

Creating Safe Walking and Bicycling Communities: Safe Routes to School Decision Maker's Toolkit

www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit

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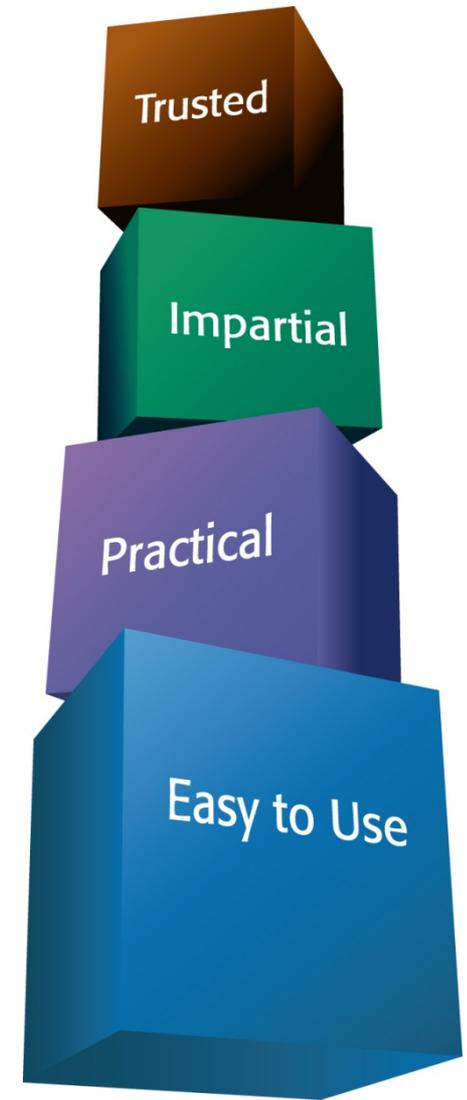


INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Non-profit research and education
affiliate of the League and CSAC

Mission

- Promote good government at the local level
- Practical, impartial and easy-to-use resources



Sustainable Communities

www.ca-ilg.org/sustainability



Resources to:

- Understand land use and planning basics
- Learn about the benefits of healthy neighborhoods
- Learn about climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions & saving energy
- Share sustainability best practices through peer-to-peer learning network (www.ca-ilg.org/scln)



- **Partners:** League of California Cities, California State Association of Counties, California School Boards Association
- **Purpose:** Improving the conditions of children, families and communities at the local level by promoting and encouraging coordination, integration and increased efficiency of local services and joint facilities use among cities, counties and schools in all California communities

Creating Safe Walking and Bicycling Communities: Safe Routes to School Decision Maker's Toolkit

www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit

- Purpose: Support city, county, school collaboration to create safe routes to schools
- Audience: City, County and School officials and executive staff
- Format: Online tool and resource center, educational workshops and sessions for city, county and school leaders
- Provide ***models and examples*** of leadership



Sustainability Resource Centers

SB 375 Resource Center

Commercial Recycling

Financing Sustainability

Greening Agency Fleets

Sustainable Economic Development

Insuring Kids' Health

Creating Safe Walking and Bicycling Communities

About the Guide

Why Create Safe Walking and Bicycling Communities?

Getting Started Locally

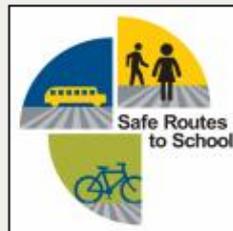
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Appendices

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How to Use This Guide

This guide explains active transportation and the conditions in a community that support safe walking and bicycling to schools and other neighborhood destinations. It offers

tools for local governments to support active transportation. Because decisions about transportation investments in California occur across an array of agencies, the guide explains the regional and state context within which local leaders will collaborate to create safer walking and bicycling environments.

Get started by reading [About this Guide](#). Then use the navigation bar on the left to move through the toolkit or skip to content most relevant to you.

You can always get back to the front page by clicking the link on the right-side of each page.

Acknowledgements

The Safe Routes to School Decision Maker Toolkit was developed by the Cities, Counties and Schools Partnership and the Institute for Local Government for the California Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC). The SRTS TARC is a program within California Active Communities, a joint Unit of the University of California, San Francisco and the California Department of Public Health, and is funded through a SRTS Non-Infrastructure award from the California Department of Transportation.

Comments

This is the first public version of this toolkit, and is meant to be updated as needed. Please click here to provide comments, feedback, corrections or suggestions to improve this toolkit and keep it up to date.

Toolkit's Components

- About the Guide
- Why Create Safe Walking and Bicycling Communities?
- Getting Started Locally
- Who Makes Transportation Decisions?
- Transportation Funding
- Existing Tools for Active Transportation
- Appendices:
 - Resources
 - Glossary

Why Create Safe Walking and Bicycling Communities?

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Why Create Safe Walking and Bicycling Communities?

There are many concerns that might lead local government leaders to care about promoting active transportation by creating safer communities for students and others to walk and bicycle to school and other destinations. These include: community safety, obesity and health issues, student achievement, busing costs, property taxes and school revenue, creating a sense of community or place, air pollution and traffic congestion.

Improve Safety

Many schools are located in neighborhoods with unsafe conditions that inhibit walking or bicycling and endanger children who use these modes of transportation. In a nationwide survey by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, traffic-related danger was the second most common reason cited by parents for not allowing their children to walk to and from school. An active transportation planning process to create safe routes to walk and bicycle addresses real dangers through infrastructure improvements, regulations, enforcement and safety education.

Promote Health



By burning calories instead of gasoline, residents combat an array of diseases caused by sedentary lifestyles. Being active has been shown to reduce the risk of type II diabetes, asthma, joint problems, heart disease and stroke. Children are suffering increased rates of health

problems related to a lack of physical activity. A study (PDF) by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and the California Center for Public Health Advocacy found that 38 percent of California youth in fifth, seventh and ninth grades were overweight or obese in 2010. Safe routes to school and other active transportation options allow for physical activity as part of a normal daily routine.

- Improve Safety
- Promote Health
- Increase Student Achievement
- Reduce Busing Costs
- Gain Tax Benefits
- Discover Other Economic Benefits
- Create Social Benefits
- Meet Clean Air Goals
- Reduce Traffic Congestion

Getting Started Locally: Leading the Effort

Leading the Effort



The art of formulating school and community active transportation related policy includes: asking questions to frame community issues, building community commitment through engagement, understanding how to work within local and regional transportation planning systems, and providing clear direction to staff and committees to develop and steward an action plan.

Framing the Issue

...ask diagnostic questions that define the problem, its scope, and identify critical partners.

- Ask for baseline data:
 - What are the pedestrian and bicycle accident rates in my jurisdiction? With a few clicks you can see the most dangerous areas using [SafeTREC](#) maps.
 - Where is traffic congestion an issue at school

Framing the Issue

...ask diagnostic questions that define the problem, its scope, and identify critical partners.

Creating a Vision

...challenge your community to fully support safe active transportation.

Providing Direction

...engage allies in creating an action plan

Getting Started Locally: Community Readiness Assessment

Community Readiness Assessment

How Ready is Your Community to
Collaborate on a Safe Routes to
School Project?



Go through these steps to assess your community's readiness to engage in safe routes to schools or other active transportation projects. These questions will also help you identify areas that need to be developed and ways to prioritize investments in order to have long lasting and successful projects.

1. Is there a perceived public problem?

- YES! (Public complaints about traffic congestion, unsafe crossings, childhood obesity, etc.)
- NO. Who have you asked? Your first step will be to develop public awareness of the problem and possible alternatives before planning a solution.

2. Have you identified other leaders who recognize the problem?

1. Is there a perceived public problem?
2. Have you identified other leaders who recognize the problem?
3. Have an array of community leaders met to build a shared vision?
4. Has the problem been defined in detail?
5. Have stakeholders developed informed possible solutions?
6. You're ready to take action!

Who Makes Transportation Decisions?

Who Makes Transportation Decisions?

Local Government Roles

Regional, State and Federal Roles

Local Government Roles

Local leaders can promote objectives of active transportation by:

- Establishing active transportation goals within their guiding documents and plans.
- Supporting local strategies that promote their healthy community goals.
- Collaborating with relevant transportation-related agencies and organizations.



City and County Leaders

Both city councils and county boards of supervisors can shape safe routes to school and other active transportation options within their jurisdictions. They determine local land-use and transportation priorities through plans, codes, and standards. They adopt land-use plans, approve park and public works expenditures for maintaining paths, sidewalks, and roads. Their police and sheriff departments enforce traffic safety and can work with schools to provide crossing guards. All of these decisions can influence the viability of safe routes to school projects and other active transportation in their community.

[Read more](#)



School District Leaders

While school districts are not assigned direct responsibility for local



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Tips for City Council Members

Practical tips for how city council members can influence active transportation decisions in the community.



Tips for County Supervisors

Practical tips for how county supervisors can influence active transportation decisions in the community.



Tips for School District Leaders

Practical tips for how school board members can influence active transportation decisions in the

Transportation Funding

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Transportation Funding

As this toolkit is launched there are pending issues at the state level that could change the details of state funding in relation to this topic. Readers are encouraged to consult technical experts, attorneys and/or relevant regulatory authorities for up-to-date information and advice on specific situations.

Different levels of government in California have authority to raise revenues or receive state or federal funds for transportation projects. This section describes designated authority and revenue sources so that local leaders can understand funding beyond specific Safe Routes to School awards and how projects can be designed to take advantage of multiple sources of funding.

Where Does It Come From?

Transportation funding exists at the local, regional, state and federal levels. This section briefly discusses the major sources of transportation funding in California.

[More](#)

Funding Opportunities



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City, County, School and Regional Plans

Plans are guiding documents cities, counties, schools and regional agencies use to guide future actions through goals, policies, strategies and maps. Scroll down for a brief description of each and then proceed to each topic's individual page.

School Plans:

- Community Action Plan
- District Strategic Plan
- School Safety Plan
- School Travel Plan
- Single Plan for Student Achievement

City and County Plans:

- Bicycle (Master) Plan
- Climate Action Plan
- General Plan
- Pedestrian Plan
- Specific Plan

Regional Plans:

- Capital Improvement Plan
- Regional Transportation Improvement Program
- Regional Transportation Plans & Sustainable Communities Strategies

Guiding Concepts:

- Complete Streets
- Smart Growth
- Transit-Oriented Development

City, County and School Tools

The tools below are specific ways of implementing the priorities and goals of the plans described in the [City, County, School and Regional Plans](#) section. Some are on-the-ground ideas like speed limits, and others are regulatory documents like transportation demand management ordinances. Scroll down for a brief description and then proceeding to each topic's individual page.

Assessment Tools:

- California School Climate Survey
- Walkability and Bikeability Assessments

Leadership Initiatives:

- Mayoral Initiatives
- School District Initiatives

Collaborative Tools:

- Air Quality Programs
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Education
- Crossing Guards
- Joint-Use Agreements

Engineering Tools:

- Traffic Calming

Guiding Documents and Standards:

- Development Agreements
- Level of Service
- Parking Standards
- School Siting Policies
- School Travel Demand Management Strategies
- School Wellness Policies
- Speed Limits
- Transportation Demand Management Ordinance
- Zoning Codes

Existing Tools for Active Transportation

Existing Tools for Active Transportation

Bicycle (Master) Plan



A bicycle plan (or bicycle master plan) is a document that describes a local agency's long range plans for bicycle infrastructure and programs. The plan emphasizes designating

and expanding bicycle routes, fostering a safe environment for bicycling and promoting bicycling as a viable transportation option. Bicycle plans are often combined with pedestrian plans.

In California, to be eligible for the State's [Bicycle Transportation Account funds](#), a city or county must prepare and adopt a bicycle transportation plan that addresses specific criteria as outlined on the [Caltrans website](#).

Ideas/Roles:

Local governments can identify safe bicycling routes to school in a bicycle plan, and work with school officials to promote these routes to students and families.

Examples:

The City of Glendale updated its Bicycle Transportation Plan

DOCUMENTS & RESOURCES

[RETURN to the front of the guide](#)

[Bikeability Checklist, Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center\(PDF\)](#)

[Sample Bicycle Plans, Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center](#)

[Additional Examples of Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans in California](#)

[Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center](#)

[California Streets and Highway Code: Bicycle Transportation Act](#)

Questions?

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