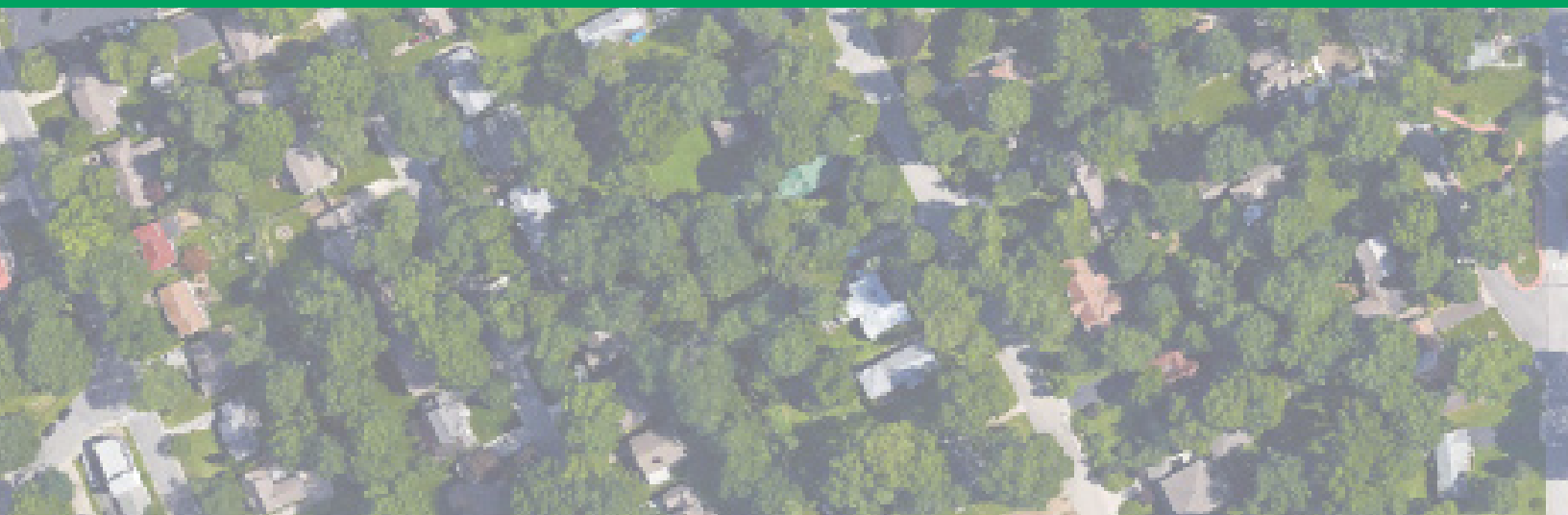




Roesland Elementary

Safe Routes to School Case Study & Checklist

January 2018





Introduction: A Coalition is Born at Roesland Elementary

2017 was a watershed year for active transportation at Roesland Elementary in Roeland Park, Kansas.

But progress didn't start that year. In fact, the partners it took to make the 2017 changes had been working in separate silos toward similar goals for years.

Roesland worked with city officials to encourage walking to school with an annual Walk to School Day initiated in 2014. The event often included the high school band, a few words from the mayor, and a police escort. When the PTA turned toward expanding active transportation with a Bike to School Day, safety concerns mounted.

Conversations between parent advocates, school officials, district leadership, city staff, and elected leaders brought additional partners with recourses to the table. County health department programming, non-profit bike educators, advocates, and volunteers joined the coalition that ultimately applied for a national grant to improve the biking and walking infrastructure around the school.

This guide tells the story of Roesland's efforts, highlighting the best practices and "lessons learned" that parents, school officials, municipal staff, and elected leaders can use to promote active transportation at schools and in neighborhoods across the Kansas City region.

How to use this guide

This guide is organized into four sections:

1. **Why Safe Routes? / The 6 E's** An introduction to safe routes projects and their benefits.
2. **A Quick-Reference Checklist** Basic steps that each safe routes project should take to deliver a successful project.
3. **Safe Routes Success: Roesland** A case study of the Roesland process with sidebars to highlight best practices used and lessons learned throughout the project.
4. **A Resource Guide** A summary of existing documents and web resources that help in planning and executing a safe routes project.

Why Safe Routes?



In 1960, half of kids walked or biked to school. Today fewer than 15% of kids walk or bike to school. Decreasing levels of physical activity are among the reasons for an increase in rates of chronic disease among younger and younger people. In fact, today's kids are the first generation of Americans with a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

“Safe Routes to School” (SRTS) refers to a national movement dedicated to getting more kids walking and biking to school. Organizing a walking school bus with neighbors, asking the city to install a crosswalk across a busy street, adding bike racks at schools, and reforming city and district policies are all steps that schools, parents, and community members can take to make it safer and easier to walk and bike to school.

Benefits of safe routes, active schools

Creating safer routes to school brings with it numerous benefits, both to students and to the wider community.

Students who walk or bike to school have been shown to be more alert and ready to learn. Overall academic performance is higher in students who travel to school via these means.

As the number of students walking to school has fallen over the past several decades, the rate of

obesity in kids has climbed. Walking or cycling is physical activity. Walking one mile in both the morning and afternoon gives kids two-thirds of their daily recommended activity. Students who walk or cycle to school build overall confidence and self-reliance as they learn to navigate their neighborhoods and to interact with traffic.

By promoting a safe walking and cycling culture, schools benefit from safer arrival and dismissal procedures, lower bus transportation costs, and more engaged students and parents.

The community as a whole wins when active transportation is promoted around schools. Infrastructure safety improvements such as new sidewalks, upgraded crosswalks, improved signage, and lower speed limits make all road users safer. In the past, safe routes campaigns have identified and addressed public safety concerns like criminal activity, dangerous dogs, and vacant structures. Resolving these issues for the sake of students' safety has also resulted in safer streets for all residents. Often, the immediate neighborhood benefits from less traffic congestion and pollution associated with parents' cars at arrival and dismissal.

The Six E's

The Safe Routes to School Partnership conducts research, publishes best practices, and has designed model programming for schools, parents, and elected officials. According to the partnership, successful Safe Routes to School projects include six stages or components, known as the “Six E’s:”



Evaluation develops an understanding of a school’s active transportation needs. School officials and parents may have a sense of the issues, but evaluation develops a clearer picture and helps build a case for improvements. This stage often involves surveys of parents or students, and school arrival/dismissal observations, which gauge rates of walking and biking and perceptions of safety issues.



The **Engineering** phase focuses on the built environment. Barriers to bicycling and walking often exist in the way streets or sidewalks are built, or in the lack of elements like safe crossings or signage. This stage involves an assessment of the physical conditions of the neighborhood around a school. Working with city officials, specific design improvements can then be identified.



Education seeks to alter behavior. Many schools offer classes to teach students how to walk or bicycle safely. Younger elementary school students are often taught the basics of interacting with traffic and crossing the street while walking, while older students are taught bicycle handling and maintenance. Education gives children the ability and confidence to be safer on the road.



Encouragement aims to inspire students and parents to travel to school by bike or on foot. Many schools organize Walk to School or Bike to School days when all students are encouraged to travel to school via active transportation. Encouragement can also engage teachers and school and elected officials to promote active transportation.



Enforcement involves working with law enforcement to make sure traffic laws are being followed where students might be traveling. Crossing guards and student safety patrols can help improve the safety and flow of arrival/dismissal.



The **Equity** focus ensures that programs to boost walking and cycling address barriers and support equitable outcomes, particularly in low-income neighborhoods or communities of color.

The Six E's in Detail

Engineering	Education	Enforcement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and develop safe routes, where safety improvements should be directed Plot safe routes with the city, parents, community members Identify short-term fixes, including signs and crosswalks Bike racks: Provide safe storage for bikes at schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer Bicycle Lesson and Safety Training (BLAST) through PE classes Develop Earn-A-Bike after-school club Convene a Community Forum to share opportunities, lessons learned Host a teacher in-service day on how to support biking and walking Share information at ice cream socials, back to school events, and kindergarten roundup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local law enforcement and codes administrators to ensure traffic enforcement, maintenance of property, clearing of sidewalks during the winter Post crossing guards at key crossings Coordinate parent volunteers or student safety patrol to manage crossings, direct arrival/dismissal
Encouragement	Equity	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan bike and walk-to-school days Promote Bike Month for school and district employees Institute recognitions and awards for biking or walking Distribute free helmets and bike locks to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that efforts to engage parents reach parents of students in need (These parents may not be connected via the PTA, for instance) Offer Earn-A-Bike course and free helmets and locks to students Where needed, develop printed materials and social media in non-English languages Partner with local organizations that work with populations in need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect pre- and post-event information (e.g. conduct same survey with parents and students before and after the project) Count the number of students walking and biking before and after the project Measure participation year-over-year; get older students involved to help collect data and create charts

Safe Routes to School Checklist, page 1

Every school and every community is different, but a successful project to grow walking and biking to school will likely include these steps:

☐ **Identify early champions/partners**

Because safe routes projects seek to effect change in the community as well as in students, attracting partners from the community is an important first step for a successful, impactful project. School administration, school district officials, and PTA members, are essential to any project. Community groups, health and active living advocates, and local elected officials can be valuable resources for technical assistance, funding, and other support.

☐ **Align with existing efforts**

Safe routes efforts never occur in a vacuum. Local government and other schools and organizations in the area have probably taken on similar projects before. Organizations like the Mid-America Regional Council and BikeWalkKC are familiar with efforts occurring across the Kansas City region. Reaching out to them or your existing partners early on will reveal opportunities for collaboration and funding.

☐ **Get organized**

Getting organized helps a working group produce results more quickly rather than getting hung up on process. The Roesland coalition agreed on regular monthly meetings. Outside of meetings, good, frequent communication was maintained through email.

☐ **Gather data - Build an understanding of the challenges**

At some point during a safe routes project, data will be important. Data may be used to build understanding of a problem or to make a case for support to potential funders or partners. This data will often include demographic data, police crash data, school attendance areas, student residences, and school bus stops.

Safe Routes to School Checklist, page 2

☐ **Make a map**

Visuals will get you everywhere. A map of the area under discussion will provide citizens an opportunity to share local knowledge of areas of concern. Maps will also help those partners who do not live in the neighborhood have an “on the ground” understanding.

☐ **Work with local officials**

Ideally, a local official or two will be key champions in your safe routes project. Engaging local officials will be important to delivering a project and ensuring lasting progress on active transportation. Officials will often need to review and approve infrastructure projects.

☐ **Record, Evaluate & Share**

Because safe routes work will likely continue at a school, understanding the successes and setbacks of your project can only help future efforts.

Depending on your project, before and after surveys of parents and students, community forums, and wrap-up meetings may all be helpful for understanding strengths and weaknesses of an effort, and ensure someone takes pictures at walk-to-school day or similar events, in order to easily promote the event in the future or to share with future partners or other schools.

☐ **Host an event**

Events, especially walk- or bike-to-school days, are an excellent opportunity to engage many of the Six E's mentioned in the previous section. While being an obvious way to develop Encouragement, the planning and outreach involved can easily mix in Education, Evaluation, Engineering, Enforcement, and Equity.

☐ **Identify solutions (and funding)**

Once an understanding of the challenges is developed, solutions should be identified. These solutions might relate to any of the Six E's. Each school may require vastly different solutions, amounts of work, and funding to put into action.

Safe Routes Success: Roesland Elementary

In just one year, an idea for improved bike-to-school outreach at Roesland Elementary became a reality – and produced wider results than originally anticipated. What contributed to the success of the project?

Roesland benefited from existing relationships between a range of partners and stakeholders. This allowed the initial idea for safe routes work to be turned into action quickly and effectively.

The project was also helped by an alignment of efforts, in several senses. The desired outcome of the project fit the goals of the partners who helped the project, meaning these partners could easily devote resources to it. For instance, the project's active transportation goals could easily be supported by partners aiming to improve community health outcomes, while the infrastructure issues at play were also of concern to the municipal government. The school also found itself in a unique situation geographically, with its attendance boundary nearly matching the city limits of Roeland Park, further simplifying collaboration between the school and city officials.

Shared Challenges

Roesland's location highlights one of several challenges students face in being able to walk or bike to school. Almost all of Roesland's students live in the city of Roeland Park -- the active transportation challenges faced by Roesland students are experienced by city residents as well.

The challenge at Roesland is its specific location. Roesland Elementary is located a few blocks east of Roe Boulevard, a major north-south artery that divides the city roughly in half (see map on opposite page). The street is busy throughout the day, carrying commuters to a nearby interstate and serving the busy Roeland Park Shopping Center. With the street's wide roadway and fast-moving traffic, safe crossings for pedestrians and cyclists are limited – one city councilmember characterizes the street as the “River of Roe.”

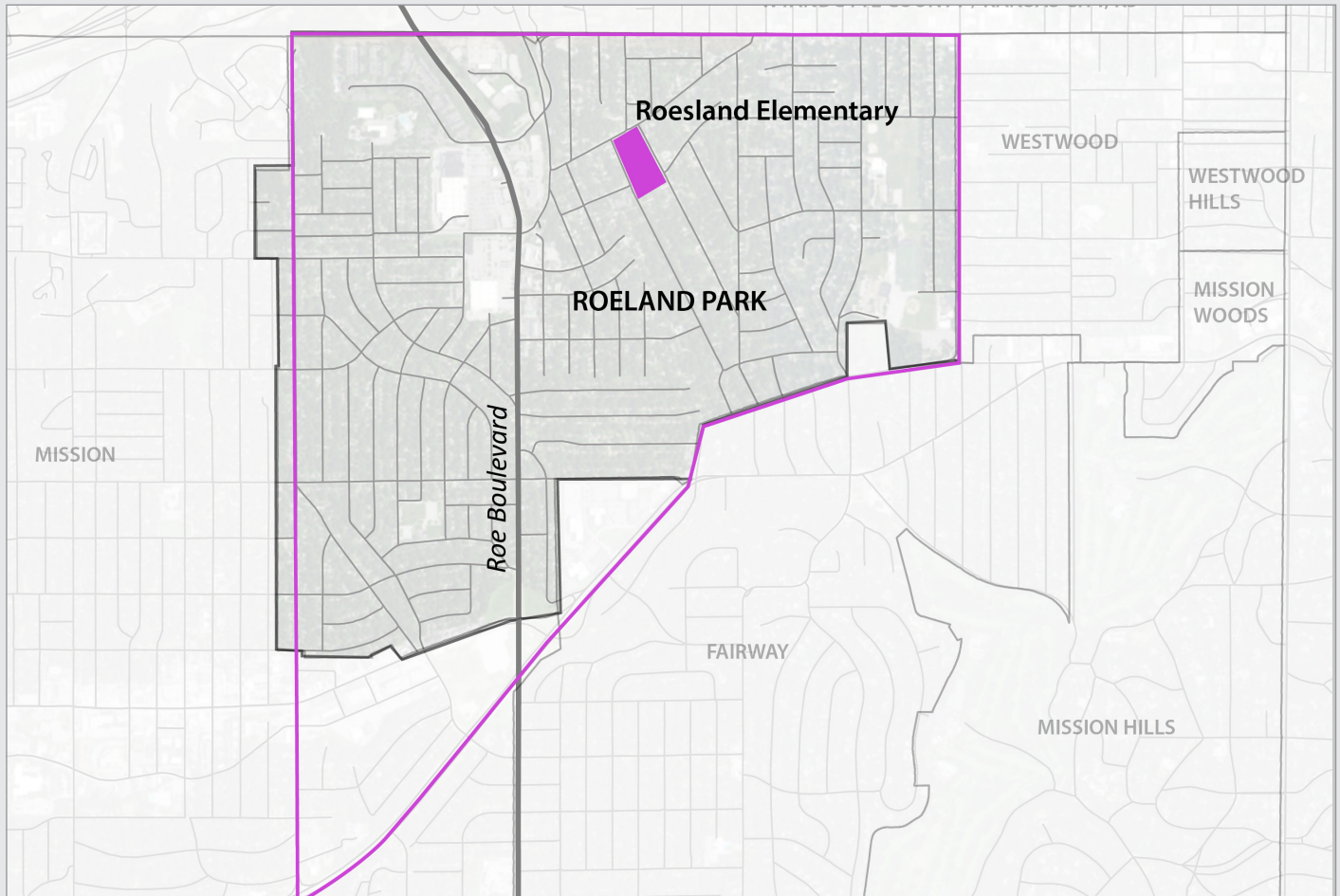
The school's location to the east of Roe is significant because half of students live to the west of the boulevard. These students face a major barrier walking to school. The Roe Boulevard challenge may be the most visible and obvious, but parents and school staff also noticed a number of additional challenges in the built environment for students, including intersections without crosswalks, fast-moving traffic, and confusion during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal.

Addressing these challenges provides students an important transportation alternative to riding the bus or riding in cars. The availability of active transportation is often especially important to students who receive free and reduced lunch or are English Language Learners.



A wide roadway with limited crossings makes Roe Boulevard a major hazard for students hoping to walk or bike to school at Roesland Elementary

A Unique Fit



Roesland Elementary is a public elementary school located in the city of Roeland Park, Kansas, and part of the Shawnee Mission School District, which serves northeastern Johnson County, Kansas.

The school serves 394 students, kindergarten through sixth grade. The school reflects the increasing diversity across the district and county. About half of students receive free or reduced lunch. Students are 55% white, 29% Hispanic, 7% African American, 5% multi-racial, 3% Asian/Pacific and 1% American Indian. Twelve percent are English Language Learners.

Roesland's attendance area largely matches the city limits of Roeland Park, with some of the atten-

dance area including Mission, Kansas. Almost all Roesland students live in Roeland Park. This makes the Roesland safe routes project a good case study for coordination between a school and the local government.

Roeland Park, meanwhile, is a suburban city of 6,800 residents and an area of 2.25 square miles. The city's size and residential scale make parts of it walkable and bikeable. An inconsistent street network, sidewalk gaps, and several busy streets leave room for improvement, however. Many key destinations, such as the grocery store or school, are not easily accessible without a car for many residents. Addressing active transportation challenges for the school provides the city an opportunity to tackle these wider issues.

Planning: Laying the Groundwork

Roeland Park has been working for years to address the city's current active transportation challenges. As far back as 2010, the city's comprehensive plan called for a "walkable community." The following year, the city council passed a complete streets resolution, calling for future roadways to be designed with all transportation modes in mind. Meanwhile, in 2015 Roeland Park received Communities for All Ages "Bronze" status for its commitment to become an age-friendly city. As part of this effort, the city pledged to assess how the city's built environment could be improved to support an active lifestyle.

The following spring, a Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Ad-Hoc Committee, made up of residents and other stakeholders, released a report highlighting challenges for getting around the city by bicycle and on foot. The report noted the issues presented by Roe Boulevard and recommended key improvements, including installation of safer crossings across that street. In 2017, the city undertook an update of its Sidewalk Master Plan, recently adopting a new plan that prioritized sidewalks and crossings near the city's major destinations, including schools.

Meanwhile, planning had begun on a redesign of Roe Boulevard. Scheduled for construction in 2020, the new design will likely include improved pedestrian crossings and a shared-use path.

Roesland Elementary's work on Safe Routes was a seed planted in fertile ground. The parent group's desires dovetailed with the city's plans. The school group was able to capitalize on the conversation that had begun at the city. City leaders - including City Councilmember Teresa Kelly - were involved from the beginning and connected the citizen efforts with the city's plans. When the opportunity arose for funding, the group had easy access to existing data about the active transportation issues within the city and committee recommendations for the reports about potential solutions.

By taking advantage of the work that was already done, the group saved time and money; the city was immediately supportive of these efforts too, because the school group was able to localize the citywide conversation that was already taking place.



The Roeland Park Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety committee is among several recent efforts in the city to improve active transportation there

+ Identify early champions/partners

Because safe routes projects seek to effect change in the community as well as in students, attracting partners from the community is an important first step for a successful, impactful project. School administration, school district officials, and PTA members are essential to any project. Community groups, health and active living advocates, and local elected officials can be valuable resources for technical assistance, funding, and other support. Finding committed partners is also important to ensuring effective delivery of a project.

+ Align with existing efforts

Safe routes efforts never occur in a vacuum. Local government and other schools and organizations in the area have probably taken on similar projects before. Organizations like the Mid-America Regional Council and BikeWalkKC are familiar with efforts occurring across the Kansas City region. Reaching out to them or your city partners early on may reveal previous lessons learned, as well as opportunities for collaboration and funding.



Taking the Next Step

The Roesland bike-walk coalition started by accident, during an unrelated meeting. In the spring of 2016, Caring for Kids convened their regular quarterly meeting about bringing community resources to students at Roesland. In attendance, among others, were the PTA president, the school district's sustainability coordinator, and City Councilmember Teresa Kelly – all of whom would later be important in making the Roesland project happen. It was the PTA president who pitched the idea of a bike-to-school day event to complement the school's walk-to-school day event. The others agreed to move forward with the idea.

In June, a large group of potential stakeholders met to brainstorm. Not all of those who attended this early meeting would go on to be actively involved in the project, but the large group was useful for sharing ideas and identifying longer term partners. This group included BikeWalk-KC, which had begun working with Roesland on bicycle education, and representatives from the county health department, which had active living and wellness resources.

The initial bike-to-school idea was expanded to something more inclusive, which encompassed not just bicycling but walking and active transportation for mobility-impaired students and those too young to safely bike to school. The possibility of organizing further bicycle education courses in conjunction with this event was discussed at this meeting, too.

Lesson learned

Having partners that were able to dedicate time to tasks like meeting coordination, grant writing, and administration was crucial for the Roesland project.

Lesson learned

Like the best ideas, safe routes projects can develop from organic, informal discussions. The Roesland safe routes project developed from an idea shared at an unrelated meeting. What eventually made it a success was the ability to move from idea to implementation effectively.

+ Get organized

Getting organized - establishing a timeline, goals, and roles for the workgroup members - helps produce results more quickly rather than getting hung up on process. The Roesland coalition agreed on regular monthly meetings and established workgroups to tackle different aspects of the project. Outside of meetings, good, frequent communication was maintained through email. Staff from the school district and county managed meetings and logistics, helping the project planning process move ahead smoothly. Establishing regular meetings and key roles was important to delivering a successful project.

Ideally, one organization or volunteer needs to “own” the process and be responsible for agendas, scheduling, follow up, etc. Developing work groups that focus on completing different tasks can mean each person at the table feels like they are responsible for some piece of the overall outcomes. Essentially, develop an efficient process so that members do not feel like they are wasting time when they attend meetings.

Fall 2016: Taking Advantage of an Opportunity

The Johnson County liaison to Safe Kids Worldwide was part of the coalition. Safe Kids, an international organization focused on preventing accidental injury in children, offered a Safe School Zone grant and technical assistance to schools interested in improving the safety of the infrastructure around their buildings. The liaison brought the grant opportunity to the group's attention and the rest, as they say, is history.

In November, Safe Kids invited the coalition to submit a full application for the Safe Zone grant. The full application required a more significant dedication of time and resources; this turning point marks the moment when the coalition moved from coordination to true collaboration and benefited from the participation of specific partners. The data used in the application came from multiple coalition partners, who either held the information themselves or had the relationships to access it quickly.

Partner expertise contributed to the group's ability to find and overlay police crash data, maps of students' homes, and school bus hubs. Findings from the sustainability committee report were also included to help describe the infrastructure issues students face. Coalition representatives from the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment and the Shawnee Mission School District lent their technical knowledge and time to actually write and submit the application. These partners were able to dedicate attention to the project because the coalition's goals fit into already-established priorities for public health improvement and sustainability identified by their respective agencies.

In January 2017, the coalition learned that its application had been approved and the coalition received a grant for \$25,000 to support infrastructure safety improvements, including improved sidewalks and signage, around Roesland Elementary.

+ Gather data

At some point during a safe routes project, data will be important. Data may be used to build understanding of a problem, or to make a case for support to potential funders or partners. This data will often include demographic data, police crash data, school attendance areas, student residences, and school bus stops. Some of this data, such as census demographic data, is readily available online.

Other data, such as student addresses, is available from the school or district. Your partners will likely be a valuable resource for acquiring the information you need. Consider that you may need multiple data points from various sources. Do your best to develop a single list of needed data and make a single, reasonable request of community groups and partners.

+ Make a map

Visuals will get you everywhere. A map of the area under discussion will provide citizens an opportunity to share local knowledge of areas of concern. Maps will also help those partners who do not live in the neighborhood have an "on the ground" understanding. The tools you develop here will be useful later: a final Safe Routes map might be posted in schools; copies can be distributed before a Walk to School Day event, or in packets sent home for kindergarteners and new students.

Results: Focus on the Six E's

Part of the Safe Kids grant award was a two-day technical assistance workshop for the coalition. The action plan developed from the workshop addressed the Six E's.

In April 2017, Roesland Elementary hosted Peter Lagerwey, a national expert bicycle-pedestrian planner. Members of the coalition attended the workshop, along with stakeholders and planners from the neighboring city of Mission, Kansas, and the regional planning organization.

Attendees spent the first day building a shared language and deeper understanding of common pedestrian safety issues and solutions that are considered best practices. One of the most valuable portions was applying what they had learned to key sites during field visits throughout the city; almost none of the coalition members have a city planning background, but this experience allowed them to address the environmental issues acting as barriers to walking and biking.

From Walking to Biking: Roesland's Foundation

Roesland's PTA organized a Walk to School Day event annually for the past three years. Parents were encouraged to bring their students to City Hall, just a few blocks from the school. School officials requested the buses also drop students off at City Hall, ensuring all students could participate. Students then walked together to the school, often with the fanfare and fun of a band, comments from the mayor, and a police escort. These events helped attract attention to the cause; city council members and the police chief attended Walk to School Day and saw first-hand the safety challenges for students.

In October 2016, Roesland partnered with BikeWalkKC to offer Bike Lesson and Safety Training (BLAST) at the school, which teaches fifth and sixth graders how to operate a bicycle safely and skillfully. Some children learned how to ride a bike for the first time. In the spring, an after-school Earn-a-Bike club offered students and some parents a chance to earn a bike by completing the classes. Beyond equipping families with new skills, they now have the tools to bike for transportation and recreation.

Lesson learned

Although the workshop proved to be a great learning opportunity, a community does not need a workshop to make progress on a bike-walk plan. Shared learning opportunities may come in the form of a conference, webinar, or a short educational session provided by an active living advocacy organization or city planner in your area. Look for or create opportunities for coalition members to attend. Take a group walking tour of the areas you are trying to address; standing on the street corner and processing the environment as a group also leads to stronger, more realistic action steps.

Result: Focus on the 6 E's: Cont'd

The coalition then prioritized the sites they had seen on the tour that most needed addressing for children to have safe routes around the school. This activity identified the infrastructure improvements that grant dollars could address.

In tandem with workshop planning, the group addressed *Encouragement* and *Education* components of the Six E's. In the weeks leading up to the Walk, Roll and Stroll day, a second group of students completed BLAST and Earn-A-Bike programs. The 5th and 6th graders who participated shared what they learned about bicycle safety, helmet fitting, hand signaling and bicycle safety checks at an all-school safety assembly. Bike-WalkKC and Safe Kids Johnson County provided helmets for all students in need to address *Equity* issues around biking to school.

Walk, Roll, and Stroll Day

Planning also moved ahead for the Walk, Roll and Stroll Day event. The group engaged the police department and community volunteers to help establish crossing points where students could cross the street safely on the day of the event. Specific recommended routes were also identified and sent to parents.

+ Work with local officials

Ideally, a local official or two will be key champions in your safe routes project. If not, remember that engaging this group eventually will be important to delivering a project and ensuring lasting progress on active transportation. Officials will often need to review and approve infrastructure projects. Local government can be an important source of funding for initiative, and will be a necessary partner in any projects involving state or federal Safe Routes to School funding.

A couple of notes for working with this group: even if local elected are not directly involved, keep them in the loop on your activities. They may have competing issues for their attention, but it may be useful for both parties if they are updated as you achieve milestones or encounter roadblocks. When the cameras are rolling and you are celebrating your achievements, invite them to share the glory. Be generous with credit; they may not have been involved with your particular project, but perhaps they helped create an environment where it could move forward. You may find you are building a champion as the process moves along.

+ Record, evaluate & share

Because safe routes work will likely continue at a school, understanding the successes and setbacks of your project can only help future efforts. Depending on your project, before and after surveys of parents and students, community forums, and wrap-up meetings may all be helpful for understanding strengths and weaknesses of an effort. Ensure someone takes pictures at walk-to-school day or similar event, in order to easily promote the event in future or to share with future partners or other schools. Invite district communications staff to develop and share stories from the project. See the video created for the Roesland Walk, Roll and Stroll Day at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9QEGW37bNE>.

The news media might also be interested, especially if the effort is part of a district-wide project. Lean on your community partners to help with press releases, contacts and interview techniques. Finally, share the wealth! You will likely learn a lot in this process, so be willing to help the next school along on their Safe Routes to School journey.

Lesson learned

City officials can benefit greatly from a safe routes project, as the process often helps them identify funding priorities for infrastructure.

The tour during the workshop led the coalition to observe a hazardous crossing at a nearby private school within Roeland Park. In an effort to share what they had learned and resources, the Roesland group offered to use some of the Safe Kids funding to upgrade the crosswalk in front of this school to best practice standards.

Continuing work

The coalition's work continues. The group is working closely with the city to determine exactly how the Safe Kids funds will be spent. Building on the work of the SafeKids workshop, several key intersections have been identified and the city has begun researching the cost of improved signage and pavement markings that would calm traffic.

The coalition's will serve as a foundation as the school encourages similar events at other sites across the district.

Next steps

The coalition has accomplished much of what it set out to do. Today, the bike rack outside of the front door to Roesland Elementary is often full of students' bikes. Soon, safer crossings will be installed at four intersections near the school.

All the same, there is other work to do, particularly concerning infrastructure. The coalition has signaled it would like to see a hazardous mid-block crossing located next to the school removed. Meanwhile, the Roe 2020 project will likely bring a major safety improvement for students to the west of Roe Boulevard. The extent to which the coalition can or will be involved in these projects is unclear. However, the expertise and relationships it developed over the past year and a half put it in a good position to be an agent for further change for Roesland and the surrounding community.

+ Host an event

Events, especially walk- or bike-to-school days, are an excellent opportunity to engage many of the Six E's mentioned in the previous section. While an obvious way to develop *Encouragement*, the planning and outreach involved can easily mix in *Education*, *Evaluation*, *Engineering*, *Enforcement*, and *Equity*. Many schools organize walk-to-school events and invite local officials and community members to be involved. Events like this "put a face" on your project and help promote your school's active transportation efforts.

+ Identify solutions (and funding)

Once an understanding of the challenges is developed, the same group should identify potential solutions. These solutions might relate to any of the Six E's and may require vastly different amounts of work and funding to put into action.

Do not let the funding or challenge of the potential solutions stop you. Record the proposed actions so if the opportunity arises for funding or inclusion in a city plan, they are ready to go.

Making these solutions happen will require funding, some more than others. An individual school may be able to sponsor a bike education class or a bike rack, while infrastructure improvements to the school site or surrounding streets will require district or municipal funding.

Larger-scale safe routes education or infrastructure efforts (such as district-wide) can be supported by federal transportation funding, though pursuing that level of support usually requires a multiyear process, which is usually led by a local government. Your partners will be a valuable resource for re-searching and connecting funding to your school's project.

Coalition partners

A project will on be as impactful as its partners and stakeholders are committed. The Roesland project benefited from a group of dedicated and active partners.



Roesland Elementary Roesland PTA

Roesland's previous work around active transportation provided an easy jumping-off point for new initiatives. The PTA president and members advocated for the latest safe routes projects.



SHAWNEE MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT

The school district serves northeastern Johnson County, Kansas. The district's sustainability programming includes a focus on active transportation. The district's Sustainability Coordinator was able to devote substantial time to coordinating the coalition.



The county government's Department of Health and Environment supported the coalition's efforts. The safe routes to school focus fit well within the department's LiveWell initiative, dedicated to wellness through active living and healthy eating. The county's liaison for SafeKids was among the department's staff. She and a program manager provided significant support to the coalition.



This local nonprofit focuses on promoting cycling and walking as viable recreation and transportation options in the Kansas City region. It has extensive experience guiding safe routes projects at area schools. The organization worked with Roesland on Walk to School Day events and Earn-A-Bike workshops.



City of Roeland Park, Kansas

City Councilmember Teresa Kelly helped generate the initial interest in the Roesland safe routes project. Down the line, the public works and police departments were important partners in delivering the Walk, Roll, and Stroll and Safe Zone projects.



The nonprofit describes itself as "a neutral convener to engage the community – churches, businesses and civic groups – around a neighborhood school." Caring for Kids had assembled the group where the initial idea for a bike-to-school day event at Roesland was discussed.

Resource Guide

The Safe Routes Guide

The Pedestrian Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) produces an extensive guide to delivering safe routes projects. Each section contains a detailed guide for each of the six E's.

http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/pdf/SRTS-Guide_full.pdf

Local Organizations

Shawnee Mission School District

Joan Leavens
Coordinator, Sustainability and
Community Engagement
913-993-8722
JoanLeavens@smsd.org

BikeWalkKC

Laura Steele
Education and Outreach Coordinator
816-205-7056, ext. 13
laura.steele@bikewalkkc.org

Mid-America Regional Council

Aaron Bartlett
Senior Transportation Planner
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abartlett@marc.org

Johnson County, KS Department of Health and Environment

Barbara Mitchell
LiveWell Johnson County
913-477-8364
Barbara.Mitchell@jocogov.org

Katie Schatte
Coordinator, Safe Kids Coalition, Johnson County
913-477-8312
katie.schatte@jocogov.org

Johnson County KS AIMS mapping

913-715-1600
mapper@jocogov.org

Caring for Kids

Terry Geenens
Partnership Director
816-875-0252
terry@caringforkidsskc.org

Other resources

New Jersey Engineering Solutions for Designing Your Safe Routes

New Jersey Department of Transportation

A concise guide to some of the infrastructure improvements that can improve routes to school

<http://www.nj.gov/transportation/community/srts/pdf/engsolutions.pdf>

At the Intersection of Transportation and Equity

Safe Routes to School National Partnership

A comprehensive guide to the challenges and approaches to creating a safe routes project that reaches students in need.

https://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/topics/environment/srts_activetranspequity_report_2015.ashx

Tools for Evaluation

National Safe Routes to School Walkability Checklist

Federal Highway Administration

A one-page survey on the walkability of a neighborhood

<http://archive.saferoutesinfo.org/sites/default/files/walkabilitychecklist.pdf>

Sample Safe Routes Parent Survey

National Center for Safe Routes to School

English: http://saferoutesdata.org/downloads/Parent_Survey_English.pdf

Spanish: http://saferoutesdata.org/downloads/Parent_Survey_Spanish.pdf

Pedestrian Environment Quality Index

Center for Occupational & Environmental Health, UCLA

A more detailed survey for analyzing the pedestrian environment, including infrastructure and other factors, along particular streets and intersections

<http://stpp.ucla.edu/node/496>

Arrival and Dismissal Observation Field Exercise Guide

Safe Routes to School Virginia

A guide for performing observations during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal, which help understand how students travel and the challenges they may face walking and biking

http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/resources/safeRouteResources/5es/VDOT_LDL_Observing_Dismissal_Field_Guide.pdf

BikeWalkKC conducts more detailed arrival/dismissal observations for local schools. Contact BikeWalkKC for more information

Data

Demographic data

For the surrounding community

- US Census Bureau
<https://factfinder.census.gov>

Transportation data

Traffic counts, road maps, recreational trails

- Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), the metropolitan planning organization
<http://www.marc.org/Data-Economy/Maps-and-GIS/GIS-Data/GIS-Datasets>
- Johnson County AIMS, the county government's mapping division
<http://maps.jocogov.org/ims/>

Traffic safety data

Including pedestrian- or bicycle-involved incidents

- Med-Act (Johnson County EMS)
- Local police department/sheriff
- Kansas Highway Patrol

School/Student data

- Enrollment, district boundaries, students bussed and free and reduced lunch are freely available via the Kansas Dept of Education
<http://datacentral.ksde.org/>
- Other data may be requested from the school district administration



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