Q: Located in Chicago. A major concern regarding walking (e.g. to school or afterschool to home or activities) is safety in terms of street violence. Do any models for active transportation include addressing street violence/gang activity/safety on streets concerns?

From Nick Sims: When it comes to Safe Routes to School programming, I find it difficult to encourage students to walk when it’s not currently safe – that includes dangerous traffic crossings as well as crime and violence. Some students don’t have a choice though, and walk to school out of necessity, so we must use various partnerships to create a safe environment. When we have a large group that always helps in respect to security. There’s a few things, we do to make a walk safer: 1) We try to create routes that avoid the most dangerous areas; 2) We utilize the Walking School Bus program so adult chaperones are present to provide supervision and prevent bullying. 3) We notify the local precinct of our schedule so they can participate as often as possible, 4) report stray dogs and 5) we work closely with the City to request vacant lots be cut, and abandoned houses boarded up and demolished when necessary. Open abandoned houses represent a huge threat as students may wander into them, and because of the people who tend to occupy them temporarily.

We have provided students with digital cameras and video cameras as a photovoice project for them to capture their perspective, and help advocate for the changes they seek.

www.saferoutesal.org

Q: Is there something in addition to the walking school bus -- while that is a great solution – that would work for teens?

From Nick Sims: We have only worked with elementary schools so far, so the walking school bus has been a great fit. In respect to teens, if you are lucky enough to have a middle school or high school close to an elementary school, then I would advocate on recruiting teens to be the walking school
bus leaders for the elementary school and in return both would be walking. Separate from that I would just look for a way to make it cool for them at that age. To that effect, I just saw recently where Active4Me has a site where it makes it fun to track physical activity and they have an app with a QR code scanner to track participation. You may also look to ideas from Fire Up Your Feet as they have ideas to combine physical activity and fundraising, and that may give teens an extra reason to be motivated to be involved. [http://www.active4.me/](http://www.active4.me/) and [http://fireupyourfeet.org/](http://fireupyourfeet.org/).

Q: How are you connecting to affordable housing development?

From Julia Murphy: A number of our stations are located near Housing Authority properties and we have done a pilot subsidized membership program.

Q: Any suggestions or advice on developing an awareness campaign for a community biking program?

From Julia Murphy: Marketing, partnerships and social media. We’ve had a number of special interest groups and partner agencies who have organized events which allows the City to help get out our safety and encouragement messaging through short presentations and give-aways such as t-shirts, water bottles, helmets, and lights. Branding the program has helped with consistency, and we repeat this on a dedicated website and FB fan page. An Enhancement grant has assisted us placing public service announcements on the radio and targeted advertising on billboards, in publications, and on the web.

Q: For a city that traditionally didn't bike a lot, did you have to create a large bike and pedestrian media and education and safety programs?

From Julia Murphy: As with marketing and advertising, the sky's the limit, but we've been able to do a lot with social media, a dedicated website, and help from our partner agencies. Our paid media has been strategically targeted online, through radio spots, and billboards.
Q: Making bikes widely available through a bike-sharing program is terrific, but what do you do if your community’s roadways are not bicycle friendly? Ours is one of the least bicycle friendly cities in the country, so just providing more bikes would not necessarily help.

From Julia Murphy: Ours has a long way to go, too. But putting in bike sharing, at least downtown, has forced us to think about sharing the road better. It was a case of putting the cart before the horse, in many ways.

Q: Has insurance or liability coverage been an issue?

From Julia Murphy: The non-profit who runs the system has a liability policy, but also each user has to sign a waiver when joining.