

Celebrate



With Us!

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Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti joins students
on Walk to School Day
More than 100 schools walking

Los Angeles, CA (October 7, 2015) – Mayor Eric Garcetti celebrated the city’s 3rd Annual Walk to School Day with students, parents and teachers from Dolores Huerta Elementary School, while locally hosted events were also underway at more than 100 other Los Angeles schools. Walk to School Day lasts throughout October to celebrate the fun and healthy benefits of walking to school and to promote traffic safety.

Walk to School Day is an encouragement activity of the City of Los Angeles Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan. Launched in 2011, the Plan set a goal of reducing fatal and severe injury collisions of children walking and bicycling on their journey to school, while increasing the number of students walking and bicycling to school. Youth (under 18) account for almost 20 percent of all people fatally or severely injured while walking and bicycling. Safe Routes emphasis on addressing safety for the city’s youth, one of the most vulnerable populations, aligns with the Los Angeles Vision Zero goal to eliminate all traffic fatalities by 2025. With the Mayor’s launch of Vision Zero in August 2015, Safe Routes investments will play an important role in helping to achieve this ambitious goal.

In addition to the dignitaries’ walk to school, the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) has installed high visibility cross walks and interim curb extensions on Maple Street at 31st and 32nd streets. The improvements focus on reducing student exposure to moving traffic. Permanent construction of these improvements will begin in 2016. In 2014, LADOT, in partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), secured \$20 million from the California Active Transportation Program to fund a mix of infrastructure improvements, school travel plans, safety education and traffic enforcement programs at Dolores Huerta and other high need schools.

“As a City, it is critical that we invest in safety improvements that slow traffic down and create safe streets around neighborhood schools for our students, teachers and families to enjoy,” says Mayor Garcetti. The Mayor was joined by LADOT General Manager, Seleta Reynolds, Councilmember Curren Price, LAUSD School Board President, Steve Zimmer and District 3 Board Member, Scott Schmerelson, Transportation Commission President Eric Eisenberg, Huerta Elementary School Principal, Susan Gutierrez, and CEO of the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, Joan Sullivan.

As part of Safe Routes data-driven approaches, LADOT has developed a prioritization method considering collision rates, the number of children living within walking and bicycling distance of each school, and equity and health indicators to target schools with highest safety needs with an emphasis on the Top 50. Huerta is one of the Top 10 schools in this analysis.

The active participation of parent and community members in grant development was instrumental to the successful award of the traffic safety project. The City is pleased to complement Huerta's academic improvements with forthcoming traffic safety improvements. "Huerta Elementary has made tremendous gains since joining the Partnership five years ago," says Joan Sullivan, Partnership for Los Angeles Schools CEO. "Thanks to our many partners, parents are more engaged and students are more excited to come to school and this year Huerta was rated the most improved elementary school in LAUSD in terms of proficiency gains in math since 2011."

The event also spotlights the continued focus of the LADOT and the LAUSD to invest in safety improvements that create calmed traffic environments around school neighborhoods. Starting this year, LADOT will also be expanding its support to schools that seek to sustain safety education with walking activities throughout the school year.

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About International Walk to School Day

- Walk to School Day was established in the United States in 1997 by the *Partnership for a Walkable America*. Canada and Great Britain already had walk to school programs in place. In 2000, these three countries joined together to create International Walk to School Day.
- In May 2006, the National Center for Safe Routes to School was established to assist communities in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bike to school. It serves as the national coordinating agency for Walk to School activities in the United States.
- Walk to School Day began as a simple idea – children and parents, school and local officials walking to school together on a designated day. It is an energizing event, reminding everyone of the simple joy of walking to school, the health benefits of regular daily activity, and the need for safe places to walk and bike. Schools focus on health, safety, physical activity and concern for the environment.
- Organizations supporting International Walk to School Day in the United States include America Walks, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Highway Administration, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the National Center for Safe Routes to School, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Safe Kids Worldwide, and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.

For additional information on Safe Routes and Vision Zero, please visit these websites:

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| Los Angeles Safe Routes to School | www.saferoutes.lacity.org |
| Los Angeles Walk to School Day | www.walktoschoolday-la.org |
| Walk to School Day in the USA | www.walkbiketoschool.org |
| National Center for Safe Routes to School | www.saferoutesinfo.org |
| City of Los Angeles Vision Zero | www.visionzero.lacity.org |

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