

WALK WITH US EL MONTE

DURFEE - THOMPSON ELEMENTARY EMERALD NECKLACE WALKING SCHOOL BUS

NON-INFRASTRUCTURE | ATP CY 1

Applicant: City of El Monte



PROJECT SUMMARY

ATP PROJECT COST: \$604,000

Walking school buses are organized groups of students who walk to and from school with adults. They have designated routes and stops where students gather or get dropped-off near their homes. These programs encourage more students to walk to school, improve community health, strengthen community ties, and address safety concerns for people walking. This Walking School Bus pilot program was at Durfee School in El Monte, California. The Project Team identified walking routes to school, trained volunteers and Route Leaders and developed reference materials, such as

program forms, signage, website, the Walk with Us El Monte Concept Plan, and a route leader hiring plan. A rigorous evaluation process was designed to understand the program's impacts through caregiver surveys and student hand tallies, as well as route tallies, route leader and volunteer participation, and focus groups. A unique component of Walk with Us El Monte was its emphasis on environmental education and connections to nature while traveling through the walking route. For more information, visit <https://www.walkelmonte.org/>

WALK WITH US EL MONTE WALKING SCHOOL BUS

Local artist painted Durfee School Walk With Us mural as a meeting place for walkers



Activities

The Project Team developed a method to determine routes for the best routes for a Walking School Bus, focused on safety and maximizing student connectivity. **They mapped six walking routes, named after local wildlife, from ½ mile to 1.12 miles** all connecting to the Emerald Necklace Recreational Trail.

Program staff created various **English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese** language materials to promote the program.

Local Route Leaders were hired by the local nonprofit Amigos de los Rios, an organization which promotes green spaces and environmental education, covering them under their insurance policy thus alleviate liability concerns.

Amigos de los Rios worked with Route Leaders to develop curricula that educated the students about environmental topics and created engaging activities to show the importance of the natural environment and conservation.

Branded materials like **hats and vests were developed to help easily identify the Route Leaders and volunteers.** Route Leaders also received a backpack with materials like umbrellas, ponchos, a first aid kit, and stickers.

Participating students measured temperatures under tree canopies and identified plants and trees along the routes.

The activities promoted students' **positive attitudes** about their natural surroundings and encouraged them to think about how they can help protect the environment.

Leading up to Earth Day, each Route competed in a **'Step Into Spring'** contest to see which group could host the most walkers. Each student received a leaf with their name on in their team's color to place on a tree each time they walked. For Route Leaders, benefits included much-need extra income for walk leaders, being able to be at work knowing their children were being picked-up and dropped off at school, getting to know neighbors, and getting daily physical activity and losing weight.



Quick Facts

6

NUMBER OF NEW WALKING ROUTES

12

NUMBER OF PAID WALKING LEADERS

68

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAILY WALKERS

153

NUMBER OF DAYS THE WALKING SCHOOL BUS OPERATED

22,398

Number of recorded student trips in the Walking School Bus



NI Elements

E DUCATION

E NCOURAGEMENT

E NGINEERING

E QUITY

E VALUATION

Outcomes & Benefits

1. Encourage more students to walk to school
2. Create a mode-shift to reduce the number of students being dropped off at school and increase the number of students walking
3. Address above-average obesity rates by aligning transportation and land use planning with health-related goals
4. Improve pedestrian safety by educating students, faculty, and caregivers about best practices for pedestrian safety
5. Foster enjoyment for walking by learning about the natural environment in their neighborhood