**Healthy Kids – Safe Streets Action Plan**

**Initiatives to encourage kids to walk, bike & bus to school**

- **Goals**
  - Build a generation of safe and healthy walkers, bike riders, and bus riders
  - Promote regular physical activity so students stay strong, healthy, and ready to learn
  - Reinforce good traffic safety skills

**Partners in the Plan:**
Parents
Local School Districts & School Staff
InterCity Transit
Local Governments
Thurston Regional Planning Council
Thurston County Health & Social Services
Olympic Region Clean Air Agency
State Department of Transportation
State Department of Health
State Department of Commerce

**Healthy Kids - Safe Streets Action Plan Achieves Shared Goals**

- Public Health & Safety
- Growth Management, Land Use & Transportation
- Safe Routes to School
- Education

**Did You Know…**

40 years ago, 50% of students walked or rode bikes to school. Today fewer than 15% travel on their own steam.

Over the last 40 years, childhood obesity has gone from 4% to 17% (2008 figure). In the last decade, obesity in youth has doubled.

By the end of the Walk & Roll program’s first year, 57% of students walked or cycled to school and only 11% arrived by car. At the beginning of the year 47% arrived by car and only 24% walked or cycled.

**Testimonials**

“This is really good because we need to get our kids healthy and doing active things at home and at school.”

-Elementary school parent on International Walk to School Day

“It was a wonderful morning for the two of us to have the time to walk and notice the little things in the neighborhood.”

-Elementary school parent

“We rode our bikes this morning. It was freezing, but it was great fun!”

-Madison Elementary school parent on a Walking & Wheeling Wednesday

**Partnerships and Success Stories**

**Problem: How to build a generation of safe and healthy walkers, bike riders and bus riders**

**Action Taken:**
Walk & Roll school-based encouragement demonstration programs at three elementary schools included: monthly flyers with walk/bike safety tips, “Walking & Wheeling Wednesday” encouragement, prizes for participation, contests, safety assemblies.


**Problem: Overcoming barriers regarding student travel to school**

**Safety Issue**

**Action Taken:**
- “Stranger danger” fears addressed at two Walk & Roll sponsored “Safety Without Fear” interactive forums with a child development specialist.
- Pedestrian and bike safety education through monthly Walk & Roll event flyers, special walk/bike safety classes for students and parents, school safety assemblies with visits by police and Intercity Transit Youth Program coordinator.
- New “Pace Car” and Anti-idling pledge program to slow driving speeds and promote clean air.
- Initiation of Walking School Bus with several parents walking with a group of students to and from school.
- Identification of infrastructure safety issues.

**Distance Issue (i.e. too far to walk/bike)**

**Action Taken:**
Walk & Roll program focuses on urban schools and students living within a mile of school.

Walk & Roll program addresses issues and supports a culture of changed attitudes toward student travel to school throughout the school community.

Walk & Roll program encourages:
- students traveling by bus to take the long way around the block to get to and from the bus stop;
- students who must be driven encouraged to park several blocks from school and walk in.

**Action Plan** recognizes the importance of school siting. The Plan recommends that school site cost/benefit analysis consider long term student transportation costs and the benefits of making walking and biking to school possible for more students.

**Weather Issue**

**Action Taken:**
Walk & Roll encouragement programs, prizes and contests resulted in participation no matter what kind of weather. Ongoing survey data continues to inform the process.

**Did You Know…**

- 25% of morning peak hour traffic
- 50 % of students living within a 1/2 mile of school are driven to school?

**The Problem**

Too few students walk, bike, or take the bus. Too many parents drive students to school. Too few students get enough daily physical activity. **Did you know that 50 % of students living within a 1/2 mile of school are driven to school?**

**The Result**

Parents driving students to school account for:
- • 25% of morning peak hour traffic
- • a decrease in safety, air quality, student health and readiness to learn (due to lack of exercise)
- • a lack of knowledge and experience needed to be safe pedestrians and cyclists

**For more information:**

On Youth Programs, contact: **Erin Scheel**
Intercity Transit Youth Education Specialist
360-705-5839 or escheel@intercitytransit.com

On Action Plan, contact: **Kathy McCormick**
Thurston Regional Planning Council Senior Planner, AICP
360-956-7575 or mccormk@trpc.org

**For more information:**

On Youth Programs, contact: **Erin Scheel**
Intercity Transit Youth Education Specialist
360-705-5839 or escheel@intercitytransit.com

On Action Plan, contact: **Kathy McCormick**
Thurston Regional Planning Council Senior Planner, AICP
360-956-7575 or mccormk@trpc.org

**For more information:**

On Youth Programs, contact: **Erin Scheel**
Intercity Transit Youth Education Specialist
360-705-5839 or escheel@intercitytransit.com

On Action Plan, contact: **Kathy McCormick**
Thurston Regional Planning Council Senior Planner, AICP
360-956-7575 or mccormk@trpc.org
Next Steps

1. **Review of Action Plan.** Stakeholder groups commit to take action and identify advocates.
2. **Create a Safe Routes to School Coordination Team** to advocate for the Action Plan initiatives; apply for funding to support programs and infrastructure improvements; and serve as a resource for school site analysis. Identify a facilitator for the team. Members should include at least school districts, and jurisdiction planning/public works. Adjunct representation should include Thurston County Health & Social Services, Intercity Transit and Thurston Regional Planning Council.
3. **Identify a Safe Routes liaison within each school district** to act as a contact with school principals to develop the required Safe Routes Walking and Biking Map and possible expansion of the Walk & Roll program.
4. **Complete Safe Routes Walking and Biking Map for each school in the county.** State law requires Safe Routes maps for all schools by September 2013. Determine responsibility and most effective and efficient way to complete maps. Identify safety improvements as part of the process.

**Programs to Develop or Expand**

1. **Develop Walk & Roll program template and “How To” manual** for program expansion to additional schools.
2. **Identify ways to sustain and build Walk & Roll type school-based incentive programs at additional schools.**
3. **Identify funds needed to support staff and program** such as stipends for school coordinators or incentive programs.

**Policies to Incorporate in Plans**

School District and Local Government:

1. **Establish early communication about infrastructure improvements** to identify opportunities to collaborate, co-locate or connect facilities to encourage walking, biking, and transit use.
2. **Consider the long range costs and benefits of school siting decisions** including long term transportation costs to the community as a whole (school districts, households), and the costs and benefits to student health.

For more information, including draft policy language, go to [http://www.trpc.org/regionalplanning/transportation/projects/Pages/HealthyKidsSafeStreets.aspx](http://www.trpc.org/regionalplanning/transportation/projects/Pages/HealthyKidsSafeStreets.aspx)

---

**The “Five E’s” - Strategies for Healthy Kids - Safe Streets**

**Education**

- Teach children about the broad range of transportation choices; instruct them in lifelong bicycle and walking safety skills; and launch driver safety campaigns near schools.
  - Integrate bicycle, pedestrian, and transit education into school curriculum. *SD*
  - Assist school districts in creating Safe Routes Walking and Biking Map for each school per state law. SD, TRPC, CO, PTO
  - Create a community outreach plan to raise awareness and promote walking and biking to school. SD, IT, LG, CD
  - Address parental concerns through outreach campaign. PTO

**Encouragement**

- Use events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.
  - Maintain and expand existing school-based encouragement programs like Walk & Roll, SD, IT, LG, TRPC, PTO
  - Identify a leader within the school to coordinate bike and walk programs. SD
  - Hold annual study sessions with school boards to review new walking, biking, and transit related initiatives. SD, SRTS
  - Identify a funding source to provide subsidized transit passes for the school community. IT, SD
  - Establish a school district policy to give physical education credits to students for walking and biking. SD
  - Support state and local policies encouraging flexible work hours so parents can walk or bike with children. $

**Enforcement**

- Partner with local law enforcement and community programs to increase awareness, slow speeds, and increase traffic safety.
  - Slow speeds and reduce idling through “Pace Car” campaign. Drivers pledge to drive within the speed limit and not idle. IT, TRPC, SD, NA, PTO
  - Initiate a Walking School Bus (either school or parent-run) to give more students an opportunity to walk with an adult leader. SD, PTO, CO
  - Analyze the effect of shifting school start time by 15 minutes to alter traffic volume and increase safety for biking and walking. SD, LG, CO
  - Work with high schools to develop alternatives to drive alone vehicle use and encourage closed campuses at lunch to enhance student safety. $

**Engineering**

- Improve opportunities to walk & bike through school site & design of walkways, bikeways, & street connections.
  - Adopt a policy for school districts and jurisdictions on school and community facility siting and infrastructure planning and design. SD, LG
  - Advocate changes to state policies relating to school size, school siting guidelines, and transportation funding to encourage easily accessible neighborhood schools. SRTS
  - Make sidewalks, bike lanes, lighting and crossing improvements a high priority within 1/2 mile of schools. $ Separate modes of travel at arrival points at schools to avoid bike and pedestrian conflicts with cars. SD, LG

**Evaluation**

- Monitor and document trends and outcomes to identify the most effective strategies.
  - Survey families annually to track successes and identify challenges. Administer the Safe Routes to School Survey through schools. SD, PTO, SRTS
  - Engage Parent Leaders. Create a Walk & Roll Parent Steering Committee to plan and share ideas between and among schools. PTO, SRTS
  - Seek input and leadership from school staff, parents and students to fit strategies and messages to each school’s needs. PTO, SRTS
  - Track vehicle use reductions around schools to monitor success of walking and biking initiatives. CO, LG, SRTS

---

*STAKEHOLDERS*

- CO - Community Organizations
- IT - Intercity Transit
- LG - Local Government
- NA - Neighborhood Associations
- PTO - Parent-Teacher Organizations

*WALK & ROLL*

Walk & Roll is a grant supported project demonstrating how to build and sustain partnerships that will result in a new generation of healthy and safe walkers, cyclists and bus riders and reduce trips to and around school. “Walking & Wheeling Wednesdays” are part of the project.