

Background

- The national Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program was authorized by Congress in 2005 with the dual purpose of providing safe walking and bicycling routes between home and school and encouraging students and parents to walk and bicycle to school.
- Florida's SRTS program provides support and funding for Safe Routes infrastructure, enforcement, encouragement, and education efforts. FDOT wants to ensure that the distribution of funds is equitable across the state of Florida by providing assistance to rural areas in submitting successful SRTS grant applications.
- In May 2016, FDOT engaged the services of the University of Florida's Center for Health and the Built Environment to study and implement a program to enhance rural capacity to successfully apply for and receive SRTS infrastructure funding.
- The first phase of the project developed an understanding of the existing opportunities for the implementation of the SRTS program in rural and under-resourced communities in Florida.

Phase One: Research Process and Findings

Why Focus on Rural Counties?

- Rural counties are often over-looked and cannot compete with more urbanized counties when attempting to gain funding and grants
- Rural communities may not be Local Area Program (LAP) certified or have access to a LAP certified local government to plan and construct the infrastructure if a grant was awarded.
- Rural areas are often where SRTS programs are most needed; a disproportionate number of crashes occur on rural roadways.

1. Identify and Prioritize Communities

identifying and mapping Areas of Opportunity (those school locations that meet certain criteria selected from existing data collection and site assessment methodologies), and solidifying existing outreach efforts, such as those being undertaken by FTBSEP

2. Outreach and Partnership Building

the preparation of a technical assistance presentation, and coordination and attendance of regional SRTS workshops.

3. Data collection and site assessment technical assistance methodologies

development and implementation of a stakeholder participation technical assistance plan, which includes presentations to a variety of stakeholder groups

4. The development of draft recommendations

update the Florida Safe Routes to School Tool Kit, which was developed almost 20 years ago.

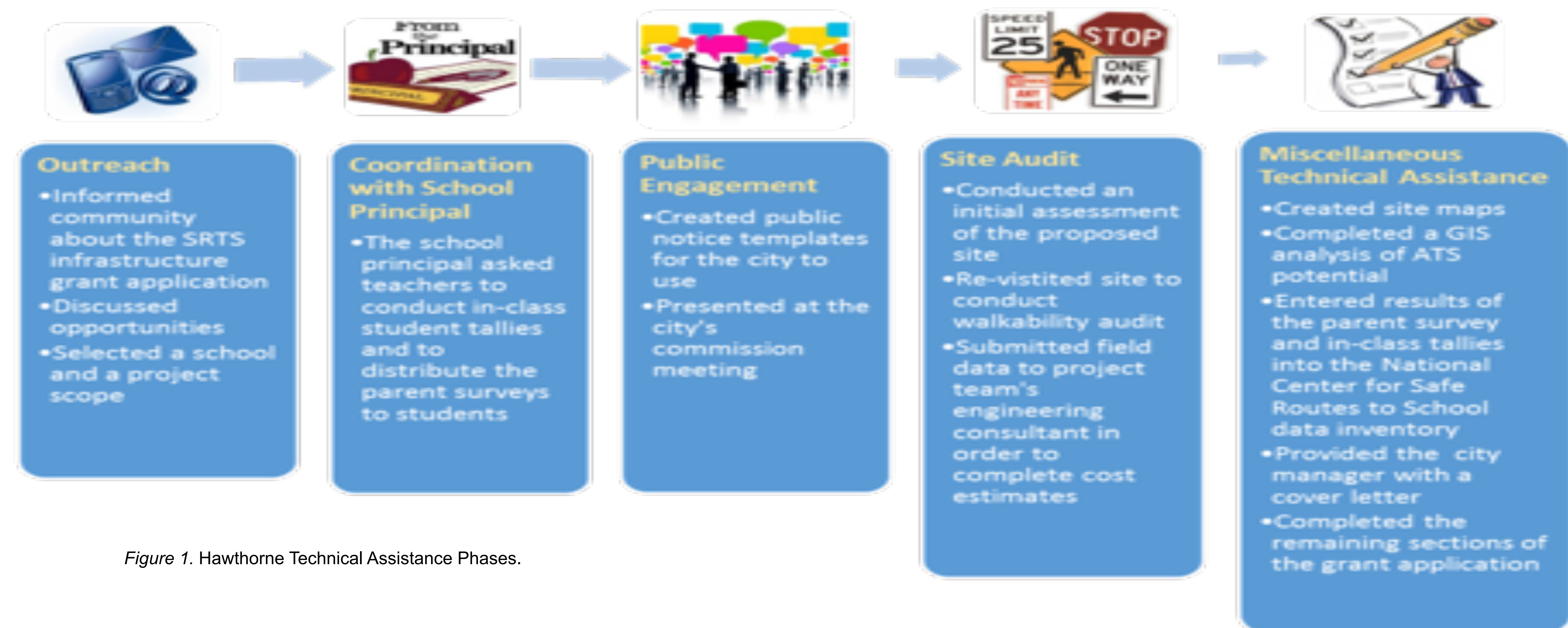


Figure 1. Hawthorne Technical Assistance Phases.

Phase 2: Moving Forward

- Recruit and assist schools and communities to put together their application for the 2017 grant cycle.
- Review SRTS best practices, identify resources and prioritize communities based on Phase 1 results.
- Initiate technical assistance related to Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) and Local Area Program (LAP).