

CONDUCTING A WALK ASSESSMENT

Terry Preston

Safe Routes Project Manager



AGENDA

- The Sacramento Safe Routes 5 E's Project
- Preparing for a walk assessment
- Conducting a walk assessment
- What to do with the results of your assessment

THE SACRAMENTO SAFE ROUTES 5 E'S PROJECT

The background of the slide is a photograph of a schoolyard. In the foreground, a child with a backpack is walking away from the camera. In the middle ground, another child is walking towards the camera. The background shows a fence, trees, and a building under a clear sky.

- *WALKS* Sacramento and the Sacramento County Department of Transportation
- US Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School planning grant
- Purpose:
 - Conduct 15 walk assessments at schools in the unincorporated county,
 - Encourage and provide assistance to schools to initiate walk/bike to school events and programs,
 - Hold an annual Safe Routes to School regional conference,
 - Convene the Safe Routes to School Resource Advisory Committee periodically over the project's lifespan.

PREPARING FOR A WALK ASSESSMENT

- **Surveys**

- Parent attitudes
 - Provides information on the primary concerns of parents. How can you incorporate this feedback into your walk?
- In-class travel mode counts
 - Counts how students are currently getting to school. Good to perform before and after a project to measure increase in walking and biking.
- Available from the National Center for SRTS
<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/data>

PREPARING FOR A WALK ASSESSMENT

- Who to invite?

- Parents (required)
 - Quality over quantity. Try to get individuals who will provide meaningful input, who are concerned about the issues, whose children are currently walking or biking to school or would if things were improved.
- Students (required)
 - Students may not come on the walk assessment, but make sure to get their opinion somehow. Children see challenges to walking differently!
- School and school district staff (encouraged)
 - Your principal, school board member, safe schools staff, facilities staff.
- Other organizations (optional—tailor to your needs)
 - Your department of transportation, the traffic officer assigned to your school, parking enforcement, community organizations nearby or involved with the school, neighborhood watch, recreation and park districts if you have nearby park facilities.

PREPARING FOR A WALK ASSESSMENT

- **Set a time**
 - Hold your walk assessment at a time that works for the attendees.
 - We have found good times to be right after school begins or right after it ends.
 - Avoid walking during or after dusk.
- **Secure a meeting space at the school**
 - e.g. library, multi-purpose room, staff lounge
- **Promotion**
 - Put up flyers at your school or send them home to parents.
 - Ask your principal to make a phone call to parents.

PREPARING FOR A WALK ASSESSMENT

- Define your walking routes
 - Think about what you want to accomplish on the assessment. When reasonable, try to observe key concerns on your walk.
 - Is the major complaint pick-up and drop-off? Or is it an intersection $\frac{1}{4}$ mile away?
 - Aim for a 30-45 minute walk.
- Defining the routes ahead of time helps things be more organized, but...
- Stay flexible!

CONDUCTING A WALK ASSESSMENT

- Walk, observe, discuss
 - What is the walking experience like?
 - What problems are you encountering?
 - What can be done to fix them?



CONDUCTING A WALK ASSESSMENT

- Record your observations
 - Where are the key problems?
 - What needs to happen to make it safer?
- Use maps and take notes
- Photos
- Discuss



WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR RESULTS

- Work with your assessment team to identify priorities; short term / long term.
- Create a task force at the school to develop a plan for pursue improvements.
- Meet with local DOT, school and law enforcement
- Who else needs to be involved?
- Start a walk/bike to school program.
 - Get more people walking, create demand for improvements, make a strong case for funding!

THANK YOU!

Terry Preston

tpreston@walksacramento.org

916-446-9255

