



**Safe
Routes**
PARTNERSHIP

Houston Safe Routes to School Webinar Series

Planning for the Future: Safe Routes to School Advocacy and National Program Highlights

Kori Johnson, Safe Routes Partnership

Wednesday, May 18, 2022

MISSION

The mission of the Safe Routes Partnership is to advance safe walking and rolling to and from schools and in everyday life, improving the health and well-being of people of all races, income levels, and abilities, and building healthy, thriving communities for everyone.





TODAY'S PRESENTERS

Kori Johnson

Safe Routes Partnership, Washington, DC

Audience: Introduce yourselves in the chat!

- *Name*
- *Organization, agency, or connection to Safe Routes to School*
- *Respond in the chat: What is something you are looking forward to doing this spring or summer?*



Agenda

- Safe Routes to School Across the U.S.
 - Montgomery County, Maryland
 - Charlotte, North Carolina
 - Tucson, Arizona
- Making the Case for Safe Routes to School
 - Connecting with Decision Makers
 - Connecting with Supporters
 - Crafting Your Message
- Gaining Support through SRTS Events and Activities
- Q & A



Houston Safe Routes to School Webinar Recap

- Safe Routes to School 101
- Engagement, Education, and Encouragement Programming
- Engineering Strategies for Safe Routes to School
- Starting a School-Based Safe Routes to School Program
- Safe Routes to School Highlights and Advocacy

Safe Routes to School Across the U.S.



Where do Safe Routes to School programs live?

- Local/regional transportation agency
- Health department
- Non-profit/community partner
- Planning department
- School district
- Individual School/PTA
- Other



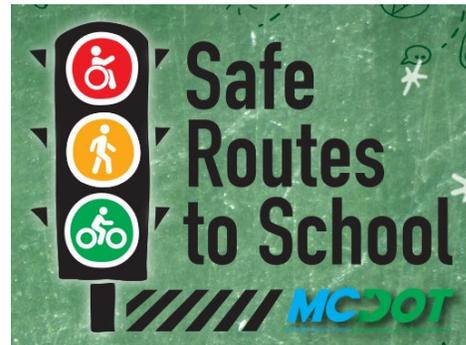


Program Models

- Local/regional transportation agency – Safe Routes to School Montgomery County
- Health department – Safe Routes to School Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- Non-profit/community partner – Safe Routes to School Tucson

Montgomery County (MD) Safe Routes to School

- **Population:** 1.051 million
- **School District:** Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)
- **Number of Schools:** 209
- **Number of Students:** 160,564
- **Program Website**





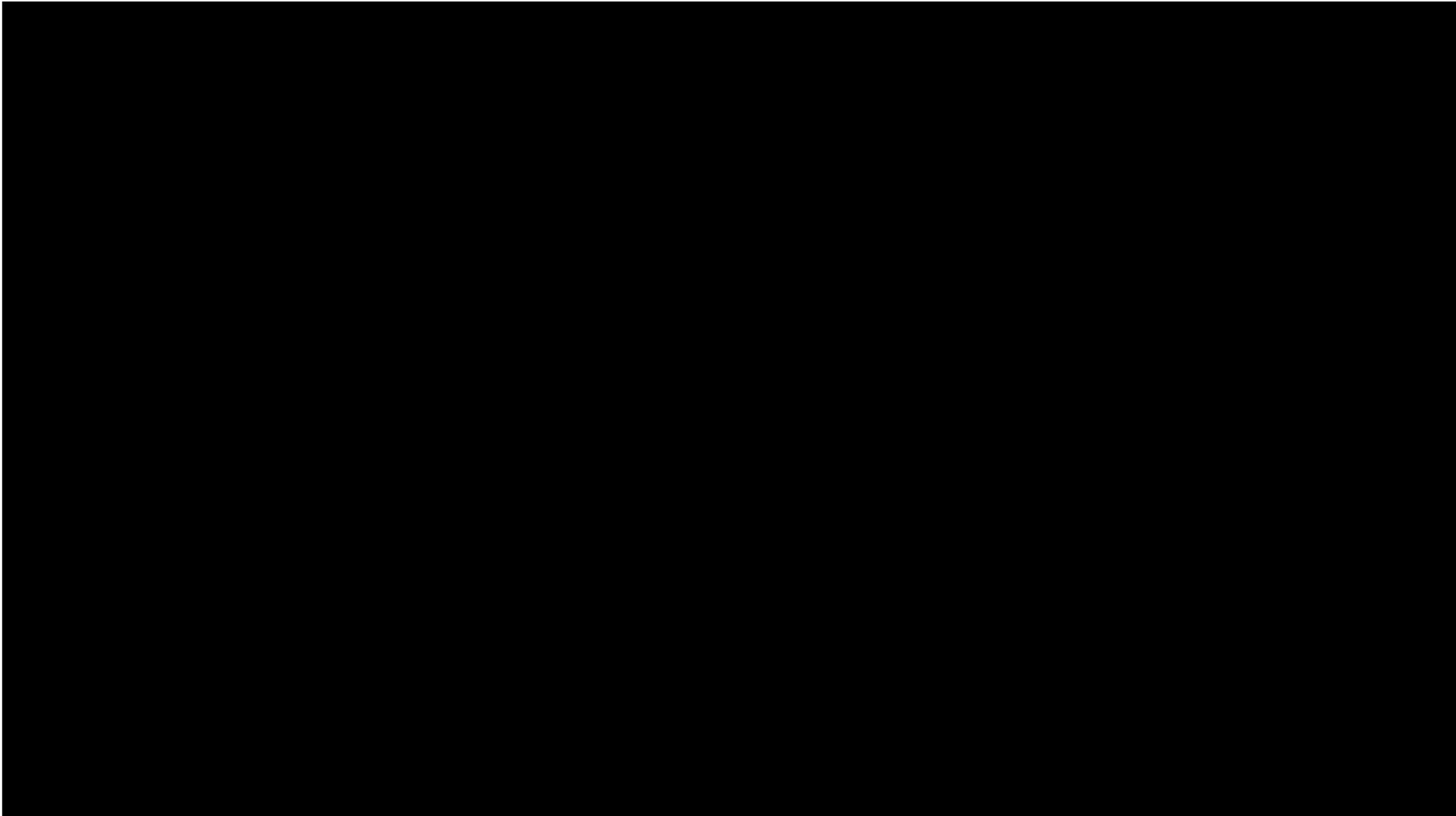
Program Structure

- **Housed Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)**
- Full-time Safe Routes to School coordinator and 2 Safe Routes to School engineers
 - Coordinator – Education and encouragement programming
 - Engineers – School safety infrastructure improvements
- 10-15 SRTS “priority” schools determined by walk audits and road safety assessments
- Aligned with [County Vision Zero initiative](#)
 - Coordinator sits on Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee

Program Features

- SRTS Mascot – Zeal the Zebra
- Safety assemblies
- Bike rodeos
- [Art contests](#)
- Safety campaigns – student PSAs
- Community outreach events – fairs, festivals
- Social media and newsletter updates
- Virtual Safety Week
- Walk/Bike & Roll to School Days





Safe Routes to School Charlotte-Mecklenburg

- **Population:** 1.01 million
- **School District:** Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS)
- **Number of Schools:** 180
- **Number of Students:** 140,000
- **Program Website**





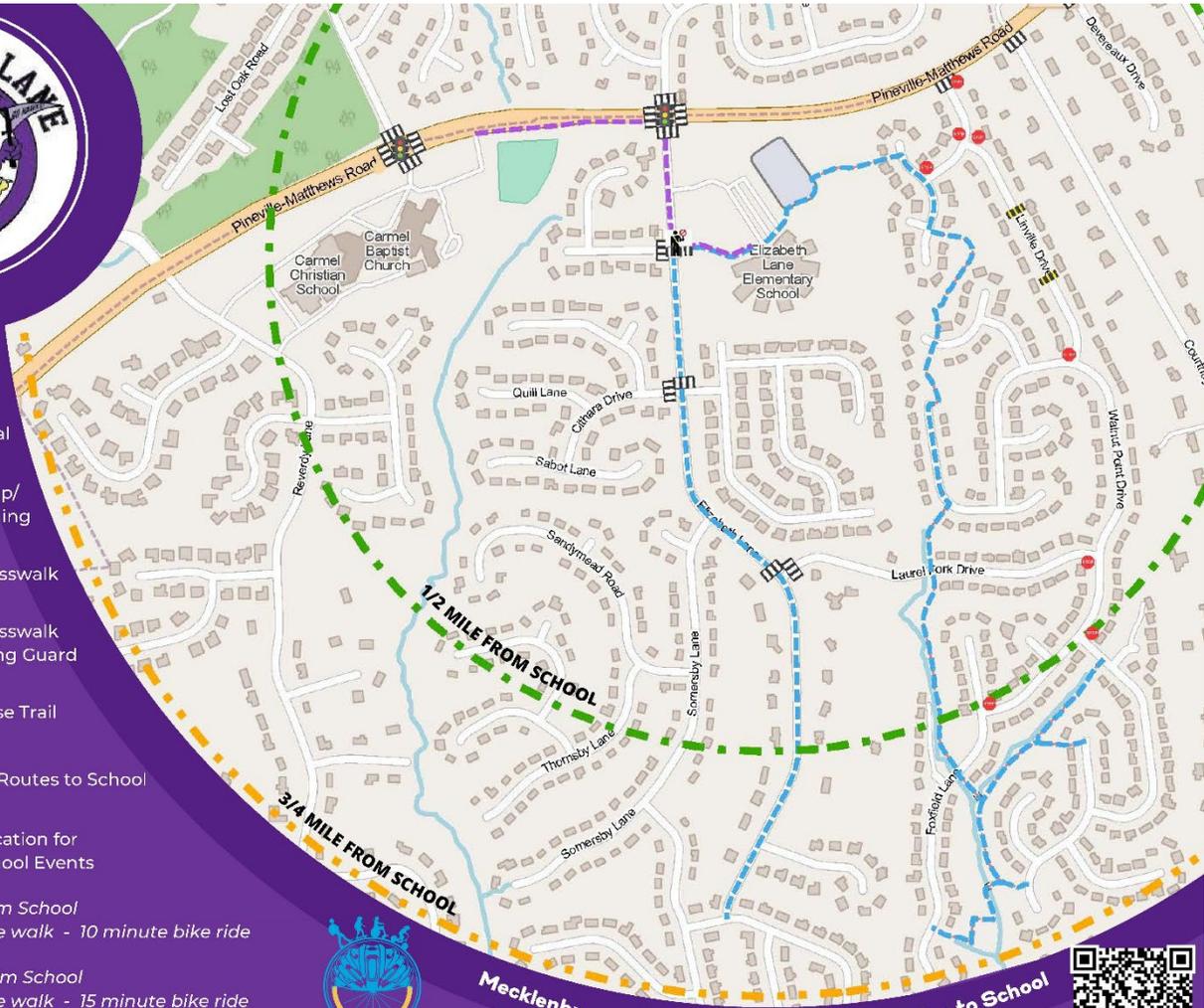
Program Structure

- **Housed Mecklenburg County Public Health (MCPH)**
- Full-time Safe Routes to School coordinator
- Serves 108 elementary and middle schools – schools can request programming and support
- School Zone Safety Committee
 - SRTS Coordinator
 - Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District
 - Charlotte Department of Transportation
- Aligned with [Charlotte Vision Zero initiative](#)

Program Features

- School partnership levels:
 - Bronze, silver, gold, platinum
 - Based off of level of program engagement
- School zone infrastructure policy
 - Created in collaboration with CDOT and CMS
- School drop off/pick up assessments
- Bike education – [All Kids Bike](#) program in 30 schools
 - Partnerships with P.E. teachers
- Walking school bus and bike train programs
- Traffic garden projects





-  Stop Sign
-  Traffic Signal
-  Speed Hump/
Traffic Calming
-  Marked Crosswalk
-  Marked Crosswalk
with Crossing Guard
-  Multipurpose Trail
-  Suggested Routes to School
-  Remote Location for
Walk to School Events
-  1/2 Mile From School
20 minute walk - 10 minute bike ride
-  3/4 Mile From School
30 minute walk - 15 minute bike ride



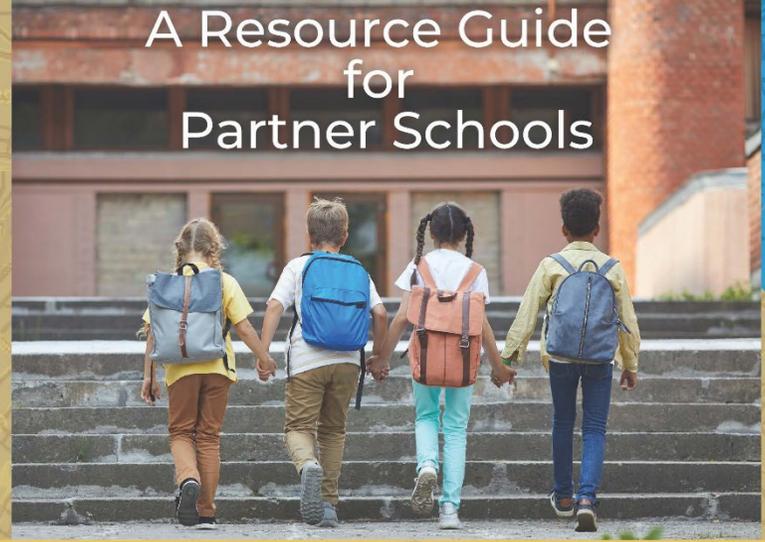
Mecklenburg County Public Health Safe Routes to School



Safe Routes to School

Mecklenburg County Public Health

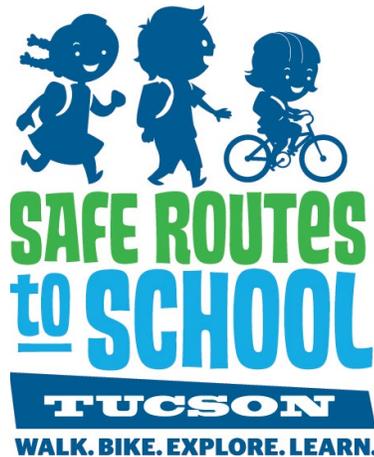
A Resource Guide for Partner Schools



Mecklenburg County Public Health | Office of Policy & Prevention
Email: Michael.Eastwood@mecklenburgcountync.gov | Office: (980) 314-9162
Michael Eastwood, M.Ed | Safe Routes to School Coordinator

Safe Routes to School Tucson

- **Population:** 542,629
- **School District:** Tucson Unified School District, Sunnyside School District
- **Number of Schools:** 180
- **Number of Students:** 62,167
- **Program Website**





Program Structure

- Housed in local non-profit: [Living Streets Alliance \(LSA\)](#)
- Full-time Safe Routes to School coordinator
- Broad SRTS programming to school districts
- Four focus schools – one elementary, one K-6
 - Title I
 - Predominately Latinx population
 - Deeper programming

Program Features

- Bike clubs
- Bike leader training
- Mobile bike repair clinics
- Weekly walking school bus
- Safety education assemblies
 - Partner with [Environmental Education Exchange \(E3\)](#) to develop and lead education sessions
 - 150 presentations per year
- Walk/Bike & Roll to School Days
- Safe route mapping





Earn a Bike Program



Bike Clubs





Bike Clubs

Safe Routes to School in the Houston Area

- Currently no Safe Routes to School Houston program
- Acres Homes Safe Routes to School pilot
- Safe Routes to School Baytown
- Houston Vision Zero
- Opportunities for parents, caregivers, school champions, and advocates to grow a SRTS program
 - School or school district level





Questions?

Making the Case for Safe Routes to School



Benefits of Safe Routes to School

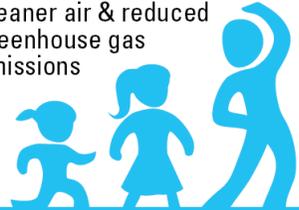
COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS

- Stronger student friendships & relationships through walking & biking together
- Positive social connections for families & neighbors



CLIMATE BENEFITS AND CLEANER AIR

- Fewer student asthma attacks due to less driving & reduced air pollution results
- Cleaner air & reduced greenhouse gas emissions



BETTER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- Better focus, improved concentration & less distraction for students who are active before school
- Fewer absences and less tardiness when students walk or bike in groups



TRAFFIC SAFETY

- Reduced traffic injuries & dangers for students and community members at arrival & dismissal through street improvements near schools
- More chances to learn & practice road safety for students



SAFETY FROM CRIME

- Increased safety from crime & violence due to more people on the streets, good lighting & better street design
- Less harassment, bullying, or violence when students walk or bike together or with adults



SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION FIXES

- Solutions to reduced or non-existent bus service through Safe Routes to School
- Reduced traffic congestion at pick-up/drop-off times



COST SAVINGS

- Household savings from reduced gas & car use
- Education budget savings through reduced student busing costs



HEALTHIER STUDENTS

- Better health & stronger bones, muscles & joints through more walking & biking
- Reduced risk of chronic disease, diabetes, & obesity





How are Safe Routes to School Programs Organized?

At the local level, Safe Routes to School programs are organized by cities, counties, schools, school districts, or community organizations. These programs can serve one school or many schools throughout a community.

At the state level, Safe Routes to School programs are usually administered by the state department of transportation (TxDOT). The program provides resources to help support local programs.

You might be trying to gain support for...

- Street, sidewalk, and crosswalk improvements
- Improvements to other places along school routes
- Bike education
- Safe Routes to School funding for projects and programs
- Safe Routes to School policy (school/city/state)
- Safer drop-off/pick-up procedures
- More crossing guards



It is good to know...

Who are the decision makers?

Who are other SRTS supporters?

What changes are possible?



Change you want to see	Decision Makers/Who is responsible
Street/sidewalk improvements	<p>City or county transportation/public works staff and city council or county board</p> <p>State DOT for improvements on state highways</p>
More education and encouragement programs	School leadership, school district leadership
Funding and staffing for SRTS	<p>City council or county board</p> <p>School board</p> <p>Metropolitan Planning Organizations</p> <p>Regional Transportation Planning Organizations/Agencies</p> <p>State DOT</p>
Adoption of a SRTS policy	<p>School board (for district policy)</p> <p>City council or county board (for city/county policy)</p>



Connect with decision makers' interests and priorities.

Common Motivators



Common Motivators: School District

- Academic achievement
- Attendance
- Safe and healthy kids
- Reducing congestion around schools
- Reducing transportation costs

BETTER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- Better focus, improved concentration & less distraction for students who are active before school
- Fewer absences and less tardiness when students walk or bike in groups



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SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION FIXES

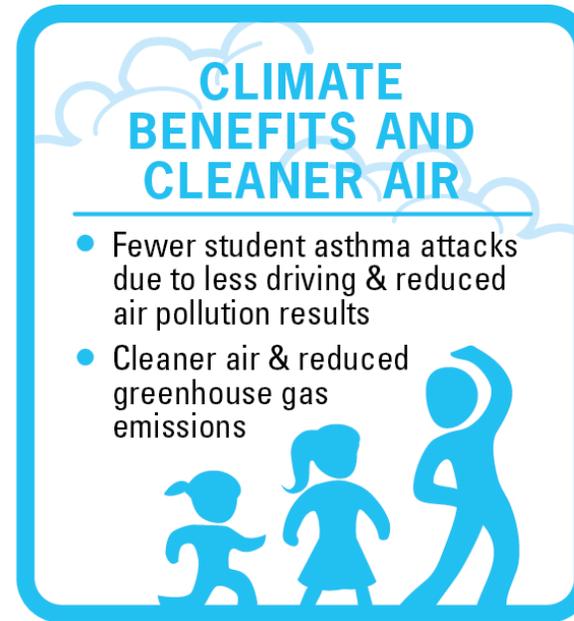
- Solutions to reduced or non-existent bus service through Safe Routes to School
- Reduced traffic congestion at pick-up/drop-off times



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Common Motivators: City/County

- Safety
- Economics
- Livable communities
- Environment
- Community health



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Common Motivators: State Policy Makers

- All of the above!
 - Economy
 - Safety
 - Health
 - Transportation and the environment
 - Education



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Find other Safe Routes to School supporters.

Potential Safe Routes to School Supporters: City and County Level

- Houston Vision Zero Task Force
- Houston Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Elected officials – city/county council members



Potential Safe Routes to School Supporters: School and School District Level

- Parents/caregivers/PTA
- Elected officials – school board members
- Neighbors
- School staff
- Students
- Crossing guards





How can you work as a team?

- Lead events together
- Apply for SRTS grants
- Public testimony
- Talk about SRTS with your individual networks
- Create a school/community SRTS task force
- Approach local decision makers about SRTS funding – city/county council, school district



Craft your message:

Safe Routes to School is an essential need for students and families.



Safe Routes BACK to School Talking Points

- COVID-19 has taken a toll on our communities and kids
 - Health and academic impact of isolation and remote learning
 - Disparate impacts by race and socioeconomic status
 - Spikes in traffic danger



Safe Routes **BACK** to School Talking Points

- Walking, Rolling, and Safe Routes can help!
 - Improved physical health
 - Improved social/emotional health
 - Lower transportation and healthcare costs
 - Reduced student tardiness and absences
 - Reduced traffic congestion and improved air quality
 - Improved academic performance
 - Improved safety from personal and traffic violence



Where to Find Information

- [Benefits of Safe Routes to School](#)
 - Benefits infographic
 - Success stories
 - National highlights
 - Citations



Where to Find Information

- Local school district
 - Academic achievement info
 - Attendance rates
- Local & state health department
 - Children's health, chronic disease rates
 - Physical activity/inactivity rates
 - Air quality data

Where to Find Information

- Medical center/hospital
 - Traffic injuries and fatalities
 - Community health data within community assessments
- Local transportation department
 - Local road conditions
 - Local crash data
- State transportation department
 - Crash data
- MPO/regional planning agency
 - Crash data



Where to Find Information

- Students, families, and community members
 - Sharing the stories of the community can be very powerful
 - Community walk audits, photos, videos





The Delivery Method

- Print media, social media, events, word of mouth
- Directly appeal to decision makers:
 - Inviting decision makers and agency staff to events
 - Testifying at public hearings or committee meetings
 - Writing letters (maybe emails) to committees, elected officials, and agency staff
 - Meeting with (maybe calling) agency staff, elected officials



Additional Safe Routes Advocacy Opportunities

- **New infrastructure funding** = more opportunities to support Safe Routes to School
- Local **health and wellness** initiatives
 - [Be Well Acres Homes](#)
- **Solution to school bus shortage** and traffic congestion
- Connect to **Safe Routes to Parks** initiatives
 - [Baytown Safe Routes to School](#)
 - [Baytown Safe Routes to Parks](#)
- Local **equity and social justice** initiatives



Questions?

Gaining Support through SRTS Events & Activities





WALK TO SCHOOL DAY
Wed. TO SCHOOL DAY

WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

Caution: Children Walking

Caution: Children Walking

SCHOOL ZONE
SAFE KIDS
FedEx

Ketcham
ROCKS
the Walk!
Walk to School Day: October 2, 2018

Safe Routes
DC Routes to School Program

Walk & Roll to School Day
Observed in October
www.walkbiketoschool.org



Bike & Roll to School Day
Observed in May



Safety Awareness Demonstration



Walk Audit

Related Events





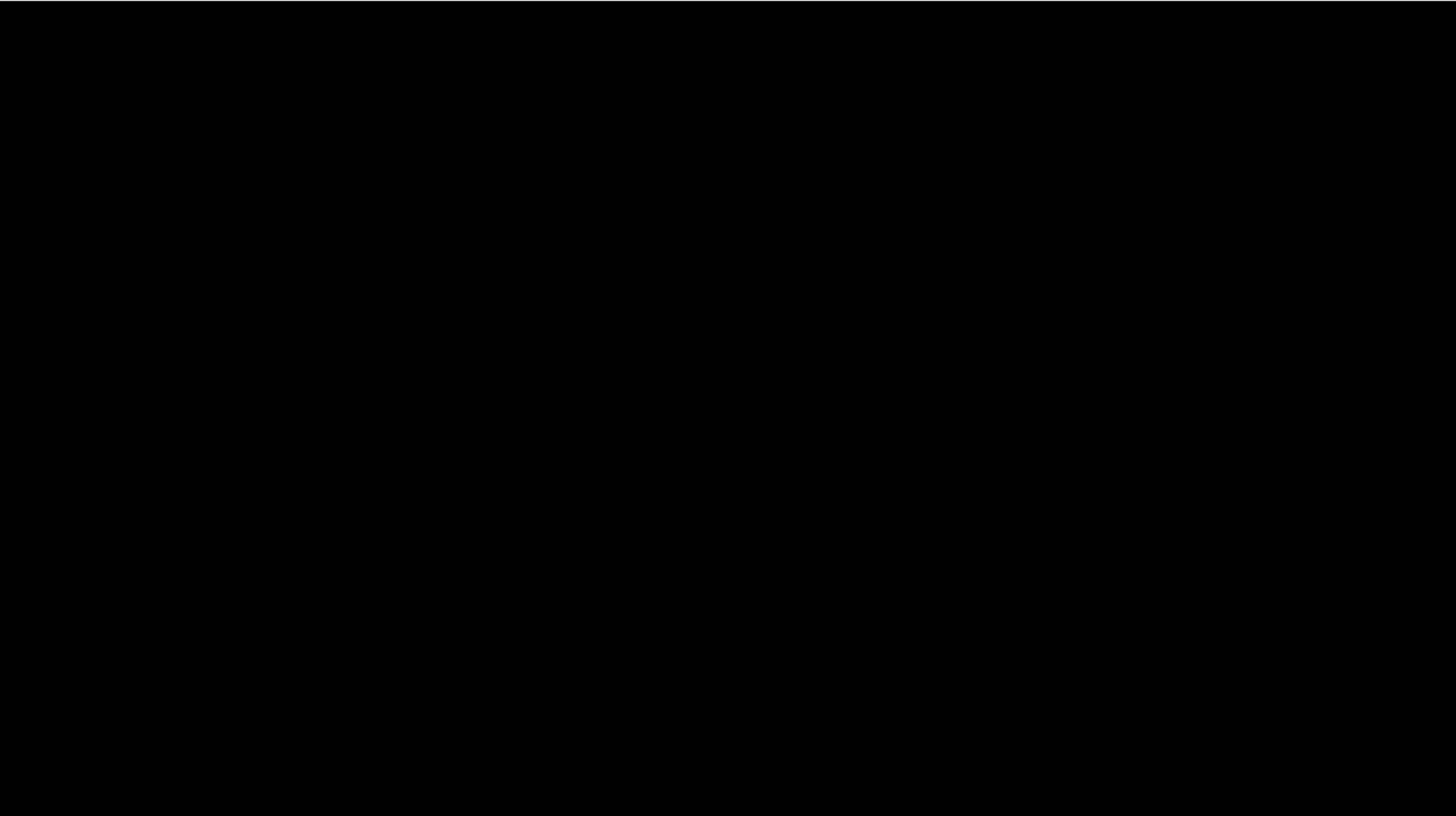
Social Media Contests

School Streets

School streets are open to students walking, biking, and rolling, mainly during pick-up and drop-off times.

- Located in blocks or areas next to the school
- Street closed to vehicles and pass through traffic
- Open to activities – walking and biking, games, sidewalk chalk





[School Streets Program - 8 80 Cities](#)

Purpose of School Streets

- Address congestion
- Reduce air pollution
- Limit danger of cars on the road during arrival and dismissal
- Provide safe place for students to play and be active
- [Child Health Initiative School Streets Report – April 2022](#)
 - Over 1000 school streets in a dozen countries
 - Large increase during COVID-19
 - School streets can address climate change and air quality
 - Guidance, advice, and toolkits for school street implementation
 - [Read the full report](#)



School Streets in the U.S.

- [Los Angeles](#) – City of LA Safe Routes to School
- [Portland](#) – PBOT Safe Routes to School
- [Seattle](#) – Seattle Department of Transportation
- Still a growing movement
- Can also be great for small cities and towns!





Who Needs to Be Involved?

- School
- School district
- City or county – street closure permit may be required
- Students and families
- Neighbors
- Volunteers and community partners



Getting People On Board

- Acknowledge this is something new – can be scary and exciting
- Explain the need and student benefits
 - Reduce traffic congestion
 - Reduce air pollution
 - Provide safe outdoor play space
 - Encourage walking and biking
- Come with a plan
- Show success stories
- Demonstrate community support



Try it out!

- Conduct dismissal observations before event
- Start small
 - One school or handful of schools
 - Pair with Walk/Bike & Roll to School Day
 - One day event or short pilot program
- Keep it simple
- Communicate in a clear and timely manner
- Evaluate what worked and what didn't

Questions?





Contact Information

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