



# Safe Routes to School 5 Year Action Plan 2019-2024

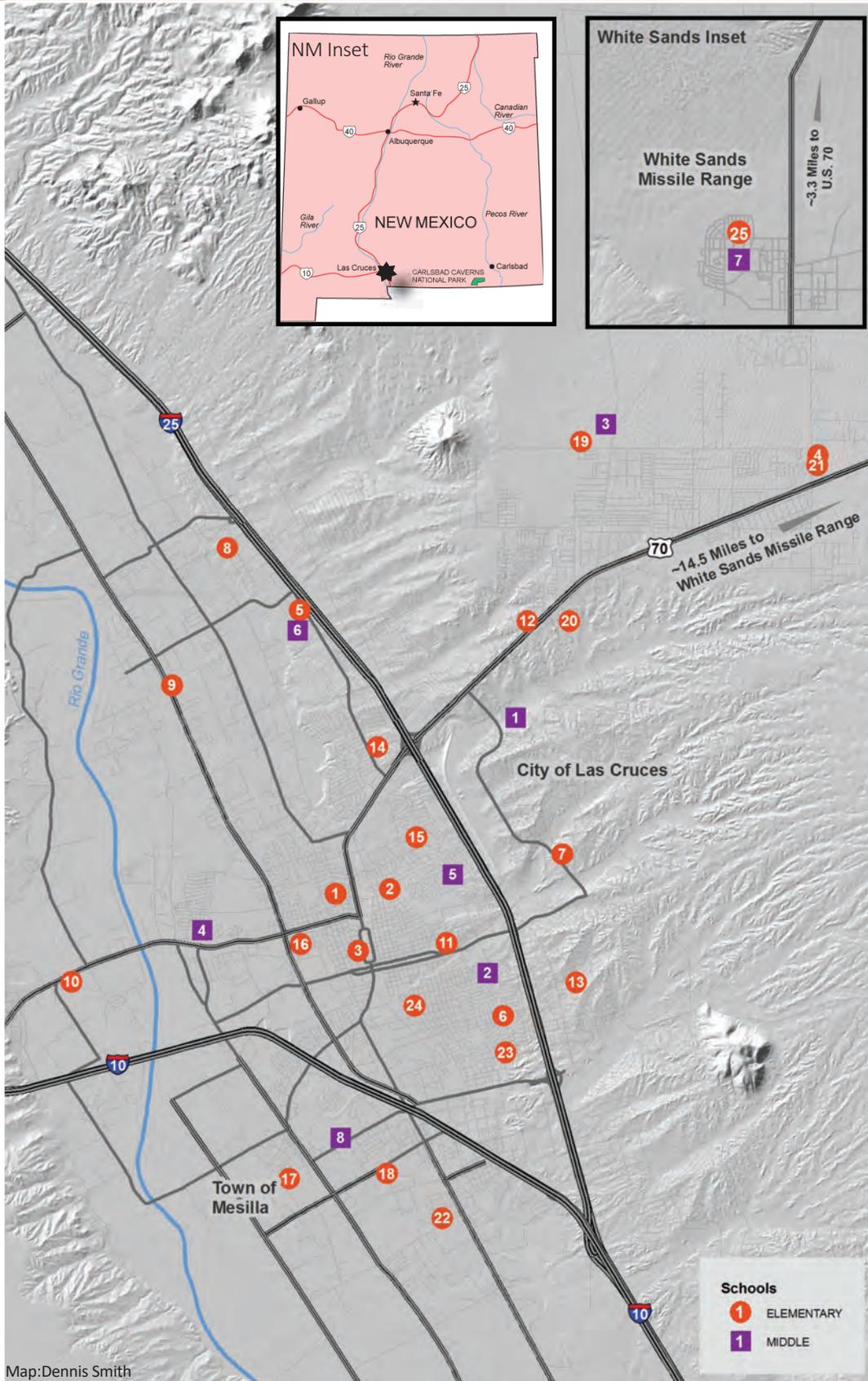


## VISION

**We envision** safe and active school communities, where walking and biking are seen as safe, convenient and fun.

## MISSION

**Safe Routes to School** will activate communities by supporting education, programs, planning, and infrastructure.



## Elementary Schools

1. Alameda
2. Booker T. Washington
3. Central
4. César E. Chávez
5. Columbia
6. Conlee
7. Desert Hills
8. Doña Ana
9. East Picacho
10. Fairacres
11. Hermosa Heights
12. Highland
13. Hillrise
14. Jornada
15. Loma Heights
16. MacArthur
17. Mesilla
18. Mesilla Park
19. Monte Vista
20. Sonoma
21. Sunrise
22. Tombaugh
23. University Hills
24. Valley View
25. White Sands

## Middle Schools

1. Camino Real
2. Lynn
3. Mesa
4. Picacho
5. Sierra
6. Vista
7. White Sands
8. Zia

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Image: Courtesy of Bill McCamley



## Letter from Bill McCamley

Cabinet Secretary for Department of Workforce Solutions  
Former New Mexico State Representative, District 33

**“This plan will guide new investments in critical areas that will make it safer and easier to walk and bike to school.”**

As a Las Cruces resident that regularly commutes by bicycle, and as a regular participant in yearly efforts to get elementary students to bike and walk to school, I recognize that the establishment of safe routes for students to get to school using these methods needs to be a priority. Therefore, to build a culture that values these methods of transportation, I completely support the SRTS Action Plan for 2019.

This plan will guide new investments in critical areas that will make it safer and easier to walk and bike to school. It not only reviewed the type of infrastructure needed around schools, but developed plans addressing the biggest school safety needs. These improvements will expand existing safe routes and benefit everyone who travels near our schools.

Improving safety will take partnerships with other agencies, neighborhoods, school communities, and everyone traveling on our streets. If implemented actively, this plan can bring safety education to every elementary school student in the city, continually improve our streets, and use the latest design innovations to ensure the safety outcomes we want.

Las Cruces is a safe city, but we can always do better. If those routes are provided, then our kids' health and our environment can benefit from these forms of transportation. Let's look out for each other, and continue working to build a safe, healthy, and vibrant future.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Bill McCamley*

*Former New Mexico State Representative, District 33*



Image: Ashleigh Curry

**“The MPO and SRTS along with its partners will continue to advance partnerships and improve conditions”**

## Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

Welcome to the 2019 Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Safe Routes to School Action Plan. This Plan will guide new investments to make it even safer and easier to walk and bike to school.

The Mesilla Valley MPO supports all modes of transportation and users, but our most vulnerable users are pedestrians, more specifically school children. As a result, the MPO continues to support the local SRTS program which continues to educate and encourage students to walk and bike to school. The SRTS program focuses on promoting the 6 “E”s as outlined by the National Center for Safe Routes to School: Evaluation, Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Equity.

The MPO, which is a multi-jurisdictional planning agency, plays a vital role in coordinating partners to address the number of shared issues that impact connectivity in our communities. Issues such as: infrastructure, crosswalks, school zones and traffic, all which can hinder active transportation. The MPO and SRTS program working with local partners can address these issues with both policy change and infrastructure investment.

The purpose of this Action Plan is to provide a specific framework to achieve the goals and actions of each “E” and to further develop school and infrastructure assessment strategies. Thus, it aims to provide a framework to guide short, medium and long-term investments.

Additions to the current Action Plan includes adding Evaluation and Equity to the list of “E”s. The addition of Evaluation is perhaps the most important “E” as it monitors the success of the SRTS program and directs programmatic change to address the needs of communities. Equity is a recent addition to the National Center’s approach that seeks to reverse adverse health outcomes for lower income areas. SRTS will incorporate the values of equity within the other “E”s. These additional “E”s align with both the “Safe, Accountable, Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A legacy for Users”-(SAFETEA-LU) and Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act-(FAST). As a result, this Action Plan aims to establish methods for data collection and measurement that support the SRTS vision.

The MPO and SRTS along with its partners will continue to advance partnerships and improve conditions for all modes of transportations and users.

*Thanks,  
Andrew Wray  
Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization  
MPO Officer*

## Letter from SRTS Coordinator

It has been a pleasure to watch SRTS evolve from an idea and a pilot program, to a dozen years later, a respectable, full fledged program that is active in all 25 elementary schools at Las Cruces Public Schools.

I've had an opportunity to look carefully at our successes and our challenges and have tried to understand what has been the cause of both. We've taken our 2018 comprehensive program evaluation into consideration as we move forward into our next 5 years.

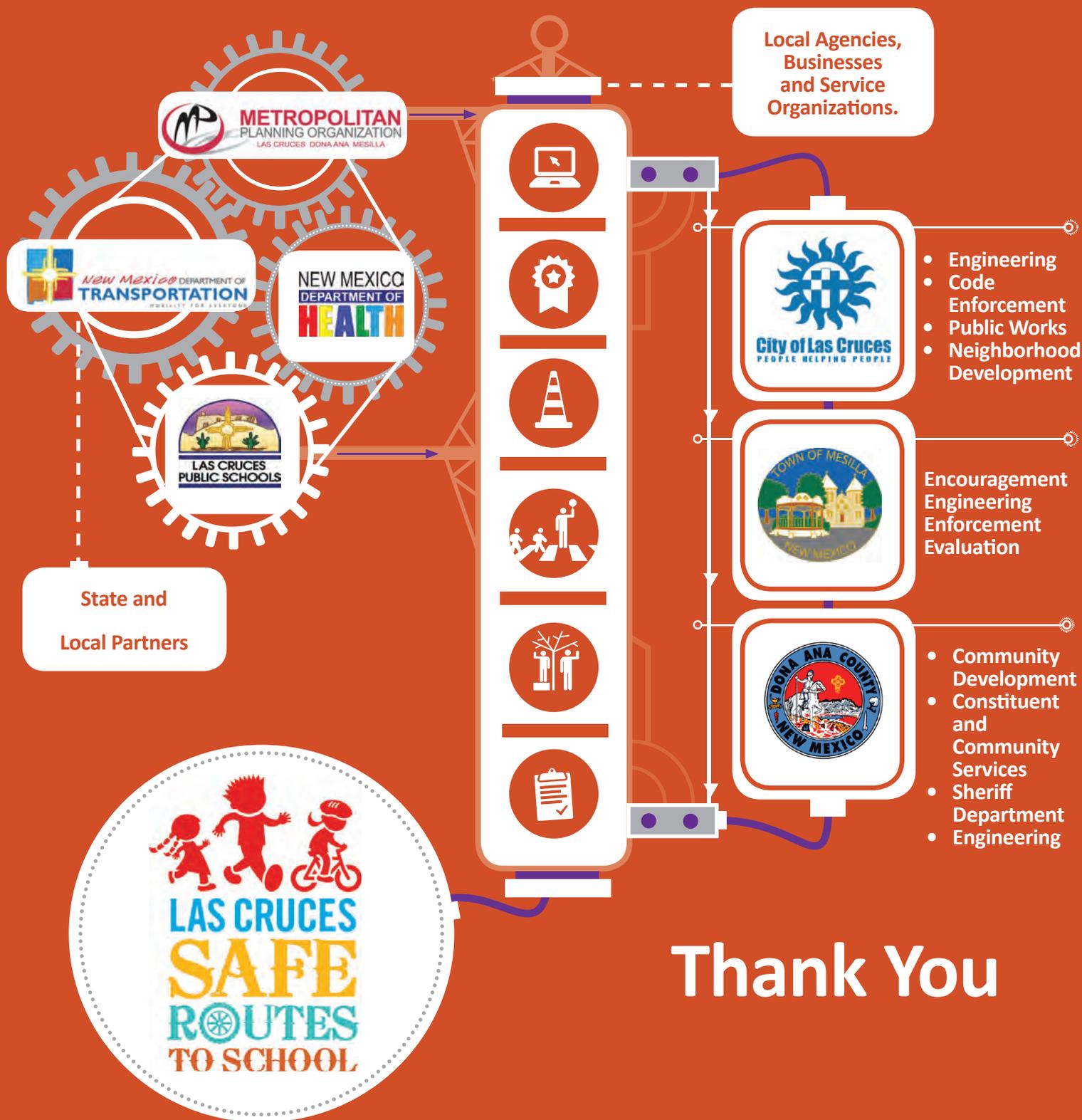
It is easy to say that our success is largely based on the strength of our partnerships. Las Cruces Public Schools, the NM Department of Transportation, Mesilla Valley MPO, Doña Ana County, the City of Las Cruces, the Town of Mesilla, the NM Department of Health, elected officials, law enforcement agencies and of great importance, our community of students, parents and teachers have all played an essential role in contributing valuable elements to the program. **We are all working on the common goal of healthy, safe and fun active transportation for the youth in our community.** SRTS has served as a platform for communication among all these agencies and **we offer channels of communication between agencies that might not otherwise happen.** Our program ties in with planning documents such as Complete Streets, Viva Doña Ana, Plan4LasCruces, League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly Community designation, and the City of Las Cruces' Active Transportation Plan. The school district has embraced the SRTS program, including it in our School Wellness Policy and our Transportation Policy.

Active transportation has a multitude of benefits from health and wellness, to reduced traffic, to community building and economic development. Our government and our community have committed to making Las Cruces a great place to walk and bike. We know that kids who bike and walk tend to be adults who bike and walk. As our governing agencies adapt current infrastructure to be walk and bike friendly, we are changing the mindset of our citizens. We are educating our children to be safe and responsible commuters, we are sharing the joys of walking and biking, and we're weaving the Safe Routes to School program into a multitude of partner's programs. We've set our focus on equity, ensuring that all sectors of our community receive the infrastructure and services that they need to make walking and biking the easy choice. Change isn't easy and it's often not linear, but we believe that if everyone takes a part in the success of our program, everyone wins. Our goal is to see more children walking and biking to school in Las Cruces.

*Ashleigh Curry  
Safe Routes to School Coordinator  
Las Cruces Public Schools*

**“It is easy to say that our success is largely based on the strength of our partnerships.”**

# Safe Routes To School is **activated** by its key partnerships



# PROGRAM TIMELINE

The SRTS program evolved from a single pilot program into a robust program serving all elementary schools within LCPS, utilizing multiple funding sources, partnerships with local agencies, evaluation component and funding infrastructure and safety improvements.

First SRTS Steering Committee Meeting (Sept 2005)

Pilot Program Funding- Hillrise Elementary (2006)

NMDOT/MVMPO hired a SRTS Planner (2009)

Pilot Program funding through NMDOT/Town of Mesilla for Mesilla Elementary (2010)

NMDOT/MVMPO Funding Part-time Coordinator (2010)

First SRTS Action Plan (Feb 2012)

First SRTS Coalition Meeting with local partners (2012)

New Mexico Department of Health funds two half-time SRTS Champions (2013)

SRTS Program offered to all 25 LCPS schools (2013/2014)

A majority of LCPS elementary schools participated in International Walk to School Day (2014)

City of Las Cruces received 500k for SRTS infrastructure improvements projects (2014)

First Participation in National Bike to School Day (2014)

SRTS Action Plan update committee formed with local partners (2016)

Funded an independent auditor for a SRTS Program Evaluation (2018)

NMDOT continued funding SRTS through 2022 (2019)

# DESIRED OUTCOMES

Increase bicycle and pedestrian trips to and from school

Increase education and knowledge of rights and responsibilities of all road users

Plan school sites that encourage active transportation

Encourage healthy lifestyles

Increase sense of community and engagement

Increase traffic safety

Decrease traffic congestion.

Improve pedestrian and bicycle access

Create connectivity to multi-use trails and bike lanes

Improve air quality

Reduce fuel consumption

Improve childhood health

Reduce obesity

Continue to learn and grow our program by working with other communities

Offer our knowledge and experience to other communities working on similar issues



Mesilla Elementary students during International Walk to School Day, with former State Representative Bill McCamley and Ernie Viramontes-LCPS Athletic Director.

Image:Charlene Curry

# WALKING AND BIKING TO SCHOOL IN LAS CRUCES

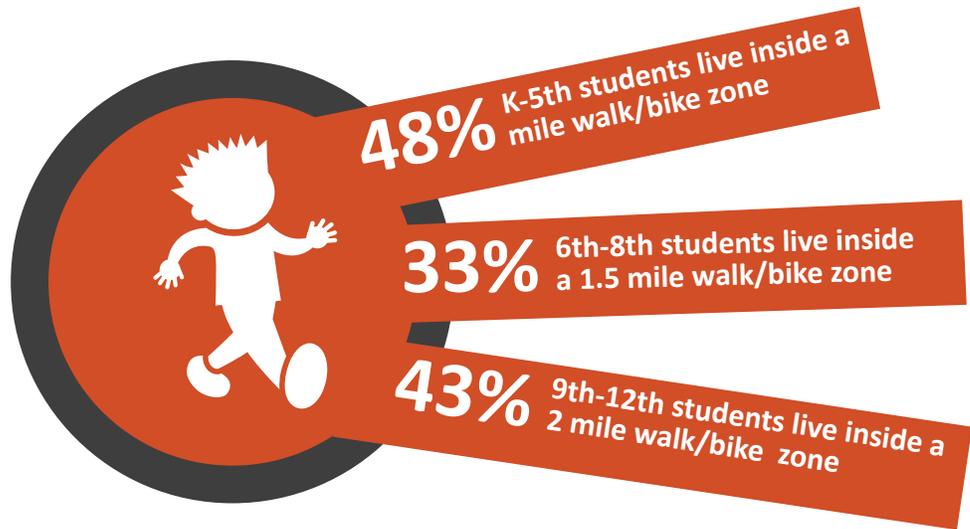
22,936  
student walkers



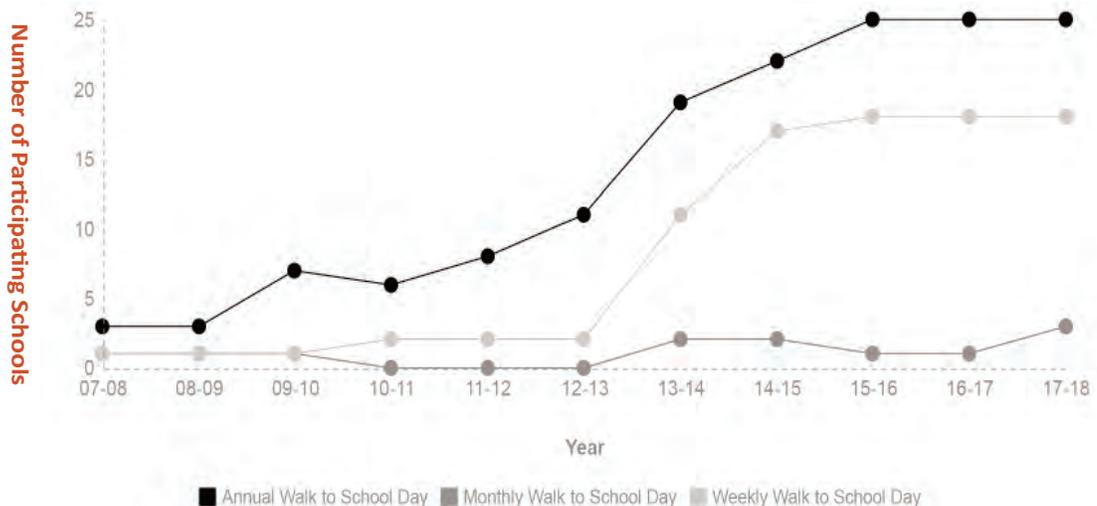
1,367  
student bicyclists



**\$500k** NMDOT invested in school area infrastructure since 2014.



**25 out of 25**  
**Elementary Schools**  
participated in SRTS 2017-2018



## Guiding Documents

The SRTS Action Plan Committee developed this Action Plan in conjunction with three key SRTS documents including the 2012 Action Plan, SRTS 2018 Program Evaluation and the SRTS Toolkit. These guiding documents inform and assist in further developing the SRTS program based on documented successes, failures and more importantly data.

## Previous Action Plan

The previous Action Plan for Safe Routes to School has been an adopted MPO document since February 2012. The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program has gained attention nationwide as a result of positive trends recorded in active transportation, health, safety and sustainability. The Las Cruces Safe Routes to School (LC SRTS) program has been in existence since September of 2005.

## Current Action Plan

This current Action Plan is influenced by the previous Action Plan, SRTS program evaluation and experience over the past decade. Our Action Plan update committee met regularly to review and share insights to better guide development of this plan and our work moving forward.

## Program Evaluation Plan

The SRTS program has been evaluated by an independent third party. We utilized this evaluation method to provide an objective review of our data, identify gaps in data and showcase data trends. Our 2018 Evaluation tracked parent surveys, student travel tallies, and walking school bus and bike train statistics. We continue to learn from statistics and data.

## SRTS Toolkit

To support our Action Plan, we will continue to expand the SRTS Toolkit. This toolkit is a living document that will evolve and change as our program grows. This toolkit can be shared with a new school, a new principal or walking school bus leader, or could be shared with another community who is looking for concrete “how-to’s” on starting a program. We will continue to document all that we’ve done to make our program and other SRTS programs successful.



Here are several documents which reference our Safe Routes to School program. Links to these documents will be available via webpage:  
[www.lcps.net/public-safety/safe-routes-to-school/](http://www.lcps.net/public-safety/safe-routes-to-school/)

- Complete Streets Resolutions
- Plan4Las Cruces/ Plan 2040
- Las Cruces Active Transportation Plan
- Comprehensive Plan Viva Doña Ana
- NMDOT’s Plan 2040
- LCPS Wellness Policy
- LCPS Transportation Policy

## **SRTS FUNDING AND FEDERAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The 2005 Federal Transportation Authorization Bill, SAFETEA-LU, was the first time federal legislation that provided funding for SRTS activities. With MAP-21, the specific SRTS stand-alone program was combined with several other programs into the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The FAST Act continues this trend and all SRTS activities eligible under MAP-21 are eligible under the FAST Act. The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) receives approximately \$6M per year in TAP funding through the FAST Act. This funding is allocated by population and is awarded via a statewide competitive call for projects once every two years. SRTS activities eligible under TAP include: SRTS coordinators, planning, design, and construction of infrastructure supporting non-motorized forms of transportation to include: sidewalks, multi-use paths, bicycle lanes, pedestrian and bicycle signals, lighting, and other safety related infrastructure.

## **POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES**

Moving forward, LC SRTS will seek every opportunity to leverage innovative funding sources to support Safe Routes to Schools. These funding sources include potential partnership opportunities. We will continue to work with our partners to submit grant applications where collaboration is beneficial.

We will look at innovative funding practices of other successful programs around the country. Local grants such as Las Cruces Public Schools Foundation, the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico and Paso del Norte Foundation could be considered to fund parts of the program, program activities and equipment.

## SRTS COALITION

The guiding body for the Las Cruces Safe Routes to School program is the SRTS Coalition. This group meets monthly and is comprised of representative partners from LCPS, the Department of Health, Doña Ana County, Las Cruces Police Department, Codes Enforcement, City Engineering, Crossing Guard Supervisor, Doña Ana Metropolitan Planning Organization, Velo Cruces, SRTS Volunteers, and Safe Routes to School Staff. On occasion we have guest attendees or speakers. We welcome other interested parties. We discuss Engineering, Enforcement, Education, Encouragement, Evaluation, Equity issues pertaining to the program.

## PARTNERS

The SRTS program has a number of local partners, beyond those who serve on the Coalition. These partners include the local bike shop, the school bus company, service organizations, NMSU Athletic Department, Public Health students, Burrell College of Medicine, non-profits and other agencies with similar and overlapping missions. We collaborate in numerous and creative ways to support each other and our programs. We have learned that strong partnerships are the key to our success.

## VOLUNTEERS

Our program relies heavily on volunteers. Our weekly Walking School Buses and Bike Trains require a good ratio of students to adults, and we appreciate the many school staff members, parents and community volunteers who make our events safe and successful. In addition, events are volunteer intensive and we depend on the generosity of our community.



# STAFFING

Since 2013, three part-time grant funded LC SRTS staff, working together with our partners, have achieved great success in growing a robust program. We've seen our numbers of participants soar. Our coordinator and champions have conducted parent surveys and student travel tallies at elementary schools. They serve as liaisons between students, families and schools, and the coalition group. These staff are Las Cruces Public Schools temporary employees. Without the staff, the reach of the program would be hindered. With the continued trajectory of growth, the need for additional staffing will become necessary.

## SRTS Coordinator

The 25-hour a week NMDOT grant funded SRTS Coordinator oversees the program at all schools. In addition, they perform the duties of a Champion at 9 of the elementary schools. This position coordinates the SRTS Coalition and communicates with city, county and town governments on engineering and enforcement issues. Additionally, this position creates and updates the SRTS curriculum.

## SRTS Champions

Two 20-hour per week Champions coordinate with 8 schools to oversee the implementation of the 6'e's of the SRTS program. They oversee Walking School Buses, volunteers and stipend staff for each school. See the SRTS Toolkit for a complete job description.

## SRTS Stipend positions

A staff person at each of the weekly schools is offered a small stipend to lead the weekly walks, help promote the program and special events, record the number of participants and report this to their Champion monthly. These positions are essential, as our small staff can't be at each school every month.



Image: Community member

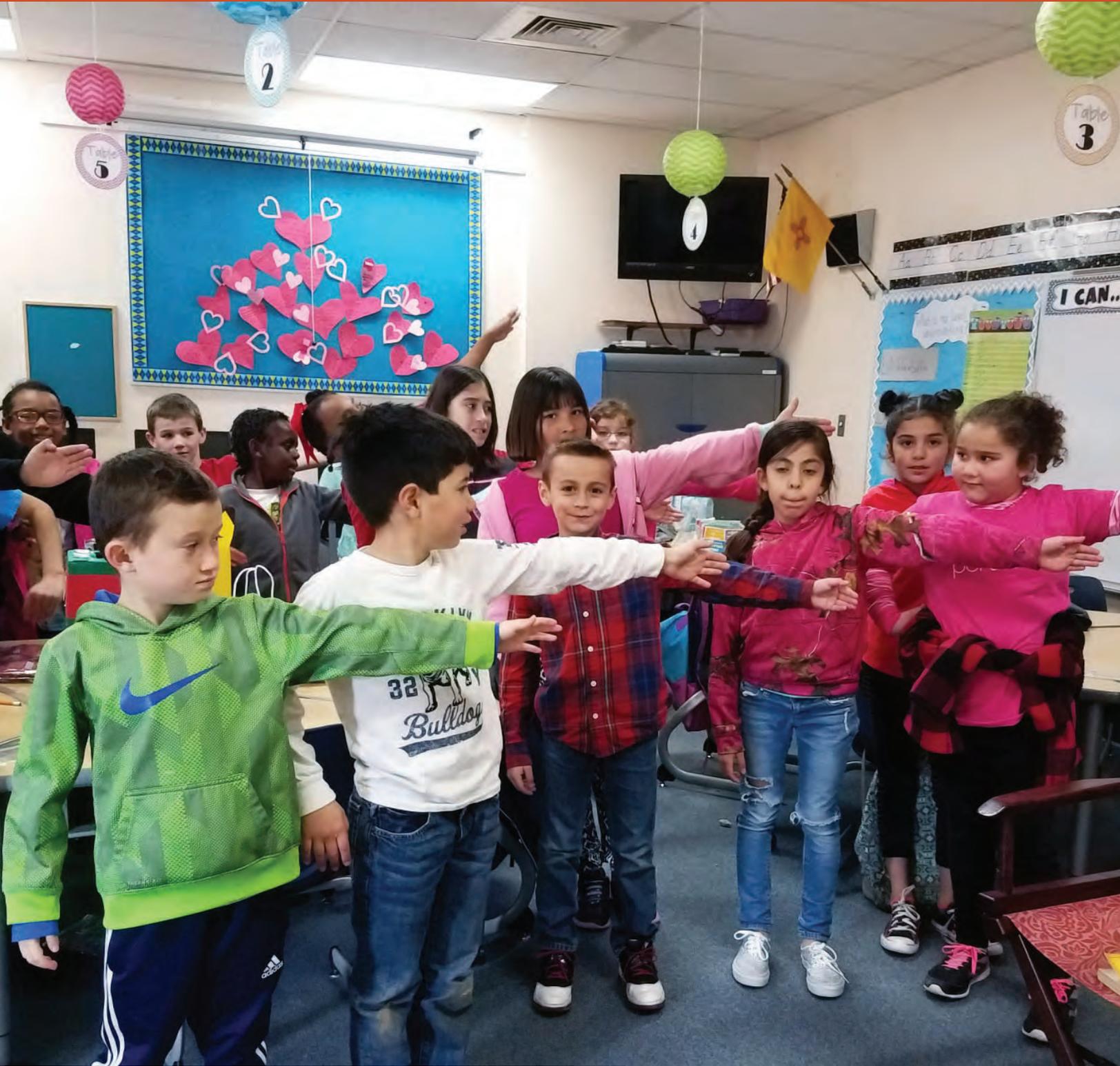
## Six “E”s of SRTS

### THE SIX “E”S OF SRTS

The Six E’s of Safe Routes to School summarize the key components of a comprehensive, integrated approach. The following sections of the document will explore each of the 6 “E”s in further depth and will outline our accomplishments so far as well as our future goals. Specific samples of each of these items can be found in the SRTS Toolkit.

	<b>EDUCATION</b>	Ensuring that everyone learns how to travel safely
	<b>ENCOURAGEMENT</b>	Promoting walking and biking in the school community
	<b>ENGINEERING</b>	Building projects such as new sidewalks, safer crosswalks, and improved streets for vulnerable users
	<b>ENFORCEMENT</b>	Partnering with local law enforcement agencies to enforce traffic safety laws
	<b>EQUITY</b>	Providing resources to disadvantaged schools and populations
	<b>EVALUATION</b>	Tracking progress toward our shared safety goals

EDUCATION



3rd graders learning cycling hand signals at Hillrise Elementary.



# EDUCATION

## **Why is Education important?** *Education ensures everyone learns to travel safely.*

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) “Pedestrian and bicycle collisions, like other road traffic crashes, should not be accepted as inevitable because they are both predictable and preventable.” As navigation skills improve, students can have more independence and can safely enjoy more time being a part of their community. If they learn these skills as youth, they will be better drivers and will be more aware of the multiple modes of transportation as they become drivers. We can change the way people see the street at all ages.

Achieving our goals in education means that every child and community member learns to travel safely whether choosing active or vehicular transportation. The school community includes students, staff, parents, caregivers, neighbors and businesses. Community members play a large role in shaping road safety near schools, especially during student arrival and dismissal. We offer programs to teach kids how to walk and bike safely, encourage active travel, and promote safe driving behaviors in the school community. See the SRTS Toolkit for the complete curriculum. The SRTS program offers the following education initiatives:

- The SRTS staff, together with school Physical Education teachers, teach a four part bike/pedestrian curriculum to 3rd grade students. In 2018/2019 we reached all 25 elementary schools.
- Students learn from participating in weekly walking and biking events with SRTS.
- During the annual Family Bike Fiesta, students and parents are educated on safe cycling practices, helmet fit and can learn how to do minor bike repair.
- Walking and biking safety tips are disseminated in middle schools by School Resource Officers (SROs) via regular announcements to students.
- Together with local bicycle educators, the SRTS team offers bicycle and pedestrian education to transit providers and interested agencies.
- SRTS brings students to local government meetings so they can understand their role in civics, how it pertains to them and their environment, and to know that their voices matter.
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety tips are offered weekly on our LC SRTS Facebook page. These inform both drivers and active transportation users of laws and best practices.
- Develop, update and share walking/biking route maps. These maps provide clear information about walking and biking conditions within the walk zone of every public school in the LCPS district.
- Offer bicycle safety classes/bike club to elementary school students after school or on the weekends.



## FUTURE ACTIONS

(SEE ACTION PLAN MATRIX ON PAGE 39)

We plan to build on the existing safety education program. As part of this effort, we will:

- Update the SRTS curriculum as appropriate with current trends in bicycle and pedestrian education.
- Create and pilot in-classroom walking and biking safety education to 5th grade students to include
  - an engineering component (walking audits/ neighborhood mapping),
  - evaluation (students conduct school wide surveys),
  - interpersonal safety skills for growing independence as students move to middle school.
- Create and pilot in-classroom walking and biking safety education to 1st grade students to include an introduction to safe walking and biking practices.
- Create bicycle safety classes/bike club for middle school students after school or on the weekends.
- Offer bicycle and pedestrian safety training to parents, school staff, community members and local businesses and agencies as requested or appropriate.





- Explore opportunities with Las Cruces Public Schools to provide walking and biking education to middle school students.
- Pursue funding for a mobile bicycle fleet and trailer to take bicycle education to schools.
- Host a social media challenge for middle school students to create a video of the fun features of their walk to school.
- Work with local high schools to host a competition to produce a safety education video by students for students. The video would focus on safety messages and encourage travel by foot, bike, and public transportation.
- Share the how-to guide, “Improve Your School Arrival and Departure Procedures, A Toolkit for School Safety Committees,” in order to increase safety for every child whether they’re walking, biking, taking the bus, or being driven to and from school. (See SRTS Toolkit)



Image: Diahn Nevares

## JORNADA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Jornada Elementary has a successful program with a 100-plus school children participating in the weekly walk and roll. Both school staff and the SRTS Champion have fostered a school culture where walking and biking are valued.

ENCOURAGEMENT



Two Wheel Tuesday Encouragement Field Trip with Mesilla Elementary students.



# ENCOURAGEMENT

**Why is Encouragement important?** *Our 2018 Evaluation shows that when students are encouraged, they participate.*

Our 2018 twelve year evaluation shows that LC SRTS' encouragement program is robust and has been successful in offering students the opportunity to participate in active transportation. Our data shows when encouragement efforts decrease, so does student participation. As a result we offer a variety of encouragement strategies which aim to both engage and encourage students. These methods include bulletin boards, announcements, banners, newsletter, calendar and school marquees and school social media.

## FAMILY BIKE FIESTA

From its inception, the Family Bike Fiesta was an event to prepare for National Bike To School Day and was held at individual schools. At these initial events, SRTS recognized many students owned bikes which were in need of repair and many students lacked helmets. Events continued to gain overwhelming popularity, and as a result increasingly burdened schools and volunteers. From that came the need for the annual community-wide Family Bike Fiesta. Volunteers for this event include local bike shop mechanics, community organizations, the City of Las Cruces, Velo Cruces, NMSU, and many other local volunteers.

*Donald Wilson of The Las Cruces Optimist club, (pictured right), is a volunteer who repairs bikes.*





## Encouragement Programs

Encouragement programs are vital partnerships between school communities, local partners, and government agencies. These groups work together to make it easy, safe, and fun for kids to walk and bike to school. Building on LC SRTS's existing programs and ongoing neighborhood initiatives, we will:

- Increase Program Awareness within schools through encouragement strategies that include bulletin boards, announcements, banners, newsletters, calendar and school marquees and school social media, and media promotion.
- Continue weekly walking school buses (and some bike trains) at 18 elementary schools that operate all school year, and take place rain or shine.
- Continue monthly walking school buses at 4 rural elementary schools. If school is on, the SRTS walking school bus is offered (with the exception of lightning). Participation is up to individual families.
- Weekly bike train options at 6 elementary schools (Central, Hillrise, Jornada, Loma Heights, Mesilla, Mesilla Park)
- Reward participation with incentives such as collectible charms, punch cards, prizes, parties and field trips.
- Offer stipends to Walking School Bus leaders.
- Increase parental awareness by offering both educational and encouragement events in conjunction with open houses, back to school nights and other family / school events.
- Outreach to parents, grandparents and community members to actively participate and volunteer to assist on a weekly basis with the Walking School Buses and Bike Trains. Include PTO involvement.
- Work with partners that encourage active transportation and healthy kids events such as MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Bicycle Friendly Community, NMDOT/UNM Look For Me Campaign, Healthy Kids Las Cruces, Velo Cruces, City of Las Cruces Active Transportation Plan and the NM Brain Injury Council.
- Encourage all schools to participate in International Walk to School Day, with 100% participation from elementary schools since 2015.
- Encourage all schools to participate in National Bike to School Day.
- Host yearly Family Bike Fiesta, a community wide event.



Students and Families gather for the Bike to School Proclamation at the Town of Mesilla.



## FUTURE ACTIONS

(SEE ACTION PLAN MATRIX ON PAGE 40 FOR DETAILS)

- Offer and promote walking and biking events at schools that don't currently have regular programs. (Columbia, Fairacres, Monte Vista)
- Create student based leadership programs within each school to gain student insight and offer opportunities to promote, educate, and collect data.
- Update and maintain the "Las Cruces Safe Routes to School Toolkit" which will include resources to start and run a successful program. In this guide, we provide information on promotion, incentives and data collection.
- Continue to build partnerships with local agencies and businesses to build and maintain encouragement programs.
- Create outdoor banners and indoor posters to educate students, families and the community on safe commuting practices and to encourage active transportation.



Las Cruces Public School Board Member-Maria Flores leading University Hills Elementary Walking School Bus.

ENGINEERING



Dated infrastructure impedes accessibility for students and residents.



# ENGINEERING

**Why is Engineering important?** *Well designed streets for all users create safe and equitable communities.*

Safe, appealing and equitable pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure promotes walking and biking, reduces vehicular traffic around schools, and benefits the community in countless ways. The LC SRTS program works with city, county and town planners, engineers and maintenance staff to determine ideal and workable solutions to create active transportation access to schools. We serve as a liaison between the school community and the government entities and have an intimate knowledge of needs around schools. By mapping most suitable routes, SRTS prioritizes areas for improvement. Mapping provides safe route options for commuters. Ensuring there is adequate bicycle parking and pedestrian access to playgrounds makes active transportation the easier choice for families and community members.

## MESILLA PARK ELEMENTARY

Enhancing the infrastructure near and around schools provides multiple benefits for the whole community. SRTS partners have coordinated to provide a multi-use path which connects communities to the school. One of the main goals of the multi-use path is to make it safer and more comfortable for families to walk and bike, while enhancing connectivity to community assets.





3rd graders from Hillrise Elementary on a walking field trip.

## PREVIOUS INVESTMENTS

LC SRTS and partnering agencies have invested significantly in improving the infrastructure and enforcement mechanisms necessary to support safe, active transportation to and from school in Las Cruces. \$500,000 received from NMDOT in 2012-2014 provided funding to make ADA improvements, add crosswalks and improve signage at 10 schools. (For a listing of these items, see the SRTS Toolkit.) While some improvements were made to schools which were highly involved in SRTS from 2006-2012, in 2012, a school site assessment was conducted in order to plan for and prioritize infrastructure improvement. In addition, bicycle racks were installed at Central, Columbia, Dona Ana, Highland, Loma Heights, Sunrise, Tombaugh, and Zia in 2014.

- LC SRTS coordinated with LCPS to install bike racks on school campuses, in places that are publicly accessible. Secure and accessible bike racks are critical to encouraging students, parents and staff to bike.
- These engineering projects include building new sidewalks, enhancing crosswalks, adding ADA accessible ramps, and improving streets for biking.



## PRESENT ACTIONS

- Act as a Liaison for schools community and local government agencies and communicate monthly at SRTS Coalition meeting regarding engineering projects, issues, and needs around schools.
- Ensure connectivity to community amenities such as schools, parks, trails, and bus stops by mapping and advocating for Active Transportation.
- Traffic Calming through engineering.
- Evaluate condition and accessibility of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in neighborhoods by conducting walking audits.



### BOOKER T. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Booker T. Washington Elementary students walking with the weekly Walking School Bus. This image showcases how SRTS initiated community improvements benefit everyone and have a lasting impact – making our streets safer no matter how we choose to travel. However these infrastructure improvements are limited and communities still face obstacles with the location of utilities and aged infrastructure. These challenges support the need for policy driven approach to support all users.



## PRESENT AND FUTURE ACTIONS

(SEE ACTION PLAN MATRIX ON PAGE 41 FOR DETAILS)

Local engineering departments use engineering treatments that are appropriate to local conditions and have been shown to improve safety. Decisions are made on the types of treatments based on factors such as the function of the street, speed and amount of traffic, and the potential to reduce collisions. In order to facilitate communication around street safety improvements, we will:

- Review and update maps for elementary schools that show walking school bus routes and preferred routes from all directions for walking or biking to school safely. These maps will show crossing guard locations and school crossings for each school walk zone.
- Work with the City/ County/ Town of Mesilla/ NMDOT to keep crosswalks painted
- Connect schools to multi-use transportation facilities.
- Identify engineering projects at priority schools based on input from the Active Transportation Planner, discussions with school staff, safety committees, parents, comments from parent surveys and results of walk and bike audits; traffic observations; and overlaying top projects identified in the city's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans. Work with the municipalities to get this on the CIP or use municipal funds.
- Work with engineering agencies to evaluate school zones per MUTCD guidelines
- Work with Las Cruces Public Schools, the City of Las Cruces, Doña Ana County and Town of Mesilla Planning and Development Departments during the development review process to ensure new or redeveloped schools consider active transportation access as a priority.
- Working with the SRTS education team, create a curriculum for 5th grade students to learn about their role in the built environment, including opportunities for walking assessments.
- Create prioritization criteria that ranks all public schools based on collision data, race and ethnicity data, and pedestrian master plan scores that include equity considerations.



City Streets crew paint crosswalk at Lynn Middle School

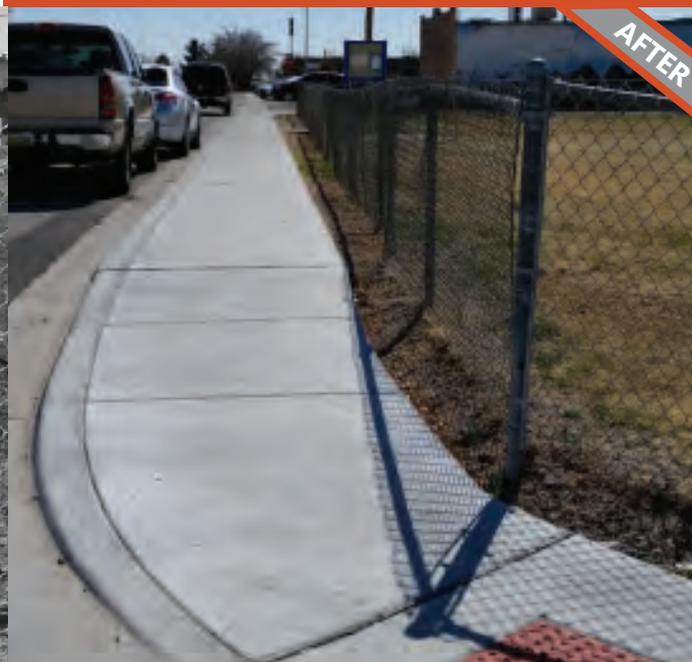


**Previous Condition:**

This crosswalk provided a route which directed pedestrians directly into a school turn-in lane, resulting in a conflict of users.

**Current Improvement:**

This crosswalk was redesigned to safely direct pedestrians through a median refuge and to an existing sidewalk.



**Previous Condition:**

A lack of connectivity created a conflict between pedestrians and parked cars.

**Current Improvement:**

This improvement was added to make an inviting and safe sidewalk.

**ENFORCEMENT**



Connie Ontiveros, Crossing Guard at MacArthur Elementary



# ENFORCEMENT

**Why is Enforcement Important?** *Partnering with local law enforcement agencies enforces traffic laws and ensures safety.*

Local law enforcement plays an important role in achieving our safety goals as they enforce the laws for all travelers on our streets. Officers enforce the law in school zones to discourage risky behaviors such as speeding and distraction. LCPD Codes Enforcement, LCPD Traffic, Mesilla Marshals, Doña Ana County Sheriff's department, and Border Patrol assist with traffic control during our walking and biking programs. Law Enforcement also assists with bicycle education as needed. The LCPD Crossing Guard program works closely with SRTS to keep pedestrians safe. Enforcement works best when implemented in conjunction with education and awareness activities and done on a long term, not sporadic basis.

- Assistance from agencies for Walking School Bus.
- Assistance in community events such as Family Bike Fiesta, National Walk and Bike to School Days
- Assistance on site and school specific enforcement problems.
- Speed Trailer as needed for increased awareness and back to school activities.
- Traffic Calming through enforcement.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement agencies assist with weekly walking school bus and walking field trips. Fairacres Elementary celebrates International Walk to School Day during a school wide field trip with DASO support.





# WHY SPEED MATTERS

75%

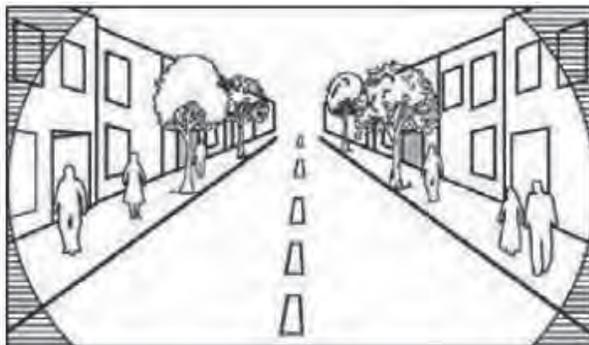


Drivers yield 75% of the time when traveling 20 MPH

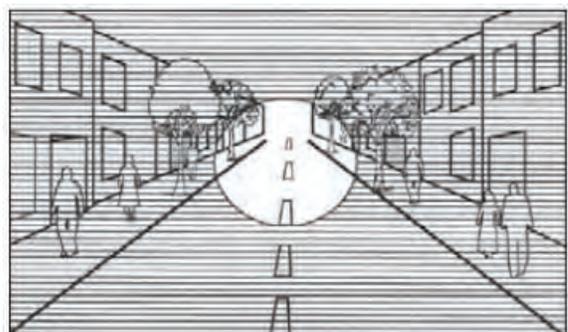
17%



Drivers yield only 17% of the time when traveling 37 MPH



Field of vision at 15 MPH



Field of vision at 30 to 40 MPH

HIT BY A VEHICLE TRAVELING AT:

20 MPH



9 out of 10 pedestrians survive

HIT BY A VEHICLE TRAVELING AT:

30 MPH



5 out of 10 pedestrians survive

HIT BY A VEHICLE TRAVELING AT:

40 MPH



Only 1 out of 10 pedestrians survives



LCPD Codes Enforcement and Traffic division, Doña Ana County Sheriff's office and Mesilla Marshal's office assist us with Walking School Buses at many schools on a regular basis. For schools with higher traffic, these officers serve to calm traffic. For schools with higher rates of crime, participants and their families feel safer having law enforcement accompany the Walking School Buses and Bike Trains.

The UNM/NMDOT's Look For Me campaign is a great resource for safety items such as hi-viz vests for staff, reflective backpacks, and slap bands. They have also offered bicycle and pedestrian crash investigation training to law enforcement agents. They have co-presented with us for City Bus Driver training.

## FUTURE ACTIONS

(SEE ACTION PLAN MATRIX ON PAGE 42 FOR DETAILS)

Police officers are an effective resource to address risky behaviors and improve safety on our streets. We will continue to partner with the Las Cruces Police Department, the Doña Ana County Sheriff Department, and the Town of Mesilla Marshal Department to encourage law enforcement officers to conduct school safety patrols throughout the school year:

- Communication and collaboration with City's Traffic Calming program, Neighborhood Enforcement team and Engineering departments
- Work with law enforcement agencies to collect speed/crash data around schools
- Law enforcement will use speed trailers and complaints to collect data on number of cars, average speed and how much over the speed limit traffic is going. This will help determine where law enforcement focuses their efforts per the Impact Project.
- Partner to ensure enforcement resources are deployed to the locations near schools that need it most, based on speed and collision data.
- On an ongoing basis, law enforcement agencies will focus on being proactive through education and enforcement near schools on risky behaviors like distracted driving, not stopping for pedestrians in crosswalks, and speeding in school zones. Work with law enforcement to ensure that school zone signs are enforced.
- Each school year, local law enforcement will educate and enforce laws in school zones during key times of year, including the beginning of the school year, after school breaks, and during walk and bike to school months and special events.
- Las Cruces Police Department runs the Crossing Guard program. Working with our partners, we will support efforts of the crossing guard program.
- Law enforcement offers education and trainings to school staff to assist crossing guards with traffic safety issues around the school.





# EVALUATION

**Why is Evaluation Important?** *Evaluation tracks progress toward shared safety goals.*

We evaluate our programs to make sure our strategies are working and that we are using our resources efficiently. Our evaluation is based on a number of measures that we track to ensure we are making progress toward our goals. We track how many schools and students participate in our Safe Routes to School programs, and the number of students who walk and bike to school on their own. We also keep data on number of schools who participate in special events, and the number of schools that offer education to their students. Every two years, we do school wide Student Travel Tallies and we send out the National SRTS Parent Survey to all elementary school parents. Attached to this survey are some additional questions that gather additional information not on the surveys. We input and analyze the data and compare it to previous years to determine trends. Our evaluation goals increase opportunities, build knowledge base, and guide infrastructure needs.

- **Education:** We'll measure the percentage of LCPS schools that are offered and receive bicycle and pedestrian education.
- **Encouragement:** We'll track the number of schools that offer weekly Walking School Buses/Bike Trains, as well as the number of student and adult participants in each. We'll track participation in National Walk to School and Bike to School events. Track statistics from Family Bike Fiesta including participants, volunteers, helmet giveaways, repairs.
- **Engineering:** We'll track the engineering projects we complete that enhance safety in school areas in partnership with our local government agencies. We'll track through Parent Surveys whether these changes have made a difference in parents allowing their children to walk to school.
- **Enforcement:** We'll coordinate with our local enforcement agencies for their statistics on speeding, traffic crashes and injuries near schools.
- **Equity:** We'll compare these metrics to school demographic information made available by LCPS. Efforts will ensure equity in implementation with racial equity goals and desired outcomes of increased safe walking and biking to school.

## FUTURE ACTIONS

(SEE ACTION PLAN MATRIX ON PAGE 43 FOR DETAILS)

- Complete Student Travel Tallies and distribute Parent Surveys at middle schools.

EQUITY



Streets are utilized by all types of users



# EQUITY

## **Why is Equity Important?** *Providing resources to disadvantaged schools and populations.*

Equity recognizes that different people have different barriers to living healthy, fulfilled lives. In order to allow people to get to the same outcome, we need to understand the different barriers and opportunities that affect different groups, and craft our policies, programs, and overall approaches with those various challenges and needs in mind. Equity is different than equality. Equality is often understood as giving everyone the same thing, while equity means ensuring each person has access to what they need to thrive. Equity needs to be built into each aspect of a comprehensive Safe Routes to School initiative. According to the Safe Routes Partnership, we ensure that SRTS initiatives are benefiting all demographic groups, with particular attention to ensuring safe, healthy, and fair outcomes for students with disabilities, low-income students, Native American students, students of color, female students, LGBTQ students, students whose families speak a language other than English, homeless students, and other demographic groups.

Equity, built environment and resource management are linked. SRTS will work to include resource distribution to best align with local government agencies' equity policies and plans. This may include increased access to community facilities, neighborhood infrastructure and advocating for active transportation in disenfranchised communities.

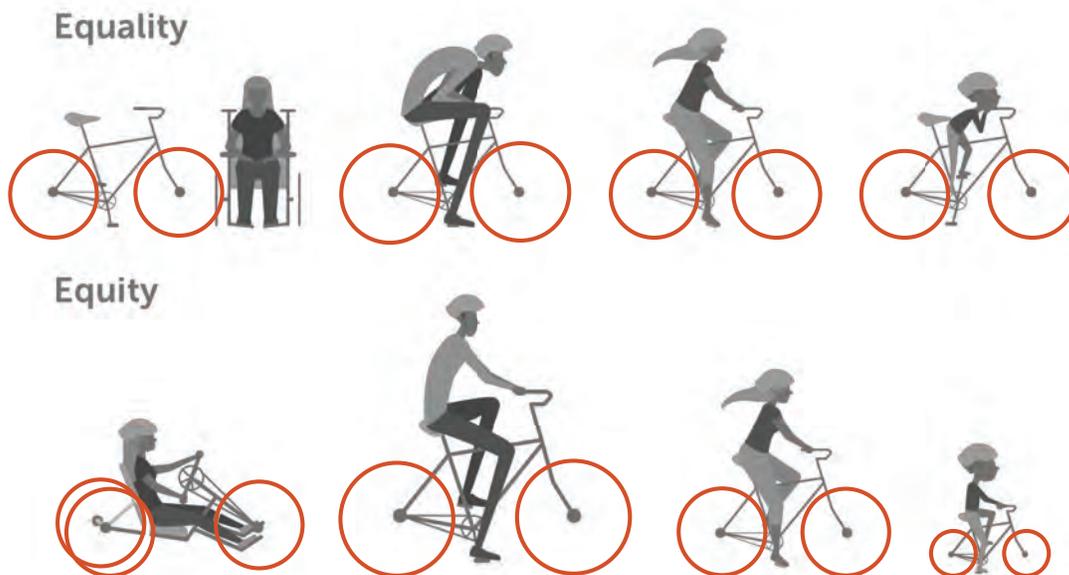


Image: 2017 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



## Title VI Coordination

SRTS and its partners assure that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination or under any program or activity under SRTS. SRTS is committed to assuring every effort will be made to prevent the discrimination of low-income and minority populations as a result of any impact of its programs or activities in accordance with Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and in Low-Income Populations. In addition, SRTS also assures every effort will be made to provide meaningful access to persons that have Limited English Proficiency, in accordance with Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency.

## PRESENT AND FUTURE ACTIONS

(SEE ACTION PLAN MATRIX ON PAGE 44 FOR DETAILS)

- Provide written materials in Spanish (handouts, permission slips, parent surveys).
- When offering programs and services (such as donated bicycles and helmets), determine recipients based on needs rather than requests.
- Provide walk audit feedback for engineering projects based on school demographics and location.
- Acknowledge cultural inhibitors.
- Use crash data, speed study data, parent and staff feedback to determine where needs are the highest and assess what resources can be allocated to schools to establish equity.

# ACTION PLAN MATRIX

EDUCATION	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	LEAD/PARTNERS
 CURRENT	Offer 3rd Grade Bicycle and Pedestrian Education program to all 25 LCPS elementary schools.	Provide a 4 part in-classroom walking and biking safety education to 3rd grade class annually.	LCPS, PE Coaches
	Offer Middle School Bicycle and Pedestrian Education including Walking and Biking safety tips.	Regular announcements through SRO (School Resource Officers)	LCPS, School Resource Officers
	Offer bike/ped safety program to Bus Drivers.	Provide training to bus drivers on rights and responsibilities of pedestrians and cyclists.	LCPS, STS Transit Providers, Bicycle Educators
	Offer Civic Education	Offer students opportunities to attend Public Meetings to provide input.	LCPS, Town of Mesilla, City of Las Cruces, Doña Ana County
	Offer Safe cycling practices	At Family Bike Fiesta, educate attendees on safe cycling practices, helmet fit and minor bike repair.	LCPS, Advocacy and Community groups, Law Enforcement, Local Agencies
	Create Bicycle Clubs/ Safety classes for Elementary Schools.	Develop extra-curricular activity based club or class. Possibly pursue funding for a bicycle fleet.	LCPS, Advocacy and Community groups
FUTURE	Update Curriculum	In keeping up with current trends in bicycle/ pedestrian education, update the curriculum as necessary.	LCPS
	Create Bicycle Clubs/ Safety classes for Middle School	Develop extra-curricular activity based club or class. Possibly pursue funding for a bicycle fleet.	LCPS, Advocacy and Community groups
	Develop 5th Grade Bicycle and Pedestrian Education Pilot Program.	Develop curriculum on walking and biking safety education to include walking audits, neighborhood mapping, data collection and inter-personal safety skills.	LCPS, PE Coaches, Local Agency Engineering Department
	Develop 1st Grade Bicycle and Pedestrian Education Pilot Program.	Develop age appropriate curriculum on walking and biking safety education.	LCPS, PE Coaches
	Offer Bicycle Safety classes	Offer safe cycling practices, helmet fit and minor bike repair for community members, local agencies and LCPS staff.	LCPS, Advocacy and Community groups
	Develop Middle School Bicycle and Pedestrian Education Pilot Program	Explore development of activity based curriculum on walking and biking safety education.	LCPS, PE Coaches
	Pursue Funding for Bicycle Fleet	Pursue funding to purchase a fleet of 30 bicycles and a storage trailer to use for classroom education.	LCPS, funders, local bicycle organizations
	Middle School Media Challenge	Host a social media challenge for middle school students to create a video of the fun features of their walk to school.	Middle School Media classes
	High School Educational Video	Work with local high schools to host a competition to produce a safety education video focusing on travel by foot, bike, and public transportation.	High School Media classes
	Share the how-to guide, "Improve Your School Arrival and Departure Procedures, A Toolkit for School Safety Committees."	Increase safety for every child whether they're walking, biking, taking the bus, or being driven to and from school.	LCPS

ENCOURAGEMENT	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	LEAD/PARTNERS
 CURRENT	Continue Weekly Walking School Buses and Bike Trains	Continue to offer walking school buses and bike trains to all 25 elementary schools to increase number of WSB/BT opportunities.	SRTS coalition partners: (LCPS, Advocacy and Community groups, Law Enforcement, Local Agencies)
	Increased student participation	Encourage student participation in Walking School Buses and Bike Trains through incentives, rewards and publicity such as banners, posters, media.	LCPS, SRTS Stipend Staff
	Increase Parental Awareness	Coordinate and attend PTO meetings, open houses and other family and school events.	LCPS, SRTS Stipend Staff
	Increase Program Awareness within schools	Coordinate and publicize SRTS events using a variety of social media, signage and handouts.	LCPS, SRTS Stipend Staff
	Increase Parent and Community Involvement	Offer volunteer opportunities to parents, grandparents and community members.	SRTS Coalition partners
	Offer stipends	Offer stipends to WSB and BT leaders	LCPS, Funding partners
	Increase Active Transportation and Healthy Kids initiatives	Participate in meetings that pertain to active transportation and healthy kids	LCPS, SRTS Coordinator
	Increase participation in Walk to School Day & Bike to School Day.	Offer events to all 25 elementary LCPS to encourage school and student participation through incentives and publicity.	LCPS, SRTS Stipend Staff
	Increase Partnerships	Continue to work with current and source future partners.	SRTS Coalition partners
	Partner with “Look for Me” Campaign	Partner with “Look for Me” Campaign to offer information on safe walking and cycling and give materials such as reflective pant straps, triangles and backpacks.	UNM SRTS Coalition partners
	Participation in National events	Encourage all schools to participate in International Walk to School Day in October and National Bike to School Day in May.	LCPS and SRTS Staff
	Host Family Bike Fiesta	Host community wide Family Bike Fiesta in preparation for National Bike to School Day. This event incorporates all Es and a multitude of partners and community members.	LCPS, SRTS Staff, community members.
	FUTURE	Increase student leadership opportunities.	Offer pilot program to elementary schools to create student based leadership programs within each school.
Update and maintain “Las Cruces Safe Routes to School Toolkit”		Archive and compile all methods and strategies with related cost, curriculum and resources. Include resources to start and run a successful program. Provide information on promotion, incentives and data collection.	SRTS Coalition partners
Partnerships		Continue to build partnerships with local agencies and businesses to build and maintain encouragement programs	LCPS, SRTS Staff, community members.

ENGINEERING	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	LEAD/PARTNERS
 CURRENT	Identify Engineering Projects	Identify priority projects based on discussion with staff, parents and comments from parent surveys, walk audits and other observations.	SRTS Coalition partners
	Ensure Connectivity to multi use transportation facilities	Work with local municipalities to ensure that schools are included on multi-use transportation plans per documents such as the Active Transportation Plan.	SRTS Coalition partners
	Evaluate school zones	Coordinate with local agencies to evaluate per MUTCD, AASHTO and NACTO guidelines. Partner with law enforcement on addressing safety concerns.	SRTS Coalition partners
	Evaluate school crosswalks	Coordinate with local agencies to evaluate per MUTCD, AASHTO and NACTO guidelines, paint and repair. Partner with law enforcement on addressing safety concerns. Communicate painting needs at crosswalks.	SRTS Coalition partners
	Community to Local Agency Liaison	Bring feedback from school community to local agencies at monthly SRTS Coalition meetings. Educate public on how to address local agencies regarding transportation issues.	SRTS Coalition partners
	On-site pedestrian and bicycle access	Be a resource to schools having issues pertaining to pedestrian or bike safety and access.	SRTS, LCPS
FUTURE	Map routes	Coordinate with local agencies to identify and map preferred routes with crosswalks and guards.	SRTS Coalition partners
	Develop Prioritization Criteria	Evaluate and rank all schools areas for infrastructure improvement opportunities based on collision data, condition of infrastructure and neighborhood demographics.	SRTS Coalition partners
	Walk Audits	Conduct walking audits, review data, and evaluate and address issues.	SRTS, LCPS, Engineering departments
	Restore a School Siting Committee	Work with LCPS Administrators, City and County to ensure school siting for future schools accommodates active transportation access	SRTS Coalition partners
	Traffic Calming and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design	Collaborate with local law enforcement agencies to incorporate design elements in engineering projects to enhance security for people walking and biking near schools.	SRTS Coalition partners
	5th grade curriculum to include civic lesson	Work with the SRTS education team to create a curriculum for 5th grade students to learn about their role in the built environment, including opportunities for walking assessments.	LCPS and Local agencies

ENFORCEMENT	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	LEAD/PARTNERS
 CURRENT	Collaborate with City's Traffic Calming Program	Work with local agencies to ensure that traffic flows smoothly and at appropriate speeds around schools and neighborhoods	Law enforcement, engineering, SRTS
	Traffic Data	Partner with local law enforcement agencies on collection of speed data, parking and crashes.	Law enforcement, SRTS
	Speed Trailers and community communication	Request and suggest speed trailer locations based on feedback from parents and school community, communicate requests for speed trailers. Use data collected for evaluation	Law enforcement, SRTS, LCPS
	Request Law Enforcement	Coordinate with school staff, law enforcement, and community. Resources are requested at the locations near schools that need it most, based on speed, observations and issues.	Law enforcement, SRTS, LCPS
	Safe commuting education and enforcement	Educate drivers and enforce laws during key times of year, such as start of school, after school breaks, and during walk and bike to school events, educate and enforce laws in school zones.	Law enforcement, SRTS
	School Resource Officers (SROs) and Security Officers.	Partner with security staff to disseminate information and education to students and school community.	LCPS, Law enforcement, SRTS
	Crossing Guard Program	Support the efforts of crossing guards, offer trainings, and communicate regarding pedestrian needs around schools.	LCPS, Law enforcement, SRTS
	Staff education	Team with law enforcement to train school staff on safety issues pertaining to all modes of traffic.	LCPS, Law enforcement, SRTS

EVALUATION 	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	LEAD/PARTNERS
CURRENT	Evaluate Education Program	Track number of classrooms that are offered and received the 4 part bike/ped curriculum. Total this as a % of schools at the end of every year.	SRTS and LCPS
	Evaluate weekly and monthly walking school buses and bike trains	Track number of weekly and monthly walking school buses and bike trains and participation of both students and adults.	SRTS and LCPS
	Evaluate International Walk to School Day/ National Bike to School Day	Track number of participants of both students and adults for International Walk to School Day/ National Bike to School Day.	SRTS and LCPS
	Evaluate Family Bike Fiesta	Track number of participants (adults and students), volunteers, and number of bicycles repaired, participants on community bike ride	SRTS and LCPS and volunteers
	Evaluate Program Objectives Equity	Compare demographics by school and city with delivery of program	SRTS Coalition partners
	Parent Surveys	Distribute and analyze SRTS National Parent Surveys and additional questions biennially.	SRTS and LCPS
	Student Travel Tallies	Collect and analyze travel daily modes of transportation data through SRTS National Student Travel Tallies.	SRTS and LCPS
	Program Overview	Systematic overview of SRTS program considering data trends and needs.	External Evaluator
	Evaluate Engineering Projects	Track engineering projects and assess if changes have improved number of walkers and parents attitudes to allow children to walk to school.	SRTS, LCPS, Engineering departments
	Evaluate Enforcement measures	Coordinate with local law enforcement for data on crashes, injuries and speeding near schools. Identify positive trends in enforcement.	SRTS, law enforcement agencies
Future	Student Travel Tallies/ Parent Surveys - Middle School	Complete Student Travel Tallies and distribute Parent Surveys at middle schools	SRTS and LCPS

EQUITY	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	LEAD/PARTNERS
 CURRENT	Translation and accessibility of materials	Translate written materials into Spanish. Ensure that information is disseminated verbally, written, and through hands on practice	SRTS, LCPS
	Material distribution	When offered bicycles, helmets and other free items, determine recipients based on greatest need.	SRTS, Coalition partners
	Align with ADA Policies	Support ADA and Title VI Policies of Local agencies and partners. Acknowledge cultural inhibitors.	SRTS, Coalition partners
	Infrastructure investments	Based on walkability studies, crash data, income levels, and other demographics, determine schools with the highest needs for sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure improvements.	SRTS, Coalition partners

RESOURCES	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	LEAD/PARTNERS
CURRENT	SRTS Toolkit	Build and update resource manual and compile handouts, newsletters, curriculum, sources for supplies etc.	SRTS
	Support Other Programs	Offer guidance and materials with other communities who are starting programs.	SRTS, Coalition partners Interested communities

# Acknowledgments

SRTS would like to thank the individuals who served on the Action Plan Committee for their commitment to making it safer and easier to walk and bike to school for our children.

## Action Plan Sub Committee

Ashleigh Curry - Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator  
Todd Gregory - Director of Public Safety, Las Cruces Public Schools  
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Andrew Wray - MPO Officer, Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

## Supporting Institutions

Las Cruces Public Schools  
New Mexico Department of Transportation  
New Mexico Department of Health  
City of Las Cruces  
Doña Ana County  
Town of Mesilla  
Las Cruces Police Department  
Velo Cruces  
Southern New Mexico Bicycle Educators  
UNM Center for Injury Prevention/Look For Me Campaign  
NM Brain Injury Advisory Council  
La Semilla Food Center  
Optimist Club of Las Cruces

## Special Thanks to:

Sean Barham - Director of Transportation, Las Cruces Public Schools  
Kendra Brunson - Crossing Guard Supervisor, Las Cruces Police Department  
Jerry Cordova - City of Las Cruces Public Works  
Randy De La O - Codes Officer, Las Cruces Police Department  
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Stacy Gherardi - Assistant Professor of Sociology at NMSU, outside evaluator  
Annaliza Grijalva - Safe Routes to School Champion  
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NMSU Public Health Student Interns  
George Pearson - League Cycling Instructor, Community Volunteer  
Tammy Schurr - Master League Cycling Instructor  
David Sedillo - City of Las Cruces  
Naoma Staley - Former SRTS Coordinator  
SRTS Walking School Bus leaders

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