

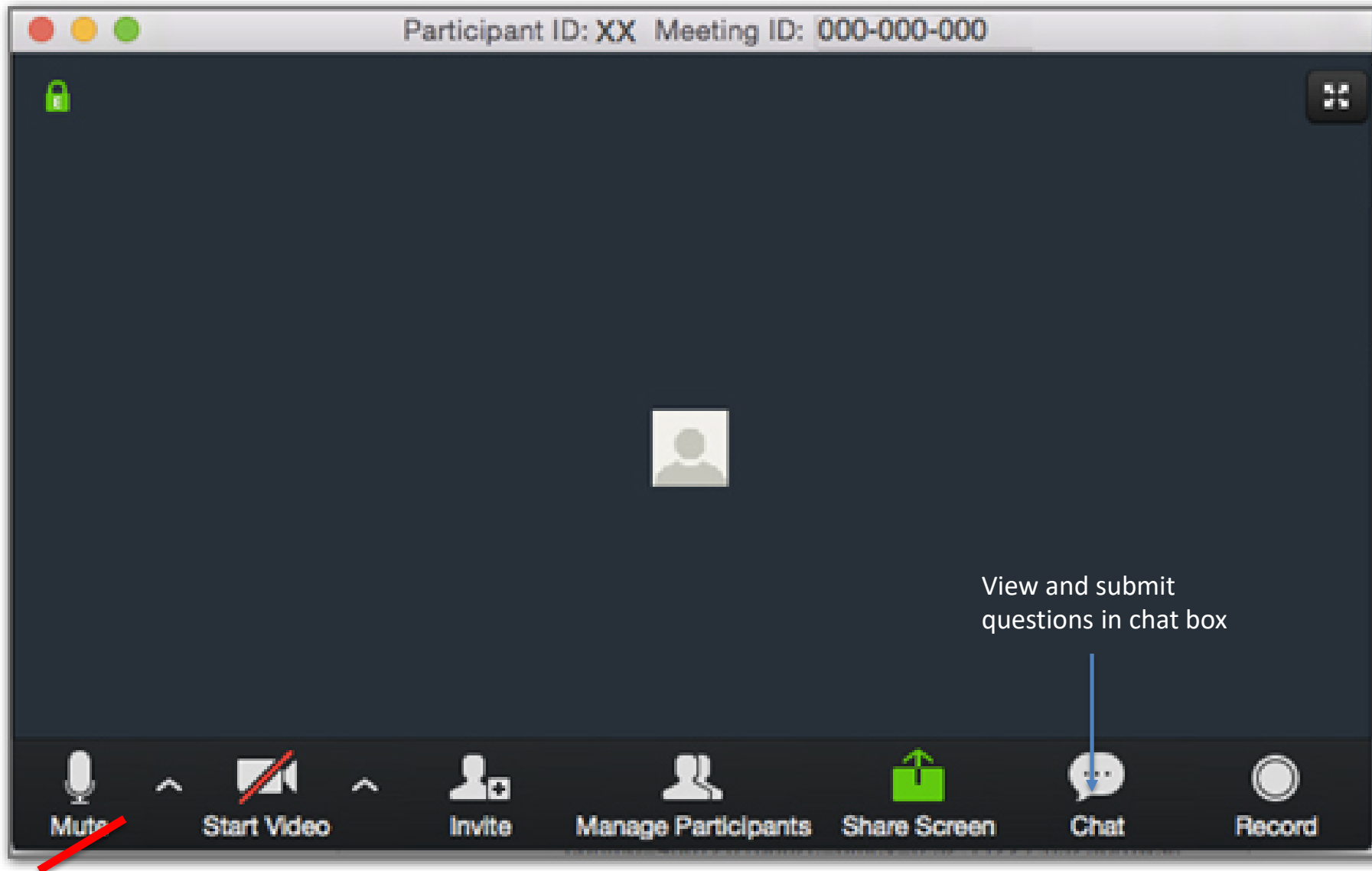


Let's Get Together: A Guide to Engaging Communities and Creating Change
Kori Johnson, Safe Routes Partnership
Wednesday, February 23rd, 2022



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.



SESSION IS BEING RECORDED
PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN THE CHAT!



TODAY'S PRESENTERS

Kori Johnson

Safe Routes Partnership, Washington, DC

Michelle Lieberman (Tech Support)

Safe Routes Partnership, Orange County, CA

Audience: Introduce yourselves in the chat!

- ***Name***
- ***Connection to Safe Routes to School***
- ***Something that is bringing you joy these days***

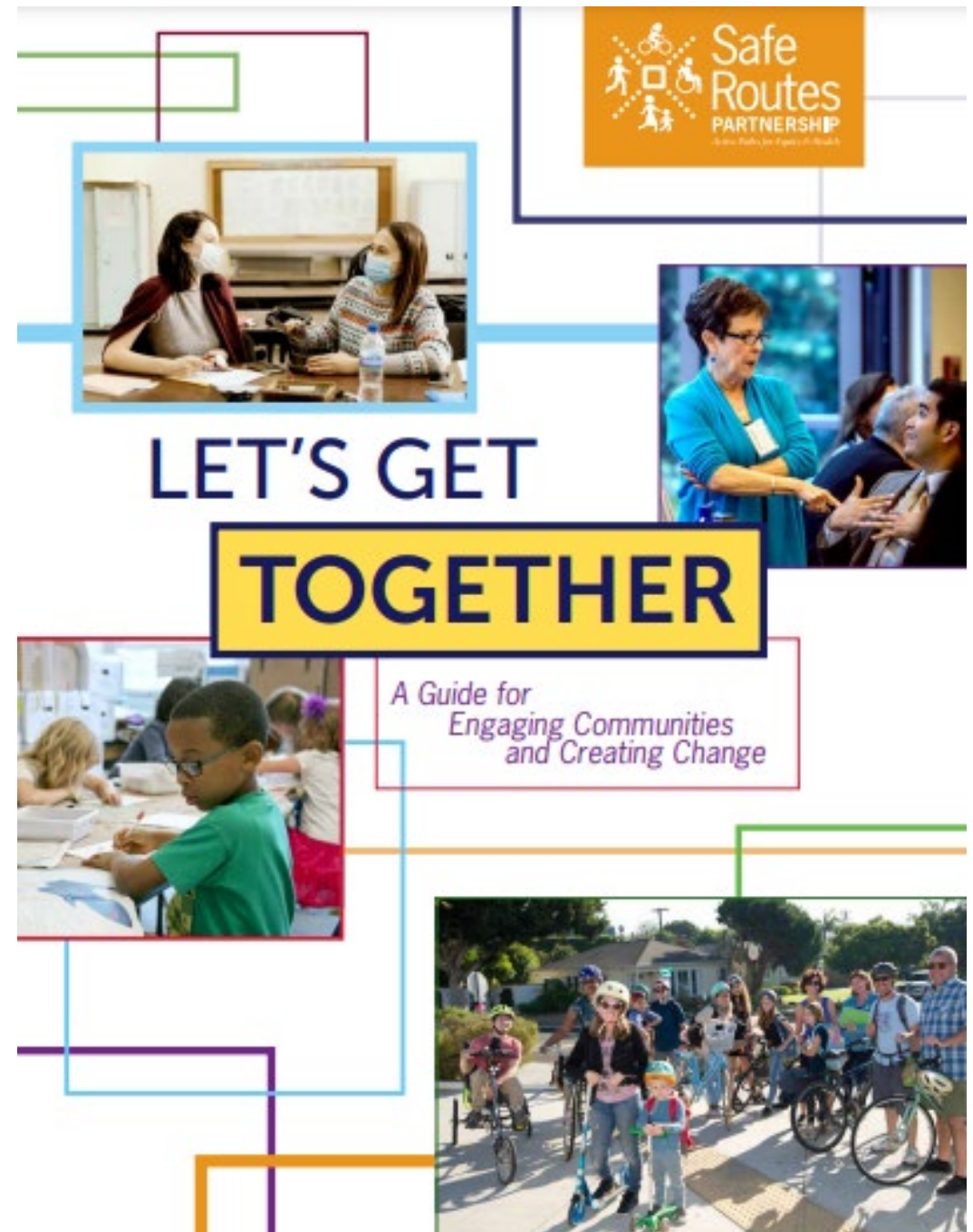


Agenda

- Introductions
- Framing the Conversation
 - Why Engagement?
- Community Engagement Framework
 - Reflect
 - Research
 - Partner
 - Plan
 - Implement
 - Sustain
- Q & A
- Closing Reflection
- Reminders & Next Steps

Safe Routes Partnership Community Engagement Toolkit

- Outlines a community engagement framework
- Highlights engagement best practices
- Guiding questions for each section
- National case studies
- Specific Safe Routes to School engagement tips
- Links to tools, worksheets, and additional resources
- Emphasis on equity



Why focus on
ENGAGEMENT?





ENGAGEMENT

All Safe Routes to School initiatives should begin by listening to students, families, teachers, and school leaders and working with existing community organizations, and build intentional, ongoing engagement opportunities into the program structure.

COVID-19's Impact on Safe Routes to School Engagement

- Reduced physical activity
- Increased stress
- Limited school capacity
- Limited Safe Routes to School coordinator capacity
- Safe Routes to School less of a priority
- COVID-19 disproportionately impacts youth and families of color and families with lower incomes – other needs take priority (food, housing, healthcare)





Engagement Matters Now More Than Ever

- Builds community and social connectedness
- Uplifts underrepresented voices
- Prioritizes needs
- Increases program participation
- Creates accountability
- Provides a roadmap for building a more just and equitable society
- Brings opportunities to explore new ideas and evolve program to fit today's needs



Community engagement is about relationship-building and creating opportunities to connect with each other.

T
O
G
E
T
H
E
R

I
S
T
H
E
W
A
Y

Who Should Be Engaged?

- Students
- Parents and caregivers
- Schools and school districts
- Local organizations
- Government agency staff
- Bike and pedestrian advocates
- Crossing guards
- Bus drivers
- Neighbors and community members

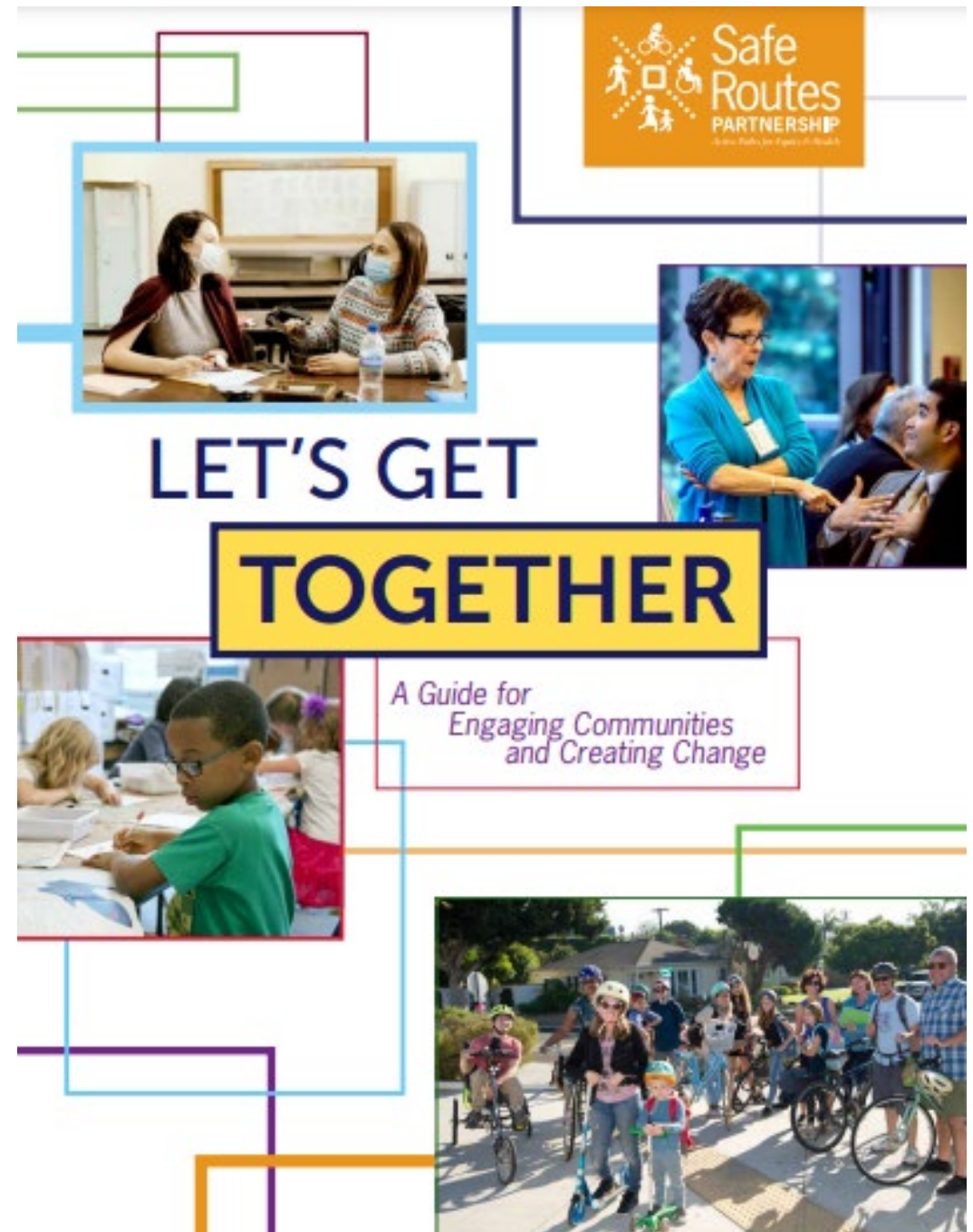




Especially people who might not look, think, or act like you.

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



REFLECT on your role
as a community partner.



Respond in the chat:

What excites or interests you about community engagement?

What makes you uneasy or unsure about community engagement?

**You can respond to one or both questions.*





Why Reflection Matters

- Grounds your work and give you purpose
- Identifies your strengths and weaknesses as a community partner
- Acknowledges your power and privilege in relation to the community you are engaging
- Important step in building trust with the community
- Especially important if you are not from the community you are working with and/or if you are a white person working in a predominantly community of color

Reflection looks like...

- A conversation with yourself – journaling, taking a solo walk
- A conversation with others – colleagues, community partners
- Being open and honest
- Being uncomfortable at times



Sample Reflection Questions

- What do you already know about this community? How did you gain this knowledge?
- What positions of power and privilege do you hold in relation to the community you are working with? Beyond your official professional role, consider race/ethnicity, language, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, citizenship status, etc.
- How might your own power and privilege impact the community?
- What has community engagement in this community looked like in the past? What does it look like currently?
- What keeps you doing the work that you do?

See the guide for more reflection questions!



Community Engagement Commitments

- A set of standards or norms of community engagement
- Helps hold yourself accountable
- Involve community members in the creating the commitments

Examples:

- I commit to challenging my own assumptions about the community I'm working with.
- I commit to making events and activities accessible to people with disabilities.
- I commit to listening more than I speak.
- I commit to talking with community members who I have not talked to before.
- I commit to learning about the history of the community where I work.

Reflecting on Safe Routes to School

- Can be done any time, not only at the start of the school year
- Consider reflecting with other SRTS practitioners or community partners
- Make it fun – go for a walk or ride, create a photo collage of past events, journal outside or in a coffee shop
- Make the time for it – even 5-10 minutes is better than nothing





Questions?

RESEARCH the community
where you are working.



Respond in the chat:

Think about a community you work with or want to work with. What are you interested in learning about that community?

**Even if you have worked in a community for a long time, there is always something new to learn!*





Why Research Matters

- Builds your understanding of the community
- Gives important context around persisting inequities
- Builds trust with community members
- Shows a willingness to learn about others perspectives
- Helps inform future programming
- Can dispel negative narratives around communities of color, low income communities, rural communities, etc.

Research looks like...

- Taking a walk or ride around a neighborhood
- Hopping on and off public transit
- Historical and archival research
- Attending different community events
- Having casual conversations with people
- Going on a guided tour
- Learning about the nuances within communities
- Exploring Google Maps and Google Earth





Researching Safe Routes to School

- Explore local walking and biking trails
- Learn about the history of SRTS/walking/biking in the community
- Learn about how different schools, neighborhoods, and landmarks got their names
- Attend different school events
- Grab lunch or a snack from a local spot
- Community scavenger hunt – virtual or in-person!



Questions?

PARTNER with other organizations to build relationships.



Respond in the chat:

Who are your community partners?

Are there any potential partnerships you would like to explore?





Why Partnership Matters

- Stretches resources
- Builds community
- Increases capacity
- Increases buy-in
- Brings accountability
- Expands your knowledge
- Everyone needs support – especially if you usually work on your own!

Partnership looks like...

- Co-leading events
- Co-marketing and co-branding materials
- Volunteer engagement
- Participating in a task force
- Regular check ins with partners
- Group brainstorming sessions
- Coalition-building





Partnership Ideas

- Parents and caregivers
- Youth groups
- Crossing guards
- Local agency staff
- Artists
- Safe Kids Coalitions
- Farm/agriculture groups
- Environmental organizations
- *What are some others?*

Partnering on Safe Routes to School

- Invite local agency staff to help at events (Walk/Bike to School Day)
- Pop-up crosswalk or safety demonstration with a local artist
- PSAs on local radio/TV
- Talking to neighbors and trusted community leaders (i.e. people who are “in the know” and have a lot of influence)
- Distributing SRTS materials at the local library, recreation centers, businesses, transit centers





Questions?

PLAN thoughtful and culturally-responsive community engagement experiences.



Respond in the chat:

What program activities are you planning in the next few months?

Are there any new activities you would like to try?





Why Planning Matters

- Provides a roadmap to help you stay on track
- Allows time for trouble-shooting
- Helps you integrate knowledge gained from community research
- Shows how you value the community
- Creates opportunities for public participation
- Planning is great – but don't overcomplicate it!


Planning looks like...

- Speaking seeking input from people you don't often hear from
- Exploring different spaces to host events
- Consulting partners to see if your activities are accessible to everyone
- Budgeting for food, volunteer stipends, giveaways, etc.
- Translating materials in multiple languages and providing interpreters or have staff/volunteers that speak the language
- Being thoughtful, but not overcomplicating it



IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



Planning for Safe Routes to School

- Create a SRTS task force or planning committee
- Consult a partner or local expert to see if your event is accessible
- Keep a school calendar on hand
- Build in appreciation days for volunteers, crossing guards, teachers
- Share your plan with others to get feedback
- Infuse cultural elements to your plan



Questions?

IMPLEMENT
community engagement
activities and events.



Respond in the chat:

What is something you have done to limit barriers to participating in your program activities (ex. Translated materials in multiple languages, hosted events at different times to accommodate work schedules, provided digital and paper flyers)?





Why Implementation Matters

- It's your program in action!
- Builds momentum and excitement
- Chance to try out new and creative ideas
- Shows follow-through on your engagement commitments
- Creates opportunities to make new connections and meet new people
- Can be a time for fun and celebration

Implementation looks like...

- Outreach events
- Community meetings
- Annual events and celebrations
- Marketing campaigns
- Educational activities and lessons
- Can be virtual or in-person





Implementing Safe Routes to School

- Walk/Bike to School Day
- Bike rodeos
- Pop-up demonstrations
- Hosting listening sessions to learn about safety concerns
- Organizing remote drop-off and pick up sites
- Walking school bus programs
- Safety campaigns and competitions
- Bike/pedestrian education lessons
- Walk audits
- *What are some others?*



Questions?

SUSTAIN community engagement beyond a single project or initiative.



Respond in the chat:

Beyond funding, how can we engage communities in Safe Routes to School long term?





Why Sustainability Matters

- Builds community trust and buy-in
- Creates opportunities for community members to lead
- Creates continuity and opportunities for growth
- Provides a sense of stability
- Builds culture and community

Sustainability looks like...

- Building long-term relationships
- Supporting community partners' initiatives
- Nurturing new leaders
- Long-term funding for programming
- Adopting plans and policies
- Following through on your commitments
- Regularly checking in with people
- Continuing to be a part of the conversation



Sustaining Safe Routes to School

- Safe Routes to School plans and policies
- Scheduling monthly or quarterly check ins with stakeholders
- Hosting annual events that become part of the school culture
- Supporting community-led initiatives (ex. Youth biking club, walking clubs, transportation advocacy campaigns)
- Creating time to regularly evaluate and reflect on your program





If you remember nothing else from this presentation,
please remember this...



Especially people who might not look, think, or act like you.

Additional Resources Links

- [Storytelling Resource Guide](#)
- [Community Asset Mapping](#)
- [Safe Routes to Parks Community Engagement Checklist](#)



A Checklist for Facilitating Community Engagement During Safe Routes to Parks Visioning Activities



Why is it important to engage residents in efforts to create community change?

Meaningful community engagement provides rewards to a variety of beneficiaries. Although sometimes engagement is initiated simply because it is a requirement for receiving funding for a community development initiative, it is important to note the plethora of benefits that these efforts can offer your initiative and the community, including:

- **Cost-efficiency:** By including community members' perspectives early on about what will actually make a difference for them, communities avoid spending money on "solutions" that do not meet the community's needs.
- **More responsive outcomes** resulting from a variety of community members coming together to identify what will make a difference for them.
- **More buy-in, community champions, and community ownership** of the change. When community members are involved from early on in the process, it fosters a greater sense of ownership of a project or outcome.
- **More use of the implemented change** due to the alignment with the community's needs.
- **More trusting relationships** with community members.

As you host community outreach and engagement events, reference this fact sheet for examples of questions to guide discussions and creative activities for engaging residents. This resource is intended to assist with developing events that engage marginalized and vulnerable populations, which often do not feel a part of transportation or active transportation planning efforts, such as people of color, low-income communities, older adults, youth, and people with disabilities.

There are many ways to engage residents in efforts to improve walking, bicycling, and public transportation access to parks and other destinations. From soliciting initial ideas to inviting feedback on conceptual designs to giving community members decision-making authority over developing and implementing solutions, organizations should involve community members in planning, implementation, and evaluation activities related to improving safe and equitable access to parks. While ongoing, collaborative efforts are the ideal, constraints on time and funding mean that organizations sometimes must host one-time community engagement events. However, if thoughtfully facilitated, one-time activities can fill a specific role of engaging residents in the development and implementation of efforts to enhance safe and equitable access to parks. This fact sheet aims to support organizations working to improve Safe Routes to Parks to meaningfully engage residents in park access improvement efforts.



Stories and Co-Creation¹⁹



Listen

Listen to individual stories and document them (written, audio, video).



Identify

Identify key themes and organize them in categories (i.e., program, policy, community healing).



Share

Share back with the folks you collected the stories from and ask if the themes resonate with them, or if something was missed or mischaracterized.



Collaborate

Collaborate with the folks who shared the stories to co-create materials, grant narratives, policy, programs, etc. Building trust takes time. Build in time to cultivate relationships into your budgets and timelines.

Map Out Your Process for Collaboration

Whose story(ies) will we seek?

How will you document it?

How much time will be allocated to ensure we can circle back with people?

What are you planning to collaborate on (co-creation of materials, grant writing, policy or program development, etc.)?

What are the key themes? Write in after you document the stories.



Questions?

Closing Poll:

What is a community engagement idea you are interested in trying?





Reminders

Let's Get Together Part Two: Community Engagement Zoom Session

- Wednesday, March 2nd, 3pm ET
- Share ideas, challenges, and resources
- No formal presentation – lots of time to chat with fellow practitioners!
- Discussion questions will be provided





Contact Information

Kori Johnson, Program Support Manager
kori@saferoutespartnership.org

www.saferoutespartnership.org

 Facebook.com/saferoutespartnership

 @saferoutesnow