survey formatted. Habermann will connect with Valerie Tanner and Cc Jamie Adams about distribution of the survey to take place in November.
- Student Transportation Tally – Since school is not in-person currently, students are not travelling to school right now. If school goes to in-person learning later this year, these tallies could take place then.
- Walk Audit – Habermann explained that MnDOT has suggested that SRTS Teams do not meet in-person for walk audits and explore alternative methods. However, the SRTS Team voiced that a walk audit can be done with appropriate health safety precautions and that getting out to do a walk audit would be valuable for the process. Habermann said he would check in about the possibility and work with Jamie Adams to set something up for those who are comfortable with getting together.

Making Information about Project Publicly Available

Habermann shared that getting the word out about the Fond du Lac SRTS plan project is important for community buy-in. Habermann will work on materials (press release, social media language, poster) for public distribution and work with Jason Holliday to distribute them to the web, social media, newspaper, and radio as seen fit.

Next Steps

- Habermann will draft a vision statement to be reviewed at the next SRTS meeting.
- Habermann will connect with Valerie Tanner about filling out the School Environment and Policy Assessment.
- Habermann will connect with MnDOT Central Office and then Valerie Tanner (Cc'ing Jamie Adams) about the Caregiver Survey.
- Habermann will connect with MnDOT and then Jamie Adams about organizing a walk audit for those who are comfortable with the in-person, outdoor meeting.
- Habermann will develop materials sharing about the planning project, run them by the SRTS Team for review, and work with Jason Holliday to release them.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.