Growing Green Streets

Regionalizing Walk/Ride Day

A Report for the Green Streets Initiative and the Somerville Department of Health

Adelman • DeVore • Earle • Krogh-Grabbe • Morales
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Written by:
Ian Adelman
Jaclyn DeVore
Emily Earle
Alex Krogh-Grabbe
Danilo Morales
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Abstract

This report was created to help the nonprofit organization the Green Streets Initiative (Green Streets) regionalize their Walk/Ride Day program, a monthly celebration of alternative and active transportation. Alternative transportation can help to improve the health of individuals, the environment, and communities as a whole. Through interviews, a focus group, a literature review, a comparison of similar programs, and a spatial analysis, we have produced a list of recommendations for Green Streets to improve and expand its existing program. We make recommendations in three areas: network, outreach, and events. Along with these recommendations, we have designed toolkits to guide communities, businesses and schools through the process of implementing their own Walk/Ride Day programs.
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Credit: Danilo Morales
Executive Summary

The Green Streets Initiative is a Cambridge-based grassroots organization that promotes sustainable and active transportation. Green Streets’ mission is to “create safer, healthier and quieter streets and more vibrant communities for commuters and citizens of all kinds.” Green Streets runs a program called Walk/Ride Day, which is a celebration of active and alternative transportation that occurs on the last Friday of every month. Walk/Ride Day is active in Cambridge, Somerville, and Boston, but the organization would like to deepen and expand the current program. We use the term “regionalize” to refer to both increased participation in the already active communities, as well as to other potential participant communities or organizations.

The goal of analyzing — and recommending — ways to regionalize the program was achieved:

1. through conducting a focus group and interviews
2. through a review of literature and best practices
3. by performing a spatial analysis
4. by creating “toolkits” for implementing Walk/Ride Day in other communities and organizations
5. by producing a promotional video for the program

A focus group was conducted with the City of Somerville employees to identify barriers and challenges to participating in alternative transportation. We interviewed a number of key informants who could speak knowledgeably about the existing program or about alternative and active transportation. The spatial analysis was performed using ArcGIS mapping tools to assess
the suitability of implementing Walk/Ride Day in the Boston metro area municipalities and schools based on physical, organizational and demographic factors. We considered the proximity of schools and analyzed student populations to compare individual schools, as well as school systems, across cities. At the city level, we compared sidewalk coverage, bus access, Walkscore, existing commuting behavior, and active transportation support organizations. After collecting and analyzing data, we developed our final recommendations. These recommendations fall into three major categories: network, outreach, and events. Our research also informed the development of three toolkits to support the expansion of Walk/Ride Day for communities, businesses, and schools.

To conclude, we hope that this research and document will be useful as the Green Streets Initiative regionalizes the Walk/Ride Day program throughout the greater Boston Metro area, ultimately leading to healthier communities.
Chapter 1 Introduction

I. Contemporary Context of Alternative Transportation

A contemporary shift towards using alternative and active transportation to commute is emerging across the United States. Walking, cycling, and taking public transit to work and school is good for your body, the environment, and for your community. Car use generates toxic emissions, can foster a sedentary lifestyle, and may lead to socially and physically disconnected communities. Despite deep-seated cultural norms of personal automobile use, the use of alternative transportation is a growing trend throughout the U.S. According to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), from 1995 to 2009, public transit ridership increased by 31 percent. In 2009 alone, U.S. residents took 10.2 billion public transit trips.¹

Like the rest of the country, the Boston metro area is beginning to move towards using more active and alternative modes of transportation. In fact, Metro Boston is sixth in the nation in the amount of commuters using public transportation – currently 7.9 percent.² In the communities within Route 128, approximately 24 percent of commuters use public transit and an additional 11 percent bike or walk to work. This shift to alternative transportation has many benefits for the environment, communities and public health.

Active and alternative transportation reduces negative environmental impacts.

Among the environmental benefits of switching to alternative transportation is reduced air pollution and improved water quality. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that more than 64,000 Americans die annually from air pollution related disease, which includes asthma, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.³ And transportation accounts for almost 30 percent of all air pollution.⁴ Increased use of public and active transportation benefits both the individuals that use it, and the community as
a whole. Reduced car use leads to fewer toxic greenhouse gas emissions and energy use. A single commuter converting to alternative transportation can reduce his or her household’s carbon footprint between 10 and 30 percent.\(^5\)

**Active and alternative transportation is part of building better communities.**

Alternative transportation has a positive impact on the social life of a community. Walking, biking, or taking transit is less socially isolating than traveling alone in a car. In one large-scale study, individuals stated that they had begun walking or cycling to work because of the encouragement of a friend or group. They articulated appreciation for the social aspect of being part of a community of active commuters.\(^6\)^\(^7\)

A shift in transportation investment to mass transit is a shift toward investment in the community. Walkability is a tourist magnet. In 1992, an estimated 32,500 visiting cyclists spent $13.1 million in Vermont, about twice the amount of money generated by Vermont’s maple syrup producers in a good year. Communities that are walkable are capturing a greater share of tourist dollars, as visitors are interested in experiencing community life.\(^8\)

According to the Built Environment and Alternative Transportation report from British Columbia, alternative transportation does more than protect the environment — it has positive effects on the local economy.\(^9\) "Pedestrianization," as the report frames it, increases consumer spending because of the exposure that local businesses receive as a result of increased foot traffic. At the municipal level, every dollar invested in public transportation yields a four dollar return on investment.\(^10\)

Alternative transportation also has economic implications for households. For the average household, 18 cents of each dollar earned goes to transportation costs; of these costs, 94 percent goes to “buying, maintaining, and operating cars,” making
transportation the largest expense after housing. Alternative transportation options can help reduce these costs, freeing up household budgets for other expenses.

**Active and alternative transportation promotes personal and public health.**

An active commute leads to improved health, for people of all ages. “Physical activity advocates have increasingly highlighted the importance of utilitarian activities, such as walking and bicycling for transportation, in addition to exercise, recreation, and athletics.”

Active transportation, whether walking or bicycling, is associated with lower body mass index (BMI), smaller waist circumference, higher physical fitness and reduced risk of cardiovascular disease among adults.

Even small increases in daily activity lead to health improvements. Walking 15 extra minutes a day burns 100 calories, preventing the average adult yearly weight gain of one to two pounds that can lead to obesity. Engaging in active transportation one hour daily for 10 weeks can increase fitness and reduce cholesterol.

Even transit commuters reported walking an average of 19 minutes daily and 29 percent walked 30 minutes a day or more.

People who walk or bicycle to work spend more time engaged in recreational physical activity than those who travel by car.

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<td>Source: International Obesity Taskforce, 2002</td>
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<td>Source: DfT, 1996</td>
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Credit: Sustrans

Credit: Sustrans
This further reinforces the idea that alternative transportation can become a positive lifestyle overhaul. Among children and teenagers too, several national studies in the U.S. and Canada have shown that active transportation to school leads to increased overall daily activity, and therefore, more positive health outcomes. A recent study in Massachusetts among children from ages two through 18 brings the issues of built environment, childhood activity and obesity closer to home. It showed that children living within walking distance of schools and public transit had lower BMI than those who lived farther away.
II. Goals and Methodology

The researchers for this study are a team of five Masters candidates in the Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at Tufts University. This report was produced as the primary product of the Field Projects course, a core requirement for the M.A. program. The goal of this report is to synthesize information and provide tools for the Green Streets Initiative to regionalize its Walk/Ride Day program (more detailed information about the organization and its program is provided in Chapter 2). This report analyzes the barriers to and challenges of the existing Walk/Ride Day Program, and determines ways to expand the program to other communities and organizations. This goal was achieved in four parts:

1. through conducting a focus group and interviews
2. by performing a geospatial analysis
3. by creating “toolkits” for implementing Walk/Ride Day in other communities and organizations
4. by producing a promotional video for the program.

Literature Review & Review of Similar Programs

The first step of our research was a literature review of relevant topics. These include: behavior change, barriers to active and alternative transportation, communication strategies, social marketing, community access and participation, and active transportation and health. We reviewed existing, similar programs to understand their strategies and methods, and to discover whether or not the application of these strategies was reflected in the findings of our literature review.

Participant Observation

We participated in Walk/Ride Day events, which are held on the last Friday of each month. Direct participation allowed us to collect first-hand observations and impressions useful for evaluating the effectiveness of the current program.
Analysis of Existing Walk/Ride Day Data

We analyzed the available data that the organization collected in 2010 and 2011. The data is from the Walk/Ride Day participant check-in survey, found on the Green Streets website. A direct link to the check-in survey is provided here: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GJJQ7NF.

Interviews

Interviews were used to provide primary source information for our research, through which we gained insight into both best practices in the field and into the existing Walk/Ride Day program. We interviewed more than a dozen practitioners and researchers from public health, alternative transportation, environmental, and other related fields. Interviewees are listed in Figure 2.

Focus Group

We conducted a focus group to help identify engagement strategies and participation barriers. The focus group was composed of Somerville city government employees. We selected individuals who could both comment on personal experience and represent the needs of their constituents. Focus group members were: Jackie Rosetti, Steve Craig, Mike Lambert, Kathleen Ziegenfuss, and Jaime Corliss.

Filming

For filming, we modeled our work on best practices of Street Films. We compiled footage to tell the story of Walk/Ride Day, editing it into a 60 second video. Our final product is a video that Green Streets can use on their website and at presentations to introduce Walk/Ride Day.

Toolkits

Our toolkits were developed from our interviews, review of
similar programs and outreach materials, and recommendations from Green Streets. To understand best practices, we looked at MassBIKE’s “Your Guide to Forming a Bicycle Committee;” WalkBoston’s “How to start your own Walk-to-School-Bike-to-School Traffic Reduction & Safety Program;” Oregon Walk + Bike to School’s 2011 “Walk + Bike Challenge Month Coordinator Packet”; the program Active Living by Design, implemented in Somerville and 24 other U.S. cities; and the paper “Promoting Active Transportation: Starting Walk/Ride Day in Somerville’s Public Schools” by 2010 Shape Up Somerville intern Andrew Petrone, a Community Health student at Tufts University.

GIS Mapping

We used ArcGIS 9.3 to assess spatial relationships of various physical and non-physical factors affecting participation in active and alternative transportation. We looked at the relationship between schools and their potential student population, city-wide sidewalk coverage, presence of active bicycle committees and walking clubs, Walkscore (from Walkscore.com), bus service coverage, and current commuting mode share to recommend where Walk/Ride Day may be most suitable. GIS was also an important part of our analysis of Walk/Ride Day sign-in data to determine trends in participation. A more detailed GIS methodology can be found in Appendix C.

Developing Recommendations

Our recommendations address the goals of our project, and were developed as a synthesis of the information gathered by the methods described above. We focused on recurring themes and ideas that were supported by the literature, the data analysis, and the experience of practitioners and similar programs on the ground.
Chapter 1 Footnotes

17. Terzano, K and Morckel, V. C. “Walk or Bike to a Healthier Life: Commuting Behavior and Recreational Physical Activity.” Environment and Behavior. Published online 9 January 2011
I. Green Streets Today

The Green Streets Initiative is a Cambridge-based grassroots organization that promotes sustainable and active transportation. Green Streets’ mission is to “create safer, healthier and quieter streets and more vibrant communities for commuters and citizens of all kinds.” The central program run by Green Streets is Walk/Ride Day, a celebration of active and alternative transportation that occurs on the last Friday of every month. Walk/Ride Day is different from other such celebrations like Bike Month or Walk to School Days, because it does not focus on a single mode of transportation. Instead, Walk/Ride Day is multimodal, celebrating bicycling, walking, taking the bus or train, and carpooling. Even driving less on Walk/Ride Day, such as driving part of the way to work and then walking the rest, is considered participation. Walk/Ride Day participants also typically wear green items of clothing. As a reward for participation, they are offered raffles, free breakfasts, and discounts from local businesses.

Today, there are more than 150 retail businesses in the greater Boston area that offer discounts to Walk/Ride Day participants on the last Friday of every month. In Figure 3, trees represent these current Walk/Ride Day retail partners. Most of the current partners are in Cambridge and Somerville, but there are also a significant number located in Medford and Boston.

Largely through word of mouth, Walk/Ride Day has spread to communities near and far. Walk/Ride Day is celebrated in Somerville, Medford, Boston, and other neighboring cities. Satellite organizations in Portland, Maine; Concord, New Hampshire; Wolf Pointe, Montana; and West Bridgford, England have also joined the monthly celebration, tailoring Walk/Ride Day to fit their own communities.

Figure 4 shows the origins and destinations, by zip code, of participants in Walk/Ride Day. The darker colors in Cambridge indicate that the highest concentration of participants is in Central Square, Cambridgeport, Harvard Square, West Cambridge, and Fresh Pond.

Walk/Ride Day participants are asked to check in online every month, helping Green Streets to collect data on its participants. When participants check in, they are asked what modes of transportation they used on Walk/Ride Day, as well as what modes they normally use. They are presented with six options, and can mark as many as they used. Figure 5 shows the mode split for participants on Walk/Ride Day, normally, and the average mode split for the cities of Cambridge and Somerville. The check-ins included in this analysis occurred between January 2010 and March 2011. On a normal day, participants use alternative transportation significantly more than the average resident of Cambridge.
Cambridge or Somerville. For example, 17 percent of all residents walk to work, whereas on a normal day, 36 percent of participants in Walk/Ride Day walk. On Walk/Ride Day, however, 55 percent of participants walked. All modes of alternative transportation increased among participants, while no participants reported driving on Walk/Ride Day. We can also conclude that most of the participants who normally drive to work switched to walking and cycling rather than transit.

Fig 5: Walk/Ride Day Mode Shift
II. A Brief History of Green Streets and Walk/Ride Day

The small group that founded the Green Streets Initiative wanted to get friends and neighbors out of their cars and onto bicycles. In 2006, the group decided that instead of advocating for permanent street closings, they wanted to share their joy of biking and walking through a celebration of active and alternative transportation. This was the beginning of Walk/Ride Day.

Founder and current Executive Director Janie Katz-Christy recalls a Yom Kippur that she spent in Israel. In observation of the holiday, no one drives on Yom Kippur. Instead, said Katz-Christy, “in this very polluted city, down the main boulevard in Tel Aviv, kids were riding their bicycles and all you could smell were the eucalyptus trees.”

Seeking to create a celebration based on this experience, the group developed Walk/Ride Day within two weeks. Walk/Ride Day launched on the last Friday of March 2006 at four schools in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Participants were encouraged through pre-event outreach to “wear green and go green,” and to use active and alternative transportation. The organization’s founders thought it important to keep the Green Streets message positive, open, and inclusive. In those first months, and today, all younger children
at participating schools receive a green stamp on their hands when they arrive at school on Walk/Ride Day, no matter how they traveled to school. This practice is useful for spreading Walk/Ride Day, because children who are asked about the stamp by their parents will explain the program. By educating children about Walk/Ride Day, the hope is that parents will also receive the message and consider bringing their child to school without the car next time.

By the summer of 2006, the Green Streets Initiative had secured its initial retail partners. Toscanini’s Ice Cream was the first. Stores offered small incentives such as discounts or small free items and advertised their participation in Walk/Ride Day.

III. The Future of Walk/Ride Day

In Somerville, Walk/Ride Day has been integrated into the city of Somerville’s Health Department as part of its strategy to promote active, healthy living. In recent years the City of Somerville has been engaged in several large public health campaigns to this end, including Active Living by Design, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Shape Up Somerville. Walk/Ride Day is complementary to this type of public health work.

At its heart Green Streets is still primarily a grassroots organization, despite its growth and integration into a municipality’s governmental structure. A largely volunteer workforce of local leaders who decided to start the celebration in their communities drives growth of the organization and the Walk/Ride Day program. Executive Director Janie Katz-Christy is supported in the daily operations of the organization by organizer Sarah Fresco, as well as by a growing board of directors that includes our client contact, Nicole Rioles of the City of Somerville’s Department of Public Health.

Green Streets is now poised to expand its Walk/Ride Day program to additional communities in the greater Boston metro area. What follows in Chapter 3 is a brief description of current transportation
trends, along with our analysis of physical and social barriers to, and opportunities to increase, active and alternative transportation.
I. Current Transportation Trends

There are many barriers to getting people out of their cars and onto the streets. Government, non-profit organizations, private businesses, and schools, however, are all finding ways to increase participation in active transportation. In this section, we look at the current state of transportation national and locally. We then summarize physical and social barriers to biking, walking, and taking public transit. Within this discussion, we have also included examples of solutions from innovative local and national transportation organizations and agencies to provide the context into which Walk/Ride Day fits.

As discussed in our introduction, the Boston Metro Area is already a national leader in the use of active and alternative transportation. The region is sixth in the nation in public transit commuting, with 7.9 percent of workers taking the MBTA to work. The figure is even higher in our study area, with 24 percent of commuters using public transit inside Route 128. Some cities, such as Cambridge, have a national reputation due to their high levels of active transportation. In Figure 7 below, you can see the distribution of commuting behavior in each of the cities in our study area. Alternative transportation is colored green, while driving alone to work is colored black.
II. Infrastructure Changes that Increase Alternative Transportation Use

Walk/Ride Day is not intended to change the built environment. Instead, it encourages drivers to try alternative transportation. It is important, however, to understand how physical barriers influence the solutions to active transportation that a program such as Walk/Ride Day operates within. The following literature does not represent all of the potential barriers or solutions, but is intended to offer an introductory reference point to understand our transportation system.

Source: US Census, 2000

Fig 7: Boston-area Mode Split
I. Planning for Alternative Transportation

Urban planning and design have a direct impact on the movement within a city. Regional transportation investment decisions made decades ago have shaped the proximity of residential, employment, retail, recreational, and other destinations in our cities.¹ For decades, engineers held up the AASHTO “Green Book” as justification for a passive approach to streetscape design.² These transportation investments and land use decisions have formed a physical environment that has established strong disincentives for active transportation.³

Urban planning and design, however, can be used in ways that enable active transportation. Environmental design that reduces sprawl can influence more people to walk to work.⁴ Higher density, mixed-use development reduces average trip distance and encourages cycling and walking for transport. The more walkable a city’s design, the more physically active people will be in a recreational setting.⁵

Employing these types of designs can lead to shared streets. Massachusetts has moved from using the “Green Book” to following its own MassDOT Highway Project Development and Design Guide, which promotes the creation of “complete streets” or “livable streets.” Livable streets are defined as “streets that seek to better integrate the needs of pedestrians and local developmental objectives into a roadway’s design.”⁶ To encourage more active transportation, the streetscape should demonstrate that pedestrians and cyclists are a valued part of the transportation system.⁷
II. Bicycle Infrastructure

Figure 8 shows bicycling trends in our study area. Cambridge in particular is known for its high levels of cycling, though many other cities in the Boston area have significant cycling populations. The state average for Massachusetts and the national average for cycling are virtually identical, at 0.4 percent. The mode share of bicycles is relatively small in the U.S. compared to international cities. Figure 9 compares cycling rates for various countries in Europe, North America, and Australia, and shows that other countries have much more cycling than the United States.

Phil Goff of Alta Planning, a firm that specializes in bicycle infrastructure
and planning, explains the small number of Americans who cycle. He breaks the attitudes of Americans toward cycling into four categories:

1. About 30 percent of people do not bike, nor want to.
2. The opposite attitude is reflected by a mere one percent of the country that already bikes. Goff describes this group as “strong and fearless,” riding through intimidating traffic with ease.
3. Another nine percent of people are “enthused and confident,” and willing to use their bike frequently, as long as travel conditions are safe and comfortable.
4. The largest portion of the population, however, is interested in cycling, but do not bike very often because they are concerned about issues such as safety, comfort, or image. This group is the target population for many improvements to bicycle infrastructure, and the target population for the Green Streets Initiative.
Bike lanes are the most obvious feature that can help attract cyclists to a street. Locally, municipalities are installing dozens of miles of bike lanes per year with the support of bike advocacy groups like Transportation Alternatives, Street Films and Bike Boston. Somerville installed 10 miles of bike lanes and bike sharrows last year, and intends to install 12 more miles next year with the continued support from the Somerville Bike Committee. Inclusion of a bike lane is only a first step to building a bike focus into the streetscape.

Many innovative facilities can improve bicycle safety even further. Bicycle boulevards are roads that may allow cars, but are primarily and explicitly intended for bicycles. Bike lanes may be painted a different color or paved with a different material to provide a more vivid assertion that the space is for bicycles. Woonerfs, coined by the Dutch in the 1970s, are shared street spaces that eliminate the boundaries between transportation modes, forcing all modes to travel at a slow, comfortable speed. Signage identifying bicycle space and guiding cyclists is important for making cyclists feel welcome. At intersections, bicycle boxes and bicycle traffic signals can reduce the danger of collisions with cars. Finally, multi-use paths create corridors for cyclists and pedestrians separate from car traffic, and allow experimentation with active transportation in a safe environment.

As another example of local activity to improve bicycle infrastructure, Boston Bikes, a department of the City of Boston, is investing in a bike network in the Boston area that is intended to go beyond bike lanes and include more multi use paths, bike parking, and wayfinders that
guide cyclists along the safest routes.

III. Pedestrian Infrastructure

Urban design can attract pedestrians to a street. The four fundamental aspects of pedestrian safety are all closely related to bicycle safety as well:  

1. vehicle speed  
2. pedestrian exposure risk  
3. driver predictability  
4. vehicle volumes  

Raised, textured crosswalks and crossing islands allow both pedestrians and cyclists to be more noticeable to cars. Traffic calming devices such as narrowing travelable street space slow cars down, increasing the safety of the slower cyclists and pedestrians. Trees along the side of the street serve multiple beneficial purposes for pedestrians, signaling that cars should drive slower and making the streetside environment more aesthetically appealing.

Street crossings are the places of highest interaction between pedestrians and cars, and therefore the biggest safety challenge for encouraging increased pedestrian use. One specific challenge is the time pedestrians have to wait at an intersection for a crossing signal. With waiting times more than 30 seconds, pedestrian likelihood of noncompliance (jaywalking) rises dramatically and the street environment becomes less welcoming. WalkBoston, a non-profit with a mission to improve walking conditions, provides resources for citizens to address this exact issue, and more. WalkBoston is focused on advocacy, education, and outreach to ensure infrastructure projects are designed and implemented with pedestrian access and safety in mind. Among other accomplishments, they contributed to successfully including pedestrian-friendly improvements for aspects of the Big Dig and the resultant Rose F. Kennedy Greenway.
III. Social and Behavioral Change that Increases Alternative Transportation Use

Along with physical infrastructure challenges, there are social and behavioral factors that create barriers to active and alternative transportation. Major social and behavioral factors impacting active and alternative transportation use are:

1. time and control
2. knowledge about travel routes and options
3. personal safety
4. community or belonging.

One key strategy for reducing these barriers is social marketing. Social marketing borrows from marketing principles to promote the common good. People make changes incrementally, and social marketing can provide the motivation to move forward with
incremental behavior or lifestyle changes. The approach involves understanding the desired behavior change and the intended audience, framing messages appropriately, and engaging in multiple strategies to promote and support behavior change. Walk/Ride Day represents one social marketing approach for overcoming barriers to alternative transportation through promotion and programming. In this section, we discuss both the major barriers and strategies to reduce them, including current efforts by Boston area organizations.

I. Time and Control

From work to school to home, people have competing demands on their time. Commuting happens within a timeframe constrained by these other demands. The real, or perceived, amount of time that we have to get from point A to point B impacts the type of transportation that we choose. When individuals are deciding between modes of transportation, walking is usually only considered under “favorable conditions,” such as relaxed time constraints, nice weather, and short distances. Cycling is considered when the time and weather conditions are the same as those favorable for walking. But cycling is used more often in place of a car for short to medium distances. Buses are less likely to replace car travel because of their “association with longer travel times and their equal sensitivity to traffic chaos.” Buses are considered as an alternative to car use only if the time constraints permit and if no other option is available or there is another benefit to taking the bus, such as not finding parking.

People tend to prefer a car as the primary travel mode because of its perceived flexibility and control. In encouraging pro-environmental behavior, however, perceived control is also an important factor. Those who believe their individual actions impact the environment are more likely to adopt pro-environmental behaviors. Individuals who believe they impact the environment by reducing their car use are more likely to use alternative forms of transportation than those who felt their efforts were futile.
Case Study: Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

Safe Routes To School (SRTS) is a national and international movement to create safe, convenient and fun opportunities for children to walk and bike to and from school. The goal of SRTS is to get more children walking and biking to schools safely on a daily basis. The program does this through building collaborative partnerships among stakeholders including “educators, parents, students, elected officials, city planners and engineers, business community leaders, health officials, and bicycle and pedestrian advocates.”18 Nationally, SRTS reaches seven percent of public school students.

In Massachusetts (MA), however, SRTS reaches 25 percent of students through partnerships with 386 elementary and middle schools in 120 communities. This represents nearly 180,000 students. Partnerships may play a significant role in the discrepancy between national figures and those of Massachusetts. Here, SRTS is coordinated through the MassRIDES office of the state’s Executive Office of Transportation, which provides significant funding and outreach. In fact, MassDOT will spend $4.42 million for SRTS initiatives in 2011.19

WalkBoston created its own SRTS program to increase elementary school students’ participation in walking through community organizing and school-based efforts. The program provided funding to hire part-time SRTS Coordinators at Brockton, Newton, Stoneham and Watertown schools.

The SRTS program is based on the Federal Highway Administration’s five E’s: Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement and Evaluation.20 Using the five E’s in a program encourages active and alternative transportation through breaking down both physical and social barriers to participation.
Green Streets and others have an opportunity to tap into this altruism by showing people that using active and alternative transportation leads to environmental benefits. Easily digestible data about cumulative impact is a behavior change prompt, one used by programs like Clean Air New York\(^{21}\) in its social marketing to reduce air pollution. New tools also help individuals to manage their time and take control over their transportation choices. Online and mobile applications like Next Bus\(^{22}\) put control over transit commute times into the hands of users, allowing them to eliminate waiting and reducing overall travel time.

II. Knowledge of Travel Routes and Options

In any community, many individuals are open to trying active and alternative transportation but do not yet know where or how to start.\(^{23}\) Lack of information and a desire to avoid unfamiliar or uncertain situations create significant barriers to alternative transportation use.\(^{24}\) A person’s mental map influences travel mode decisions “because it reflects the individual knowledge and frame of mind concerning the environment and its transportation systems.”\(^{25}\) Individuals who are accustomed to driving a car have a mental map oriented to the use of a car, one that is “space extensive and time intensive.”\(^{26}\) Travel mode choice, activity, and destination are generally “fixed, interconnected decisions, triggered simultaneously without much deliberation.”\(^{27}\) By providing accurate maps and planning events that specifically encourage residents to interact with their community on a human scale, programs like Walk/Ride Day can help to reorient individuals’ mental maps. Several Boston area organizations provide portable maps to encourage cycling and
walking, including Bike Boston and Walk Boston.

Changing habitual behavior like commuting involves a series of steps: habit breaking, habit learning, and ‘freezing’ the new behavior. Often, individuals have the motivation to make changes, whether a concern for the environment or a new commitment to health living, but are unable to make these changes on their own. Social marketing can provide the nudge necessary, making it “convenient for people to translate their motivation into action.”

III. Safety Concerns

Safety concerns are among the most significant barriers to active transportation. Traffic speed, congestion, motorist aggression, and a lack of designated bicycle paths are problematic for cyclists. Additionally, according to a study done by the University of Los Angeles, women were more likely to drive or take a taxi than to choose active transportation in public space. This proved especially true for minority women in low-income neighborhoods. Pedestrians share similar concerns about their personal safety, especially where issues with the built environment, such as lack of lighting or sidewalks, make walking “unpleasant, inconvenient, or scary.” In our focus group, participants also identified fears of cycling in traffic and walking alone after dark.

One of the biggest issues for the safety of cyclists and pedestrians is the speed of the cars they are interacting with.

![Pedestrian Injury Severity Risk](image)

Source: WalkBoston

Fig 17: Pedestrian Injury Severity Risk
Figure 17 shows the dramatic change in risk as traffic speeds increase. At 20 miles per hour, fatality and even injury are unlikely, but at 50 miles per hour, death is almost certain.

There are direct ways to address the safety concerns of bicyclists and pedestrians. The more people that are on the street bicycling, the safer it becomes. Studies show that several countries in Europe with high levels of bicycle use are less risky for cyclists. In Denmark, people bicycle over 900 kilometers a year and it is far safer for cyclists than Portugal, where each person covers barely 30 kilometers by bicycle annually. These studies suggest that a doubling of cycling would lead to a reduction in the risks of cycling by approximately one third. Biking or walking tours are an effective way to introduce people to active transportation, – there is actual and perceived safety in numbers. Safe Routes to Schools and Walk/Ride Day both use “walking school buses” to help children travel in groups to school. Our focus group echoed the need for social support. They recommended publicized bicycle convoys to help new bicycle commuters adjust to sharing the road with cars, an environment that would otherwise be challenging.
A lack of skills and confidence is another barrier to engaging in active transportation, especially bicycling. Providing skill-building classes for bicyclists, drivers and pedestrians can raise awareness about rules of the road for all. MassBike is one local organization that provides classes in bicycle safety. The City of Somerville has developed social marketing signage that they will be launching to remind bicyclists, pedestrians, and drivers about safely sharing the road.

IV. Community

Communities are made up of individuals and networks. Social capital refers to the connections within and between people’s social networks. It enables individuals to function cooperatively in society for mutual benefit. Building opportunities for equitable access to active and alternative transportation increases social capital, a sense of community and better health outcomes.

A follow-up study of 25 Active Living by Design cities (see Figure 18) found cross-sector partnerships and collaboration broke down silos for successful program implementation. Medical professionals focused on activity for health, but shared information and strategies with environmentalists focused on active commuting as a means of reducing pollution. “Diverse partnerships are necessary for an ecologic approach to address the various influences on health. Community partnerships are well suited to bring people together with varied skills, knowledge, expertise, and local sensitivities,” according to Bors et al.31

Somerville’s Active Living by Design program included promotional activities that were inclusive of diverse populations, including a collaboration with WalkBoston that generated Somerville Walking and Somerville Parks maps in four languages, a Walk to School video on local cable station, and annual road races.38

Studies show that the prospect of joining a community is a major motivator for people to try active transportation. A large European study found that successful campaigns to promote cycling focused
Case Study: Active Living by Design

Active Living by Design is a national program that aims to create communities where activity is part of everyday life. The city of Somerville was one of only 25 cities that participated in this five-year program, thereby securing a competitive grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Active Living by Design emphasized building networks and collaborating to improve community health through increasing residents' physical activity, particularly through active transportation. Communities implemented “5P” strategies: preparation, promotion, programs, policy, and physical projects. Locally, Somerville’s Active Living by Design program involved several successful promotional activities, including a collaboration with WalkBoston that generated Somerville Walking and Somerville Parks maps in four languages, a Walk to School video on a local cable station, and annual road races. Through its implementation in diverse communities across the U.S., Active Living by Design provides some best practices for designing an active living campaign, as detailed below.

1. Preparation:
   ✷ Develop and maintain a multifaceted community partnership
   ✷ Collect relevant data to inform planning
   ✷ Build capacity through training and funding

2. Promotions:
   ✷ Connect with both general public and opinion leaders
   ✷ Focus on target audience segments: the elderly, children, teenagers
   ✷ Determine if your messages connect with intended audiences
   ✷ Connect with the public through participatory events
   ✷ Use media outlets to reach additional individuals

3. Programs:
   ✷ Ongoing and organized events and activities that get people moving
   ✷ Tap into people’s social orientation
   ✷ Expand access to active living and develop new avenues for active living
   ✷ Create social support for infrastructure changes to facilitate active living

4. Policy:
   ✷ Pursue as a means of creating institutional change
   ✷ Include advocacy for active living and education of opinion leaders

5. Physical projects:
   ✷ Build upon earlier work in a comprehensive program
   ✷ Create opportunities or remove active living barriers
on “creating social support by encouraging cycling with cycling partners, increasing self-efficacy, raising ecological and economic awareness, decreasing lack of time and interest barriers and providing facilities for cyclists at the workplace.” It is important to frame messages in ways that engage different segments of general populations and that emphasize the ease, fun and social nature of active transportation. Initiatives such as Street Films, Red, Bike and Green, and Walk/Ride Day highlight the fun, accessibility and community of active transportation.

Finally, human behavior is often influenced by how people believe others will see their behaviors. Given this context, social influence can lead to behavior change. If one perceives that others are engaging in an environmentally friendly behavior it predicts one’s likelihood to support this behavior and join in. Websites like the hugely popular Cycle Chic tap into this psychological phenomenon and encourage bicycling by making it not only fun but also fashionable.

Changing Commuting Habits Through Social Marketing

In South Perth, Australia, local government reached out to households to find out why they were not using public transportation. Forty percent stated they were not using public transit but were interested. Ten percent then received an in-person visit from the Perth bus company; others received personalized timetables and information about walking, bicycling and using public transit. The results were impressive: a 14 percent reduction in single driver trips, a nine percent increase in carpooling, a 17 percent increase in public transportation use, a 61 percent increase in bicycle commuting, and a 35 percent increase in walking. This included multi-modal trips like walking or cycling to public transit. These results remained constant when reexamined two years later. Several studies showed that it was the social marketing strategy that prompted the mode shift. The pilot led to more than 100 roll-outs of the approach in Europe, Australia and the U.S.
Chapter 3 Footnotes

5. Terzano, K and Morckel, V. C. “Walk or Bike to a Healthier Life: Commuting Behavior and Recreational Physical Activity.” Environment and Behavior. Published online 9 January 2011


44. http://www.copenhagencyclechic.com/
Chapter 4  Recommendations

Based on analysis and synthesis of our research, we have generated a set of recommendations for the Green Streets Initiative to consider as it expands Walk/Ride Day to new communities and continues to grow its network of participants. These recommendations reflect the literature, evaluation of the current Walk/Ride Day program, and best practices of both Walk/Ride Day and similar efforts to promote active and alternative transportation. We have organized our recommendations for the expansion of the Walk/Ride Day program into three sections: Network, Outreach, and Events.

I. Network

Recommendation: Deepen existing partnerships through synergy and reciprocity.

As detailed earlier in the report, there are many Boston-area organizations working to promote and support active transportation. Green Streets should deepen its existing relationships with MassRIDES, Safe Routes to School, WalkBoston, Bike Boston, MassBIKE, and Livable Streets. We also suggest developing a new partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Mass in Motion initiative. Like Green Streets, each of these organizations plays a successful and specific role in improving the conditions that promote active transportation. Below, we focus on the specifics of how four deeper, more reciprocal partnerships could work.

MassRIDES

MassRIDES is an important resource for many commuters. Its website provides a useful network of various alternative transportation resources and organizations. It is also an organization with over 400 partners consisting of municipalities, businesses, advocacy organizations, community based organizations, universities and more. Both MassBIKE and WalkBoston are listed as partners and there is a link to
WalkBoston’s website as a resource for pedestrian information. Green Streets is not listed or linked as a partner, however, and there is no information about Walk/Ride Day.

Green Streets should sign up to be a MassRIDES partner, encourage Walk/Ride Day partner businesses to also sign up as MassRIDES partners and, in return, ask to be listed as a “resource” on the MassRIDES website.

Safe Routes to School

MassRIDES is also the statewide administrator of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. Walk/Ride Day programs at schools and the SRTS program are both trying to increase active transportation for children at schools.

Ben Hammer, Massachusetts SRTS state coordinator, considers Walk/Ride Day an effective encouragement method for promoting active transportation among school children. This is one element of SRTS’ strategy for increasing active transportation on which they could use partnership.

Sarah Cushman, former Executive Director of Portland Green Streets and the Southern Maine Coordinator for SRTS, described one limitation of SRTS programs. Many schools participating in SRTS, she said, organize around only one event a year such as International Walk to School Day. “Walk/Ride Day,” said Cushman, “could be a potential anchor event for a SRTS program...a way to encourage schools to do something monthly.”

In other instances with SRTS, students participate in isolation from other children at other schools and the wider community. Both Cushman and WalkBoston Program Director Joseph Cutrufo explained that by being a part of Walk/Ride Day, students could connect their participation with other schools, their parents, and the community. Their effort to commute actively can be understood as part of a bigger movement.
We recommend Green Streets deepen its relationship with MassRIDEs by offering Walk/Ride Day as an “anchor event” and encouragement tool to be incorporated into current and future SRTS programs. Green Streets could reciprocate by connecting current and future Walk/Ride Day schools with SRTS.

WalkBoston

Much of WalkBoston’s work is in pedestrian friendly infrastructure advocacy and education. Making the built environment conducive to biking and walking is an important part of increasing participation in active transportation. Walk/Ride Day, however, does not address infrastructure barriers to active transportation. Instead, Green Streets should address built environment issues by supporting the work of organizations well suited to addressing these issues. The organization could deepen its partnership with WalkBoston by including information about their advocacy campaigns in the Green Streets monthly newsletter or by circulating petition letters to Green Streets members. In return for supplementing WalkBoston’s outreach campaigns, WalkBoston could include Green Streets as a partner on their website with a link to the Green Streets website.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) runs a program called Mass in Motion, which focuses on policy and environmental changes to facilitate active living. In conjunction with Mass in Motion, Walk/Ride Day participants could play a key role in evaluating current city environments. Participants could conduct an environmental assessment (walk-ability or bike-ability) of their routes on Walk/Ride Day. Their insights could be key to developing advocacy and policy strategies for policy and physical infrastructure changes. Green Streets could facilitate the collection of this ground-level data to feed into municipal policy and planning for improved Complete Streets infrastructure, a goal of both MDPH and MassDOT (as disused earlier in this report). If Walk/Ride Day was active in a community funded by MDPH’s Mass in Motion...
program to make policy and physical infrastructure changes, this could be a very effective partnership for promoting change.

**Recommendation: Reinvigorate incentive program.**

According to data from Walk/Ride Day online surveys between January 2010 and March 2011, only 35 percent of those that signed in said they planned on receiving an incentive. Of those who intended to take advantage of an incentive, 15 percent did not know which retailer they wanted to visit. These trends suggest that the incentive program is not being maximized. We have several suggestions of how to reinvigorate the incentive program based on the information from the sign in data and an interview with Sarah Cushman from Portland Green Streets. It is also important to note that not everyone that participates in Walk/Ride Day signs in. To fully understand how the program is being used, Green Streets should directly poll members and the business partners that offer the incentives.

Portland Green Streets assessed their incentive program and found that it was underutilized. They developed an alternative program where members, at the beginning of the year, receive a member card with all of the incentives listed on the back. At any point during the year members can bring the card into the supporting business and receive their freebie or discount and have the item crossed off. This incentive system is meant to increase use and maintain interest in Walk/Ride Day throughout the month. Once this new incentive program is started, Green Streets (of
Cambridge) should assess its effectiveness.

In addition to evaluating it, Green Streets should increase awareness of the incentive program. A community map that includes the location of businesses that offer incentives as well as other important bicycling and walking information could increase utilization of the incentives and help solicit new businesses to offer incentives.

Boston Bikes promotes its Bike Fridays program through an advertisement-supported map that identifies the location of relevant businesses, biking safety and laws, and biking routes.

Green Streets could use this as a model for developing their own maps for participants to locate sponsors and commute alongside fellow Green Streets members (see the Outreach section below for further information on maps). Selling advertisements on the maps could also be a potential revenue source.
We also analyzed the survey data to determine which types of retailers and types of incentives that participants were most interested in. The most common types of retailers were food, bicycle, and sporting goods shops for incentives.

Participants were also most interested in incentives that provided discounts or free items or some combination of the two.
Based on this survey data, interviews with key informants, and the input from our focus group, we also recommend that Green Streets ask participating businesses to offer discounts for “everyday” purchases or small free items, not just discounts on big ticket items or raffles to enter for gift certificates. Focus group participants were more interested in discounts on food or other small items that they would normally purchase, and less interested in small discounts on major purchases that they would not purchase on any given Friday.

Reinvigorating the incentive program is important for supporting Walk/Ride Day in its current form. It can also be a valuable means for expanding Walk/Ride Day into new communities. Bike shops or athletic retailers offering incentives for Walk/Ride Day are one important way to advertise the program in new areas. Popular in current communities, they provide a conduit into a new community that may not have a supporting alternative transportation organization. The following maps show the location of bicycle and sporting goods stores that could support the expansion of Walk/Ride Day.

**Recommendation: Broaden reach of Walk/Ride Day by establishing the program in other communities.**

To recommend expansion of the Walk/Ride Day program, we did a spatial analysis on factors that influence alternative transportation
for both towns and schools. Our goal was to determine where would be best for Walk/Ride Day to expand, based on factors such as walkability and transit access. Figure 24 shows the suitability rankings we produced.

We also did a spatial analysis of public middle schools in the Boston area to see which schools could potentially serve the largest walking or biking student age population. Figure 24 also shows a list ranking towns by the size of their middle-school age population. We chose “middle-school age” as a significant factor because it is the demographic that potentially could be best served by walking and biking programs — that is, middle school is when it is considered appropriate for children to begin to walk to school on their own. In the future, the same type of analysis could be done to identify prospective high schools.
The rankings by city-wide and school factors produced very similar lists — the cities and towns most suitable for Walk/Ride Day in general were also home to the most suitable schools. To establish Walk/Ride Day in these new communities, we recommend Green Streets continue its methodology of first anchoring the program in the most suitable schools and then expanding citywide.

More depth on our methodology is available in Appendix C. It should be noted, however, that while this section suggests certain areas for expansion, our analyses here did not include non-spatial factors that could be very important. Human capital is especially important, in the form of effective organizers, amenable officials, and personal contacts. We offer suggestions regarding the human and social aspects of expanding the program throughout the rest of the recommendations section.
II. Outreach

**Recommendation: Create program materials that are more culturally and socially inclusive.**

The Boston metro area — Somerville, in particular — is culturally diverse. In 2000, 29 percent of Somerville’s population was foreign-born. The six most represented languages other than English in Somerville include Portuguese, Spanish, Hindi, Haitian Creole, Italian, and Chinese.¹

Inclusive program materials should also address the “low status” stigma of active and alternative transportation choices. Conservation behaviors in general, aside from recycling, are perceived to convey “low status.” This includes the use of public transportation over a personal vehicle. If behaviors are perceived as low status, they are rendered unappealing. This negative perception reduces the likelihood of people engaging in conservation behaviors, such as taking alternative transportation.² Human behavior is often influenced by how an individual believes others will perceive his or her behavior. Given this context, social influence is the best predictor of behaviors. If one perceives that others are “engaging in a particular conservation behavior,” that “predicts one’s own endorsement of and engagement in that behavior.”³ In other words, Green Streets should frame Walk/Ride Day as something that everyone is doing.

However, according to Sarah Fresco, Walk/Ride Day has a “quirky” audience. Through Walk/Ride Day, Green Streets reaches those who feel that they “haven’t counted before” and offers a strong message of inclusivity for disenfranchised groups. The marketing materials for the Walk/Ride Day program should reflect this spirit and environment of inclusivity so that individuals who are not currently involved can better understand the nature of the program.

**Recommendation: Distribute accurate and detailed community maps that focus on safe...**
walking and biking routes and highlight new or improved infrastructure.

Providing residents with up-to-date maps that highlight walking and biking routes is a way to shape their “mental maps.” As discussed earlier (p26), an individual’s mental map influences travel mode decisions and vehicle owners have mental maps oriented to using a car. Distributing walking and biking maps is one potential way to shrink the scale of an individual’s mental map, thereby making active transportation a more comfortable and viable option. Further, a lack of information and a desire to avoid unfamiliar or uncertain situations is a significant barrier to alternative transportation use.\(^4\) We recommend distributing accurate, detailed walking and biking maps that focus on safety and new or improved infrastructure to empower residents who are interested in active transportation. This map could include both bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and the local businesses that offer incentives, as discussed above.

In our focus group, participants indicated that bike maps are useful, but are not usually up to date. More specifically, Somerville has been adding many bike lanes that are not represented on the existing maps. Participants also said that accurate maps can be helpful in “getting over the hump,” or sparking initial interest for people. Consistent with the research findings mentioned above, maps are useful for helping individuals build a mental framework for the biking scale, according to participants.

**Recommendation:** Make Green Streets’ image and “brand” consistent across all marketing
If used consistently and visibly, a well-defined organizational image and brand has the power to increase the visibility of the nonprofit’s mission and draw new participants to its activities and programs. Several of our key informants and focus group participants commented on a lack of understanding regarding the connection between Walk/Ride Day and the Green Streets Initiative, the availability of incentives at local retailers, and the difference between Walk/Ride Day and similar events such as Bike Month. As explained above, research on social marketing for behavior change emphasizes the importance of capturing individuals’ attention through an effective message and messenger. Cohesive branding is a direct way for Green Streets to convey its inclusive, action-oriented message and thereby engage new participants.

One model for this is Clean Air New York, which uses a similar social marketing strategy to reduce car miles traveled. Clean Air New York has a clean, simple online presence with consistent graphics on each media platform: official homepage, Facebook, Twitter, Flicker, and their blog site. Hard materials targeted at individuals, businesses, schools, and nonprofit partners are also tied together through logos, language use and color. They are identifiable as produced by and belonging to Clean Air New York.

Green Streets should ensure that their logo and name is prominently displayed on all materials including handouts, event signage, any advertising, all of its online media platforms, and in participating retailers’ stores. As an element of its partnership agreements, Green Streets’ logo and name graphic should be displayed and linked on the websites of partner organization. The logo and name

![Current Green Streets Website](source: gogreenstreets.org)

![Mock-up of Simpler Green Streets Website](source: alexkg.com/test)
graphic also should be made available to new Walk/Ride Day coordinators as they launch their programs in new communities, so that coordinators are able to easily incorporate Green Streets’ image into their ‘homegrown’ outreach materials.

**Recommendation: Strengthen Green Streets’ online presence.**

From both a social marketing perspective and a usability perspective, it is important for Green Streets to redesign its web presence. As it exists at the time of this report, the website is long, text-heavy, and disorganized. It is essential to fix these basic flaws so that the website can be a positive marketing tool.

Following is a prioritization of improvements based on web design principles and desired features of Green Streets organizers.

1. **Clean up the homepage.** This can be done immediately, without waiting for a redesign. Smashing Magazine’s “10 Principles of Effective Web Design” includes two points relevant to Green Streets: First, don’t make users think. The organization should be described succinctly in a prominent position on the homepage. Second, strive for feature exposure. Walk/Ride Day participants want to see the most important aspects of the website, so move everything but the few vital features to sub-pages.

2. **Change the header.** The image at the top of the website is currently the default image from TypePad. To optimize the potential for branding consistency, the header should directly represent what Green Streets is about.

The next two improvements could probably be completed by an intern or volunteer even before a design firm is contacted with. These two recommendations and the two preceding are urgent, to bring the website up to a minimum standard of usefulness for marketing.

3. **Be more succinct everywhere.** Smashing Magazine advises using short and concise phrases, objective language, and a scannable layout (categorized content, multiple heading levels, lists and images to break up text blocks) to hold visitors’ attention. Editing all the main pages for succinctness would greatly improve Green Streets’ web presence.

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**Fig 30: Important Website Pages**

1. Homepage
2. How to Get Involved
3. Sponsor list
4. Who we are
5. Blog
6. School Coordinator Guide
7. Business Coordinator Guide
8. Community Coordinator Guide
9. Retail Partner Information
10. History
11. FAQ
4. Get a simple, horizontal menu. The current menu is in two columns on the right-hand side of the page. Simplify this list to the 4 – 6 most important categories of content, and move it to the top of the page, horizontally above or below the header.

The remaining improvements are important components that should be implemented when Green Streets contracts with a web design firm to overhaul the site. Also for this purpose, Figure 30 lists the pages on the current site, prioritized for inclusion in the overhaul.

5. Clarify the blog’s purpose. On a static website like Green Streets’, a blog is for the range of content between a press release and an update for participants. If there is information of lasting importance, it should go on a static page. The blog should be reserved for news, and referred to that way from elsewhere on the site.

6. Feature an effortless sign-in. If the website saves participants’ information, collecting more incrementally over time, they can experience a one-click sign-in. Smashing Magazine calls this, “not squandering users’ patience.”

7. Feature an integrated contact management system. If sign-in information is automatically added to a mailing list, Green Streets organizers and staff don’t have to do it manually.

8. Feature up-to-date maps. Green Streets should prominently provide, or at least link to, clear and complete maps of bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure.

9. Feature quantifications of participants’ impact. Display measurements of the health and environmental benefits, both for the individual and the community. This will give participants...
a greater sense of accomplishment.

10. Feature a resource suite for organizers and partners. This is important, but probably the most difficult to implement. It has two parts. First, each community and partner should have their own section of the site. This would be their home on their site, where they could be as active as they wanted, and publicize their participation. Second, the site should have a forum where organizers can share best practices and outreach materials. Many sources in our research asked for these two components.

**Recommendation: Rename Walk/Ride Day “Green Streets Day” to clearly link the Green Streets Initiative with its central monthly event.**

Finally, as an additional way of building name recognition and achieving consistency of its unique brand we recommend that the Green Streets Initiative consider changing the name of Walk/Ride Day to Green Streets Day. Many people in the Somerville and Cambridge area are familiar with Walk/Ride Day but do not fully understand its affiliation with Green Streets. Several incorrectly connected Walk/Ride Day with either their employer or another Boston area nonprofit promoting active transportation. A name change of the day itself would be an opportunity for the Green Streets Initiative to build recognition of its pivotal role in creating, implementing and sustaining Walk/Ride Day for the past five years and into the future.
III. Events

Recommendation: Hold evening commute Walk/Ride Day events to engage different community members.

Walk/Ride Day events are traditionally held in the mornings. Members of our focus group, however, strongly supported the idea of holding a “Happy Hour” as an evening social event for an after work crowd, especially for younger people without families. Extending social events to this demographic aligns with the Walk/Ride Day mission of creating an “inclusive, community celebration.” A Walk/Ride Day Happy Hour would provide a forum for individuals to socialize and form walking or biking groups. Local groups such as Green Drinks or Livable Streets are potential partners for coordinating this type of event. An evening social event co-sponsored by Green Streets would be particularly beneficial for promoting active transportation in the winter months. Maintaining an active lifestyle in New England is particularly challenging in the winter, according to Dr. Brian Green of Somerville Hospital. Walk/Ride Day could be an opportunity to make active commuting in the winter more enjoyable through organized activities and festivities.

Recommendation: Hold a large tabling event every month that brings together a more diverse collection of stakeholders.

In an interview with Sarah Fresco, the Cambridge coordinator of Walk/Ride Day, Green Streets was identified as a “matchmaker” in the community. We acknowledge and encourage the expansion of this identified role. Research indicates that increasing the number of sectors represented in the active and alternative and active transportation stakeholder group can lead to a more successful effort. “A growing coalition of actors” have a stake in increasing active transportation. This growing coalition could include: city
officials who want to make downtowns safe and popular; social equity advocates who want to make walking a safe and desirable option for the elderly, women, children, transit riders, the poor, and the disabled; environmentalists who want alternatives to roads, parking, emissions, and car dependence; and New Urbanists who want to design “diverse, pedestrian-friendly places that support resource efficiency and a sense of community.” 11 By offering a space, place, and time for other groups to congregate and discuss their roles in the context of alternative transportation, those groups likely would be willing to promote the event to their respective networks, as well. Increasing the sector diversity of participants also helps Green Streets achieve the goal of creating an inclusive celebration of public and active transportation.

Credit: Danilo Morales
Conclusion

As this report shows, a wide range of interconnected strategies is needed to help individuals and communities shift towards using active and alternative transportation. Both physical and social barriers to alternative transportation must be addressed, thoughtfully and at the same time, in order for this transition to happen. In the greater Boston Metro area, transportation mode change is happening because of infrastructure improvements. But it is also happening because of a network of bicycle, pedestrian and public transit organizations that advocate for policy change and encourage individuals to try active transportation. As part of this network, the Green Streets Initiative and its Walk/Ride Day program play an important role in promoting active and alternative transportation. Walk/Ride Day celebrates those who already take part and introduces newcomers to active transportation in a fun, inclusive environment. As it expands throughout the greater Boston Metro area, Green Streets has an opportunity to build on its core strengths by tapping into a growing movement, providing a supportive and safe atmosphere to try active transportation, and bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders that leverages the strengths of each.

The recommendations in this report provide a framework for effective regional growth of Walk/Ride Day with a focus on three core areas: network, outreach and events. To support regionalization of Walk/Ride Day, our recommendations are reflected in three standalone toolkits for communities, businesses, and schools. These toolkits distill the best practices for promoting active and alternative transportation, and are intended to complement the substantial work that Green Streets already does to support new Walk/Ride Day communities and organizations.

It is our hope that our work will support the growth of active and alternative transportation in the greater Boston area and, ultimately, to healthier and more vibrant communities.
Chapter 4 Footnotes

Toolkits

1. Community Toolkit
2. School Toolkit
3. Business Toolkit
Starting Walk/Ride Day in Your Community: A Toolkit

Credit: Jaclyn DeVore

Green Streets.
Why Join the Green Streets Initiative and Walk/Ride Day?

Walk/Ride Day is an opportunity for communities to celebrate the choice to walk, bike, ride public transit or carpool to work, school, and anywhere else in their busy lives. Walk/Ride Day is a simple and effective way to:

- Promote low-carbon transportation choices that reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) and other emissions;
- Encourage active transportation options for all, including walking, biking and public transportation;
- Support cooperation between green transportation initiatives and business networks.

Walk/Ride Day is the only Boston area event celebrating multiple types of active and alternative transportation. The Cambridge-based grassroots organization Green Streets Initiative developed and launched Walk/Ride Day in 2006. Green Streets’ mission is to “create safer, healthier and quieter streets and more vibrant communities for commuters and citizens of all kinds.” On Walk/Ride Day, occurring the last Friday of every month, participants join the celebration of active and alternative transportation by wearing green and “going green.”

Using active and alternative transportation once monthly might seem like a small step towards change, but it is a step towards more active, healthy and environmentally friendly living. Did you know that simply adding 15 minutes of activity to your day can prevent the yearly weight gain leading to adult obesity? Or that if one commuter in a household switches to active or alternative transportation this can reduce the household’s carbon footprint by as much as 30 percent?

With over 4,000 members, 80 businesses, 10 schools and two Boston area municipalities supporting the program, Walk/Ride Day offers a unique opportunity for children and adults alike to try out ‘multimodal’ transportation options. With the help of this toolkit, and the support of Green Streets, your community can promote fun, healthy, safe and environmentally friendly ways for kids to get to class, commuters to get to work, and everyone to get around your community. Join us! Go green and have fun!

Janie Katz-Christy
Executive Director, The Green Streets Initiative
A Roadmap to Starting Walk/Ride Day

This toolkit provides ideas, resources and tools to get your community on the (multimodal) road to success. We’ve broken down the process of starting Walk/Ride Day in your community into four main steps: Prepare, Partner Up, Promote and emPower, and Program Review.

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- How is your community laid out physically?
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  - Re-administer your transportation barriers survey
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- Use Three Simple Qualitative Methods
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  - Community Meeting

Resources
Step 1: Prepare

By taking some time to understand the lay of the land in your community, you will be better prepared to build a successful Walk/Ride Day celebration from the ground up. Who lives and works in your community? How do they travel? How is your community laid out physically? Are there barriers to active and alternative transportation? Answering these questions at the start of your Walk/Ride Day program will help you tailor outreach and events to your community. It will also help you to identify and describe the impacts that Walk/Ride Day has had on your community once you launch your program.

Who lives and works in your community?

The more you know about community members, the more you’ll know about creating a Walk/Ride Day that meets their needs and interests. If your community has a large elderly, teen or school age population, this could inform the kinds of Walk/Ride Day events that you host. If your town or city has a large immigrant community, you may want to develop communication materials in languages besides English.

You can find demographic information about your community in several, easily accessible places online. For general information about individuals and families, the Census (http://www.census.gov/) is a good place to start. Data from the 2010 Census is newly available and will allow you to look at community demographics such as income, race, health, languages spoken and family size. City or town records, and often, your community’s official website are other places to gather information about population characteristics, population density, and any trends or changes that your community has identified.

How do community members travel?

If a large proportion of community members are already getting to
work and school by active or alternative transportation, you have built in allies in launching your Walk/Ride Day program. If your community has an underutilized bus system, on the other hand, your local transit authority may be open to partnering on a project like Walk/Ride Day that encourages people to check out public transportation.

To look at current commuting patterns, the Census is again a useful starting point. Walk/Ride Day partner Nuride collects data on commuting patterns. Contact Green Streets to see if the data is available for your community. The Massachusetts Rideshare Regulation requires large employers and schools to develop plans to reduce ‘driving alone’ and these institutions are also required to track data on commuting patterns. You may also choose to administer a survey of community members about their commuting habits, either through the mail or online. Two samples from the Massachusetts Rideshare program are attached, for use or inspiration. The community survey could be done in conjunction with your partners, once you’ve moved onto step two of launching your Walk/Ride Day celebration.

How is your community laid out physically?

The built environment has an impact on how people travel. It is important to consider the physical infrastructure of your community: both transportation features like major roads, public transportation, bike lanes, sidewalks, as well as the location of amenities like business centers, parks, squares and schools. A major highway that bisects your town or the lack of even sidewalks and good lighting present real barriers to engaging in active and alternative transportation.

You can build up your own understanding of pluses and minuses of your community’s physical environment through a quick review on Google Maps (http://maps.google.com/) and by a biking or walking assessment. Pedestrian or bicycle assessments look at the infrastructure supporting these modes of transportation.
such as sidewalks, crossing barriers, signage and lighting. Kansas City offers some great tips for doing a neighborhood walkability survey: http://ww4.kcmo.org/planning.nsf/plnpres/walkability?opendocument. Walkscore.com also provides a fantastic service, providing a score for walkability for any address. The score is based on proximity to services such as grocery stores, schools, and parks. In addition to scores for individual addresses, Walkscore produces scores for select cities, based on an average of addresses. MassBike (http://www.massbike.org/services/bikeability-assessment/) also conducts assessments of bike-ability for communities throughout Massachusetts. Finally, your town or city planning department likely has detailed physical infrastructure information available, either at their offices or online.

**What are non-physical barriers to active and alternative transportation?**

Community members have individual perspectives on engaging in active and alternative transportation, informed by the built environment and the transportation habits of those around them. Take some time to better understand community attitudes, beliefs and behaviors by conducting a community-wide survey or through hosting focus groups that engage targeted groups of residents. The commuter survey discussed above could ask questions about both commuting patterns and attitudes. Attached is a model for conducting a focus group, along with suggested questions. Your Walk/Ride Day partners can serve to bring together different populations, giving you insight into the varying perspectives of community members.

Now that you’ve gotten to know your community, its physical infrastructure and its commuting patterns better, it’s time to build up your Walk/Ride Day partnerships.
Step 2: Partner Up

There are natural Walk/Ride Day allies in every community. We suggest reaching out to these partners early on in your program development so they can support and inform your work. In this section, we suggest several types of partnerships to pursue and discuss the benefits of bringing these diverse partners to the table as you develop and launch your Walk/Ride Day program. Your Walk/Ride Day may not initially engage all of these partners, but they each offer resources and perspectives that contribute to a successful program. This chart lists types of partnerships to consider.

Potential Walk/Ride Day Partners

Government

Your municipal government can be a strong set of allies for launching a Walk/Ride Day program. Whether you work for your town or city government, or not, key local government partners are very helpful in getting the word out, connecting Walk/Ride Day to other city initiatives in health or transportation, and potentially as ways to leverage funding as Walk/Ride Day may support municipal goals such as improving streets or reducing obesity rates. Consider engaging Planning, Health, Communications and Transportation Departments; along with the Mayor, Select Board Members, City Councilors, and even your state representatives.

Schools

Schools are a great place to kick off your Walk/Ride Day program. Walking/riding to school gives families an opportunity to spend time together and be active before the day begins. Younger children love simple Walk/Ride Day rewards, teenagers appreciate the independence that comes with active transportation, and college students are often talented...
community organizers with large networks. When you have a supportive Superintendent of Schools, or other school leadership, it can lead to an entire school district adopting Walk/Ride Day. The Green Streets Initiative’s Starting Walk/Ride Day in Your School toolkit is full of tips and tools for school-based coordinators.

**Nonprofits**

Your community is probably home to several nonprofits working on similar issues. Whether these nonprofits are grassroots organizing efforts on the neighborhood level or larger nonprofits with regional reach, consider them all potential Walk/Ride Day partners. Walk/Ride Day events are a place for these groups to come together to promote their goals, and they represent existing networks through which you can get the word out. Some groups to consider first: environmental groups, bicycle clubs, community development organizations, and health advocacy groups.

**Businesses**

Local businesses are essential to Walk/Ride Day success. Incentives from small business partners encourage broad participation and a sense of reward for participants. Toscanini’s Ice Cream in Cambridge gives away small ice cream cones on Walk/Ride Day, one example of a wildly popular incentive for active commuters. At the same time, listing their incentives with Walk/Ride Day gets the word out about what local businesses have to offer and encourages community members to shop local. The Green Streets Initiative has sponsorship packages and information sheets available for engaging new retail partners.

Additionally, large employers in your community are a great place to start, as getting a large employer on board means reaching a large number of people working in your community at one time. As mentioned above, the Massachusetts Rideshare Regulation requires large employers to help their employees reduce single occupancy travel and Walk/Ride Day participation can help them
achieve this goal. The Green Streets Initiative’s Starting Walk/Ride Day at Your Business toolkit is full of suggestions for business coordinators, such as creating friendly competition and setting up a steering committee.

Community

Finally, think about bringing together allies in your community that are already engaged in civic or service oriented activities. Members of neighborhood associations, parent teacher associations, and your friends and neighbors, may be interested in connecting Walk/Ride Day with their ongoing community building activities. These types of groups are likely sources for Walk/Ride Day leadership and represent sources for potential event and outreach volunteers.

Approaching Potential Partners

One-on-one meetings – who do you know?

The easiest way to begin building your Walk/Ride Day partnership is to start with the people you know working in your community’s government, schools, nonprofit organizations and businesses. Short one-on-one meetings with potential partners are a first step in connecting Walk/Ride Day to the needs and interests of these partners. These conversations do not only build partnership with that individual and the organizations that he or she represents, but will lead to useful introductions to additional potential partners.

Community events

Take your Walk/Ride Day plans on the road! Community events are an effective platform for sharing your plans for Walk/Ride Day with potential partners. This could mean reserving speaking time at your town or city’s transportation committee meeting, talking about Walk/Ride Day at the next parent teacher association gathering you attend, or setting up a table at the Earth Day event sponsored by your local environmental nonprofit.
Email introductions

You will also need to reach out to people who are not accessible through personal connections or public events. While you are building up your base of partners, short email messages based on the introduction to this toolkit are a great place to start. Tailor your message to suit your audience, for instance, highlighting that Walk/Ride Day promotes active living when reaching out to your city’s health department. Then suggest a follow-up phone call to discuss the benefits of partnership, and take the lead on making that phone call.

Step 3: Promote and emPower

You've laid the groundwork for launching Walk/Ride Day by gathering information about your community and you've brought community partners together to support your efforts. This section contains ideas for promoting monthly Walk/Ride Day events and for keeping your partners, volunteers, and participants engaged as Walk/Ride Day leaders.

Outreach

Online

Establish an online presence at the Green Streets Initiative’s website and through social media including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Every Walk/Ride Day community has access to dedicated space on the Green Streets website, where you can post the important aspects of your program including partners, retailers offering incentives, and information about upcoming events. Find a volunteer who has the time and internet savvy to post regular updates to other online platforms, and encourage participants to post their thoughts as well.

Media

Communications and Outreach Resources

Duck Call: http://www.bigducknyc.com/blog/. A project of Big Duck, an innovative nonprofit communications firm, the Duck Call is a resource for generating new, fun and effective communications ideas.

Nudge: http://nudges.org/. A blog from the authors of the book Nudge that offers insight into social marketing strategies for improving decisions about health, wealth and happiness.

Active Living by Design: http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/. Covering a successful five-step campaign that promotes active living in many communities across the U.S., this website is a resource for practical and inspiring outreach and promotional ideas.
Approach traditional media in your community with story angles that connect to current issues, such as reducing air pollution, shopping locally, or preventing obesity. Personal stories about participants, described more below, are a way to lend a human-interest angle to Walk/Ride Day and are often easy to pitch to busy reporters. For extra insurance that your story will get picked up by local media, make sure you’ve already gathered the names and numbers of people that the reporter could interview to give the article more depth.

Visibility

Build visibility for your Walk/Ride Day program through targeted marketing that will be seen by large numbers of people. Two effective places to start are community calendars and the stores of retailers that are offering incentives. Figure out the deadlines for community calendars and get into the habit of posting information about Walk/Ride Day every month. Work with retail partners to post Walk/Ride Day decals and other signage in a highly visible location, for customers and those passing by. Meet with retail partner staff to go over the details of Walk/Ride Day and the role that the incentive program plays in promoting both active transportation and local business.

Flyering

Consider handing out flyers at public transit hubs, especially as you first launch your Walk/Ride Day program. You’ll be targeting a built-in audience of individuals already using public transit, who can help to spread the word and who will feel recognized for their existing contribution to a cleaner, healthier community. This is also a great opportunity for Walk/Ride Day organizers and volunteers to practice their Walk/Ride Day pitch. How would you describe Walk/Ride Day in 30 seconds?

Maps
Work with the Green Streets Initiative and other partners to develop a community map that includes the location of businesses offering incentives, and important bicycling, walking and public transit information. This will increase visibility of Walk/Ride Day, promote available incentives, and help solicit new businesses to join the incentive program. The map could be paid for by contributions from participating businesses, donations or through local advertising.

Events

Visibility

Ensure that event signage is visible, prominent and cohesive. Your Walk/Ride Day events themselves are likely one of the best ways to build visibility and introduce Walk/Ride Day to new participants. A Walk/Ride Day logo is available from the Green Streets Initiative to incorporate into your signage and materials.

Themes

Organize your Walk/Ride Day events around themes that change with the season and connect to other active transportation, environmental and health events. Seasonal events could include an event that includes free kayaking lessons during July, or an event that includes hot chocolate and a talk on winter cycling and walking safety in January. Related events provide an opportunity to focus on different modes of active and alternative transportation, such as connecting your May event to National Bike Month.

Food

Provide food, beverages and other small giveaways at events. This gives participants another reason to mix and mingle at Walk/Ride Day events, staying longer and getting to know each other and your partners. Partner organizations, both organizational and retail sponsors, are often happy to donate food and drink once a year, especially if their support is shared through promotion before,
during and after the event.

**Partnership**

Use Walk/Ride Day events as an opportunity to bring partners together to share their work with participants and with each other. Partners will appreciate the opportunity that Walk/Ride Day provides for tabling and connecting with community members. Aim to have a diverse representation of partners at your events and encourage them to do something beyond tabling, such as healthy cooking demonstrations or free bike repair lessons.

**Building Community**

**Tell Stories**

Celebrate Walk/Ride Day participants, volunteers and sponsors by telling their stories. Feature a rotating lineup of individual stories on your blog, in your newsletter, and on the Green Streets Initiative’s website and Facebook page. This is a personal and effective way to highlight the contributions of individuals, and also to inspire others to join in. Better yet, encourage participants to tell their own stories on shared online platforms and at events!

**Highlight Supporters**

At each Walk/Ride Day, take the time to focus your outreach efforts around a select number of local businesses that are participating retail sponsors. By bringing attention to a small, rotating pool of retail partners, you can ensure that each gets its moment in the spotlight. For example, you could choose to highlight thematic clusters of businesses like participating cafes, or to highlight geographic clusters of five businesses located around the same intersection.

**Get Competitive**
Consider setting up a little friendly competition among Walk/Ride Day participants. Elementary schools or large businesses could compete against each other for the highest participation rates. Individuals could compete to see who uses the most bus lines in one year, similar to the “10 in 2010” competition set up by Cambridge Walk/Ride Day, or could track cumulative miles traveled by bicycle.

Finally…

All Walk/Ride Day participants are part of a larger community promoting and engaging in active and alternative transportation. Look for opportunities to tie your community’s Walk/Ride Day events into other alternative transportation, health and environmental events happening locally, regionally and nationally. During May, bike month nationally, you could offer a bicycle safety or repair workshop at your event. If your town opens a new pedestrian path, you could help to coordinate opening day with Walk/Ride Day. Or, if one of your active transportation allies is advocating for new state legislation, ask your members to consider writing emails in support. Together, these efforts build up support of active and alternative transportation beyond Walk/Ride Day itself.
Step 4: Program Review

Congratulations! You’ve started a successful Walk/Ride Day celebration with your partners. Once you’ve been up and running for a year, you’ll want to look at the impact, the highlights, and the challenges of your community’s Walk/Ride Day. In this section, we offer several options for measuring and evaluating participation in Walk/Ride Day events along with methods to solicit feedback from your program stakeholders.

Use the evaluation tools that you already have in place.

When you were preparing to launch Walk/Ride Day, you administered a survey to community residents asking questions about their commuting habits and perceived barriers to using active and alternative transportation. Re-administer this survey and compare its results to your original survey. Have self-reported commuting behaviors changed? Are there fewer perceived barriers to active and alternative transportation?

Download and analyze data on your community from the Green Streets Initiative online survey. This data should be able to tell you several stories about community participation. Has event participation grown over the past year? Are participants visiting local sponsor businesses? What are the most popular modes of transportation on Walk/Ride Day? How far is the average commute? Are there locations where many participants work? Whether you choose to look at this data after every monthly event, or to focus on trends over time, it should provide insight to help you tailor future outreach and community organizing work.

Use three straightforward qualitative methods to gain information and insight from Walk/Ride Day participants (and non-participants).
Interviews

Interview eight to ten participants. Reach out to a varied group of regular Walk/Ride Day participants. These could be individuals that stop by Walk/Ride Day events, owners of sponsor businesses, or contacts at partner organizations. Conduct short interviews (20 to 30 minutes) with each individual to solicit feedback. What do they like or dislike about the program? What are their suggestions for increasing participation or improving communication? What are ways to connect Walk/Ride Day more closely with their personal or professional goals and activities?

Focus Groups

Conduct two to three focus groups. Your partners can be helpful in assembling different focus groups: perhaps a group of parents, a group of small business owners, and a group of non-participants. Similar to the focus groups that you may have held at the program’s launch, the focus groups can be used to fine-tune your approach to Walk/Ride Day. Ask specific questions about the outreach methods you’ve used and the Walk/Ride Day events that you have held. Be sure to leave some open-ended time for suggestions as well.

Community Meeting

Host a community meeting. Tap into your partners’ resources by cosponsoring the meeting around an active living, environmental health or other relevant theme. The community meeting is both an opportunity to solicit feedback on Walk/Ride Day and to outreach to new participants. Be sure to have food. At the meeting, present first year results of your community’s Walk/Ride Day and create space for program feedback, especially in areas where you need support. Some areas to consider: recommendations for future events, ideas for outreach strategies, and potential new program partners.
Conclusion

We hope this toolkit has you well on your way to launching a fun and successful Walk/Ride Day in your community. Remember that the Green Streets team is always available for sharing ideas and answering questions. We’re looking forward to seeing what your community’s Walk/Ride Day celebration looks like. Good luck and have fun!
Resources

Janie Katz-Christy, Executive Director, Green Streets Initiative
Sarah Fresco, Outreach Coordinator, Green Streets Initiative
Nicole Rioles, Green Streets Initiative Treasurer and member of Somerville Health Department

Green Streets Initiative http://www.gogreenstreets.org/
MassBike http://www.massbike.org/
MassRIDES http://www.commute.com/
Mass in Motion http://www.mass.gov/massinmotion/
Active Living by Design http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/
Cause Effective Perspective http://www.causeeffectiveperspective.net/
Ciclavia http://www.ciclavia.org/
Duck Call – Big Duck http://www.bigducknyc.com/blog
Walk Score http://www.walkscore.com/
Nudge http://nudges.org/
Nonprofit Technology Network http://www.nten.org
CNN iReport: http://ireport.cnn.com
U.S. Census www.census.gov
Starting Walk/Ride Day in Your School: A Toolkit
Why Join the Green Streets Initiative and Walk/Ride Day?

Walk/Ride Day is an opportunity for schools to celebrate and support the choice to walk, bike, ride public transit or carpool to school. Walk/Ride Day is a simple and effective way to:

- Encourage active and healthy transportation options for all, including walking, biking and public transportation;
- Promote low-carbon transportation choices that reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) and other emissions; and,
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Walk/Ride Day is the only Boston area event celebrating multiple types of active and alternative transportation. The Cambridge-based grassroots organization Green Streets Initiative developed and launched Walk/Ride Day in 2006. Green Street’s mission is to “create safer, healthier and quieter streets and more vibrant communities for commuters and citizens of all kinds.” On Walk/Ride Day, occurring the last Friday of every month, participants join the celebration of active and alternative transportation by wearing green and “going green.”

Using active and alternative transportation once monthly might seem like a small step towards change, but it is a step towards more active, healthy and environmentally friendly living. Did you know that simply adding 15 minutes of activity to your day can prevent the yearly weight gain leading to adult obesity? Or that if one commuter in a household switches to active or alternative transportation this can reduce the household’s carbon footprint by as much as 30 percent?

With over 4,000 members, 80 businesses, 10 schools and two Boston area municipalities supporting the program, Walk/Ride Day offers a unique opportunity for children and adults alike to try out ‘multimodal’ transportation options. With the help of this toolkit, and the support of Green Streets, your school can promote fun, healthy,
safe and environmentally friendly ways for kids to get to class and everyone to get around your community. Join us! Go green and have fun!

Janie Katz-Christy

Executive Director, The Green Streets Initiative
A Roadmap to Starting Walk/Ride Day

This toolkit provides ideas, resources and tools to get your school on the (multimodal) road to success. We’ve broken down the process of starting Walk/Ride Day at your school or child’s school into four main steps: Prepare, Partner Up, Promote and emPower, and Program Review.

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Step 1: Prepare

How do children get to school presently?
How is your community laid out physically?
How will children get school safely and actively?
What are non-physical barriers to active transportation?

Step 2: Partner Up

Potential Partner Chart
Partner Descriptions
Tips for Approaching Potential Partners

Step 3. Promote and emPower

Outreach and Engagement Methods
Event Planning and Implementation
Building Your Walk/Ride Day Community

Step 4. Program Review

Use Existing Evaluation Tools
Re-administer your transportation barriers survey
Analyze data from Walk/Ride Day Sign-In
Use Three Simple Qualitative Methods
Participant Interviews
Focus Groups
Community Meeting

Resources
Step One: Prepare

By taking some time to understand the lay of the land in your community and around your school, you will be better prepared to build a successful Walk/Ride Day celebration from the ground up. How far from school do children live? Is your school a neighborhood school or a regional school? How do students travel to school? How is your community laid out physically? Are there barriers to active and alternative transportation? Answering these questions at the start of your Walk/Ride Day program will help you tailor outreach and events to your school and parents. It will also help you to identify and describe the impacts that Walk/Ride Day has had on your school and community once you launch your program.

How do kids get to school?

In 1969, approximately 50% of children walked or biked to school, with approximately 87% of children who lived within one mile of school walking or bicycling. Today, fewer than 15% of schoolchildren walk or bike to school. As a result, kids today are less active, less independent and less healthy. As much as 30% of morning traffic can be generated by parents driving their children to schools (www.saferoutesinf.org). We have provided you with a survey to find out how kids are getting to your school.

How is your community laid out physically?

The built environment has an impact on how people travel. It is important to consider the physical infrastructure of your community: both transportation features like major roads, crosswalks, bike lanes, sidewalks, crossing guards as well as the location of amenities like business centers, parks, squares and schools. A major highway that bisects your town or the lack of even sidewalks and good lighting present real barriers to engaging in active and alternative transportation.
You can build up your own understanding of pluses and minuses of your community’s physical environment through a quick review on Google Maps (http://maps.google.com/) and by a biking or walking assessment. Pedestrian or bicycle assessments look at the infrastructure supporting these modes of transportation such as sidewalks, crossing barriers, signage and lighting. Kansas City offers some great tips for doing a neighborhood walkability survey: http://ww4.kcmo.org/planning.nsf/plnpres/walkability?opendocument. Walkscore.com also provides a fantastic service, providing a score for walkability for any address. The score is based on proximity to services such as grocery stores, schools, and parks. In addition to scores for individual addresses, Walkscore produces scores for select cities, based on an average of addresses. MassBike (http://www.massbike.org/services/bikeability-assessment/) also conducts assessments of bike-ability for communities throughout Massachusetts. Finally, your town or city planning department likely has detailed physical infrastructure information available, either at their offices or online.

**What are non-physical barriers to active and alternative transportation?**

Parents and kids have individual perspectives on walking and biking to school, informed by the built environment and the transportation habits of those around them. Take some time to better understand community attitudes, beliefs and behaviors by conducting a community-wide survey or through hosting focus groups that engage school parents and staff. Included in the resources section of this toolkit is a model for conducting a focus group, along with suggested questions. Your Walk/Ride Day partners can serve to bring together different populations, giving you insight into the varying perspectives of community members.

**How will kids get to school safely?**

The most important preparation for Walk/Ride Day is to make sure kids know how to walk and bike to school safely. Teaching walking
and biking safety may be beyond your capacity as a coordinator, but there are numerous local organizations that will come to your school and conduct class and school wide trainings. You can find more information about these potential partners in the Partner Up section.

Step Two: Partner Up

You don’t need to go it alone! Sharing the duties of developing a successful Walk/Ride Day program will create a lasting initiative. In this section, we suggest several types of partnerships to pursue and discuss the benefits of bringing these diverse partners to the table as you develop and launch your Walk/Ride Day program. Your Walk/Ride Day may not initially engage all of these partners, but they each offer resources and perspectives that contribute to a successful program. This chart lists types of partnerships to consider.

Potential Walk/ Ride Day Partners

**Government**

The first partnership should be the formation of a Walk/Ride Day Committee, which should include at least one parent, one teacher and one school administrator. Physical education or health teachers should be considered as well as other parents who are active volunteers at the school. Members of this committee should plan on meeting once a month the week before Walk/Ride Day.

**Nonprofits**

Your community is probably home to several nonprofits working on similar issues. Whether these nonprofits are grassroots organizing efforts on the neighborhood level or larger nonprofits with regional reach, consider them all potential Walk/Ride Day partners. Walk/Ride Day events are a place for these groups to come together to promote their goals, and they represent existing networks through
which you can get the word out. Some groups to consider first: environmental groups, bicycle clubs, community development organizations, and health advocacy groups.

Specifically, through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and MassRIDES (www.commute.com), your school can begin Safe Routes to School (www.commute.com/schools) programming if it has not already. SRTS can connect your school with WalkBoston (www.walkboston.org), MassBIKE (www.massbike.org), or Cycle Kids (www.cyclekids.org) to provide in school bicycle and pedestrian safety courses.

**Government**

Your municipal government can be a strong set of allies for launching a Walk/Ride Day program. Whether you work for your town or city government, or not, key local government partners are very helpful in getting the word out, connecting Walk/Ride Day to other city initiatives in health or transportation, and potentially as ways to leverage funding as Walk/Ride Day may support municipal goals such as improving streets or reducing obesity rates. Consider engaging Planning, Health, Communications and Transportation Departments; along with the Mayor, Select Board Members, City Councilors, and even your state representatives.

**Community**

Finally, think about bringing together allies in your community that are already engaged in civic or service oriented activities. Members of neighborhood associations, parent teacher associations, and your friends and neighbors, may be interested in connecting Walk/Ride Day with their ongoing community building activities. These types of groups are likely sources for Walk/Ride Day leadership and represent sources for potential event and outreach volunteers.

**Approaching Potential Partners**

### Government
- Mayor’s Office, city councilors, and elected officials
- MassRIDES
- Safe Routes to School

### At Your School
- Superintendent, principal, teachers, and administrators
- Parent Teacher Associations
- Parents
- Crossing guard or police officer

### Nonprofits
- Environmental Groups
- MassBIKE or your local bicycle committee
- Community Advocacy or Development Groups
- Health Advocates
- WalkBoston

### Community
- Neighborhood Associations
- Neighbors and Friends
- Volunteers
One-on-one meetings – who do you know? The easiest way to begin building your Walk/Ride Day partnership is to start with the people you know working in your community’s government, schools, nonprofit organizations and businesses. Short one-on-one meetings with potential partners are a first step in connecting Walk/Ride Day to the needs and interests of these partners. These conversations do not only build partnership with that individual and the organizations that he or she represents, but will lead to useful introductions to additional potential partners.

Community events

Take your Walk/Ride Day plans on the road! Community events are an effective platform for sharing your plans for Walk/Ride Day with potential partners. This could mean reserving speaking time at your town or city’s transportation committee meeting, talking about Walk/Ride Day at the next parent teacher association gathering you attend, or setting up a table at the Earth Day event sponsored by your local environmental nonprofit.

Email introductions

You will also need to reach out to people who are not accessible through personal connections or public events. While you are building up your base of partners, short email messages based on the introduction to this toolkit are a great place to start. Tailor your message to suit your audience, for instance, highlighting that Walk/Ride Day promotes active living when reaching out to your city’s health department. Then suggest a follow-up phone call to discuss the benefits of partnership, and take the lead on making that phone call.

Step 3: Promote and emPower

You’ve laid the groundwork for launching Walk/Ride Day by gathering information about your community and your school. You’ve brought community partners together to support your
efforts. This section contains ideas for promoting monthly Walk/Ride Day events and for keeping your partners, volunteers, and participants engaged as Walk/Ride Day leaders.

**Outreach**

**Online**

Establish an online presence at the Green Streets Initiative’s website and through social media including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Find a volunteer who has the time and internet savvy to post regular updates to other online platforms.

**Media**

Approach traditional media in your community with story angles that connect to current issues, such as reducing air pollution, keeping children safe or preventing obesity. Personal stories about participants, described more below, are a way to lend a human-interest angle to Walk/Ride Day and are often easy to pitch to busy reporters. For extra insurance that your story will get picked up by local media, make sure you’ve already gathered the names and numbers of people that the reporter could interview to give the article more depth.

**Maps**

Work with the Green Streets Initiative and other partners to develop (or secure) a community map that includes important bicycling, walking and public transit information. This will help your parents and students identify the safest routes for traveling school.

**Events**

**Visibility**

Ensure that event signage is visible, prominent and cohesive. Your
Walk/Ride Day events themselves are likely one of the best ways to build visibility and introduce Walk/Ride Day to new participants. Even kids can take part in the promotions by making signs. A Walk/Ride Day logo is available from the Green Streets Initiative to incorporate into your signage and materials.

Themes

Organize your Walk/Ride Day events around themes that change with the season and connect to other active transportation, environmental and health events. Related events provide an opportunity to focus on different modes of active and alternative transportation, such as connecting your event to International Walk to School Day, Bike Month or Massachusetts Walk to School Week in May.

Build Community

Tell Stories

Celebrate Walk/Ride Day participants, volunteers and sponsors by telling their stories. Feature a rotating lineup of individual stories in your email communications and on the Green Streets Initiative’s website. This is a personal and effective way to highlight the contributions of individuals, and also to inspire others to join in. Better yet, encourage participants to tell their own stories on shared online platforms and at events!

Finally...

all Walk/Ride Day participants are part of a larger community promoting and engaging in active and alternative transportation. Look for opportunities to tie your Walk/Ride Day events into other alternative transportation, health and environmental events happening locally, regionally and nationally. If your town opens a new pedestrian path, you could help to coordinate opening day with your Walk/Ride Day program. Together, these efforts build up

Communication and Outreach Resources (continued)

Nonprofit Technology Network: http://www.nten.org/. Full of accessible tips and tools, NTEN’s website is focused around effectively using new media for nonprofit communications.

CNN iReport: http://ireport.cnn.com/. CNN highlights the contributions of citizen reporters. This could be a place to try out reporting about your Walk/Ride Day event. It's also a good resource to see how different people tell short, interesting stories about a wide variety of topics.
support of active and alternative transportation beyond Walk/Ride Day itself.

Step 4: Program Review

Congratulations! You’ve started a successful Walk/Ride Day celebration. Once you’ve been up and running for a year, you’ll want to look at the impact, the highlights, and the challenges of your schools Walk/Ride Day. In this section, we offer options for evaluating participation in your Walk/Ride Day program.

Use the evaluation tools that you already have in place.

When you were preparing to launch Walk/Ride Day, you administered a survey to parents and students asking questions about their commuting habits and perceived barriers to using active and alternative transportation. Re-administer this survey and compare its results to your original survey. Have self-reported commuting behaviors changed? Are there fewer perceived barriers to active and alternative transportation?

Use three straightforward qualitative methods to gain information and insight from Walk/Ride Day participants (and non-participants).

Interviews

Interview eight to ten parents. Conduct short interviews (20 to 30 minutes) with each individual to solicit feedback. What do they like or dislike about the program? What are their suggestions for increasing participation or improving communication? What are ways to connect Walk/Ride Day more closely with their personal and family goals and activities?

Focus Groups

Conduct two to three focus groups. Similar to the focus groups you
may have held at the program’s launch, the focus groups can be used to fine-tune your approach to Walk/Ride Day. Bring together parents, school administrators and teachers to ask specific questions about the outreach methods you’ve used and the Walk/Ride Day events you’ve held. Be sure to leave some open-ended time for suggestions as well.

**Community Meeting**

Host a community meeting. Tap into your partners’ resources by cosponsoring the meeting around an active living, environmental health or other relevant theme. The community meeting is both an opportunity to solicit feedback on Walk/Ride Day and to outreach to new participants. Be sure to have food. At the meeting, present first year results of your school’s Walk/Ride Day and create space for program feedback, especially in areas where you need support. Some areas to consider: recommendations for future events, ideas for outreach strategies, and potential new program partners.
Conclusion

We hope this toolkit has you well on your way to launching a fun and successful Walk/Ride Day at your school. The Green Streets team is always available for sharing ideas and answering questions. We’re looking forward to seeing what your Walk/Ride Day celebration looks like. Good luck and have fun!

Resources

Janie Katz-Christy, Executive Director, Green Streets Initiative
Sarah Fresco, Outreach Coordinator, Green Streets Initiative
Nicole Rioles, Green Streets Initiative Treasurer and member of Somerville Health Department

Green Streets Initiative http://www.gogreenstreets.org/
MassBike http://www.massbike.org/
MassRIDES http://www.commute.com/
Mass in Motion http://www.mass.gov/massinmotion/
Active Living by Design http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/
Cause Effective Perspective http://www.causeeffectiveperspective.net/
Ciclavia http://www.ciclavia.org/
Duck Call – Big Duck http://www.biggucknyc.com/blog
Walk Score http://www.walkscore.com/
Nudge http://nudges.org/
Nonprofit Technology Network http://www.nten.org
CNN iReport: http://ireport.cnn.com
U.S. Census http://www.census.gov/
Green Streets.
Why Join the Green Streets Initiative and Walk/Ride Day?

Walk/Ride Day is an opportunity for your business to celebrate your employees’ choice to walk, bike, ride public transit or carpool to work and anywhere else in their busy lives. Walk/Ride Day is a simple and effective way to:

- Promote low-carbon transportation choices that reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) and other emissions;
- Encourage active transportation options for all, including walking, biking and public transportation; and,
- Support cooperation between green transportation initiatives and business networks.

Walk/Ride Day is the only Boston area event celebrating multiple types of active and alternative transportation. The Cambridge-based grassroots organization Green Streets Initiative developed and launched Walk/Ride Day in 2006. Green Street’s mission is to “create safer, healthier and quieter streets and more vibrant communities for commuters and citizens of all kinds.” On Walk/Ride Day, occurring the last Friday of every month, participants join the celebration of active and alternative transportation by wearing green and “going green.”

Using active and alternative transportation once monthly might seem like a small step towards change, but it is a step towards more active, healthy and environmentally friendly living. Did you know that simply adding 15 minutes of activity to your day can prevent the yearly weight gain leading to adult obesity? Or that if one commuter in a household switches to active or alternative transportation this can reduce the household’s carbon footprint by as much as 30 percent?

With over 4,000 members, 80 businesses, 10 schools and two Boston area municipalities supporting the program, Walk/Ride Day offers a unique opportunity to try out ‘multimodal’ transportation options. With the help of this toolkit, and the support of Green
Streets, your business can promote fun, healthy, safe and environmentally friendly ways for your colleagues to get to work and around your community. Join us! Go green and have fun!

Janie Katz-Christy

Executive Director, The Green Streets Initiative
A Roadmap to Starting Walk/Ride Day

This toolkit provides ideas, resources and tools to get your business on the (multimodal) road to success. We’ve broken down the process of starting Walk/Ride Day at your business into four main steps: Prepare, Partner Up, Promote and emPower, and Program Review.

Contents

Step 1: Prepare

Where do employees live and how do they travel to work?
How is your community laid out physically?
What are non-physical barriers to active transportation?

Step 2: Partner Up

Potential Partner Descriptions
Tips for Approaching Potential Partners

Step 3. Promote and emPower

Outreach and Engagement
Event Planning and Implementation
Building Your Business’ Walk/Ride Day Community

Step 4. Program Review

Use Existing Evaluation Tools
Re-administer your survey
Use Three Simple Qualitative Methods
Participant Interviews
Focus Groups
Community Meeting

Resources
Step 1: Prepare

By taking some time to understand the lay of the land in the community where you’re located, you will be better prepared to build a successful Walk/Ride Day celebration from the ground up. Where do your business’ employees live? How do they travel? How is your community laid out physically? Are there barriers to active and alternative transportation? Answering these questions at the start of your Walk/Ride Day program will help you tailor outreach and events to meet the needs of your colleagues. It will also help you to identify and describe the impacts that Walk/Ride Day has had on your company’s commuting patterns once you launch your program.

Where do employees live and how do they travel to work?

If a large proportion of your colleagues are already getting to work by active or alternative transportation, you have built in allies in launching your Walk/Ride Day program. If your community has an underutilized bus system, on the other hand, your local transit authority may be open to partnering on a project like Walk/Ride Day that encourages people to check out public transportation.

To get an idea of commuting patterns in your community, in comparison to what your colleagues are doing, the Census (www.census.gov) is a useful starting point. Walk/Ride Day partner NuRide also collects data on commuting patterns. Contact Green Streets to see if the data is available for your community. You’ll also want to administer a survey their commuting habits, either through the mail or online. Two samples from the Massachusetts Rideshare program are attached, for use or inspiration.

How is your community laid out physically?

The built environment has an impact on how people travel. It is important to consider the physical infrastructure of your community:
both transportation features like major roads, public transportation, bike lanes, sidewalks, as well as the location of amenities like business centers, parks, squares and schools. A major highway that bisects your town or the lack of even sidewalks and good lighting present real barriers to engaging in active and alternative transportation.

You can build up your understanding of pluses and minuses of your community’s physical environment through a quick review on Google Maps (http://maps.google.com/) and by a biking or walking assessment. Pedestrian or bicycle assessments look at the infrastructure supporting these modes of transportation such as sidewalks, crossing barriers, signage and lighting. Kansas City offers some great tips for doing a neighborhood walkability survey: http://ww4.kcmo.org/planning.nsf/plnpres/walkability?opendocument. Walkscore.com also provides a fantastic service, providing a score for walkability for any address. The score is based on proximity to services such as grocery stores, schools, and parks. In addition to scores for individual addresses, Walkscore produces scores for select cities, based on an average of addresses. MassBike (http://www.massbike.org/services/bikeability-assessment/) also conducts assessments of bike-ability for communities throughout Massachusetts. Finally, your town or city planning department likely has detailed physical infrastructure information available, either at their offices or online.

What are non-physical barriers to active and alternative transportation?

Your colleagues will have individual perspectives on engaging in active and alternative transportation, informed by the built environment and the transportation habits of those around them. Take some time to better understand their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors by conducting a company-wide survey or through hosting focus groups that engage targeted groups of colleagues, perhaps several that already use alternative transportation and another groups of several that don’t. The survey discussed above
could ask questions about both commuting patterns and attitudes. Attached is a model for conducting a focus group, along with suggested questions.

Now that you’ve gotten to know your community, its physical infrastructure and its commuting patterns better, it’s time to build up your Walk/Ride Day partnerships.

Step 2: Partner Up

There are natural Walk/Ride Day allies in every community. We suggest reaching out to these partners early on in your company’s Walk/Ride Day program development so they can support and inform your work. In this section, we suggest several types of partnerships to pursue. Your Walk/Ride Day may not initially engage all of these partners, but they each offer resources and perspectives that can contribute to a successful program.

Potential Walk/Ride Day Partners

Government

Your municipal government can be a strong set of allies for launching a Walk/Ride Day program. Key local government partners are very helpful in getting the word out, connecting your company’s Walk/Ride Day to city initiatives in health or transportation. Consider reaching out to see what’s happening in your community’s Planning, Health, Communications and Transportation Departments; also consider contacting the Mayor’s office, Select Board Members, City Councilors, and possibly even your state representatives.

Nonprofits

Your community is probably home to several nonprofits working on active living, health and alternative transportation issues. Whether these nonprofits are grassroots organizing efforts on

Government

- Mayor’s Office, city councilors, and elected officials
- MassRIDES
- Safe Routes to School

At Your School

- Superintendent, principal, teachers, and administrators
- Parent Teacher Associations
- Parents
- Crossing guard or police officer

Nonprofits

- Environmental Groups
- MassBIKE or your local bicycle committee
- Community Advocacy or Development Groups
- Health Advocates
- WalkBoston

Community

- Neighborhood Associations
- Neighbors and Friends
- Volunteers
the neighborhood level or larger nonprofits with regional reach, consider them all potential Walk/Ride Day partners. These groups are likely looking for opportunities to engage with your colleagues. For example, Green Streets’ partner organization, MassBike offers materials and classes on bicycle safety. You could host classes like this onsite on Walk/Ride Day. Some nonprofit groups to consider first: environmental groups, bicycle clubs, and health advocacy groups.

**Businesses**

Local businesses are essential to Walk/Ride Day success. Incentives from small business partners encourage broad participation and a sense of reward for participants. Toscanini’s Ice Cream in Cambridge gives away small ice cream cones on Walk/Ride Day, an example of a wildly popular incentive for active commuters. Check to see what businesses in your community are already involved in Walk/Ride Day. You may also want to reach out to local businesses that are popular with your colleagues to see if they want to offer Walk/Ride Day incentives as well. The Green Streets Initiative has sponsorship packages and information sheets available for engaging new retail partners.

Additionally, other large employers in your community are a great place to start some friendly competition. Green Streets is developing a model for business competitions to determine most miles traveled via alternative transportation, largest percentage of participants and other metrics. See which other companies in your community are involved.

**Committee**

Establish a working committee of colleagues who are already commuting actively, or who are interested in starting. Having a small core of dedicated volunteers will make your job easier. Think about involving individuals from several parts of your company to leverage their expertise and reach, for instance, someone from

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**Communication and Outreach Resources**

Duck Call: [http://www.bigducknyc.com/blog/](http://www.bigducknyc.com/blog/). A project of Big Duck, an innovative nonprofit communications firm, the Duck Call is a resource for generating new, fun and effective communications ideas.

Nudge: [http://nudges.org/](http://nudges.org/). A blog from the authors of the book Nudge that offers insight into social marketing strategies for improving decisions about health, wealth and happiness.

Active Living by Design: [http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/). Covering a successful five-step campaign that promotes active living in many communities across the U.S., this website is a resource for practical and inspiring outreach and promotional ideas.
HR, someone from communications, someone from environmental health and safety.

Approaching Potential Partners

Who do you know? The easiest way to begin building your Walk/Ride Day partnership is to start with the people you know. Short one-on-one meetings with potential partners are a first step in connecting your business’ Walk/Ride Day to the needs and interests of these partners. These conversations do not only build partnership with that individual and the organizations that he or she represents, but will lead to useful introductions to additional potential partners.

Community events

Take your Walk/Ride Day plans on the road! Community events are an effective platform for sharing your plans for Walk/Ride Day with potential partners. This could mean reserving speaking time at your town or city’s transportation committee meeting or connecting with your local Chamber of Commerce.

Email introductions

While you are building up your base of partners, short email messages based on the introduction to this toolkit are a great place to start. Tailor your message to suit your audience, for instance, highlighting that Walk/Ride Day promotes active living when reaching out to your city’s health department. Then suggest a follow-up phone call to discuss the benefits of partnership, and take the lead on making that phone call.

Communication and Outreach Resources (continued)


CNN iReport: [http://ireport.cnn.com/](http://ireport.cnn.com/). CNN highlights the contributions of citizen reporters. This could be a place to try out reporting about your Walk/Ride Day event. It’s also a good resource to see how different people tell short, interesting stories about a wide variety of topics.
Step 3: Promote and emPower

You’ve laid the groundwork for launching your Walk/Ride Day program by gathering information about your colleagues and community, and you’ve connected with community partners to support your efforts. This section contains ideas for promoting monthly Walk/Ride Day events and for engaging volunteers and participants over time.

Outreach

Online

Establish an online presence at the Green Streets Initiative’s website and through social media including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Participating businesses have access to dedicated space on the Green Streets website, where you can post the important aspects of your program including partners, retailers offering incentives, and information about upcoming events. Find a volunteer who has the time and internet savvy to post regular updates to other online platforms and encourage other participants to post their thoughts as well. Walk/Ride Day participating Millennium Pharmaceuticals has a small team of volunteers that send out monthly Walk/Ride Day reminders and tips through the company email listserv.

Media

Want to highlight how your business is promoting alternative transportation? Approach traditional media in your community with story angles that connect to current issues, such as reducing air pollution, shopping local or preventing obesity. Personal stories about participants, described more below, are a way to lend a human-interest angle to Walk/Ride Day and are often easy to pitch to busy reporters. For extra insurance that your story will get picked up by local media, make sure you’ve already gathered the names and numbers of people that the reporter could interview to give the
article more depth.

Maps

Work with the Green Streets Initiative and other partners to develop (or secure) a community map that includes the location of businesses offering incentives, and important bicycling, walking and public transit information. This will help your colleagues identify where they can take advantage of incentives, and point out the safest routes for traveling by bicycle.

Events

Visibility

Ensure that event signage is visible, prominent and cohesive. Your Walk/Ride Day events themselves are likely one of the best ways to build visibility and introduce Walk/Ride Day to new participants. A Walk/Ride Day logo is available from the Green Streets Initiative to incorporate into your signage and materials.

Themes

Organize your Walk/Ride Day events around themes that change with the season and connect to other active transportation, environmental and health events. Seasonal events could include an event that includes free kayaking lessons during July, or an event that includes hot chocolate and a talk on winter cycling and walking safety in January. Related events provide an opportunity to focus on different modes of active and alternative transportation, such as connecting your May event to National Bike Month.

Food

Provide food, beverages and other small giveaways at events. This gives participants another reason to mix and mingle at Walk/Ride Day events, staying longer and getting to know each other
and your partners. Partner organizations, both organizational and retail sponsors, are often happy to donate food and drink once a year, especially if their support is shared through promotion before, during and after the event.

**Partnership**

Use Walk/Ride Day events as an opportunity to bring partners together to share their work with participants and with each other. Partners will appreciate the opportunity that Walk/Ride Day provides for tabling and connecting with community members. Aim to have a diverse representation of partners at your events and encourage them to do something beyond tabling, such as healthy cooking demonstrations or free bike repair lessons.

**Building Community**

**Tell Stories**

Celebrate Walk/Ride Day participants, volunteers and sponsors by telling their stories. Feature a rotating lineup of individual stories in your email communications and on the Green Streets Initiative’s website. This is a personal and effective way to highlight the contributions of individuals, and also to inspire others to join in. Better yet, encourage participants to tell their own stories on shared online platforms and at events!

**Get Competitive**

Consider setting up a little friendly competition amongst Walk/Ride Day participants, either within your company or with another business. You could compete against another business to achieve the highest participation rates. Colleagues could compete to see who uses the most bus lines in your community in one year, similar to the “10 in 2010” competition set up by Cambridge Walk/Ride Day, or everyone could track cumulative miles traveled by bicycle.
Finally…

all Walk/Ride Day participants are part of a larger community promoting and engaging in active and alternative transportation. Look for opportunities to tie your Walk/Ride Day events into other alternative transportation, health and environmental events happening locally, regionally and nationally. During May, bike month nationally, you could offer a bicycle safety or repair workshop at your event. If your town opens a new pedestrian path, you could help to coordinate opening day with your Walk/Ride Day program. Together, these efforts build up support of active and alternative transportation beyond Walk/Ride Day itself.

Step 4: Program Review

Congratulations! You’ve started a successful Walk/Ride Day celebration. Once you’ve been up and running for a year, you’ll want to look at the impact, the highlights, and the challenges of your company’s Walk/Ride Day. In this section, we offer options for evaluating participation in your Walk/Ride Day program.

Use the evaluation tools that you already have in place.

When you were preparing to launch Walk/Ride Day, you administered a survey to employees asking questions about their commuting habits and perceived barriers to using active and alternative transportation. Re-administer this survey and compare its results to your original survey. Have self-reported commuting behaviors changed? Are there fewer perceived barriers to active and alternative transportation?

Use three straightforward qualitative methods to gain information and insight from Walk/Ride Day participants (and non-participants).

Interviews
Interview eight to ten participants. Conduct short interviews (20 to 30 minutes) with each individual to solicit feedback. What do they like or dislike about the program? What are their suggestions for increasing participation or improving communication? What are ways to connect Walk/Ride Day more closely with their personal or professional goals and activities?

**Focus Groups**

Conduct two to three focus groups. Similar to the focus groups you may have held at the program’s launch, the focus groups can be used to fine-tune your approach to Walk/Ride Day. Bringing together both participants, and nonparticipants, ask specific questions about the outreach methods you’ve used and the Walk/Ride Day events you’ve held. Be sure to leave some open-ended time for suggestions as well.

**Community Meeting**

Host a meeting open to all employees. This meeting is both an opportunity to solicit feedback on Walk/Ride Day and to outreach to new participants. Be sure to have food. Present first year results of your company’s Walk/Ride Day and create space for program feedback, especially in areas where you need support. Areas to consider: recommendations for future events, ideas for outreach strategies, and potential new program partners.
Conclusion

We hope this toolkit has you well on your way to launching a fun and successful Walk/Ride Day at your business. The Green Streets team is always available for sharing ideas and answering questions. We’re looking forward to seeing what your Walk/Ride Day celebration looks like. Good luck and have fun!

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Activate Omaha: http://www.activateomaha.org/

Bikestation Long Beach: www.bikestation.org

Bike to Work Week: www.biketowork.ca

Boston Bikes: www.cityofboston.gov/bikes

Cambridge CitySmart program: http://www2.cambridgema.gov/cdd/et/citysmart/cs_newsletter.pdf

Charles River TMA: http://www.charlesrivertma.org/


Green Communities Active + Safe Routes to School, Canada: [http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/default.asp](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/default.asp)

Hub On Wheels: [www.hubonwheels.org](http://www.hubonwheels.org)


Map My Fitness: [www.mapmyfitness.com](http://www.mapmyfitness.com)

Map My Ride: [www.mapmyride.com](http://www.mapmyride.com)


Masco/Commute Works: [www.masco.org](http://www.masco.org)

Mass Rides: [http://www.commute.com](http://www.commute.com)


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San Fran Bike to work day videos


[http://www.streetfilms.org/walk-to-school-day-nyc/](http://www.streetfilms.org/walk-to-school-day-nyc/)

Street Films: [http://www.streetfilms.org/](http://www.streetfilms.org/)

TransForm: [http://transformca.org/](http://transformca.org/)


T Riders Union: [http://www.ace-ej.org/tru](http://www.ace-ej.org/tru)

TROMP: [www.trompcambridge.com](http://www.trompcambridge.com)


Focus Group Primary Goals:

We want to identify issues and themes that determine whether individuals are engaging in active and alternative transportation. What are their values, habits and behaviors as pertains to active and alternative commuting? We want to find out the values, motives and rationale for participation and/or non-participation. What are barriers or perceived barriers? What are stumbling blocks that people face? How could Walk/Ride Day help people get around these barriers? Armed with this information, we can help tailor Walk/Ride Day to better meet the needs of those who do not currently participate. This information will also inform our outreach and communication strategy for encouraging participation.

The questions below provide a framework for the focus group. The direction of discussion will be determined by responses of participants. We may decide to skip certain questions or dig in deeper based on participants’ responses.

Questions

**How do you get to work?**

- Do you always use the same mode of transportation?
- Have you considered walking, biking, carpooling, taking public transportation

**Have you ever tried active or alternative transportation before?**

- What did you like or not like about it?
- If you’ve tried active/alternative commuting, why aren’t you doing it now?

**How do you stay active in your daily life?**

- Do you go to the gym?
When do you prefer to work out?
Do you exercise outdoors? if so, how often?
Who do you work out with?

For you personally, what are some barriers to walking and riding to work?
Prompts: time, infrastructure, cost, lack of shower facilities

Discuss possible incentives

If you knew other people were walking or biking a route near your home/work, would this encourage you to join them?
Would you find bicycle or walking maps useful?
If you received discounts at local businesses and retailers would you consider participating in Walk/Ride Day once monthly?
Would you participate if you were invited to attend a free breakfast to socialize with other Walk/Ride Day community members?
Would a little friendly competition with other people, businesses, or organizations encourage you to participate in Walk/Ride Day?
Would you like to be able to track your participation: mileage or number of times?
Would incorporating Walk/Ride Day into your exercise routine be motivational?
What would you suggest as incentives for participation in Walk/Ride Day?

When and how would you prefer to be reminded about Walk/Ride Day events and/or active commuting in general?

Who would make good spokespeople for Walk/Ride Day and active/alternative transport in this community?
What ways would you like to hear about it?
Prompts: email, text message, word of mouth, signage at work

Is there anything else you’d like to share with us as promoters of Walk/Ride Day?
Appendix C  GIS Methodology

Our GIS method is not intended to provide a definitive order of cities or schools for the expansion of Walk/Ride Day. Instead, our method is intended to help Green Streets ask what barriers and opportunities each community poses. Below you will find a detailed explanation for how we went about our analysis.

Cities:

To evaluate the suitability for Walk/Ride Day in cities around the Boston area, a GIS analysis of the following factors was conducted:

- Sidewalk coverage (from MassDOT street data)
- Presence of active bicycle committees and walking clubs (from MassBike and MA Department of Public Health)
- Walkscore (from Walkscore.com)
- Coverage by frequent bus service (from MBTA service data)
- Coverage by basic bus service (from MBTA service data)
- Current commuting mode share (from the 2000 US Census)

Each of these factors was measured for each of the thirteen towns in our study area. Those measurements were converted into rankings, which were weighted and combined into an overall metric. More detail on each factor is below:

**Sidewalk Coverage**

MassDOT includes fields in its streets dataset for the width of sidewalks on the each side of every street. This allows the researcher to distinguish which streets have sidewalks on one side, which on both sides, and which streets have no sidewalks at all (sidewalks with a width of zero). The two fields were added together for each street, and for each town in the study area, an average value was calculated. This metric simultaneously measures sidewalk width in each town, and, because streets without sidewalks lower the average for their town, it also measures a town’s sidewalk coverage. Sidewalks of about five feet in width are a basic standard, and sidewalks over ten feet in width tend to provide a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians. The averages for each town were ranked and converted into a 1 – 5 scale.

**Active groups**

MassBike’s Metro Boston chapter helps establish and support municipal bicycle committees, and keeps a list of them on its website. Towns were given a score of one if they had a committee, and a score of zero if they did not. For walking clubs, the Massachusetts
Department of Public Health keeps a list through its “Keep Moving” program. These clubs cater mostly to older adults, but as that demographic is particularly vulnerable to a lack of pedestrian support, the metric was deemed relevant. A score of zero was given to towns without walking clubs, a score of one was given to those with one club meeting one or two times a week, and a score of two was given to those with multiple walking clubs or one club meeting more than two times per week. Finally, the bicycle committee score and the walking club score were added together to create one score for “active groups”. These scores ranged from 0 – 3.

Walkscore

Walkscore.com provides a fantastic service, providing for any address a score for walkability. The score is based on proximity to services such as grocery stores, schools, and parks. In addition to scores for individual addresses, Walkscore produces scores for select cities, based on an average of addresses. Such city-wide scores were available for nine of the thirteen cities in our study area. For the other four cities (Arlington, Belmont, Brookline, and Winthrop), we ran scores for ten addresses distributed evenly throughout the towns. Those ten scores were averaged into estimates of the city-wide scores for those towns. The thirteen scores were ranked and converted to a 1 – 5 scale.

Bus Coverage

The two metrics for bus coverage are based on data from the MBTA’s 2009 “Blue Book”, the report which publishes data about many different aspects of T service. The information used for both of these metrics was in a chart of every bus route with its numbers of vehicles in operation and “headway” for each time of the week. Headway is an average measurement of how long one would have to wait at a stop between one bus and the next bus on the same route. The MBTA considers routes with headways under 10 minutes to be “walk-up” routes, where passengers can trust that

Fig 34: City Rankings

1. Boston: 41.5
2. Chelsea: 39.5
3. Cambridge: 39
4. Somerville: 38.5
5. East Boston: 33.5
6. Brookline: 28
7. Everett: 26
8. Malden: 26
9. Watertown: 25
10. Medford: 21
11. Winthrop: 20
12. Arlington: 17.5
13. Revere: 16.5
14. Belmont: 13
they will not need to wait long for a bus. Routes falling under this category for morning and evening rush hours were considered “key” routes for the purposes of this study. To evaluate this, headways were converted to a measurement of “buses per hour”. Routes with six or more buses per hour were considered “key”.

“Basic” service in this study was determined to consist of routes with at least one bus per hour during off-peak hours and at least one bus per hour during the Saturday peak period. While this may seem like a low standard for bus service, a number of MBTA bus routes did not qualify as “basic” service by this metric.

For both key and basic bus routes, a quarter-mile buffer was created. The towns in the study area were then clipped to these buffers, to determine the area of each town within walking distance of each kind of route. By comparing this coverage area with the total area of a town, a percentage was produced. For both key and basic service, these town coverage percentages were ranked. Perhaps surprisingly, the ranking was substantially different for the two metrics. For example, Arlington ranked high on the key service metric, due to the 77 bus running the length of the city through its middle, but low on the basic service metric due to few other basic bus routes passing through the city. The ranking of the percentage coverage was converted to a 1 – 5 scale for each service level.

**Commuting Mode Share**

The US Census asks respondents questions about how they get to work, and this data was gathered for each town in our study area. Until recently, this data was gathered in the long-form Census, conducted every ten years. Now that part of the Census is done on a rolling
basis through the American Community Survey (ACS). However, for this study we used 2000 data, still from the long-form Census, because the most recent ACS data is not available yet. Based on the percentage of workers driving alone to work, we ranked each town in our study area. Analyzing those commuters driving alone was useful because the different modes of alternative transportation were broken down individually, and we were more interested in the aggregate of commuters not driving alone. These rankings were converted to a 1 – 5 scale, with 5 representing those with the lowest percentage of commuters driving alone.

**Aggregate**

The above metrics were weighted according to the following scale: Active Organizations and Basic Bus Service were given a weight
of 1, Walkscore and Mode Share were given a weight of 1.5, and Key Bus Service and Sidewalk Coverage were given a weight of 2. It should be noted, however, that a preliminary aggregation which gave all factors equal weight produced a nearly identical total ranking. The final ratings are listed in Figure 34.

Schools

The first step in the analysis was to determine the area within a reasonable walking or biking distance from each school. The literature does not provide a general guideline for how far middle school aged kids will walk and bike to school. The unique physical and social context of every school makes it impossible to generalize across the Boston area; therefore, we chose a conservative distance of a half-mile along the street network excluding highways. Figure 35 shows the half-mile area in purple surrounding a middle school in Medford.

The second step was to look at the size of the school age population that lives within the half-mile area surrounding the school. We looked at the 11 to 14 year-old population based on 2000 Census Block data projected to 2011. We then extended the analysis to every public middle school in the Boston area. The Figure 36 shows the individual schools as purple dots. The size of the dot is relative to the size of the projected 11 to 14 year-old populations within a half-mile along the street network of the closest school.

The map is also overlaid with the middle schools in the Boston area that have Safe Routes to School programming. According to this analysis SRTS is in schools whose half-mile school age population varies in size.
Memorandum of Understanding between Tufts University Field Projects Team No. 8 and City of Somerville Health Department: Green Streets Initiative

I. Introduction

Project #8

Project title: Regionalizing Walk/Ride Days in Greater Boston Communities

Client: Nicole Rioles, City of Somerville Health Department: Green Streets Initiative

This Memorandum of Understanding (the “MOU”) summarizes the scope of work, work product(s) and deliverables, timeline, work processes and methods, and lines of authority, supervision and communication relating to the Field Project identified above (the “Project”), as agreed to between (i) the UEP graduate students enrolled in the Field Projects and Planning course (UEP-255) (the “Course”) offered by the Tufts University Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning (“UEP”) who are identified in Paragraph II(1) below (the “Field Projects Team”); (ii) Nicole Rioles, City of Somerville Health Department, further identified in Paragraph II(2) below (the “Client”); and (iii) UEP, as represented by a Tufts faculty member directly involved in teaching the Course during the spring 2011 semester.

II. Specific Provisions

(1) The Field Projects Team working on the Project consists of the following individuals:
1. Ian Adelman  email: adelman19@gmail.com
2. Jaclyn DeVore  email: jaclyn.devore@gmail.com
3. Emily Earle  email: emily.e.earle@gmail.com
4. Alex Krogh-Grabbe  email: alexkg@alexkg.com
5. Danilo Morales  email: danilo.fromtheandes@gmail.com

(2) The Client’s contact information is as follows:

Client name: City of Somerville Health Department: Green Streets Initiative
Key contact/supervisor: Nicole Rioles
Email address: nrioles@somervillema.gov
Telephone number: (617) 625-6600 x 2414
FAX number: (617) 625-2519
Address: City of Somerville
City Hall Annex
Health Department
50 Evergreen Avenue
Somerville, MA 02145
Web site: http://www.gogreenstreets.org/

(3) The goals of the Project are:
- Promote no-/low-carbon transportation choices that reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) and other emissions;
- Encourage active transportation options for all, including walking, biking and public transportation;
- Support cooperation between green transportation initiatives and business networks;
- Demonstrate to communities that the Walk/Ride Days program is a simple and effective tool to achieve these goals;
- Evaluate the current Green Streets Initiative in order to replicate its successes;
- Develop a planning document to be used by the GSI in expanding its reach to new communities, businesses, schools and other participants;
- Update GSI’s online presence to reflect the dynamism of the program;
- Develop/identify government agency/official partnerships;
Broaden and deepen participation from underrepresented communities;

(4) The methods and processes through which the Field Projects Team intends to achieve this goal/these goals is/are:

- Literature review
- Review of similar programs and technical tools (i.e. data collection systems)
- Interviews with key stakeholders, stakeholder groups and key organizers
- Surveys and/or focus groups
- GIS mapping/commuting data collection

(5) The work products and deliverables of the Project are (this includes any additional presentations for the client):

- Final presentation to client and Field Project class
- Planning Document
- Planning document “modules” for businesses, schools, communities
- Updated Green Streets Initiative website
- Short video summarizing report (30 - 60 seconds)

(6) The anticipated Project timeline (with dates anticipated for key deliverables) is:

Final presentation – May 3, 2011 (Tentative)
Planning Document – May 6, 2011
Planning Document “Modules” (in English & Spanish) – May 6, 2011
Updated Green Streets Initiative Website (in English & Spanish) – May 6, 2011
Presenting Walk/Ride Days Video (in English & Spanish) – May 6, 2011
(7) The lines of authority, supervision and communication between the Client and the Field Projects Team are (or will be determined as follows):

Team member Alex Krogh-Grabbe will act as the primary point of contact between Nicole Rioles at the City of Somerville Health Department and the Green Streets Initiative field project team. The team will meet regularly (e.g., weekly) with the client to access necessary data and information, problem shoot, and share progress about research, solutions and development of project deliverables.

(8) The understanding with regard to payment/reimbursement by the client to the Field Projects Team of any Project-related expenses is:

The Green Streets team will retain receipts for all expenses incurred.
III. Additional Representations and Understandings

A. The Field Projects Team is undertaking the Course and the Project for academic credit and therefore compensation (other than reimbursement of Project-related expenses) may not be provided to team members.

B. Because the Course and the Project itself are part of an academic program, it is understood that the final work product and deliverables of the Project (the “Work Product”) – either in whole or in part – may and most likely will be shared with others inside and beyond the Tufts community. This may include, without limitation, the distribution of the Work Product to other students, faculty and staff, release to community groups or public agencies, general publication, and posting on the Web. Tufts University and the Field Projects Team may seek and secure grant funds or similar payment to defray the cost of any such distribution or publication. It is expected that any issues involving Client confidentiality or proprietary information that may arise in connection with a Project will be narrow ones that can be resolved as early in the semester as possible by discussion among the Client, the Field Projects Team and a Tufts instructor directly responsible for the Course (or his or her designee).

C. If the client wishes to revise or alter the text of the final document, the client will confer with the project team before doing so.

D. It is understood that this Project may require the approval (either through full review or by exemption) of the Tufts University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This process is not expected to interfere with timely completion of the project.
Appendix E  IRB Approval

Tufts University
Office of the Vice Provost
Social, Behavioral, and Educational Research
Institutional Review Board
FWA00002063

Re: IRB Study # 1102038
Title: Regionalizing Walk/Ride Days
PI: Jaclyn DeVore
Co-Investigator(s): Ian Adelman
Faculty Advisor: Rusty Russell
IRB Review Date: 2/23/2011

February 24, 2011

Dear Jaclyn,

Your Application for Exempt Status for the above referenced study has been reviewed. This study qualifies as exempt from review under the following federal guidelines:

Exempt Categories 2 and 4 as defined in 45 CFR 46.101 (b). For complete details please visit the United States Department of Health and Human Services Office (DHHS) for Human Research Protections (OHRP) website at: http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm#46.101

Please know that this exemption does not relieve the investigator of any responsibilities relating to the research subjects; equal care must still be taken to ensure that subjects experience no harm to themselves or to their legitimate interests.

Furthermore research should be conducted in accordance with the ethical principles, (i) Respect for Persons, (ii) Beneficence, and (iii) Justice as outlined in the Belmont Report.

Any changes to the protocol or study materials that might affect the exempt status must be referred to the Office of the IRB for guidance. Depending on the changes, you may be required to apply for either expedited or full review.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of the IRB at (617) 627-3417.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Wakeford, Ph.D.
IRB Administrator