

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
**WALKING ACTIVITY
HANDBOOK**

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
CITY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



**WEEKEND
WALKS &
BICYCLE
RIDES**



This activity guide is part of a series produced in a partnership between Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Additional guides can be found on www.walktoschoolday-la.org including the Walk to School Day Organizer Manual, Walking Field Trip, and the Golden Sneakers Program.

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ABOUT THE LOS ANGELES SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM



Within the span of a generation, the percentage of children walking or bicycling to school has greatly decreased, from 50% in 1969 to just 13% in 2009.

Safe Routes to School National Partnership, 2015

In August 2014, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti launched Vision Zero. Vision Zero uses data-driven approaches to engineering, enforcement, education, evaluation, and community engagement to reduce the likelihood of crashes. Central to the plan is ensuring a safe city with a goal to achieve zero traffic fatalities in Los Angeles by 2025. As youth who walk and bicycle are disproportionately impacted by traffic collisions, the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is a key strategy to reduce fatal and severe injuries of our most vulnerable populations.

As the lead agency for the City's SRTS program, LADOT uses a prioritization of schools with most need to target safety improvements. Recommended infrastructure improvements and safety education are documented in a School Travel Plan. Analysis of traffic conditions and student travel inform the plan, as does collaboration among principals, parents, students and community members.

To improve safety and encourage more students to walk and bicycle to school, LADOT has developed this activity guide for Weekend Walks and Bicycle Rides.

INTRODUCTION

WEEKEND WALKS AND BICYCLE RIDES

Weekend or after school walks and bicycle rides are a great way to get parents, kids, and community members outdoors. Whether a one-time event or something held regularly, they help children build confidence, independence, and neighborhood knowledge.

In Santa Monica, Kidical Mass brings together neighborhood children, their families, and environmental and advocacy organizations once a quarter to explore different city streets and destinations. In Los Angeles, organizations such as C.I.C.L.E host various events related to cycling, such as Women’s Bike Night, Bike-In Movie Night, and Pedal Party.

Start planning your weekend walk or bicycle ride by thinking about why you want to gather the community, then recruit volunteers, work with community members, and promote the event. The goal is to balance the scale of your event with your available resources so that all participants, including the organizing volunteers, will want to keep participating. This guide outlines simple steps for planning and hosting a successful Community Walk or Ride!

WHY DO IT?

AWARENESS!

Weekend walks and bicycle rides raise awareness and support for walking and bicycling. It is not a race or a fundraiser. They can also mark a special occasion.

HEALTH!

Weekend walks and bicycle rides promote sustainable and healthy lifestyles.

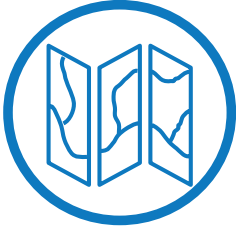
COMMUNITY PRIDE!

Weekend walks and bicycle rides can build community connections.



Over the past 40 years, rates of obesity have soared among children of all ages in the United States. Today, approximately 25 million children and adolescents — more than 33% — are overweight, obese, or in danger of becoming so.

Safe Routes to School
National Partnership, 2015



PLAN YOUR EVENT

CHOOSE A THEME

The first step is to determine the purpose of your event. Do you want to focus on walking and bicycling for health? Do you want to tour your neighborhood? Are you interested in going to a specific place or celebrating an upcoming holiday? Choosing a purpose will help you attract family and community member participants and volunteers!

Make sure to have the event on a day that does not conflict with other big community events or holidays, and pick a time of year when weather is likely to be favorable. Alternatively, if there is a big community event already going on, work with the event organizer to make a walk or bike ride part of the planned activities.



RECRUIT HELP

Two groups of volunteers are needed for a Community Walk or Bike Ride: an organizing committee and day of event volunteers.

- » **Organizing Committee** — If your event is small, the organizing committee can be a small group of parents and children. If you are planning a larger event, consider involving representatives from local civic departments (such as the Parks Department, Council District, etc.) and/or advocacy group representatives.
- » **Day of Event Volunteers** — Day of event staff may include a broader group of individuals including park staff, school administration, city staff, community organizations, and involved community members. If your event is sponsored, consider asking the organization to help recruit volunteers. Use parent groups and school communication channels to get the word out about opportunities to participate.

The number of volunteers will vary based on the expected size and scale of the event itself, but tasks may include crossing monitors, food and beverages, event promotion, first aid help, music and decorations, and more. The general rule is to have one event staff member for every 15 expected participants. Event staff should also take on roles for leading the ride, helping participants cross intersections, and helping out slower groups of participants.

Roles include:

- » Set up/decorations crew
- » Check-in table greeter
- » First aid helper
- » Bike repair/safety check technician (optional)
- » Walk/bike marshalls
- » Mid point activity coordinator (optional)
- » Raffle prize organizer (optional)
- » Post event activity staff (optional)
- » Clean up crew



CONSIDER PARTNERSHIPS/ SPONSORSHIPS

You can bring down the cost of an event by partnering with local businesses, community groups, and elected officials who might be interested in cost sharing and helping to organize. Council District field offices, the LAUSD Family Community Services Branch, Neighborhood Councils, Chambers of Commerce, and Neighborhood Improvement/ Beautification Associations are examples of organizations and agencies to reach out to early.

Bicycle and walking advocacy groups are sometimes interested in helping with resources, route planning, advertising, and event volunteer staff. C.I.C.L.E., the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, Los Angeles Walks, and other non-profit organizations may want to help.

Any community group might be a good partner for a stop mid—way—for example a community garden, a playground, or museum.



SELECT THE ACTIVITY (WALKING OR BIKING)

Your Organizing Committee should decide whether the event will be centered around walking, bicycling or both. Different ways of travel have different safety considerations – especially across different ages.

For the most part, as long as there are sidewalks and access ramps, people of all ages and abilities can participate in a walking event. A reasonable distance will depend on the group’s ages and abilities. In total, plan for a two hour event, including any fun activities along the way.

The very young and very old might be most comfortable with a walk about a one mile in total length, while a two mile walk will suit a large group of average speed walkers. That leaves time for starting off, walking to someplace fun, and walking back to the central meeting location.

If the event is going to feature a destination further than 1.5 miles away, bicycling should be encouraged.

Unlike sidewalks for people walking, the presence of bicycling lanes is not enough for most people who are interested, but concerned, about riding a bicycle. A little more preparation time must be spent on route selection, equipment, and skills training. It is important to remember that skill levels vary among age groups!



Your route should connect the start and halfway destinations, using safe, easy, and enjoyable streets.

SELECT THE ROUTE

It is important to start the event at a central location (possibly a school or other civic location), with ample parking, since people may need to drive there. It is also convenient to start near a Metro Rail station.

Routes that travel in a loop are best for participant interest and logistics! A stop halfway can be educational or interesting and a celebration at the end, with food or raffles, keeps the event fun the whole way.

Your route should connect the start and halfway destinations, using safe, easy, and enjoyable streets.

The LAUSD Office of Environmental Health & Safety website hosts maps for your school neighborhood that highlight which intersections have stop lights and signs, where stairs or walkways exist and pedestrian bridges and tunnels for crossing large roads. You can download these Safe Routes to School maps at <http://www.lausd-oehs.org/saferoutestoschools.asp>. Use as many of the recommended crossings for as much of the route as possible.

ROUTE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- » **Central starting point** — Parks are generally a recommended starting point, as they are publicly accessible on weekends and city or county managed. With proper planning, park staff may be leveraged to staff your event. In addition, there are usually tables, benches, and bathrooms at parks, which are essential components to a community event. On-site bicycle parking is helpful.
- » **A manageable distance** — For a slower pace, a 1-mile walk should take about 30 minutes. At a faster pace, a 1-mile walk may take approximately 20 minutes. Group walks should accommodate an average pace, and a 2-mile walk is recommended. While cycling is faster, 2-mile rides are recommended for younger groups to make sure groups have time to cross street lights or stop signs together. The pace is meant to be leisurely and comfortable for all abilities, as it is not a race.
- » **Universal access** — Ensure that the route is accessible to all ages and abilities. Crossings should have curb cuts that are navigable by wheelchairs, crutches, and other mobility devices. The destination should also have ramps that meet ADA standards. In general, there should be a sidewalk in good condition throughout a walking route.
- » **A reasonable walking path for the whole trip** — There should be a sidewalk or recreational path for the entire length of the trip. Paths that are wide enough so that at least two people can walk side by side are preferred so that children walking with buddies or a chaperone can be accommodated.
- » **Comfortable bicycle routes** — If bicycling, choose paths or ride on streets with protected bicycle lanes or low traffic

volumes (not major traffic boulevards). Children under the age of 13 vary in their ability to judge speed and distance. Slower streets with less traffic are more forgiving to wiggly riders. Children with confident cycling skills can ride on the street with adult supervision. Sidewalk riding should be discouraged because motorists and pedestrians do not expect people riding bikes there.

- » **Safe crossings** — Try to minimize the number of crossings and left turns the group has to make. Stoplight-controlled intersections with crosswalks are considered the best way to cross the street. Intersections that have four-way stop signs are also good choices for crossing. Uncontrolled intersections (those without traffic lights or stop signs) should be avoided if other nearby options exist.
- » **Kid-friendly land uses along the route** — Think about the types of establishments that are along the route. Avoid any that may be considered inappropriate such as adult entertainment venues. Try to avoid places that have heavy traffic accessing their driveways, such as the entrance to a fast food establishment or parking garage. Frequently turning vehicles can be unsafe because they often move at higher speeds and are not looking for people walking or riding bicycles .
- » **Bike parking** — It will be much easier to walk around both the start/end and midway points of the event, if bicycle valet or temporary rack parking is in place.
- » **Nuisance, violence or criminal activity in the area** — Should your school be located in areas where gangs are prevalent or there is a perception that the area is unsafe, coordinate with your local LA Police Department (precinct Senior Lead Officer) so that they may advise you, volunteer assistance or provide referrals to other organization or resources that can support safe travel of walkers and bicyclists.



PROMOTE THE EVENT

Once the event date and route have been set, it is essential to promote the event through a variety of outlets. Prepare eye-catching flyers and posters that describe the date, time, and meeting point at a minimum. Promote your partners, and mention the themed activities that will take place at the start/end point or midway. Make sure to give flyers to the organizing committee to post.

Use newspapers, radio, social media, listservs, local council offices, schools, and faith based places to get the message out.

Bring flyers to local businesses and activity centers to increase its visibility. It is important to consider how different age groups and cultural groups receive information when deciding on which media outlets to pursue. Consider using highly visual graphics and multiple languages, depending on your community's needs.

In addition to flyers, you can write a press release to promote the event. Local news outlets and organizations that may post your news include LA Streetsblog, LA Walks, Empower LA, neighborhood Patches, Metro's The Source, and others. A press release could be as simple as a few paragraphs that include information about the benefits of a Community Walk and Bike event, the event purpose, information about any partnering organizations, and event details.

A sample press release is on page 15.

EVENT DAY PREPARATION

Almost there! This event will be fun for all ages and abilities if you follow the tips in this booklet, and have adequate support from other stakeholders.

Compile the materials necessary to ensure that each volunteer has an itinerary, map, and guidelines. Ask yourself and the volunteer team the following questions ?

- » Do you have one volunteer for every 15 expected participants? Does everyone know their roles?
- » Have you asked someone to photograph the event?
- » Have you organized a check-in table, first aid table and equipment, water, food or other equipment that may be necessary?
- » Review the day of event checklist on page 13.

Be sure to start the event out with a quick safety talk that assures the participants that all laws of the road will be followed, and point out the ride leaders and sweeps. Start and end on time!





EVALUATE YOUR EVENT

To continue improving the events, document them while they are still fresh in your mind. Reflect with your organizing committee and event staff on what they experienced on the walk or bike, including both planned unplanned moments. Ask participants how they felt being out in the community, and reinforce positive experiences.

Write down what you learned to make it easy to plan future events. To share your experience and tips with other staff, please fill out a short evaluation form (on page 19) and upload it to the LAUSD Safe Routes to Schools website, <http://www.walktoschoolday-la.org>.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

TIMELINE

Planning should begin 8 weeks in advance or more.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
WEEK 8	<p>Form organizing committee</p> <p>» A committee of four is ideal to oversee the main aspects of planning: Route selection and field-testing, volunteer recruitment, equipment/ location, and advertising</p> <p><i>(8 weeks in advance or more)</i></p>				
WEEK 7					
WEEK 6	<p>Recruit event day volunteers</p> <p>» Contact local organizing, community groups, and parent teacher associations to recruit event volunteers.</p> <p><i>(4-6 weeks in advance)</i></p>	<p>Identify partners/ sponsors</p> <p>» Aim for one city dept partner and/ or a local advocacy group to help co-sponsor the event.</p>			
WEEK 5	<p>Plan, test, and refine route</p> <p>» Walk or bike your route before the even and use the LAUSD website as a resource for safe crossings in a school neighborhood or the National Safe Routes to School website, as well as local knowledge of busy streets for route selection.</p> <p><i>(5 weeks in advance)</i></p>	<p>Create flyers with event location/ route/ activities/ theme</p> <p>» Create a flyer to email and post at local businesses, schools, and centers to promote awareness of the event.</p> <p>» The route does not have to be on the flyer.</p>			
WEEK 4					
WEEK 3	<p>Promote event</p> <p>» Send the event information out via email, hard copy, social media, and create an event page on social media to gather an idea of the number of participants.</p>	<p>Finalize event volunteer roles and equipment</p> <p>» Assign roles to the event day volunteers and ensure everyone is clear on their roles. Refer to the Volunteer job descriptions sheet for more information</p>			
WEEK 2					
			Event day!		
WEEK 1					
	<p>Evaluate your event</p>				

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

POSITION	DESCRIPTION
Event Host	This volunteer will kick off the event. This can be filled by a special guest, local official, or other prominent member of the community if possible.
Ride/ Walk Marshall	This volunteer should know how to manage a group of people safely throughout the route. This person will be responsible for leading the group through the route, especially at crossings, and ensuring the group is safely maneuvering along the route.
Sign-In Coordinator/ Greeter	This volunteer will be stationed at a table ensuring all participants (and their parents) sign in to get an accurate count of individuals and maintain a contact list for future events. For most people, this volunteer will be the first point of contact and will also help people navigate on site.
First Aid Helper	This volunteer should be prepared to help individuals who may fall, trip, or have an accident during the event. A basic first aid kit should be available, and this person should be able to dress small cuts. This person will be responsible for seeking professional medical help should a serious accident occur.
Event Photographer	This volunteer will document the event and should be able to safely operate a camera while walking/bicycling.
Set Up/ Clean Up	Depending on the scale of the event, there may be someone tasked with setting up food, beverages, and decorations. If the event is large, ensure there are multiple volunteers in charge of food, drinks, and decorations.
Activity Leaders	If the event is coupled with a follow-up activity (e.g. face painting, community garden visit, Farmers' Market visit) ensure there is a volunteer to explain and lead the activity.

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST (FOR WALKING AND BICYCLING)

- High visibility vests for volunteers** — Neon and reflective vests on Bike/Walk Marshalls increase visibility for drivers and indicate the need for caution.
- Cargo bikes** — For bike events with many children present, cargo bikes, child seats, and trailers are useful to help children who may tire easily.
- Water and snacks** — Given the event involves physical activity, sufficient water should be provided for each participant. Healthy snacks are always great for after the walk/ride.
- Sign-in sheet** — A few sign-in sheets should be on hand to maintain a contact list of participants and garner interest for future events!
- Pens/pencils** — Don't forget to have extras for people to use to sign in.
- First aid kit** — First aid kits can be purchased at local drugstores, but should include band-aids, Neosporin, cleaning wipes, and other materials in case of emergency.
- Posters/signage** — This will help people find the meeting point, especially if the location is large and/or far away from the nearest parking lot.
- Music/speakers/microphone** — Depending on the expected size of the event, it will be helpful to have a microphone and speakers to kick off the event and present the safety tips.
- Table(s) and chairs** — If the meeting site does not have public benches, ensure at least two folding tables for check in and refreshments. Obtain a few chairs for the volunteers as well.

DAY OF EVENT CHECKLIST

- Ask volunteers to arrive 30 minutes early to set up any registration tables, refreshments, signage, greeting tables, and any other event-related tasks.
- Review the Safety Tips with volunteers and assign leader, assistant, and sweep positions to specific experienced volunteers.
- Ask someone to take photos or videos.
- Task someone with sign in and counting the number of participants.
- Optional: Have volunteers available to do bike checks; provide bagels, coffee, and water; face paint or decorations; special guest speech; and any prize drawings for an hour before the walk or ride starts.
- Ensure participants know when to start and where to go.
- Announce the event is starting (e.g. 10:15 a.m.), and have bike/walk marshalls at the beginning, middle, and end of the group to ensure help is evenly distributed.
- Review Safety Tips with the group.
- Begin event, and ensure safety along the route by having designated crossing assistants!
- Enjoy post event activities (lunch, snacks, raffle).
- Clean up.

MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT SAMPLE

_____ (community or group name) to host a Weekend Walk/Ride on _____ (date)

Los Angeles, CA _____ (date) - Students and their families and local community members from all over _____ (community name) will participate in a Weekend Walk/Ride on _____ (date). The local event, which is expected to draw over _____ (# of participants), is a chance for children to practice waiting for a signal and looking left and right before crossing the street.

The LADOT hopes to increase school and community awareness of the value of walking and bicycling, including regular physical activity, increased local pride, and better health. Many schools have held Safe Routes to School events and Walk/Bike to School Events in the past, and _____ (community) supports the goal of increasing active transportation. LADOT supports Weekend Walks and Rides as an important component of its Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan.

In addition to receiving planning support materials from LADOT, _____ (community) will be partnering with _____ (organization name), whose mission is _____ (related to walking/bicycling) safely across Los Angeles neighborhoods. They will provide support for the event by providing route planning services and event day staff.

Our event will start at 9 a.m. on _____ (date) at _____ (location). Bring your family, your bikes, and join us for a wonderful morning of touring through the community. We will finish up at the same location with refreshments and activities!

Date: _____

Time: _____

Who: _____

When: _____

Where: _____

For additional local information, please contact _____ (event organizer) at _____ (phone number).

SAFETY TIPS

The following safety tips should be shared in written or verbal form with participants at the start of the event. Note that they are useful to remember when you are walking or bicycling on your own as well!

- Be visible** — Wear bright colors in daytime. When dark, wear light-colored clothing and something with reflective material.
- Be predictable** — Walk on sidewalks, bike in bike lanes and paths, and stay in single-file if necessary.
- Make your own decisions** — Although this is a group walk or ride, we are not providing crossing aids. You are responsible to cross cautiously, and not rely on the person in front of you for your own safety.
- Cross safely** — Use designated crossing locations. Always stop at the curb edge or painted line. Look left, look right, and look left again. When it is clear, walk or bike cautiously and deliberately, looking for possible hazards the entire way.
- Be alert** — Make eye contact with drivers who may be turning. Watch for cars backing up.
- Don't walk or bike and talk (on a cell phone)** — If you must use a cell phone, stop walking and find a safe area to talk. If on a bike, pull over safely out of the bike lane and onto a location out of the roadway.

ADDITIONAL BIKE SAFETY TIPS

Ride predictably — Follow traffic laws (observe stop lights, stop signs, and other road-users' right-of-way).

Use hand-signals — Demonstrate how to signal left turn, right turn, and stopping/slowing); it's helpful to vocalize in congested situations (“turning” or “stopping!”).

Watch for car doors — Look through rear window of parked cars; is there a driver inside? Ride outside the open door zone.

Be aware of traffic at intersections — Each rider should decide for him or herself if safe to cross. Don't rely on other riders yelling “Clear” to decide when to go through.

Keep an eye on cars to your left — Watch front wheels to predict if they will turn (don't count on drivers to signal).

Pass cars on the left — There may be times when it's appropriate to pass cars on the right but Always use extreme caution.

Assign a sweep rider — Ensure a volunteer remains at the back of the group for those that are slower cyclists and may need a shortened route.

SPECIAL TIPS FOR GROUP RIDING

Ride single file — Generally stay in a line, on the right. On streets where traffic is light enough to ride side-by-side, yell “Car Back” and “Car Up” when necessary. This means get back into single file, and let the car pass (or get out of our way).

Call out hazards — Help your fellow riders by signaling road hazards. Point down or which side, and say out loud “gravel!” “glass!” or “grates!” If someone signals a road hazard always try to swerve away from traffic to avoid the hazard.

Announce when passing — When it's o.k. to pass another rider (or a pedestrian on a multi-use path), use an audible signal (“on your left” and/or ring your bell).

Stop with a buddy — If an individual rider needs to stop, he or she should alert a volunteer, pull over and out of the way.

Stay together — If a rider will leave the group early, let the ride leader or assistant know.

CONTACT INFORMATION

ORGANIZATION	CONTACT INFORMATION
C.I.C.L.E.	http://www.cicle.org/contact/ bike@cicle.org
Council District Directory	http://lacity.org/city-government/elected-official-offices/city-council/council-directory
Empower LA	http://empowerla.org/councils/
Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition	http://la-bike.org/about/staff
Los Angeles Department of Transportation	213-972-4962 ladot@lacity.org
Los Angeles Police Department	http://www.lapdonline.org/inside_the_lapd/content_basic_view/6279
Los Angeles Walks	http://www.losangeleswalks.org/contact/
Metro the Source	http://thesource.metro.net/email-the-source-2/
Safe Routes to School	http://saferoutescalifornia.org/about/
Streetsblog LA	Events@la.streetsblog.org

EVENT EVALUATION FORM

Documenting your experience can help others plan successful events. Please print and fill out this form, then mail it to the address below or scan and send it to info@walktoschoolday-la.org.

Name/ school/ class grade: _____

Where did you go? _____

Approximately how far did you go? _____

What was your child / chaperone ratio? Did the ratio feel manageable? How many students participated?

Did the event go as planned?

What went well?

What needs improvement?

Did you have any trouble with the routes you chose?

<p>ATTN: Margot Ocanas Los Angeles Department of Transportation 100 South Main Street 10th Floor Los Angeles, CA 90012</p>

USEFUL LINKS

Los Angeles Walks provides resources related to the California Vehicle Code as it relates to pedestrian activity. In particular, Los Angeles Walks provides guidance on situations related to pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. For more information, visit their website:

<http://www.losangeleswalks.org/resources/>

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation offers guidance on bicycle safety and transit education for schools. The website includes information on bicycling and motorist etiquette, safety tips, and even a bicycle safety quiz. For more information, visit:

http://www.bicyclela.org/Safety_Programs.htm

LADOT provides a list of government agencies and contacts that can prove useful for bicycling events, which includes bicycle advocacy organizations:

<http://www.bicyclela.org/Resources.htm>

The Walk to School Day Los Angeles website has a number of resources related to event planning and organizing. For a full spectrum of flyer samples, outreach newsletters, safety tips, and more, please visit:

<http://www.walktoschoolday-la.org/#organizer-resources>

Metro also has resources available on their website for teachers and principals related to Safe Routes to School. This past year, Metro began a pilot program for select schools, and will continue producing handouts and downloadable materials. These can be found here:

<http://www.metro.net/projects/srts/>

NOTES

