



City of Ventura

Appendix N: Menu of Safe Routes to School Programs & Policies

April 2023



MENU OF RECOMMENDED SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

This document provides implementation guidance for a range of recommended programs and policies that can support increasing the share of students who walk and bike to and from school across the city of Ventura. It includes a description of each along with basic implementation guidance, suggested implementation leads, and suggested age ranges for those programs better suited to different school and age contexts.

PROGRAMS

Arrival/Dismissal Evaluation and Recommendations

Description

Observe arrival or dismissal at least every 2-3 years to evaluate what is and is not working well. Include direction for people walking and bicycling in written arrival/dismissal procedures for schools. Cite bike parking location(s) and building entry/exit locations for people who walk and bike.

Infrastructure and program strategies can set the tone for students to enter school in a stress-free way. Arrival and dismissal procedures and supportive programs can improve driver behavior, reduce, or eliminate interaction between cars and students walking and bicycling, and promote more walking and bicycling overall. The National Safe Routes to School Partnership provides more information [here](#).

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- School Staff
- VUSD
- City of Ventura

Applicable Age Range

- All schools

Arrival and Dismissal Supervision

Description

Ask school personnel or parent volunteers to stand at key locations and provide oversight of arrival and dismissal procedures.

Adults or older students who facilitate a predictable flow of vehicular traffic helps promote a calm and safe environment for all students who walk, bike, or get dropped off at school. Schools can also establish a formal safety valet program that encourages a smooth drop-off experience. Valets greet students by opening their car doors and direct drivers to pull forward after students are safely on the sidewalk.

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- Staff
- PTA/PTO

Applicable Age Range

- Elementary School
- Middle School

Art Walk

Description

Through the Art Walk, each student will decorate a portion of the sidewalk along their route to school by drawing, tracing, and marking the sidewalk with chalk art.

This can create awareness within the community where students are likely commuting by walking and encourage potential students who want to walk because they can receive a visual cue that other students are taking similar routes. Students can be provided a bag of chalk and an instructional sheet to help guide what to draw and where. A QR code can be scanned, where students are able to upload images of their sidewalk art to a map for viewing by others around the City.

Potential Leads

- Staff
- PTA
- Neighborhood groups

Applicable Age Range

- All schools

Bicycle Education Curriculum (6th Grade)

Description

Continue partnership with Bike Ventura to provide bicycle education programming to all 6th grade students. Evaluate program periodically to respond to student and family needs, update selection of training routes in response to infrastructure improvements, and other needs as identified.

In school bicycle education can be supported with complementary materials available to deepen students' interest in bicycling or to extend the lessons learned to the home. [Bike New York](#) has a collection of resources and City of Ventura can work with VUSD to develop simple companion materials for families.

Develop materials that can be sent home with students that can serve as educational material for both students and parents/caregivers. Information should include key items that the students learned that week.

Potential Leads

- Bike Ventura
- PE Teacher
- School Administration

Applicable Age Range

- Middle School

Bicycle Lock Library

Description

Maintain a library of bicycle locks to be available for students locking their bikes at school. Making bike locks available for loan to students who ride to school will keep bicycles secure during the school day. These locks can be made available as needed, regardless of whether the need is daily or in the event of a forgotten lock.

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- Office Administration
- PE Teacher / Librarian
- PTA

Applicable Age Range

- All schools

Bicycle Parking Assessment & Upgrade (Districtwide)

Description

Assess bicycle parking location and capacity at each school. Require bicycle parking to be visible, accessible, secure, well lit, and protected from inclement weather. A safe and protected place for students and teachers to store their bicycles during the school day is important when encouraging bicycling through Safe Routes to School programs. Often schools provide racks that are inefficient, unusable, or poorly located on school grounds. Building and installing secure and sensible places for students to store their bicycles during school hours can help to get more students on their bikes more often.

Secure and protected bicycle parking is essential for students and teachers/staff to feel comfortable leaving their bicycles for a full day of instruction. Additional tips for providing school-based bike parking can be found [here](#).

Potential Leads

- VUSD
- School Administration
- City of Ventura

Applicable Age Range

- All schools
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

Bike to School Day with Bike-Related Safety Education

Description

Coordinate a bike to school day event. Make sure to include safety-related information about biking to school, beginning ideally one month leading up to the event. Education can include information or materials to be sent home for students and families (including safety checklist, a bike map with bike parking locations, or small incentives, as well as in-class lessons on rules of the road.

Bike to School Day is an opportunity for schools to join together to support bike safety for students and families as part of Bike Month, in May. Some activities include group rides to/from school, learning signals and traffic rules, equipment safety checks, and helmet giveaways. Information about Bike to School Day can be found [here](#). USA Bike to School Day [website](#) provides resources and event registration.

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- VUSD
- PE Teacher
- Staff
- City of Ventura

Applicable Age Range

- All schools
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

Caregiver Driver Education / Safe Driving Pledge Program

Description

Parents pledge to drive the speed limit and follow other basic safe driving procedures. Campaign could include informational materials.

Have parents pledge to drive the speed limit and respect pedestrians and bicyclists on the road or at crossings. Parents that sign could receive a bumper sticker (if funding allows).

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- PTA

Applicable Age Range

- All schools

Crossing Guard Appreciation Event

Description

Select a day to celebrate crossing guards with thank you cards, a special gift, breakfast, or school assembly.

Crossing Guard appreciation day is an event devoted to saying thank you to those who help students cross the street safely on their way to and from school. See more and get event ideas at the [Virginia DOT website](#) and LADOT's SRTS December theme, "[Be Thankful for Safety Champions.](#)"

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- PE Teacher

Applicable Age Range

- Applicable schools

Driver-focused School Zone Traffic Safety Campaign

Description

Develop a campaign targeted at safer driving, prioritizing safe speeds around schools. Include yard signs, social media, and other communication channels.

Observations of the school zone can be used to identify key safety threats created by parents and pass-by drivers. Targeted messages to school community members using established school communication channels can set a tone for a school-based traffic safety culture.

Potential Leads

- City of Ventura
- VUSD

Applicable Age Range

- All schools
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

Enhance Classroom Traffic Safety Instruction

Description

Review traffic safety materials offered through elementary school health curriculum. Consider replacing and updating if curriculum is outdated or lacks rigor.

[The Bicycle and Pedestrian Curricula Guide](#), published by the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, identifies a variety of lesson plans and curricula that support safety education and more.

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- VUSD
- Stem Teacher / PE / Health Teachers

Applicable Age Range

- Elementary School
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

Frequent Walker/Biker Program

Description

Create punch cards and create incentives for students to get punches in their frequent walker/biker punch card. Information on individual or classroom-based competitions can be found at the [NCSRTS webpage](#). Incentives can be offered for school based or other trips, using a simple recording system.

Potential Leads

- PE Teacher
- Homeroom Teachers

Applicable Age Range

- Elementary School
- Middle School

Integrate Safe Routes to School Content into Instruction

Description

Share planning initiatives developed for this project with faculty and encourage their use. [The Bicycle and Pedestrian Curricula Guide](#), published by the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, identifies a variety of lesson plans and curricula that support safety education and more.

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- Teachers

Applicable Age Range

- All schools
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

Multi-modal Safe Passage Pledge

Description

Students, parents/caregivers, and school staff pledge to practice safe travel when walking, bicycling, scooting, or driving. Campaign could include informational materials and could be combined with the “Parent Driver Education & Safe Driving Pledge,” which is like the driver pledge but broadened to include students and the school community at large.

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- Teachers/Staff

Applicable Age Range

- All schools

Neighborhood Carpools

Description

Organize carpools by neighborhood to limit vehicle trips to and from school zones. Support for carpool organization could come from a service such as [Karpool Club mobile phone app](#).

Potential Leads

- Community Councils
- VUSD
- PTA

Applicable Age Range

- All schools

Neighborhood Safety Messaging Campaign

Description

Use yard signs, neighborhood newsletters, and flyers to communicate with neighbors and drivers regarding safe school zone travel.

Student inspired messages can be developed via instructional or after-school programming. Work with YMCA, Bike Ventura, and other community partners to develop messaging and strategy.

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- Art Teacher
- PTA
- After-school programs
- Neighborhood groups

Applicable Age Range

- All schools
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

Parent / Caregiver Survey

Description

Conduct an annual survey of parents and caregivers to provide additional information on student travel modes and monitor parent concerns about walking and bicycling.

The parent survey is helpful for learning about parent/caregiver thoughts about children walking, biking, and taking transit to school. It helps inform ongoing SRTS activities.

Adapt and expand citywide survey developed by consultant team to learn more about school-specific travel concerns. A standardized survey on National Center for Safe Routes to School or a personalized survey that is more school-specific can alternatively be used.

LAUSD has an annual [School Experience Survey](#), which now includes questions about travel mode choice and travel behavior.

Potential Leads

- VUSD
- School Administration
- PE Teacher
- PTA / PTO

Applicable Age Range

- All schools
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

Remote Drop-off or Park and Walk Program

Description

Identify remote drop-off or park and walk location(s) at an accessible location near the school (e.g., a park, public library, or church parking lot), or quiet neighborhood streets with ample parking, and encourage parents to use them on a regular basis as an alternative to dropping children off at school.

Remote drop-off or park and walk locations remove the possibility of automobile conflicts from the front door of the school. This can also prove to eliminate some of the conflict inherent in the loading zone when families feel pressured because they feel rushed.

This strategy can improve pedestrian and bicycle conditions near schools and provide an opportunity for students who live far from the school to practice pedestrian and bicycle safety skills.

Locations can be identified on school walking route maps.

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- Staff
- PTA

Applicable Age Range

- All schools

Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee

Description

Develop a standing Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee and host meetings at least twice per school year. Invite participation from school families, school staff, and students. The group could be led by VUSD and/or City of Ventura. A group of people who want to make walking and bicycling to school safe and appealing for children is essential for developing and implementing solutions sensitive to the school context. Sharing concerns, interests, and knowledge among a variety of community members with diverse expertise can enable groups to tackle many different issues.

The [Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center](#) provides more information about building local committees.

Potential Leads

- VUSD
- City of Ventura
- School staff

- PTA
- School community

Applicable Age Range

- All schools
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

School Safety Patrol Program

Description

Implement a school safety patrol program to put students in role model positions where they can assist with the arrival and dismissal process.

[AAA School Safety Patrol members](#) are school-sponsored student volunteers from upper elementary grades, middle and junior high schools. Typically, teachers and principals appoint patrol members, who participate with parental approval. A teacher usually serves as the patrol advisor. Local law enforcement officers may also be involved with your patrol. Patrollers direct children, not traffic. As school-age leaders in traffic safety, patrol members teach other students about traffic safety on a peer-to-peer basis. School Safety Patrol members:

- Complete training in traffic safety
- Protect students from hazards of crossing roads and highways on their way to and from school
- Assist bus drivers in safely transporting students to and from school
- Teach fellow students about traffic safety
- Serve in other leadership roles under the direction of school officials
- Presence of students along the street gives drivers added responsibility to follow school zone traffic rules.

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- Staff
- Student leadership organizations

Applicable Age Range

- Elementary School
- Middle School

School Safety Valet

Description

Organize vehicle traffic around the school entrance during arrival and dismissal to match students quickly and efficiently with parents/caregivers. Identify operational procedures for school staff, and opportunities to adjust street and parking lot vehicle flow, to improve safe and efficient movement for students and families driving, biking, walking, or riding the bus.

See example of school safety valet street design at Los Angeles' Esperanza Elementary and more information from LADOT [here](#).

Potential Leads

- School Administrators
- Operations / Facilities Managers
- VUSD Risk Management

Applicable Age Range

- All levels

School Streets

Description

Identify low-volume streets adjacent to select schools where vehicle traffic may be restricted, creating plaza spaces open to students and families walking, biking, and playing.

School streets calm the school zone, improve safety, and improve air quality. See extensive examples in [Barcelona and Paris](#) and guidance from [National Association of City Transportation Officials](#).

Potential Leads

- City of Ventura
- School Administrators
- Operations / Facilities Managers
- VUSD Risk Management

Applicable Age Range

- All schools
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

School-based Student Advocacy Programs

Description

Students explore the street network and learn about city community engagement process by requesting infrastructure improvements as residents.

Student-led campaigns can generate enthusiasm and improve the social conditions for a Safe Routes to School program. Students can promote safe walking, bicycling, and public transit use to and from school through advocacy for safer and more complete streets.

The Safe Routes Partnership provides a guide for mentoring student based advocacy [here](#).

Potential Leads

- Could be school-led (by school principal or teachers / staff) or non-profit led (e.g. Safe Routes Partnership, Bike Ventura, etc.)

Applicable Age Range

- All schools

Schoolwide Mode-Split Challenge (Travel Tally)

Description

Conduct a Travel Tally among all students in the school and award a pizza or taco party to the grades or classrooms with the lowest drive-to-school rates.

Building on the Student Travel Tallies Program suggestion, this challenge could take place within a school or among multiple schools within the district with similar age/grade levels.

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- VUSD

Applicable Age Range

- All schools
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

Secure Storage for Scooters and Skateboards

Description

Add secure, easily accessible storage for students' scooter and skateboards.

School administrators and facilities manager can work to identify or install available storage space. Similar to bike parking, scooter and skateboard storage should be visible, easily accessible, and easily monitored.

Potential Leads

- School Administrators
- Operations / Facilities Managers

Applicable Age Range

- All schools

Student Bike Swap or Giveaway Program

Description

Create a program that receives donated bikes that children have grown out of, provide basic maintenance/repairs, and gift these bikes to students. By having their own personal bikes, students will be able to enhance their bike riding skills following the 2nd grade program. Bikes can be donated from varying sources, including older bikes from the 2nd grade biking program.

Potential Leads

- Bike Ventura
- VUSD

Applicable Age Range

- All schools
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

Student Travel Tallies

Description

Student travel tallies count the number of students who walk, bicycle, take public transit, ride the school bus, or are driven to and from school. Conduct hand tallies annually to collect information about journey to school and monitor changes or progress in efforts to encourage students to walk and bike to school.

The information is collected using a brief, consistent form that can be administered by teachers with a simple "hand raising" survey. Tallies are typically collected over the course of one week. Homeroom or breakfast in the classroom time allows for the information to be collected school-wide. When the data is collected annually, correlation between SRTS activities and travel mode can be monitored. A standardized tally form and tally instructions can be downloaded [here](#). [LADOT's Student Travel Tally project](#) also includes Travel Tally reports and forms.

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- Teachers / Staff
- PE Teachers

Applicable Age Range

- Elementary School
- Middle School

Student Walk and Bike Mentors

Description

Pair younger students with older students for walking/biking buddies. Older students can travel with younger students to help them feel safer and more comfortable navigating their trip to school.

Bike and walk mentor/mentee participants should be identified within the first weeks of school to establish walking/biking as a routine early on.

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- Teachers / Staff

Applicable Age Range

- All schools

Student-led Social Media Safety & Education Campaign

Description

Work with City of Ventura and VUSD communications teams to establish walking, rolling, and biking social media strategy and approach. Student representatives can work with these teams to create regular social media posts targeting students, parents/caregivers, and the general public.

Social media platforms may include Tik Tok, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, and others as appropriate/applicable. Messages and themes could follow a monthly schedule such as that [used by LADOT](#).

Potential Leads

- City of Ventura
- VUSD
- School Administration

Applicable Age Range

- Middle School
- High School
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

Traffic Gardens

Description

Implement a temporary or semi-permanent traffic garden to create a traffic-free environment for students to practice bicycling and learn traffic rules.

A [traffic garden](#) is a set of small-sized streets with scaled-down traffic features and other fun elements. Traffic gardens may be known as safety town, safety city, safety village, traffic park or one of the many other regional names. They can be constructed with asphalt streets and concrete curbs on dedicated sites or assembled with temporary sets of markings and portable equipment in parking lots and playgrounds. What these facilities and installations all have in common is they create a world to ride bicycles, steer scooters and drive pedal cars. Children navigate and practice using roadways, intersections, and crossings in a safe and fun environment free of motor vehicles.

Permanent traffic gardens can be implemented as part of school modernization projects, but temporary ones can also benefit second grade instruction.

Potential Leads

- School Administration

- Director of Operations
- PTA

Applicable Age Range

- Elementary School

Vision Zero-focused Student Art Projects

Description

Develop art projects centered around Vision Zero to engage students and advance a traffic safety culture. The Safe Routes to School Partnership published a [guide describing innovative ways to support and empower teen leaders in Vision Zero](#).

Youth led traffic safety initiatives can be more effective in encouraging safe behavior amongst their peers and families. Students can use art or creative writing to demonstrate the value of Vision Zero.

Potential Leads

- Could be school-led (by school principal or staff) or non-profit led (e.g. Safe Routes Partnership, Bike Ventura, etc.)

Applicable Age Range

- All schools

Vision-Zero-focused Traffic Calming through Street Art

Description

Have students design a street mural for a street or intersection adjacent to the school and work with Ventura Public Works and community volunteers to get it installed.

One example of city-permitted intersection painting programs is in [Portland, Oregon](#).

Potential Leads

- Could be school-led (by School Administration or staff) or non-profit led (e.g. Safe Routes Partnership) with City of Ventura's support for execution by Art in the Right of Way (AROW) team

Applicable Age Range

- All schools

Walk Audits

Description

Conduct annual or biannual walk audits to note walking and biking conditions on streets near the school. Report serious deficiencies to VUSD and document other issues and challenges based on priority.

In a walk audit, community members go for a walk together, noting what makes their streets feel comfortable for walking and what is missing. Walk audits can be informal and casual events with just a few friends, or can include city councilmembers, traffic engineers, and detailed forms. (source: Safe Routes to School National Partnership)

Walk audit resources can be found [here](#).

Potential Leads

- City of Ventura
- VUSD
- School Administration

Applicable Age Range

- All schools
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

Walk to School Day with Pedestrian-Related Safety Education

Description

Coordinate walk to school day events. Make sure to include safety-related information about walking to school, beginning at least one month leading up to the event. Education can include materials and information to be sent home for students and families (including walking bingo cards, safety tips, or small incentives, as well as in-class lessons on street signs, walking etiquette, and other tips).

Walk to School Day is a one-day event that celebrates walking and biking to school. Generally this event is scheduled for the first full week in October. Walk to School Day events are also sometimes planned for the spring to coincide with Walk to Work Day (first week in April) or Bike Month/Bike to Work/Bike to School Day (May).

Can evolve into monthly “Walking Wednesdays” events.

USA Walk to School Day website provides resources and event registration: www.walkbiketoschool.org

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- VUSD
- PE Teacher
- Staff
- City of Ventura

Applicable Age Range

- All schools
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

Walking Challenge

Description

Organize a walking challenge to encourage students to be active. Walking challenges can create friendly competitions between classrooms, grade levels, or entire schools across the district. One example is The Natural Wonders Walking Challenge, a collective event where students work together to “visit” the 7 Natural Wonders of the World. Students log minutes of physical activity to collect “Wonder Miles.” Add up everyone’s “Wonder Miles” to complete an around the world tour of the 7 Natural Wonders.

Potential Leads

- Teachers / Staff

- PE Teacher
- VUSD

Applicable Age Range

- All schools
- This program could be implemented districtwide.

Walking School Bus and/or Bicycle Train

Description

Encourage parents to volunteer to help provide adult supervision for students that can walk to/from school. Walking school buses can also be coordinated for a remote drop-off or park and walk location.

Walking school buses and bicycle trains are adult supervised groups of students walking or bicycling to school with designated routes, meeting points and schedules. The National Center for Safe Routes to School provides information [here](#).

Another possibility is for schools to apply for grant funding for additional adults to staff these “last-mile” transportation gaps

Potential Leads

- School Administration
- PTA

Applicable Age Range

- Elementary School Middle School

POLICIES

School Zones

Expand the distance from schools which are designated school zones and ensure consistency citywide and enforce consistent school zones and speed limits.

School zone speed limits

Enforce 20 mph speed limits within 2 miles of a school for half an hour before / after school arrival and dismissal periods.

School zone signage

Update school zone signage to fluorescent yellow green at all school warning sign locations.

School time speed limits

Reduce citywide speed during arrival and dismissal period.

Adopt no idling policy to reduce pollution exposure

Encourage all drivers to turn off their engines when in line for pickup/drop-off to reduce pollution exposure. Explore local ordinances to enforce no-idle policy. [Current ordinance](#) applies to City of Ventura vehicles and limits idling to no more than 5 consecutive minutes.

School zone automated speed enforcement

Advocate for legislation at the state level to allow automated speed camera enforcement. City of Ventura could lead the effort with support and recognition from VUSD and school administrators.