



Evaluation activities measure both program outputs (deliverables) and program outcomes. Evaluation helps address whether a program is doing what it intended to do.

Common active transportation evaluation activities include:

TRACK PARTICIPATION

Keep track of attendance for the different services and activities you administer to help answer questions about whether you were able to reach the number of individuals or specialized groups that you intended to serve.

SURVEYS*

Administer surveys to capture knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors from different groups (such as parents, community members, students, etc.) that you are serving in your programs. Administering surveys repeatedly or routinely — before, during, and after a program is implemented — is useful to describe changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Surveys can also provide feedback from program participants to determine any necessary program improvements.

QUIZZES/TESTS

Administer quizzes or tests on topics such as pedestrian or bicycle safety to evaluate increased knowledge or improved skills within your intended audience. Methods will vary based on what you are trying to assess. Traditional quizzes (via paper and pencil or computer) can help evaluate knowledge changes. Skills demonstration tests have been used by some bicycling instructors to determine if students are able to put into action what was taught to them in the course.

POLICY

Assess policy changes over time. Safe Routes to School programs can annually review school district and participating schools' policies to ensure they continue to encourage walking and bicycling to school. Workplace policies can be examined annually to determine if more active transportation policies have been maintained or implemented to encourage walking, biking, or taking transit to work.



SAFETY DATA

Collect and analyze safety data to assess conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. Data may be available for bicycle- or pedestrian- related crash/collisions, injuries, and fatalities through existing statewide data sets (such as UC Berkeley SafeTREC's Transportation Injury Mapping System). More often, communities collect key safety data from more local sources such as regional transportation planning agencies, county public health departments, or local government divisions including planning/public works, traffic operations, or law enforcement. Data can include existing traffic violations, speed surveys, and existing inventories of active transportation or "Complete Streets" facilities. Data from Walk or Bicycle Audits or School Site Assessments may also be available for review. While much of this data is frequently used for planning, this data may have the potential to be used for evaluation purposes in longer-term efforts as well.

‘BEFORE AND AFTER’ TRAVEL MODE COUNTS

- Classroom Travel Tally* — Ask and record whether students walked or biked to/from school. Use classroom travel tally tools and consistent protocols from such notable groups as the National Center for Safe Routes to School to conduct ‘before and after’ counts. Collect similar data before and after programs to describe active transportation mode shifts that may have occurred with the school over time. Compare rates annually or more frequently if resources permit.
- Bike counts — Count the number of bikes on racks at school to indicate number of bicyclists at school or other desired location (parks, libraries, community center, worksite, etc.). Compare counts annually to determine changes.
- Helmet use observation counts — Count the number of helmets that are worn by bicyclists arriving or leaving school or before and after an educational program. Calculate differences in helmet rates.
- Web-based apps or scanning technology — Innovative free mobile apps such as Active4me can be used to collect self-reported active transportation trips at schools or other locations. Trip data can then be used to estimate co-benefits associated with active travel trips such as CO2 emissions and fuel consumption reductions, and calories burned from physical activity.
- Manual counts* — Enlist volunteers to observe and record the number of pedestrians and bicyclists at a designated time/ place. Consider methods and tools from the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project. Repeat the same protocols and methods to assess changes over time.
- Automated counts* — Although more resource intensive, automated count devices can be installed in a set location and time to monitor the number of pedestrians and bicyclists who use a particular facility (e.g., sidewalk, crosswalk, bicycle lane, etc.). Collect repeat counts over specified periods to assess changes over time.



BIG DATA

Big Data is a field that analyzes and systematically extracts information from varied, large, and complex data sets to uncover patterns, correlations, and trends in transportation. It can describe current, changes over time, and future mobility behaviors. For transportation planning, two types of geospatial data are often used, location-based services data and navigation- Global Positioning System (GPS) data. These are combined with contextual data sets (e.g. demographics, trip purpose) to best describe travel behavior. Application of this data to project evaluation is still emerging, but early adopters tout the richness of the data and technological work-arounds to traditionally personnel and labor intensive data collection practices.

** California Active Transportation Program (ATP) grant awardees are required to conduct before and after counts, surveys, or classroom tallies as specified by guidance from Caltrans Office of State Programs. Evaluation methodology is specific to the ATP project type. Please check the following website for the latest ATP guidance: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/atp/index.html>*

These definitions are provided as a resource for planning or implementing a non-infrastructure (NI) project. For questions, please contact us at ATSP@cdph.ca.gov