Minnesota Safe Routes to School

Improving Health, Safety, and Transportation



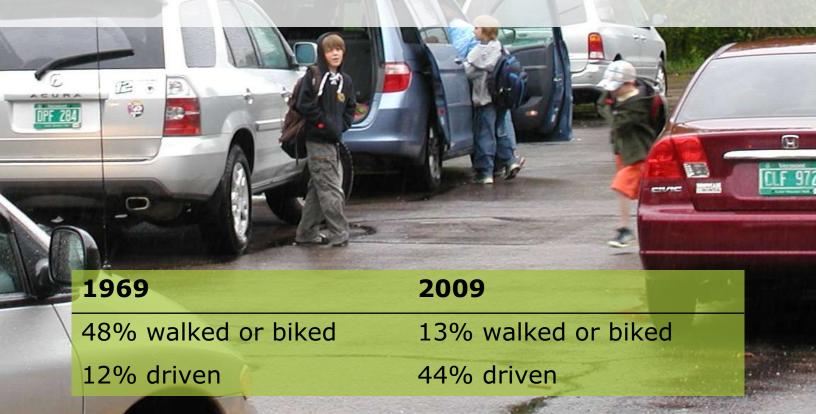


Why Safe Routes to School?



- 1. Fewer kids today walk and bike to school
- 2. This has resulted in unintended consequences
- 3. SRTS programs can be part of the solution

Fewer kids are biking and walking More parents are driving



School travel by private vehicle accounts for 10-14% of morning rush hour traffic.

(McDonald, Brown, Marchetti, Pedroso, 2011)



What caused the shift?



School siting: A generation ago

- Small (average of 127 students)
- Located in community centers
- 48% of kids walked or biked to school (EPA, 2003)



School siting: Today

- Current average enrollment: 517 students
- Mega-schools: up to 2,800 students
- Schools located on 10 to 30+ acres fringe land
- Lowest-cost construction

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2012)



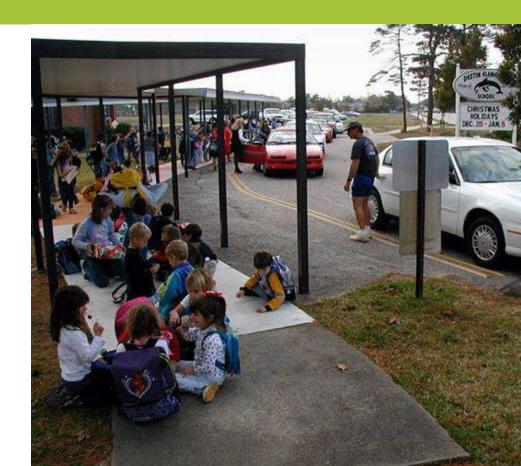
It's not just distance

Students living within 1 mile or less who walk or bike to school:

1969: 89%

• 2009: 35%

(USDOT, 2009)



Most common barriers to walking and bicycling to school

Long distances 62%

• Traffic danger 30%

• Adverse weather 19%

• Fear of crime danger 12%

Note: Sum of percentages is more than 100% because respondents could identify more than one barrier.

(CDC, 2005)

Traffic danger



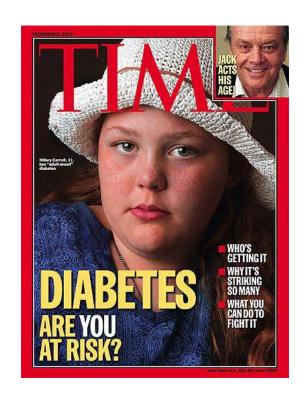


Fear of crime danger

- Range of concerns is broad, often not unique to walking and bicycling to school
- Both reality and perceptions need to be addressed
- SRTS can be a part of a larger, community-wide response

What are the unintended consequences of less walking and bicycling?





1996 Summer Olympic Games banned single occupant cars in downtown Atlanta



Results of the ban

- Morning traffic decreased 23%
- Peak ozone decreased 28%
- Asthma-related events for kids decreased 42%

(Friedman, 2001)

Air quality is measurably better around schools with more walkers and bicyclists

(EPA, 2003)



Physical inactivity

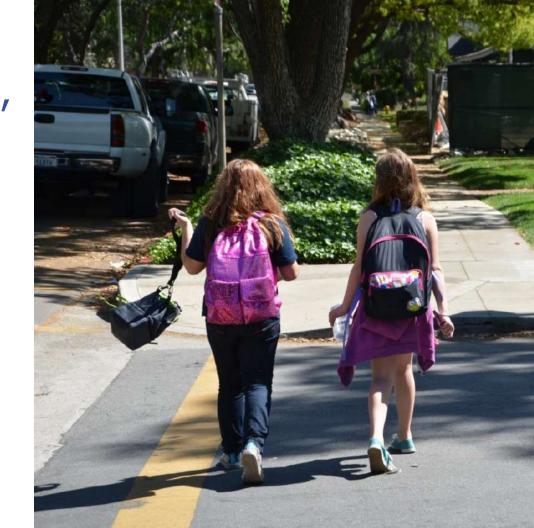


- Many kids aren't getting the physical activity they need
- Recommended at least 60 minutes daily

(Trust for America's Health & Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2011)

Healthy lifestyle habits, including healthy eating and physical activity, can lower the risk of becoming obese

(CDC, 2013)



Obese children have an increased risk of...

- Heart disease and stroke
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Low self esteem
- Sleep apnea
- Several types of cancer
- Osteoarthritis (CDC, 2014)

Good news!

Communities are taking action on behalf of children through Safe Routes to School



Safe Routes to School programs are part of the solution...

- to increase physical activity
- to improve unsafe walking conditions
- to improve poor air quality by reducing vehicle emissions

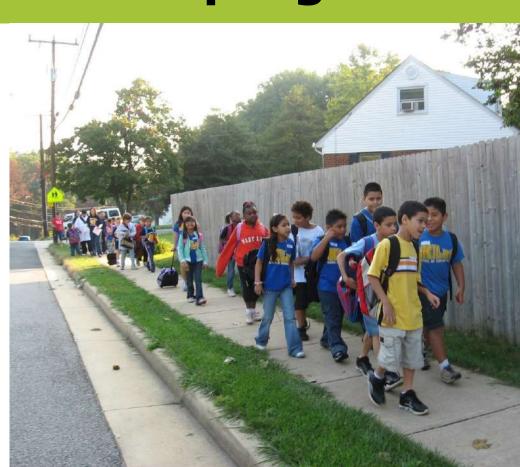


More benefits of SRTS programs

- Reduce traffic congestion around schools
- Cost savings for schools (reduce need for "hazard" busing)
- Increase child's sense of freedom and responsibility
- Teach fundamental safety skills
- Strengthen family bonds
- Benefit local economy
- Provide more transportation options for everyone

Elements of SRTS programs

- Equity
- Education
- Encouragement
- Enforcement
- Engineering
- Evaluation



Equity



Education

Teaches safety skills

- Creates safety awareness
- Fosters life-long safety habits

 Includes parents, neighbors and other drivers



Encouragement

- Increases popularity of walking and bicycling
- Is an easy way to start SRTS programs
- Emphasizes fun of walking and biking



Enforcement

 Increases awareness of pedestrians and bicyclists

- Improves driver behavior
- Helps children follow traffic rules

Decreases parent perceptions of danger



Engineering

 Creates safer, more accessible settings for walking and bicycling

 Can influence the way people behave



Evaluation

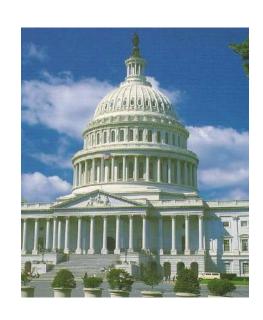
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Is the program making a difference?

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21)

- Legislation passed in 2012
- Established new program: Transportation Alternatives
- SRTS activities eligible to compete for funding
- State DOTs and MPOs administer funds
- Some states have SAFETEA-LU funds remaining



Minnesota Programs

Minnesota Safe Routes to School Coordinator Dave Cowan dave.cowan@state.mn.us

651-366-4180



Safe Routes to School Goals

- Where it's safe, get children walking and biking
- Where it's not safe, make changes



