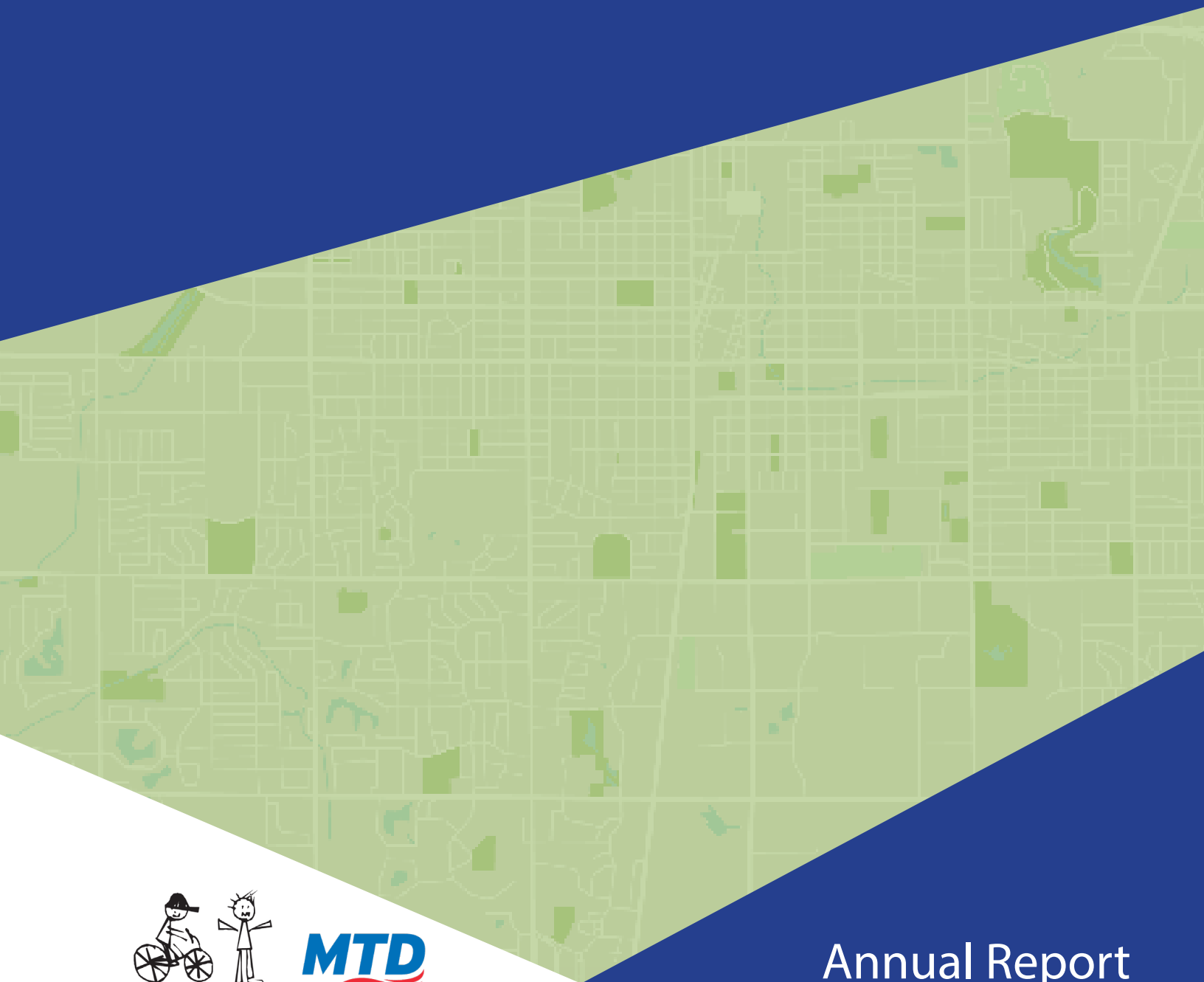


Champaign-Urbana Safe Routes to School Project



C-U Safe Routes to School Project
(C-U SRTS Project)



Annual Report
2020 - 2021

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	0
Safe Routes to School Solutions.....	1
Health.....	1
Safety.....	1
Project Background.....	3
Partnerships.....	3
Program Accomplishments.....	4
Non-Infrastructure Grant.....	4
Earn-A-Bike Program.....	4
Superheroes Cycle.....	5
Online Learning Package.....	5
Snow Removal Program.....	5-6
Bike Month 2021.....	6
Safe Routes to Parks.....	6-7
Worldwide Day of Remembrance - People for Safe Streets.....	7
Traffic Gardens.....	7
Train-the-Trainer Program.....	7-8
C-U SRTS Website.....	8
Bike Month Website.....	9
Social Media.....	9
Challenges and Lessons Learned.....	10
Challenges.....	10
Lessons Learned.....	10

Executive Summary

This report highlights and summarized the events and activities conducted by the Champaign-Urbana Safe Routes to School (C-U SRTS) Project in the year 2020-2021. This year was especially challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic as most of the in-person activities had to be canceled. This year also marked the resilience of the C-U SRTS team, leadership, and steering committee members in organizing online events as well as in-person and hybrid activities. The project was awarded a grant of \$48,587 in 2019 which was extended to support activities from 2020-2021. The programs conducted this year included Earn-A-Bike, Superheroes Cycle, Safe Routes to Parks, Light-the-night, World Day of Remembrance, Bike to School Day, and Train-the-Trainer.

These programs and events are all integral in supporting the goals of the C-U SRTS Project:

- Encourage and increase walking and/or bicycling trips to school
- Improve safety for students walking/bicycling to school
- Reduce congestion at schools during arrival/dismissal
- Raise community awareness of and compliance with school zones/roadway safety
- Expand and sustain SRTS programs for the school districts into the future.

C-U SRTS Project is supported through the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (MTD) that pays for staff time to operate the project as well as providing office space and administrative support. C-U SRTS Project has continuously worked with both Champaign and Urbana School Districts, the Cities of Urbana and Champaign, local law enforcement, local bike organizations, MTD, and the University of Illinois to help promote and educate the community on bicycle and pedestrian safety. More information, as well as a copy of this report, can be found [online](#).

Safe Routes to School: A Solution



Health

In the U.S. nearly 40% of adults are obese, and 18.5% of youth from ages 2-19 are obese as well, according to the most recent CDC data.¹ Childhood obesity presents a variety of immediate health complications and sets the stage for future health problems. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, breathing problems, type 2 diabetes are all immediate health risks that children with obesity face.

Furthermore, psychological problems and a propensity to remain obese can have future impacts on the health of obese children.²

Participating in physical activity can help prevent childhood obesity and even benefit students academically. In a report prepared by the CDC it is stated “that participating in physical activity was positively related to outcomes including academic achievement, academic behaviors, and indicators of cognitive skills and attitudes, such as concentration, memory, self-esteem, and verbal skills.”³

This goes to show that physical activity helps children’s physical and mental wellbeing. C-U SRTS Project strives to increase and promote walking and biking to school as a healthy alternative to driving.

Safety

Children walking and cycling to school are faced with a variety of safety challenges mostly from lack of supportive infrastructure, negligent driving, uneducated cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers. Improvements in infrastructure such as crosswalks, signage, sidewalks, bike lanes, and most importantly street design that reduces driver speed, are shown to help make streets safer. Beyond street design, promotion of safety education for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists have been shown to improve safety outcomes.

C-U SRTS Project has a community-wide safety campaign to educate kids and adults alike on how to mitigate risks when walking or cycling. Furthermore, staff from C-U SRTS Project have been active in promoting Vision Zero legislation that promotes the idea of creating policy, infrastructure, and ideology of zero traffic-related deaths.

1 Prevalence of Obesity Among Adults and Youth: United States, 2011-2014. Retrieved May 22, 2020 from <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html>

2 Childhood Obesity Causes and Consequences, 2016. Retrieved May 22, 2020 from <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html>

3 The Association Between School-Based Physical Activity, Including Physical Education, and Academic Performance. Retrieved May 22, 2020 from https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/pa-pe_paper.pdf



Project Background

Project Background

The C-U SRTS Project started in 2004 through a partnership between MTD and SafeKids Champaign County to promote International Walk and Roll to School Day. The 2004 event saw the distribution of walkability checklists and the participation of two elementary schools from the Urbana and Champaign school districts. Walk and Roll to School Day events have been a staple of the C-U SRTS Program ever since.

The C-U SRTS Project has been awarded several grants through the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. All of these grants have been awarded for non-infrastructure purposes.

- 2008: \$25,500
- 2009: \$62,000
- 2012: \$76,000
- 2014: \$15,840
- 2019: \$48,587 (extended through June 2021)

Partnerships

Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (CUMTD)

CUMTD has been essential in enabling the C-U SRTS Project. The C-U Safe Routes to School Project has been heavily supported by the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (CUMTD) through their provision of staff time, office space, and administrative assistance.

C-U SRTS Steering Committee

The purpose of the steering committee was to establish communications with community stakeholders and gain insight on making key decisions. Furthermore, the members of the steering committee help provide recommendations and support with various projects.

The members of the steering committee include:

- City of Champaign
- City of Urbana
- Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)
- Champaign County Bikes
- Urbana School District 116
- Champaign Unit 4 School District
- Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (CUMTD)
- Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD)

Parents and PTAs

Much of the work the C-U SRTS Project conducts involves schools and children; therefore, the involvement of parents and PTAs is necessitated. This year, there were limited formal interactions with PTAs; although, many parents volunteered for Walk & Roll to School Day, Bike to School Day and through filling out walkability checklists. It is planned to increase involvement with PTAs in the future, especially in regard to the Walking School Bus Program and Bike Rodeo events.

Educators

C-U SRTS Project is intrinsically connected to educators as they have a direct role in the lives of students and parents. Teachers, administrators, and staff have been invaluable in the success of bike rodeos, safety programs, and Walk & Roll to School Day.

Law Enforcement

The partnership C-U SRTS Project maintains with law enforcement is incredibly important as the laws that protect pedestrians and cyclists require both education and enforcement. Furthermore, police departments from Champaign, Urbana, and Champaign County have assisted in Walk and Bike to School Days, bike rodeos, Risk Watch presentations, and educational training at various schools.

Elected Officials

The support and involvement of elected officials is critical to improving safety, developing bicycle and pedestrian-friendly legislation, and drawing media attention to SRTS events. The Mayors of Champaign and Urbana participate in Walk and Roll to School Day. In 2021, Urbana Mayor Diane Marlin read a proclamation for Bike to School Day at the Urbana Middle School Bike Station and live streamed it. Moreover, the Urbana City Council moved forward with passage of a Vision Zero policy.



Program Accomplishments

Non-Infrastructure Grant

The C-U SRTS project was awarded a non-infrastructure grant of \$48,587 in July 2019 to conduct the activities and events planned as part of the project and purchase supplies. We received an extension of the grant for the academic year 2020-2021. We used the grant to purchase equipment and supplies such as helmets, bikes, snow removal gear, safety vests, as well as supplies for conducting education, encouragement programs, and publicity. The grant was also used in pioneering the train-the-trainer program organized in partnership with Lotte Bech from the Danish Cycling Institute

Earn-A-Bike Program

C-U Safe Routes to School Program partnered with Champaign County Bikes and Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club in Champaign to conduct the Earn-A-Bike program in 2019 and 2020. The program will also be held in August of 2021. The program is designed to teach student participants basic bike maintenance and repair as well as safe bike handling skills. Six students participated in this year's program which took place from July 20th-24th, 2020. Three League Certified Instructors, certified by the League of American Bicyclists, assisted with the class: Cynthia Hoyle, Lily Wilcock, and Jeff Yockey. In addition, seven people volunteered to assist with the activities of the four-day program - Evan Alvarez, Archie Chen, Aaron Hoyle-Katz, Ed Schmidt, Tom Carlson, Tom Ward, and Nicole Mormando. Kwame Thomas and Araceli Carbajal from the Don Moyers Boys & Girls Club helped with bike rides and bike assembly.



C-U SRTS Project, in cooperation with Champaign County Bikes, purchased bikes for the students who participated in the program. We thank our partners and volunteers for their support throughout the event.

The students from Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club completed an application to confirm their participation in the program. Prior to the start of the first class, they took an online bike safety quiz designed by Ride Illinois, the statewide bicycle advocacy organization for Illinois. Each student who completed the course and passed the bicycle safety quiz received a new bike, a bike lock, bike lights, and a helmet.

Due to the COVID-19 health and safety guidelines, the entire program was held outside. The participants, instructors, and volunteers were required to wear masks and maintain a 6-foot distance from each other during the program. Masks were not required while riding a bike.



Superheroes Cycle

The C-USRTS team introduced the Superheroes Cycle program this last spring when Bike to school day was canceled due to Covid-19. “Superheroes Cycle” encourages families and kids to get out and bicycle. Families can take short bike rides and find the best routes for cycling to school or local parks. The kids who participated in the program win a Superheroes t-shirt. We have continued this program through the summer and into the fall and winter. Walk ‘n Roll to School Day was also canceled in C-U we worked to get program information out to the families. We had three interns helping with the program during the fall through the University of Illinois Community Learning Lab (CLL) program. We promoted this program through our social media platforms - Facebook, outreach to various interested groups in Champaign-Urbana via email, and promotion through our website and flyers. We sent our special information to the school districts and they put in newsletters and sent it to teachers. We have distributed t-shirts, workbooks, bookmarks, and stickers in a branded string bag to kids who participated in the program. We have distributed nearly all 60 of the t-shirts paid for with this grant. We also created a raffle for the Superheroes cycle along with the CLL interns and distributed free bike lights and helmets to three winners from the raffle. More info about the program can be accessed [here](#).



Online Learning Package

The Champaign-Urbana Safe Routes to School Online Learning Package is aimed at providing an alternative to in-person activities/events conducted by the C-U SRTS program. Most of the in-person events were canceled due to the ongoing coronavirus outbreak in Fall 2020. We created a learning package that can be used by parents, educators, community groups to encourage, support, and educate kids on healthy and safe walking and biking behaviors. As part of the learning package, we posted biweekly activities for each grade on our website and provide access to safety videos about biking and walking. The online learning package can be found [here](#).

Snow Removal Program

C-U SRTS played an instrumental role in encouraging snow removal in the Champaign-Urbana community. The team distributed snow removal yard signs and ran public service announcements on local radio, conducted outreach through social media and partner websites to promote sidewalk snow removal. The grant was also used to purchase snow removal equipment including shovels, gloves, and hats. The C-U SRTS team made an appearance on the local news to promote the event. WCIA Champaign did a [news story](#) on the program in January. C-U SRTS did a presentation on the need for and progress of the snow removal program

for the Urbana Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) in February. Three people signed up to volunteer for snow removal.

SHOVEL YOUR WALK

THANKS FOR HELPING STUDENTS GET TO & FROM SCHOOL

cu-srtsproject.com 

Bike Month 2021

The C-U SRTS Steering Committee planned and organized activities to celebrate Bike Month in May. We distributed bike gear such as lights, helmets, locks, workbooks as part of the Bike to School Day organized on May 5th, 2021 at Urbana Middle School. Participants biked to schools in Champaign, Urbana, and Savoy. The event was attended by the Mayor of Urbana. Mayor Marlin read a proclamation that made May 5th, 2021, Bike to School Day in Urbana.

The C-U SRTS team organized Bicycle 123 for Adults on May 8th and a Mother's Day Bike Ride on May 9th as part of the Bike Month. The events were promoted through our website and social media.



Safe Routes to Parks

Safe Routes to Parks is an initiative developed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) aimed at improving access to local parks. The goals of the Safe Routes to Parks movement are to improve access to parks through biking, walking, and public transit (Safe Routes Partnership, 2020). This project aimed at capturing user perspectives through engaging community members and other stakeholders to identify gaps in the existing pedestrian and biking infrastructure in and around parks. The analysis was informed by an examination of the crash data. Community engagement was central to the success of this project. The initial part of the process included an extensive multi-media outreach for participant recruitment for walk audits and stakeholder interviews (with community members). This was accomplished through the creation of multiple participant recruitment materials, including flyers, social media posts, regular posting in newsletters and listservs. The participant recruitment posed challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and winter weather. A

total of 3 community members participated in walk audits, and two community members in the interviews (the interviews with community members are not reported in this document due to limited participation). The toolkit provided as part of the project lays the groundwork for continued community engagement.

Professionals from planning and government organizations were interviewed to identify institutional gaps (if any) and the level of interest and existing capacity of the organization to design and implement active transportation projects. A total of 8 employees from planning and government agencies participated in the interviews. This project was taken up as a Master's capstone project by the C-U SRTS Intern Shubhangi Rathor as part of the 2021 MUP Virtual Capstone Showcase. She compiled a report on the project that can be accessed [here](#).



World Day of Remembrance Event – People for Safe Streets

Due to several recent pedestrian and cyclists' deaths in the community a group formed to advocate for safer streets and create a local event for the international U.N. sponsored World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. We were a core part of this effort and created the website for the group and helped organize and publicize the World Day of Remembrance. We will be continuing with this group to promote Vision Zero in Champaign-Urbana. The City of Urbana has officially adopted Vision Zero and is working on plans for communications and implementation. C-U SRTS Project plans to continue to partner with the city and People for Safe Streets to improve safety on our streets for everyone. <https://peopleforsafestreeets.weebly.com/>

Traffic Gardens

A traffic garden is a designated area — usually on a paved street, a network of streets, or a paved lot — with traffic features but without any motorized vehicles. At a traffic garden (also known as a traffic park or playground), young people and adult learners can develop skills related to general bike riding abilities, as well as navigating streets, intersections, and crossings. C-U Safe Routes to School project with assistance from the Community Learning Lab interns, developed a proposal to transform Bliss Drive into a robust traffic garden so that individuals in the community can learn the skills needed to ride their bicycles safely and lawfully. The proposal was presented to the Urbana Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission and further work is scheduled for the fall of 2021 with the University of Illinois which owns the roadway in the proposal.

Train-the-Trainer

The C-U SRTS team hosted the Youth Instructor Certification Workshop at the Stephen's Family YMCA in Champaign on June 10th. This was the first time that the team partnered with the Y to run the event. The program was designed to teach and certify instructors to organize and run bicycle rodeos and bicycle education classes using the League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle 123 Clinic Curriculum with enhancements from the Danish Cycling Embassy's Cycling Games curriculum. The LCI curriculum was taught by certified instructor Cynthia Hoyle and the DCE curriculum was taught by instructor Lotte Bech who joined the workshop virtually from Denmark. There were seven adult workshop students in attendance: Elliot Hillback, Shubhangi Rathor, Thomas Valencia, Charlie Smyth, Daniel Saphiere, Evan Alvarez, and Susan Jones. Charlie Smyth of Champaign County Bikes (CCB) helped provide the trailer of bicycles that the children were going to use. During the event, just over 30 students from the Y's summer camp program participated. We divided students into three age groups and each group was fitted with a free helmet and bike month t-shirt. Participants were also given a bike safety workbook and sticker. All the campers participated in a bike rodeo and participated in at least two cycling games. A third cycling game was offered to one group. The balance bikes purchased with the SRTS grant were used by the youngest group of students K-3. A few older students also used a balance bike. New equipment to conduct the Cycling Games was purchased and used during the workshop including



a bubble machine, plastic rings, and plastic balls. All of the adult workshop participants completed the training successfully and were awarded certificated of completion.

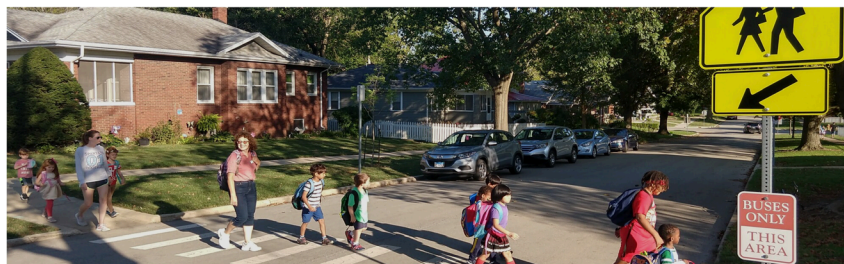


C-U SRTS Website

C-U SRTS maintains a website that contains a variety of resources, upcoming and previous events, and documentation of projects. The team redesigned the website this year. The website is updated regularly to include details about upcoming events, and an archive of past events. The staff posts biweekly activities as part of the online learning package to educate kids about safe walking and biking as part of the online learning package.

C-U SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

HOME EVENTS BIKE RODEOS PROGRAMS RESOURCES CALENDAR CONTACT ONLINE LEARNING FOR KIDS! MORE...



f i e y

Select Language

Welcome to C-U Safe Routes to School!

POWERED BY weebly

C-U Safe Routes to School Project (C-U SRTS Project) is an organization with representatives



Bike Month Website

The C-U Bike Month website is maintained by C-U SRTS Project staff, CCRPC staff, and CCB staff. Together, these entities provide up-to-date information on Bike Month activities, a comprehensive calendar, and various other forms of supplemental information. On the site, Champaign-Urbana residents can register for events and view pictures and resources from previous Bike Months.



Social Media

The C-U SRTS teams post regularly on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The Instagram account for the project was created in 2020. The team uses social media platforms to post links to articles, details about upcoming events, and other project-related materials. The team uses Facebook and Instagram to conduct outreach and participant recruitment for volunteers for different events.

Challenges and Lessons Learned



Challenges

COVID-19 posed several challenges to conducting the events and activities planned as part of the C-U SRTS project. Most of the in-person activities were canceled following the safety guidelines of the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A major part of the grant was to be used for the Train-the-trainer program, which was postponed to June 2021. Due to travel restrictions, the program was conducted online with a presentation and an online session with Lotte Bech. Beyond the setbacks the COVID-19 pandemic has created, there are the usual challenges that C-U SRTS faces: lack of staff time to accomplish all potential projects and having too few volunteers and/or instructors for programs and events. These issues are usually exacerbated by lack of funding, however, the SRTS grant provided a great deal of support for programming during this academic year.

Lessons Learned

With COVID-19 we have learned people are walking and cycling more which has placed more emphasis on the importance of our work. We have been increasing online resources and we are continuing to promote, encourage, and participate in walking and cycling in Champaign-Urbana. We found ways to expand our outreach and programming to support families and kids in walking and bicycling safely. The Super Heroes Cycling program, created to replace Bike to School Day, is one example. We also created and posted numerous online activities as part of the online learning package to foster a culture of safe walking and biking practices among kids through our website and social media. Moving trainings to online platforms is another example that has been popular with cycling instructors and educators. Flexibility and resiliency have been key to maintaining our programming and helping create a safe community for children and families to walk and roll in.



Champaign-Urbana Safe Routes to School Project

Annual Report 2020-2021

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2020-2021