



WHY CAN'T KIDS WALK AND BIKE TO SCHOOL?

A Policy Maker Discussion/Brainstorming Session

GOAL:

To identify barriers and brainstorm ideas for actions that help build a generation of safe and healthy walkers, bicycle and bus riders.

FOCUS:

Elementary and Middle School age students.



What Happens Next

Discussion/Brainstorming Follow-up:

- ▣ TRPC stakeholder team reviews ideas looking for short and long term actions,
- ▣ Follow-up session to review action ideas for a Draft Action Plan
- ▣ Action Plan established with partners

Large Group Brainstorming Question

(Focusing on Elementary and Middle School Students)

What do you think are the barriers to students walking, biking and riding the city bus to school?



Why Can't Kids Walk & Bike to School?

- A national, state and local issue
- Recent National Safe Routes to School Conference included:
 - Federally funded Safe Routes To School Partnership
 - Private/nonprofit bike/pedestrian advocates
 - Federal Highway Administration
 - US Center for Disease Control and Prevention
 - Environmental Protection Agency
 - Land use, transportation and health researchers
 - The Conservation Fund
 - Kaiser Permanente

Why Now?

- Implications for student health and readiness to learn
- TRPC's long interest in student travel issues and commute trip reduction and student travel
- Greenhouse gas emission and VMT reduction goals (State and Regional)
- Grants for demonstration projects
- School District budget cuts – including transportation cuts

Complementary Activity in The County

Infrastructure and Programs

- ▣ Sidewalk and bike lanes built and connected over the years
- ▣ Trail network (61 miles of trail built/potential for 145 mile system over time)
- ▣ Intercity Transit Youth Education and Bicycle Program
- ▣ Bike/pedestrian education, encouragement and safety programs
- ▣ WSDOT – Commute Trip Reduction Program and Safe Routes To School Program
- ▣ Active Community Environments – WSDOH grant program
 - Health and the Built Environment (2007)
 - 2008/2011 School Demonstration Project
 - Walk and Roll Elementary School Program and Partnership

Results of Demonstration Project

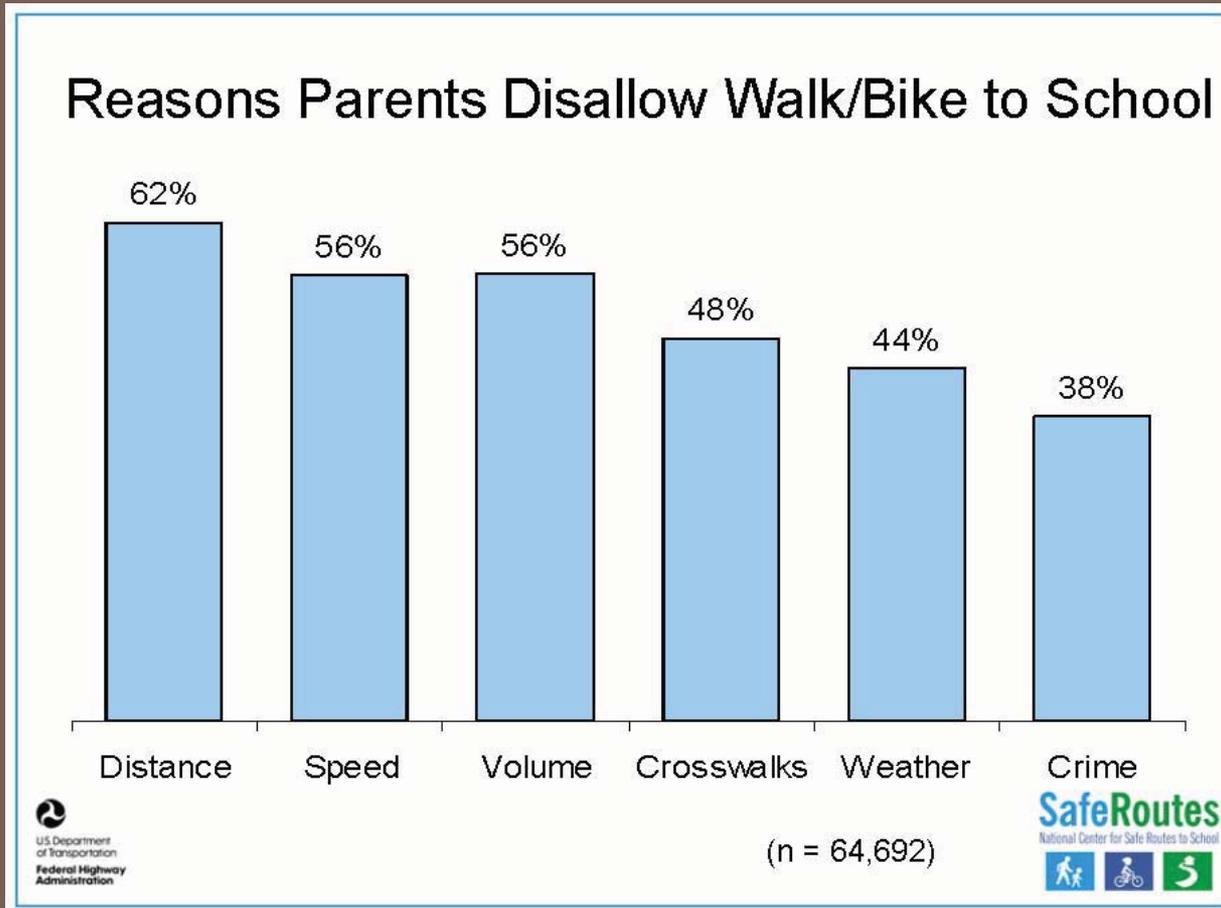
2008/2009 school year program

- Student arrival by car fell from 47% to 17%
- Student arrival by walk and bike increased from 24% to 57%

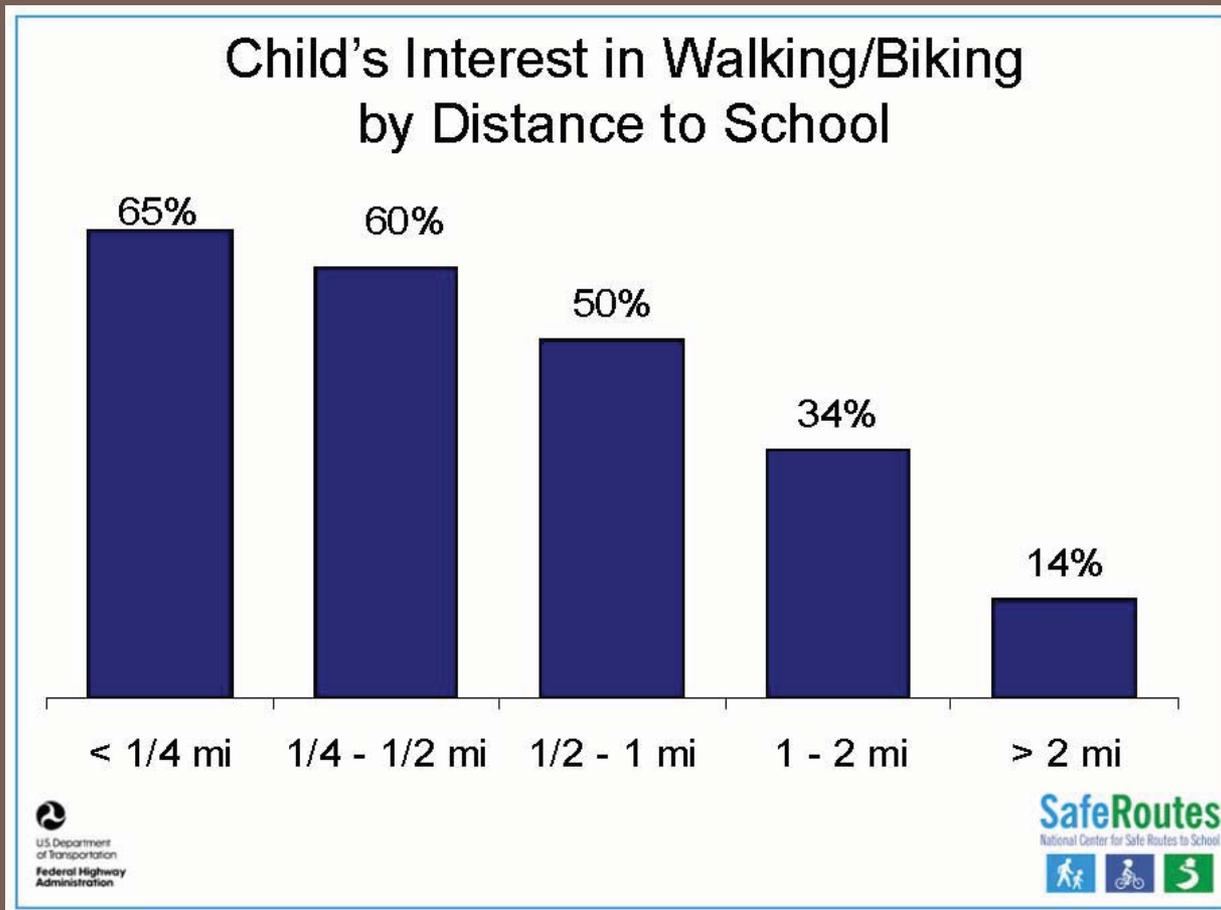


What are the Barriers?

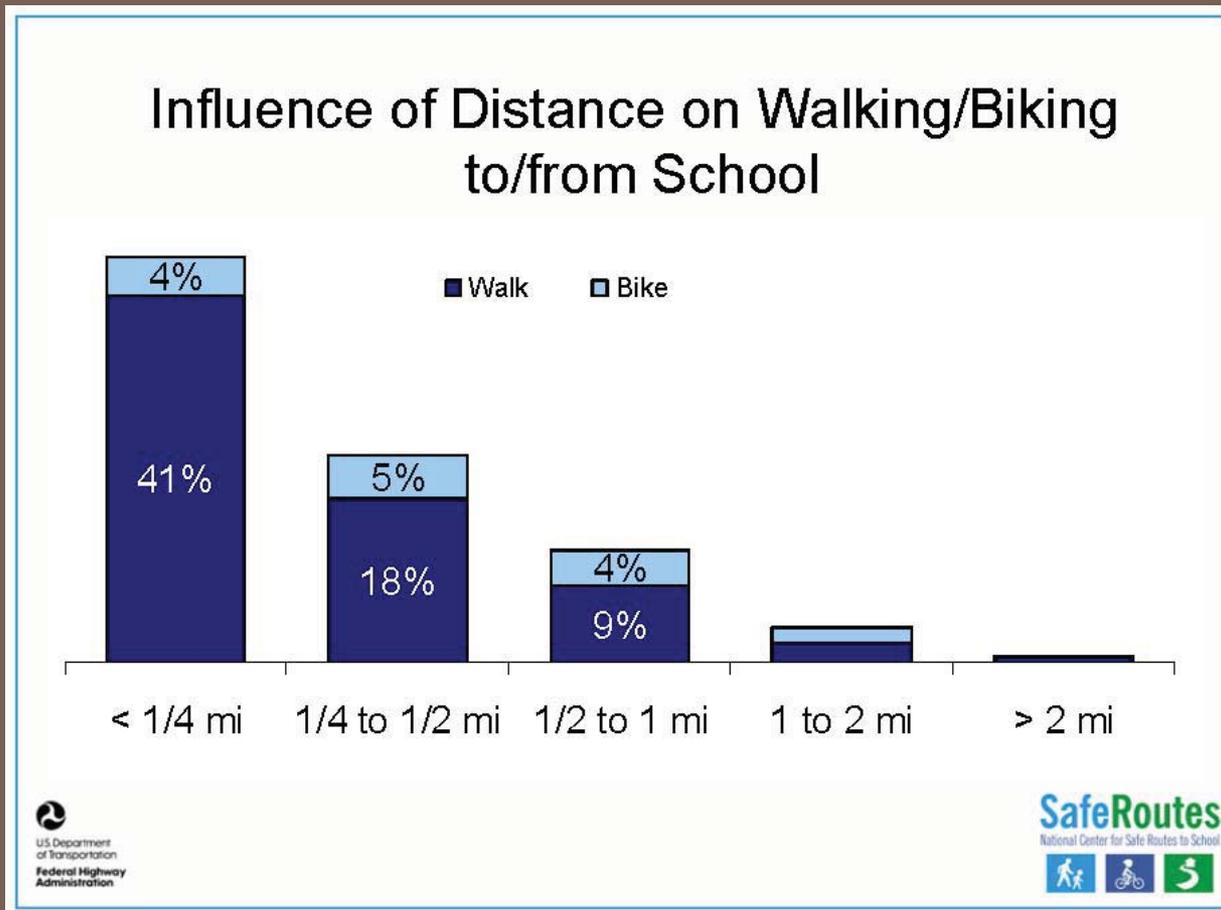
What do we know about student travel to school?



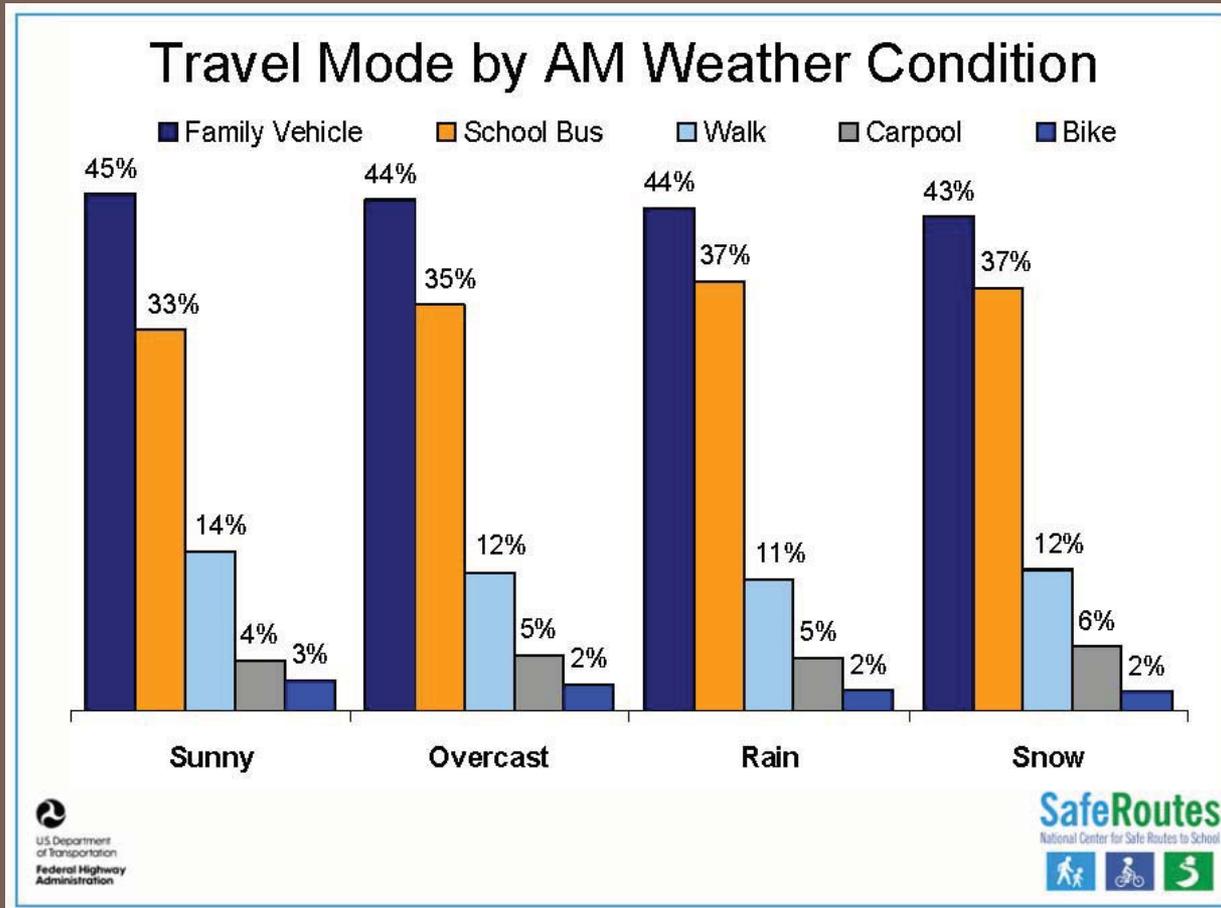
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WA State School Bus Funding

- School districts pay for school buses - reimbursed by State over the life of the vehicle (13 years – large buses, 8 years – small buses)
- State pays for K-12 bus travel for students: 1) using the bus and 2) living beyond one mile radius of school (Portion paid determined by formula - # of students transported, distance traveled, and # of buses used)
- State pays formula base funding for K-5 students within one mile radius of school. Funds used for buses, crossing guards, or improving walking conditions

School Siting

- WA State Forum on School Siting (CTED and OSPI – Feb 2007)
- Major issue in heavy growth areas attracting households with school age students
- Siting of schools currently determined by economics, school size, and land availability
- New federal recommendations on school size and siting are emerging
 - ▣ Size should be determined by school program and sites
 - ▣ EPA releasing new guidelines for size and location of schools

Examples of Actions Taken

Marin County, CA – 10 year old Walk and Bike promotion program

- ▣ 11% of a transportation tax used for the school program (coordination, education, encouragement and infrastructure improvements)

Clark County – Battleground School District – Walking School Bus program

- ▣ Instead of school buses - pay employees to be “walking school bus monitors”

Auburn, WA – Regional Collaborative Approach

Pull resources for grants – focus on fixing unsafe walking/biking conditions for students living close to school

- ▣ Result: \$500,000 in grants – Twenty percent more students have a safe walking environment and don't need to be bused - Save \$240,000/year in transportation costs.

Boulder, Colorado - Freiker (frequent biker) Program

Computer scanner at school entrance keeps track of walkers and bike riders - and encourages them

- ▣ Prototype demonstrations 2010 - including at Reeves Middle School (State SRTS grant awarded to IT)

Glendale, CA and Beaverton, OR

Built joint facilities combining school/park/community center/library

Bend, OR

Used a 5 acre site for a new school sited where 250 of 300 students can walk to school – with one school bus needed

Why Us?

- Building a generation of safe and healthy walkers, bicycle and bus riders is a regional issue
- We are all community stewards for health, safety and physical and economic sustainability
- **Because while youth may be only about one fourth of the population – they are 100% of the future!**