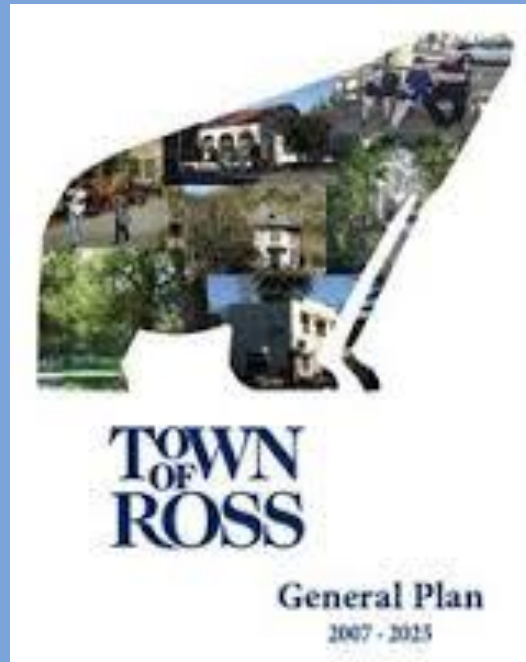


City/County Policies & Safe Routes to School: An Overview



Sara Zimmerman, JD
Technical Assistance Director



*Has your town or county
adopted any policies that
support Safe Routes to
School?*



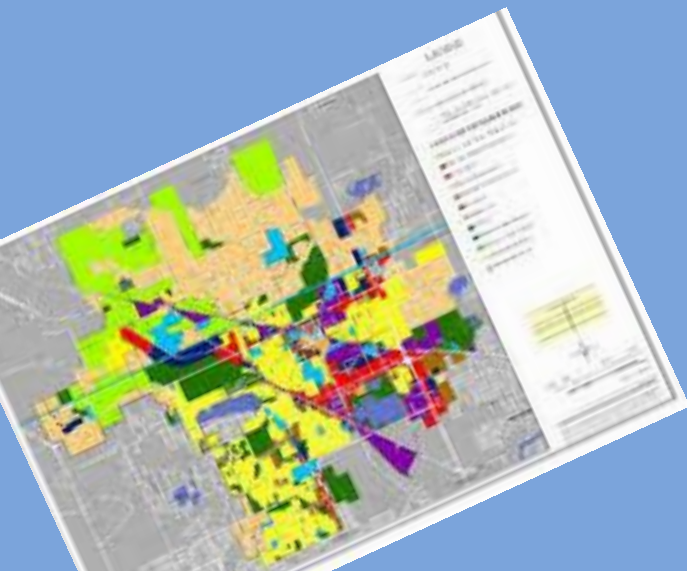
Why Include Safe Routes to School in City and County Policies?



Remember:
Safe Routes to School
requires a safe route
to school



What Is a General Plan?



Poll

What is a general plan?

- A. A plan that is general? I have no idea
- B. I've heard of it before – but I'm a little vague on the details
- C. I'm quite familiar with general plans
- D. I've read my community's general plan from cover to cover



What is a general plan?

- Blueprint for future development in a community
- Opportunity for residents and leaders to think about what they value about their community and what changes they'd like to see, and create a plan to accomplish that
- Guides future policy decisions and investments
- Long term vision



How does a general plan work?

- In CA, they have a lot of force: actions must comply
- State law requires coverage of specific topics (elements) – land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety
- Others can be included too, like parks & recreation or public facilities
- Spells out goals, objectives, policies, and action steps

How to Include Safe Routes to School in a General Plan



Vision

- How community residents want to see their community evolve
- Can include walking and bicycling generally
- As well as safe walking and bicycling to school



Core Areas

- Public Facilities element
- Circulation element





Public Facilities Element

How local jurisdiction works with school district

- Walking and bicycling events
- Traffic enforcement near schools
- Crossing guard program
- Local funding for Safe Routes to School

Circulation Element

Generally: include a complete streets approach

Specifically:

- Identify steps to reduce speed near schools, both through lowering speed limits and through design changes
- Prioritize safe infrastructure near schools; fill gaps on school routes



Nampa, Idaho, Transportation Chapter:
“Encourage all new schools to do an analysis of pedestrian and bicycle accessibility to the school prior to approval of the construction plans.”

Additional Areas

- Land use element
- Recreation element
- Housing element
- Health element





Land Use Element

School locations are important & long term

- Emphasize the importance of in-fill development near schools
- Call for zoning updates that support connectivity and good walking and bicycling infrastructure

Recreation Element



- Routes to school through parks and on trails
- Locate schools and parks next to each other

A photograph of a two-story yellow house with white trim. An American flag is flying on a pole in front of the house. The house has several windows, some with dark shutters. In the foreground, there is a garden with green plants and a concrete sidewalk. A blue semi-transparent box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text 'Housing Element' and a bullet point.

Housing Element

- Build new housing near schools, especially multi-income housing

Key Resources

Integrating Safe Walking and Bicycling to School into Comprehensive Planning

In many communities, roads, schools, and neighborhoods have developed in ways that make it difficult, unsafe, or impossible for children to get to school by foot or bicycle. However, some communities are taking steps to make streets and neighborhoods better. One key way that communities go about determining how they want to change and develop in the future is through a process known as comprehensive planning. Many communities are revising their comprehensive plans to include Safe Routes to School concepts and address walking and bicycling to school. Safe Routes to School describes the initiatives that focus on encouraging students to walk and bicycle to school and making it safer for them to do so, as well as the movement of advocates and stakeholders who support these efforts. Safe Routes to School projects are eligible for funding under federal transportation programs and may be eligible under some state programs. By including considerations and action steps on walking and bicycling to school in comprehensive plans, decisions about the future of our communities can include safe and active travel to school.

What Is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan acts as a blueprint for a community's future. A comprehensive plan is a written document that starts with residents' vision for how they want the community to look and feel in the future – what kind of place they want it to be. Building off of the current community conditions, the comprehensive plan details the specific goals, objectives, policies, and action steps that, if implemented, will lead to a realization of that vision. Does a midsize town in an agricultural region want to stay aligned with its rural culture while becoming a home to specific new industries? Does a small city want to reinvigorate its downtown and maintain the peaceful feel of its neighborhoods? The comprehensive plan is the place where the large and small steps necessary to achieve these kinds of goals are spelled out.

Comprehensive plans vary in their legal strength and effect from state to state. In some states, zoning codes must conform to comprehensive plans, and development that is contrary to a plan is illegal. In other states, comprehensive plans provide a vision and guidelines, but may not be enforceable. State law or regulations may spell out how frequently a comprehensive plan must be updated, and will likely set out the topic areas that must be addressed by the comprehensive plan. But whatever the legal weight of a comprehensive plan, all comprehensive plans play a role in articulating how a community should develop and in guiding investments and actions by private individuals and local officials.

Terminology:

Safe Routes to School or Walking and Bicycling to School

In some communities, the phrase "Safe Routes to School" is widely used and well known. In others, the term may be unfamiliar or too jargony and it makes more sense to just say "walking and bicycling to school." When thinking about language for the comprehensive plan, the goal is to be clear for present and future readers while capturing the full spirit of what is envisioned, so a community can pick whichever phrase resonates more for them.

Integrating Safe Walking and Bicycling to School into Comprehensive Planning,

Safe Routes to School National Partnership

www.saferoutespartnership.org

Model Safe Routes to School Language for Comprehensive Plans, **ChangeLab Solutions**

www.changelabsolutions.org/publications/SRTS_general-plans

Multimodal Transportation Best Practices and Model Element,

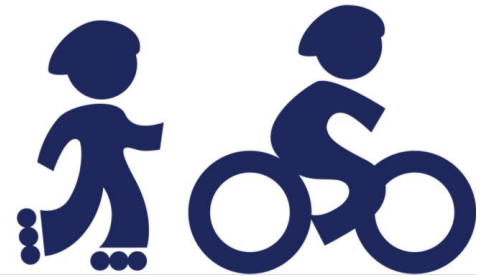
National Center for Transit Research

<http://www.nctr.usf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/77954.pdf>



Developed by the Safe Routes to School National Partnership for the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

Questions?





Activity



5 minute activity

Find a partner. What policy opportunities are there at the community level for Safe Routes to School in your town? How can health equity be included?



Other Kinds of Policies



Crossing Guards



- Often run by police departments
- Can significantly affect parents' attitudes re walking and biking

Safe School Zone policy

- Reduce speed
- Prioritize new walking and biking infrastructure near schools
- Traffic enforcement



Complete Streets

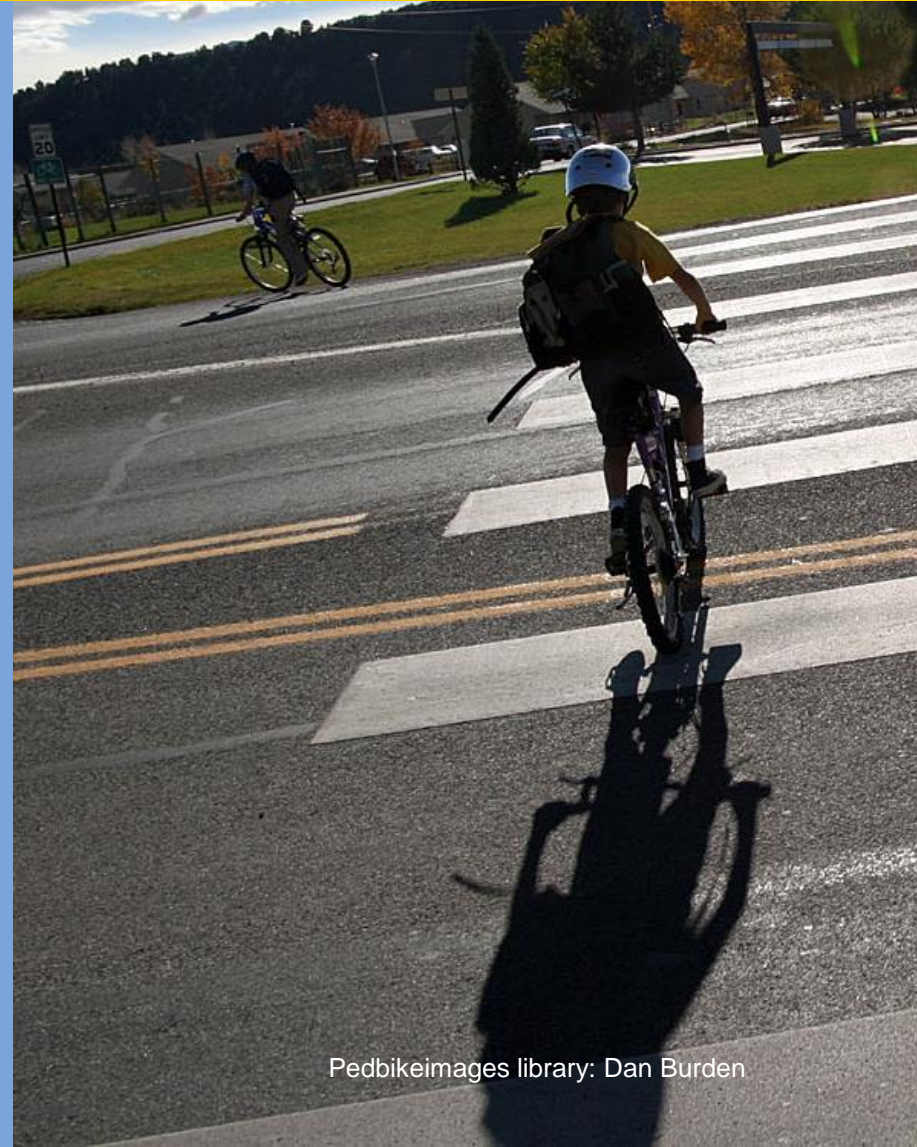
Policies that ensure that all new construction and renovation of streets creates **streets** that are **safe, comfortable, and convenient** for **everyone** using them

Who? People **walking and biking**, **cars**, **public transportation riders**, **people with disabilities**, and **people of all ages**.



Bicycle/Pedestrian Plans

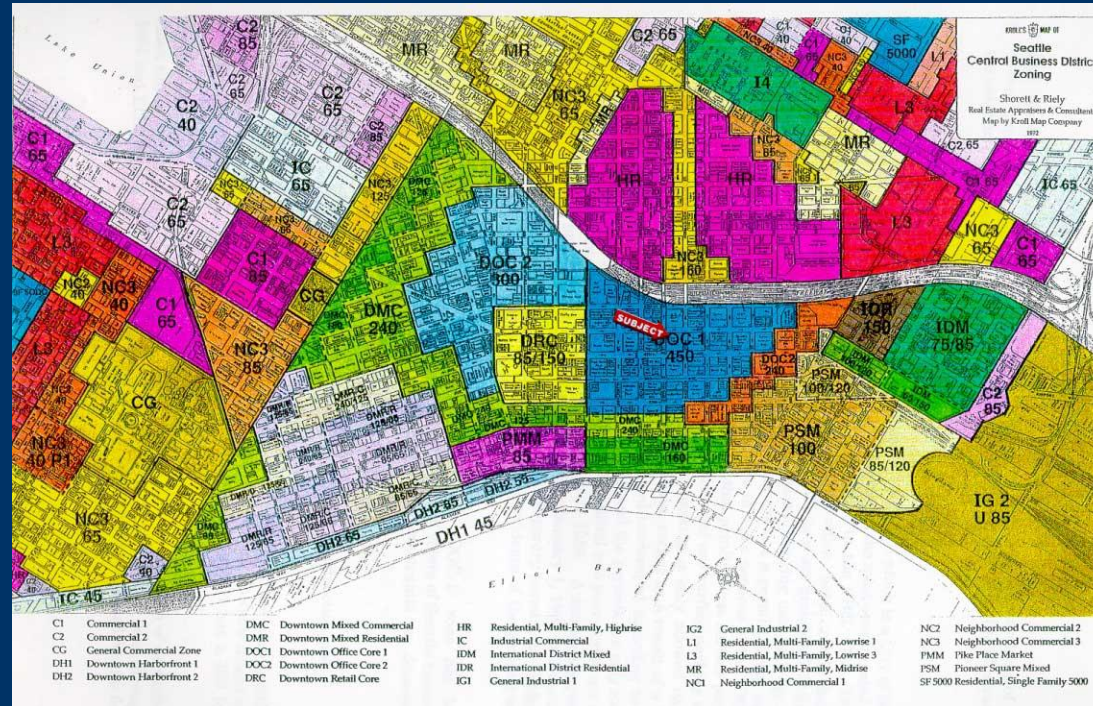
- Can stand alone or be incorporated into transportation plan or general plan
- Planning process for walking and biking
- Include Safe Routes to School



Pedbikeimages library: Dan Burden

Zoning

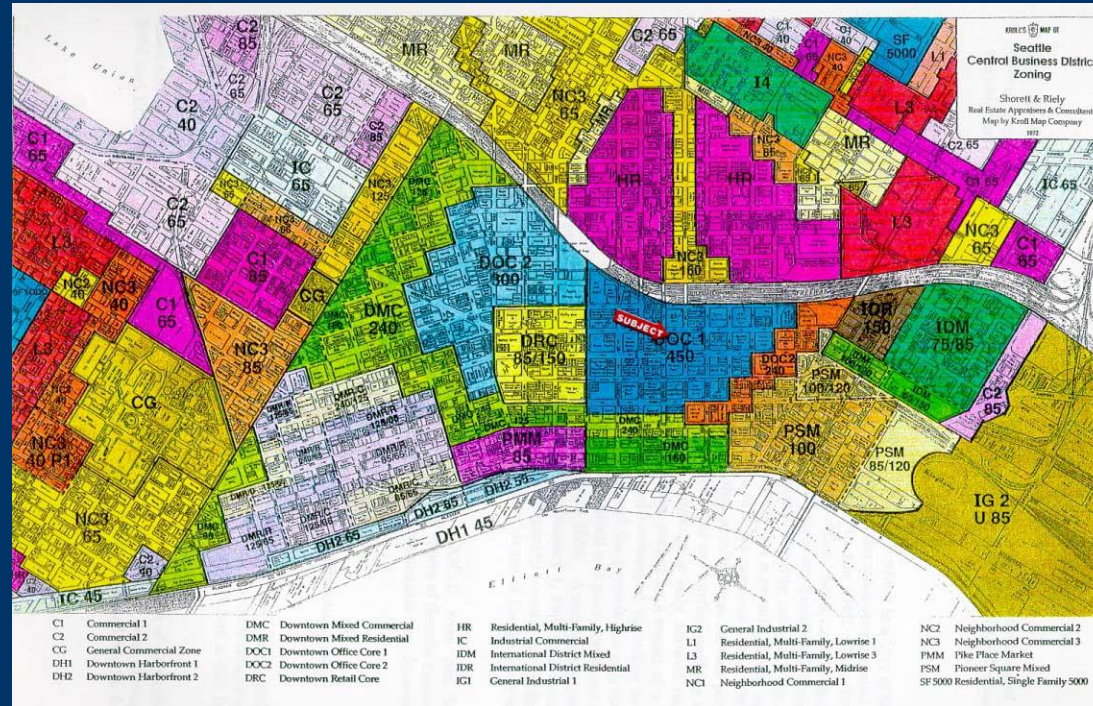
WHAT can be built
WHERE uses can locate
WHAT specific activities
can take place



Subdivision Codes

HOW streets will be built

WHAT infrastructure supportive of walking & biking will and won't be required



Zoning & Subdivision Codes

- Require
- Incentivize (e.g. density bonuses)
- Restrict



Questions?





Safe Routes
to School
**National
Partnership**

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Activity



Small Group Strategizing

Describe work you are doing related to Safe Routes to School; share one success/outcome you have achieved

- What challenge (s) do you face in advancing your goal?**
- How can you use general planning, zoning, or other policies to create lasting impact with your work?**
- How is your work addressing health equity?**

Community Strategy Development

- What did you learn from the presentations and from the conversations with others?
- What ideas can you integrate into your work? What may you do differently or what ideas may you explore?