

**INTERCITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY
SPECIAL MEETING
AGENDA ITEM NO. 8
MEETING DATE: November 16, 2016**

FOR: Intercity Transit Authority

FROM: Jessica Gould and David Copley, Youth Program, 705-5855

SUBJECT: Youth Program: Walking and Rolling, Today and Tomorrow

1) **The Issue:** To share the work of Intercity Transit's Walk N Roll youth education program and to show where we plan to head.

2) **Recommended Action:** For information and discussion.

3) **Policy Analysis:** The Authority supports outreach and education to youth as part of Intercity Transit's overall objective to increase ridership, raise awareness of active transportation and its value, and encourage and support community sustainability.

4) **Background:** Youth program staff would like to share the work that they did over the 2015- 2016 school year and introduce some changes and enhancements for this school year, including new outreach and new schools for the 2016- 2017 school year.

Intercity Transit's Walk N Roll program is part of the agency's Marketing & Communications division.

5) **Alternatives:** N/A.

6) **Budget Notes:** The agency's youth education work is funded with one permanent FTE position and a \$24,000 budget. Beyond this, the program has been very successful in creating partnerships and securing grant funding. We have applied for CMAQ funds to help fund the program this year and are awaiting that decision.

7) **Goal Reference:** **Goal #1:** "Assess the transportation needs of our community throughout the Public Transportation Benefit Area." **Goal #2:** "Provide outstanding customer service." **Goal #4:** "Provide responsive transportation options within financial limitation." **Goal #5:** "Align best practices and support agency activities and sustainable technologies."

8) **References:** Healthy Kids – Safe Streets Action Plan. Walk N Roll Schedule.

Healthy Kids – Safe Streets Action Plan



Initiatives to encourage kids to walk, bike & bus to school

Goals

- Build a generation of safe and healthy walkers, bike riders, and bus riders
- Promote regular physical activity so students stay strong, healthy, and ready to learn
- Reinforce good traffic safety skills

The Problem

Too few students walk, bike, or take the bus. Too many parents drive students to school. Too few students get enough daily physical activity. ***Did you know that 50 % of students living within a 1/2 mile of school are driven to school?***

The Result

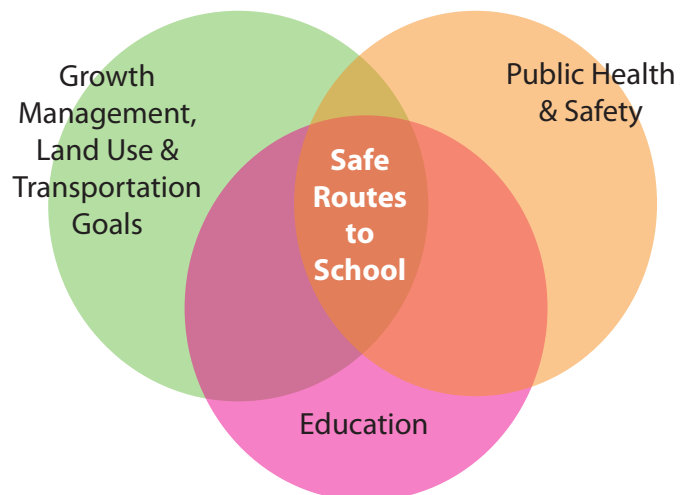
Parents driving students to school account for:

- 25% of morning peak hour traffic
- a decrease in safety, air quality, student health and readiness to learn (due to lack of exercise)
- a lack of knowledge and experience needed to be safe pedestrians and cyclists

Partners in the Plan:

Parents
Local School Districts & School Staff
Intercity Transit
Local Governments
Thurston Regional Planning Council
Thurston County Health & Social Services
Olympic Region Clean Air Agency
State Department of Transportation
State Department of Health

Healthy Kids - Safe Streets Action Plan Achieves Shared Goals



This Action Plan results from school and community stakeholder ideas and Walk & Roll demonstration project findings. The plan identifies strategies, programs and policies that address school, transportation, and community health issues.

Healthy Kids - Safe Streets Action Plan

Next Steps

- 1. Review of Action Plan.** Stakeholder groups commit to take action and identify advocates.
- 2. Create a Safe Routes to School Coordination Team** to advocate for the Action Plan initiatives; apply for funding to support programs and infrastructure improvements; and serve as a resource for school site analysis. Identify a facilitator for the team. Members should include at least school districts, and jurisdiction planning/public works. Adjunct representation should include Thurston County Health & Social Services, Intercity Transit and Thurston Regional Planning Council.
- 3. Identify a Safe Routes liaison within each school district** to act as a contact with school principals to develop the required Safe Routes Walking and Biking map and possible expansion of the Walk & Roll program.
- 4. Complete Safe Routes Walking and Biking Map for each school in the county.** State law requires Safe Routes maps for all schools by September 2013. Determine responsibility and most effective and efficient way to complete maps. Identify safety improvements as part of the process.

Programs to Develop or Expand

- 1. Develop Walk & Roll program template and "How To" manual** for program expansion to additional schools.
- 2. Identify ways to sustain and build Walk & Roll type school-based incentive programs at additional schools.**
- 3. Identify funds needed to support staff and program** such as stipends for school coordinators or incentive programs.

Policies to Incorporate in Plans

School District and Local Government:

- 1. Establish early communication about infrastructure improvements** to identify opportunities to collaborate, co-locate or connect facilities to encourage walking, biking, and transit use.
- 2. Consider the long range costs and benefits of school siting decisions** including long term transportation costs to the community as a whole (school districts, households), and the costs and benefits to student health.

- 3. Collaborate on school design and infrastructure improvements** at the beginning of the design process to maximize opportunities for walking, biking and transit use.

State:

- 1. Advocate state policy change for school siting guidelines.**
- 2. Encourage state policy change related to school retrofit and maintenance.**
- 3. Add state policy or incentive to locate schools on transit routes or within walking distance of large student populations.**
- 4. Advocate for state policy directive to contribute to infrastructure improvements and programs** targeted to students living within a mile of school – instead of yellow school bus funding in these areas.

For more information, including draft policy language, go to www.trpc.org/programs/transportation/regional-planning/walkandroll

The "Five E's" - Strategies for Healthy Kids - Safe Streets

Education

Teach children about the broad range of transportation choices; instruct them in lifelong bicycle and walking safety skills; and launch driver safety campaigns near schools.

- Integrate bicycle, pedestrian, and transit education into school curriculum. *SD
- Assist school districts in creating **Safe Routes Walking and Biking Map** for each school per state law. SD, TRPC, CO, PTO
- Create a **community outreach plan** to raise awareness and promote walking and biking to school. SD, IT, LG, CO
- Address parental concerns through outreach campaign. PTO

Encouragement

Use events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.

- Maintain and expand existing school-based encouragement programs like Walk & Roll. SD, IT, LG, TRPC, PTO
- Identify a leader within the school to coordinate bike and walk programs. SD
- Hold annual study sessions with school boards to review new walking, biking, and transit related initiatives. SD, SRTS
- Identify a funding source to provide subsidized transit passes for the school community. IT, SD
- Establish a school district policy to give physical education credits to students for walking and biking. SD
- Support state and local policies encouraging flexible work hours so parents can walk or bike with children. S

Enforcement

Partner with local law enforcement and community programs to increase awareness, slow speeds, and increase traffic safety.

- Slow speeds and reduce idling through "Pace Car" campaign. Drivers pledge to drive within the speed limit and not idle. IT, TRPC, SD, NA, PTO
- Initiate a Walking School Bus (either school or parent-run) to give more students an opportunity to walk with an adult leader. SD, PTO, CO
- Analyze the effect of shifting school start time by 15 minutes to alter traffic volume and increase safety for biking and walking. SD, LG, CO
- Work with high schools to develop alternatives to drive alone vehicle use and encourage closed campuses at lunch to enhance student safety. S

Engineering

Improve opportunities to walk & bike through school siting & design of walkways, bikeways, & street connections.

- Adopt a policy for school districts and jurisdictions on school and community facility siting and infrastructure planning and design. SD, LG
- Advocate changes to state policies relating to school size, school siting guidelines, and transportation funding to encourage easily accessible neighborhood schools. SRTS
- Make sidewalks, bike lanes, lighting and crossing improvements a high priority within 1/2 mile of schools. S
- Separate modes of travel at arrival points at schools to avoid bike and pedestrian conflicts with cars. SD, LG

Evaluation

Monitor and document trends and outcomes to identify the most effective strategies.

- Survey families annually to track successes and identify challenges. Administer the Safe Routes to School Survey through schools. SD, PTO, SRTS
- Engage Parent Leaders. Create a Walk & Roll Parent Steering Committee to plan and share ideas between and among schools. PTO, SRTS
- Seek input and leadership from school staff, parents and students to fit strategies and messages to each school's needs. PTO, SRTS
- Track vehicle use reductions around schools to monitor success of walking and biking initiatives. CO, LG, SRTS



Walk & Roll is a grant supported project demonstrating how to build and sustain partnerships that will result in a new generation of healthy and safe walkers, cyclists and bus riders and reduce trips to and around school. "Walking & Wheeling Wednesdays" are part of the project.



* STAKEHOLDERS

CO - Community Organizations
IT - Intercity Transit
LG - Local Government
NA - Neighborhood Associations
PTO - Parent-Teacher Organizations

S - Stakeholders
SD - School District
SRTS - Safe Routes to School Coordination Team
TRPC - Thurston Regional Planning Council

Testimonials

"This is really good because we need to get our kids healthy and doing active things at home and at school."

-Elementary school parent on International Walk to School Day

"It was a wonderful morning for the two of us to have the time to walk and notice the little things in the neighborhood."

-Elementary school parent

"We rode our bikes this morning. It was freezing, but it was great fun!"

-Madison Elementary parent on a Walking & Wheeling Wednesday

Did You Know...

40 years ago, 50% of students walked or rode bikes to school. Today fewer than 15% travel on their own steam.

Over the last 40 years, childhood obesity has gone from 4% to 17% (2008 figure). In the last decade, obesity in youth has doubled.

By the end of the Walk & Roll program's first year, 57% of students walked or cycled to school and only 17% arrived by car. At the beginning of the year 47% arrived by car and only 24% walked or cycled.

Partnerships and Success Stories

Problem: How to build a generation of safe and healthy walkers, bike riders and bus riders

Action Taken:

Walk & Roll school-based encouragement demonstration programs at three elementary schools included: monthly flyers with walk/bike safety tips; "Walking & Wheeling Wednesday" encouragement, prizes for participation, contests, safety assemblies.

Walk & Roll Program Partnership included Thurston Regional Planning Council, Intercity Transit, Olympia School District and Madison, Roosevelt, and Pioneer elementary schools, Safe Kids, City of Olympia, State Department of Transportation - Highways and Local Programs – Safe Routes to School, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and State Department of Health.



Problem: Overcoming barriers regarding student travel to school

Safety Issue

Action Taken:

- "Stranger danger" fears addressed at two Walk & Roll sponsored "Safety Without Fear" interactive forums with a child development specialist.
- Pedestrian and bike safety education through monthly Walk & Roll event flyers, special walk/bike safety classes for students and parents, school safety assemblies with visits by police and Intercity Transit Youth Program coordinator.
- New "Pace Car" and Anti-Idling pledge program to slow driving speeds and promote clean air.
- Initiation of Walking School Bus with several parents walking with a group of students to and from school.
- Identification of infrastructure safety issues.

Distance Issue (i.e. too far to walk/bike)

Action Taken:

- Walk & Roll program focuses on urban schools and students living within a mile of school.
- Walk & Roll program addresses issues and supports a culture of changed attitudes toward student travel to school throughout the school community.
- Walk & Roll program encourages:
 - students traveling by bus to take the long way around the block to get to and from the bus stop;
 - students who must be driven encouraged to park several blocks from school and walk in.
- Action Plan recognizes the importance of school siting. The Plan recommends that school site cost/benefit analysis consider long term student transportation costs and the benefits of making walking and biking to school possible for more students.



Weather Issue

Action Taken:

- Walk & Roll encouragement programs, prizes and contests resulted in participation no matter what kind of weather. Ongoing survey data continues to inform the process.

For more information:

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On Action Plan, contact: **Kathy McCormick**
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