

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYDAY ACTIVITY



# Safe Routes to School

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# Safe Routes to School

- Transportation funding set aside to:
  - Enable and encourage children to walk and bike to school
  - Improve safety of children walking and bicycling to school
  - Facilitate projects and activities to reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution near schools

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# The Disappearing Walk to School

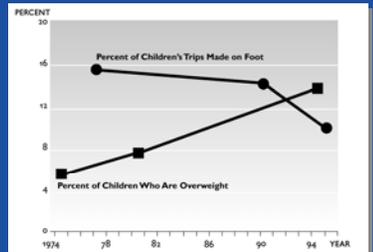
- Children don't walk anymore
  - In 1970s, 70% of youngsters walked or rode bikes to school
  - Today, only 14% do this
- 1 in 4 trips made by 5-15 year olds are for the journey to and from school
- Of school trips one mile or less, about 28% are walk-based and less than 1% are bike-based



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# Walking for transport and overweight in children



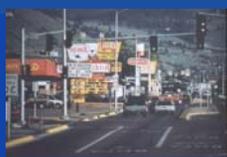
| Year | Percent of Children's Trips Made on Foot | Percent of Children Who Are Overweight |
|------|--|--|
| 1974 | 15                                       | 5                                      |
| 1978 | 14                                       | 7                                      |
| 1982 | 13                                       | 10                                     |
| 1986 | 12                                       | 13                                     |
| 1990 | 11                                       | 15                                     |
| 1994 | 10                                       | 18                                     |

Based on data from the Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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# Nobody wants to walk or bike if it isn't safe




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# Injury and Violence Prevention and Physical Activity

- Safe Mobility for Seniors and People with Disabilities
- Violence Prevention
- Safe, Active Communities
- Traffic Safety
  - Pedestrians
  - Bicyclists
  - Traffic-calming



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## Partnering with CA DOT

In the beginning CDPH:

- Forged relationships with like-minded staff at Caltrans
  - Pedestrian Coordinator
  - Bicycle Coordinator
- Introduced them to public health initiatives which supported Caltrans goals
  - Walk to School Day

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## Walk to School Activities

- Turn-key event that can be launching pad for permanent changes to improve neighborhoods
- Highlights a variety of health and safety issues:
  - Overweight and obesity epidemic
  - Traffic, crime and violence hazards
  - Insufficient pedestrian and bicycle facilities
  - Air quality ~ asthma
  - Bicycle helmets

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## Walkability Checklists

- Define routes from child's perspective (e.g., want parents walking with them, help in crossing certain streets, less scary traffic in front of the school, get rid of dogs....)
- Pint-sized policy wonks



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## CA Public Health Data Opened Door

- Pedestrian collisions:
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of injury death among ages 1 through 12
  - 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of injury death among 65+
  - Deaths/nonfatal hospitalizations are 813 and 4,913 among all ages




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## Bike Injury Data

- Bicycle collisions:
  - 5<sup>th</sup> leading cause of hospitalized nonfatal among ages 5 through 12
  - Deaths/nonfatal hospitalizations are 131 and 4,508 among all ages
    - for every death there are 34 more people admitted for nonfatal injury





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## Safe Communities

- 1996, CDPH brainstormed with various entities about starting a safe communities program to encourage safe walking and bicycling
- 1998, CDPH received a grant from the Office of Traffic Safety to use the public health model and gave 16 communities a grant to develop safe walkable communities

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## Birth of SRTS

- 1999, because the initial Safe Communities program was so successful, OTS gave CDPH a second grant to focus on pedestrian safety among children
- Marin County was one of ten communities to receive a grant which created the foundation for the SRTS national program model



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## CA Pedestrian Safety Task Force

- CDPH brought in Caltrans to start a Pedestrian Safety Task Force
- Caltrans buy in based on fact that while pedestrians made up a very small percentage of road users, 20% of fatalities were pedestrians
- Traffic safety was the hook to involve traffic engineers via traffic calming measures

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## CA State SR2S Grants

- In 1999, legislation (AB 1475) authored by then Assembly member Nell Soto passed to develop a State SR2S program which Caltrans came to manage as grants were for SR2S construction projects
- Only 10% of the CA monies could be used for education, encouragement and enforcement efforts



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## Paradigm Shift

In CA, SRTS gradually morphed from traffic calming to walkable communities; strengthening the link between injury prevention and physical activity




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## Transportation Reauthorization Bill (Section 1404 SAFETEA-LU)

- Created new Federally-assisted \$612 million program, spread over 5 years and 51 DOTs
- Three main requirements of law:
  - Implement SRTS program nationwide (State DOTs must have SRTS Coordinator)
  - Create a national clearinghouse
  - Establish a task force

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## SRTS = The 5 Es

- Education
- Encouragement
- Enforcement
- Engineering
- Evaluation

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## Es Working in Tandem with Walk to School Movement



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## Who Is Eligible?

State SR2S  
Any city or county

Federal SRTS  
Any state, local, or regional agency; non-profits, school districts, or tribes may initiate projects but must partner with city or county agency that agrees to be "host"

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## What Type of Projects?

State SR2S  
Primarily Infrastructure (I) Projects:

- Up to 10% of construction cost can fund a NI element
- 10% local match required; funding cap is \$900,000
- K - 12 grade

Federal SRTS

- I Projects (70-90% of funds), NI Projects (10-30%)
- Infrastructure projects must be w/in 2 miles of elementary school or middle school, NI can be community wide
- No local match; funding cap of \$1M for I, \$500,000 for NI

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## How Are Proposals Selected?

- Funds apportioned to each of the 12 Caltrans Districts based on student enrollment
- District review committees score/rate applications
- Caltrans HQ validates District selections
- Caltrans Director – final approval

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## Demand? *Yep!*

State SR2S applications

Cycle 7:

- \$206,462,813 requests for \$52,000,000
- 139 projects funded

Cycle 9:

- 400 applications and 85 projects funded

Federal SRTS applications for 2009

- \$191,000,000 requests for \$46,000,000
- 121 projects funded

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## National Results Show Progress

SRTS by the numbers:

- 51 Coordinators (including D.C.)
- \$370.6 M funds awarded (by 1/09)
- 4,566 schools funded (by 1/09)

*Note: This is only ~6% of eligible schools!*

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## SRTS “Payoffs”

- Reductions in cars and corresponding traffic congestion
- Decreased number of speeding cars in school zones
- Number of Walking School Buses have greatly increased
- Increase in Walking School Buses has reduced number of school buses needed (\$\$ savings)

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## National Surveys Tell the Story

National SRTS Clearinghouse

- 26,000 student travel forms
- 154,000 parent surveys
- 47 states reporting, 1,932 schools

Describes attitudes, distances to school and number of children now participating in Walking School Buses (baseline)

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## California Evaluation

CDC analyzed California’s data:

- Walkability Checklists from California’s Walk to School Day demonstrated:
  - Drivers don’t yield to children on foot
  - Children want to bike
  - By 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, walk trips are in decline
  - Bus riders are the children most likely to perceive dangers along the route when they do walk

*Thanks to Cathy Staunton @ CDC*

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## Roles for Public Health?

- Facilitator or Catalyst - bring folks together; advance the debate on solutions
- Provide data to demonstrate impact of land use and transportation choices on health
- Engage in policy stewardship - participate in planning, disseminate information to those who influence decision makers (e.g., CA SRTS State Network)
- Train and educate planners and engineers
- Mobilize communities/interject diversity

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## SRTS Statewide Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC)



Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance Resource Center  
California Active Communities, California Department of Public Health

Project Coordinators & Contact Information

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1814 Capitol Avenue, MS 7217, Sacramento, CA 95814




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## TARC Partners

Cities, Counties and Schools Partnership

- CA School Boards Association
- CA League of Cities
- CA State Association of Counties

California Department of Education

- CA After School Resource Center

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## TARC Responsibilities

- Focus on SRTS/SR2S funded NI projects and underserved communities
- TA and training for current/potential NI grantees
- Networking and problem-solving forums and teleconferences for NI grantees
- CA-specific resource website
- GIS mapping tools
- Educational materials, case studies, tools
- Provide local trainings to interested groups based on community-identified needs

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## Responsibilities Cont.

- Train youth advocates on SRTS
- Analyze and track demographics of SRTS funded schools
- Conduct needs assessments and outreach to low-income communities
- Support Caltrans' SRTS program
- Comprehensive evaluation
  - Walking and bicycling data
  - CA SRTS program evaluation

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## SRTS Funding

Contact:

Dawn Foster, SRTS Coordinator  
 California Department of Transportation  
 (916) 653-6920  
 Dawn.foster@dot.ca.gov

[www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/saferoutes.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/saferoutes.htm)

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## Selected Website Resources

- [www.CAactivecommunities.org](http://www.CAactivecommunities.org)
- [www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/saferoutes.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/saferoutes.htm)
- [www.saferoutesinfo.org/](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/)
- [www.saferoutespartnership.org/](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/)
- <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/>
- [www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org)
- [www.pedbikeinfo.org](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org)
- [www.californiawalks.org](http://www.californiawalks.org)

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