



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***** MEDIA ADVISORY *** MEDIA ADVISORY *****

STA Wins Award for Safe Routes to School Plan

Suisun City, CA – The Solano Transportation Authority's (STA) Countywide Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Plan is slated to receive the "Grassroots Initiative Award" from the Northern Section, California Chapter of the American Planning Association (NSCCAPA). The Solano Countywide SR2S Plan was selected from entries throughout the region, which spans from the Monterey coastline to the northern border of the state, and will be recognized on May 16 at the NSCCAPA 2008 Awards Program in San Francisco.

The STA began the development of its Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Program in 2005, in response to the growing childhood obesity epidemic, student travel safety concerns, and traffic congestion near schools in Solano County. The program works to encourage more students to walk and bike to school by identifying a balance of traffic calming and safety engineering projects, student education & safety training, encouragement contests & events, and enforcement coordination with police. The program also strives to increase interagency cooperation to continue to plan and implement SR2S projects with all local agencies.

STA Board Chair and Rio Vista Mayor Eddie Woodruff said, "We are excited about receiving this recognition and are dedicated to pursuing funding to support the Safe Routes to School Program."

To create the community-based SR2S plan, the STA created multi-disciplinary local task forces composed of a combination of a City Engineer, Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee members, City Council appointee, School Board appointee, and a police department representative. Seven Local SR2S Task Forces were formed in the cities of Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield, Rio Vista, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo. Each local task force developed community based local plans in each city. A total of 29 schools participated in walking audits and planning events involving not only local task force members but an estimated 450 teachers, parents, students, and neighbors.

By February 2008, all city councils and school boards adopted their local plans and appointed task forces or existing committees to continue to plan and implement SR2S projects and programs within their community. The Countywide SR2S Plan was adopted by the STA Board on February 13, 2008.

The Countywide SR2S Plan identifies \$1M in annual program costs and \$31 M in countywide engineering costs. The STA is working to build a \$1.8 M initial program through various grant opportunities by the end of 2008. According to Chair Woodruff, "Through Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Engineering projects between the public and agency staff, I am confident we can make a difference in the safety and health of our students throughout Solano County."

The STA's Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet on May 20, 2008 to recommend \$300,000 for SR2S engineering projects in Dixon, Rio Vista, and Vacaville. For more information on the Safe Routes to School program, contact STA Assistant Project Manager Sam Shelton at (707) 424-6075, or go to www.solanolinks.com/sr2s.html.

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