



San Mateo County **SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

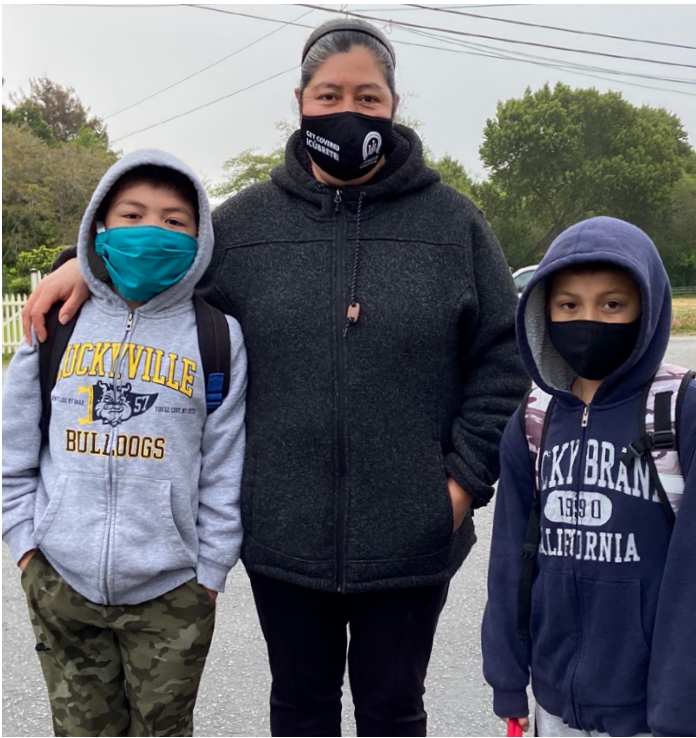
Healthy Kids • Green Communities • Safe Journeys

2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT



SAN MATEO
COUNTY
OFFICE OF
EDUCATION

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



BACKGROUND

As fall 2020 approached, preparations were made for a return to Safe Routes to School (SRTS) business as usual. Twenty grantees from school districts across the county were awarded \$253,000 in non-infrastructure funding from the San Mateo County City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) and \$121,000 for infrastructure and special projects from the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (TA). Grantees made plans for in-person bike rodeos, bike and pedestrian classroom presentations, and walk and bike to school days. Unfortunately, as the COVID-19 virus continued to rage across the state, most San Mateo County schools did not return to in-person learning until late Spring 2021. This created an opportunity to improve virtual offerings that began when schools were closed in Spring 2020 and to continue focusing on helping children have a safe route to anywhere as they continued to engage in distance learning. San

Mateo County Safe Routes to School continued to be a leader in innovative, inclusive, and creative programming during the 2020-2021 school year.

With the unwavering support of C/CAG, the agency that brought Safe Routes to School to San Mateo County eleven years ago, the San Mateo County Office of Education successfully delivered Safe Routes to School programming to students across the county in a variety of ways. An exciting and new collaboration with the Transportation Authority allowed the Safe Routes to School program to provide additional funding for special projects and small capital infrastructure on or near school campuses.

Walking and biking to school enables school children to become familiar with their neighborhood, incorporate physical activity into their day, mitigate climate change, reduce traffic congestion, and improve air quality around schools. The San Mateo County Office of Education Safe Routes to School program works in partnership with municipalities, schools, community partners, and Safe Routes to School service providers to promote and encourage active transportation across the county and encourage infrastructure to support it. By continuing to invest in education, encouragement, and infrastructure that supports safe walking and biking, there will be a change in transportation among school children in San Mateo County.

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

Participation Breakdown

K-6 Schools	61
K-8 Schools	13
Middle Schools	14
High Schools	6

Total number of schools supported in '20-'21 . . .	94
Walkability and Bikeability Audits.	2
Total assemblies, bike rodeos, education, encouragement events	102
Total route maps	0

Partner Organizations

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

Schools and Districts

(20-21 C/CAG and TA Grantees)

Belmont-Redwood Shores
School District

Brisbane School District

Burlingame School District

Cabrillo Unified School District

George Washington Elementary
(JESD)

Las Lomas Elementary School
District

Los Cerritos Elementary School
District (SSFUSD)

Menlo Park City School District

Menlo-Atherton High School
(SUHSD)

MH Tobias Elementary School
(JESD)

Ravenswood City School District

Redwood City 2020 (RWCSD)

Redwood High School (SUHSD)

San Bruno Park School District

San Carlos School District

San Mateo-Foster City
School District

Sunshine Gardens Elementary
School (SSFUSD)

Westlake Elementary School (JESD)

Woodrow Wilson Elementary
(JESD)

Woodside High School (SUHSD)

Cities and Organizations

*This is a list of the various
partners SRTS worked with
throughout the 20-21 school year.*

Active Transportation Resource
Center

California Office of Traffic Safety

Caltrans

City/County Association of
Governments

City of Daly City

City of Half Moon Bay

City of Menlo Park

City of Redwood City

City of South San Francisco

Community Trust

County of San Mateo

Office of Sustainability

Parents for Safe Routes

Reimagine Samtrans

Safe Kids Coalition

San Mateo County Health
Planning and Policy

San Mateo County Office of
Sustainability

San Mateo County Transit
District (SamTrans)

San Mateo County Transportation
Authority

Spare the Air Youth Technical
Advisory Committee

Stanford University, Our Voice
Initiative

Transportation Equity Allied
Movement

UC Davis Cooperative Extension

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

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 the San Mateo County City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG), the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (TA), and the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE). Funding for the program is made possible through a combination of federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funds and local C/CAG Measure M funds as well as Measure W funds from the TA. During the 2020-2021 school year, other partners and collaborators included: municipalities throughout San Mateo County, Second Harvest Food Bank, California Office of Traffic Safety, Caltrans Active Transportation Program, San Mateo County Health

Policy and Planning, Spare the Air Youth Technical Advisory Committee, Alta Planning + Design, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and a variety of approved service providers listed on page 5.

Specific support to participants included remote learning and engagement options during distance learning, the annual grant award program, professional development and training, connection to various Safe Routes to School resources, assistance in city/school relationship building, customized outreach, consultation, technical assistance, and countywide event coordination with resources on how to promote walking and biking during distance learning. SMCOE's Safe Routes to School coordinator leads a team of five other Safe Routes to School practitioners, including a project specialist, two AmeriCorps Fellows, and two consultants. During the 2020-2021 school year, the team collaborated with district administration, wellness coordinators, teachers, parents, community partners, and stakeholders to encourage young people to take

a break from their computers while learning at home and go for a walk or bike ride in their neighborhood. When the majority of schools did not reopen in Fall 2020 due to the pandemic, the mantra adopted at the beginning of the pandemic remained the same – Safe Routes to *Anywhere*.

Framework for Success

The San Mateo County Safe Routes to School Program was modeled after the nationally recognized Six E's framework. The 6 E's are: Education, Encouragement, Evaluation, Engineering, Equity, and Engagement. When included as part of a comprehensive Safe Routes to School program, the Six E's are an effective approach to creating safer environments for walking and biking.

Education: Education plays a key role in Safe Routes to School programming. Education is delivered in a multitude of ways and includes school assemblies, classroom instruction, bicycle and pedestrian rodeos, wellness programs, student clubs, and family events.

Cities and Organizations

This is a list of the various partners SRTS worked with throughout the 20-21 school year.

Active Transportation Resource Center	Safe Kids Coalition
California Office of Traffic Safety	San Mateo County Health Planning and Policy
Caltrans	San Mateo County Office of Sustainability
City/County Association of Governments	San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans)
City of Daly City	San Mateo County Transportation Authority
City of Half Moon Bay	Spare the Air Youth Technical Advisory Committee
City of Menlo Park	Stanford University, Our Voice Initiative
City of Redwood City	Transportation Equity Allied Movement
City of South San Francisco	UC Davis Cooperative Extension
Community Trust	
County of San Mateo Office of Sustainability	
Parents for Safe Routes	
Reimagine Samtrans	



Approved Service Providers

- **Alta Planning + Design** – traffic analysis, route maps, GIS modeling, encouragement activities, community policies, bike share programs
- **Earthcapades** – live and virtual assemblies emphasizing active transportation's effects on the environment
- **Ecology Action** – walk smart and bike smart programs
- **Kidpower** – safety trainings, workshops, and materials for children and adults
- **Marine Science Institute** – interactive, hands-on adventures with San Francisco Bay Area marine life to show how active transportation helps the environment
- **Music Notes** – live or pre-recorded concerts and songwriting workshops teaching students about walking and biking safety via music
- **Our Voice** – mobile app that collects community-generated data to help facilitate discussion for improving and planning walking/biking infrastructure
- **Parisi** – walk/bike audits, school route maps, training and safety education
- **Perfection on Wheels** – bicycle stunt show emphasizes the importance of wearing a helmet and riding a bike safely
- **Pik My Kid** – mobile application and consultation to improve daily school dismissals and traffic
- **Safe Moves** – bike rodeos, parent workshops, family bike rides
- **Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition** – pedestrian and bicycling safety skills, bike rodeos
- **Toole Design/TransForm** – programming for connecting students to walking and biking by relating active transportation to locations and issues local to them
- **YBIke** – bike rodeos, bike sheds, afterschool clubs, and assemblies

These activities increase active participation in SRTS events throughout the school year. Since March 2020, service providers, educators, and SRTS coordinators have included virtual services in their delivery to support education, including virtual classroom presentations, field trips, and SRTS Story Time. Although many schools returned to in-person learning in the latter half of the 2020-2021 school year, many still continued to schedule virtual education events with outside organizations for their students due to COVID-19 restrictions. Education provides 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 protecting the environment, promoting healthy lifestyles, and reducing traffic congestion near/around schools.

Engagement: All Safe Routes to School initiatives begin by listening to students, families, teachers, and school leaders. Safe Routes to School does not use a “cookie-cutter” approach. Working with existing

community organizations to build intentional, ongoing engagement opportunities provides a Safe Routes to School experience that meets the needs of the school community. The San Mateo County Safe Routes to School team responded to requests from grantees by working with service providers to create virtual bike and pedestrian education, advocating for in-person bike rodeos for remote learning centers, and providing resources to keep students safe from COVID-19.

Encouragement: Encouragement events and activities are intended to spark interest in walking and biking to school as opposed to relying on single occupancy vehicles. Encouragement events, such as Walk and Roll to School Days, go hand in hand with educational activities. Students are provided with the opportunity to practice safe walking and biking behaviors, and encouragement activities generate interest, build community, and sustain momentum by celebrating success at these events. Countywide encouragement events include: International Walk to School Day in October, Ruby Bridges Walk to School

Day in November, Earth Day in April, and Bike to School Day in May. Schools and families are encouraged to walk/bike to school year-round by establishing and promoting weekly or monthly Walk and Roll to School Days. Regular encouragement activities are essential to shifting modes of travel from single occupancy vehicles to more active forms of transportation. In March 2020, when San Mateo County entered into shelter-in-place and most travel to school was stalled, SMCOE shifted encouragement activities to extend beyond school-related travel. Safe Routes to Anywhere and Walk to Anywhere Days have helped SRTS programming continue encouragement activities outside of school-related travel.

Evaluation: Evaluation is an important element of any SRTS program. Evaluation can determine if the most vital needs are addressed, appropriate strategies are used, and desired results are achieved. The two main evaluation methods in the SRTS program are

student travel tallies and the parent and caregiver survey. Student travel tallies are collected twice a year and measure how students get to and from school. Student travel tallies can serve as a metric for the effectiveness of encouragement and education activities. These data are collected through the National Safe Routes Student Travel Tally Form and are computed with the assistance of the National Safe Routes Data Center.

The SRTS parent/caregiver survey asks for information regarding factors that affect a parent or caregiver's decision to 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 provided in English and Spanish and is available online as well as in print. The 2020-2021 iteration of the annual parent survey included questions that pertain to safety and health concerns due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Safe Routes to Schools Shared Goals

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

Grant program funded by federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, local C/CAG Measure M funds (which may be used for education and encouragement), and Transportation Authority Measure VV funds (which may be used for small capital infrastructure and special projects).

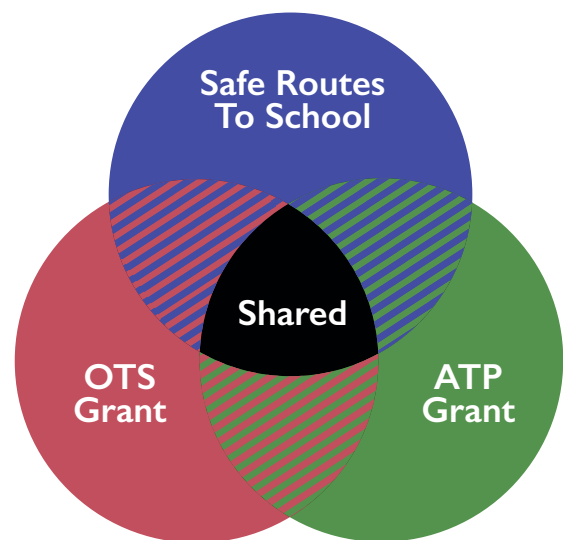
Districts or individual schools apply for funding to implement walking and biking education and encouragement and/or small capital infrastructure improvements.

Active Transportation Program (ATP)

Cycle 1 Caltrans ATP Grant to support the creation and implementation of *Resilient Neighborhoods*, a standards-aligned Safe Routes to School curriculum.

Office of Traffic Safety (OTS)

Equity-focused funding from the California Office of Traffic Safety to support ten schools in developing a Safe Routes to School program. The schools are in areas of the county that have been identified as hotspots for pedestrian and bicycle collisions.



Shared Goals

- Educate and encourage children and their families to walk and bike to school
- Assist cities and their respective schools in developing a collaborative relationship

Shared Expectations

- Participation in county-wide walk and roll to school days
- Parent/Caregiver Survey and Student Travel Tallies
- Promotion of active transportation

2020-2021 Events

Presentations

- Back to School Travel, City Streets – July 17, 2020
- Walk/Bike Places Poster Session: Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day – August 3, 2020
- SRTS Summit – August 27, 2020
- SRTS Adaptations and Insights During the COVID-19 Pandemic – October 27, 2020
- Safer California Bike/Ped Session Presentation: Safe Routes to Zoom: Bike/Ped Safety and Community Engagement in the Time of COVID-19 – November 17, 2020
- Quarterly Coordinator Meetings – December 15, 2020, March 4, 2021, May 13, 2021
- Walk/Bike/Places Presentation: Safe Routes to Zoom and How to Create a Virtual Escape Room for Your Students – June 16, 2021
- San Mateo County BPAC Presentation: Safe Routes to School in San Mateo County – June 17, 2021
- Walk to Anywhere Week (in lieu of International Walk to School Day) – October 5-9, 2020
- Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day – November 18, 2020
- Earth Day – April 22, 2021
- Safe Routes to School Story Time – February 24 - May 12, 2021
- Bike to School Day and Bike Month – May 5, 2021 and the entire month of May
- Weekly/Monthly Walk & Roll to School Days – Fall 2020 - Spring 2021

Encouragement Events

- Pedestrian Safety Month – September 2020

Engineering: In addition to the other E's, engineering allows for broader collaboration with local cities, municipalities, and other public agencies and stakeholders to identify and address barriers to walking, bicycling, and accessing transit.

Walk and bike safety audits assess the walkability and bikeability of a school and its surrounding environment. These audits include analyzing traffic patterns and student travel. Walk and bike audits allow for direct and indirect feedback for potential positive changes. Suggested walking and biking route maps are also generated in order to provide an effective tool for safe and efficient travel flow. Engineering proposals tend to focus on smaller infrastructure projects, which include painting parking lots, directing traffic flow, designating pick up and drop off zones, and installing bicycle racks.

Equity: Children from families with limited financial means are more likely to walk to school out of necessity and often face busy streets, poor infrastructure, and more instances of crime or violence during their trips to and from school. Communities with high poverty rates have historically lacked policies, funding, or other forms of support to ensure community

streets are safe for walking and biking. Additionally, these communities experience high injury and fatality rates from traffic crashes, due in large part to years of disinvestment in safe infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. Due to these factors, fatality rates nationwide are twice as high for pedestrians in under-resourced metropolitan areas than those in neighborhoods with low poverty rates.

Supporting accessible and equitable programming has become the foundation of the SMCOE SRTS Program. The growing focus on equity has made it possible to focus on the needs of all students, with particular emphasis on providing access and support for students with limited financial means, students of color, students of all genders, students with disabilities, and others. This foundation ensures safe, healthy, and fair outcomes for all. SRTS has committed to building programs around equity by focusing Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) funding in under-resourced communities within the county, and providing in-depth technical assistance to schools serving low income communities with higher rates of traffic collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists. During the 2020-2021 school year, SRTS utilized OTS funding to improve walking

and biking safety for two priority schools in under-resourced neighborhoods within a ½ mile radius of unsafe intersections. The program provided educational opportunities for students to learn about safe walking and biking practices and improved partnerships between schools, their local municipalities, and community organizations.

2020-2021 Coordinator Support

The following workshops and opportunities were offered during the 2020-2021 school year to support school and district Safe Routes to School Coordinators.

Safe Routes to School Coordinator Meetings: The Safe Routes to School Coordinators met quarterly via Zoom. Meetings included presentations by various partners on several topics, including resources for continuing Safe Routes to School programming during distance learning.

Safe Routes to School Summit: The sixth Annual Safe Routes to School Summit was held virtually and brought SRTS practitioners from San Mateo County and beyond together for workshops, a vendor showcase, and sharing of best practices. This summit is the only one of its kind in the Bay Area.

Technical Assistance: SMCOE's Safe Routes to School Coordinator provided support and technical assistance throughout the 2020-2021 school year and implemented twice weekly drop-in office hours on Zoom.

2020-21 YEAR IN REVIEW

2020-2021 Resilient Neighborhoods Curriculum

The 2020-2021 school year marked the third year of implementing the SRTS Resilient Neighborhoods transportation curriculum, with C/CAG's support in providing teacher stipends for the training. The curriculum was adopted as one of the official topical pathways for the Solutionary Teacher Fellowship, formerly called the San Mateo Environmental Literacy Collaborative Teacher Fellowship. The fellowship, a

Crossing Guards (TA Funded)

Burlingame School District:

- Established new crossing guard

Westlake Elementary School:

- Purchased signage and equipment for safety patrol

San Carlos School District:

- Developed schedule and contract for crossing guards to support five intersections

Sunshine Gardens Elementary School:

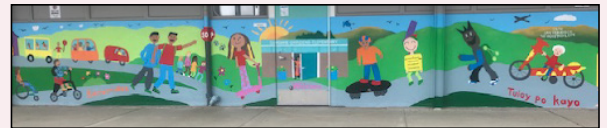
- Used funding to pay for a crossing guard and two school employees to help families cross streets

Murals (TA Funded)

Cabrillo Unified School District:



Sunshine Gardens Elementary School:



Signage

Burlingame School District:

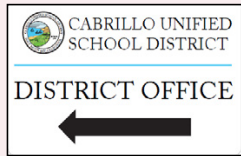
- Provided traffic cones and barriers to one school site to help create a safety zone for COVID-compliant student un/loading.
- Purchased and placed pedestrian safety signs at two school sites.

Cabrillo Unified School District:

- Posted "Drive Safely" yard signs around some schools



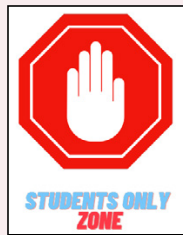
2021 SRTS Special Projects and Infrastructure



- Placed directional signage around district office.
- Ordered parking lot safety supplies (signage, cones) for schools in preparation for return to in-person learning

San Carlos School District:

- Distributed signage to assist with directing students back to school during return to in-person learning
- Purchased additional traffic signs and materials to help improve visibility for bicyclists and pedestrians, such as cones and arrow signs



Scooter/Bicycle Initiatives (TA Funded)

Burlingame School District:

- Replaced outdated racks at one school site.
- Expanded bike parking at one school site.
- Built ten custom scooter racks for distribution to 1-2 school sites.

Menlo-Atherton High School:

- Repaired donated bicycles and distributed them to students
- Supported material refreshment and bicycle education at school's bike shed

Sunshine Gardens Elementary School:

- Purchased a covered bike rack



Infrastructure Planning and Design

Burlingame School District:

- Worked with city planners to design curbside operations for loading zones at two school sites.

Cabrillo Unified School District:

- Began construction for a multi-modal trail for El Granada Elementary School



Small Capital Infrastructure (TA Funded)

MH Tobias Elementary School:

- Repaired and made improvements on local sidewalk
- Cleared overgrown bush and garbage in the area
- Purchased storage for cones and flags in preparation for return to in-person learning

Woodrow Wilson Elementary School:

- Developed and painted bike path
- Created educational material to support use of the bike path

Las Lomas Elementary School District:

- Installed Rapid Flashing Beacon

Other

San Carlos School District:

- Coordinated with adjacent programs to ensure families understood how to use the school bus system and how to navigate the changing phase schedules
- Coordinated four extra school bus routes, which helped reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles at school campuses

knowledge-to-action program, builds teacher capacity for designing and delivering learning experiences that integrate real-world environmental justice issues that are student-centered, problem-project-based, and solutions-oriented. It is an opportunity for region-wide educators to implement environmental literacy and standards-aligned curriculum into their classrooms through service learning and a solutionary framework, which empowers students to explore, understand, and tackle real-world issues that impact the environment.

The Solutionary Teacher Fellowship included the SRTS Resilient Neighborhoods curriculum in its four-day long, immersive professional development and training, which was held on Zoom in 2020 due to the pandemic. Through the lens of active transportation, educators learned how to teach their students to assess their neighborhoods, understand the transportation needs in their communities, and ultimately make an informed and healthy decision regarding how they choose to travel to school. Given the COVID-19 restraints on public gatherings, the teacher fellows participated in virtual synchronous and asynchronous learning activi-

ties to help them teach the subject matter virtually, while still emphasizing the importance of teaching environmental, social, and transportation justice to students.

Safe Routes Response to the Pandemic

When the majority of students did not return to in-person learning in Fall 2020, the Safe Routes to School team continued to provide virtual bike and pedestrian education through Safe Routes to School story time in Spanish and English and technical assistance to Safe Routes to School service providers on what would and would not work for schools in the virtual realm. The Safe Routes to School team also looked for opportunities to provide in-person bike and pedestrian education through learning hubs that sprung up around the county. The team developed COVID-19 safety protocols and worked with service providers to implement physically-distant bike rodeos.

In lieu of International Walk to School Day, the Safe Routes to School Team promoted “Walk to Anywhere



Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day

The Martin Elementary School students who began Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day (RBWTSD) in 2018 had a dream to take the event across the nation. In the first year, 14 San Mateo County schools participated. That number increased to 25 schools in 2019. In 2020, despite the pandemic, 55 schools across the country participated in RBWTSD! The day has captured the imagination of young people across the country because of the efforts of the San Mateo County Safe Routes to School team, which created a website, sign-up link, and resource page and worked with a videographer and Martin Elementary School students to create a promotional video that was shared across the country. Thanks to the efforts of the Martin Elementary School students and their collaboration with AAA, a RBWTSD resolution for the California State Senate was in the works at the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year. Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day will continue to gain traction across the country and it started right here, in San Mateo County.

2020-21 Program Participants

DISTRICT	BIKE RODEOS	BIKE SKILLS PRESENTATIONS	PEDESTRIAN SKILLS PRESENTATIONS	CLASS-ROOM PRESENTATIONS	ASSEMBLIES	COMMUNITY EVENTS	WALK AUDITS	WALK AND ROLL TO SCHOOL DAYS	BIKE SHED/CLUB	POSTER CONTESTS
Belmont-Redwood Shores SD					2			1		
Brisbane SD		1				3		2		1
Burlingame SD							1	1	3	
Cabrillo SD		2	1		15			2		3
Jefferson Elementary SD					6	3		23		
Las Lomitas SD			1					7		
Menlo Park City SD			5			5				
Ravenswood SD		3			2	2				
Redwood City Together	1						1	3		
San Bruno Park SD			3	2				1		1
San Carlos SD		2	2			2		1		
San Mateo-Foster City SD	1									
Sequoia Union High School District								2	7	
South San Francisco Unified SD	1				3			1		

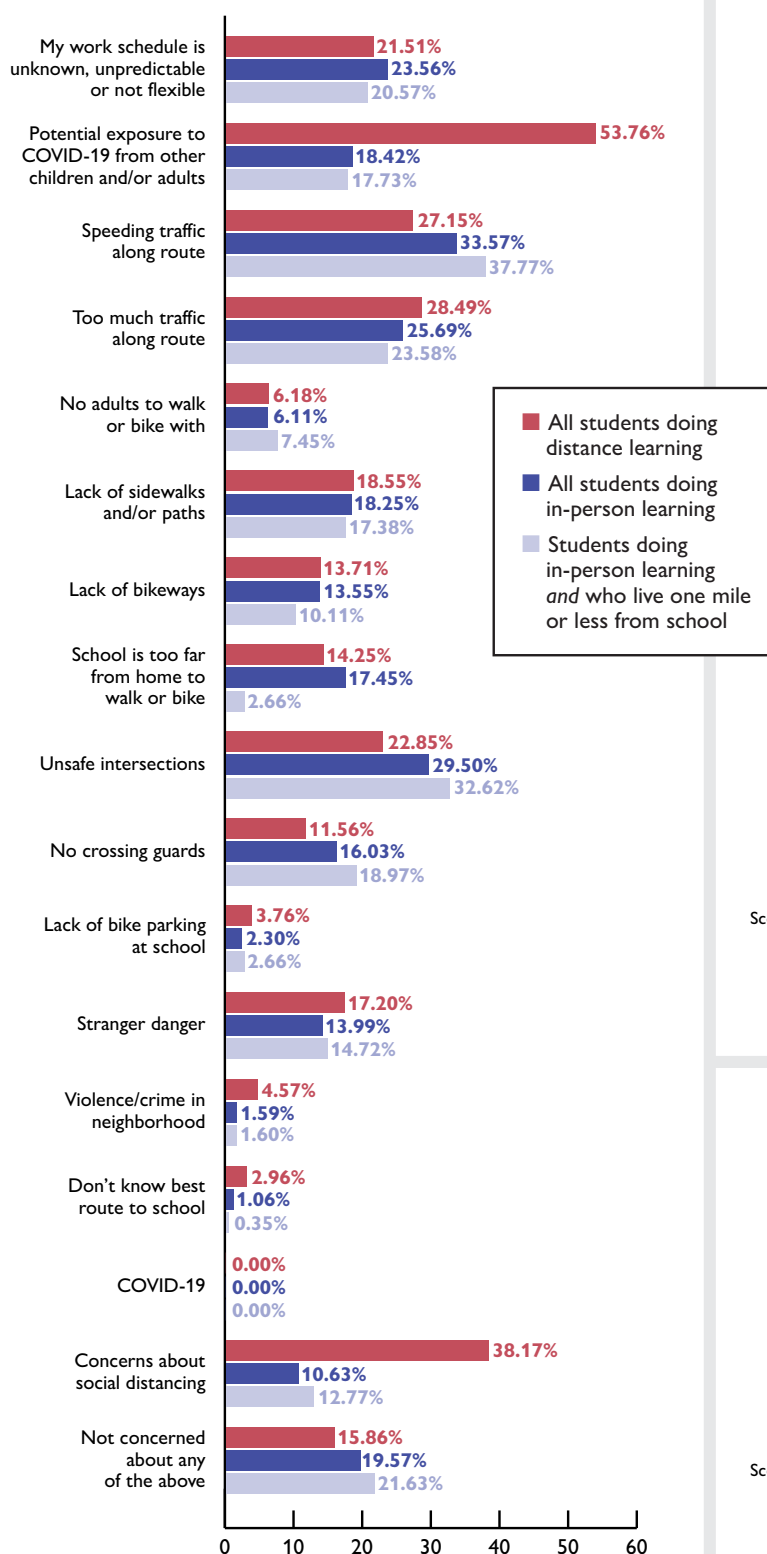
Day” with a poster that reminded students to “unplug, put on their masks, and go for a walk.” Bike to School Day became “Bike to Anywhere Month.” The team promoted this in conjunction with Commute.org and set up a Safe Routes to School information table in downtown San Mateo where they gave away helmets, reflective vests, bike tags, and slap bands.

Funding from the Office of Traffic Safety allowed the Safe Routes to School team to host the county’s first virtual walk audit. The walk audit was a huge success as the team partnered with Sunshine Gardens Elementary School in South San Francisco, Stanford’s Our Voice initiative, and Mark Fenton, a nationally recognized public health and transportation consultant. Our Voice provided user training and access to the Discovery Tool App, which allowed participants to assess the streets around Sunshine Gardens on their own time and upload their assessments into a database. The

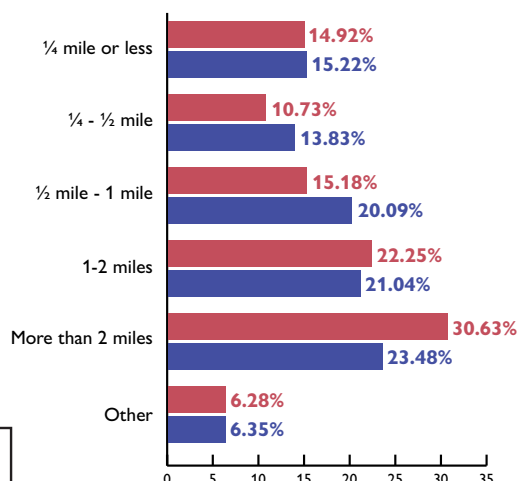


20-21 Safe Routes to School Parent/Caregiver Survey Results

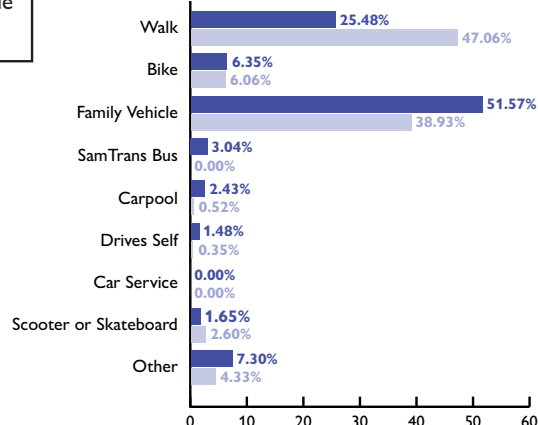
What challenges or concerns do you currently have about getting your child/children to/from school?



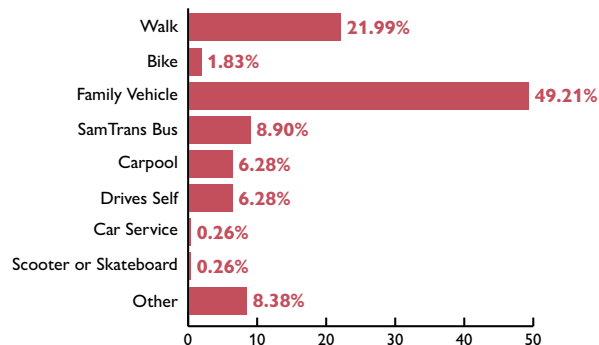
What is the approximate distance from your home to the school?



How do your child/children typically get to and from school?

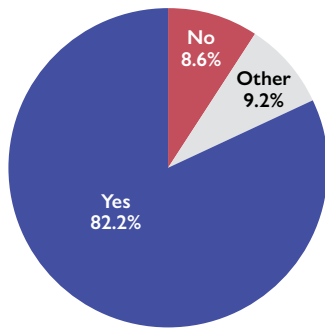


Before schools closed to in-person learning, how did your child/children typically get to and from school?



Due to the pandemic and schools being in distance learning, 2020-21 Student Travel Tally data was not collected.

When your child/children returns to school in person, will they travel to school in the same manner as before schools closed?



result was a report that included community-generated data on hotspots and suggestions for improving safety for children who walk and bike to school. All trainings and meetings were bilingual.

During the 2020-2021 school year, the Safe Routes to School team created what is perhaps the first Safe Routes to School Virtual Escape Room in the country! The escape room includes puzzles, lessons, and videos on bike and pedestrian education in the context of helping Baby Yoda get home safely. The escape room was well received and a few iterations of it have popped up across the country.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated hardships for everyone but especially for low-income families. With that in mind, the Safe Routes to School team gave special attention to students in East Palo Alto (EPA). This included a partnership with the Cooline Team, which provides free activities and leadership training for students in EPA. The Safe Routes to School team supported their efforts by providing a virtual assembly, reflective items to keep students safe while walking and biking, and technical assistance for their virtual camps. The team also worked with the Boys and Girls Club to bring multi-day Safe Routes to School programming to their learning hub.

Safe Routes to School for Health and Wellness

In 2014, SMCOE was awarded funding from Caltrans' Cycle I Active Transportation Program (ATP) grant. However, the organization was unable to access the grant funds until May 2017, due to specific funding requirements. Grant funds were used to hire a project

specialist to deepen schools' connection to SRTS through resources designed to encourage sustainable, long-term programming that shifts school culture in San Mateo County from one that enables families to drive to school to one that promotes safe, accessible, active transportation. These resources include an administrator toolkit that assists school site administrators in addressing common SRTS issues, such as bullying and personal safety, and provides communication resources for education and encouragement events; a parent and community engagement toolkit that encourages parents to become actively involved in SRTS and provides fun and engaging ideas for encouragement events; planning tools to help facilitate event coordination; and a curriculum that meets science, engineering, computer science, health, and social science standards.

The ATP project specialist worked with educators, administrators, and community organizations across the county to implement these resources and provide additional technical assistance to 14 schools located in communities of concern. These schools received hands-on technical assistance and resources that included: pedestrian and bicycle rodeos, parent engagement workshops and resources, walk and bike



audits, and additional support for walk/bike to school encouragement events. In addition, more than 50 educators county-wide have been trained in the SRTS Transportation-focused Environmental Literacy Curriculum since its inception in the 2018-2019 school year. Through the support of C/CAG, SRTS staff were able to offer a teacher stipend to those implementing the curriculum in their classrooms across the county. The standards-aligned solutions-focused curriculum allows educators and students to assess their neighborhoods, understand transportation needs in their communities, and make an informed and healthy decision regarding how they choose to travel to school. The combined efforts of the SRTS staff helped pave the way for a greater county-wide emphasis on the benefits of active transportation. The ATP funded grant received an extension from Caltrans due to the pandemic and is scheduled to close out in June 2022, but the impacts of the program have created a lasting impact for schools county-wide.

FUTURE OF SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Several goals for the future of Safe Routes to School were identified during the 2020-2021 school year. They include:

- continue to **provide technical assistance that reflects the needs of individual schools**
- continue to deliver the SRTS program with an **equity lens**
- focus on **Safe Routes to Anywhere**
- continue to assist schools and their municipalities in **relationship building**
- assess the **high injury network** across the county
- **evaluate** the Safe Routes to School program
- continue to work with **AmeriCorps Fellows**

Program Goals

Technical Assistance: Safe Routes to School programming is contingent on the needs of the school community. The San Mateo County Safe Routes to



School program will continue to engage with all school stakeholders to provide technical assistance to schools to address barriers to walking and biking.

Equity Lens: In May 2021, the SMCOE SRTS program was awarded a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety for the fourth year in a row. This grant has allowed the program to focus Safe Routes to School efforts on priority schools in under-resourced areas of the county with the majority of students on free and reduced lunch. Students in areas with high poverty rates often walk and bike to school out of necessity. The OTS grant has enhanced the equity lens of the SRTS program by providing more access to education and encouragement, community engagement, and bike helmets.

Safe Routes to Anywhere: The Safe Routes to School Team will continue to focus on advocating for safe routes to anywhere. When a community is safe for children to walk and bike, it will be safe for everyone!

Assist Schools and Their Municipalities in Relationship Building: Oftentimes, school personnel do not know who to contact in the city when a problem arises with infrastructure, traffic conditions, or broken sidewalks. Additionally, city personnel do not know who to contact at the schools. The Safe Routes to School team will continue to address this issue by being the liaison between cities and their respective schools. In July 2020, the SRTS team held a webinar focused on cities helping students return to school safely. Many of the cities in attendance had implemented a “slow streets” program that included blocking off streets to provide outdoor seating for restaurants. The webinar presented the idea of piloting the same thing for schools. Unfortunately,

many children did not return to school for in-person learning in Fall 2020 but the Safe Routes to School team continued to bridge the gap that sometimes exists between cities and schools.

High Injury Network: The San Mateo County report *Creating Safer Streets Near Schools* was published in 2017. This report identified schools near unsafe intersections that were prioritized for Safe Routes to School programming. Since 2017, several schools that were identified have closed. The Safe Routes to School team will work with Alta Planning + Design to create a high injury network profile for the county and use it to inform future Safe Routes to School work.

Evaluation: Eleven years ago, C/CAG had the foresight to bring Safe Routes to School to San Mateo County. Since that time, the program has grown exponentially and includes additional funding sources. An evaluation of the program and development of a strategic plan will take place during the 2021-2022 school year. Results of the evaluation and subsequent strategic plan will guide the future of Safe Routes to School in San Mateo County.

AmeriCorps Fellows: The Safe Routes to School program has partnered with Climate Corps AmeriCorps Fellows from Bay Area Community Resources to manage the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) grant since the 2018-2019 school year. This partnership offers a recent college graduate the opportunity to explore the world of active transportation and sustainability through the Safe Routes to School lens. In the 2020-2021 school year, two fellows worked with the SRTS program. One worked on the OTS grant and the other fellow, whose position was funded by C/CAG, coordinated the Safe Routes to School grant for the Ravenswood City School District (RCSD). This fellow was a game changer for SRTS in East Palo Alto. She was able to bring programming to an area of the county that has been historically underserved in Safe Routes to School due to lack of capacity and staffing. This very successful partnership will continue to serve the program and county well!





San Mateo County **SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

Healthy Kids • Green Communities • Safe Journeys



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