



COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

to support *CONNECTING PEOPLE TO PARKS: A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces*



About the Communications Guide

This communications guide contains key messages and resources from the Oregon Health Authority toolkit, “[Connecting People to Parks: A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces](#)”, social media messages, as well as images and graphics to help you reach a variety of audiences who might benefit from this information.

A few examples of how you might use this guide include one or more of the following:

- A blog post highlighting your work
- Inclusion in a newsletter to colleagues and partners
- A media advisory or press release underlining your efforts in this area

The Communications Guide resources have been organized to assist you in two messaging areas: **(1)** promotion of the *Connecting People to Parks: A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces* toolkit and **(2)** promotion of your organization’s implementation of Safe Routes to Parks through the use of the toolkit.

Resources will be labeled with the following headings to assist you in effectively communicating your message.

Promoting the Resource

Promoting Your Work

Newsletter Copy

Newsletters are an essential communication tool in creating awareness, as subscribers are already invested in your message. Use the following sample copy in your newsletter or create your own copy using your agency's messaging content.

Promoting the Resource

Everyone deserves safe and easy access to parks, but not all people and neighborhoods have that opportunity. With generous support from the Oregon Health Authority, the Safe Routes Partnership has created, [**Connecting People to Parks: A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces**](#). This toolkit was developed using the Safe Routes to Parks Action Framework to guide advocates and agency staff as they learn how to thoughtfully engage their community, assess barriers to safe and equitable park access, identify goals and take meaningful action steps, and consider how to sustain their ongoing Safe Routes to Parks efforts. The toolkit focuses on access to parks via active transportation as well as ensuring a high-quality, safe experience within the park itself. Explore the resources at: <https://bit.ly/3meXg3q>.

Are you interested in learning more about how to increase and improve access to parks in your community? Could you use an extra set of hands to make parks and green spaces safer, more equitable, and more accessible? With generous support from the Oregon Health Authority, Safe Routes Partnership is providing one-on-one coaching and support to improve park access to communities in Oregon - at no cost! Get individualized guidance and help to implement our new toolkit, "[**Connecting People to Parks: A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces**](#)." For more information contact Becky Gilliam at becky@saferoutespartnership.org.

Promoting Your Work

Do you want to improve our community's access to parks? [Agency Name] is working to ensure that everyone has safe and easy access to our parks and greenspaces. Using the [**Connecting People to Parks: A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces**](#) resource, our staff is learning how to thoughtfully engage our community, assess barriers to safe and equitable park access, identify goals and take meaningful action steps, and consider how to sustain our ongoing Safe Routes to Parks efforts. Help us to create Safe Routes to Parks for everyone by [Insert Call to Action].

Sample Press Release

Press releases are a vital tool in a public relations campaign in getting coverage for your organization in newspapers, trade journals & magazines, and blogs. Use the sample press release to distribute to your network to share the message of your work.

Promoting Your Work

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts

Contact Name

Title

Organization

City

Email

Direct phone contact

[Community members/Organization]

Help Improve Local Park Access

[city/town, state], [date]—[Organization] has recently launched an initiative called [Name of Project] to increase safe and equitable access to parks and green spaces in [city/town/neighborhood]. Through this effort, we plan to [insert 1-2 sentences of project summary/goals.]

The park(s) we've selected to work on are: [Describe the park(s) you chose to work on and why you've decided to work on them.]

Parks provide a place for people to be active, spend time in nature, and connect with neighbors and friends. However, not everyone in our community has safe, easy access to parks and green or open spaces. Safe Routes to Parks aims to fix that by making it easier and safer for people to walk, bike, and roll to local parks. Our goal is that everyone in our community has safe and easy access to parks and green space and we are starting that work in the neighborhoods that need it most. Over the long term, with increased safety and accessibility, Safe Routes to Parks seeks to increase park usage and improve health for people of all ages, races, abilities, and income levels. [Call to action: i.e., if you're interested in learning more about this project and/or want to get involved, contact x.]

[Insert a quote from city/town official or the leader of your organization about why city/town/your organization is excited to join the program and what they hope the action planning process will accomplish].

About [Your Organization]

[Insert a paragraph about your organization's mission and link to website]

Social Media Copy

Social media can play a key role in creating awareness about safe and equitable park access. Adapt these social media messages to recruit new partners and build your supportive team, educate the public on how improved park access benefits the community, and generate interest in parks and recreation initiatives. Add your own link for people to learn more about your work.

Promoting the Resource

Public Health:

- Safe Routes to Parks can save money while improving mental and physical health. Oregon benefitted from \$1.4 billion in health care savings in 2018 (3.6% of state healthcare costs) from outdoor physical activity! Learn more about Safe Routes to Parks at <https://bit.ly/3meXg3q>. **Suggested Graphic - Image #4**

Reducing Barriers/Advancing Equity:

- Reduce barriers to park access and help diversify and reimagine your local park's use for people of all races, genders, ages, income levels, & abilities! Safe Routes to Parks = equitable outcomes. Learn more about Safe Routes to Parks at <https://bit.ly/3meXg3q>. **Suggested Graphic - Image #1**

Inclusivity:

- People of all ages and abilities should have Safe Routes to Parks, right? Improving sidewalks, bike paths, safe crossings, & low speeds on surrounding streets make parks more inclusive for all. Learn more about Safe Routes to Parks at <https://bit.ly/3meXg3q>. **Suggested Graphic - Image #2**

Transportation Planning and Safety:

- Does your community have a 10-minute walking goal? Safe Routes to Parks efforts help communities reach these goals by reducing distance & barriers between where people live and recreate. Learn more about Safe Routes to Parks at <https://bit.ly/3meXg3q>. **Suggested Graphic - Image #3**

Environment:

- DYK Safe Routes to Parks planning often involves creating more green spaces and infrastructure in and around parks? More green spaces = greater physical mental health outcomes. Win win! Learn more about Safe Routes to Parks at <https://bit.ly/3meXg3q>. **Suggested Graphic - Image #5**

Walk With Ease:

- Parks and recreation agencies can support the overall health and wellbeing of older adults by making their facilities and programming more accessible via Safe Routes to Parks. Learn more about Safe Routes to Parks at <https://bit.ly/3meXg3q>. **Suggested Graphic - Image #6**

Social Media Copy - continued

Promoting Your Work

Public Health:

- Public health wins big with Safe Routes to Parks! Access to and time spent in high-quality parks results in both physical and mental health benefits. Learn more about our Safe Routes to Parks program at [Insert Link]. **Suggested Graphic - Image #8**
- Time spent in nature is vital in improving the psychological well-being and cognitive functioning of our youth. Safe Routes to Parks helps provide this access to the outdoors. Learn more about our Safe Routes to Parks program at [Insert Link]. **Suggested Graphic - Image #8**

Reducing Barriers/Advancing Equity:

- Safe Routes to Parks benefits families who can walk and roll to meal distribution sites at parks and recreation centers, the 2nd largest provider of meals to children (after schools). Learn more about our Safe Routes to Parks program at [Insert Link]. **Suggested Graphic - Image #10**
- Address health disparities in your local community with Safe Routes to Parks:
 - Improve walking and biking access to parks
 - Provide culturally-sensitive recreational programming
 - Develop park-based community gardens

Learn more about our Safe Routes to Parks program at [Insert Link]. **Suggested Graphic - Image #7**

Inclusivity:

- Parks and rec groups offer a variety of programming for older adults. Safe Routes to Parks provides access these offerings by walking or rolling which amplifies health and well-being benefits to these valuable community members. Learn more about our Safe Routes to Parks program at [Insert Link]. **Suggested Graphic - Image #9**
- Safe Routes to Parks reaches underserved older adults with parks and recreation facilities providing free or low-cost meals followed by social or physical activity. Learn how at [Insert Link]. **Suggested Graphic - Image #9**

Transportation Planning and Safety:

- Research shows if it is nearby and safe, people will walk and bike. Safe Routes to Parks helps communities address violence and crime to increase safe access to and within parks. Learn more at [Insert Link]. **Suggested Graphic - Image #12**
- Want safer routes to parks? Engage community members to identify safety threats in and around parks. Community-led initiatives lead to long-term ownership of efforts and safety. Learn more about our Safe Routes to Parks program at [Insert Link]. **Suggested Graphic - Image #10**

Social Media Copy - continued

Promoting Your Work

Environment:

- Safe Routes to Parks efforts can help your community meet its environmental goals by creating maintenance practices to keep the park safe from hazards and free from graffiti, trash, & overgrown plants. Learn more about our Safe Routes to Parks program at [Insert Link].
Suggested Graphic - Image #11
- By fixing flooding concerns in parks, communities can increase physical activity and park usage. Safe Routes to Parks offers real life, cost-effective solutions to bundle stormwater and infrastructure improvements with an end result of reducing barriers to parks and improving the environment. Learn more about our Safe Routes to Parks program at [Insert Link]. **Suggested Graphic - Image #11**

Walk With Ease:

- Safe Routes to Parks programs create walkable access to parks and recreation facilities which can support evidence-based programming like Walk With Ease to address arthritis and fall prevention in older adults. Learn more about our Safe Routes to Parks program at [Insert Link].
Suggested Graphic - Image #9
- Evidence shows that Walk With Ease programs improve arthritis symptoms and increase self-efficacy, perceived control, balance, strength, and walking pace. Older adults can assist Safe Routes to Parks to identify concerns in accessibility and safety. Learn more about our Safe Routes to Parks program at [Insert Link]. **Suggested Graphic - Image #9**

Graphics

These items can be used on your social media platforms to disseminate the information found in the toolkit, “Connecting People to Parks: A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces”. You can also include them on your social media pages, blogs, or websites.

Promoting the Resource

ENGAGE

Meaningful, authentic engagement is an essential piece of each step in the process of creating Safe Routes to Parks.





Image #1

ASSESS

By strategically selecting messengers, sharing stories, and using data to illuminate both needed and proposed solutions, advocates and communities can work together to improve Safe Routes to Parks.








Image #2

PLAN

Creating safer and more equitable park access is a big task, but with a specific and actionable plan, your community can make their vision a reality.





Image #3

IMPLEMENT

With creativity and collaboration, there are many ways to fund the implementation of Safe Routes to Parks improvements.





Image #4

SUSTAIN

It takes time and effort to make meaningful community change but taking steps early on can help you keep up the momentum and anticipate challenges ahead.





Image #5

People of all ages benefit from more physical activity and access to nature.





Image #6

* Click the image to save a copy.

Graphics - continued


Promoting Your Work



Access to parks, playgrounds, and recreation centers can lead to active behaviors by youth, including walking or bicycling to parks.



Image #7



Parks play a critical role in increasing opportunities for communities to be physically active.



Image #8



Safe Routes to Parks is important for people of all ages and abilities, including youth, adults, and older adults.



Image #9



An important element of a thriving, equitable community is that people can safely and conveniently access well-maintained, well-programmed parks and open spaces.




Image #10



Safe Routes to Parks programs can help to decrease the environmental impact of daily travel.



Image #11



Everyone deserves safe and easy access to parks, but not all people and neighborhoods have that opportunity.



Image #12

* Click the image to save a copy.

Safe Routes to Parks Technical Assistance Opportunity

Safe Routes Partnership is providing one-on-one coaching and support to communities in Oregon at no cost. Share the flyer below with your network and/or take advantage of this opportunity for your organization. Use the sample social media post below to help get the message out.

Promoting the Resource



Want help improving park access in your community?

Are you interested in learning more about how to increase and improve access to parks in your community? Could you use an extra set of hands to make parks and green spaces safer, more equitable, and more accessible? With generous support from the Oregon Health Authority, Safe Routes Partnership is providing one-on-one coaching and support to improve park access to communities in Oregon - at no cost! Get individualized guidance and help to implement our new toolkit, "Connecting People to Parks: A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces."

If you are looking to increase organizational capacity to improve access to parks and improve opportunities for walking, biking, and transit access to parks for everyone, please take advantage of this opportunity! Over the past four years, we've worked with a variety of Oregon communities to make an impact with Safe Routes to Parks. Here are some ways we can help in your community:

- Integrating Safe Routes to Parks with existing plans and policies
- Exploring creative partnerships to advance Safe Routes to Parks and achieve shared goals
- Identifying funding opportunities to advance Safe Routes to Parks in your community
- Collecting and sharing data to make changes for safer, more equitable park access

For more information, please contact Becky Gilliam: becky@saferoutespartnership.org



Why Safe Routes to Parks?

Parks provide a place for people to be active, spend time in nature, and connect with neighbors and friends. However, not everyone in our community has safe, easy access to parks and green or open spaces. Safe Routes to Parks aims to fix that by making it easier and safer for people to walk, bike, and roll to local parks. Our goal is that everyone in our community has safe and easy access to parks and green space and we are starting that work in the neighborhoods that need it most. Over the long term, with increased safety and accessibility, Safe Routes to Parks seeks to increase park usage and improve health for people of all ages, races, abilities, and income levels.

New Oregon-Specific Toolkit!

Connecting People to Parks: A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces



This toolkit, developed specifically for Oregon communities, includes step-by-step guidance through the Safe Routes to Parks framework to increase safe and equitable access to parks and green spaces. It focuses on access to parks via active transportation as well as ensuring a high-quality, safe experience within the park itself. As you work through this toolkit, you can expect to learn how to thoughtfully engage your community, assess barriers to safe and equitable park access, identify goals and take meaningful action steps, and consider how to sustain your ongoing Safe Routes to Parks efforts.

To explore the toolkit, visit: <https://saferoutespartnership.org/resources/toolkit/connecting-people-parks>

Support for this toolkit was provided by Oregon Health Authority with funding from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Social Media Copy:

- Interested in learning more about how to increase and improve access to parks in your community? Safe Routes Partnership is offering free one-on-one coaching to assist Oregon communities. Find out more at <https://bit.ly/3BTxrtm>
- Want to improve park access in your community but don't know where to start? Communities in Oregon can take advantage of free one-on-one coaching and support from Safe Routes Partnership. Find out more at <https://bit.ly/3BTxrtm>

* Click the image to save a copy.