



Michigan Safe Routes to School in Action... South Meadows Elementary & Beach Middle School, Chelsea, Michigan



When South Meadows Elementary School and Beach Middle School in the Chelsea School District decided to launch a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project, they looked to 5 Healthy Towns to help them navigate the planning process. Collectively, they sought to become one of the four communities to be awarded the services of the team of researchers sponsored by the SRTS program at Michigan Fitness Foundation. Combining design and planning skills of the MSU School of Planning, Design, and Construction with the engineering design skills of Wayne State University's Transportation Research Group, this team lead Chelsea through three meetings focused on community outreach and input sessions, walking audits, surveys and analysis, and engineering solutions. Culminating in a comprehensive Action Plan with a wide selection of customized strategies to make walking and biking to school more safe, and to encourage more students to do so, the project positioned the community and schools to be ready to implement strategies and with the documents needed to apply for TAP/SRTS funding for engineering improvements.



Improvements to the infrastructure included the addition of a pedestrian refuge island at a wide and oddly-shaped intersection, improvements to and addition of sidewalks where there were gaps, updating or addition of pedestrian crossings at several streets, including US12, and the improvement of signage in several of these locations. Also awarded were a series of noninfrastructure activities including two bike rodeos, a safety campaign focused on drivers in the area, pedestrian safety education, crossing guard materials, and a portable speed trailer to be used alternately around each of Chelsea's school. The noninfrastructure work will be coordinated by the community partner, 5 Healthy Towns.



While there were only two schools joined on this application, the project also benefits the larger Chelsea community and additional school buildings. Further, this project supports the city's adoption of a Complete Streets Ordinance when Chelsea revises their Master Plan, and strengthens the ongoing effort to create a safe network of access for pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages. Finally, these projects will improve connectivity in the city. The Chelsea Safe Routes to School project is a success story of sponsored technical assistance and a community organization doing the heavy lifting to help a school district and municipality define and achieve their goals.



- Total Project Amount: \$377,285
 - Infrastructure investment: \$369,290
 - Noninfrastructure investment: \$7,995