

# Neighborhood Walk-about and Bike-about

Neighborhood walk-about and bike-about, also sometimes called "Walkability" or "Bikeability" surveys, are environment analysis exercises used in the creation and program design/development stages of many Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs. These walking/biking surveys are conducted to: raise awareness of the issues and conditions that pedestrians and bicyclists are facing while walking and bicycling; to gain support for the changes to the built environment that are needed; and to gather essential information that will be used to help create school route maps. Walk-about and bike-about seek to identify and document the traffic and safety issues near schools, as well as seeking to identify potential short and long-term solutions to deal with these safety issues.

*Participants of Tucson Brichta Elementary School's neighborhood walk-about familiarize themselves with the school zone.*



Neighborhood or school zone walk-about and bike-about are organized by the community or school and may involve local policymakers, traffic engineers and planners, law enforcement, safety professionals, school district personnel, school nurses, parents, students, school principals and local media. The group typically meets at the school, observes the school activities during drop-off and pick-up time, and tours the school zone, plus the walking and bicycling routes to the school. Along the way, safety concerns are documented and photographed for later discussion. **Active &**

**Safe Routes to School** (<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/default.asp>) offers a list of items to consider during a walk-about. Participants also can complete easy to use checklists such as the **Walkability Checklist** (<http://drusilla.hsrb.unc.edu/cms/downloads/walkabilitychecklist.pdf>) and **Bikeability Checklist** (<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pdf/bikabilitychecklist.pdf>) while conducting the walk-about or bike-about.

After the tour, the group reconvenes at the school to discuss their findings and potential short and long term solutions to address the problems they encountered. Participants leave the meeting with a clear plan of action, including responsibilities for each person and follow-up dates. Results of the walk-about and bike-about are communicated to the school community through newsletters or other channels. A walk-about and bike-about can also be conducted by teachers with students as a hands-on learning experience about their community.

In 2008, the Yavapai-Apache Nation conducted walkability surveys of both the Middle Verde and Clarkdale parcels of its reservation as part of the SRTS Planning Assistance Program grant it received from the Arizona Department of Transportation with great success. Results of the surveys were compiled into a School Route/Travel Plan. The School Route/Travel Plan and walk-about results were incorporated into the Nation's Safe Routes to School Cycle Three infrastructure grant application and program design. To request a copy of the Yavapai-Apache Nation's School Route/Travel Plan, or to learn more about the Nation's Safe Routes to School program development process, please contact Mr. Robert Mills, Yavapai-Apache Nation Grants and Contracts Manager, at 928.649.7103 or [rmills@yan-tribe.org](mailto:rmills@yan-tribe.org).

*Information for this brief originated from the SRTS Guide found at: [http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/engineering/neighborhood\\_walkabouts\\_and\\_bikeabouts.cfm](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/engineering/neighborhood_walkabouts_and_bikeabouts.cfm) on the National Center for Safe Routes to School's web site.*