
Community Foundations Could Play a Key Role in Greening up America's Streets

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Community Foundations are great resources for improving various aspects of communities throughout the United States. Most community foundations earmark a certain percentage of their annual philanthropic givings towards specific categories. Some are very specific and others are a little more general. However, the main point is this: foundations are looking to disperse capital every year to groups, schools, and non-profits. This is good news for those of us who wish for safe places for people to ride their bicycles, walk, or skate.

In 2001, less than 16% of children between the ages of 5 and 15 walked or rode their bikes to school. In 1969, 42% walked or rode their bikes to school. More children are driven to school today than ever which has various negative health and environmental effects. This information alone is what inspired the creation of the Safe Routes to School program (SRTS) (<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org>). SRTS is funded through the federal government, however, in the case of the Greenways to School campaign, other piggy-backing programs could get the attention of community foundations.

The Greenways to School program has been given a \$175,000 grant from the Marin Community Foundation (MCF) to help combat global warming. If you visit the Marin Community Foundation's website (<http://www.marincf.org>), you will see that Climate Change is categorized under Strategic Initiatives allocations. Our hats off to MCF for supporting such a good cause like the Greenways to School Program.

Let this be an example for anyone who wants to take action towards building a more sustainable community. Look into your Safe Routes to School chapter or think about creating your own group. Then, look into local foundations and research their specific areas of giving and steer your program to fit their categories with special consideration to environmental or educational programs. With the right organization, you could be on your way to obtaining a grant and making your community a more sustainable community.