



Transportation Voice

Students walk safe with the 'Safe Routes to School' Program

Winter 2009-10

A REVIVAL OF WALKING TO SCHOOL

The Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is taking strides with Florida Department of Transportation District VI (FDOT), Miami-Dade County Public Works Department (PWD), and the Miami-Dade County School Board (MDCSB) to support the Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS). This program ensures children have a safe and enjoyable experience when walking to and from school.

The PWD established a SRTS program in the 1970's, which focused on the engineering aspects that identified and improved walking routes to elementary schools. In 2003, the SRTS program was revived under the sponsorship of MDCSB Member and MPO Governing Board Vice Chair Perla Tabares Hantman through the Miami-Dade Public Schools Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) with funding and technical assistance from the MPO. The study involved developing a pilot project for 15 elementary schools (see page 2). The schools selected were based on the relatively high juvenile bicycle/pedestrian crash rates, as

revealed from historical police crash records. Staff began attending events to help educate and encourage children, including those with disabilities, about which routes were the safest to take.

A Federal SRTS program was created in 2004 as part of the national SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) legislation to fund both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects to help increase the number of children that safely walk to school. The PWD and MDCSB have taken the lead on developing infrastructure projects such as sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, signs, and markings while the UM Miller School of Medicine has developed and a "5E Model" educational program (page 3).

In addition, the MPO is beginning the development of an on-line SRTS mapping system that will identify low-volume streets and signalized intersections to help parents choose a safe route from their home to school. The system will be able to respond to changing conditions and provide safety information to encourage safe walking.

DID YOU KNOW?

☞ Crashes involving pedestrians account for 40% of traffic fatalities in Miami-Dade County each year.

☞ 20% to 30% of morning rush hour traffic is assumed to be parents driving children to school.

☞ The WalkSafe™ program has helped reduce the number of children that are injured in traffic crashes while walking by 40% since 2001.

☞ Forty years ago half of all school children in the nation walked to school. Today, less than 10% of school children in kinder-garten to 10th grade walk to school and less than 2% travel by bicycle.

☞ Individuals are 65% more likely to walk in a neighborhood with sidewalks.

☞ Safe Routes to School programs can increase walking and bicycling by 20 to 200%.

☞ Posters promoting pedestrian safety are being displayed inside Metrorail and Metrobus vehicles resulting from an initiative by County Commissioner and MPO Board Member Dorrin D. Rolle.

Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST)

The CTST Program is an inter-agency team approach to reducing the number of traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities. The Miami-Dade County Public Schools CTST is a spin-off of the countywide CTST team who work on school traffic issues and coordinates the Safe Routes to School program. Members include:

- Citizens Independent Transportation Trust
- Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee
- City of Miami, Bicycle Coordinator
- Florida International University Engineering Dept.
- Florida Department of Transportation District VI
- Miami-Dade County Police Department
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools
- Miami-Dade County Public Works Department
- Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization
- UM Miller School of Medicine, WalkSafe Program



Pictured in center: Perla Tabares Hantman, Miami-Dade County School Board member and MPO Governing Board Vice Chairwoman with the Miami-Dade County School Board CTST and students from Miami Lakes Middle School



INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

Improving infrastructure is a key element to the success of the Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS). The ultimate goal is to develop a program for every school in the Miami-Dade County Public School (MDCPS) District. To date, the School Board has endorsed fifty-nine (59) schools for inclusion in the SRTS Program with forty-one (41) selected for funding of over \$6.2 million in necessary infrastructure improvements.

Currently, improvements are being made to thirteen (13) school's sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals. Solar powered school flashers are being installed for safety purposes, which will also save electricity. 'Drivers' Speed Feedback' signs



have been installed as a Pilot Speed reduction Program at seven (7) High Schools with a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation District VI (FDOT) at:

1. Coral Gables
2. John A. Ferguson
3. Felix Varela
4. Dr. Michael M. Krop
5. American
6. G. Holmes Braddock
7. Coral Reef

Three (3) additional High Schools, requested by MDCPS, will utilize donated solar powered equipment:

1. Hialeah Gardens
2. Booker T. Washington
3. Miami Carol City

Finally, Flagler Elementary and Eugenia B. Thomas K-8 will also benefit from donated non-solar powered equipment for test purposes, which will expand this Pilot Program to all grade school levels.

MARKETING UPDATE

As part of the Florida Department of Transportation's District VI (FDOT) commitment to the Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS), the University of Miami/WalkSafe™ Program will create a Social Marketing/Media campaign aimed at creating a shift in the cultural norm in Miami-Dade County. The University will collaborate directly with FDOT's SRTS Coordinator in order to create materials for the campaign.

The goals of the campaign would be to create this shift by increasing knowledge of pedestrian safety and build awareness of the benefits of children walking safely to and from school. A shift would also decrease the rate of pedestrians hit by cars and would increase physical activity.

There will be a series of Public Service Announcements (PSA) aired on local television stations that will build awareness, gain parent support, and educate children about walking to and from school. Viewers will be directed to a mini website hosted within the local television's website that will contain important links, pedestrian safety information, and a feedback section. Users can take a survey asking about the effectiveness of the PSA and their views on pedestrian safety and physical activity as it relates to walking to and from school.

This campaign will complement and enhance current efforts to educate the public about pedestrian safety and will run from 2010 to 2014.

Walk Our Children

The 13th Annual International "Walk Our Children" event, held on October 7, 2009, promoted pedestrian safety by encouraging children to walk to school every day. The nationwide event focused on raising awareness about pedestrian safety among students, parents, and the community. It also emphasized the awareness of safe walking skills, safe routes, and walking as an exercise that promotes health. In addition, it helps the environment by reducing traffic congestion and forces the importance of reducing traffic speed.



Left picture from left: Julio Robaina, City of Hialeah Mayor; Hantman, Miami-Dade County School Board member; Alberto M. Carvalho, Miami-Dade County Public Schools Superintendent; and students from Twin Lakes Elementary during their 2009 WalkSafe event.

The Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Advisory Committee (BPAC) have endorsed the event, which is sponsored nationwide by the National SAFE Routes to School Program. In 2006, 100,000 children under the age of 14 were injured and killed as a result of pedestrian accidents in Miami-Dade County, a 25% increase in injuries as compared to 2006.



Students from Irving and Beatrice Elementary Schools participating in the 2009 WalkSafe International event.

Aside from the important safety messages and awareness raised at the event, it is also very important that the walking school bus program be maintained. Ms. Hantman has also sponsored the Safe Routes to School Grant Program, which provides the funding to support the program in all school districts. Learn more at www.walktoschool-usa.org.

5-E's OF THE WALKSAFE PROGRAM

Children to School Day

Children to School Day", held on Wednesday, is an annual event that provides education and awareness to students who are walking to school. The program is designed to promote awareness to parents, and schools. The program increases awareness of safe routes to school for students and parents as well as good health and physical fitness. In addition, it addresses school-related traffic and pollution, and reinforces the importance of obeying speed zone limits.



Mayor and MPO Governing Board Member, Perla Tabares and MPO Governing Board Vice Chairwoman, and Schools Superintendent walk with children from the 2009 International Walk to School Event

organization (MPO) and the Bicycle Pedestrian Coalition, "Walk Our Children to School Day", which is a coalition of the Miami-Dade County Schools and the Miami-Dade County Schools Superintendent walk with children from the 2009 International Walk to School Event



Peskoie Elementary participate in the International Walk to School Day Event

that are offered by the Walk to School Day program. Safe routes are safe for the children. In this report, we discuss Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Infrastructure and how to build safer walking routes in our neighborhoods. Visit www.walksafe.us

The WalkSafe™ program is based on a '5E Model' that incorporates education, engineering, enforcement, evaluation, and encouragement.

Education - The educational component consists of a three day curriculum taught in the classroom to children in grades K-5. This information is taught yearly in conjunction with the International Walk to School Day. WalkSafe™ has shown to significantly increase the pedestrian safety knowledge of elementary school children using the three main learning modalities: audio; visual; and motor. This is accomplished through formal educational curricula, videos, interdisciplinary activities, workbooks, outside simulation activities and art projects.



Engineering - In collaboration with organizations such as the Miami-Dade MPO, Miami-Dade Public Schools, and the Public Works Department, WalkSafe™ has created a task force team which helps create the safest possible environments for healthy, active living. WalkSafe™ facilitates the assessment of sites where children have been hit by cars and documents the engineering modifications that can be made to prevent future accidents. These detailed reports are presented at the Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) meetings.

Enforcement - Keeping children safe around school zones is of utmost importance. Partnerships with Police Departments and other community organizations assist in ensuring that our communities are safe environments for healthy, active living. These partnerships also seek to increase community awareness of enforcement within and around school zones.



Evaluation - Evaluation is a key factor for all programs in achieving and maintaining a higher level of efficiency. WalkSafe™ uses various forms of evaluation tools to identify and monitor pedestrian safety and health issues. Data collected from teacher and parent surveys, surveillance of injuries, and behavioral research are a few of the evaluation tools that the WalkSafe™ program utilizes.

Encouragement - WalkSafe™ encourages everyone throughout their communities to help advocate for children safely engaging in a healthy, active lifestyle. By participating in many outreach efforts, WalkSafe™ has become a staple in educating and encouraging others to take part in promoting safe walking environments and healthy behaviors.

Visit www.walksafe.us to learn more about this program.

CALENDAR OF MIAMI-DADE MPO MONTHLY MEETINGS

MPO Governing Board
Dennis C. Moss, Chairman
Perla Tabares Hantman, Vice Chairwoman

	DECEMBER 2009	JANUARY 2010	FEBRUARY 2010
MPO	12/17	1/28*	2/18*
TPC	12/07	1/11*	2/08*
TPTAC	12/02	1/06*	2/03*
CTAC	12/16	1/27	2/24
BPAC	12/16	1/27	2/24
TARC	12/02	1/06	2/03
FTAC	TBA	1/27	2/24
LCB	12/08	No Meeting	No Meeting

* *Dates subject to confirmation*

MPO Metropolitan Planning Organization
 TPC Transportation Planning Council
 TPTAC Transportation Planning Technical Advisory Committee
 CTAC Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee
 BPAC Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee
 TARC Transportation Aesthetics Review Committee
 FTAC Freight Transportation Advisory Committee
 LCB Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged

Bruno A. Barreiro
 Steven C. Bateman
 Matti Herrera Bower
 Jose "Pepe" Diaz
 Audrey M. Edmonson
 Shirley M. Gibson
 Carlos A. Gimenez
 Maritza Gutierrez
 Sally A. Heyman
 Barbara J. Jordan
 William H. Kerdyk
 Joe A. Martinez
 Andre D. Pierre
 Julio Robaina
 Dorrin D. Rolle
 Marc D. Sarnoff
 Natacha Seijas
 Katy Sorenson
 Rebeca Sosa
 Sen. Javier D. Souto

Non-Voting Members
FDOT District VI
 Gus Pego, P.E., Secretary
 Alice N. Bravo, P.E.

MPO Secretariat Director
 Jose-Luis Mesa, Ph.D.

