



## PHOENIX - SAFEST ROUTE TO SCHOOL WALKING PLAN GUIDELINES

Phoenix considers pedestrian and bicyclist safety to be very important. Studies have shown that school age pedestrians and bicyclists are at a greater risk while in traffic. Because of this, Phoenix recommends and is willing to provide support for a new service that works with school officials and parents to develop a walk to school plan for elementary students. The purpose of a 'safest walking plan' is to prepare a suggested walking route that is based on input from parents, school officials, and City staff. The recommended walking plan is also used to identify any deficiencies along the routes, and is used to evaluate the need for school traffic control and the placement of adult crossing guards and sidewalk monitors.

The safest route plan should encourage more children to walk and ride their bikes in a safe environment, which is a healthy activity. It should also help to minimize the number of vehicles at schools during arrival and dismissal times and the traffic congestion that results. To be successful, the input and momentum needs to come from parents and school officials. With nearly 400 schools in Phoenix, this program is offered on a 'first come – first serve' basis for those schools willing to put forth the effort in working on the plan having the highest priority.

The process to identify recommended 'safe walking routes' is a cooperative effort among parents, school officials, and City staff. It requires:

### School to Provide

- Walking attendance boundary
- Parent/School volunteers
- Meeting place at the school

### City to Provide:

- Aerial photographs for the entire area within the walking attendance boundary with all streets labeled
- Half size quarter-section maps corresponding to the aerial photographs
- AAA Safest Route to School Guide for each parent/school volunteer
- A sample 'Safest Route to School' plan
- Phoenix Safest Route to School Walking Plan guidelines (this sheet)

### Procedure

1. City staff meet with parents and school officials to discuss the purpose of a 'Safest Route to School' plan, describe how the plan is developed, and to identify a time-frame for completing the project
2. Parents and school officials review each walking route to identify traffic controls, as well as sidewalk and crossing deficiencies. Where possible, some of the deficiencies may be photographed. Each item below should be identified on the aerial photograph.
  - a. Crosswalks and crossing guard locations
  - b. STOP signs and traffic signals

- c. Missing sidewalk segments
  - d. Pot holes or broken sidewalk segments
  - e. Visibility obstructions at corners
  - f. Sidewalks blocked by bushes or tree branches or other obstacles
  - g. Wheelchair ramps needed at crosswalks
  - h. Difficult crossing locations
  - i. Other locations where traffic studies or field reviews are needed
3. Parents and school officials draw pedestrian flow lines along each street within the walking attendance boundary using the following guidelines:
    - a. Review the walking attendance boundary on the aerial photographs to verify that they are correct
    - b. Draw arrows showing the walking routes on each side of the street within walking attendance boundary. If a sidewalk does not exist, the children should be directed along a street that does have a sidewalk, when possible.
    - c. The arrows should show the direction of walking *towards* the school.
    - d. Start on the streets nearest the school and work outwards to include a route from ALL homes or apartments within the boundary.
    - e. Show where the students should cross each street. Minimize the number of crossings and crossing locations.
    - f. Utilize existing school crosswalks, crossing guards, traffic signals, and STOP signs to cross the streets.
    - g. The shortest route is not always the safest route. The goal is to identify the safest route.
  4. City staff meets with parents and school officials for a follow-up to review the preliminary 'safe route to school plan' and review sidewalk/crossing concerns.
    - a. City staff will review the traffic concerns and conduct additional studies where needed.
    - b. City staff will review the preliminary walking plan and make adjustments where necessary.
  5. City staff will prepare final 'Safest Route to School' walking plan on an 8 ½" by 11" or a legal size map, as well as an oversized copy for school display. Phoenix will keep a copy of the plan on file.
  6. School will distribute the 'Safest Route to School' plans to the parents and children and discusses the importance of pedestrian and bicycle safety.
  7. **If there is a change in the walking attendance boundary or if a new street or other development occurs within the area of the Safest Route to School Walking Plan, the school shall notify City staff and request changes to the plan.**

For further information contact:

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