



October 1, 2024

The Safe Routes Partnership is very pleased to invite prospective state agencies, metropolitan planning organizations, regional planning agencies, health and public health organizations, and nonprofits to serve as the local host and presenting sponsor of the 8th Safe Routes to School National Conference, to be held sometime between April and November 2026.

We look forward to hosting the conference in a dynamic and walkable, bikeable location with strong Safe Routes to School, active transportation, and healthy communities' initiatives that can be featured during the conference.

Being in the company of hundreds of people who share goals about advancing Safe Routes to School will foster new partnerships, ideas, and projects. This synergy can be a real boost to local and state efforts, long after the conference is over. In addition, benefits of hosting the National Conference include:

- Bring national recognition to the host agency and city as leaders in Safe Routes to School
- Provide a boost to the local economy as hundreds of attendees come to your city
- Build more state and local support for your Safe Routes to School, active transportation, and healthy communities initiatives and strengthen ties with local stakeholders
- Engage the media in showcasing the importance of Safe Routes to School funding and programming in your city and state.
- Participate in inspiring teambuilding and networking opportunities amongst participants from your city, state and across the nation.

The three-day, two-night National Conference will provide an opportunity for an informative professional development and networking experience not otherwise available to people working on Safe Routes to School programs and policies.

The following pages include a list of roles and responsibilities for the local host/presenting sponsor. We invite interested agencies to submit a letter of interest by January 31, 2025. Questions about the opportunity can be submitted to marisa@saferoutespartnership.org.

We appreciate your partnership in exploring the potential for hosting the next Safe Routes to School National Conference in your state or community!

Sincerely,

Marisa Jones
Managing Director, Policy and Partnerships
Safe Routes Partnership



Request for Local Host/Presenting Sponsor of the 8th Safe Routes to School National Conference

1. Introduction

The [Safe Routes Partnership](https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/) is soliciting letters of interest from agencies, institutions, and organizations interested in the opportunity to host the 8th Safe Routes to School National Conference, to be held between April and November 2026. The purpose of the conference is to provide an opportunity for individuals and organizations interested and involved with Safe Routes to School, active transportation, and healthy community design initiatives to network, engage in educational opportunities and form partnerships to enhance their work.

2. Conference Background

The conference has been held on seven separate occasions. Most recently, the conference was held in Fort Collins, Colorado in October 2024. Additional details about past conferences are provided below:

	2007	2009	2011	2013	2016	2019	2024
Location	Dearborn, MI	Portland, OR	Minneapolis, MN	Sacramento, CA	Columbus, OH	Tampa, FL	Fort Collins, CO
Date	November 5-7, 2007	August 19-21, 2009	August 15-17, 2011	August 13-15, 2013	April 5-7, 2016	November 2019	October 22-24, 2024
Local Host	Michigan Fitness Foundation	Bicycle Transportation Alliance	Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota	Local Government Commission	Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission	Florida Department of Transportation	Colorado Department of Transportation
Number of Attendees	403	528	536	627	375	420	412
Site	Dearborn Inn	Hilton Portland	Meeting space at Minneapolis Convention Center; rooms at Hilton Garden Inn	Sheraton Grand Hotel	Hilton Columbus Downtown	Hilton Tampa Downtown	Hilton Fort Collins
Conference theme	Creating, Building and Sustaining Momentum	Two Steps Ahead	Building Connections: Schools + Streets + Communities	Building on Success—Projects, Programs, People	Intersections: Where Transportation and Health Meet	Active Paths for Equity and Health	Safe, Healthy, and JOYful: The Possibilities of our Movement



3. Attendees

Attendance at previous conferences has ranged from approximately 300 to 500. In 2024, 370 (to date) participants attended the 2024 National Conference. Targeted attendees include state Safe Routes to School coordinators and state Department of Transportation representatives, local program coordinators, engineers and planners, health and education professionals, elected officials, and community champions.

4. Scheduling Considerations

The main conference is typically held Tuesday through Thursday, with Monday and Friday set aside for pre- and post-conference activities. Past conferences have been in November, August, and April. We can work with the local host to determine the best time of year and specific dates.

5. Financial Considerations

Registration fees cover approximately two-thirds of the cost of the conference. The remaining portion is covered by sponsorships. Securing a local host/presenting sponsor commitment of at least \$65,000 (though amount may increase depending on expense of anticipated host city) would enable us to set the location for the conference and move forward with planning. We would then seek additional sponsorships from other national, state, or local government agencies and corporate, individual, and foundation donors. We are happy to brainstorm potential funding sources for the sponsorship. As an example, for the 2024 conference, the Colorado Department of Transportation set aside State Planning and Research funds to support the conference, and Safe Routes Partnership submitted a proposal in response to an event planning RFP that led to a purchase order. In 2019, the Florida Department of Transportation supported the conference by sub-granting National Highway Traffic Safety Administration funds. We worked with them to split the sponsorship fee across two separate fiscal years, and matched the sponsorship fee to specific expenses that were allowable under the grant. The local host/presenting sponsorship funds would need to be provided to Safe Routes Partnership in 2025 or 2026. We can determine an exact schedule based on mutual needs including timing of source funding availability.

6. Presenting Sponsor Benefits

Sponsorship benefits can be tailored to best meet the needs of the host. Examples of benefits that can be included as part of the package include:

- Introduction of keynote speaker
- Acknowledgement in opening remarks
- Three confirmed program sessions to showcase state and local work
- Ten complementary registrations to registrants of your choosing
- Complementary promotional tables throughout the conference in the exhibit area
- Opportunity to plan a pre- or post-conference reception, workshop, or meeting for state attendees
- Logo placement on all conference website and print materials
- Tailored communications and marketing plan including options for inclusion in social media and conference app messages during event
- Newsletter profile – individual spotlight in e-news leading up to conference, reach of ~25,000
- Opportunity to place swag or flyers in attendee bags



7. Roles of Different Partners

Safe Routes Partnership would serve as the overall conference organizer and host, overseeing both the content and the logistics. Ideally, we would want to engage a local host committee that would provide input on logistics, organize mobile workshops, assist with connections to other potential local/state sponsors, help showcase local initiatives, and help promote the conference to potential attendees. Exact roles and responsibilities can be determined based on the local host capacity and preferences.

These organizations' roles and responsibilities are as follows:

Host/Presenting Sponsor: Safe Routes Partnership

Safe Routes Partnership is responsible for the Conference and event support, planning, coordinating, fundraising and implementing all aspects related to the Conference. Responsibilities include:

- Staff the conference with employees or contractors to plan and execute all aspects of the event
- Procure competitive quotes from area hotels or centers for the meetings and lodging for the Conference and negotiate contract terms with selected hotel/center. A portion of the hotel rooms in a single hotel must be available at state government rates
- Develop a fundraising plan and manage outreach to secure funding from additional sponsors; keep accurate financial records
- Create a conference theme, logo, and key graphical treatments and maintain a conference website
- Develop a comprehensive communications/marketing plan to include the integration of social media into activities before and during the conference
- Design, edit, produce and print all Conference materials such as the agenda, name badges, signage, bags and other ancillary materials.
- Set registration fees and deadlines and process conference registrations
- Maintain conference budget and pay all conference-related invoices
- Arrange all conference logistics, including meals, audio visual, meeting space, and registration
- Identify and secure keynote speakers; solicit proposals for presentations and mobile workshops (with appropriate liability insurance) and produce final conference schedule program

Local Host/Presenting Sponsor: The agency or organization selected through this letter of interest process to manage the conference is the local host/presenting sponsor. The host agency may be an institution of higher learning, a state or local agency, a state or local government agency, or a non-profit organization.

- Provide a financial commitment of at least \$65,000 to support conference
- Provide input and recommendations for the conference location and timing
- Provide recommendations and assist with outreach, as possible and appropriate, for keynote speakers, panelists, and mobile workshops
- Make connections and introductions to potential financial sponsors, other state agencies, nonprofit partners, and key organizations throughout the state/local community who may be able to contribute funds, knowledge or support to the conference
- Assist with promotion and marketing of the conference to generate registrations and participation
- Identify whether local host/presenting sponsor wants to hold any ancillary meetings or trainings before or after the conference
- Provide input on the conference theme, venue, and timeline (as desired).



- Provide input on the selection of sessions and speakers (as desired)
- Supply advice on conference planning based on other past state/local events
- Assistance in identifying local volunteers to provide assistance as session monitors or with on-site registration

Local Host Committee: Chaired by the Safe Routes Partnership and co-chaired by the local host/presenting sponsor (if desired), this committee will include presenting sponsors and relevant state and local organizations.

- Lead planning and execution of mobile workshops
- Assist with promotion of the conference to generate participation
- Connect Safe Routes Partnership with volunteers
- Support identification of local leaders who may be invited to speak
- Marketing strategies and other tasks as needed

IV. Letter of Intent Requirements

Please submit a letter of interest (no longer than two pages) including the following information:

1. **Interested Party Information:** Provide the name of the lead organization or agency submitting the proposal and the following contact information: Name of contact person, representative organization, mailing address, phone number, email address, and website.
2. **Organization's Involvement with Safe Routes to School:** Provide background on the applicant organization proposing to host the conference. Describe the entity's involvement with and understanding of Safe Routes to School.
3. **Location:** Describe attributes of the host city or potential cities that you think would be appealing to conference participants, i.e. proximity to non-regional airport, local bike/ped infrastructure, nearby Safe Routes to School projects that could be toured, etc.
4. **Partners:** Please list the state and local partners (agencies, nonprofits, etc) that you envision engaging with as potential members of a local host committee. Please indicate how and if the state DOT will be involved with the conference (which is strongly encouraged).
5. **Funding:** Confirm your commitment to providing at least a \$60,000 financial contribution.

Please submit letters of interest to marisa@saferoutespartnership.org by January 31, 2025. You will receive an email confirmation of its receipt. If you have additional questions, you may contact marisa@saferoutespartnership.org.

Safe Routes Partnership will schedule follow-up conversations with interested hosts. The selected host will be asked to sign a memorandum of understanding confirming roles and financial responsibilities.

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