

PIMA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

# 2030 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

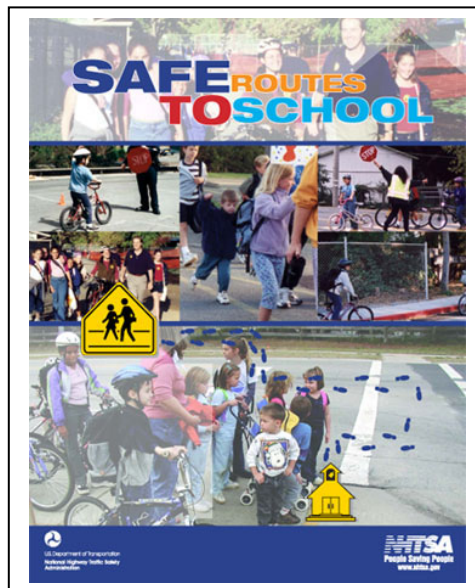


August 2003

This Fact Sheet focuses on the

## Safe Routes to School Program

- What is the Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Program?
- How can you start a SR2S Program?
- What are successful SR2S approaches?
- What information is available from PAG's Safe Routes to School Workshop?
- Where to go for more information?



### WHAT IS THE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM?

In late 2002, the **Pima Association of Governments (PAG)** initiated an extensive 3-year planning effort to develop a new long range transportation plan for eastern Pima County and the Tucson metropolitan area. The initial phase of public involvement for this plan, known as the **2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)**, was aimed at identifying the community's core values for a good quality of life. This public involvement effort specifically identified safety for drivers of vehicles, riders of buses, pedestrians and cyclists one of the top three transportation issues\*. PAG hosted a Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Workshop on August 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003 to raise awareness of the SR2S program and how it addresses modal-choice and safety for our children.

The **Safe Routes to School Program (SR2S)** focuses on getting kids safely to school -- on their feet and their bikes. The program aims to get neighborhood groups, traffic engineers and local officials to work together to develop safe school routes. It also encourages parents and children to take advantage of the many benefits of getting around on foot or by bike.

Any effort to get more children to walk or bike needs to address both safety and convenience from a variety of perspectives. Although statistics tell us that child abductions are infrequent occurrences, parents have legitimate concerns about crime, and violence prevention is an important component of the Safe Routes to School program.

But the greatest danger for children walking or biking to school comes from traffic on neighborhood roads and streets. Thus, SR2S recognizes the importance of stronger education programs for both motorists and children, better enforcement of traffic laws, and projects and programs to help slow down the speed of residential traffic. It is this type of comprehensive approach to traffic safety problems that has been shown to be most effective in creating safer streets and promoting increased walking and bicycling among Americans of all ages.

### HOW CAN YOU START AN SR2S PROGRAM?

Every SR2S program needs at least one champion-- a teacher, a principal, or even a student—and a SR2S team. Champions are the key organizers of the program, overseeing activities at their school and working with champions from other schools to share ideas. An SR2S team would work to gain official school status, either as a committee of the PTA, or as a part of the school's Site Council or Safety Committee. The team would also gather information about their school through surveys and traffic counts, organize incentive-based events and contests to encourage students to try new modes of transportation, and promote the program through school newsletters and other means to reach parents and students.

The success of SR2S programs within a common geographic area are often enhanced by the efforts of a community-wide SR2S Task Force involving a diversity of stakeholders and community leaders.

\* The top three issues were: Safety; Cross Town Mobility and Traffic Flow; and Transit and Multi-modal choices

Pima Association of Governments is developing a new long range transportation plan for eastern Pima County and the Tucson metropolitan area that will identify transportation needs, potential solutions, and funding requirements through the year 2030.

The **2030 RTP** program for public education and outreach includes a series of educational forums and/ or seminars. This is one of a series of informational Fact Sheets related to the 2030 RTP educational events.

A successful community-wide SR2S Task Force would involve the following:

- Parents
- Students
- Teachers
- Neighbors
- School Staff Members
- City or County Staff Members
- Elected Officials
- Businesses
- Community Groups
- Law Enforcement/Crossing Guards

## WHAT ARE SUCCESSFUL SR2S APPROACHES?

Successful SR2S programs in the United States have incorporated one or more of the following approaches:

1. The **Encouragement Approach** uses events and contests to encourage students to try walking and biking.
2. The **Education Approach** teaches students important safety skills and launches driver safety campaigns.
3. The **Engineering Approach** focuses on creating physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding the school, reducing speeds and establishing safer crosswalks and pathways.
4. The **Enforcement Approach** uses local law enforcement to ensure drivers obey traffic laws.

Although each element can stand alone, the most successful programs have integrated elements from all four approaches. Each time the program is adapted to a specific region, or even a specific school location, new ideas emerge.

## WHAT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM PAG'S SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL WORKSHOP?

PAG brought in national leaders in Safe Routes to School program development as instructors for the workshop. **Wendi Kallins** is founder and Program Director for the award winning SR2S program in Marin County, California, and author of the national "Safe Routes to School" guidebook. **David Parisi** is a professional engineer who developed traffic calming programs for over 100 schools and created "Transportation Tools for Improving Children's Health and Safety", a guide of solutions to common school-related issues. He is the consulting traffic and civil engineer for the Marin County SR2S program.

The basic components of the Safe Routes to School program outlined at the workshop included:

- Activities and Outreach
- Mapping the Routes to School
- Classroom Lessons

Participants were provided the Safe Routes to School toolkit that describes the basics of a SR2S program. The Toolkit provides ideas about events and contests, as well as other tips to generate interest in the program. The Safe Streets Toolkit provides aids to map routes to schools in the community and information on practices used to ensure traffic safety. The Classroom Lessons section provides ideas that will encourage students to reflect on their transportation choices and teach them basic safety skills. The toolkit also supplies sample SR2S forms, press releases, posters, and other resources.

## NEED TO KNOW MORE?

**For more information on the Safe Routes to School in the PAG region contact:**

- Matt Zoll, Pima County Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager, 520-740-6746
- Trace Tang, City of Tucson Planner, 520-791-4371

**For information on Transportation Safety or other Safe Routes to School activities nationwide visit:**

- The Safe Routes to School website at: [www.saferoutestoschools.org](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org)
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/saferouteshtml/index.html>

**To stay informed or get involved in PAG planning activities:**

- Visit the PAG website at [www.pagnet.org](http://www.pagnet.org)
- Add your name to PAG's 2030 RTP mailing list by calling PAG at 792-1093, Extension 502
- Schedule a speaker for your next meeting