



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

Healthy Kids • Green Communities • Safe Journeys

## 2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT



SAN MATEO  
COUNTY  
OFFICE OF  
EDUCATION

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

# BACKGROUND

In just a generation, the number of students who walk and bike to school each day has declined dramatically while childhood obesity rates and physical inactivity have soared. According to the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, less than 15 percent of children in the United States walk or bicycle to school.<sup>1</sup> As traffic has increased, parents drive their children to school, convinced it is too dangerous to allow them to walk or bike. This self-perpetuating cycle results in substantial traffic congestion and an increase in air pollution.

San Mateo County residents are no strangers to school-related traffic congestion. With more than 109,000 school-aged children living in the county, traffic congestion around schools is particularly high.<sup>2</sup> Data collected in the 2017-18 Safe Routes to School parent survey indicates that 49 percent of respondents live one mile or less from school, a distance easily covered on foot. The children of 62 percent of the respondents who live one mile or less from school regularly take an active mode of transportation to school, and 41 percent of all survey respondents indicate that their children walk, bike, or use another active mode to travel to school each day. As in years past, the most pressing concerns for parents are speeding, traffic and unsafe intersections.

The San Mateo County Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) works in partnership with municipalities, schools, and community members to make walking and biking to school as safe as possible. It is funded by a combination of the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program and local C/CAG Measure M funds. Since its inception in 2011, SRTS has brought stakeholders together, especially school administrators and city staff, to address barriers to walking and biking to school. The SRTS program also partners with service providers who educate children and parents on safe walking and biking practices through pedestrian and bicycle skills training, educational theatre, and personal safety workshops. These efforts are made to encourage behavior change that increases walking and biking, helps children meet the recommended 60 or more minutes of moderate

to vigorous physical activity per day, improves air quality and reduces congestion around schools, and encourages children to grow into self-reliant, independent adults.

## Vision

SRTS envisions a greener, healthier community with less traffic congestion around schools, improved air quality, and greater self-reliance among San Mateo County children who walk and bike to school. SRTS 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

SRTS's mission is to encourage and enable school children to walk and bicycle to school by implementing projects and activities that improve their health, well-being, and safety, resulting in less traffic congestion and vehicle emissions caused by school-related travel.

## Goal

The overall goal of the program is to encourage children and their parents to take an active mode of transportation or carpool 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.



1 <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/saferoutes.htm>

2 <https://www.kidsdata.org/region/4/san-mateo-county/summary#6/demographics>

3 <http://www.gethealthysmc.org/post/creating-safer-streets-near-schools>

# PROGRAM STRUCTURE

SRTS partners with a variety of agencies, including San Mateo County Health Policy and Planning (HPP), Caltrans, Spare the Air Youth Technical Advisory Committee, Parents for Safe Routes, Alta Planning + Design, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to support a variety of efforts aimed at encouraging active modes of transportation. Specific support to participants includes the annual grant award program, the mini grant program, professional development and training, connection to various SRTS resources, assistance in city/school relationship building, customized outreach, consultation, technical assistance, and county-wide event coordination. SRTS staff collaborate with district administration, wellness coordinators, teachers, parents, community partners, and stakeholders to encourage young people to walk and bike to school, which results in a reduction in traffic congestion and improved air quality around schools. These efforts also help combat the upward trend of childhood obesity and physical inactivity.

During the 2017-18 school year, SRTS staff collaborated with San Mateo County HPP to conduct an equity analysis, which identified 15 priority schools in San Mateo County and culminated in a report titled *Creating Safer Streets Near Schools*.<sup>3</sup> Educators from the priority schools took part in a facilitated discussion with their corresponding city staff, resulting in heightened awareness among city staff of the need for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and a stronger commitment from schools and city staff to work together to make SRTS more sustainable. Despite a gap in funding, which caused a delay in several programs being implemented during the 2017-18 school year, SRTS introduced two new projects, the SRTS Mini Grant Program and the SRTS and Green Streets Infrastructure Pilot Program (SRTS/GI Pilot Program), and continued to convene the Community Advisory Committee and connect agencies with approved vendors.

## Mini Grant Program

SRTS set aside \$20,000 for the SRTS Mini Grant Program to fund projects for schools that were not part of the program, with the goal of encouraging schools to begin implementing safe routes before applying for the regular grant program. A mini grant between \$1,000 and \$5,000

year, including two high schools and three elementary schools.

### Mini-Grant Schools and Projects They Are Working On

**George Washington Elementary School:**

Bicycle and Pedestrian Education

**Parkway Heights Middle School:**

Bicycle and Pedestrian Education

**Redwood High School:**

Bike Shed Program

**Woodrow Wilson Elementary School:**

School Safety Patrol

**Woodside High School:**

Bike Shed Program

## Safe Routes to School and Green Streets Infrastructure Pilot Program

The SRTS and Green Streets Infrastructure Pilot Program (SRTS/GI Pilot Program) is a \$2.1 million-dollar C/CAG-funded program that supports construction projects that incorporate both safe routes to school safety improvements and green infrastructure elements at schools.

It is intended to fund integrated improvements at intersections and mid-block crossings near schools. Funding for the SRTS/GI Pilot Program includes approximately \$1 million from Measure M and \$1 million from AB 1546.

The C/CAG Board approved funding for ten projects, summarized in the table on page 4, in December 2017. Projects are scheduled to be constructed by winter 2019.

As seen in Figure 1 on page 4, the Half Moon Bay project was constructed in conjunction with the new Library in August 2018. The project included bulbouts, Class II bicycle lanes, and bioretention areas at the intersection of Purissima Street and Correias Street, one block from Manual F. Cunha Intermediate School.



Figure 1: Half Moon Bay SRTS/GI Pilot Program Project

## Safe Routes to School Community Advisory Committee Meeting

The Community Advisory Committee is comprised of SRTS stakeholders, including community members, city staff, students, community health planners, district level SRTS coordinators, school board members, C/CAG staff, and staff from the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE). The Committee provides guidance for SRTS in San Mateo County.

### Approved Vendors

**Alta Planning + Design** - traffic analysis, route maps, GIS modeling, encouragement activities, works on healthy community policies, bike share programs

**Accent on Languages** – language translation services

## SRTS/GI Pilot Projects Funded by C/CAG Board in December, 2017

CITY	PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICT	PARTICIPATING SCHOOL(S)	PROJECT NAME
City of Brisbane	Brisbane School District	Brisbane Elementary School and Lipman Middle School	Brisbane SRTS and Green Infrastructure Project
Town of Colma	South San Francisco Unified School District	El Camino High School	Mission Road Improvements – Safe Routes to School & Green Streets Infrastructure
City of Daly City	Jefferson Elementary School District	Westlake Elementary School	Westlake Elementary School Pilot Green Streets Improvements
City of East Palo Alto	Ravenswood City Elementary School District	Cesar Chavez Elementary School	Addison Avenue SRTS and Green Street Project
City of Half Moon Bay	Cabrillo Unified School District	Manuel F. Cunha Intermediate School	Half Moon Bay Safe Routes to Cunha School Project
City of Menlo Park	Sequoia Union High School District	Menlo-Atherton High School and Nativity School	Oak Grove Safe Routes to School and Green Infrastructure Improvements Project
City of Millbrae	Millbrae School District	Taylor Middle School	Taylor Middle School SRTS and GSIPP
City of Pacifica	Pacifica School District	Cabrillo School	Cabrillo School Pedestrian Crossing Improvement Project
City of Redwood City	Redwood City School District	Taft Elementary School and KIPP Excelencia Community Prep School	Taft Community School – Safe Routes to School/Green Infrastructure Improvements
County of San Mateo	Redwood City School District	Fair Oaks Community School	Fair Oaks Community School Green Infrastructure and SRTS Improvements

**Bay Area Bike Mobile** - hands on bicycle repair workshops at schools, parks, and community events in an effort to encourage folks to walk & bike more often

**Bay Area Children's Theatre** - *Rock the Block: A Walk and Roll Musical* for elementary school students, and *Step Up Crew: A Street Smart Concert* for middle school students. The shows feature singing, dancing, comedy, and lessons about safely walking and bicycling to and from school (*Rock the Block*) and taking public transportation (*Step Up!*)

**KidPower** – workshops to help eliminate stranger danger fear that often keeps parents from allowing their children to take an active mode of transportation to school

**Kimley-Horn** - walk bike audits, school route maps and training and safety education

**Marine Science Institute** - interactive hands-on adventures with San Francisco Bay Area marine life show how choosing active transportation can help the environment

**Richmond Blue Print** – printing services

**Parisi** - walk bike audits, school route maps and training and safety education

**Peninsula Family YMCA (Ybike)** - traffic safety and biking skills through classroom and on-bike experiences

**Perfection on Wheels** – bicycle stunt show emphasizes the importance of wearing a helmet and riding a bike safely

**Safe Moves** – bike rodeos, parent workshops, family bike rides

**Strategic Energy Innovations** - hands-on sustainability projects, lessons, and campaigns in schools, focused on a variety of topics including air quality monitoring, transportation assessments, and green transportation campaigns

**Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition** - pedestrian and bicycling safety skills, bike rodeos



## Partner Organizations

Additional active partners include these school districts (SD) and organizations in San Mateo County:

### School Districts

Belmont-Redwood Shores Elementary SD  
Brisbane Elementary SD  
Burlingame Elementary SD  
Cabrillo Unified SD  
Jefferson Elementary SD  
Pacifica SD  
Ravenswood City Elementary SD  
Redwood City SD  
San Carlos Elementary SD  
San Mateo-Foster City SD

Sequoia Union High SD  
South San Francisco Unified SD

### Cities and Organizations

City of Brisbane  
City of Daly City  
City of East Palo Alto  
City of Half Moon Bay  
City of Menlo Park  
City of Millbrae  
City of Pacifica  
City of Redwood City

County of San Mateo  
Parents for Safe Routes  
Redwood City 20/20  
San Mateo County Health Planning and Policy  
San Mateo County Office of Sustainability  
San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans)  
Spare the Air Youth Technical Advisory Committee  
Town of Colma



## 2017-18 Coordinator Support

The following workshops and opportunities were offered during the 2017-18 school year to support school and district SRTS Coordinators:

### Safe Routes to School Coordinator Meetings

The SRTS Coordinators enjoyed presentations on various topics, including SamTrans Youth Mobility Program and bus scheduling, San Carlos Idle Free Campaign, How to Form a Safe Routes to School Task Force, Office of Sustainability Transportation Pathway,<sup>4</sup> and the Get Us Moving San Mateo County half-cent sales tax measure.

### Technical Assistance

SMCOE's SRTS Coordinator conducted two site visits or phone calls per coordinator during the 2017-18 school year to provide support and technical assistance.

## The Golden Bicycle Award

The first annual Golden Bicycle Award was presented to Las Lomitas Elementary School in May 2018. This award will be presented annually to the school that creates the best bicycle rack display promoting safety. The winning school will have its name engraved on the trophy.



## 2017-18 EVENTS

**International Walk to School Day**  
October 4, 2017

**Golden Sneaker**  
Dates determined by coordinators

**Earth Day: Week of April 22, 2018**

**National Bike to School Day: May 9, 2018**

**Bike Rack Decorating Contest: May 2018**

**Walk to School Days**  
Determined by coordinators

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.smcsustainability.org/waste-reduction/education-schools/>

# FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

SRTS is 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 SRTS program seeks to achieve and the positive impact the program can have on one's lifestyle, the environment and 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 an integral part of the SRTS program. Students have an opportunity to practice positive walking and biking behaviors, generate interest in safe routes to school, build community and sustain momentum by celebrating success at these events. Encouragement activities in 2017-2018 included participation in weekly walk to school days, walking school buses, International Walk to School Day, Golden Sneaker Contests, Earth Day, National Bike to School Day, and a bike rack decorating contest.

## Engineering

Engineering proposals for the SRTS grant program focus on small infrastructure projects, which include painting parking lots, directing traffic flow, designating pick up and drop off zones, and installing bicycle racks.

Walk and Bike Audits can be 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.

## Enforcement

The main goal of enforcement strategies is to encourage all road users to obey traffic laws. SRTS 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 2017-18 school year, schools with student valet programs continued their efforts and the SRTS program provided safety signage to a school located in a high density area near unsafe intersections.

## Equity

San Mateo County SRTS aims to make walking and biking safe for all children. The most recent data available from kidsdata.org indicate that 16.2 percent of children in San Mateo County live in food insecure households and 33.7 percent of students in San Mateo County are eligible for free or reduced priced school meals.

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.

## Evaluation

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

### Participation Breakdown

K-6th Grade . . . . .	59
K-8th Grade . . . . .	13
Middle . . . . .	17
High School . . . . .	3
Total number of schools supported in '17-'18 . . . . .	92
Walkability and Bikeability Audits . . . . .	0
Total Assemblies, Bike Rodeos, Education, Encouragement Events . . . . .	290
Total Awarded in '17-'18 . . . . .	\$356,000*

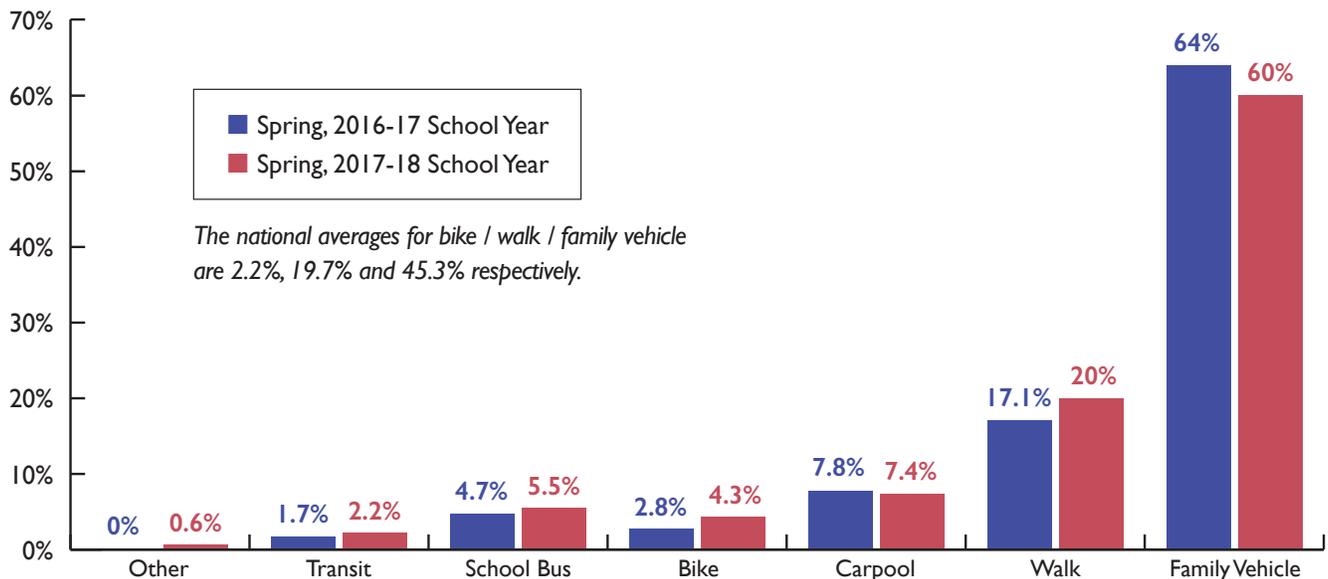
\* Funding was awarded for 1.5 years:  
January 2018 - June 2019

## 2017-18 Program Participants

During the 2017-18 school year, 16 districts participated in the SMCOE Safe Routes to School Program.

DISTRICT	BIKE RODEOS	ASSEMBLIES/ CLASSES	ENCOURAGEMENT EVENTS
Belmont-Redwood Shores	0	0	36
Brisbane	0	0	6
Burlingame	0	29	10
Cabrillo	5	0	12
La Honda-Pescadero	0	0	9
Las Lomitas	0	0	6
Los Cerritos	0	0	2
Menlo Park City School District	3	0	8
Menlo-Atherton	0	2	3
MH Tobias	0	1	13
Pacifica	0	0	12
Ravenswood	0	0	14
Redwood City	1	7	14
San Carlos	0	18	14
San Mateo-Foster City	0	23	40
Westlake	0	0	2

## 2017-18 Student Travel Tally



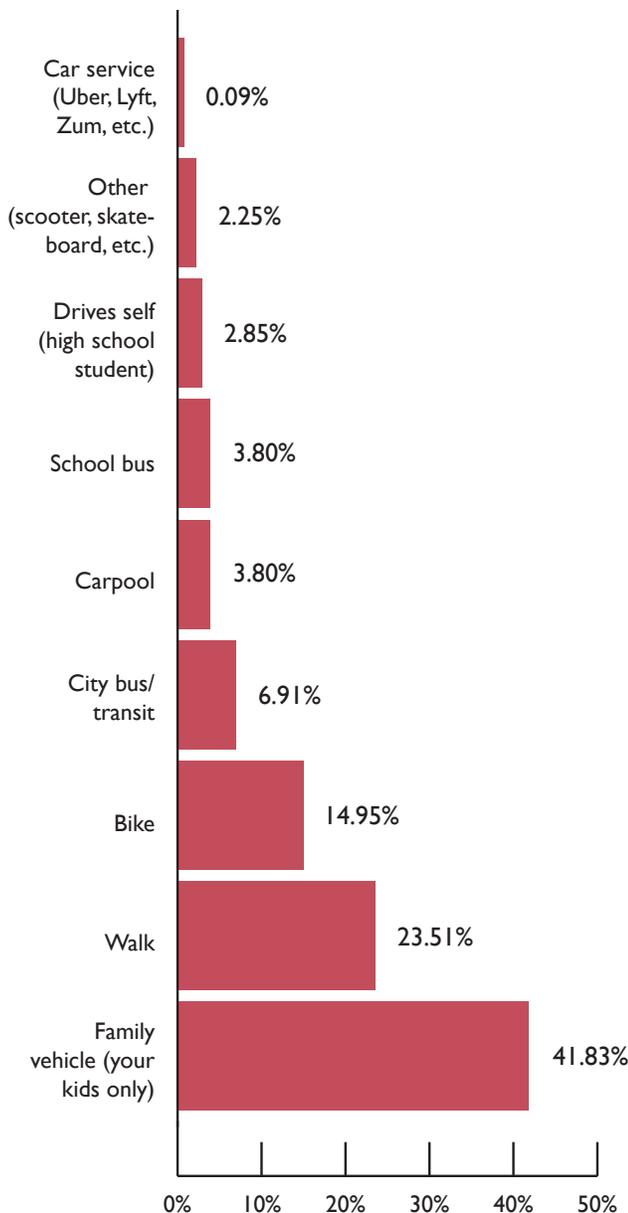
The SRTS program relies on two main evaluation tools: Student Travel Tallies and the Parent/Caregiver Survey.

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. Due to the funding gap and delayed start of regular program activities, several schools did not complete student travel tallies in 2017-18.

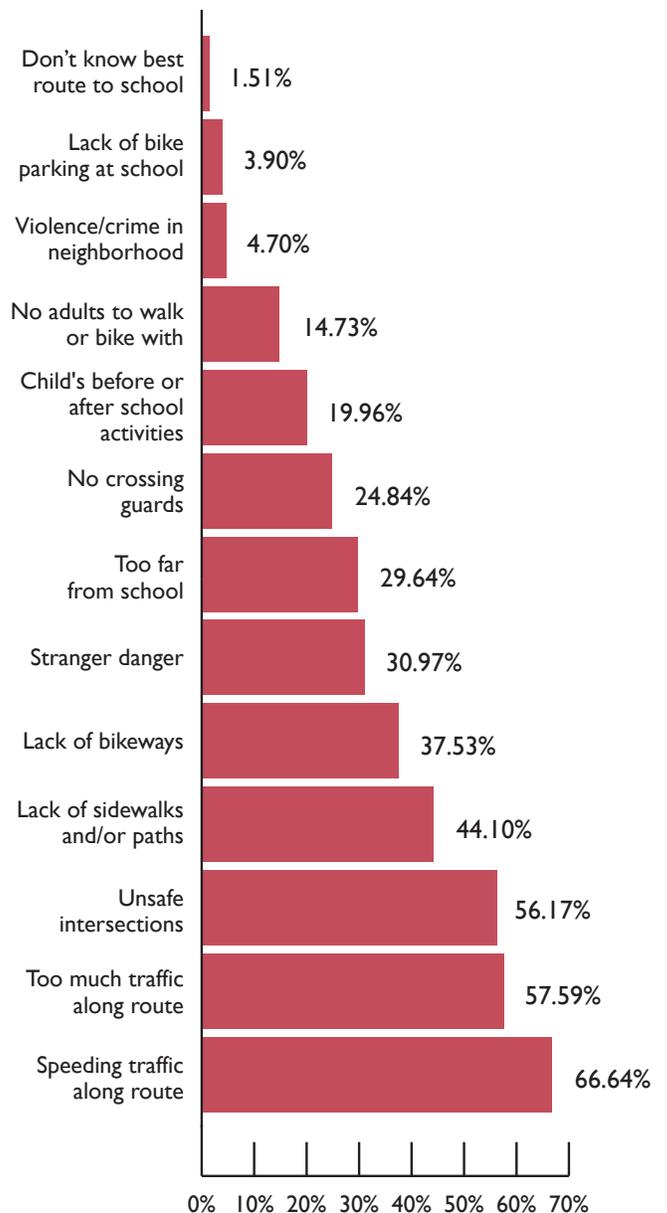
The SRTS Parent Survey asks for information about factors

that 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 online as well as in print in both English and Spanish. The survey was available to parents from fall 2017 through late spring 2018. However, due to the funding gap and the delayed start of SRTS programming, the number of survey respondents was down by 72 percent as compared to the 2016-17 parent survey.

### How does your child usually travel to school?



### Check any concerns you have regarding your child or children walking and/or biking to school.



# FUTURE OF SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

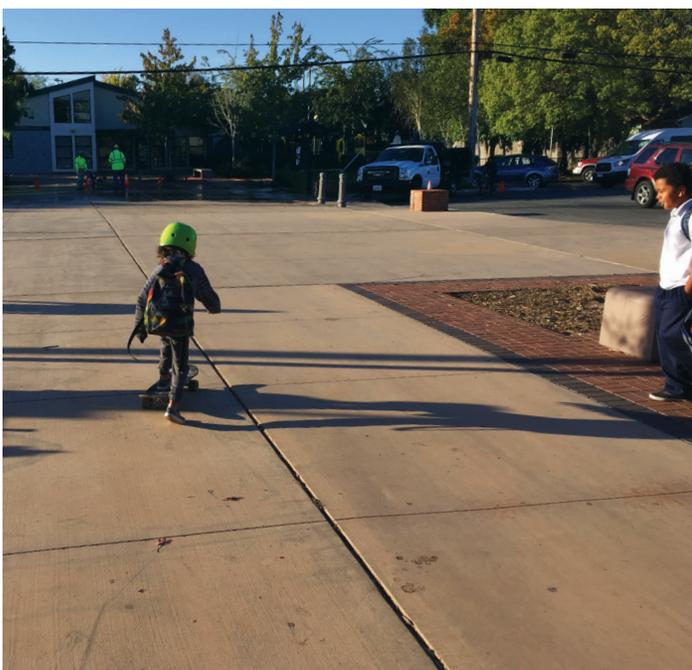
Several goals for the future of SRTS were identified during the 2017-18 school year. The SRTS Coordinator will work with the SRTS Community Advisory Committee to achieve these goals. They include:

- delivering the SRTS program with an equity lens
- raising the profile and awareness of SRTS among parents in San Mateo County
- focusing on program sustainability and embedding SRTS curriculum in existing school programs
- advocating for equitable and safe streets
- promoting walking and biking culture with all SRTS grantees
- developing Community Advisory Committee membership
- providing professional development opportunities for SRTS stakeholders

## Program Goals

### Equity Lens

SRTS is focused on providing equitable support to schools in San Mateo County, so schools in low-income communities have strong policies, sufficient staffing, and improved infrastructure to provide safe walking and biking routes.



SMCOE and the San Mateo County Health System received a California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) grant which will be allocated in the 2018-19 school year to high priority schools identified in the *Creating Safer Streets Near Schools* report. The goal of the grant is to address issues encountered by children in high poverty areas when walking or biking to school.

### Awareness of Safe Routes to School

The San Mateo County SRTS Parent/Caregiver Survey indicates that 58 percent of parents did not know if their child's school had a SRTS 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 SRTS program. During the 2018-2019 school year, a greater emphasis will be placed on educating and involving parents in safe routes to school.

### Sustainability and Embedding Curriculum

SMCOE was awarded an Active Transportation Program Cycle I grant for the implementation of the *Safe Routes to School for Health and Wellness Program*. A project specialist was hired in February 2018 to lead this program. The SMCOE SRTS Coordinator partners with the project specialist, schools, and other stakeholders to embed the SRTS program and philosophy into existing school programs to make walking and biking part of school curriculum. These efforts, coupled with education and encouragement funded by the SRTS grant, will lead to a greater county-wide emphasis on the benefits of active transportation.

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

The SRTS Coordinator will continue to participate in various stakeholder groups throughout the county. In March 2018, schools highlighted in the San Mateo County HPP report, *Creating Safer Streets Near Schools*, met with their city staff counterparts. Creating opportunities for these two entities to collaborate will continue in 2018-19.

The SRTS/Green Infrastructure Pilot Program, which funds improvements at intersections and mid-block crossings near schools, will be implemented as well. A letter of support from the participating school district, explaining how the project would leverage SRTS programming to improve walking and biking conditions, was required as part of the municipality's application. Collaboration between cities and schools will provide safe passage for children far into the future.

Two grantees, Belmont-Redwood Shores and Redwood City 2020, were awarded funds for small capital infrastructure projects. Due to the funding gap and the extension of time to utilize funding, the projects will take place during the 2018-19 school year.

## Promote Walking and Biking to School

Many schools in the county are located in areas with topographic challenges that make it difficult for bicyclists. Efforts to promote safe bicycling practices will continue along with a greater effort to promote a culture of walking. Stranger danger on the walk or bike ride to school continued to be a top concern of parents who took the 2017-18 SRTS Parent/Caregiver Survey. A new vendor added to the list of approved service providers in 2017-18

may help address this concern. Kidpower teaches people of all ages and abilities how to use their power to stay safe, be aware, and act wisely in all situations, including while walking or biking to and from school. This, coupled with traditional pedestrian and bicycle education, will lead to greater self-efficacy in regards to readiness for walking or biking to school.

## Develop Community Advisory Committee Membership

The SRTS Community Advisory Committee meets four times per year to provide feedback on program direction and goals. An effort will be made to include additional SRTS stakeholders such as law enforcement and elected officials. A well-rounded committee will enhance program development.

## Professional Development Opportunities

Professional development (PD) opportunities offered in the 2018-19 school year will build the capacity of SRTS partners and district level coordinators. PD will include *Why Walking Matters & How to Lead a Walk Audit* as well as *The Slow Way Home*, a film and panel discussion.





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