



Colorado PHR Collaborative Summit

Better Together: Exploring Partnerships Between Safe Routes to Parks and Safe Routes to School

Kori Johnson and Natasha Riveron, Safe Routes Partnership



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.





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Safe Routes to School is a movement and a program to make school travel – including walking, biking, and scooting – safe convenient, and fun for children of all genders, races, and abilities.

In 1969, nearly **50%**
of all children walked
or bicycled to school.
Today, just **13%** walk
or bicycle.





The Evidence is In: Safe Routes to School Works

- Safe Routes to School programs lead to a **35-45% increase in walking and bicycling** to school
- Safe Routes to School programs result in a **45-75% decrease in pedestrian injuries** near schools
- Kids who walk and bike are **more physically active**

Benefits of Safe Routes to School

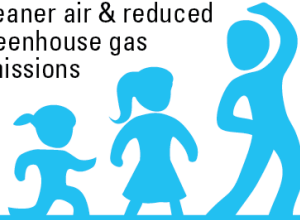
COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS

- 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



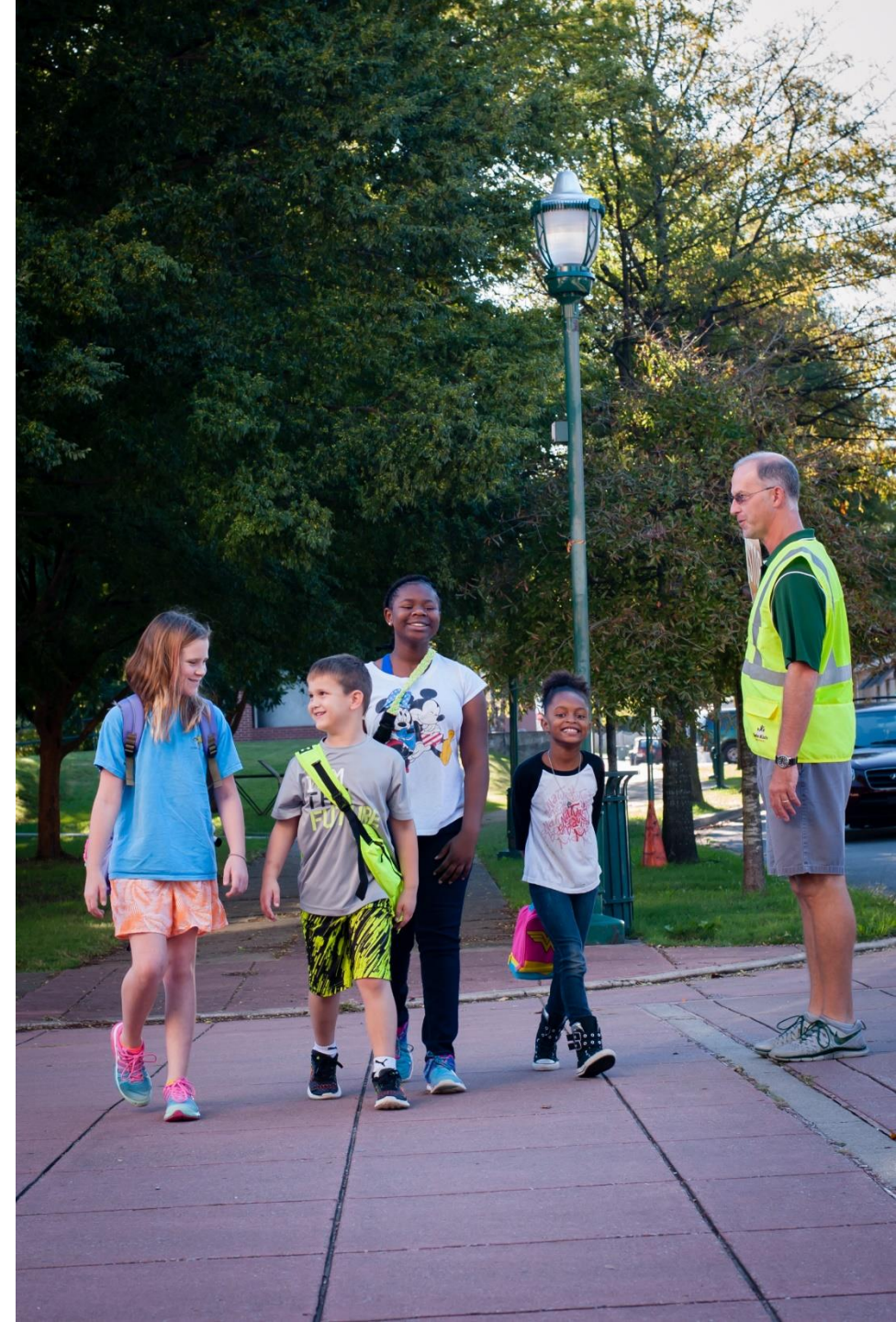
HEALTHIER STUDENTS

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



Safe Routes to School Activities

- [Walk, Bike, and Roll to School Day](#)
 - October and May
- Walking School Bus
- Bike Trains
- Bike Rodeos
- Walk Audits
- Remote Drop-off/Pick Up
- Infrastructure Projects



Safe Routes to School Across Colorado

- Safe Routes to School projects funded by Colorado Department of Transportation
- Colorado Safe Routes to School webinar series
- Rural, suburban, and city programs
- Bike education and encouragement programs
- Walk/Bike and Roll to School Day celebrations
- Health and wellness initiatives
- Infrastructure improvement projects





Safe Routes to Parks is a movement to make access to great parks safer, more convenient, and more equitable for people walking, biking, and taking public transportation.

Parks boost physical activity when paired with...

- Community engagement
- Structured programming
- Public awareness
- Access enhancements



Actionable Public Health Strategies to Boost Community Well-Being with Safe Routes to Parks



Communities are healthier when people can use and access parks and green spaces. New research findings from the [Community Preventive Services Task Force \(CPSTF\)](#) point to a measurable increase in physical activity when parks, greenways, and trails are coupled with at least one of these strategies: community engagement, structured programming, public awareness, and access enhancements. This resource provides actionable strategies and inspiring examples for public health agencies to take an active role in their communities' Safe Routes to Parks efforts.

About This Resource and Why Now

In a systematic review, the Community Preventive Services Task Force found that when parks, greenways, and trails are paired with at least one other intervention – community engagement, structured programs, public awareness, and/or access enhancements – people use parks more, having a significant impact on increased rates of physical activity, boosting the health benefits that come from being active in the outdoors and in nature.¹ This factsheet outlines what public health uniquely brings to the table in supporting these evidence-based interventions and how to incorporate these park access strategies into existing public health programs to maximize their impact.

WHAT IS SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS?

Safe Routes to Parks is a movement to make access to great parks by walking, bicycling, and taking public transportation safer, more convenient, and more equitable for people, especially in low-income communities and communities of color, where less investment has gone into the routes to and the facilities in parks. To learn more, visit [Safe Routes to Parks](#).

Why Collaborate?

- Collaboration helps us go further
- We have similar goals and priorities
 - Increase physical activity
 - Promote health and wellness
 - Increase community connectedness
 - Help people feel safe in their community
- Communities like when we work together



Colorado Community Engagement Toolkit

- Outlines a community engagement framework
- Highlights engagement best practices
- Guiding questions for each section
- Features Colorado programs
- Links to tools, worksheets, and additional resources
- Emphasis on equity



Safe Routes to School + Safe Routes to Parks Potential Collaborations

- Walk and Roll to School Day
- Bike and Roll to School Day
- Remote drop off/pick up programs
- Walking school bus and bike trains
- Walk and roll audits
- Shared use agreements – bike education, recreation programs



Opportunity: Combine engagement efforts



Photo Credit: Evren Sonmez (Tucson, AZ)



Opportunity: Open school grounds for community use

Opportunity: Highlight connections between schools and parks

- Events
- Signage
- Field Trips



Photo Credit: Cultiva La Salud (Merced, CA)

Upcoming Collaboration Opportunities

- **Wednesday, May 3rd – Bike and Roll to School Day**
 - [Walk and Roll to School Day Collaboration Guide](#)
- Colorado Safe Routes to School Webinar Series

CELEBRATING WALKING, ROLLING, AND SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS ON INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY:
Ideas to Integrate Safe Routes to Parks into Walk to School Day Events



The first Wednesday of October can be an exciting time of year for many students who walk and roll with their families and friends to school. It is International Walk to School Day, a day when families across several countries celebrate their active route to school. Walk to School Day can be a fun way to encourage or re-energize children and families to walk and roll to school regularly. It can also be a unique opportunity to celebrate great parks and safe park access. This fact sheet shares ideas for incorporating Safe Routes to Parks elements into Walk to School Day – a win-win for Safe Routes to School and Safe Routes to Parks advocates. Parks advocates and Safe Routes to School practitioners alike can use this fact sheet for ideas on tying Safe Routes to Parks activities into their Walk to School Day events and keeping up the momentum beyond October.

There are natural overlaps between Walk to School Day and Safe Routes to Parks. For example, some schools use nearby parks as remote drop-off locations to assist children who live too far or have unsafe routes, reduce traffic congestion at schools during arrival and dismissal, and encourage neighbors to walk and roll together to school. Parks can also serve as excellent alternative locations for schools that may not have space to host recess, sports practices, or other out-of-school activities. When schools are close to parks, there are opportunities to support Walk to School Day and engage primary park users in the discussion to improve safe and equitable park access, ultimately leading to more people using the park. Safe Routes to School and Safe Routes to Parks advocates can work together to use Walk to School Day as a catalyst for improving safe walking and biking throughout the community.



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