



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

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## Leading the Effort

The art of formulating school and community active transportation 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 bicycle and pedestrian accident rates in my jurisdiction? With a few clicks you can see the most dangerous areas using [SafeTRAC](#) maps at <http://tims.berkeley.edu/resources/srts/main.php>.
  - Where is traffic congestion an issue at school drop-off and pick-up?
  - Have there been traffic counts taken near schools to compare school days with non-school days?
  - What percentage of students are walking or bicycling to school?
- Who are the constituents that want these problems addressed? Have I asked them for their ideas?
- How ready is our community to address these problems? (See *readiness assessment* at [www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/community-readiness-assessment](http://www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/community-readiness-assessment).)
- How are pedestrian and bicyclist needs addressed in our city or county general plan?
- How do city and county public works departments prioritize pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects? Is there an allocation for bicycle and pedestrian projects?
- What are our upcoming pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure investments? How can we leverage these?
- How do we engage in regional transportation planning?

- In what ways does our county public health department promote active transportation and how can we leverage their efforts?
- Is this a priority of our local hospital community foundation or community programs? How can we engage them in the creation of solutions?
- Is safe routes to school addressed in our school districts' safety plans and wellness policies? How is it addressed in school site safety plans and wellness policies?
- How are school zones addressed in our local and regional transportation planning process?

## Create a Vision

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

- Imagine your constituents walking, bicycling and using their wheelchairs to get to their destination. Notice what needs to be different.
- Discover what other communities have done. Find websites that demonstrate active transportation solutions on the *Resources* page at [www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/resources](http://www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/resources). Visit communities that are walkable and bikeable. Talk to their leaders to learn how it was done there.
- Talk to your community leaders to fold their priorities into a shared vision.
- Go public with your vision. Seek opportunities within your jurisdiction and through collaboration.
- Walk your talk and talk your walk ([www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/local-champions-walk-your-talk](http://www.ca-ilg.org/srts-toolkit/local-champions-walk-your-talk)). Walk more, bicycle more and challenge others to join you.

## Provide Direction

*...engage allies in creating an action plan*

- Decide on how you want to initiate action.
  - Will you work within your jurisdiction or engage other local policymakers?
  - Will you assign this to staff or convene a task force?
  - How will you work with existing interest groups?
  - How will you link to your regional transportation planning agency?

- Ensure a group is charged to develop and report implementation progress for their action plan.
- Calendar annual reporting to review progress, celebrates success, note collaborative roles and opportunities.

For more on active transportation, access the *Creating Safe Walking and Bicycling Communities: Safe Routes to Schools Decision Maker Toolkit* at [www.ca-ilg.org/SRTS-toolkit](http://www.ca-ilg.org/SRTS-toolkit).<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> 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 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.