



Making it Better  
CREATING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

## Safe Routes to School Gets More Kids Biking and Walking



### Did You Know?

*An average of 18% of MPS students live within the “walk zone” – that’s within a distance considered easily walkable.*

### Overview

The Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) has worked closely with the Minneapolis Public School (MPS) system for many years to encourage Safe Routes to School efforts that increase the number of students biking and walking to and from school.

As part of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative CPPW), MPS provided intensive technical assistance to ten schools (eight elementary, one middle, and one high school) to help them assess their existing Safe Routes practices and policies and develop a customized plan for increasing biking and walking opportunities for students during the 2011-2012 school year. Through CPPW funding, MPS was also able to purchase two “bike fleets” (a set of 15 bikes, helmets, locks, and basic maintenance tools) plus safety vests, stop paddles, and other supplies to support the newly adopted Safe Routes activities at various school sites.

### Results and Accomplishments

Schools implemented various goals from their customized plans during the 2011-2012 school year including:

- Starting walking school buses.

- Planning a bike/walk to school day (*nearly 1,000 students from these ten schools participated in national Bike Walk to School Day in May 2012*).
- Starting or expanding a school safety patrol.
- Increasing the network of parent and staff champions for Safe Routes to School.
- Developing primary walking and biking route maps.
- Planning a bike safety event.
- Assessing school arrival and dismissals to identify ways to improve safety and incorporate Safe Routes to School principles.

Bike fleets were awarded to a group of three collaborating schools in North Minneapolis as well as two collaborating schools in Northeast Minneapolis. These schools will use the bike fleets during the school day as a non-food reward for students, for bike safety trainings, and as part of after-school programs and field trips. During the 2012-2013 school year, these schools will also use the bikes to support their participation in a bike/pedestrian curriculum pilot run by the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

### Synergies

Throughout the project, MDHFS intentionally connected Safe Routes to School efforts with other CPPW-funded biking and walking initiatives including the Venture North bike walk center, the Bike Walk Move media campaign, and the Making it Better media campaign. As a result, Safe Routes to School became a key component in a network of physical activity resources available to community residents in Minneapolis.

### Future Plans

MDHFS will continue to partner with MPS to expand existing Safe Routes to School initiatives across the city and to support the establishment of new activities that encourage more students to bike and walk before, during, and after the school day.

For additional Safe Routes to School reports and resources, please visit:

[http://www.minneapolismn.gov/health/cppw/dhfs\\_saferoutes](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/health/cppw/dhfs_saferoutes)

For more information, contact:

Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support

250 South 4th Street, Room 510

Minneapolis, MN 55415

[www.minneapolismn.gov/dhfs](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/dhfs)

612-673-2301

*Made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

*Sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Health.*

