

City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2023 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers

March 30, 2022

Question: What is the recommended interval for performing Safe Routes to School walk audits in the context of the broader Safe Routes to School program?

Response:

The primary purpose of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is to fund infrastructure projects that improve mobility, access, safety, and comfort for students walking and biking to and from school. These projects are guided by the City's 2017 Safe Routes to School Walk Audit Reports, which included approximately 250 recommendations across 13 elementary and K-8 schools.

Walk audits are an essential component of the SRTS program, because they bring stakeholders together (including City staff, ACPS staff, APD, and parents) to identify concerns and develop action items to improve safety for schoolchildren and families. There is not a singular best practice for how frequently walk audits should be conducted, but a common approach is to refresh walk audit reports when there has been significant progress on infrastructure recommendations made in the original report, creating an opportunity to identify additional projects.

City staff coordinate regularly with ACPS staff to ensure that the existing walk audit recommendations are still timely and relevant. Staff also performs additional community engagement for many SRTS projects to capture the latest input for the project area.

Since walk audits are a very intensive planning effort and produce a large number of recommendations that can take years to accomplish depending on the cost and complexity of each project, staff does not recommend updating walk audits on less than a 5-year interval. Rather, it can be expected that walk audits will be updated every 5-10 years. This provides an appropriate balance between ensuring the recommendations are timely and ensuring the majority of the City's SRTS resources are going towards implementing safety projects.