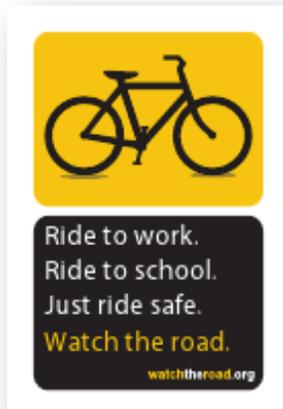


Path to Success Led by a City Department of Transportation

City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation: *Using media and community partnerships to build success*

The City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) is an agency that is concerned about public safety and believes that educational programs are important for children to learn behaviors that promote a safe and healthy future. In 2004, they received an Office of Traffic Safety Grant of \$1.5 million to establish their highly successful “Watch the Road” traffic education and awareness campaign to reduce bad behaviors of all roadway users in Los Angeles County and increase rates of walking and biking. LADOT won two Emmy’s for the Public Service Announcements from the Academy of Arts and Sciences that they developed for this campaign. For more information, please visit www.watchtheroad.org



LADOT staff recognized the importance of working with young people in order to establish safe pedestrian and bicyclist behaviors in the region. In 2006, they applied for and were awarded a federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant of \$500,000 to work at six schools in West Los Angeles. According to parent surveys, 19 percent of the students at these schools walked at least once per week and lived within a two mile radius of their school. However, parents were concerned about traffic speeds and strangers around the schools.

To address parental concerns, LADOT launched a multi-faceted education and encouragement campaign. The campaign included: holding a SRTS press event, a field event (bike rodeo, walk-a-thon, or mobile skate park), a contest (essay, slogan or poster), workshops for students, workshops for parents, recommended pedestrian route maps, bilingual ‘Kid-Steps’ pedestrian safety brochures, and ‘Watch the Road’ lawn signs. LADOT also supported a successful program called ‘Walk Across America’ with the schools in West Los Angeles. Each participating class was given a large map of the U.S., and students tracked the number of miles walked during lunch or recess and charted their progress across the U.S., while also earning foot-shaped charms.

In addition, LADOT staff developed several campaign messages, such as: ‘Be safe, be healthy, and help the environment: walk or bike to school’. LADOT worked with regional transit to place the messages for free on buses and on bus shelters throughout the region. Finally, LADOT developed a SRTS specific Public Service Announcements (PSA) called,

'What's a Walking Bus?' that featured students from the elementary schools. LADOT partnered with Time Warner Cable to make the PSA available on Video on Demand. To date over 18,000 people have watched it and were automatically sent a package of materials that included: a pedestrian route map, Kid-Steps pedestrian safety brochure, Watch the Road bilingual message, and a Watch the Road wristband.

In 2009, LADOT applied for and was awarded another SRTS non-infrastructure grant of \$250,000. In this round of funding, LADOT has chosen to focus on 12 elementary schools in South Los Angeles, an ethnically and economically diverse area of the city. According to parents in this area, crime is the biggest concern for letting children walk and bike to school. Since it was unrealistic to set up police patrols around each school, the LADOT worked to implement an 'ambassador program'. This program helps parents identify problem locations and then encourages parent volunteers to stand on those corners during times when students are walking to and from school.



LADOT believes that the key to success in implementing SRTS in Los Angeles is continual collaboration and establishing an excellent rapport within the community network. From their perspective, the educational component of the program is important for children to learn good behaviors that promote a safe and healthy future. LADOT continually works with parents, school board members, school Parent Teacher Associations, the school district superintendent, the Los Angeles Police Department and the media to build powerful partnerships. These partnerships have resulted in decreased traffic congestion and an increase in the number of children walking and biking to school safely in Los Angeles.



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