

# Is it Safe to Send Your Child to School?

## Why Safe Routes to School Matters

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CCLHO, HOAC and CDPH  
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# Fewer kids are walking and bicycling More parents are driving

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1969

48% walked or bicycled  
12% driven

2009

13% walked or bicycled  
44% driven

*(U.S. DOT, 2009)*

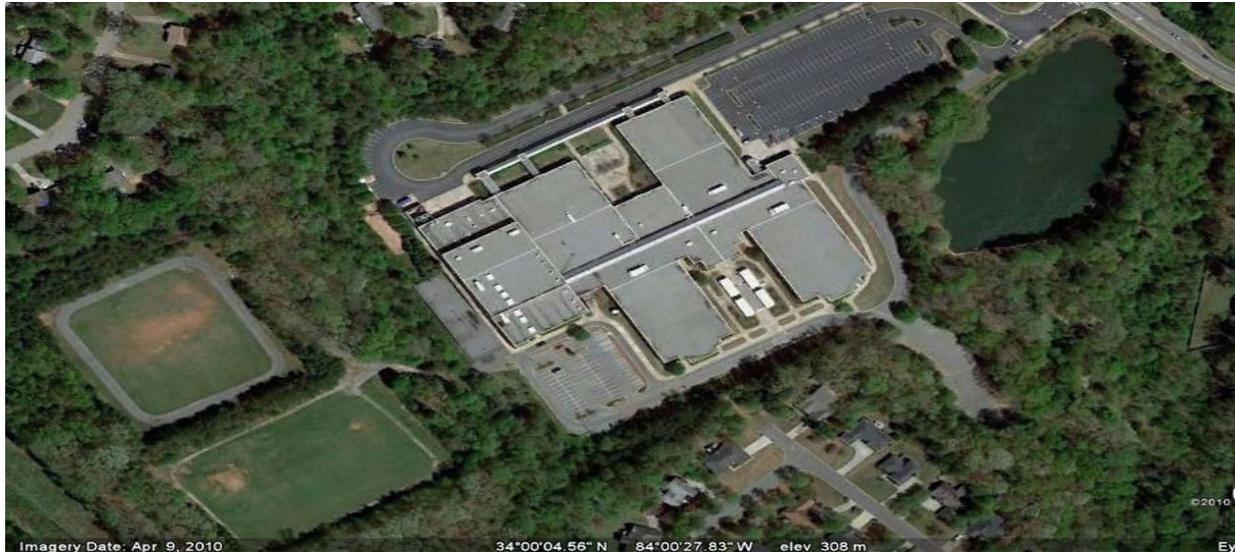
# Individual Barriers to Walking and Bicycling to School

- Long distances 62%
- Traffic danger 30%
- Adverse weather 19%
- Fear of crime/violence 12%

*(CDC, 2005)*



# School Siting Issues



- Mega-schools (average 521 students)
- Schools located on 10 to 30+ acres of fringe land
- Lowest-cost construction
- School program consolidation decisions

# It's Not Just Distance

Students living within one mile or less who walk or bicycle to school:

1969 – 89%

2009 – 35%

*(U.S. DOT, 2009)*



# Traffic Danger: Pedestrian Fatalities

- Each year pedestrian fatalities comprise about 12 percent of all traffic fatalities
- Each year there are approximately 4,000 pedestrian deaths
- Another 59,000 pedestrians are injured in roadway crashes annually



(Federal Highway Administration, 2010)

# Unsafe Driver Behaviors

- Speeding
- Failure to yield
- Running lights or STOP signs
- Passing stopped school buses or stopped cars at crosswalks
- Illegal parking
- Distracted driving



# Unsafe Pedestrian Behaviors

- Not looking before crossing
- Distracted walking
- Crossing at undesirable locations
- Darting out
- Disobeying guards/signals



# Unsafe Bicyclist Behaviors

- Riding into traffic without looking
- Riding facing traffic
- Swerving, turning left without looking
- Disobeying signs and signals
- Riding too fast for conditions
- No helmet



# Fear of Crime and Violence

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- Range of concerns is broad, often not unique to walking and bicycling to school (i.e., “stranger danger”)
- Fears may include gangs, drug activity, community violence
- Both reality and perceptions need to be addressed
- SRTS can be a part of a larger, community-wide response



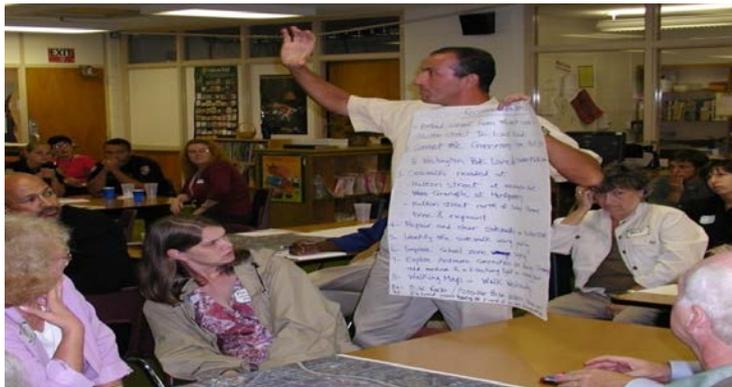
# Other Fears

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- Stray and aggressive dogs
- Abandoned buildings and vacant lots
- Other community conditions that can cause concern for children and parents ( i.e., bullying)
  - Bullying is any hurtful or aggressive act toward an individual or group that is intentional or repeated



# Communities are Taking Action on Behalf of their Children



# Safe Routes to School programs are part of the solution...

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- ...to improve unsafe walking and bicycling conditions
- ...to increase physical activity
- ...to improve poor air quality by reducing vehicle emissions

# Elements of Safe Routes to School Programs

- Education
- Encouragement
- Enforcement
- Engineering
- Evaluation



# Successful SRTS Strategies

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## Education, Encouragement and Enforcement Efforts:

- Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day activities
- Walking School Buses and Bicycle Trains
- Street Smart Skills Education
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education
- Community Engagement
- Driver Behavior Education
- Partnerships with Law Enforcement

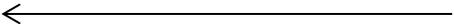


# Safety Programs

Safety Patrols



Adult Crossing Guards



# Every School Faces a Different Challenge



# Community Success Stories

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# Alice Birney Elementary, Eureka, California, Caltrans District 1, Humboldt County

- 67% decrease in bicycle collisions over a three-year period
- 45 students participated in Alice Birney Elementary inaugural Bike to School Day
- 160 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders received bicycle safety training



# Glendale, California, Caltrans District 7, Los Angeles County

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- 13% decrease in pedestrian and bicycle collisions within a ½ mile of the city's schools from 2001 to 2010
- 2 new city plans addressing safety – a Safe and Healthy Streets Plan and a Bicycle Transportation Plan
- 17,000 students benefitted from having the Safe Routes to School program at their school



# La Mesa, California, Caltrans District 11, San Diego County

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- 34% decrease in motor vehicle collisions involving pedestrians or bicyclists over a three-year period
- 75% of the schools increased rates of students walking to school
- 38% of schools increased rates of students bicycling to school
- 5,000 students benefitted from having the Safe Routes to School program at their school



# System Change Strategies to Support SRTS Efforts

- Capital Improvement Plans
- Complete Streets and other ordinances
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans
- General Plan/Comprehensive Plan updates
- Specific Plans
- Public transit scheduling
- Composition of stakeholder and decision-making bodies
- School transportation plans and policies
- Sustainable community strategy plans
- School wellness policies
- Joint use agreements
- School arrival and dismissal practices
- School transportation plans
- Fine Based Funding
- Remote school bus drop off
- Speed limit reductions
- Sales taxes
- School siting policies
- Law enforcement practices
- School bonds

# Active Transportation Program Provides Opportunities for Local Partnerships

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# CA Active Transportation Program

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## Safe Routes to School provisions\*

- \$24M minimum dedicated for SRTS projects
- \$7.3M minimum for non-infrastructure programs

\*Senate Bill 95/Assembly Bill 101 budget bills allocate funding for Safe Routes to School for the first 3 years of ATP

*No guaranteed \$ for project types in statute*

# Safe Routes to School Infographic

## How Safe Routes to School Programs Benefit Our Communities



### IMPROVES STUDENTS' HEALTH AND WELL-BEING <sup>1, 2</sup>

Students who walk or bicycle to school:

- Get more daily physical activity
- Have lower rates of obesity
- Watch less television as teenagers
- Are less likely to smoke as teenagers

### INCREASES PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY <sup>3, 4, 5</sup>

Safe Routes to School Programs can:

- Increase physical activity for people of all ages and abilities
- Benefit residents of urban, suburban, and rural areas by improving the built environment
- Result in population-level health improvements by providing opportunities for active transportation



### IMPROVES STUDENTS' SELF-CONFIDENCE AND INDEPENDENCE <sup>6</sup>

Physical activity including active transportation can:

- Improve academic performance, concentration, and behavior
- Benefit students regardless of age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity and prior achievement scores

### REDUCES COLLISIONS AND INJURIES <sup>3, 5</sup>

Effective Safe Routes to School pedestrian and bicycle interventions have been found to:

- Reduce traffic dangers that prevent children from walking to school
- Cut rates of pedestrian and bicycle collisions by as much as 50 percent

### REDUCES TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND POLLUTION <sup>7</sup>

Nationally, if 20 percent of children living within two miles of school were to walk or bicycle to school instead of being driven:

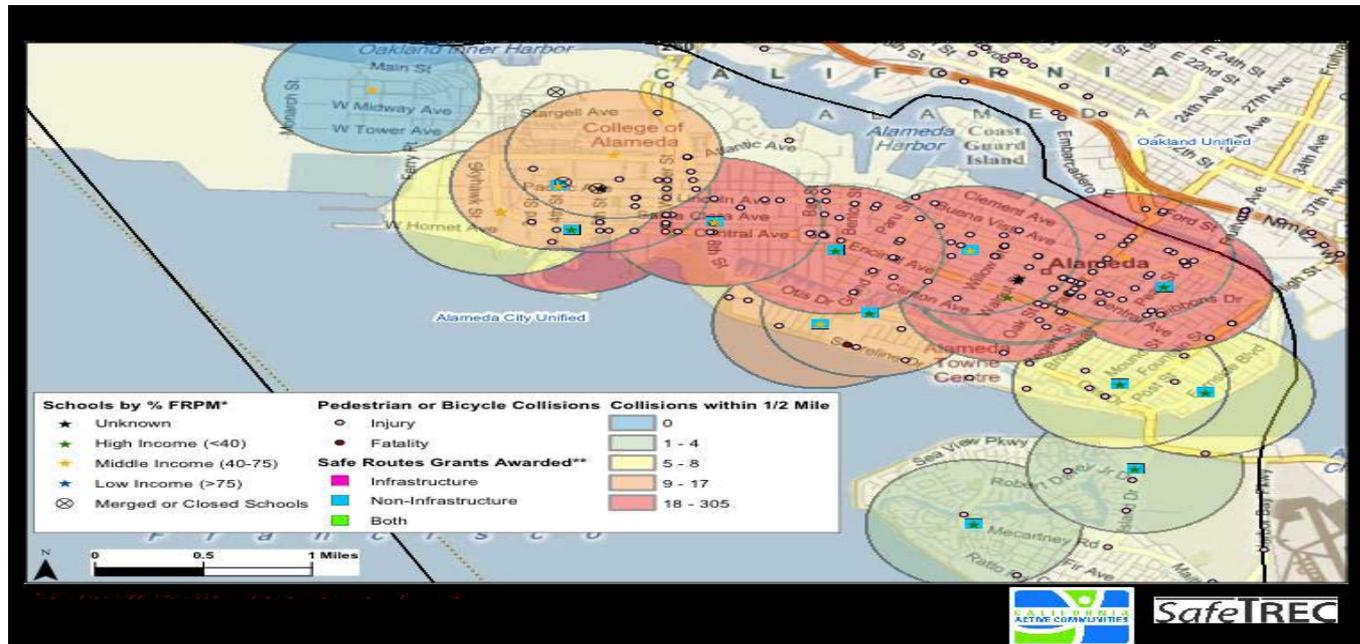
- Up to 4.3 million miles of driving per day would be avoided
- As much as 356,000 tons of carbon dioxide would not be emitted over a year
- As much as 21,500 tons of other pollutants would not be emitted over a year



Safe Routes to School  
Technical Assistance Resource Center  
[www.casaferoutestoschool.org](http://www.casaferoutestoschool.org)



# Pedestrian and Bicycle Collision Maps



For all California cities: Maps demonstrate school district boundaries, school catchment areas, injuries/fatalities, school site closures/mergers, percentage of students receiving Free and Reduced Price Meals and SRTS grant awardees

# www.CAsaferoutestoschool.org

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# For more SRTS information contact:

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