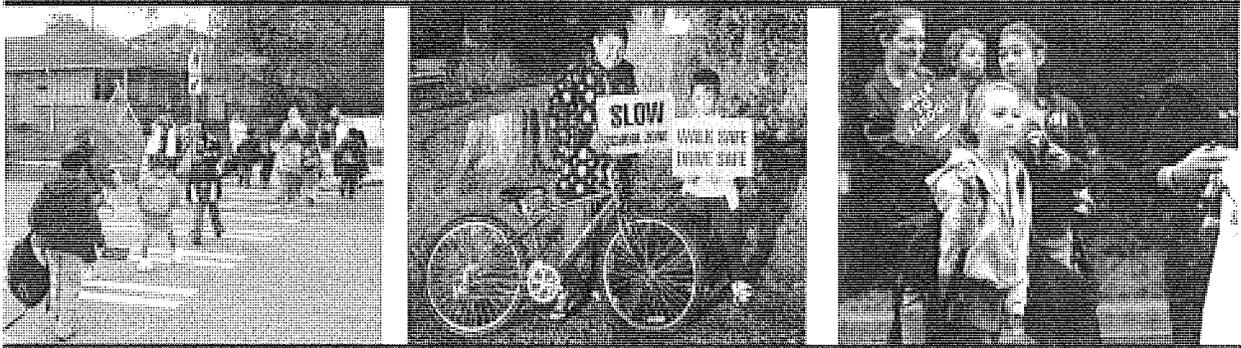


WSDOT Safe Route to School Program

Winter 2010



What is Washington's Commitment to Safe Routes to Schools?

Washington State is a committed leader among states for its Safe Routes to Schools Program. In 2004, before the federal Safe Routes to Schools program was created, the State Legislature approved a Safe Routes to Schools Pilot Program administered by WSDOT. Additionally in 2005, the State Legislature committed \$74 million in state funding over 16 years to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and mobility, including improving safe routes to schools.

What services does WSDOT provide?

Washington's Safe Routes to School program provides technical assistance, and resources for engineering, education, encouragement and enforcement improvements that get more children walking and bicycling to school safely. In particular, project development services are provided to communities. These services include help with walk route plans. The purpose of the walk route plan is to help students and parents identify the safest route or routes for walking to school. Development of the plans is one way to help communities identify locations which need improvements. A recent inventory of walk route plans in Washington indicates that approximately 46% of schools districts have them for the elementary schools in their area.

How have schools and communities responded to the program?

WSDOT has had an overwhelming response to the program. Available funding has allowed for 60 projects to be awarded out of approximately 260 applications. These projects have and continue to work to improve walking and biking conditions for 123 schools and approximately 43,000 children.

What has been accomplished?

More children walking and biking:

- There has been a significant increase in the number of children walking and biking to school;

More pedestrian and bicycle facilities:

- Sidewalks;
- Crossing improvements;
- Shared use paths;

Safer walking and biking:

- A reduction in motorist travel speeds and traffic citations near schools;
- Increased student compliance with safe crossing behaviors.

What are people saying about the program?

- “Kids who walk to school are more alert and ready to learn”, Teacher, Larabee Elementary.
- “It is an empowering program for the community”, Kim Brown, Public Works Department, City of Bellingham.
- “Safe Routes to School pulls organizations together that wouldn’t normally talk to each other”, Nicole Willis, Whatcom County Health Department.
- “When people feel safe walking and/or biking to and from school, they will increase the number of times they utilize that mode of transportation; not only does this improve the quality of air in our environment, but it gives adults opportunities to be positive, healthy role models for our children and increases the level of physical fitness.” “Thank you again for making our community and school a more safe and better place to live.” Rick Winters, Superintendent, St. John – Endicott School District.
- “We feel our students are a lot safer walking to and from school”, Patrick Ulery, Wahluke School District.
- “The new sidewalk, named “Logger’s Lane”, is a matter of pride for the community, as it is the first sidewalk that the community has ever had”, Tom Anderson, Crescent School District.
- “We expect the percentage of walkers/bicyclists to continue to increase as more parents and students become familiar with the improvements. This project represents a major infrastructure investment that continues to pay dividends to the community by providing a safe, reliable and “walk-able” corridor for everyone to enjoy.” Mark Burlingame, Steilacoom Public Works.