Walk, Ride, and Roll Webinar Series
Let Them Lead: Engaging High School Students in Safe Routes Projects
Wednesday, May 10th, 2023
The mission of the Safe Routes Partnership is to advance safe walking and rolling to and from schools and in everyday life, improving the health and well-being of people of all races, income levels, and abilities, and building healthy, thriving communities for everyone.
TODAY’S PRESENTERS

Kori Johnson, Program and Engagement Manager
Safe Routes Partnership
Washington, D.C.

Say *hi in the chat!*

- *Name, location, connection to Safe Routes*
High school programs can look like...

- Student-led Walk and Roll to School Day
- Video PSA contest to encourage walking and rolling
- Air quality awareness campaign
- Vision Zero youth council
- Students on Safe Routes to School task force
- Students meeting with town council to advocate for sidewalk improvement project
- Other ideas?
Youth care about safe walking, riding, and rolling.
Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among teens.

Source: Center for Disease Control (2022)
Teens are getting their driver’s license at lower rates than previous generations.

Source: The Washington Post (2023)
So what does this mean?

Increased interest in...

• Safe walking, biking, and scooting

• Public transit

• **Climate justice** recognizes the disproportionate impacts of climate change on low-income communities and communities of color around the world, the people and places least responsible for the problem.

- University of California Center for Climate Justice
So what does this mean?

More alternative transportation options...

- E-scooters
- E-bikes
- Skateboarding
- Roller skating and roller blading
- Ride-sharing
More options to connect and make an impact online.
So what does this mean?

More opportunities to partner with youth

• Safe Routes to School
• Vision Zero
• Bike-ped advocacy
• Placemaking
Keep In Mind

- Some youth still want or need to drive
- Not all youth have access to transit
- Youth care about safe driving behaviors
- Young drivers care about people walking, riding, and rolling
Be honest about your ability and desire to work with high school students.
If not me, who?

- Dedicated high school program coordinator
- Youth serving organizations
- Sports teams
- School staff
- Libraries
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Social media
Get to know the school community.
Find a staff contact

- Teacher – P.E., Science, Digital Media, Health, Advisory
- Coach
- Club advisor
- Librarian
What are youth priorities? Ask them!

- Independence
- Traffic safety
- Personal safety
- School safety
- Climate justice
- Mental health

*Chat: What other topics might be important to young people?*
How can you ask them?

• Tell them why you are asking
• Outreach tabling
• Survey or poll
• Comment board
• Talk to school staff
• Attend a student club meeting
• Social media
Use that information to...

- Align priorities

- Determine how you can help – Safe Routes to School can be part of a solution
  - Advice/Guidance
  - Program materials
  - Sharing information
  - Connecting teens with decision makers
Let youth lead.
What does this look like?

- Playing an advisor or support role
- Youth directly implementing Safe Routes projects
- Youth are the Safe Routes champions
- Providing resources and materials
- Listening more
Atlanta Students Advocating for Pedestrians (ASAP)

- Student-led organization
- Advocates for infrastructure improvements
- Supports local Safe Routes to School projects
  - Middle school tactical urbanism project
- Engages elected officials and local leaders
Alameda County Safe Routes to School

• Over decade of high school programming
• Dedicated high school site coordinator
• Emphasis on transportation independence and climate justice

• Reboot Your Commute
• Travel Training
• Youth Task Force
National Organizations for Youth Safety (NYOS)

- Addresses health and safety
  - Road safety
  - Mobility justice
  - Personal safety
  - Mental health
- Teens and young adults
- Shifts conversation and power to youth
- Inclusive and diverse
Walking Wednesdays

High School students lead a walking school bus in Pryor Creek, Oklahoma.

Students received training from local experts, city staff, the school district, and Cherokee Nation.
Connect to what teens care about.
Climate Action Pathways for Schools (Porterville, CA)

- Lack of active transportation infrastructure
- Sustainability concerns – energy, waste, transportation
- Walk audits
- Surveys
- Community engagement
Rainbow Crosswalks

- Ellsworth High School – Maine
  - Gender & Sexuality Diversity Alliance project
  - City Council concerns about safety
  - Students, staff, and community members advocated for project
- Weymouth High School – Massachusetts
  - Human Rights Coalition project
  - Supported by school staff, Black Student Union, students, superintendent
Bloomberg Asphalt Art Initiative & Safety Study

• April 2022: Asphalt Art Safety Study

• Painted asphalt can offer protection

• Researched 17 sites with painted asphalt art

• Historic Crash Analysis revealed 50% decrease in pedestrian involved crashes and 17% decreased in total crashes

• Grant applications open through June 12!
Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Pop-Up Guide

- Tips on costs and implementation
- On-school campus projects
- Near school campus projects
- Materials considerations
- Site considerations
- Project examples
- Links to additional resources

**POP-UP PROJECTS FOR SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

Low-Cost, Temporary Interventions to Promote Traffic Calming Around School Campuses, Address Arrival/Dismissal Safety Issues, and Encourage Walking and Biking to School

This guide explores how schools can use “pop-up” demonstration projects to improve safety on and around campus. These temporary activations, often referred to as tactical urbanism, can be used to promote walking and biking to, from, and around campus. You will find examples of local, national, and international projects, tips to support implementation efforts, and links to additional resources.

Updated: October 25, 2022
Teen Driver Programs

• Youth are multimodal

• Youth drivers care about their own safety

• Youth drivers care about the safety of people walking, biking, and rolling

• Partner with driver’s education programs

• How can you incorporate active transportation?
Go digital.
Montgomery County Safe Routes to School (Montgomery County, MD)

- Vision Zero Ambassadors program
  - Education and engineering projects
  - Earn service learning hours
- Heads Up, Phones Down video contest
  - 30 second PSA to discourage distracted driving
Massachusetts Safe Routes to School

- Youth ambassador program
- Road safety video contest
- Car-Free Campus Day
Markham Public Library Trail Project (Ontario, Canada)

- Placemaking grant
- Student designed app
- Digitally animated trails with local and natural history
- Community-wide collaboration
Looking Ahead
Funding

• K – 12 federal funding for Safe Routes to School

• Explore other funding areas:
  • Climate justice
  • Health and wellbeing
  • Mental health
  • Technology
Partner with Out of School Programs

- Local Ys
- Libraries
- Sport teams
- Civic organizations
- Arts programs
Uplift Youth of Color

- Have own set of safety priorities
  - Road safety
  - Personal safety
  - Alternative enforcement methods
- Have lived experience and expertise to advance racial equity
Explore Micromobility

• Growing interest in skateboarding, scooters, electric bikes, skating

• Potential partnerships with Parks and Recreation

• Let teens create educational materials
Embrace Different Kinds of Movement

• Physical activity can include...
  • Dance
  • Yoga
  • Sports
  • Skating
• Movement is fun!
Keep an eye on climate.
Walking, Riding, and Rolling for a New Generation: How to Partner with Youth on Safe Routes Projects

Youth engagement strategies

Examples of youth-led and youth-focused projects
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