



## **Rhode Island Awards Safe Routes to School Program Funding**

In an effort to encourage and enable more of Rhode Island's children to safely walk and bike to school, the Rhode Island Division of Planning and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation announced awards for local schools to participate in the 100% federally funded Safe Routes to School Program. Funded through the Federal Highway Administration, SRTS is a reimbursement program for a variety of projects and activities at elementary and middle schools (kindergarten through eighth grade). In this first project solicitation, over \$1,900,000 million is being made available for thirteen programs in ten cities and towns.

The funding awarded is for infrastructure and/or non-infrastructure projects in the vicinity of the schools listed on the following page. Eligible activities include the planning, design and construction of infrastructure projects such as crosswalks, traffic calming, and sidewalk construction or repair that improve the ability of students to safely walk and bicycle to school. Examples of non-infrastructure activities include "walking school buses", "bike rodeos", safety curriculum, and increased law enforcement. The SRTS programs represent a partnership with the schools, city or town, and in many cases with non-profit organizations.

Walking and bicycling to school were once a part of everyday life. According to the 2001 National Household Travel Survey, less than 16 percent of students between the ages of 5 and 15 walked or biked to school, compared to 42 percent in 1969. Approximately half are driven in a private vehicle even if they live close to the school. Childhood obesity rates have more than tripled in the past 30 years resulting in many children now at risk for a variety of health problems such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes, while the number of children walking and biking to school has declined. Much of the rush hour traffic congestion (and associated vehicle emissions) is due to children being driven to school. The SRTS Program is consistent with state and national initiatives to improve the environment and public health and reduce traffic congestion.

The State of Rhode Island anticipates receiving \$5 million in SRTS funding through the current federal transportation act. Additional funding rounds will become available for new projects in future years. Projects awarded in this round include:

- **Barrington:** Hampden Meadows School -- \$226,100
- **Central Falls:** Ella Risk and Veterans Elementary Schools and Channel One – Ralph J. Holden Community Center -- \$386,012
- **Cranston:**
  - Park View Middle School, area elementary schools with Cranston Police Department-- \$213,334
  - Hugh B. Bain Middle School, area elementary schools with Cranston Police Department -- \$78,033
- **East Providence:** Kent Heights Elementary School -- \$23,000
- **Jamestown:** Melrose Ave. Elementary School and Lawn Ave. Middle School with Rolling Agenda bike advocacy group and community coalition -- \$251,500
- **Providence:**
  - Anthony Carnevale Elementary School -- \$2,750
  - Laurel Hill Ave. Elementary School -- \$252,750
- **Warwick:** Holliman Elementary School -- \$8,400
- **West Warwick:** John Deering Middle School, Greenbush Elementary School, Maisie Quinn Elementary School, and Wakefield Hills Elementary School -- \$17,600
- **Westerly:** Tower Street Elementary School -- \$53,280
- **Woonsocket:**
  - Kevin Coleman and Fifth Ave. Elementary Schools and Connecting for Children and Families-- \$248,155
  - Woonsocket Middle School & Connecting for Children and Families -- \$168,155