Safe Routes to School in Times of Uncertainty: Keeping Your Programs Running and Your Community Active During COVID-19 and Beyond

Colorado Safe Routes to School Program
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Safe Routes Partnership
April 21, 2020
MISSION

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.
We know that our bodies were designed to move, yet many of our communities were created with intentional inequities that limit mobility. We believe change is necessary to achieve a vision of safe, active, equitable, and healthy communities – urban, suburban, and rural – for everyone.
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HAVE A QUESTION?

Submit your text questions and comments using the Questions Panel.
Today’s Agenda

1. Overview: SRTS and COVID-19
2. SRTS Programming During COVID-19
3. Planning for When Campus Activities Resume
4. Planning Beyond COVID-19
5. Q & A and Next Steps
OVERVIEW: SRTS AND COVID-19
How is Safe Routes Partnership responding to COVID-19?

- Blog posts
- Safe Routes to School Listserv/Google Group
- SRTS and COVID-19 Resource Google Sheet
- Staff Education – We are learning with you!
How is Colorado responding to COVID-19?

• CDOT daily COVID-19 updates with information and resource links

• Department of Education COVID-19 resources, including “Healthy Habits” tips for families

• Department of Health Equity tools to stop the spread of racism during COVID-19, including an Inclusive Virtual Community Engagement Guide.

• Department of Public Health and Environment releasing race and ethnicity data on reported COVID-19 cases
Current Safe Routes to School Grantees

Reach out to Melissa Trecoske Houghton melissa.houghton@state.co.us to discuss the specifics of your situation.
How are Safe Routes to School practitioners responding to COVID-19?

- Sharing resources on bike and pedestrian safety
- Sharing resources that encourage physical activity – dance, yoga, movement videos
- Professional Development – Webinars, articles, etc.
- Connecting with other SRTS coordinators
- Planning – Immediate, Short-Term, Long-Term
  - What can I do right now?
  - How can I plan for the fall/upcoming year?
  - How can I plan for an uncertain future?
Immediate Planning

- National Bike to School Day - Wednesday, May 6th
- Staying Active While Physical Distancing
- Staying Active While Indoors
- Learning About Your Community
- Working in Partnership
This year, we can't gather together to celebrate Bike to School Day, but we can still use this time to focus on safety, fun and community connection. We're offering a week of ideas from May 4 to May 8 to help you do just that. Though not every idea will fit every neighborhood, we encourage you to pick among the options that make sense for your area and fit with local public health guidance. Please help continue the strong sense of community that makes Bike to School Day so powerful by posting pictures on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter using the hashtag #BiketoSchoolDay.

- National Center for Safe Routes to School
Bike to School Day 2020 – May 4 to 8

• **Monday**
  INSPIRE: Decorate your sidewalk or windows with words of encouragement and reasons to bike and walk for your neighbors or put a [teddy bear in your window and organize a scavenger hunt](https://example.com).

• **Tuesday**
  PREPARE: Conduct a bike safety and helmet fit check. Do you have a bicycle? If so, have you done a basic safety check? Check the [fit of your helmet](https://example.com) and teach others in your family how to properly fit their helmets. Review the ABC [Quick Check](https://example.com) guidelines.

• **Wednesday**
  GET OUT THERE: Get out for a walk or ride with your family! Can you take a [test ride to your school](https://example.com) or around your neighborhood? Or take a walk to hunt for chalk art or signs created by others near you? Share a photo of your family or a location on your route with the tag #experience walking or biking.
Bike to School Day 2020 – May 4 to 8

- **Thursday**
  SHARE: Do you have safety concerns with walking or biking around your neighborhood? [Learn more about who can help address those concerns](#) and reach out to them.

- **Friday**
  TALK: Hold a five-minute interview with family members about their experience walking or biking.

[Walkbiketoschool.org](http://walkbiketoschool.org)

*Facebook:* walkbiketoschoolday

*Twitter:* @walkbikeschool
STAYING ACTIVE WHILE PHYSICAL DISTANCING
• Stay home if you are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
• Practice social distancing by staying six feet away from others.
• Stay close to home
• Avoid playgrounds
• Wear a mask when participating in outdoor activities
Fewer cars means more room for people:

- Practice the route to school
- Discuss safe road riding
- Enjoy the freedom that comes with feeling safer with fewer cars
Getting creative together
Physical activity

follow line

Dumpling Jacks

LONG JUMP
Today we drew a huge bike obstacle course in an empty lot near our house, complete with fire breathing dragons, hot lava, pirates, and of course a treasure chest! Not pictured: cows, pigs, waterfalls, an avalanche, and a black hole. #sidewalkchalk #learntorideabike #quarantinekidsactivities @ Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Find adventure close to home
Neighborhood Bingo

Week 4: Benefits of Active Transportation

- Look up close at the bark of a tree
- Walk 20 minutes for heart health
- Breathe deeply for 1 minute
- Bust out some dance moves
- Wave at someone from a distance!
- Be creative! Draw with sidewalk chalk
- Count the petals on a flower
- Use your imagination. Find 3 clouds shaped like animals
- Do 5 minutes of stretching
- Walk to an errand to reduce CO2
- Count the number of trees on your street
- Go for a bike ride to break up time inside
- Make a scavenger hunt for your family to do on a walk
- Smile! Walking outside will increase happiness
- Do 10 jumping jacks to let out more energy
- Take a picture of an interesting plant

https://tinyurl.com/active-transport-bingo
Record observations

Completion of the Cully Main Street, LIDs, and the 72nd Avenue Green Street projects have addressed some of the deficiencies in Cully. However, these projects only scrape the surface for an area plagued by substandard active transportation infrastructure. With some projects already under construction and more funded in coming years, there is finally hope amongst neighbors. This map shows completed and scheduled projects compared to comments received during the Living Cully Walks events. Click on different lines and points to read about the projects that are scheduled to happen and where gaps in the network were identified during 30+ events.

Gaps Identified by Cully Community Members on May 26th, 2017

On May 20th, 2017, a meeting was held with members of the public at Hacienda CDC. The goal of the meeting was to address how successful completed or funded projects are at addressing deficient pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Community members were asked which projects would be the most beneficial, along with what was missing. The feedback from this event is on the photograph to the right. These comments were ultimately relayed to the Portland Bureau of Transportation for future consideration.

Maps by Kevin Donohue

Project Team
Portland State University - Rebecca McLain, Kevin Donohue
STAYING ACTIVE WHILE INDOORS
Scavenger hunts, yoga, stretching exercises, cooking, and dance parties can be a fun way to stay active while indoors.
Reading and creative play can activate your mind while staying indoors.
Decorate an old pair of sneakers – cut outs, drawings, etc. – and have a fashion show when campus activities resume.
Safe Routes to School in Marin County, CA is hosting an art and poetry contest. Students are encouraged to create art and poetry about staying active.

Remember, not all students have email and internet access. Consider adapting this concept to include social media posts or celebrate student art when campus activities resume.
Safe Routes to School in Charlottesville, VA is teaming up with their local arts community to create a city-wide art gallery. Families can make or find a piece of artwork and display it in their window or on their porch. They can add their work to a digital art map and then use the map to find art during walks and bike rides!
Alameda County (CA) Safe Routes to School program offers a list of activities for students to enjoy indoors and outdoors. Activities include coloring sheets, safety videos, lesson plans, webinars, and a climate conversation contest.
Bear hunts are happening all around the world! This one was spotted in Littleton, CO. Residents are encouraged to place bears, or other fun creatures, in their windows to add a bit of fun to daily walks.
You can also create your own scavenger hunt, use a pre-made template, or encourage students to make their own.
LEARNING ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY
As you walk and ride around your community, consider asking yourself:

- What businesses are opened? What is closed?
- Who is working? Who is not? What kind of work are they doing?
- Who else is walking/riding around?
- What are things about your community you have not noticed before (landmarks, buildings, street names, etc)? Do you know the story behind these places?
WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP
PLANNING FOR WHEN CAMPUS ACTIVITIES RESUME
Getting Started

• Research all the schools in your region and gather data about income levels, food access, park locations, crash rates. Prioritize the schools where SRTS work is most needed.

• Use Google maps to review the streets around schools and start building a sidewalk and crosswalk gap inventory.

• Review curricula to identify ways to build walking and biking into lesson plans. Watch our past webinars to get ideas for your program.

• Don’t have a SRTS task force yet? Use down time to research different departments and staff to identify the right advocates.

• Review your school’s wellness policy and other policies to see if they can be strengthened for walking/biking to school.

• Draft messages in advance for your Walk to School Day in the fall.
Short-Term Planning

• Preparing Students
• Preparing Parents and Caregivers
• Preparing Teachers and School Staff
Preparing Students

- Create traffic safety refreshers
  - Videos, social media, newsletters
- Walk to School Day – October
- Adapt current programs for small groups and physical distancing
- Continue encouraging safe walking and biking
- Draft messaging about safely using school buses and public transit.
Preparing Parents & Caregivers

• Connect with parents and caregivers to find out what kinds of resources they will need
  – PTAs and parent/caregiver groups

• Connect with school district about keeping buses safe – How are they protecting drivers and students?
Preparing Teachers & School Staff

• Stay updated on your school district’s plans
• If possible, be a part in the planning process
  – Connect with transportation planner, administrators, etc.
PLANNING FOR DISTANCE LEARNING
Long-Term Planning

- Advancing SRTS Policies
- Taking Care of Ourselves
Parting Policy Thoughts

• Stay abreast of the policy discussions in your municipality and school district
• Be cautious so we don’t put in place policies that create barriers to students walking and bicycling
• Spaces to walk and bike have become precious. How do we make changes permanent?
• Remember that SRTS benefits include student health and well being, cost savings, and environmental benefits
Last but not least...remember to take care of yourself too!
Reminders

• Sign up for the Colorado Safe Routes to School Newsletter – email Wendy McMillan at wendy.mcmillan@state.co.us

• Upcoming SRTS Grant Cycle

• Upcoming Webinar – Community Engagement, May 13th, 11am MT
  • Request for Case Studies

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Email Discussion Network
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