



STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2015

Executive Summary

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership (the National Partnership) is a network of more than 500 partners and is the advocacy organization which leads the Safe Routes to School national movement. Initially, our role was focused on ensuring strong implementation of the federal Safe Routes to School program by the states. Over the past five years, we have branched out to focus on federal legislation, state policy, distillation of research and the dissemination of best practices. The common purpose for every initiative we have undertaken is that it advances Safe Routes to School and the goal of creating healthy communities.

However, the movement for Safe Routes to School is much bigger than any one organization: it includes everyone who is working toward making communities, streets and schools safer for everyday bicycling and walking – students, parents, educators, engineers, elected and government officials, police officers, environmentalists, health professionals, smart growth advocates and more. The National Partnership provides leadership and brings together these diverse constituencies to make the movement more cohesive, effective and collaborative.

Safe Routes to School impacts many large-scale issues, such as reducing social and economic disparities, decreasing pollution, improving safety, increasing physical activity and improving the design of communities to support health, active transportation and sustainability. Safe Routes to School can be a catalyst for policy makers to understand smart growth, livability, equity and sustainability, since everyone can relate to kids and the innate desire for it to be safe for children to be able to walk and bicycle to school.

Before developing our five-year Strategic Plan for the years 2011 through 2015, the National Partnership surveyed our partners, held focus groups and conducted interviews with key stakeholders to find out: 1) what people felt was needed to advance the Safe Routes to School national movement, and 2) what should be the role of the National Partnership as the movement's advocate.

The Strategic Plan for the National Partnership was crafted after careful analysis of our unique niche in supporting and leading the overall movement. Our 2011-2015 Strategic Plan prioritizes five strategic focus areas, which are briefly summarized to the left and detailed on pages 11-21.

Goals and indicators are provided for each of the five strategic focus areas. We believe that progress in each of these areas will collectively lead to an overall increase in walking and bicycling to school by 50% by 2015, a stabilization in distance to school and improved safety for children. We look forward to working with numerous partners to advance these ambitious goals.

Five Strategic Focus Areas

- 1. Opening Minds through Research and Communications:** To further advance Safe Routes to School funding, policies and outcomes, we plan to elevate the role of research within the field and conduct a strong media campaign on the benefits of the movement. This will help open people's minds about the advantages of walking and bicycling, make Safe Routes to School a household name and demonstrate the impact of the program.
- 2. Changing Policies and Infrastructure:** The key to getting more children safely walking and bicycling lies in creating improvements to the built environment that foster equitable community-centered schools, complete streets and safe access to schools. To achieve this, we will work with our partners to advocate for improved policies and more funds for pathways, sidewalks, bike lanes and street crossings at the federal, state and local levels.
- 3. Building Capacity for Leadership:** We intend to activate thousands more knowledgeable policy makers, professionals, parents and student champions for Safe Routes to School to work at every level of government and within schools. These champions will be most effective when equipped with tools for navigating government processes and advocating for Safe Routes to School policies and funding.
- 4. Advancing Social Equity:** Many low income communities—whether urban or rural—lack the resources to apply for Safe Routes to School grants to make improvements. Yet children in these communities are more likely to walk to school and often face greater traffic and personal safety challenges on the trip to school. We plan to increase outreach, provide resources and work with government agencies and organizations at all levels to develop more policies, trainings and funding to ensure that Safe Routes to School reaches those most in need.
- 5. Assuring Sustainability:** The long-term viability of Safe Routes to School is dependent on the movement's ability to leverage additional funds, ensure collaboration among leaders in the field and integrate Safe Routes to School within the plans and goals of a wide range of partners and government agencies. In addition, it is important that the National Partnership has the funding, capacity and infrastructure in place to respond to the growing demand for Safe Routes to School.

For more information visit:

www.saferoutespartnership.org

