

Your five-step guide to creating

SAFE

ROUTES TO
EVERYDAY
DESTINATIONS

SAFE ROUTES TO EVERYDAY DESTINATIONS CURRICULUM



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment



COLORADO
Department of Transportation

Author

Kori Johnson, *Senior Program and Engagement Manager, Safe Routes Partnership*

Design by Matt Giraud, *Gyroscope Creative*

Published July 2026

Acknowledgements

The Safe Routes Partnership would like to extend our appreciation to the people who supported the development of this toolkit by sharing their knowledge and expertise, with a special thank you to our Colorado partners:

Darena Herschler, *Built Environment Coordinator, Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment*

Annelies Von Vonno, *Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Coordinator, Colorado Department of Transportation*

Maggie Brown, *Planner, Colorado Department of Transportation*

Neysa Bermingham, *Senior Planner, Colorado Department of Transportation*

The Safe Routes Partnership is a nonprofit organization working to advance safe walking and rolling to and from schools and in everyday life, improving the health and well-being for everyone, and building healthy, thriving communities for everyone.

This resource is provided by the Colorado Public Health and the Environment (CDPHE) through the State Physical Activity and Nutrition Grant funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Introduction

Welcome to the Colorado Safe Routes to Everyday

Destinations guide! This resource teaches you how to develop and promote activities that encourage people to walk, bike, and roll in their communities.

This guide will help you:

- **Understand Safe Routes to Everyday Destinations** and its benefits.
- **Identify opportunities** to boost physical activity and improve access to everyday destinations
- **Work with community partners** to improve routes to everyday destinations and identify policies for implementation
- **Develop a Safe Routes to Everyday Destinations quick win action plan**
- **Implement a quick win project** to improve routes to everyday destinations
- **Sustain your efforts** and create long-term change

How to Use this Guide

This resource outlines steps to advance Safe Routes to Everyday Destinations initiatives in your community. We recommend going through each step to get the most effective results, even if you're an experienced Safe Routes practitioner.

- **Step 1:** Learn the Basics of Safe Routes to Everyday Destinations
- **Step 2:** Learn from Your Community
- **Step 3:** Review Your Community's Plans
- **Step 4:** Plan and Implement a Safe Routes Quick Win Activity
- **Step 5:** Turn Your Quick Win into Long-Term Change

The guide also includes downloadable templates, worksheets, and project planning documents ranging from beginner to advanced levels. Choose the tools that work for you and customize them as needed.



Want to learn more about Safe Routes programs?

Check out our [Safe Routes to School](#) and [Safe Routes to Parks](#) resources!

Step 1

Learn the Basics of Safe Routes to Everyday Destinations

Let's start with the basics! This section provides an introduction to Safe Routes to Everyday Destinations. By the end of this section, you will have:

1. **Learned key terms** related to Safe Routes to Everyday Destinations
2. **Reviewed the benefits** of Safe Routes to Everyday Destinations
3. **Crafted a vision** for improving access to everyday destinations in your community
4. **Explained why Safe Routes to Everyday Destinations matter** to you and your community

What is an everyday destination?

An everyday destination is a place where people frequent in their daily lives. They usually provide goods, services, and programs that people rely on. Everyday destinations can include schools, parks, grocery stores or food sources, homes, libraries, jobs, hospitals and health centers, and transit stops. Everyday destinations keep communities running smoothly and ensure that people have what they need to live healthy, fulfilling lives. It is important that everyone be able to safely access these locations by all modes of travel.

What does a safe route to an everyday destination look like?

Safe routes have features that make it safe, easy, and enjoyable to walk, bike, roll, or use a mobility device to get to everyday destinations. This could include sidewalks, bike lanes, trees, shade, lighting, accessibility ramps, trails and paths, and beautification elements like public art. These features are part of the community's built environment. They make it easier for people to be physically active and increase access to everyday destinations.

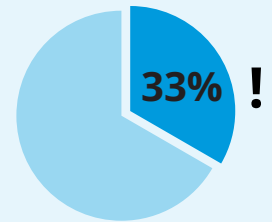
STEP 1 RESOURCE LIST:



Visioning activity instructions



Sensory details brainstorm sheet



Approximately 33% of U.S. residents are non-drivers, which includes children, older adults, people with disabilities, and people who do not have access to a personal vehicle. Safe Routes to Everyday Destinations makes it easier for non-drivers to move around their communities and increases access to essential services.

? Quick Check

What are some of the everyday destinations in your community? Why are they important? Learn more about how improving access to everyday destinations can boost physical activity.

Safe routes to everyday destinations are important because they:

- Provide opportunities to be physically active
- Increase access to healthy food options
- Increase access to essential goods and services
- Increase access to education, employment, healthcare, and recreation
- Increase social connections for people of all ages
- Infuse fun and joy into daily life

Safe Routes Vocabulary: Words You Need to Know

Safe routes activities can involve a lot of technical language. Here are three key terms you need to know:

- The **built environment** is the layout and design of a community's buildings, streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure, encompassing the spaces and places where people live, learn, work, play, and recreate. The built environment shapes daily experiences and can impact a person's physical, mental, and social well-being.
- **Physical activity** is any body movement that expends energy, ranging from low to high intensity. Physical activity can include walking, biking, dancing, participating in sports, and daily movements like performing household chores.
- **Active transportation** refers to human-powered mobility, including walking, biking, scooting, skateboarding, and the use of mobility devices. We also refer to this as "walking, biking, and rolling."

Envisioning Safe Routes to Everyday Destinations in Your Community

Imagine a community where people could walk, bike, and roll to everyday destinations. What would it look like? What would it feel like? What would be the benefits? How would it change the way people live and interact with each other?

Use the [Safe Routes to Everyday Destinations Visioning Activity](#) to help you:

- Envision what safe routes to everyday destinations could look like in your community
- Clearly identify your reasons for improving safe routes to everyday destinations.
- Understand how different people perceive safety and accessibility

Download
this tool



Safe Routes Across Colorado

In 2024, four communities participated in the [Safe Routes to Parks](#) Activating Communities Program. The City of Boulder, the Town of Paonia, the Town of Wellington, and the City of Wheat Ridge worked with state partners and the Safe Routes Partnership to improve safety access to local parks. [Read more](#) about how they took early action steps to create long-term change.



Step 2

Learn from Your Community

Hearing from community members is the first step in improving safety and access to everyday destinations. We call this process Community Research and Engagement. This section offers a mix of tools and resources that you can adapt to fit your needs, including a Community Research and Engagement worksheet. You can use whichever tools work best for you. By the end of this section, you will have:

- **Identified potential community partners**
- **Defined your Safe Routes community research question**
- **Selected a community engagement tool**
- **Implemented a simple community research activity**
- **Gathered and shared key takeaways**

Finding Your Community Partners

Safe Routes projects take teamwork. Local partners will bring additional knowledge, experience, and expertise that can strengthen your efforts. Make a list of community partners who you might want to engage in a Safe Routes activity. This [Safe Routes Community Partners list](#) shows how different people can help improve routes to everyday destinations.

Connect with different demographic groups to get a range of perspectives. Youth, older adults, and people with disabilities face the most challenges to walking, biking, and rolling, yet they are often overlooked in decision-making processes. Be sure to involve them in your Safe Routes activities, both as participants and as leaders and decision-makers.

For more information on how to deepen community involvement in Safe Routes initiatives, check out the [IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation](#) and [Colorado's Youth Engagement Continuum](#).

**Download
this tool**



STEP 2 RESOURCE LIST:



Safe Routes Community Partners list



Community Research and Engagement worksheet



Safe Routes Community Engagement cards



Safe Routes To Parks Walk Audit toolkit



Aarp Walk Audit toolkit



Walk Audit Next Steps guide



Want to learn more about community engagement?

Check out the [Working Together to Make Meaningful Change Community Engagement Guide](#).

Developing Your Community Research and Engagement Approach

Community research and engagement is important because it helps you make informed decisions. Understanding the local context and hearing a variety of perspectives will help ensure that your Safe Routes activities are benefitting the people who need them the most. To develop your unique approach to community engagement, you want to think through the following prompts, understand what you want to learn, and how you'll learn it.

- **I want to understand...**
- **My research question is...**
- **The best way to learn this is...**

Let's walk through some examples. Follow along using the [Community Research and Engagement worksheet](#).

**Download
this tool**



First, you want to figure out what you want to know or understand about walking and biking in your community.

For example:

- I want to know why people drive to Waverly Library instead of walking or biking.
- I want to know how to make it easier for kids and families to walk to Elkhorn Recreation Center.
- I want to gauge interest in developing a walking group for older adults in Elmhurst Park. What would make it safe and easy for people to participate?
- I want to know how to improve biking routes between Westwood Middle School, Westwood Library, and Ferndale Skate Park.
- I want to know why more people don't bike around downtown.

Then, turn your statement into a research question.

For example:

- Why are people driving to Waverly Library instead of walking or biking?
- How can we make it easier for kids and families to walk to Elkhorn Recreation Center?
- Would older adults be interested in joining a walking group at Elmhurst Park? What would make it safe and easy for people to participate?



- How can we improve the bike routes between Westwood Middle School, Westwood Library, and Ferndale Skate Park?
- How can we make downtown a safer, friendlier, easier place to walk and bike?

Lastly, decide how you will gather this information.

For example:

- The best way to learn this information is by doing outreach tabling at Waverly Library.
- The best way to learn this information is by doing a walk audit at Cedar Park.
- The best way to learn this information is by talking to residents at Florence Senior Center.
- The best way to learn this information is by spending an hour observing how people are traveling around Main Street.
- The best way to learn this information is by doing a survey at our town's annual Summer Fest.

Exploring Your Community

Another way to collect information is to go for a walk or bike ride around your community. This can be an informal walk and roll with a friend or an organized walk and roll audit. Getting outside will give you a sense of what feels safe and easy, what feels unsafe and difficult, and what needs improvement.

For an informal walk and roll:

- **Choose a destination.** Think of a place you usually go or a place where a lot of community members go — a park, library, coffee shop, Main Street, or grocery store. Consider walking from a neighborhood or walking a route that includes multiple destinations. For example, a library might be close to a park and a recreation center.
- **Grab a friend or community partner.** People will experience the route differently. Walk with someone else and compare notes on what feels safe and unsafe.
- **Go for a walk.** Plan a route in advance or choose your route as you go. Use it as an excuse to run an errand, visit your favorite coffee shop, or get some physical activity.
- **Take pictures.** Notice a street feature that you really like or something that you don't like? Snap a quick picture! Decision-makers like to see what's working well and what needs improvement.

Check out this list of community engagement resources for more ideas:

[Safe Routes Community Engagement Cards](#)

[Safe Routes to School Poster Survey](#)

[Neighborhood Walkability Checklist](#)

[Walk, Ride, and Roll Bingo](#)

[Safe Routes Caregiver Survey](#)

[Webinar Recording: Outreach Tabling Tips and Tricks](#)



- **Document key takeaways.** Jot down a few thoughts about your walk. You can do this during or afterward. Even informal notes and reflections can be helpful! This simple [neighborhood walkability checklist](#) makes it easy to take notes along the way.

A formal walk audit requires additional planning and coordination, but it's worth it! A walk audit is a more technical, robust assessment of walking, biking, and rolling routes. It includes a predetermined route, formal observations, is usually done in a group, and provides feedback that can be incorporated into planning documents, grant applications, or even safe route mapping.

Documenting and Sharing What You Learned

Once you complete an activity, summarize key takeaways and share highlights from what you learned.

1. **Find the biggest issues.** Look for the problems most people agree on (like unsafe crossings, missing sidewalks). Highlight the top three to five issues.
2. **Look at location patterns.** See if certain streets or areas show more concerns than others. You can create a list or a map of locations.
3. **Notice differences in experience.** Compare data and responses across different groups, such as kids, older adults, or people with disabilities. Note what is similar and what is different.
4. **Add quotes and photos.** Use short participant quotes and include photos from walk audits and engagement activities to show what people are experiencing.
5. **Keep it actionable.** Summarize your information as
 - a. Top concerns
 - b. What is working
 - c. What could improve
6. **Share your findings with the community.** Highlight on social media, local news media (newspaper, radio, TV), e-newsletters, and community information boards. Focus your summary on
 - a. What you did
 - b. What you learned
 - c. What comes next
 - d. How they can get involved



These resources will help you organize and lead a walk audit:

Safe Routes to Parks Walk Audit Toolkit –

[English Version / Spanish Version](#)

[AARP Walk Audit Toolkit](#)

[Factsheet: Next Steps After Conducting a Walk Audit](#)

Community partners can help coordinate a walk audit. Reach out to your local transportation/ planning department, public health department, or Safe Routes to School Coordinator for assistance.

Step 3

Review Your Community's Plans

Your community might already have plans to improve safety and access to everyday destinations. This section helps you find these plans and align them with your Safe Routes goals. By the end of this section, you will have:

- **Found and reviewed your community's plans**
- **Figured out how your Safe Routes goals align with existing plans**

Finding Community Plans

Work with your partners to find your community's plans. Here are some that might already exist:

- Pedestrian plan
- Bicycle plan
- Comprehensive plan or Master Plan
- Vision Zero Plan
- Complete Streets Plan
- Safe Routes to School Plan
- Complete Streets Policy
- School/School District Wellness Policy
- Shared-use policies
- Zoning regulations

STEP 3 RESOURCE LIST:

-  [ACT Modules/Action Planning Guide](#)
-  [Active Communities Assessment Modules](#)
-  [Active Communities Assessment Worksheet](#)



Bicycle, pedestrian, or active transportation plan — A formal, strategic planning document that outlines policies, infrastructure improvements, and programs for how a state or region will improve and expand safe, accessible ways for people to walk, bike, and use other non-motorized transportation options.

Reviewing Community Plans

Planning documents can be tricky to understand, so it's best to review them with a team. Your community partners can help locate planning documents, explain what is in them, and identify opportunities to improve routes to everyday destinations. A comprehensive review will give the most complete picture of what is happening in your community. The [Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules](#) assess the strengths and weaknesses of a community's plans. It includes six self-assessment modules and moves towards creating a [built environment action plan](#). For a simpler version, use this [Active Communities Assessment worksheet](#) to review your community's plans. Choose whichever tool works best for you and your community partners.

Download
this tool



Step 4

Plan and Implement a Quick Win Activity

Creating a Safe Routes Action Plan will help you identify short-term and long-term steps to improving walking and biking and increasing physical activity. Your action plan will also help you narrow down your priorities and set realistic goals. If your community is ready to develop a robust action plan, these resources will help you:

- [The Active People, Healthy Nation Active Communities Tool Action Planning Guide](#)
- [Colorado Safe Routes to School Action Plan Webinar Recordings](#)
- [Connecting People to Parks: A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces](#)
- Visit the [Safe Routes to Parks](#) webpage for sample action plans, resources, tools, case studies, and more!

If you want to start simple, this section shows how to develop a basic action plan to achieve a short-term “quick win” goal. By the end of this section, you will have:

- **Identified a quick win activity**
- **Developed a quick win action plan**

Follow along using the [Quick Win Action Plan template](#).

Download
this tool



1 Write a list of key themes and priorities based on your community research. This can include:

- Feedback from community engagement activities
- Walk audit results
- Plan and policy scan highlights
- Anecdotal data
- Photos and videos

STEP 4 RESOURCE LIST:



Quick Win Action
Plan template



2 Determine what information is missing or what you want to know more about. Refer to your community research notes.

- Is there an audience you haven't engaged yet? (Ex. I want to hear more from high school students about how they are accessing the local park)
- Is there a topic area or theme you want to learn more about? (Ex. I want to know more about improving safety and accessibility for people with disabilities)
- Is there something you don't understand that requires further explanation? (Ex. I don't understand why we can't have a traffic light in front of the elementary school despite all the safety concerns from students and caregivers.)

3 Brainstorm "quick wins" you could achieve in the next three to six months. Need an activity idea? Here are five quick wins that work!

- Host a Walk, Bike, and Roll event. Encourage people to walk or bike to a specific location (e.g., a school, park, library, or recreation center).
 - [Walk and Roll to School Day Resources](#)
 - [Bike and Roll to School Day Resources](#)
- Launch a public messaging campaign. Share walking and biking safety tips, recommended routes, and encourage physical activity through social media, print media, newsletters/flyers, and signage.
- Team up for a Learn-to-Ride event. Work with your local bike shop or bike advocacy organization to host a bike rodeo or bike skills training. This activity can be designed for kids or adults.
- Plan a pop-up. Is there an unused or underused space in your community (park, plaza, town square)? Pilot a pop-up event that will bring people to that space. Test out temporary seating, bike and scooter parking, flower planters, public art, and fun activities.
- Implement a quick build demonstration project. Quick builds test out temporary, low-cost infrastructure to improve safety and accessibility. They are a great way to promote physical activity and drum up community interest. Quick builds can also lead to long-term, permanent changes. This [quick build demonstration project guide](#) offers practical tips, strategies, and project examples.



4 Select a quick win idea from your list. Remember, quick wins are meant to be quick! Start with something small, simple, and within your capacity.

- What can be implemented quickly, easily, and at little to no cost?
- Which idea has strong community support?
- Who will benefit from this quick win?
- How will this quick win make it safer and easier to walk and bike to an everyday destination?
- What do you hope this quick win will accomplish?

5 Create a list of community partners and resources you need to achieve your quick win. Remember to use your Safe Routes Community Partners list to determine who might be interested and who might be able to help or contribute to your activity.

6 Decide how you will evaluate success. Choose a simple metric that will be easy to collect.

- Participation numbers
- Participant survey
- Comment box or comment board

7 Draft a list of five to ten action steps to complete your quick win. Each step should include:

- Action step
- Person responsible
- Due date
- Resources needed
- Status — Not Started, In Progress, Complete

Next Steps After a Quick Win

Debrief with your team and pull-out key takeaways.

- What went well? Any memorable moments?
- What can be improved next time?
- What did you learn about your community?

✓ Quick Win Pro Tips

Plan activities that people can do with friends and family.

Add “bring a friend” to your promotional materials. You can also market your activity as an opportunity to meet new people.

Take pictures and videos.

This will make it easier to share your quick win with community members, elected officials, and funders. This is a great role for a high school student, volunteer, or communications team.

Make it fun!

Think about ways to infuse joy into your activity. Play live music. Hire a local artist to paint planters with participants. Host your activity as part of a larger event like a town fair, festival, summer movie night, or cultural celebration.

- What are 2-3 things you can do to improve access to everyday destinations in the next 30 days? (Ex. Put more trashcans in the park. Print more walking maps and distribute them to local businesses. Follow up with the Parks and Rec department to schedule a walk audit).
- What long-term changes need to be implemented?

Share highlights with the community.

- Post a short highlight reel on social media. Ask your community partners to share and post their own content.
- Share a recap in the newspaper, radio, or TV station. A local media partner can write a feature on your activity.
- Follow up with your elected officials. Share photos, quotes or community feedback, and invite them to your next event.



Step 5

Turn Your Quick Win into Long-Term Change

Quick win activities are just the beginning. This section lays out how to turn your quick wins into long-term change. By the end of this section, you will have:

- **Identified 2-3 steps you can take that will lead to long-term change**

Use data to advocate for change. Data is one of the most powerful tools for influencing decision-makers to invest in Safe Routes projects. Sharing survey results, participation numbers, community comments, walk audit results, and photos can lead to investments in walk and roll programs, infrastructure, and Safe Routes supportive elements (bike racks, bike storage, public art, green space and landscaping, etc). If you're not sure how to connect with elected officials, a local advocacy organization, government agency, or community leader can make the introduction. You can also use these [email templates](#) to reach out to local decision-makers.

Get involved in local planning. Your community might be making plans to improve access to everyday destinations, including changes to the built environment. If your community is developing or updating a plan, provide feedback during meetings and public comment periods. If you want to be more involved, join a planning stakeholder committee or task force to provide more input. For more information on policy change, check out the [Safe Routes to School District Policy Workbook](#) — also applicable to everyday destinations!

STEP 5 RESOURCE LIST:

-  Outreach email template
-  CDC Action Plan guide
-  CDOT SRTS action plan webinar recordings
-  Safe Routes to Parks Action Framework
-  Safe Routes to Parks webpage



Turn your quick-win data into policy change

Learn how community members in [Wheat Ridge](#) and [Boulder](#) turned their quick win data into policy change and long-term investments in Safe Routes to Parks.

Organize or participate in a Safe Routes working group. A working group can set goals, define roles and responsibilities, plan and implement events, and promote Safe Routes within the community. Try making it a light commitment to increase the chances of people participating. Suggest an occasional check-in with a few partners to share updates and discuss next steps. You can also make it fun! Meet up at a local park, library, or café to test Safe Routes to Everyday Destinations in real time!

Make a long-term action plan. A Safe Routes action plan lays out your community's approach to improving access to everyday destinations. It can be specific to one location, like a park, or community-wide. Safe Routes action plans are not focused on a single activity but provide a broad roadmap to long-term change. When you are ready, work with your partners to develop the right kind of action plan for your community. There are lots of resources to help you!

Keep looking for quick wins. Safe Routes projects can take time, especially if you are improving infrastructure. Long project timelines leave communities feeling frustrated and disengaged. Continue implementing quick wins as you work towards long-term change. Consistent quick win activities keep people excited and engaged and keep Safe Routes as a priority.

Find Moments of Joy and Connection. Creating safe, accessible, active communities takes time, planning, and a lot of heart. A quick win is not the end of the work; it's proof that people care and that small steps can build support for bigger changes. It's also a reminder of what is possible when people work together.

Stay connected to your community, listen to people's concerns, approach challenges with an open mind, and let the joy of safe routes fuel you for the work ahead.

Action Plan Resources to help build change for your community:

[The Active People,
Healthy Nation Active
Communities Tool Action
Planning Guide](#)

[Colorado Safe Routes to
School Action Plan
Webinar Recordings](#)

[Connecting People to
Parks: A Toolkit to
Increase Safe and
Equitable Access to Local
Parks and Green Spaces](#)

[Safe Routes to School
District Policy Workbook](#)

Visit the [Safe Routes to
Parks](#) webpage for sample
action plans, resources,
tools, case studies, and
more!



SAFE

ROUTES TO
EVERYDAY
DESTINATIONS

