



**Colorado Safe Routes to School Webinar Series**  
**Getting Around Town: Exploring Partnerships with Safe Routes to Parks**  
**Kori Johnson and Vanessa Cascio, Safe Routes Partnership**

## MISSION

The mission of the Safe Routes Partnership is to advance safe walking and rolling to and from schools and in everyday life, improving the health and well-being of people of all races, income levels, and abilities, and building healthy, thriving communities for everyone.





## TODAY'S PRESENTERS

### **Kori Johnson**

Program and Engagement Manager  
Safe Routes Partnership  
Baltimore, MD

### **Vanessa Cascio**

Program and Policy Manager  
Safe Routes Partnership  
Washington, D.C.

*Say hi in the chat!*

- *Name, location, connection to Safe Routes*

## Webinar Logistics

- Questions in the Q&A box
- Comments and resource links in the Chat box
- Recording and slides will be available





**Poll:** How often do you visit your local parks?

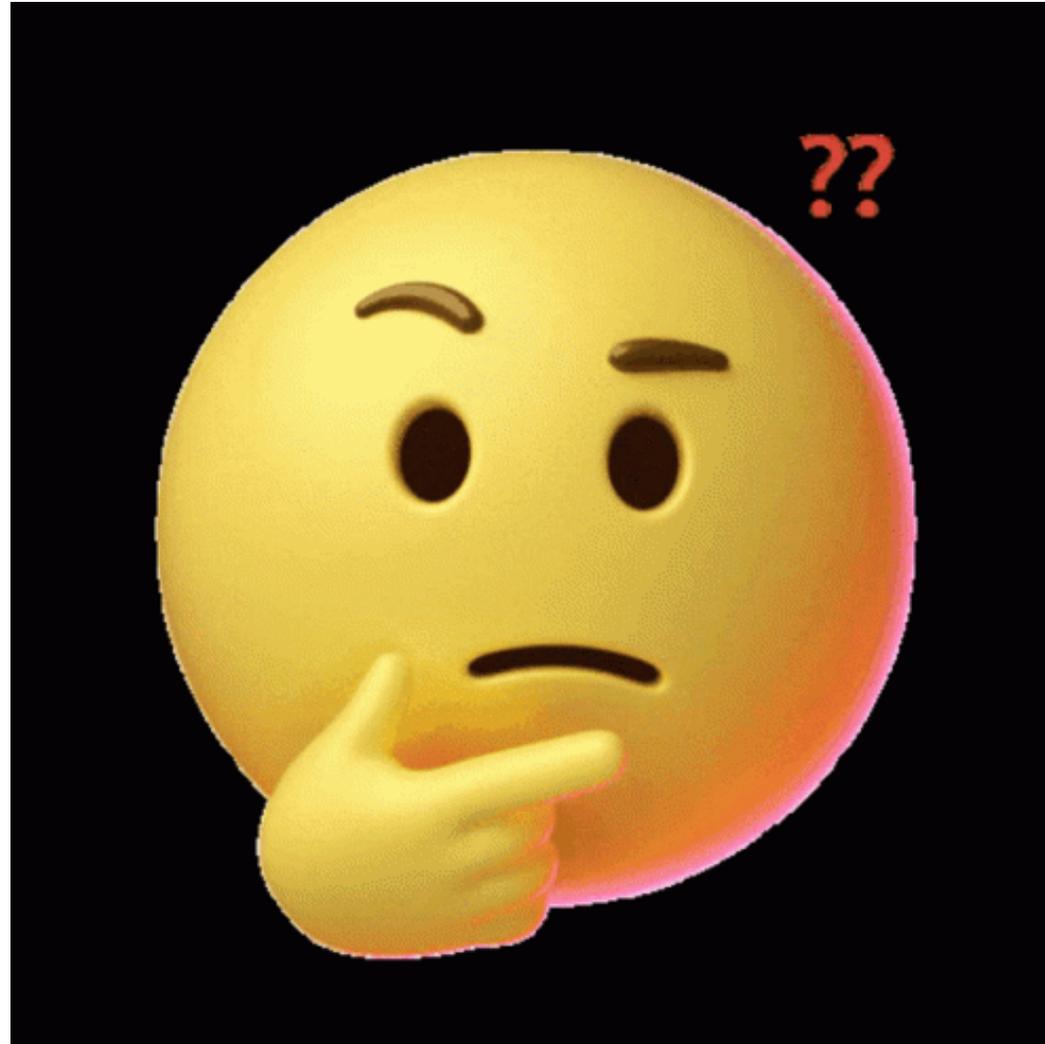


**Chat:** What is your favorite activity to do in the park?



**Poll:** What would make it easier and safer to access and enjoy parks in your community?

# What do parks have to do with Safe Routes to School?



# Parks are...

- Community destinations
- Visited and used by kids
- Often next to or near schools
- Places to be physically active
- Places to connect with your community



## Parks are...

- Not always safe or easy to get to, especially by walking, biking, rolling, or scooting
- Not always accessible to communities of color and low-income communities
- Sometimes lacking adequate funding and resources



## Parks Partners...Sound Familiar?

- Non-profits and community organizations
- Elected officials
- Community members
- Public health
- School district
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Arts and cultural organizations





But parks are also different from schools....

## Parks are...

- Recreational spaces
- Open to all age groups
- Places that might feel more welcoming than a school campus for some people
- Spaces to reflect, refuel, refresh
- Spaces to have fun!



# So let's team up!

- Collaboration helps us go further
- We have similar goals and priorities
  - Increase physical activity
  - Promote health and wellness
  - Increase community connectedness
  - Help people feel safe in their community
- Communities like when we work together



# Colorado Community Engagement Toolkit

- Outlines a community engagement framework
- Highlights engagement best practices
- Guiding questions for each section
- Features Colorado programs
- Links to tools, worksheets, and additional resources
- Emphasis on equity



# Community Engagement Framework

- **REFLECT** on your role as a community partner
- **RESEARCH** the community where you are working
- **PARTNER** with other organizations to build community relationships
- **PLAN** thoughtful, culturally-responsive community engagement experiences
- **IMPLEMENT** your community engagement experiences and events
- **SUSTAIN** your community engagement beyond a single event or initiative

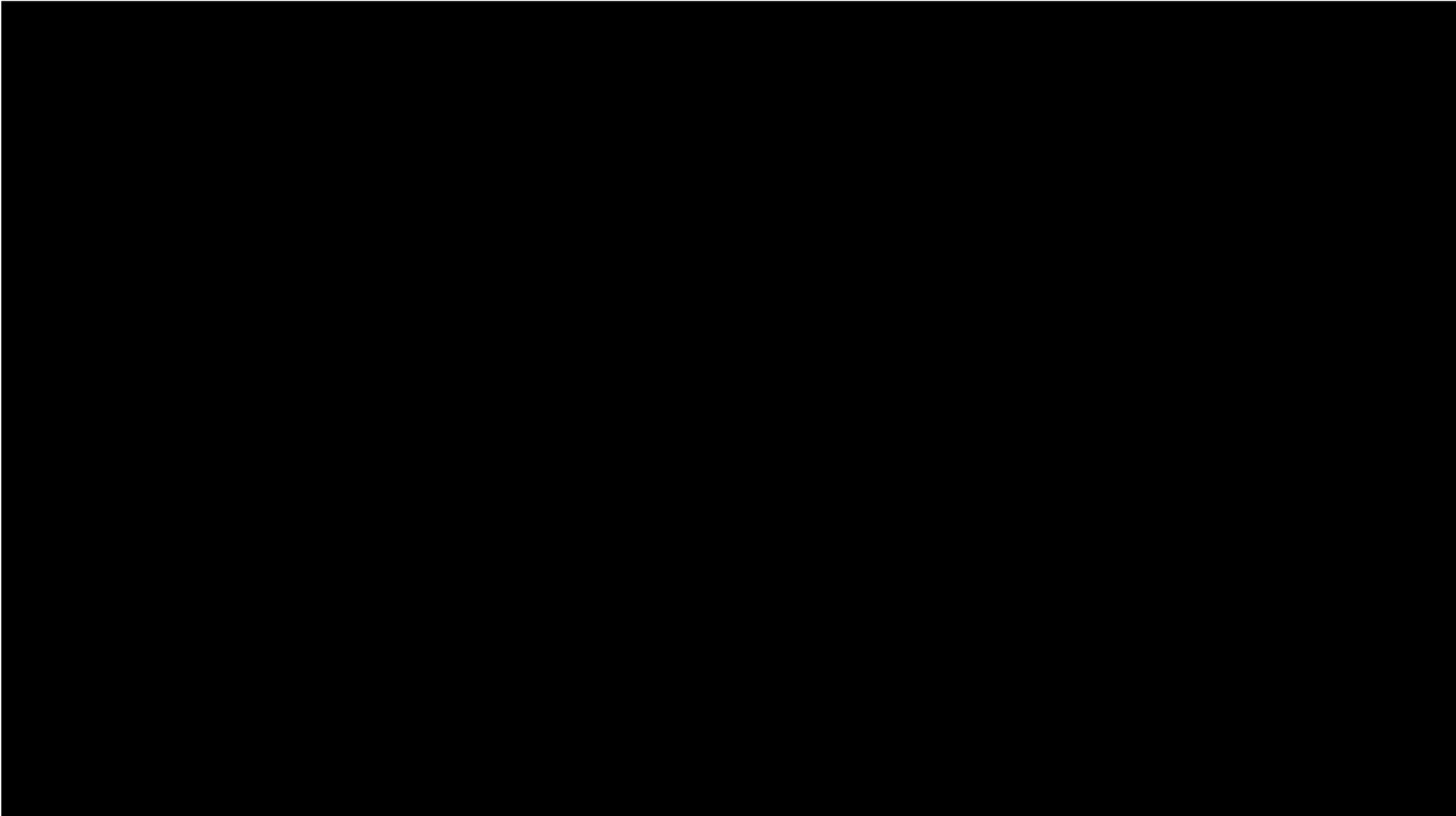




**Chat:** How have you incorporated parks into your Safe Routes to School program?



**Safe Routes to Parks** is a movement to make access to great parks safer, more convenient, and more equitable for people walking, biking, and taking public transportation.



[Safe Routes to Parks Video](#)

# Safe Routes to Parks means...

- Convenient, affordable transportation options (walk, bike, transit) along routes that are safe from traffic and personal danger for people of all ages and abilities.
- Routes start or end at well-maintained, well-programmed parks conveniently located within a 10-minute walk of where people live.
- Long-Term Goal:
  - Improve health and well-being for people of all ages, races, abilities, and income levels.



# The health impacts of walking and biking are significant

- Parks boost physical activity when coupled with at least one other intervention.
- **Every dollar spent on parks, greenways, and trails interventions led to \$3.10 worth of benefits – including improved health due to physical activity.**

## Physical Activity: Park, Trail, and Greenway Infrastructure Interventions when Combined with Additional Interventions

[Print](#)

[Snapshot](#)

**[What the CPSTF Found](#)**

[Supporting Materials](#)

[Considerations for Implementation](#)

### Summary of CPSTF Finding

The [Community Preventive Services Task Force \(CPSTF\)](#) recommends park, trail, and greenway infrastructure interventions when combined with additional interventions to increase physical activity. Evidence from the systematic review shows these interventions increase the number of people who engage in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity in the park, trail, or greenway. Studies also show increases in the number of people who use the park, trail, or greenway.

There were no economic studies that evaluated park, trail, and greenway infrastructure interventions when combined with additional interventions. However, CPSTF finds the economic benefits exceed the cost for park, trail, and greenway infrastructure interventions when implemented alone.

CPSTF finds insufficient evidence for park, trail, and greenway infrastructure interventions when implemented alone.

### Intervention

These interventions combine infrastructure interventions with one or more additional interventions. Park, trail, and greenway infrastructure interventions improve the built and natural environments by creating or enhancing public locations for physical activity, relaxation, social interaction, and enjoyment. Locations include the following:

- Parks designated public areas that often combine greenery with paths, facilities for physical activity and recreation, and places for relaxation and social interaction
- Trails and Greenways routes for walking, hiking, or cycling in urban, suburban, or rural areas (e.g., “rails to trails” conversion projects). These may involve street conversions that provide opportunities for walking and cycling (most often in urban areas).

Additional interventions include the following:





### Community Engagement

Photo Credit: Human Resources Development Council (Bozeman, MT)



### Structured Programs

Photo Credit: Health by Design (Indianapolis, IN)



### Access Enhancements

Photo Credit: Central Arkansas Library System



### Increase Public Awareness

Photo Credit: Cultiva La Salud (Merced, CA)

# Safe Routes to Parks Strategies (that work!)



# Youth-led bikeshare project in La Junta, CO

- Launch of La Junta Bike Share Program led by two students
- Awarded \$66,000 from CDOT's Revitalizing Main Street Program
- Deployed 26 bikes, 30 racks
- Affordable option to connect to local destinations – the Safeway, park, school, and community college



**Colorado Youth Initiative** 

Download the App to get started.

**Check Out**

1. Use the App to locate the bike station.
2. Press "Select a Bike".
3. Enter the bike number and press "Rent Bike".
4. Bike will electronically unlock from the rack.
5. Inspect bike prior to ride. Report any issues in App.

**Returns**

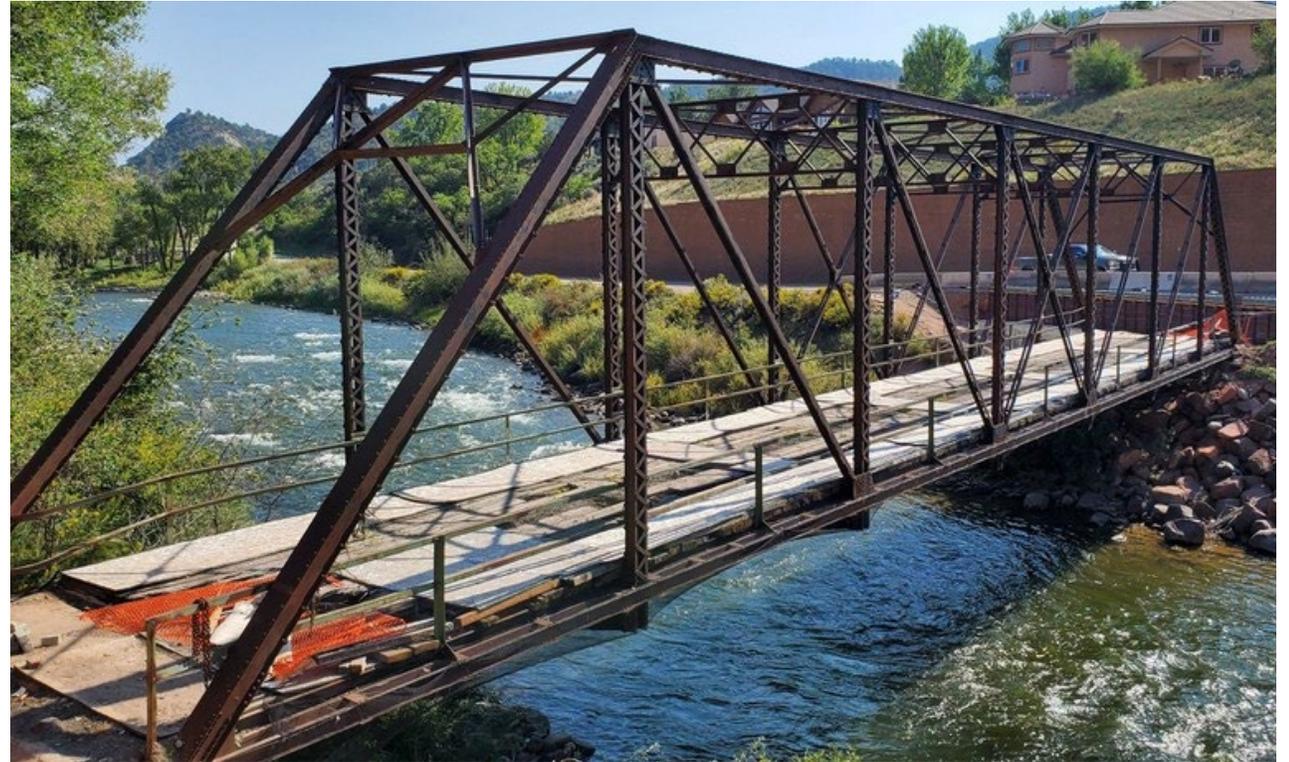
1. Dock the bike to the pin on the rack. Ensure bike is securely locked to rack.
2. In the App, press Active rentals.
3. Press End Rental.

 Be sure to follow all rules of the road. Use of bike helmet is recommended. Always ride in control.



# Bridge improvements to connect trails, school, and downtown in Glenwood Springs, CO

- Restoration of historic bridge to provide connection
- Rio Grande Trail to Ironbridge community, new school, and shopping center
- Roaring Fork School District awarded \$149,999 from CDOT's Revitalizing Main Street Program



Hardwick Bridge, currently inaccessible over Roaring Fork River. Credit: [CDOT Main Street Program](#)



# Bike rack installs encourage biking to school and parks in Durango, CO

- Demand for secure bike parking via surveys, letters to local newspaper
- Funding from CO Department of Health Quick Win to install racks at park locations and schools
- Partnership with parks, schools and local rotary club



Photos credit: [Durango Herald](#)





How can I get started?

# #1 Integrate Parks into your Safe Routes to School Activities

- Coordinate with local parks to host a walk and bike to-school day
- Ask if parks could be a site for remote drop off/pick up programs
- Invite park staff and park users to be part of your walk and roll audits
- Host bike rodeos or bike repairs in your local park



## #2 Combine Community Engagement Efforts

- Parks are great venues for engagement
- Engage park users on transportation access
- Combine resources for engagement



Photo Credit: Evren Sonmez (Tucson, AZ)



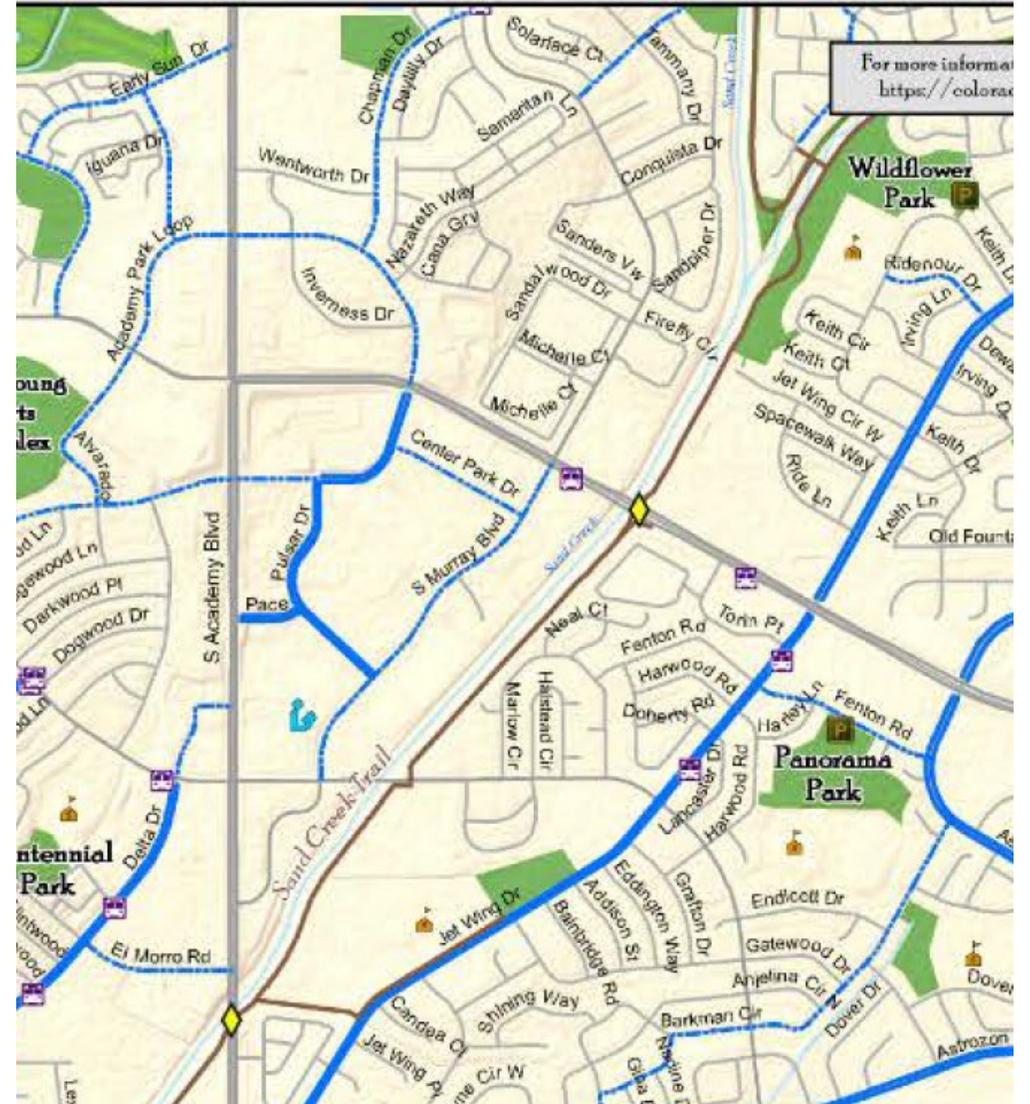
## #3 Open School Grounds for Community Use

- Shared-use agreements keep school grounds open for community use
- Sharing resources to ensure great community spaces for everyone to be active



# #4 Highlight Connection Between Parks and Schools

- Wayfinding signs to that promote routes
- Walking field trips to parks
- Partnerships and joint programs with youth park and rec centers



Map shows Sand Creek Trail in Colorado Springs connecting to schools and parks



# #5 Learn about the 2024 Colorado Activating Communities Program!

- Applications open October 2, 2023
- Nine-month technical assistance program (Jan – Sept 2024)
- Four non-profit organizations in Colorado
- Grantees receive \$10,000 for an early action
- **Register for the info session on November 1, 2023**



## Safe Routes Education in Parks

- [Traffic gardens](#) – Alexandria, Virginia
- [Student bike rides](#) – Washington, D.C.
- [StoryWalks](#) – Two Rivers, Wisconsin



# Planning and Policy Opportunities

- Safe Routes to School plans
- Vision Zero action plans
- Complete Streets policies
- Health and wellness policies



# Safe Routes to Parks Resources

- [Aligning Safe Routes to Parks with Safe Routes to School](#)
- [Connecting People to Parks: A Toolkit to Increase Safe and Equitable Access to Local Parks and Green Spaces.](#)



**ALIGNING SAFE ROUTES  
TO PARKS WITH SAFE  
ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

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# Upcoming Collaboration Opportunities

- Wednesday, October 4<sup>th</sup> – Walk and Roll to School Day
  - [Walk and Roll to School Day Collaboration Guide](#)
- Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup> – [Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day](#)

CELEBRATING WALKING, ROLLING, AND SAFE ROUTES  
TO PARKS ON INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY:  
*Ideas to Integrate Safe Routes to Parks into Walk to School Day Events*



The first Wednesday of October can be an exciting time of year for many students who walk and roll with their families and friends to school. It is International Walk to School Day, a day when families across several countries celebrate their active route to school. Walk to School Day can be a fun way to encourage or re-energize children and families to walk and roll to school regularly. It can also be a unique opportunity to celebrate great parks and safe park access. This fact sheet shares ideas for incorporating Safe Routes to Parks elements into Walk to School Day – a win-win for Safe Routes to School and Safe Routes to Parks advocates. Parks advocates and Safe Routes to School practitioners alike can use this fact sheet for ideas on tying Safe Routes to Parks activities into their Walk to School Day events and keeping up the momentum beyond October.

There are natural overlaps between Walk to School Day and Safe Routes to Parks. For example, some schools use nearby parks as remote drop-off locations to assist children who live too far or have unsafe routes, reduce traffic congestion at schools during arrival and dismissal, and encourage neighbors to walk and roll together to school. Parks can also serve as excellent alternative locations for schools that may not have space to host recess, sports practices, or other out-of-school activities. When schools are close to parks, there are opportunities to support Walk to School Day and engage primary park users in the discussion to improve safe and equitable park access, ultimately leading to more people using the park. Safe Routes to School and Safe Routes to Parks advocates can work together to use Walk to School Day as a catalyst for improving safe walking and biking throughout the community.

# Q & A





**Poll:** What type of parks collaboration are you interested in exploring?



**Next Colorado Safe Routes to School Webinar Series:  
Wednesday, October 11th, 11am MT**

**Community Engagement Highlights – Partnership mapping and  
neighborhood interviews**

# Summit Sneak Peek

- Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day
- Equity in Safe Routes to School
- Safe Routes to School funding
- Traffic gardens and bike education
- E-bike education and messaging
- Corps Network partnerships
- Youth engagement
- Rural and urban programming



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL  
**SUMMIT 2023**



People, Places, & Possibility  
OCTOBER 24 - 26



**Early Bird Registration Ends September 15<sup>th</sup>!**



## Contact Information

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