Colorado Safe Routes to School Webinar Series
Getting Around Town: Exploring Partnerships with Safe Routes to Parks
Kori Johnson and Vanessa Cascio, Safe Routes Partnership
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
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Safe Routes Partnership
Baltimore, MD

Vanessa Cascio
Program and Policy Manager
Safe Routes Partnership
Washington, D.C.

Say hi in the chat!

• Name, location, connection to Safe Routes
Webinar Logistics

- Questions in the Q&A box
- Comments and resource links in the Chat box
- Recording and slides will be available
Poll: How often do you visit your local parks?
Chat: What is your favorite activity to do in the park?
Poll: What would make it easier and safer to access and enjoy parks in your community?
What do parks have to do with Safe Routes to School?
Parks are...

• Community destinations
• Visited and used by kids
• Often next to or near schools
• Places to be physically active
• Places to connect with your community
Parks are...

- Not always safe or easy to get to, especially by walking, biking, rolling, or scooting
- Not always accessible to communities of color and low-income communities
- Sometimes lacking adequate funding and resources
Parks Partners...Sound Familiar?

- Non-profits and community organizations
- Elected officials
- Community members
- Public health
- School district
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Arts and cultural organizations
But parks are also different from schools....
Parks are...

- Recreational spaces
- Open to all age groups
- Places that might feel more welcoming than a school campus for some people
- Spaces to reflect, refuel, refresh
- Spaces to have fun!
So let’s team up!

- Collaboration helps us go further
- We have similar goals and priorities
  - Increase physical activity
  - Promote health and wellness
  - Increase community connectedness
  - Help people feel safe in their community
- Communities like when we work together
Colorado Community Engagement Toolkit

• Outlines a community engagement framework
• Highlights engagement best practices
• Guiding questions for each section
• Features Colorado programs
• Links to tools, worksheets, and additional resources
• Emphasis on equity
Community Engagement Framework

• **REFLECT** on your role as a community partner

• **RESEARCH** the community where you are working

• **PARTNER** with other organizations to build community relationships

• **PLAN** thoughtful, culturally-responsive community engagement experiences

• **IMPLEMENT** your community engagement experiences and events

• **SUSTAIN** your community engagement beyond a single event or initiative
Chat: How have you incorporated parks into your Safe Routes to School program?
Safe Routes to Parks is a movement to make access to great parks safer, more convenient, and more equitable for people walking, biking, and taking public transportation.
Safe Routes to Parks means...

• Convenient, affordable transportation options (walk, bike, transit) along routes that are safe from traffic and personal danger for people of all ages and abilities.

• Routes start or end at well-maintained, well-programmed parks conveniently located within a 10-minute walk of where people live.

• Long-Term Goal:
  • Improve health and well-being for people of all ages, races, abilities, and income levels.
The health impacts of walking and biking are significant

• Parks boost physical activity when coupled with at least one other intervention.
• Every dollar spent on parks, greenways, and trails interventions led to $3.10 worth of benefits – including improved health due to physical activity.
Safe Routes to Parks Strategies (that work!)
Youth-led bikeshare project in La Junta, CO

- Launch of La Junta Bike Share Program led by two students
- Awarded $66,000 from CDOT’s Revitalizing Main Street Program
- Deployed 26 bikes, 30 racks
- Affordable option to connect to local destinations – the Safeway, park, school, and community college

Photos credit: Seco News
Bridge improvements to connect trails, school, and downtown in Glenwood Springs, CO

- Restoration of historic bridge to provide connection
- Rio Grande Trail to Ironbridge community, new school, and shopping center
- Roaring Fork School District awarded $149,999 from CDOT’s Revitalizing Main Street Program

Hardwick Bridge, currently inaccessible over Roaring Fork River. Credit: [CDOT Main Street Program](#)
Bike rack installs encourage biking to school and parks in Durango, CO

• Demand for secure bike parking via surveys, letters to local newspaper

• Funding from CO Department of Health Quick Win to install racks at park locations and schools

• Partnership with parks, schools and local rotary club

Photos credit: Durango Herald
How can I get started?
#1 Integrate Parks into your Safe Routes to School Activities

• Coordinate with local parks to host a walk and bike to-school day

• Ask if parks could be a site for remote drop off/pick up programs

• Invite park staff and park users to be part of your walk and roll audits

• Host bike rodeos or bike repairs in your local park
#2 Combine Community Engagement Efforts

- Parks are great venues for engagement
- Engage park users on transportation access
- Combine resources for engagement
#3 Open School Grounds for Community Use

• Shared-use agreements keep school grounds open for community use
• Sharing resources to ensure great community spaces for everyone to be active
#4 Highlight Connection Between Parks and Schools

- Wayfinding signs to promote routes
- Walking field trips to parks
- Partnerships and joint programs with youth park and rec centers

Map shows Sand Creek Trail in Colorado Springs connecting to schools and parks
Learn about the 2024 Colorado Activating Communities Program!

- Applications open October 2, 2023
- Nine-month technical assistance program (Jan – Sept 2024)
- Four non-profit organizations in Colorado
- Grantees receive $10,000 for an early action
- Register for the info session on November 1, 2023
Safe Routes Education in Parks

- Traffic gardens – Alexandria, Virginia
- Student bike rides – Washington, D.C.
- StoryWalks – Two Rivers, Wisconsin
Planning and Policy Opportunities

- Safe Routes to School plans
- Vision Zero action plans
- Complete Streets policies
- Health and wellness policies
Safe Routes to Parks Resources

- **Aligning Safe Routes to Parks with Safe Routes to School**

- **Connecting People to Parks: A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces.**
Upcoming Collaboration Opportunities

• Wednesday, October 4th – Walk and Roll to School Day
  • [Walk and Roll to School Day Collaboration Guide](#)

• Tuesday, November 14th - [Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day](#)
Poll: What type of parks collaboration are you interested in exploring?
Next Colorado Safe Routes to School Webinar Series: Wednesday, October 11th, 11am MT

Community Engagement Highlights – Partnership mapping and neighborhood interviews
Summit Sneak Peek

- Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day
- Equity in Safe Routes to School
- Safe Routes to School funding
- Traffic gardens and bike education
- E-bike education and messaging
- Corps Network partnerships
- Youth engagement
- Rural and urban programming

Early Bird Registration Ends September 15th!
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