

We have the resources. Let's do the right thing.

Under the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), there is existing federal funding for alternative transportation options—and it's up to YOU to make sure our state's Safe Routes to School programs are fully funded.

Safe routes to school is the best option for this funding, and here's why.

Some communities in [STATE] have few sidewalks and bike lanes. As a result, it's hard for people, especially children, to get exercise in healthy *and* safe ways. Building safe routes to school would encourage our children to choose walking or biking to school over taking the bus or riding in a car. And studies show the benefits of making this choice will extend beyond the physical: When kids get enough exercise, they also perform better academically and exhibit better behavior in the classroom. ^{i,ii,iiiiv,v}

It's clear: Building safe routes to school in [STATE] is one of the most effective ways to help our children grow up to be the healthy, active, and safe adults we want them to be.

Need more convincing? Here are the facts:

- Safety is a critical need for children walking or biking to school: From 2000 to 2006, 30% of traffic-related deaths among children between ages 5 and 15 happened while walking or bicycling. ^{vi}
- Safe Routes to School initiatives help teach safety through education programs: These important lessons in walking and bicycling safety are taught at a young age and complement street-scale improvements, helping to prevent and reduce injuries.
- It works: A recent study of Safe Routes to School projects in New York City found that census tracts with Safe Routes to School interventions saw a 44% decline in school-aged pedestrian injuries during school travel hours while locations without stayed the same. ^{vii}
- Safe Routes to School initiatives help kids stay healthy: In the face of a childhood obesity rate that has tripled since 1963; ^{viii} these safe routes are crucial for helping our children get the CDC-recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day. ^{ix}
- One California-based study reported that walking and bicycling increased anywhere from 20% to 200% at schools that received Safe Routes to School funding for infrastructure improvements. ^x

Of course, Safe Routes to School is not just for the kids, it's for the whole community.

- If more children bike or walk to school, that means parents drive less, ultimately reducing traffic, road congestion, and carbon emissions, improving air quality around schools. ^{xi, xii, xiii}
- Sidewalks and bike lanes would increase the overall walkability and safety of our neighborhoods while promoting the further development of active and sustainable communities. ^{xiv}
- Simply put, sidewalks and bike lanes make for a convenient, social, and fun way for our entire community to stay physically active. ^{xv}

As a decision maker in [STATE], you can strengthen our community by making safe and healthy lifestyle choices easy for our children and for all of us. We urge you to support fully funding Safe Routes to School programs.

Safe Routes to School are good for the economy too: Studies have found that health care costs associated with physical inactivity decrease by almost \$3 for every \$1 invested in safe pathways for pedestrians and cyclists. ^{xvi}

SOURCES

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