Ideas for Talking Points for Walk to School Day

1. This city cares about the health and well-being of its residents, which is what Walk to School Day is all about.
2. There are so many reasons why this event is special. It helps us all connect with issues we care about.
   * It brings community members together.
   * Gives everyone a chance to try or re-discover walking and the easy enjoyment it affords.
   * Focuses on promoting walking and biking and an active lifestyle for all of us, starting with our children.
     + We’ve all heard that children are not getting the active time that they need every day to be healthy and ready to learn.
     + Walking or bicycling to school also offers children a sense of responsibility and independence.
   * It can help us understand where people would like to be able to walk and where safety problems get in the way.
   * The entire community benefits if there is less traffic congestion because parents don’t have to drive their kids to school.
3. After many years of declining rates of walking to school, there’s growing interest again.
   * Parent surveys across the US from 2007-2014 show that walking to school in the mornings increased from almost 12 percent of students to a little more than 15 percent (a 32 percent increase).[[1]](#endnote-1)
   * Walk to School Day events often turn into regularly occurring walking and bicycling programs, which over time can get significantly more students walking and bicycling to school.[[2]](#endnote-2),[[3]](#endnote-3)
4. We all have a role in making it safer for students to walk and bike to school, parks, friends’ homes and other places. Safe walking and bicycling environments include:
   * Sidewalks or bicycle-paths
   * Child-friendly opportunities to cross streets (such as the presence of adult crossing guards, raised medians, as well as traffic and pedestrian signals),
   * Slow vehicle speeds accomplished through roadway safety measures (traffic calming) and police enforcement where needed, and
   * Pathways that are accessible for students of all abilities.
5. **Mayors’ Statement on Safe Walking and Bicycling for Youth for Walk to School Day**

The ability of people to safely walk and bicycle is a vital part of what makes cities thrive. We recognize that by enabling children and youth to safely walk and bicycle, we can benefit people of all ages, abilities and resources. My city is committed to work to promote safe walking and bicycling and to eliminate fatal and serious traffic crashes. Now is the time to act. We know the benefits this would bring to the health and well-being of our children, our communities, and the nation are immeasurable.

1. [Describe actions the mayor will take to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety for children and youth]

1. The National Center for Safe Routes to School. (2016, July). *Trends in Walking and Bicycling to School from 2007-2014*. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Buckley, A., Lowry, M., Brown, H., Barton, B. (2013). Evaluating safe routes to school events that designate days for walking and bicycling. *Transport Policy, 30*, 294-300. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. McDonald, N.C. et al. (2014). Impact of the Safe Routes to School program on walking and bicycling. *Journal of the American Planning Association, 82*(2), 153-167. doi:10.1080/01944363.2014.956654. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)