

# New Mexico Safe Routes to School (NM SRTS) Program



Jessica Frost, NM SRTS Coordinator  
New Mexico Department of  
Transportation

# Fewer kids are biking and walking.

1969: 42% of 5-18 year olds walked to school

2001: 16% of 5-18 year olds walked to school

(US Centers for Disease Control, 2005)

**More parents are driving!**

Parents driving their children to school account for 20%-25% of morning rush hour traffic.

(NHTSA 2003; Dept. of Environment)



# Impacts to schools



Increased congestion in drop off zones.

Conflicts between private vehicles, buses, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Unsafe for students walking/bicycling.

# Impacts on our children



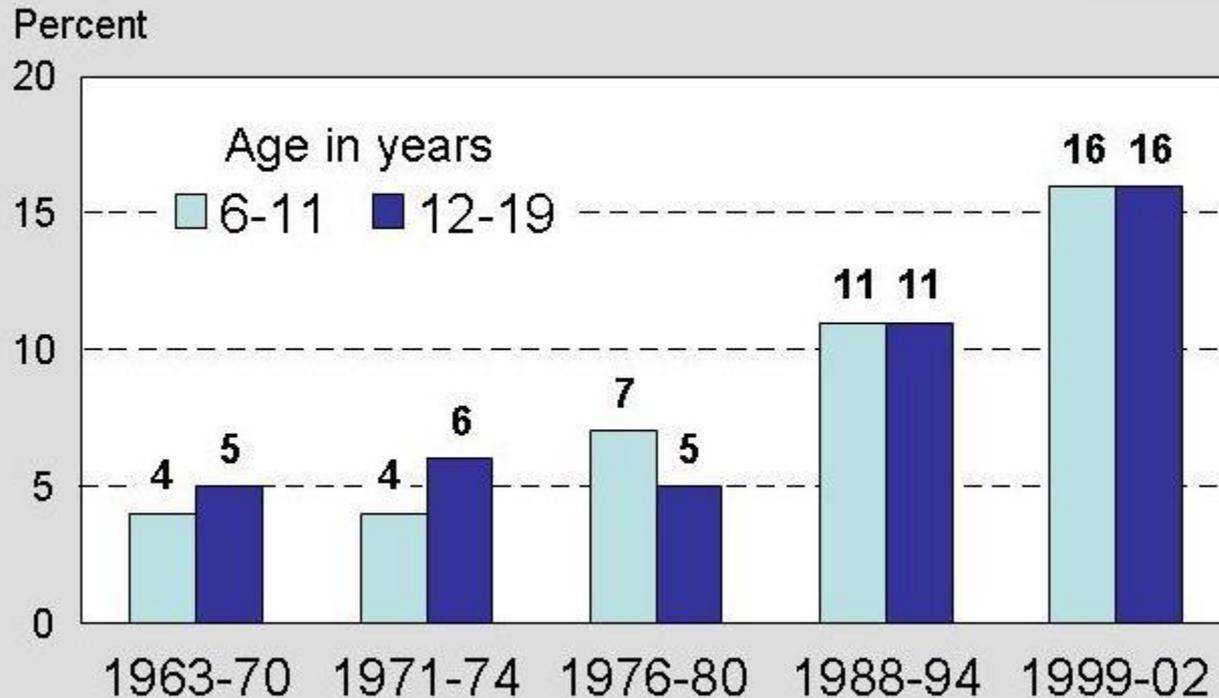
# The Physical Inactivity Epidemic



Most children  
(and adults!)  
aren't getting the  
physical activity  
they need

# U.S. youth overweight rates

## Prevalence of overweight among children and adolescents ages 6-19 years



NOTE: Excludes pregnant women starting with 1971-74. Pregnancy status not available for 1963-65 and 1966-70. Data for 1963-65 are for children 6-11 years of age; data for 1966-70 are for adolescents 12-17 years of age, not 12-19 years.  
SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, NHES and NHANES

The % of children considered severely overweight has tripled in last 30 years.

# Overweight children have an increased risk of...

Type 2 Diabetes

Low self esteem

Aggravated existing asthma

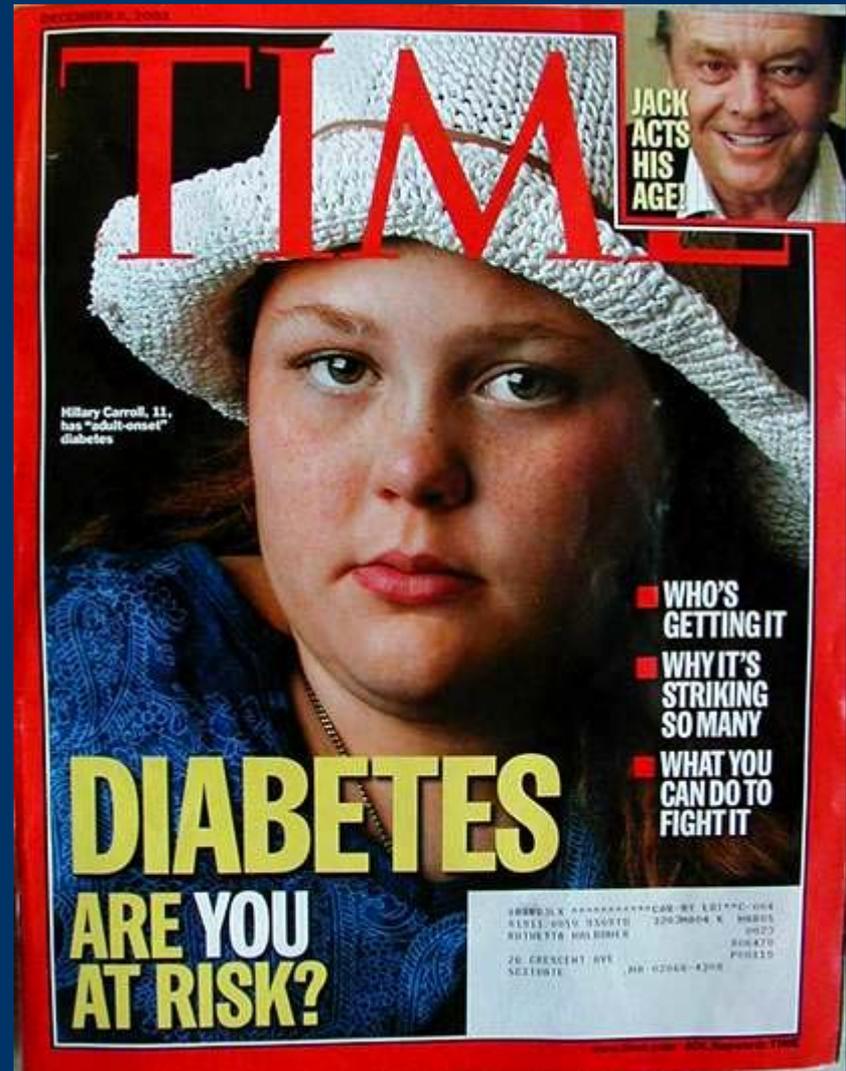
Sleep apnea

Decreased physical functioning

Many other negative emotional & physical effects

(American Academy of Pediatrics, 2005)

Today's children may be the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.



# Impacts to our environment (and health)

- Idling cars emit air pollutants, contribute to GHG, waste gasoline
- Air pollutants are harmful to children because of their developing respiratory systems, exacerbate asthma
- Asthma is 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of hospitalizations among children under 15 years/accounts for 14 million days of school missed annually



# How did we get here?

- School siting issues
- Individual barriers to walking to school
- Community issues

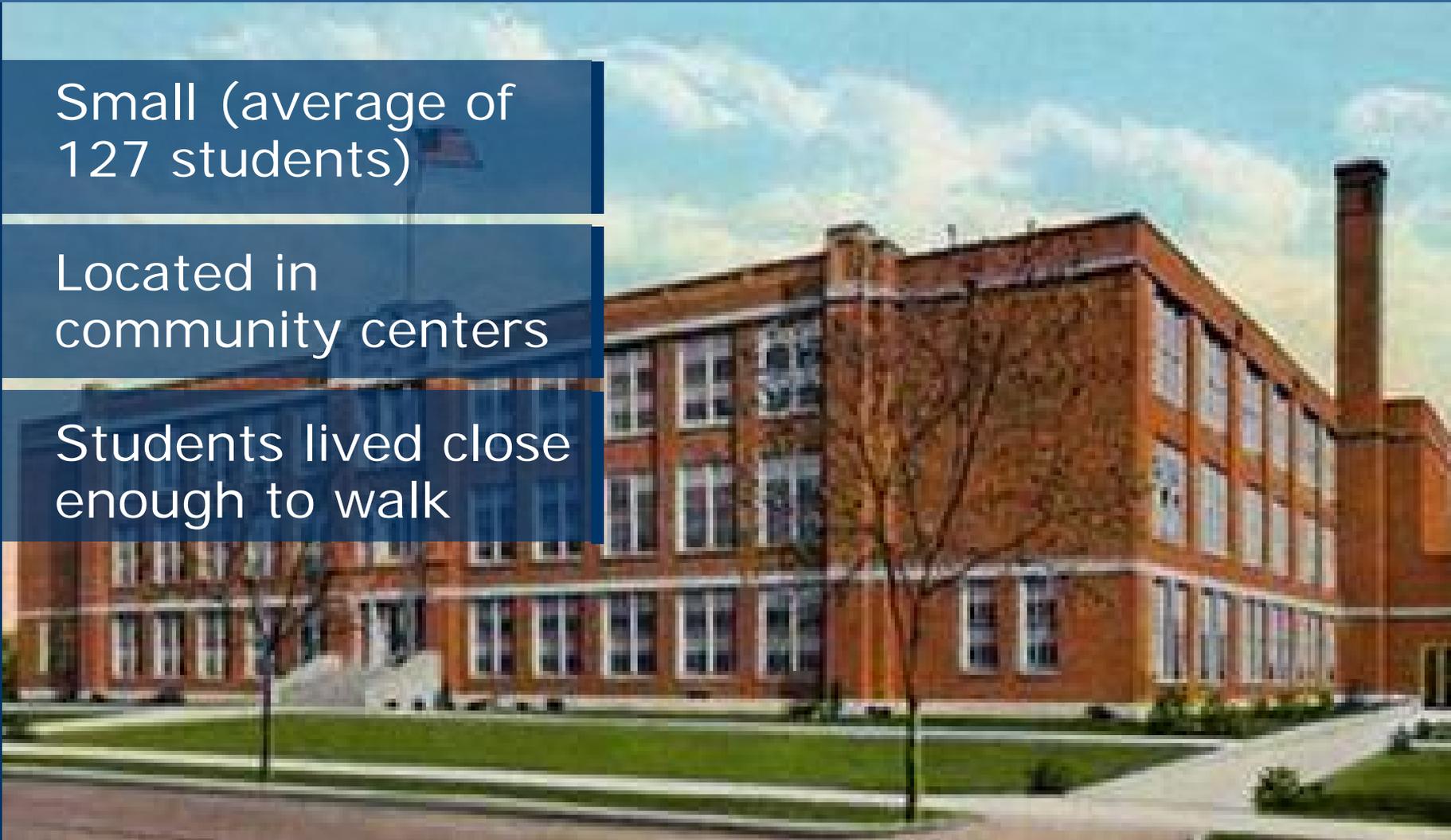


# School siting issues: a generation ago

Small (average of 127 students)

Located in community centers

Students lived close enough to walk



(EPA, 2003; 1969 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey)

# School siting issues: today



- Mega-schools (average 653 students)
- Schools located on 10 to 30+ acres cheaper urban fringe land (long term costs?)
- Lowest-cost construction (initially)

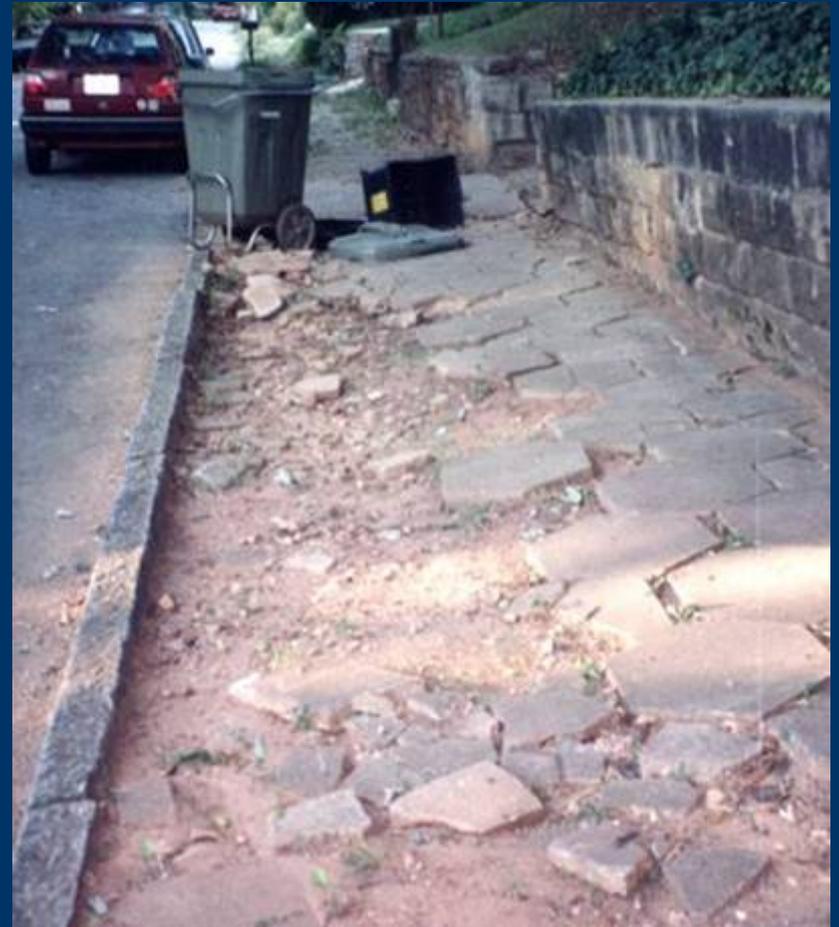
(U.S. Department of Education, 2002)

# Individual barriers (or reasons why parents don't let children walk to school)

Long distances	62%
Traffic danger	30%
Adverse weather	19%
Fear of crime danger	12%

(CDC Survey of Parents, 2005)

# Traffic Danger - Community conditions make it hard to walk or bike



# Adverse weather



Do people see weather as a barrier because we are so used to taking the car for every trip?

# Fear of crime danger

- Perception vs. reality—both are important to address.
- Some low probability events provoke the greatest fears.



# Safe Routes to School programs are part of the solution...

- to increase physical activity
- to improve unsafe walking and biking conditions
- to improve poor air quality by reducing vehicle emissions
- to decrease VMT



# Safe Routes to School Programs

**Make walking and bicycling safe ways to get to school**

**Encourage more children to walk or bike to school**

SafelyRoutes



# 2005 SAFETEA-LU: Created Federal Safe Routes to School Program

- \$612 million to States
- Requires State SRTS Coordinators
- Infrastructure projects (within 2 miles of schools) and non-infrastructure activities
- K-8<sup>th</sup> grade schools

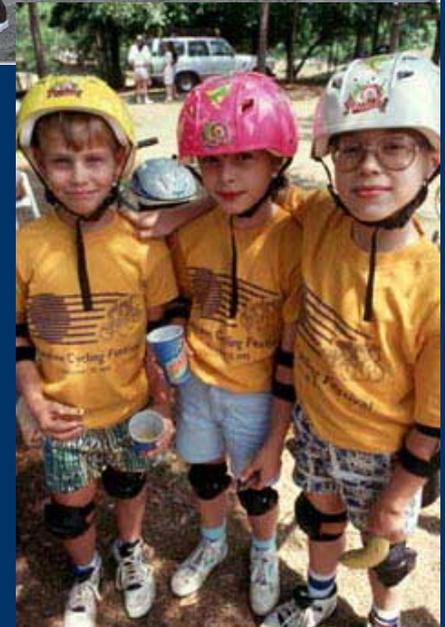


More Information:

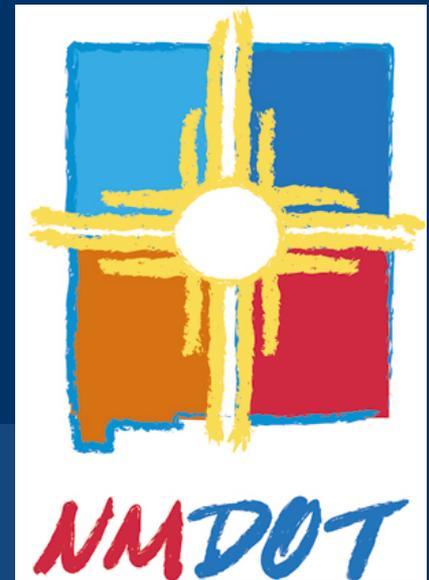
[www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

# Purpose of program (SAFETEA-LU):

- To enable and encourage all children in K-8 to walk and bike to school safely
- To make bicycling and walking to school a more appealing transportation choice
- To improve conditions for walking and bicycling



# New Mexico's SRTS Program



- Administered by NM Department of Transportation (NMDOT)
- "Minimum Allocation State" – \$1 million per year for FY05-09
- Based on Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) Guidance for SRTS
- Federal aid program – cost reimbursement, NEPA, ADA, etc.

# NM SRTS Program Funding Cycle 3



## Phase 1 – Development of SRTS Action Plans

- \$15,000 awards

## Phase 2 – Implementation of SRTS Action Plans

- Infrastructure projects up to \$250,000
- Non-infrastructure activities up to \$25,000

Phase 1 –  
Develop the SRTS Action Plan

# What is the purpose of the Action Plan?



- ✓ Develop comprehensive SRTS program
- ✓ Build SRTS Team of "experts"
- ✓ Identify barriers to walking/biking to school
- ✓ Develop and prioritize strategies

# How do you develop the Action Plan?

1. Assemble the SRTS Team
2. Collect information
3. Write the Action Plan



**New Mexico**

**Safe Routes to School Handbook**



New Mexico Safe Routes to School Program  
[www.nmsaferoutes.com](http://www.nmsaferoutes.com)

**NMDOT** August 2008

[www.nmsaferoutes.com](http://www.nmsaferoutes.com)

# 1. Assemble SRTS Team

- Start with the 3 Ps
  - Principal
  - Parents
  - Police
- School representatives
- Community members
- Local government
- Public health
- Local advocates



## 2. Collect information to identify issues and barriers to walking/biking



- School data
- Survey Parents
- Assess the routes
- Other data – speeding, crashes
- Future projects (CIP)

# 3. Develop and write the Action Plan

- Review and organize data
- Establish goals
  - Create safe routes
  - More students walking/biking
- Compile issues (data)
- Determine and prioritize strategies based on the E's



What are the E's???

# “The 5 E’s” of SRTS

Engineering

Education

Encouragement

Enforcement

Evaluation



# Engineering (Make the routes safe!)

- Along the routes
- School zones/school
- Within 2 miles of K-8 school
- Public ROW



# Engineering



# Education

- Teach safety skills
- Create awareness of peds/bikes
- Fosters life-long safety habits
- Includes parents, neighbors and other drivers
- Benefits of walking/bicycling



# Encouragement



- Increase popularity of walking and biking
- Easy way to start a SRTS program (if routes are safe!)
- Emphasize fun of walking and biking

# Enforcement



- Increase awareness of pedestrians and bicyclists
- Improve driver behavior
- Help children (and adults) follow traffic rules
- Help address parents' fears

# Evaluation

- Surveying parents and students before/after implementation
  - Student travel tally
  - Parent surveys
- Determine effectiveness of program
- Make changes

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

### STUDENT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TALLY SHEET

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ # of students enrolled in class: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Monday's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School's Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ (used to identify weather conditions)

Teachers, here are simple instructions for using this form:

- Please conduct these counts **each of the five days of the assigned week.**
- Before asking your students to raise their hands to indicate the one answer that is correct for them, read through all potential answers so they will know what the choices are.
- Ask your students as a group the question "How did you arrive at school today?"
- Read each answer and record the number of students that raised their hands for each.
- Follow the same procedure for the question "How do you plan to leave for home after school?"
- Please conduct this count regardless of weather conditions (i.e., ask these questions on rainy days, too).

Step 1. Fill in the weather conditions and number of students in class each day			Step 2. Ask students "How did you arrive at school today?" and "How do you plan to leave for home after school?" (record number of hands for each answer)						
Weather Sunny Rainy Cloudy See snow	Number of Students (in class when count made)		Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle (only with children from your family)	Carpool (riding with children from other families)	Transit (city bus, subway, etc.)	Other (skateboard, scooter, inline skates, etc.)
Mon AM									
Mon PM									
Tues AM									
Tues PM									
Wed AM									
Wed PM									
Thur AM									
Thur PM									
Fri AM									
Fri PM									

Comments (Please list any disruptions to these counts or any unusual travel conditions to/from the school on the days of the tally):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is the program making a difference?

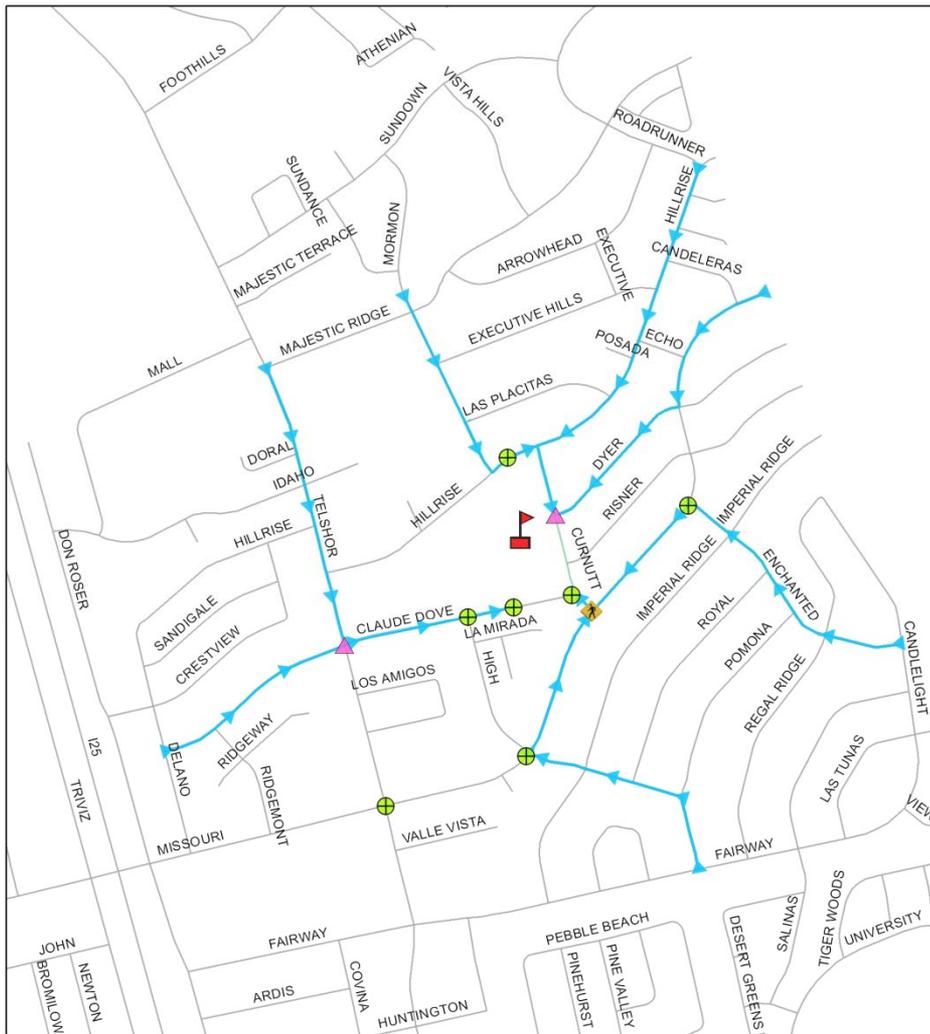
## Action Plan Form

Name of School: Sample Elementary School

Issue #	Issue	Strategies				Tasks	When?	Who?	Potential Funding Source	Evaluation
		Education	Encouragement	Enforcement	Engineering					
1	Traffic queue during pick up is backing up into traffic	Use valet attendents in pick up during dismissal.			X	Find and train volunteers, purchase safety vests.	August 08	John Brown	NM SRTS for safety vests	Observe pick up on monthly basis
2	Only 1/3 of students in walking boundary are walking/biking to school	Start Walking School Bus program		X		Recruit volunteers, select routes, post flyers, sign up students.	Ongoing beginning Sept 08	Jill Sanchez	NMDOT for incentive items	Conduct student tallies once a month.
		Educate students on bike/ped safety	X			Work with Safe Kids and Fire Department to hold a bike rodeo.	Sept 08	Sally Smith	None required	Observe behavior of students
		Hold Walk and Roll to School Day event.		X		Organize event--involve Safe Kids, Police, PTA.	10/8/08	Jill Sanchez	NM SRTS goodies	Count number of participants.
3	Parked cars obscure visibility on NE corner of Elm and 1st; no curb ramps	Install bulb out with curb ramps and ADA ramps.			X	Ask city to install.	Estimated at 36 months to complete	Jason White	City/NMDOT: ADA and SRTS funds.	Observe behavior of drivers
		Extend no parking zone; use cones to prevent parking during pick-up hours			X	Ask city to install.	City to paint; cones purchased by District	Jason White	School District Maintenance Program	Observe behavior of drivers
		Ask police dept to provide sporadic law enforcement to ticket cars parked in no parking zone.		X		Send request to police dept	After no parking zone is painted.	Jason White	None required	Count number of cars parked in zone.
4	Parents expressed concern about "stranger danger"	Ask local law enforcement to provide presentation on stranger danger and teaching kids to be safe	X			Talk to police department community officer.	At Sept 08 PTA meeting.	Jill Sanchez	None required	Conduct Parent Survey again in spring 09
5	Highway 000 is difficult to cross.	Explore traffic calming measures, ie median "refuge island" with NMDOT.			X	Make appointment with NMDOT.	May 08	Jason White	Unknown at this time.	Re-assess route
		Make sure students are crossing at correct location and are educated on pedestrian behavior.	X			Discuss route with students, make sure they participate in educational trainings.	ASAP	Sally Smith	None required	Observe student behavior when crossing.

# Walk & Bike to School Route Map

- If/when routes are safe
- To determine best routes/alternatives
- Educational and encouragement tool



## Hillrise Elementary Walking & Biking Routes



Created by Susan Jansen  
IT/GIS Department  
City of Las Cruces  
21 July 2006

### Legend

- Crosswalks
- Crosswalks with Flashing Lights
- Crosswalks with Crossing Guards
- Hillrise Elementary
- Best Routes

# Using SRTS Phase 1 Funds for Action Plan

- Pay Local Champion to coordinate
- Engineering services, reports, studies
- Technical assistance
- Public meetings, ads, education, outreach



# What does NMDOT provide?

- Handbook
- Trainings
- Technical assistance
- Engineering assistance
- Other?



# Phase 2 – Implement SRTS Action Plan

- Must be a Phase 1 community
- Action Plan completed and approved
- NMDOT and RPO/MPO support
- Meet sponsorship requirements
- Infrastructure projects up to \$250,000
- Non-infrastructure activities up to \$25,000



# Cycle 3 Application schedule:

- October - Funding Cycle 2 opens
- Phase 1 training for developing Action Plan
  - 11/3 Las Cruces
  - 11/5 Albuquerque
- December 15, 2008 - Applications due to NMDOT
- March 2008 - NMDOT announces awards

# NM SRTS Communities:

Alamogordo

Bayard

Carlsbad

Corrales

Deming

Des Moines

Dexter

Espanola

Gallup

Hobbs

Las Cruces

Mesilla

San Miguel County

Silver City

Wagon Mound

# For more information:

Jessica Frost, AICP

NM Safe Routes to School  
Coordinator

NMDOT

(505) 476-2155

[Jessica.Frost@state.nm.us](mailto:Jessica.Frost@state.nm.us)

[www.nmsaferoutes.com](http://www.nmsaferoutes.com)

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