



# San Mateo County **SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

Healthy Kids • Green Communities • Safe Journeys

## 2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT



SAN MATEO  
COUNTY  
OFFICE OF  
EDUCATION

**C/CAG**  
City/County Association of Governments  
of San Mateo County

# BACKGROUND

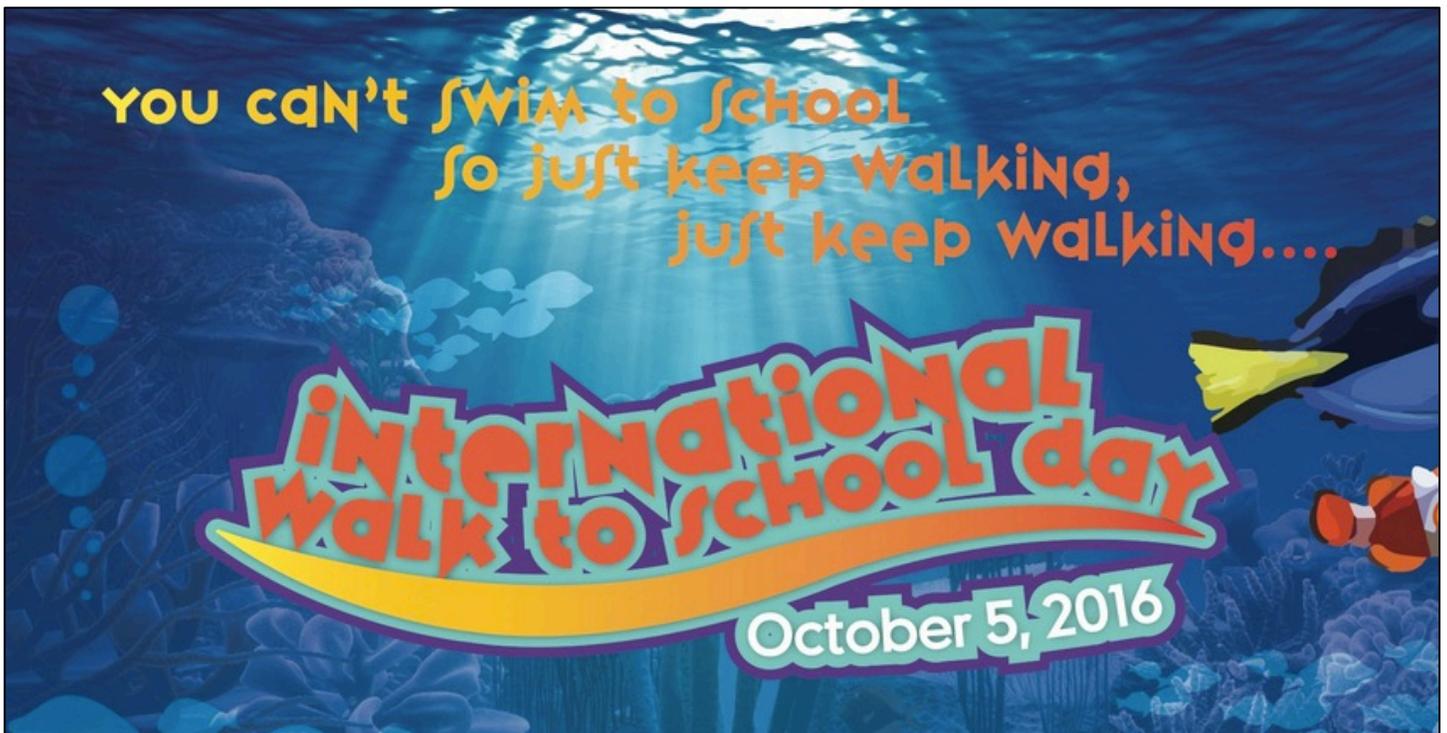
According to the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, only 13 percent of students in the United States walk or bicycle to school and private vehicles account for half of school trips between a quarter mile and a half mile. San Mateo County residents are not strangers to school-related traffic congestion. With more than 70,000 school-aged children living in the county, traffic congestion around schools is dramatically reduced by Safe Routes to School initiatives such as walking school buses, walk to school days, and pedestrian and bicycle education.

Data collected from parent surveys and student travel tallies in fall 2016 indicate that 53 percent of respondents live one mile or less from school, a distance easily covered on foot. The children of 33 percent of respondents regularly take an active mode of transportation to school. As in years past, the most pressing concerns for parents are unsafe intersections, speeding, and traffic. These concerns continue to be barriers to increased numbers of children walking and biking. Efforts need to continue in order to minimize these barriers.

According to the Safe Routes to School Parent/Caregiver Survey, San Mateo County parents would be more likely to allow their children to bike or walk to school if infrastructure such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and crosswalks provided safe passage. Many parents expressed concern about the amount and speed of traffic along the route to school as well as safety at intersections. Since its inception in 2011, San Mateo County Safe Routes to School has brought stakeholders together to address these issues and raise community awareness.

The San Mateo County Safe Routes to School program teaches children the skills needed to get to school safely through active modes of transportation. It gets kids outside and exercising, which helps them meet the recommended levels of 60 or more minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity on weekdays.

Additionally, the Safe Routes to School program supports the age-old childhood rite of passage that walking or biking to school leads to independence and self-reliance, not to mention, it's fun!



## Vision

The efforts of Safe Routes to School in San Mateo County result in less traffic congestion around schools, improved air quality, a greener, healthier community, and an increase in self-reliance among San Mateo County children who walk and bike to school. Safe Routes to School is the catalyst for teaching children traffic safety skills and encouraging them to take an active mode of transportation to school. San Mateo County communities support this initiative with infrastructure that provides safe passage for children.

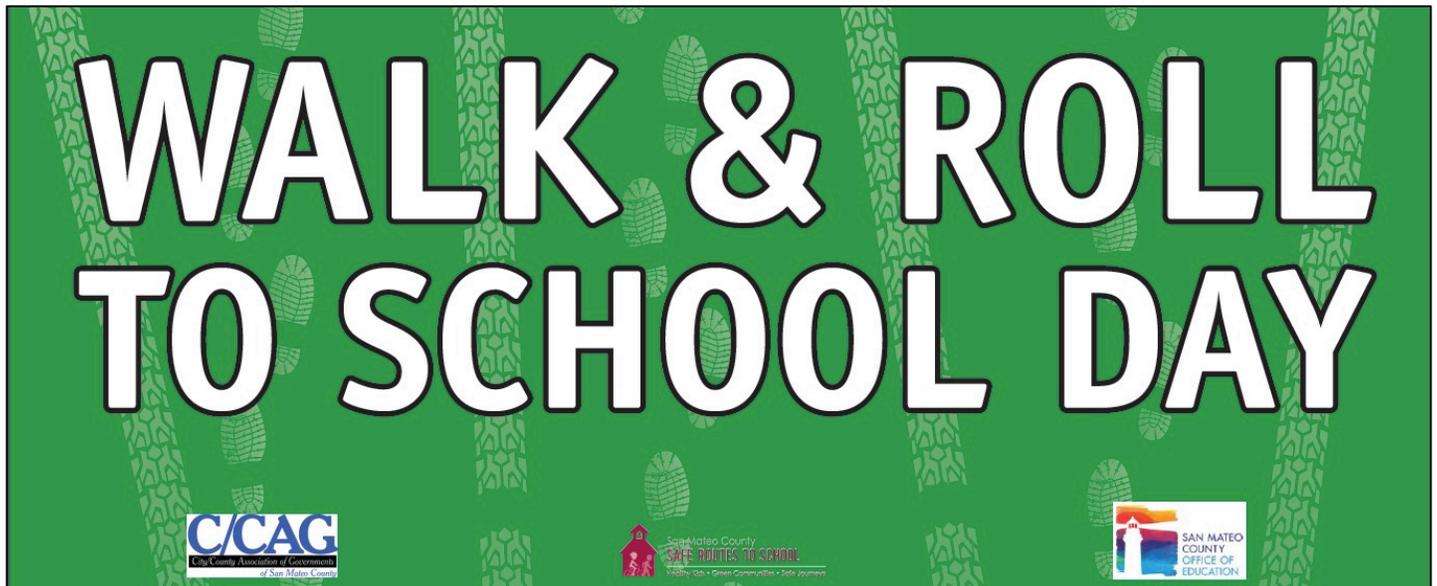
## Mission

San Mateo County Safe Routes to School encourages and enables school children to walk and bicycle to school by implementing projects and activities that improve the health, well-being, and safety of children, resulting in less traffic congestion and vehicle emissions caused by school-related travel.



## Goal

Funding for the San Mateo County Office of Education's Safe Routes to School (SMCOE SRTS) program is made possible through the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG). The overall goal of the program is to encourage children and their parents to carpool or to take an active mode of transportation to school to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. This is achieved through education on pedestrian and bicycle safety as well as awareness around human impact on the environment.



# PROGRAM STRUCTURE

San Mateo County Safe Routes to School is a collaborative effort between City/County Association of Governments and the San Mateo County Office of Education. During the 2016-2017 school year, other partners and collaborators included: San Mateo County Health System, Sequoia Healthcare District, Peninsula Health Care District, Spare the Air Youth Technical Advisory Committee, Parents for Safe Routes, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, Alta Planning + Design and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).

Specific support to participants includes a grant award program, professional development and

training, connection to various Safe Routes to School resources, customized outreach, consultation and technical assistance, and countywide event coordination. The San Mateo County Office of Education's Safe Routes to School coordinator collaborates with district administration, wellness coordinators, teachers, parents and community partners to encourage young people to improve the environmental health of the community by choosing an active mode of transportation.

## Partner Organizations

Additional active partners include the following school districts and organizations in San Mateo County:

Belmont-Redwood Shores Elementary SD  
Brisbane Elementary SD  
Burlingame Elementary SD  
Cabrillo Unified SD  
Jefferson Elementary SD  
Millbrae Elementary SD  
Pacifica SD  
Ravenswood City Elementary SD  
Redwood City 20/20  
San Carlos Elementary SD  
San Mateo-Foster City SD  
Sequoia Union High SD  
South San Francisco Parks & Recreation

Bay Area Bike Mobile  
Bay Area Children's Theatre  
Bay.org  
Parents for Safe Routes  
Peninsula YMCA – YBikes  
Recycle Works  
Safe Moves  
San Mateo County Office of Sustainability  
Spare the Air Youth Technical Advisory Committee  
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition  
Stanford Children's Health  
Wheel Kids

# FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

The 2016-2017 program was based on the comprehensive 6 E's model: Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, Evaluation, and Equity.

## Education

Educational activities are designed to promote and provide members of the school community—students, parents, faculty, and staff—a common understanding of what the Safe Routes to School program seeks to achieve and the positive impact the program can have on the environment, healthy lifestyle, and reducing traffic congestion. Education is delivered via school assemblies, classroom instruction, bicycle and pedestrian rodeos, bike clubs, green teams, family bike nights, and wellness fairs.

## Encouragement

Encouragement events are integrated into educational activities. Students have an opportunity to practice positive walking and biking behaviors, generate interest, build community and sustain momentum by celebrating success at these events. Encouragement activities include weekly walk to school days, walking school buses, a bike train/brigade, International Walk to School Day, Golden Sneaker Contests, Earth Day and National Bike to School Day.



## 2016-2017 Events

**International Walk to School Day**  
October 5, 2016

**Golden Sneaker**  
Dates determined by coordinators

**Earth Day**  
Week of April 17, 2017

**National Bike to School Day**  
May 10, 2017

**Walk to School Days**  
Determined by coordinators

## Engineering

Engineering projects can range from capital outlay projects (i.e. parking lot improvements, widening roads on school property, and/or installing traffic signs) to smaller infrastructure projects, which include painting parking lots, directing traffic flow, or designating pick up and drop off zones.

Walk and Bike Audits are performed to assess the walkability and bikeability of the school and surrounding environment. These audits include analyzing traffic patterns and travel to and from the school. Walk and bike audits allow for direct and indirect feedback for potential positive changes. Walking and biking route maps are also generated in order to provide an effective tool for safe and efficient travel flow to and from the school.



Three engineering firms were available for Walk Audits during the 2016-2017 school year: Parisi Transportation Group, Kimley-Horn, and Alta Planning + Design. A Walk Audit was performed during the 2016-2017 school year at Menlo-Atherton High School.

With the aid of Safe Routes to School funding, the Las Lomas School District completed a bike path at La Entrada Middle School, which has helped direct students on and off school property with the flow of traffic (see picture above).

In May 2017, C/CAG and SMCOE brought stakeholders from municipalities and schools together to learn about the Safe Routes to School and Green Streets Infrastructure Pilot Project. This project combines funding from C/CAG's storm water management and Safe Routes to School programs to address pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure issues around schools and manage storm water run-off. More than 50 people attended the event and collaborated with their school and city counterparts.

## Enforcement

The main goal of enforcement strategies is to encourage all road users to obey traffic laws. Safe Routes to School coordinators are encouraged to work closely with school resource officers to address issues regarding traffic safety in and around the school campus. Other effective tools include: student valet programs, active speed monitors, and community awareness via announcements and parent newsletters.

During the 2016-2017 school year, two schools started student valet programs, which helped create a more organized morning drop off. Several other schools started a pedestrian flag program at crosswalks. Pedestrian flags help make children more visible while crossing the street.

## Equity

Children from low-income families are more likely to walk to school and often face busy streets, poor infrastructure, and more crime or violence. Low-income communities often lack strong policies or staffing to ensure community streets are safe for walking and biking.

The most recent data available from kidsdata.org indicate that 9.7 percent of children in San Mateo County live in poverty. San Mateo County Safe Routes to School aims to make walking and biking safe for all children. With this in mind, Get Healthy San Mateo County conducted an equity analysis of Safe Routes to School in San Mateo County. The analysis identified 15 elementary schools and three districts that are located in communities of concern and within a quarter mile of an unsafe intersection. In spring 2017, the Safe Routes to School Coordinator and Alta Planning + Design selected two of the identified schools and one of the districts to assist in applying for Safe Routes to School funding and program planning.

# Evaluation

Evaluation is an important element of any Safe Routes to School program. It is used to help determine if the most vital needs are addressed, appropriate strategies are used, and desired results are achieved.

The two main evaluation tools/activities in Safe Routes to School programs are Student Travel Tallies and parent surveys.

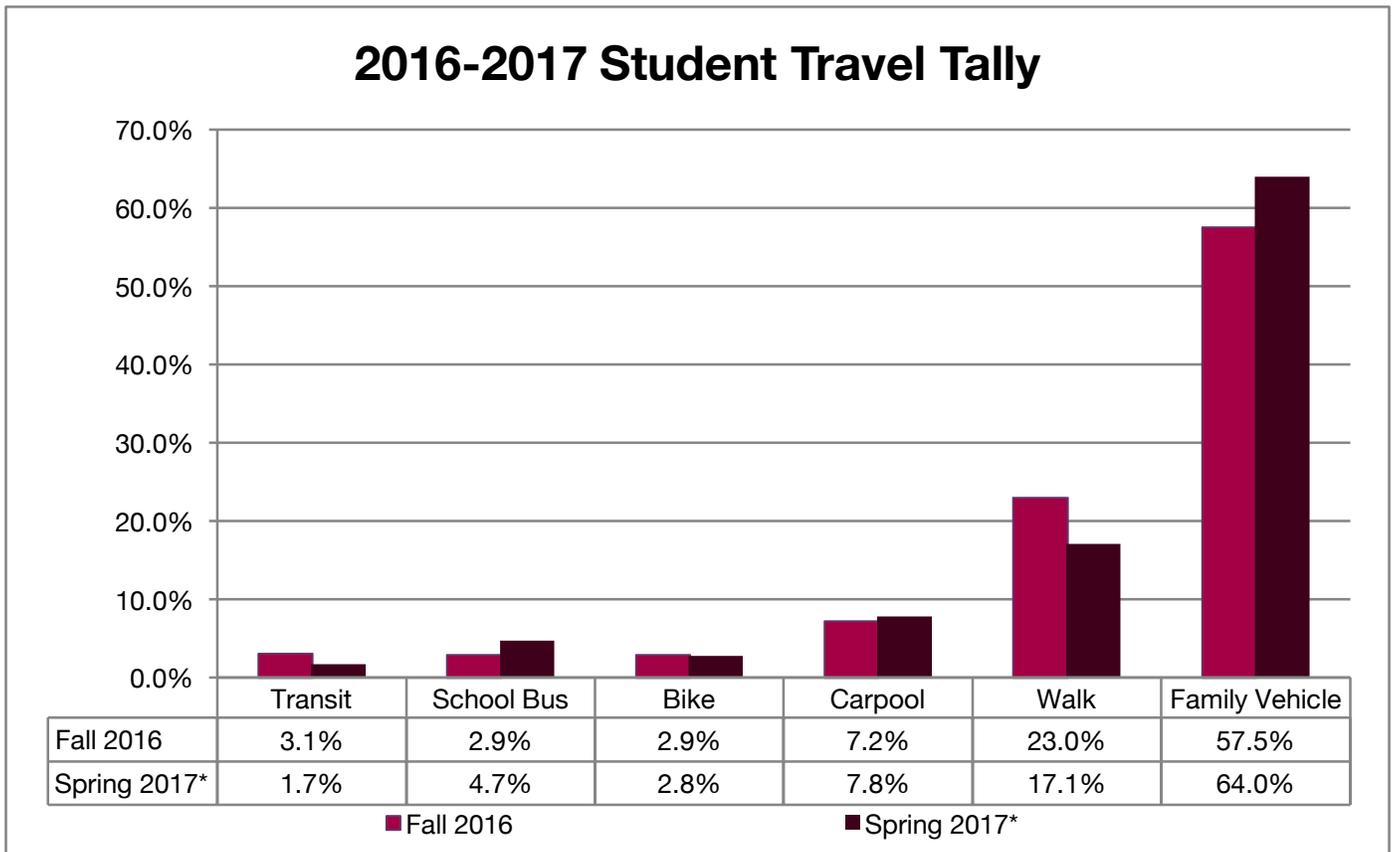
Student Travel Tallies help measure how students get to and from school. These data are collected through the National Safe Routes Student Travel Tally Form and computed with the assistance of the National Safe Routes Data Center.

The Safe Routes to School Parent Survey asks for information about what factors affect whether parents allow their children to walk, roll, or bike to school, the presence of key safety-related



conditions along various routes to school and related background information. The Parent Survey is available in English, Spanish, and Mandarin. There is an online and a printed version.

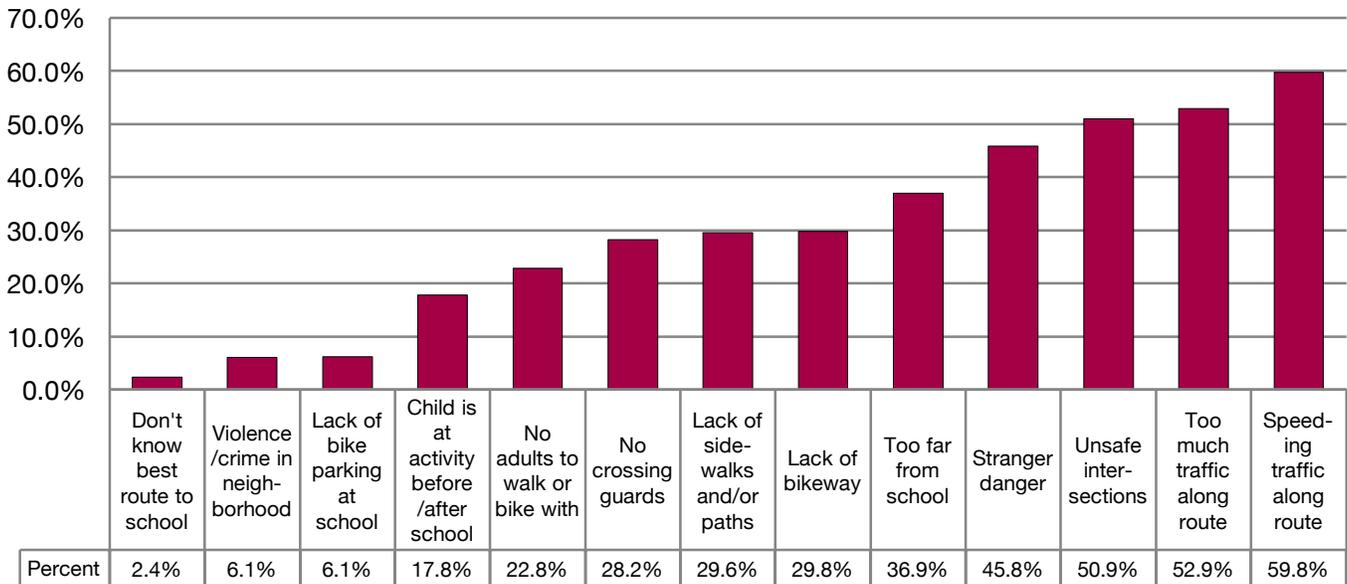
This survey was available to parents from fall 2016 through early spring 2017.



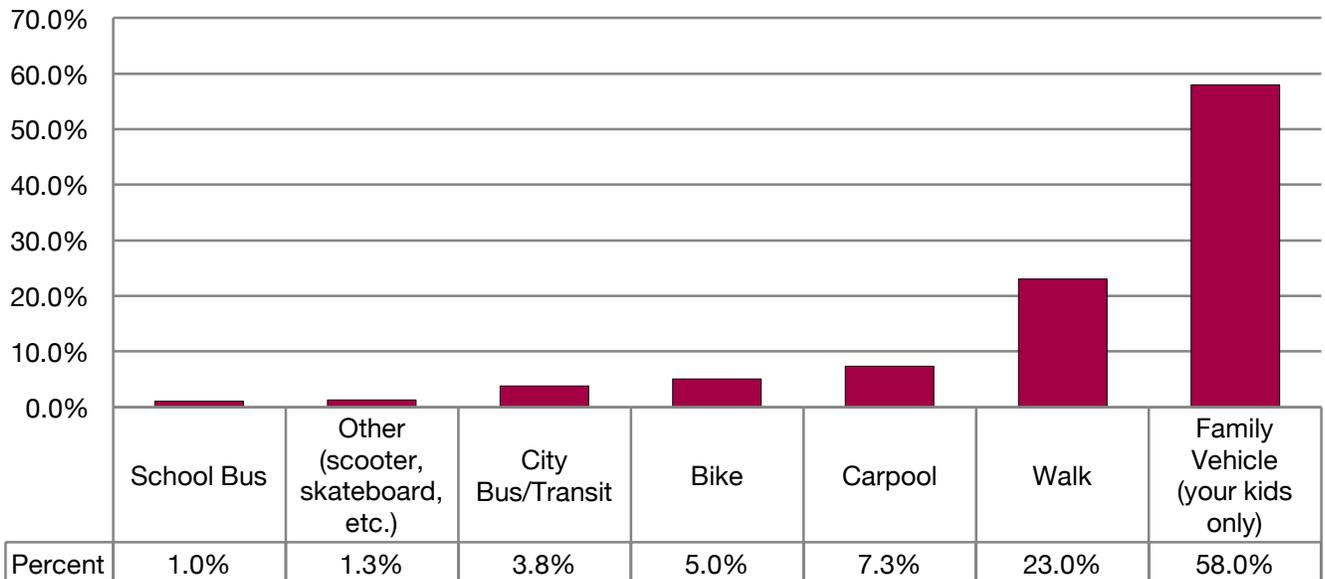
The national averages for walk/bike/family vehicle are 19.7 percent, 2.2 percent, 45.3 percent, respectively.

\*Spring 2017 data are provisional and incomplete.

## Do any of the following items concern or limit your child's ability to walk or bike to/from school?



## How does your child usually travel to school? (3,720 respondents from October 2016 to January 2017)



# 2016-2017 PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

During the 2016-2017 school year, 96 schools from 14 districts participated in the SMCOE Safe Routes to School program.

District/School	Bicycle Rodeos	Assemblies/ Classes	Encouragement Events	Walk Audits	Route Maps
<b>Belmont-Redwood Shores</b>	2	4	24	0	0
<b>Brisbane</b>	4	4	38	0	0
<b>Burlingame</b>	1	9	5	0	0
<b>Cabrillo</b>	2	7	5	0	0
<b>City of SSF</b>	1	3	4	0	0
<b>Fernando Rivera &amp; Thomas Edison</b>	0	17	2	0	0
<b>Las Lomas</b>	Infrastructure Only – Bike Path at La Entrada Middle School				
<b>Marjorie H. Tobias</b>	1	5	10	0	0
<b>Menlo-Atherton H.S.</b>	0	0	4	1	1
<b>Millbrae</b>	1	7	9	0	0
<b>Pacifica</b>	6	8	10	0	0
<b>Redwood City 2020</b>	7	51	4	4	0
<b>San Carlos</b>	0	24	2	0	0
<b>San Mateo-Foster City</b>	18	33	2	4	0
<b>Sequoia H.S.</b>	0	145	1	0	0
<b>Westlake</b>	0	6	2	0	0
<b>Ravenswood</b>	2	1	4	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>



<b>Participation Breakdown</b>	
Elementary	53
K-6 <sup>th</sup> grade	3
K-8 <sup>th</sup> grade	22
Middle	15
High School	3
<b>Total number of schools supported in '16-'17</b>	<b>96</b>
Walkability and Bikeability Audits	9*
Total Assemblies, Bike Rodeos, Education	495
Total Awarded in '16-'17	\$339,944**
*Eight of the nine walk/bike audits were supported by SRTS coordinators but funding came from other sources. **SMCOE contribution - \$100,000.	

## 2016-2017 Coordinator Support

The following workshops and opportunities were offered during the 2016-2017 school year to support school and district Safe Routes to School Coordinators:

### Safe Routes to School Summit and Resource Fair

The Safe Routes to School Summit included workshops on: planning a Walk and Roll to School Day event, Vision Zero, and county-wide bike/ped collision data.

The Resource Fair featured 15 vendors and partners, including AAA, Alta Planning + Design, Bay Area Children's Theatre (Rock the Block: A Walk and Roll Musical), Bay Mobile, Bike Mobile, C/CAG, Parisi, Pegasus Promotional Items, Safe Moves, SamTrans, San Mateo County Public Health, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, Wheel Kids, YBike, and Youth Leadership Institute.

### Safe Routes to School Coordinator Meetings

The Safe Routes to School Coordinators enjoyed presentations by various partners, including Rock the Bike, GoChaperone, Zume, Office of Sustainability, YBike, Commute.org, AAA School Safety Program, Alta Planning + Design, Redwood City 20/20, and the American Heart Association.

### Technical Assistance

The San Mateo County Office of Education Safe Routes to School Coordinator conducted three site visits per coordinator during the 2016-2017 school year to provide support and technical assistance. A grant writing workshop was also held for coordinators and prospective coordinators.

### Safe Routes to School Community Advisory Committee Meeting

This committee is made up of Safe Routes to School stakeholders, including community members, city engineers and staff, students, community health planners, C/CAG staff, SMCOE staff, and elected officials. The committee provides guidance for Safe Routes to School in San Mateo County.

# FUTURE OF SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Several goals for the future of Safe Routes to School have been identified. The Safe Routes to School Coordinator will work with the **Safe Routes to School Community Advisory Committee** to achieve these goals. They include:

- delivering program with an **equity lens**
- raising the **profile and awareness** of Safe Routes to School among parents in San Mateo County
- focusing on program **sustainability and embedding** Safe Routes to School curriculum in existing school programs
- advocating for **equitable and safe streets**
- promoting **walking school bus culture** with all Safe Routes to School grantees

## Program Goals

### Equity Lens

The most recent data from kidsdata.org indicate 9.7 percent of children in San Mateo County live in poverty. According to the 2016 National Safe Routes to School Annual Report, low-income communities are less likely to have infrastructure that supports safe walking and biking even though children from low-income families are more likely to walk to school than their wealthier counterparts. Additionally, the fastest growth in bicycle usage is among low-income people of color. The equity analysis on Safe Routes to School that was recently conducted by the San Mateo County Public Health System will be used as a guide for working with schools that are in high poverty and high pedestrian/bicycle collision areas. San Mateo County Safe Routes to School aims to make walking and biking safe for all children.

### Profile and Awareness of Safe Routes to School

The most recent data from the San Mateo County Safe Routes to School Parent/Caregiver Survey

indicate that 60 percent of parents did not know if their child's school had a Safe Routes to School program. Parents may not realize that the walk and roll to school days and bicycle and pedestrian education their child receives *are* part of the Safe Routes to School program. During the 2017-2018 school year, a greater emphasis will be placed on educating and involving parents in Safe Routes to School.

### Sustainability and Embedding Curriculum

The SMCOE Safe Routes to School Coordinator will partner with schools and other stakeholders to embed the Safe Routes to School program and philosophy into existing school programs and make walking and biking part of school culture.

### Advocate for Equitable and Safe Streets for San Mateo County Children

The Safe Routes to School Coordinator will continue to participate in various stakeholder groups and Complete Streets initiatives throughout the county. In May 2017, district-level Safe Routes to School Coordinators met their city public works counterparts. For many, this was the beginning of a fruitful relationship. Creating opportunities for these two entities to collaborate will continue in 2017-2018.

### Promote Walking School Buses

The 2016-2017 Safe Routes to School Parent/Caregiver Survey revealed that 43 percent of respondents drove their children to school because of stranger danger. A walking school bus culture would alleviate this problem. Walking to school reduces stress and helps children learn. A 2012 Dutch study revealed that children who walk to school are able to concentrate better, learn better and know the geography of their neighborhood better. An effort will be made to aid schools in promoting the benefits of a walking school bus.



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## San Mateo County Office of Education

Safe Routes to School  
101 Twin Dolphin Drive  
Redwood City, CA 94065