

# Safe Routes to School Programs As a Means to Increase Physical Activity in Children



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# How SR2S Got Started

- High numbers of pedestrian injuries.
- Children are less active- only 13% travel to/from school on foot or by bicycle.
- Children are losing their independence and relationships within their neighborhoods.
- Unhealthy levels of air pollution mainly due to auto emissions.
- Transportation funding became available to address these issues.



# Why Walking & Biking?

- Moderate to vigorous physical activity positively affects academic performance and skill achievement.
- Improves concentration, memory and learning, enhances creativity and problem solving ability.
- Stimulates and maintains muscular strength and good joint function.
- Improves mood and self-esteem.
- Increasing the proportion of trips to school made by walking and biking is a nation health objective.



# How Does SR2S Work?

A comprehensive and coordinated approach:

- Convene stakeholders
- Gather local data
- Conduct environmental study
- Educate school community and students
- Coordinate enforcement efforts
- Advocate for policy changes



# Mobilizing the Community is Priority #1!

- Everyone loves Walk to School Day...
  - School administration: press coverage, potential \$ for improvements, incentives for kids
  - Parents: chance to give input through interviews and Walkability Checklists, incentives for kids
  - Kids: incentives, projects in classroom, Kids ‘N’ Skids demonstration
  - Community leaders: visibility in press





# Evolution: Parent Safety Committees

- Individualized, school-specific solutions empower parents and create sustainability
- Euclid Elementary:  
Safer Steps Project
- Central Elementary:  
Parent Monitors





# Evolution: Citywide SR2S Initiative

- Attention and support from the Public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee of the City Council
- Recommendations proposed:
  1. Revise School Pedestrian Policies and Warrants.
  2. Form a citywide advisory committee to help improve coordination of communication amongst traffic safety experts, key stakeholders and the community; help facilitate solutions, fund improvements.
  3. Return in September with a plan for how to take initiatives to scale and what resources will be needed to implement. 7



# Additional Outcomes of Successful SR2S Programs

- Marin- 57% increase in children walking or biking to school and 29% decrease in those arriving by car (excluding carpools)
- A Walking School Bus or Bike Train gets parents and neighbors involved and active.
- Contests get children's attention and motivate them to try something new.
- Can reduce pedestrian injuries