

# COMPLETE STREETS

## help youth stay active

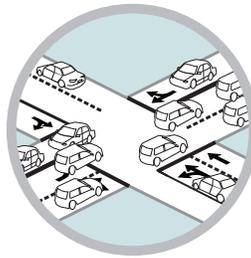
Complete Streets create a safe environment for children to walk and bike to school. However, many roads today are incomplete, resulting in a decrease in children's daily physical activity. This has, in part, led to a rise in childhood obesity and other health-related concerns.



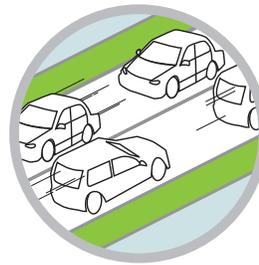
### Of parents surveyed, their worries involve:



Heavy traffic  
along route:  
**51.3%**



Intersection  
safety:  
**38.2%**



Traffic speed  
along route:  
**53.7%**



Travel distance  
of route:  
**67%**

*Improving some of the above factors could change parents' decisions about allowing their children to walk or bike to school.<sup>1</sup> While travel distance is a major concern, half of all school trips between 1/4 and 1/2 mile are taken by car or other private vehicle.<sup>9</sup>*



## BATTLING INACTIVITY & OBESITY

Fewer children are biking and walking to school than ever

- In 1969, almost 50 percent of children traveled to school on foot or by bike.
- By 2009, only 13 percent did.<sup>2</sup>

Inactivity and unhealthy weight gain puts kids at risk for diabetes, heart disease and other chronic diseases:

- For the first time in history, a generation of American children will likely live shorter lives than their parents.<sup>3</sup>
- Illinois has the 9th highest childhood obesity rate for 10-17 year olds in the nation.<sup>4</sup>
- About 34 percent of Illinois youth are obese or overweight.<sup>5</sup>
- Twenty-three percent of kids in the U.S. get less than 60 minutes of physical activity per week.
- Forty-four percent of kids in the U.S. don't attend a physical education class in an average week.<sup>6</sup>

## CALMER MORNINGS

Walking and biking is a great way to improve health, but roads are often not safe for kids:

- In the Chicago region, 7,583 children under the age of 14 were struck by motor vehicles while out walking or biking from 2006 to 2010.<sup>7</sup>
- Over 15,000 Illinois students are bused to school due to hazardous conditions.<sup>8</sup>
- Half of school trips between 1/4 and 1/2 miles are taken by private vehicle.<sup>9</sup>
- In 2009, 10 to 14 percent of traffic during the morning commute was trips to take children to school.<sup>9</sup>

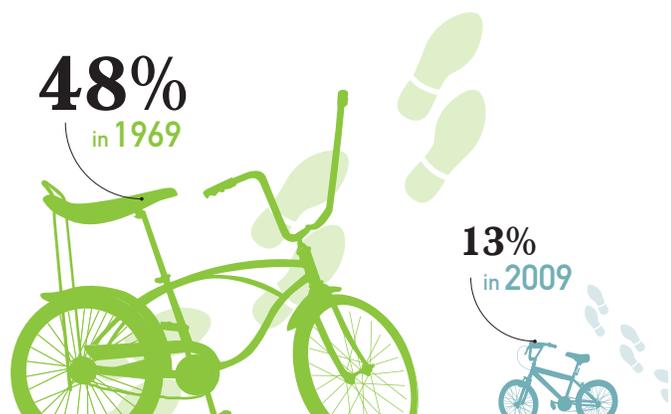
## ACTIVE KIDS LEARN MORE

Creating safe places to walk and bike will enable children to have an active and healthy lifestyle:

- In South Carolina, fifth-grade students who walk to school five days a week had 24 additional minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day than those who walked fewer than five days or traveled by car.<sup>10</sup>

Regular walking and biking ensures that children are getting daily physical activity.

- A one-half mile walk to and from school gives a child 20 minutes of physical activity per day. That meets one-third of the daily amount recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



*In 1969, 48% of children walked and biked to school. Fifty years later, that number has fallen to 13%.*

## Healthy HotSpot Initiative

The places we live, work, learn, worship, and play matter to our healthy and can have an impact on how long and how well we live. Healthy HotSpots are places in suburban Cook County that have implemented one or more proven strategies to encourage positive behaviors, or to protect the public's well-being. Learn more at [cookcountypublichealth.org/healthy-hotspot](http://cookcountypublichealth.org/healthy-hotspot).

<sup>1</sup> Zhou, Huaguo, et al. (2009). "Identifying Factors Affecting the Number of Students Walking or Biking to School." Institute of Transportation Engineers Journal, 79(10).

<sup>2</sup> Federal Highway Administration. (2009). National Household Travel Survey. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Transportation.

<sup>3</sup> Olshansky, S., et al. (2005). "A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century." New England Journal of Medicine, 352(11): 1138-1145.

<sup>4</sup> The State of Obesity. (2015). Illinois State Obesity Data, Rates, and Trends. Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Retrieved from <http://stateofobesity.org/states/il/>

<sup>5</sup> State Health Facts (2011). Percent of Children (10-17) who are Overweight or Obese. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. Retrieved from <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/overweightobese-children/>

<sup>6</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2009). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2009. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services.

<sup>7</sup> Illinois Department of Transportation. (2010). City and County Crash Summaries webpage. Retrieved from [www.dot.il.gov/trafficsafety/summaries.html](http://www.dot.il.gov/trafficsafety/summaries.html)

<sup>8</sup> Helphand, Ben, et al. (2007). School Safety Busing: Serious Safety Hazards in Cook County, 1980-2006. Chicago: Center for Neighborhood Technology. Retrieved from <http://www.cnt.org/repository/Hazard-Busing-Report.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Safe Routes to School National Partnership (2005). "What is Safe Routes to School? Background and Statistics." Retrieved from: <http://saferoutespartnership.org/resourcecenter/quick-facts>

<sup>10</sup> Sirard, John R., et al. (2005). "Physical Activity and Active Commuting to Elementary School." Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, 37(12): 2062-2069.