

April 2010

the newsletter of
Urbanthinkers
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editions of **FASTthinkers**

Interview with...

Shane Rhodes, [SRTS Program Manger](#) - Eugene School Dist. Eugene, OR



Interview by Arthur Orsini
I first met Shane at last year's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Conference in Portland. Shane was born in Eugene but before returning to take on the role of SRTS Program Manager, he lived in Alaska, several East Bay California communities and has run bike education & cargo bike services in, among other places, Sevilla, Spain. I spoke with [Shane Rhodes](#) earlier this month....

Shane, what do you do?
I've been working with community partners here in Eugene to deliver the SRTS program for 2½ years. I work with students, families and teachers...

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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN CALGARY HIGH SCHOOLS



online photo: Poets from Calgary

[SHAPE-Alberta](#) is partnering with Urbanthinkers to pilot an Active & Safe Routes to SECONDARY School project in Calgary. Raelene Lauzon will work with teens in six Calgary secondary schools to adapt Urbanthinkers' youth engagement strategies for Alberta.

After initial recruitment of student leaders, Lauzon and Urbanthinkers' Arthur Orsini will co-facilitate a youth-leader training workshop in the spring. The project runs from April 2010 to March 2011 with funding from the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation. Stay tuned – project results will be profiled in upcoming editions of **FASTthinkers**.



CHILD ENGAGEMENT IN COQUITLAM BC ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Young, local experts take on the morning rush hour

Grade 4, 5, 6 and 7 student leaders in four Coquitlam schools are beginning to *Facilitate Active School Travel* in an Urbanthinkers project sponsored by the City of Coquitlam's Engineering and Public Works department.

Building on the foundation of last year's Walkability Assessment at every elementary school in the city, three elementary schools and one middle school have been chosen to move ahead into an *education and engagement phase*.

Urbanthinkers will work with a small team of student leaders in each school to reduce vehicle-trips to school by 20% this spring. With an emphasis on walking to school, the student committees will focus on strategies to get their peers to;



Gr. 5 student leaders assessing the student/vehicle ratio

1. walk the entire journey to school
2. come together in walkpools & carpools
3. *park-&-stroll* (at least 2 blocks)

The project was launched in mid-April with a meeting of the four principals and a re-commissioning of the student leaders who contributed to the Walkability Assessments.

Family surveys will be distributed in English, Korean, Chinese and Farsi. Preliminary findings will be profiled in the next edition of **FASTthinkers**.

new: E-SUPPORT from URBANTHINKERS

Are you; ... troubled by school traffic congestion?
...needing to increase the number of students walking & cycling to school?
...under-staffed and pressed for time?

Urbanthinkers can help: we have over 14 years experience developing, and collaborating on active school travel programs in Australia, Canada, NZ, UK & USA. Our skills and tools can help you become more efficient and productive.

Try a FREE 45-min consult to see how our experience can help you;

- 15-min – you set the context for your problems & concerns
- 15-min – you hear how we've solved similar issues elsewhere
- 15-min – you learn specific strategies that will help you

Contact us to request a free consult – then decide if a few hours, or a few days of support from Urbanthinkers will improve your results.

PROMPTING SAFETY FOR CROSSWALKERS

This past winter, Urbanthinkers worked with Grade 4 & 5 students at Pinetree Way Elementary School to find ways to improve safety at a nearby crosswalk.



The crossing sits at a steep junction of two downhill routes leading towards the school. This geography seems to make the crosswalk invisible to drivers. (Editor's note: *More than once I had to stop mid-crossing as drivers sailed past!*)

from the Principal's letter to parents:

"The children explored and created educational messages for drivers that could ultimately lead to a change in the driving habit of our community, resulting in an increase in student safety. This process included getting parental feedback on the messages the students created. This feedback was used in the creation of the four [social marketing tools](#) including,

- **signs** to be used on our Walk to School Days,
- **educational** Christmas trees decorations,
- **prompts** for car rear windows and
- a bookmark with a safe driving tip **pledge**.

Each week from December 18, to January 22, 2010, the children of Pinetree Way sent safe driving educational messages home and into the community."



design phase:
students take parent feedback to refine designs

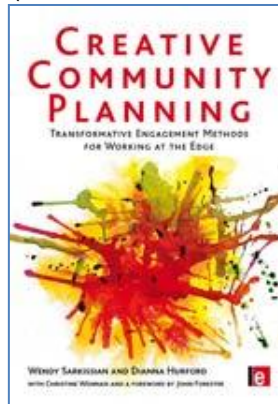


educational tool:
Winter Solstice Tree Ornament

NEW RESOURCE

Child & youth engagement is one component of community planning where creativity is paramount.

Wendy Sarkissian has teamed up with Dianna Hurford and Christine Wenman to create **Creative Community Planning**, Sarkissian's third volume in Earthscan's *Tools for Community Planning* series. (Released Mar 2010 – [link for 20% discount](#))



Creative Community Planning provides clear access to emerging innovations in artistic, narrative, embodied and technological methods. Reflecting on the wide continuum of participatory practice, the authors explore the frontiers of community engagement within a fresh sustainability framework.

The style and methods in this book offer multiple points for both practice and dialogue, ideal for academics, practitioners, students and instructors in all forms of planning, social research, participatory action research, community cultural development and community engagement.

Part 4 is focused on **The Growing Edge: Creative Engagement Processes for Children & Young People** and includes an interview with Urbanthinkers' Arthur Orsini on creative strategies developed while working with teenagers on active school travel projects in Vancouver and Auckland.

'Creative Community Planning shows how to truly engage a community with freshness and fun so that participants can listen, laugh and interact with openness and insight. ...' Arthur Orsini, Urbanthinkers

SECONDARY SCHOOL TDM INVENTORY

Last year, Urbanthinkers compiled a **Secondary School Inventory of Travel Demand Management Programs and Resources** for Transport Canada.

If you know of any omissions or new initiatives that belong in this inventory, please let us know.



The document is being translated into French – and until that translation is complete, the Final Draft can be accessed from the [Urbanthinkers research page](#).

...I work with students, families and teachers at the 31 schools (K-Gr.8) in the Eugene School District.

What does 'child & youth engagement' have to do with your work? Our programs have a lot to do with child & youth encouragement. My recruitment process usually involves call-outs to students through morning announcements, newsletters and speed-dial calls to families.

Our **Walk & Bike Challenge Month** grew from just a one-day event. I work with students on this so that they know more about what walking & cycling offers – so that they get more excited about wanting to sell the idea to other kids. They get to choose the event prizes so that we know they are what kids want.

designBridge is a U of Oregon program where Architecture students work with kids at a school on cycling improvements – like bike-racks, murals, benches and rain shelters. We'll have completed three projects by this summer.

Kidical Mass is a fun *-and legal-* version of Critical Mass that brings families & kids together on bikes outside of school time. The kids get to talk about what they want to do, and they enjoy comparing which gear they are in, and trying to crash into each other. We usually meet at a playground on a Saturday, and ride off to another playground, or an ice cream shop or maybe a rock climbing centre.

...how important school traffic (is) within the big picture, and how much kids-being-driven affects not only the traffic around schools, but a life of becoming accustomed to being driven

Describe an 'ah ha' moment that has guided your work? I had previously heard about SRTS but it wasn't until I got this job that I realized what the potential was ...how important school traffic was within the big picture, and how much kids-being-driven affects not only the traffic around schools, but a life of becoming accustomed to being driven and not being familiar with how to walk or bike or catch a bus to get somewhere...

What brought you into this work? I graduated from the University of Oregon in Psychology in 1995 and started working for the [Center for Appropriate Transport \(CAT\)](#). At that time they did mobile school presentations which included building cool funky bikes – and talking about bikes as transportation. I started work with their [Pedaler's Express business](#) and then I bought my own cargo bike and started a bike delivery business in California, and then Spain.

Then I came back to Eugene when someone told me about the SRTS posting and I knew it was the ideal job for me.

What results are you most proud of? Kidical Mass. This is something we started in Eugene 2 years ago as a spur-of-the-moment idea to see how it would go. Now, it's also in San Diego, Seattle, Chicago, Toronto and [more!](#)

Not only is it fun but I see it as something for my own daughter... like, the bike movement has grown up over the past decades and now that we have various levels of funding to address cycling issues, there's less of a need for the anarchists' response. ...we need events that generate fun and excitement while building a different kind of community.



How have you maintained funding to do this work? Our three-year federal SRTS grant continues until October. Our City & County believe that our program is important enough to maintain and so they want to use other, more flexible federal funds to continue our project so that we won't be competing with other projects in other Oregon communities in the next round of SRTS funding.

What is your biggest challenge in this work?...changing the mindset of Traffic Engineers – we struggle in Eugene with a progressive planning department, but the engineering department isn't as forward-thinking. They are too used to reacting to automobile issues and concerns. In one case, we can't even get a crosswalk painted in front a school.

Happy & Fun: what do these words have to do with the work that you do? I believe that 'fun' should be a part of whatever we do ... you can't have an effective bike safety class if it is boring: kids need to be engaged, encouraged to laugh and to talk about all the fun that you have when riding a bike in order to listen and learn about safety. We thought of changing our program name in Eugene to **Fun & Active Routes to School** – but the acronym would be FART.

What might be a theme song for your approach to this work? [You can get it if you really want - by Jimmy Cliff](#)

*please feel free to [recommend](#) other people working with children & youths in sustainable transportation for upcoming interviews in the **FASTthinkers** newsletter*