

Roaring Fork Valley

Safe Routes to School

Survey Handbook



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Survey Handbook**

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Introduction

Welcome to the Roaring Fork Valley Safe Routes to School Program!

Welcome and congratulations! You have joined a growing number of citizens who are concerned about the safety of children who walk or bicycle to school, and who have decided to work together to improve conditions. The materials in this guide will enable you to evaluate our school and neighborhood streets and establish a successful and ongoing Safe Routes to School Program at your school—and to ultimately enhance the safety and health of your community for years to come.



As traffic volumes around schools have increased, parents have felt less and less comfortable letting their children walk or ride bicycles to school. More and more parents have begun driving their kids to school. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 85 percent of children's trips to school are made by car or school bus; only 13 percent of school trips are made by walking or bicycling. These motor vehicle trips add to the traffic problems on the roads surrounding the school and create long lines of traffic in school drop-off zones. Other drivers stuck in these traffic jams become angry and drive aggressively. This cycle continues until very few parents feel comfortable letting their children walk or bike to school, even if they live close by. Many of us, however, remember a time when walking to school was part of everyday life. Walking to school helps children feel more connected to their community, and increases their confidence that school is a safe place for learning. Teachers report that kids who walk and bike to school arrive more alert and ready to work.



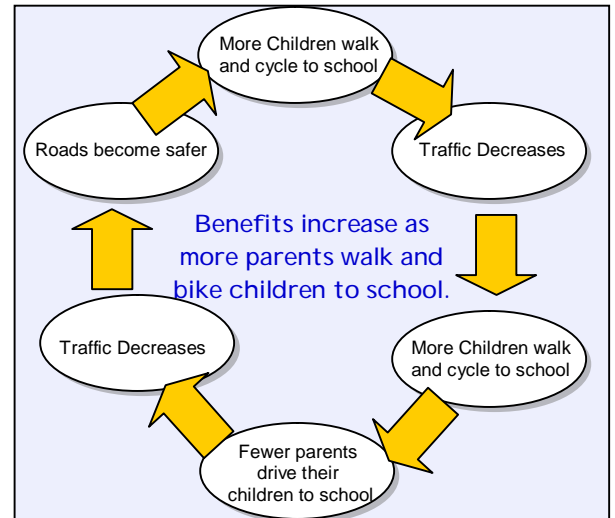
What is the CDOT Safe Routes To School Program?

A *Safe Routes to School* (or SR2S) Program is a way to improve the safety of children who walk or bicycle to school and to promote these types of transportation. During a Safe Routes to School Program, parents and administrators at the school work along with other community groups and agencies to build new sidewalks, improve pedestrian crossings, teach children safer bicycling and walking skills and promote healthier, more active lifestyles. All that is required is a dedicated group of parents,

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teachers, school administrators and other community members who want to take actions to improve the walking and bicycling conditions near and around their school.

In the case of our Roaring Fork Valley Region, the New Century Transportation Foundation has taken the lead to implement this program. This guidebook provides an overview and general instructions for conducting the survey portions of our SR2S program.



Why Have A Safe Routes to School Program?

Chances are, the reason you're reading this is because you are concerned about our children's exposure to traffic on their way to school. You have good reason to be concerned: many pedestrians younger than age 16 are struck by motor vehicles in Colorado. More parents driving has contributed to a number of other problems



including increased congestion and pollution near our schools, children who are less physically active and schools that are less connected with the surrounding community.

Having a Safe Routes to School program is a great way to help address many of these problems. Depending on the unique needs and goals of your school, your Safe Routes program may

strive to:

- Improve traffic safety for children by
 - teaching children pedestrian and bicycle safety skills, and better awareness of traffic conditions
 - getting physical improvements (such as new sidewalks) that reduce pedestrian and bicycle crashes on the journey to and from school
- Improve children's personal safety and security by working to reduce crime along a route to school
- Increase child health and physical activity levels through increased walking and bicycling

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- Contribute to a reduction in traffic congestion and improved air quality
- Develop a stronger relationship between children and their neighborhood community, or all of the above.
- Teaching children to become more independent and self reliant
- Enabling parents to become involved in making their communities safer.

Who Prepares the Safe Routes Plan?

We do. Although the overall plan was developed by CDOT, the *Safe Routes to School Program* is usually a local, school- and community-based initiative.

Anyone can develop the Safe Routes Plan, but to be successful, we want to involve a range of people along the way including parents, neighborhood organizations, the local PIE, a group of teachers, a Community Traffic Safety Program (CTSP) representative, local police, NCTF planners and other interested businesses or organizations.



The Safe Routes Plan will be usually developed by a mix of people from various groups working together as a committee.

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Contents of This Guide

This guide explains how to carry out the safety review portion of our *Safe Routes to School Program*. It also provides the tools and resources necessary for the safety review.

The tools contained in this guide include:

- Samples of Base Maps,
- Sample survey forms,
- General instructions for their use.

The Plan

Teams for each area to be covered will be recruited and formed for this effort. There will be a short training session to assure that we all will be producing the same product. The coordinator listed on the front page of this document will contact you for the time and place of the first activity. Here is an outline of the goals and information for each activity:

What Does "Safe" Mean?

There are different ways to define the word safe.

In some communities, it means keeping kids safe from being hit by a car on the way to school.

In others, it might mean keeping kids safe from crime such as drugs and violence.

Or it might mean both. By starting a Safe Routes Program, you can find out what the most pressing safety problems are in your school and begin working as a community to address them.

✚ Activity one – Orientation and Neighborhood Audit training. One hour in length, held on a designated evening. We will review the teams for each neighborhood and provide the materials that you will need to document your findings.

✚ Activity two – School site audits. The activity will be conducted by school officials, city transportation personnel and selected parent volunteers. This activity will take place during the morning and evening rush hours at each school to identify areas of concern for safety improvements.

✚ Activity three – Design workshops. This activity will be held at an announced city or town facility, and will be the place for you to return with your neighborhood findings. A prioritized list of needed improvements for each school and each town will be developed for further remediation.

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Determining School/Walking Routes Conditions

We have created base maps of the area and the school zones, and have itemized any roadway improvements that are planned near the schools. It is now time to get out and take a look at existing conditions at each school and on the streets that many students currently walk or live along.



The main goal of this exercise is to list SPECIFIC locations on the school site and the surrounding streets that need improvements. We will watch what happens at the school during the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up periods. It's very important to watch the traffic patterns and observe students movements. We will also talk to parents, teachers (especially those with outside duty in the morning and afternoon), kids and crossing guards about the problems.

We will keep a list of the problems we see or people tell you about.

In many cases, you may already know the major "hot spots" such as intersections that are difficult to cross, streets that need sidewalks, but during our "walk-through," you may notice areas where sidewalks are missing or are in poor repair, corners that are in need of curb ramps (wheelchair ramps), intersections that are too wide and dangerous, streets where traffic is going too fast, and other things. These are the types of problems that you need to write down on your list.

To assist with the survey process, we will provide two types of "site surveys" or "audits" which are depicted later in this guide to assist you in evaluating conditions: the School Site Audit and the Neighborhood Site Audit. General directions for completion of the audit forms are shown following pages. You will be provided with additional information during the short training session that will be provided.

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How to Use the School Site Audit

The school site audit will help determine walking and bicycling conditions on or adjacent to school property. By looking closely at such things as the student drop-off, bus loading zones, sidewalks, crossing guard locations, signage and adjacent intersections; it will help us discover potential areas for design improvements and increased safety.

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School Site Audit

School Name: SOPRIS ELEM.

Date: 4-10-07 Day: Tues. Time: 8:15 Weather Conditions: SUNNY

	Yes	No	NA
I. Student Drop Off Area			
a. Are they designed to that road vehicles? or entering cars are protected from other vehicles?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
b. Do they have a continuous sidewalk from pedestrians?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
c. Do they have accessible curbs?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
d. Do the ramps have tactile paving?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
e. Are there posted vehicle signs?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
f. Are there posted pedestrian signs?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
g. Is the area lighted?			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h. Does traffic seem to move freely without congestion and delays?			

i. Please describe additional problems within the student drop-off area in the space provided below.

TOO MANY VEHICLES FOR THE DROP-OFF SPACE.



Members of the Safe Routes Team and the Principal will fill out the audit during the prime school hours in order to see how the children get to and from school. We will have a map of school grounds on hand for note taking.

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How to Use the Neighborhood Site Audit

Similar to the school site audit, the neighborhood audit is designed to help us evaluate the walking and bicycling conditions by inventorying neighborhood intersections, streets and sidewalks used by the students.

There are separate forms for evaluating intersections or mid-block crosswalks and roadway segments. We will use your base maps and some of the information you've or city employees already collected such as traffic counts and the rough locations of where students live.

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Neighborhood Site Audit

School Name: SOPRDS ELEM

Intersection and Mid-block Crosswalk Evaluation (Use only one form for each intersection or mid-block crosswalk evaluation.) Make additional copies of this page to conduct a thorough analysis of all necessary streets.

Date: 4-11-07 Day: WED Time: 3:30 Weather Conditions: PC

North - South Street	East-West Street
Name: <u>CO RD 117</u>	Name: <u>CO RD 127</u>
Curb to Curb Width (In feet): <u>100 (EST)</u>	Curb to Curb Width (In feet): <u>100 (EST)</u>
# of Lanes Northbound: <u>1</u> Southbound: <u>1</u>	# of Lanes Northbound: <u>1</u> Southbound: <u>1</u>
Posted Speed Limit <u>25</u> Observed Speed <u>25</u>	Posted Speed Limit <u>25</u> Observed Speed: <u>25</u>
Average Daily Traffic (ADT): _____	Average Daily Traffic (ADT): _____
How is the intersection controlled? (please describe): <u>NO STOP</u>	Four-Way Stop Traffic Signal Other _____
How is the mid-block crosswalk controlled? (Circle One) Yield sign (no control) Other (please describe): _____	light Pedestrian activated signal _____

Same

	Circle One		Comments and potential solutions
	YES	NO	
Do drivers yield to pedestrians at the intersection or mid-block crosswalk?			<u>N/A - NO CROSSWALK</u>
Do drivers run red lights or increase speed to catch green lights?			<u>NA - NO LIGHT</u>
Are there a high % of turning movements and right turns on red?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Is there a high volume of truck traffic? (i.e., more than 1 vehicle in every 20 you count in a truck)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Are there blind curves approaching the intersection?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Are there places where pedestrians are not visible to drivers at the intersection crossings?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Do parked cars, junction boxes or vegetation block the pedestrian's view of traffic while waiting to cross?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Have crashes occurred at this location? If yes, note if pedestrians or bicyclists were involved.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<u>UNK</u>
Are school zone signs, flashers, or overhead signs present?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

At the conclusion of the site audits, we will gather participants together to summarize the findings and create a list of problems and improvements that are needed.

As we begin to identify where students live and the routes along which they walk or bike, we will learn a lot about where we want to prioritize improvements. In some neighborhoods, kids may come from pretty much every street around the school.

However, in our small town communities, we may have a major street that carries a lot of the student foot/bike traffic. We may find that there are several logical, "main routes" to school.

We may want to designate these main routes as "Safe Routes" and focus the improvement efforts along them... This might be particularly helpful in neighborhood areas with uncomfortable conditions, such as individuals loitering or aggressive dogs, etc... In these neighborhoods, a designated route could be focused on in order to create a safe space for children using a walking school bus and for advocating for physical improvements to make it safe and more secure.

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Putting It All Together

By this time, we have checked out the school sites, looked at neighborhood streets, and have good general knowledge of what is important for each school area.



The next step is to bring it all together in a session called a design workshop, or Charrette. This workshop is geared to quickly gather documented information from everyone by forming teams that will

combine their information for each zone. A recorder is assigned to each group, and items of concern will be logged for prioritization.

This information will be compiled and prioritized, and a list for each city and town in the Roaring Fork Valley will be produced.

The items on the list will have costs assigned and the New Century Transportation Foundation will take the lead in working with each city and town to identify possible funding sources, and to assure that approved items are included in the budget for subsequent remediation.



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Sample School Zone Map

