There was a time when the sight of children walking and bicycling to school was a familiar scene in communities across California. In fact, in 1969 approximately 50 percent of children walked or bicycled to school. Today, fewer than 15 percent of children do and rates of childhood obesity and overweight are overwhelming.¹ ²

Concerns about traffic safety are often cited as one of the main reasons children do not walk or bicycle to school.³ And for good reason, as in 2010 alone, over 21,000 California school children were sent to an emergency department and over 1,500 were hospitalized due to pedestrian or bicycle injuries.⁴

Creating safe opportunities for walking and bicycling is critical to improving the safety of young pedestrians and bicyclists and to reducing overweight and obesity among California’s youth. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs are key to reversing these trends. SRTS programs increase the number of children who safely walk and bicycle to school through education and encouragement programs, enhanced enforcement, engineering improvements, and strong program evaluation.

**PROGRAM SUMMARY**

Glendale’s SRTS program was initiated by a champion mother who was interested in calming the traffic at Richardson D. White Elementary School. Initially, she worked with the principal and other parents to create a SRTS Committee which established a dynamic two–pronged program that has increased family involvement and child safety for the school community. This program is comprised of a “Mustang Valet” Safe Drop–Off Zone and an ever expanding “Walking School Bus Program.” Now, the program includes city–wide participation in International Walk to School Day. In 2011, 31 schools participated.

The catalyst for these programs was a tragic accident in 2008 at a nearby school in which an elementary student was
Implementing Agency
Glendale Public Works Department

Location
Glendale, Los Angeles County
Caltrans District 7
CA Assembly District 21
CA Senate District 43

Funding
Federal SRTS Non-Infrastructure (Cycle 3) and Infrastructure (Cycle 3)
State SRTS Non-Infrastructure (Cycles 9 & 10) and Infrastructure (Cycles 1, 2, 8, 9 & 10)

Participating Schools

52.17 percent of students in the school district are eligible for the Free and Reduced Price Meals Program

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Safe RouteS to School
SucceSS Story
Implementing agency Glendale Public Works department killed in a crosswalk. Sadly, that incident was not isolated.
Many injuries and “near misses” have occurred throughout the Glendale Unified School District due to the high volume of cars around schools and increased numbers of busy, late, and distracted parents dropping children off. Richardson D. White Elementary School now has weekly walking school busses from four locations and recently had its first bicycle train which included over 30 students.

Since the beginning of California’s SRTS program, Glendale has successfully applied for a total of seven SRTS project awards totaling more than $3.4 million. These funds are being used to implement a number of infrastructure improvements at schools throughout the city. Infrastructure improvements have consisted of improved lighting, raised crosswalks, bulbouts, bicycle racks, countdown signals, and advance stop markings.

Glendale has also received a federal SRTS Non-Infrastructure Cycle 3 award which will be used to roll out a broader safety education and encouragement program city-wide.

PROGRAM SUCCESSES

• Champion mother encouraged City to pursue outside grant funding
• Established strong partnership with Parent Teacher Association
• Coordinated planning effort to improve pedestrian safety around schools by leveraging resources
• Developed large group of parent volunteers
• Garnered interest of principals at other schools
• Developed a Safe and Healthy Streets Plan which details steps the city can take to improve conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians
• The city is drafting a new Bicycle Transportation Plan which has an emphasis on creating safe bicycle routes to school


The California Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance Resource Center is a program of California Active Communities, a joint Unit of the University of California San Francisco and the California Department of Public Health, and is funded through a statewide non-infrastructure SRTS award from the California Department of Transportation.