

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023-2024



## BACKGROUND

San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) Safe Routes to School is dedicated to creating safe, equitable, and accessible pathways for students to walk and bicycle to school. Rooted in the 6 Es – Education, Encouragement, Engagement, Equity, Evaluation, and Engineering – the SRTS program brings schools, municipalities, and community organizations together to collaborate on making walking and bicycling safer for students and their families, which in turn enhances safety and sustainability for the larger community. This annual report highlights key activities, partnerships, and accomplishments during the 2023-2024 school year and emphasizes the program's commitment to supporting schools and equity-priority communities across the county.

## VISION

The efforts of SRTS 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 SRTS encourages and enables school children to walk and bicycle to school by implementing projects and activities that improve children's health, well-being, and safety, which result in less traffic congestion and emissions caused by school-related travel.

## GOALS

The San Mateo County SRTS program has two main goals:

- 1. Promote Active Transportation and Safety Education** Partner with schools and community-based organizations to encourage families to choose walking, biking, or other active transportation options for school commutes. This helps reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality while providing students and families with education on pedestrian and bicycle safety and raising awareness of environmental impacts.
- 2. Strengthen School-Municipality Partnerships** Support schools in building strong relationships with local municipalities to improve active transportation opportunities for children and families. By fostering communication between schools and cities, the program helps address transportation-related challenges and develop practical solutions that prioritize student safety and accessibility.



## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The San Mateo County SRTS program is a collaborative effort funded by the San Mateo County City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG), San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA), and the California Office of Traffic Safety. Funding for the program is made possible through a combination of federal CMAQ funds and local C/CAG Measure M funds as well as Measure W funds from SMCTA. Funding from OTS is from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

During the 2023-2024 school year, other partners and collaborators included San Mateo County school districts, municipalities throughout the county, 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 promotional items for walk and bike to school days, an annual grant award program, professional development and training, various Safe Routes to School resources, assistance in city/school relationship building, customized outreach, consultation, technical assistance, and countywide event coordination.

During the 2023-2024 school year, the San Mateo County SRTS team included a coordinator, project specialist, two AmeriCorps Fellows, and a variety of consultants. The team collaborated with district administration, transportation engineers, city

planners, wellness coordinators, principals, teachers, parents, community partners, and stakeholders to encourage active modes of transportation to school.

## SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Throughout the year, the San Mateo County SRTS team provided technical assistance to schools across the county by offering guidance on implementing active transportation programs and addressing safety needs. This technical support involved tailored resources and troubleshooting to help schools foster active, safe commuting options for students.

## SUPPORTING TITLE I SCHOOLS: EQUITY IN ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Title I schools, which serve a high percentage of students from low-income families, benefit greatly from Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs that promote safe, active transportation. By addressing barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, safety concerns, and access to resources, SRTS helps ensure that students can walk and bike to school safely. Through education, community engagement, and targeted improvements, these initiatives support equity by fostering healthier, more connected school environments while empowering students and families with sustainable transportation options.



View list of Title I schools that have benefitted from SRTS

## NETWORK OF COLLABORATORS

The strength of the San Mateo County SRTS program lies in a broad network of partners. Key partners this year included:

- **Government Agencies:** SRTS worked with C/CAG, the San Mateo County Transportation Authority, and California's Office of Traffic Safety, all of which provided funding and support.
- **Schools:** Schools across the county engaged with SRTS initiatives, including active participation in Walk to School Day and Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day.
- **Municipalities:** Regular collaboration with cities fostered joint efforts to improve walking and biking infrastructure near schools, while task forces worked to align municipal goals with SRTS initiatives.
- **Community-Based Organizations:** SRTS worked closely with partners such as Ayudando Latinos a Soñar (ALAS) on events like the Farmworker

## PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



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

### 2023-24 Cities and Organizations

- AAA
- Active Transportation Resource Center
- Alta Planning + Design
- Bay Area Community Resources
- California Office of Traffic Safety
- Caltrans
- City of Daly City
- City of East Palo Alto
- City of Half Moon Bay
- City of Menlo Park
- City of Redwood City
- City of San Mateo
- City of South San Francisco
- City/County Association of Governments
- County of San Mateo
- Ruby Bridges Foundation
- Safe Kids Coalition
- Safe Routes to School National Partnership
- San Mateo County Office of Sustainability
- San Mateo Transit District (SamTrans)
- San Mateo County Transportation Authority
- Stanford University, Our Voice Initiative
- San Mateo County Health Policy and Planning

## APPROVED SERVICE PROVIDERS

- **Alta Planning + Design** – Traffic analysis, route maps, GIS modeling, encouragement activities, community policies, walk audits
- **EarthCapades** – Live and virtual assemblies emphasizing active transportation's effects on the environment
- **Ecology Action** – Walk smart and bike smart programs
- **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 concerts and songwriting workshops teaching students about walking and biking safety via music
- **Our Voice** – A Stanford University initiative that uses citizen science to improve health equity by using the Discovery Tool, a mobile app that collects community-generated data to help facilitate discussion for improving and planning walking/ biking infrastructure
- **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
- **Bike Mobile** – Mobile bike repair

Family Bike Night, where SRTS engaged with more than twenty agencies from across the county to provide resources to farmworker families.

- **Consultants:** The SRTS team partnered with Alta Planning + Design and Connected to Place to support the School Travel Fellowship. The team also contracted with educational service providers to provide bike and pedestrian safety education to schools countywide, including bike rodeos, assemblies, and classroom presentations.
- **Law Enforcement:** The California Highway Patrol (CHP) and San Mateo County Sheriff's Office played a significant role, particularly at the Farmworker Family event, where officers provided hands-on helmet fitting and education.
- **San Mateo County Public Health:** San Mateo County Health Policy and Planning supported several initiatives, including the School Travel Fellowship, walk audits, and the farmworker family event.

## FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

The San Mateo County Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program frames its work around the Six E's: Education, Engagement, Encouragement, Evaluation, Engineering, and Equity. These interconnected strategies foster safer, healthier, and more sustainable transportation options for students and their families, encouraging active modes of travel, carpooling, or public transit use. By reducing traffic congestion near schools and enhancing student safety, the SRTS program has become a vital resource for the community. Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, the program actively implemented the Six E's while exploring innovative ways to deepen its impact.

## EDUCATION

Education is a cornerstone of the San Mateo County SRTS program, equipping students and families with traffic safety skills and knowledge about how

transportation choices impact health and the environment. The program delivered education through school assemblies, classroom instruction, wellness programs, community events, and student clubs. Notable efforts in 2023-2024 included hosting a "train the trainer" Crossing Guard Training and using resources like the Our Voice app for student engagement. Partnerships with organizations like Music Notes and Safe Moves introduced interactive safety education, further reinforcing the importance of safe walking and biking.

## ENGAGEMENT

San Mateo County SRTS initiatives prioritize meaningful engagement through the Citizen Science Leadership Academy with a wide range of community members, including students, families, teachers, and community organizations. The program fostered collaboration to meet the unique needs of each school, exemplified by South San Francisco's "Every Kid Deserves a Bike" program, which SRTS supported to provide bicycle safety education to over 200 students at five Title 1 schools. Additionally, resources like the Slow Speed School Zones Guidebook supported community-led safety improvements.

The team's engagement extended to hosting walk audits, coordinating with partners at community events, and facilitating a Community Advisory Committee. Through parent/caregiver surveys and newsletter updates, families were actively involved in safety initiatives, ensuring a community-centered approach to improving school routes.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Encouragement efforts focus on building enthusiasm for walking and biking to school, inspiring new commute habits. Celebratory events like International Walk to School Day, Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, Earth Month, and Bike Month created excitement and reinforced safe travel behaviors. Monthly Walk and Roll to School Days provided ongoing momentum,

while school-led events received support through promotional materials and items, such as stickers and reflectors. These activities fostered a culture of active transportation, making walking and biking to school a rewarding and enjoyable experience.

## EVALUATION

Evaluation is critical for measuring progress and identifying areas for improvement. In 2023-2024, the San Mateo County SRTS program conducted student travel tallies and parent/caregiver surveys to better understand travel habits and barriers to active transportation. Insights from these evaluations informed strategic planning and enhanced program offerings. Quarterly reporting tracked accomplishments, and the program's success was further validated by receiving the prestigious Kent Award in 2024.

## ENGINEERING

Engineering focuses on creating safer streets and infrastructure for walking and biking. Collaboration with transportation professionals, such as Alta Planning + Design, enabled the program to address physical barriers to active transportation. Walk audits at five schools, facilitated by Alta Planning + Design and Mark Fenton, a public health, planning, and transportation consultant, assessed conditions and provided actionable recommendations. The City of South San Francisco secured \$2,000,000 in funding from the San Mateo County Transportation Authority to implement road safety improvements at two schools that participated in Safe Routes to School walk audits in Spring 2024. Demonstration projects, such as those developed through the School Travel Fellowship, showcased innovative traffic-calming solutions like curb extensions and safer crosswalks, making school zones more accessible and secure for students.

## WALK AUDIT LIST AND LIST OF STF CITIES AND SCHOOLS

### Mark Fenton Walk Audits:

- Las Lomas Elementary: 3/26/2024
- Buri Buri Elementary / Alta Loma Middle: 3/26/2024
- Woodside High: 3/28/2024
- George Washington Elementary: 3/27/2024

### Alta Walk Audits:

- Roy Cloud Elementary: 11/14/2023
- Clifford Elementary: 10/26/2023
- Ocean Shore Elementary: 10/12/2023

### Alta through School Travel Fellowship:

- Parkway Heights Middle: 3/19/2024
- Hillsdale High: 3/26/2024
- Costaño Elementary: 4/18/2024

### Schools and Cities that were part of the School Travel Fellowship Cycle 3:

- East Palo Alto - Costaño Elementary - Ravenswood City School District
- Menlo Park - Las Lomas Elementary - Las Lomas Elementary School District
- South San Francisco - Parkway Heights Middle School - SSFUSD
- San Mateo - Hillsdale High School - SMUHSD
- Redwood City - McKinley Institute of Technology - Redwood City School District

## PARTICIPATION BREAKDOWN

### 83 schools supported

- 59 K-5 Schools
- 7 K-8 Schools
- 12 Middle Schools
- 5 High Schools
- 11 schools had walk audits
- 33 bike/helmet safety performances
- 33 bike rodeos
- 20 bike/pedestrian educational concerts
- 2 Walk Smart programs
- 10 human impact on environment sessions

## EQUITY

Equity lies at the heart of the San Mateo County SRTS program, ensuring resources and activities are inclusive and tailored to the community's diverse needs. Efforts included providing multilingual materials, supporting schools with Special Education programs, and addressing systemic barriers such as air quality and socioeconomic challenges. Partnerships with organizations like Ayudando Latinos a Soñar and programs like Every Kid Deserves a Bike exemplified the program's commitment to reaching underserved groups. By prioritizing equity, the San Mateo County SRTS program empowered all students, regardless of their background, to access safe and sustainable transportation options.

## 2023-2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

### COASTSIDE SUPPORT

In 2023-2024, the San Mateo County SRTS program funded a dedicated coastside coordinator for the fourth consecutive year, ensuring that school districts along the San Mateo County coast received comprehensive support. All coastside school districts participated in encouragement events, provided educational programs at schools, and conducted SRTS Student Travel Tallies and Parent/Caregiver Surveys.

San Mateo County SRTS organized bicycle and pedestrian safety events for children in affordable housing communities and engaged directly with the

community at events like the Farmworker Convention in Pescadero and the 2023 Make it Main Street Back-to-School Block Party in Half Moon Bay. Coastside SRTS initiatives also included active involvement in the School Travel Fellowship, Walk Audits, and the Farmworker Family Bike Night.

In October 2023, a walk audit was conducted by Alta Planning + Design at Ocean Shore School, with follow-up meetings held with the school and the City of Pacifica to discuss priority recommendations. Partnerships with the City of Pacifica, the City of Half Moon Bay, and unincorporated San Mateo County resulted in advocacy for bicycle and pedestrian safety and support for infrastructure grant applications and project implementation throughout the school year.

Coastside school districts were also awarded grants through the SRTS Infrastructure and Special Projects program, funded by the San Mateo County Transportation Authority. These grants supported the implementation of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements in response to walk audits conducted in 2022-2023. Projects included upgrades near Ortega Elementary School in partnership with the City of Pacifica and safety enhancements on the Half Moon Bay High School campus. Additionally, funding was allocated to support bike programs at Pescadero Middle/High School, further strengthening active transportation and safety efforts on the coastside. SRTS initiatives are thriving on the coastside because of support from C/CAG and the San Mateo County Office of Education.



## AMERICORPS FELLOWS

AmeriCorps fellows from the Sustainability Service Corps have been a valuable addition to the San Mateo County SRTS program since 2018. Fellows are usually recent college graduates interested in the intersection of active transportation, education, equity, accessibility, and traffic safety. Their placement in the program allows them to engage with communities and develop their professional skills. Fellows primarily assist in managing the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) grant, which funds outreach and education programming for schools in equity priority neighborhoods that typically are located near unsafe roads and intersections. Programming is diverse and meant to teach K-8 students about pedestrian and bike safety in ways that are relevant, informative, and engaging. Examples of programming include bike and pedestrian rodeos and traffic safety assemblies.

During the 2023-2024 school year, fellows scheduled traffic safety programming and supported schools in participating in events such as International Walk to School Day, Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, Crossing Guard Appreciation Week, the Golden Sneaker Contest, Earth Month, and Bike Month. The fellows also used the OTS grant to provide ten Title I schools in San Mateo County with traffic safety equipment, including signs, cones, and crossing guard materials. Engaging with students in person, the fellows trained a team of Student Safety Valets at John Muir Elementary to help keep morning drop-off safe for all. The fellows supported the Every Kid Deserves a Bike program by providing 200 helmets and assisting students with proper fittings at four Title I schools in South San Francisco. Fellows also tabled at over a dozen events, including community bike events, retirement community functions, and environmental awareness events. At these events, community members engaged in active transportation trivia and received prizes in the form of educational materials, helmets, and reflective items. AmeriCorps fellows are a valuable addition to the Safe Routes to School program!

## SCHOOL TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP

The 2023-2024 School Travel Fellowship in San Mateo County fostered collaboration between schools, municipalities, and community partners to improve active transportation and traffic safety near schools. The program supported teams in identifying local transportation challenges and developing community-focused solutions. Demonstration projects showcased innovative approaches, such as traffic calming and infrastructure improvements. For example, Hillsdale High School in San Mateo implemented a 31st Avenue project with curb extensions and enhanced crosswalks, while Costaño Elementary School in East Palo Alto introduced a roundabout to improve pedestrian safety. Parkway Heights Middle School in South San Francisco addressed unsafe driving behaviors with vertical delineators and curb extensions. In Redwood City, the SPOKES bicycle maintenance program at McKinley Institute of Technology empowered students with cycling skills, and Menlo Park's team pivoted to improve communication for future crosswalk enhancements. These projects exemplified the fellowship's commitment to fostering safer, healthier, and more accessible routes to school while addressing unique community needs.



*Safe Routes to School 2024  
School Travel Fellowship Final  
Workshop Presentations*

Three projects initially launched through the School Travel Fellowship have now secured funding for design and/or infrastructure: the City of San Mateo (\$350,000 - SMCTA), East Palo Alto (\$400,000 - C/CAG), and South San Francisco (\$2,000,000 - SMCTA).

## FARMWORKER FAMILY BIKE NIGHT

Farmworker Family Bike Night was created in 2023 in response to the farmworker shooting in Half Moon Bay. The Safe Routes to School team collaborated with Ayudando Latinos a Soñar, Cabrillo Unified School District, the City of Half Moon Bay, and Supervisor Mueller's Office to organize the event as a way to support and uplift the farmworker community. The event featured a resource fair where agencies from across the county provided valuable services and information. Families also participated in a drawing for free bicycles, donated by the City of South San Francisco and community members. More than just a safety initiative, Farmworker Family Bike Night was a community celebration that recognized the vital contributions of farmworkers in San Mateo County.



Scan to watch the farmworker family bike night video



## GOLDEN SNEAKER CONTEST

The Golden Sneaker Contest, a hallmark of the San Mateo County SRTS program, aims to promote walking, rolling, carpooling, and using public transit for school commutes. This engaging event raises awareness about the benefits of active transportation, including enhanced physical and mental health, reduced carbon emissions, and improved air quality. The contest encourages teachers, students, and

families to collectively adopt sustainable travel habits, addressing the reliance on personal vehicles in San Mateo County. Participating classes track their alternative transportation choices over a two-week period of their choice, with incentives such as golden sneaker trophies and the chance to win a visit from a San Mateo County therapy dog. The 2024 contest ran from February 26 to March 22, with 13 schools participating. Teachers recorded daily transportation choices, and results were calculated by dividing the total number of sustainable trips by the number of students and participation days. Each school's top-performing class received a custom-made golden sneaker trophy, and five lucky schools won prize visits from a therapy dog. Feedback from school coordinators highlighted the contest's success in fostering excitement and enthusiasm for active transportation while educating participants about its benefits.

## CROSSING GUARD APPRECIATION WEEK

Crossing Guard Appreciation Week, held from March 18-22, 2024, celebrated the vital role of crossing guards in ensuring pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Organized by San Mateo County SRTS, this initiative honored 59 crossing guards across 28 participating schools. In appreciation of their contributions to student safety, each crossing guard received a reflective "World's Best Crossing Guard" stickers, a neon beanie, a visor, and a certificate.

Schools encouraged families to walk and roll to school throughout the week, fostering community engagement and alternative transportation. Students expressed gratitude for their crossing guard by creating thank-you cards and posters, adding a personal touch to the celebrations. This event not only highlighted the dedication of crossing guards but also inspired schools to prioritize active transportation as a safe and rewarding way to travel.

## SENIOR CENTER OUTREACH

Through the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) grant, efforts are focused on supporting two vulnerable populations in the county—children and seniors. Expanding outreach beyond schools, Safe Routes to School incorporated senior engagement into the 2023-2024 fiscal year, reaching three senior centers near school communities. The senior center initiative aims to enhance awareness of pedestrian and bicycling safety among adults aged 65 and older as 36 percent of the county's population is under 18 or over 65, groups that may have limited driving options. Providing seniors with information on safe walking and biking practices ensures equitable access to mobility for all.

Senior outreach events included:

- East Palo Alto Senior Center: Hosted a food distribution event where Safe Routes to School facilitated interactive activities, including a prize wheel with pedestrian and bicycling safety questions. Safety vests, bike lights, helmets, and pencils were distributed as prizes. Brochures with safety tips, local bike route maps, and OTS crossword puzzles were provided.
- San Bruno Senior Center: Held an outreach event focusing on pedestrian and bicycling safety, offering educational materials and giveaways to promote safe mobility for seniors.
- Robert Terra Ceglia Center (South San Francisco): Engaged seniors with resources on traffic safety, distributing materials and facilitating discussions on walking and biking best practices.
- Doelger Senior Center (Daly City): Provided an opportunity to connect with the senior community, share essential safety information, and encourage active transportation through interactive engagement and resource distribution.

## TRAFFIC SAFETY PROGRAMMING

The OTS grant brought traffic safety programming to San Mateo County schools and community events throughout the year. Schools in the Ravenswood City, San Bruno Park, and Jefferson Elementary school districts received complimentary educational assemblies related to traffic safety and active transportation, which educated students on pedestrian and bicycle safety through interactive performances featuring engaging themes to capture students' attention and reinforce traffic safety messages.



Bike Rodeos with Safe Moves, an organization specializing in interactive bicycle and pedestrian safety education, has been a long-time partner in promoting active transportation.:

- Featured a miniature city where students practiced navigating busy intersections while staying focused on their bikes.
- Provided hands-on experience in managing real-world traffic situations in a controlled environment.

Walking Field Trips with Ecology Action, a nonprofit dedicated to sustainability and transportation solutions, has extensive experience in Safe Routes to School programming.:

- Started with an engaging classroom presentation on pedestrian safety.
- Allowed students to walk through their school neighborhoods, applying safety skills in real-world settings.

Circus-Themed Assembly with Earthcapades, an organization known for its eco-educational performances and use of creative storytelling to engage students.:

- Combined juggling, unicycling, and comedy to make traffic safety and helmet safety lessons entertaining.

Hip-Hop-Themed Assembly with Music Notes, an organization that incorporates music into traffic safety education making it memorable through dynamic performances.

- Used music, rhythm, and rhyming to teach pedestrian and bicycle safety in a relatable way.

## SMALL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT SUPPORT

The San Mateo County Transportation Authority funded several small capital infrastructure and special projects as outlined in the chart below. Additionally, support was provided to Portola Elementary School in San Bruno in exploring options for painting a crosswalk in the parking lot. A group of parent volunteers had previously installed a temporary crosswalk using tape and requested assistance in making it more permanent. In collaboration with Alta Planning + Design and the San Bruno Park School District, meetings were held with the Division of the State Architect to discuss feasible options for painting the crosswalk in a timely manner. Discussions on the matter remain ongoing.

## CROSSING GUARD TRAINING

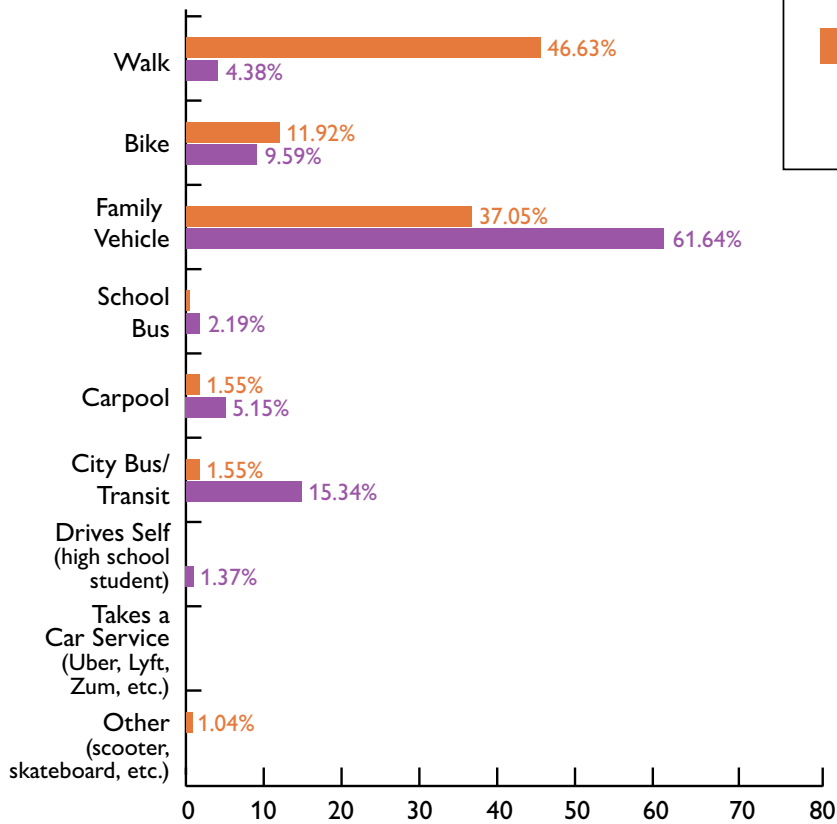
San Mateo County SRTS hosted a three-hour, in-person Crossing Guard training workshop in June 2024. Designed as a “train the trainer” session, the workshop equipped attendees with the knowledge to train others and support the establishment of Crossing Guard programs at their school sites.



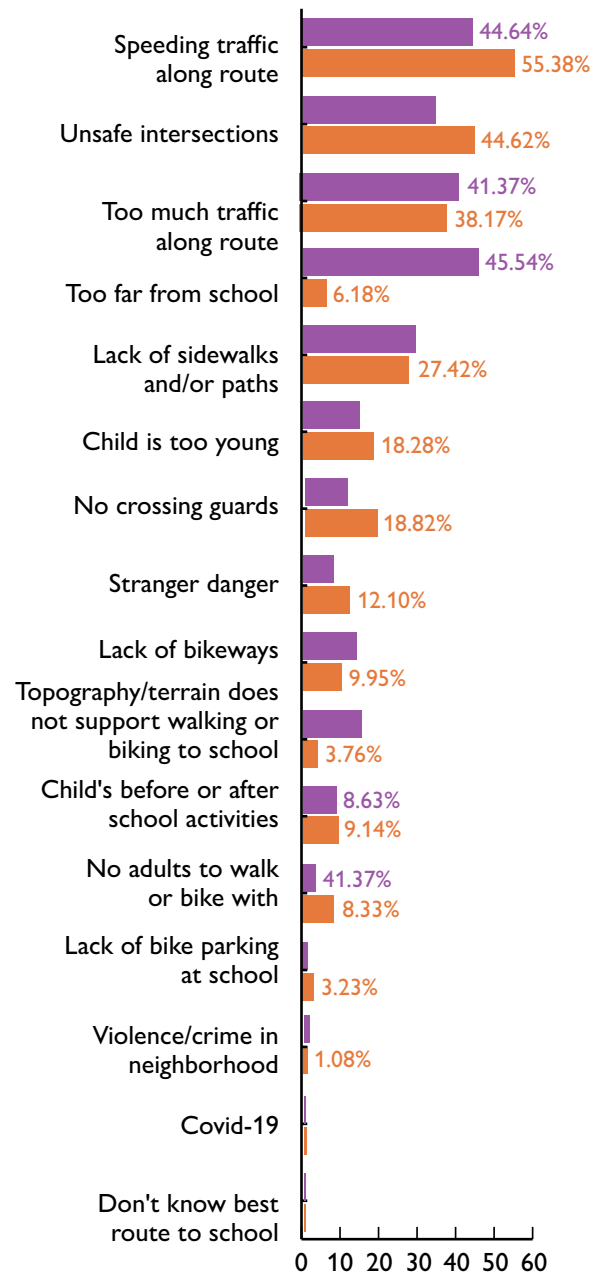
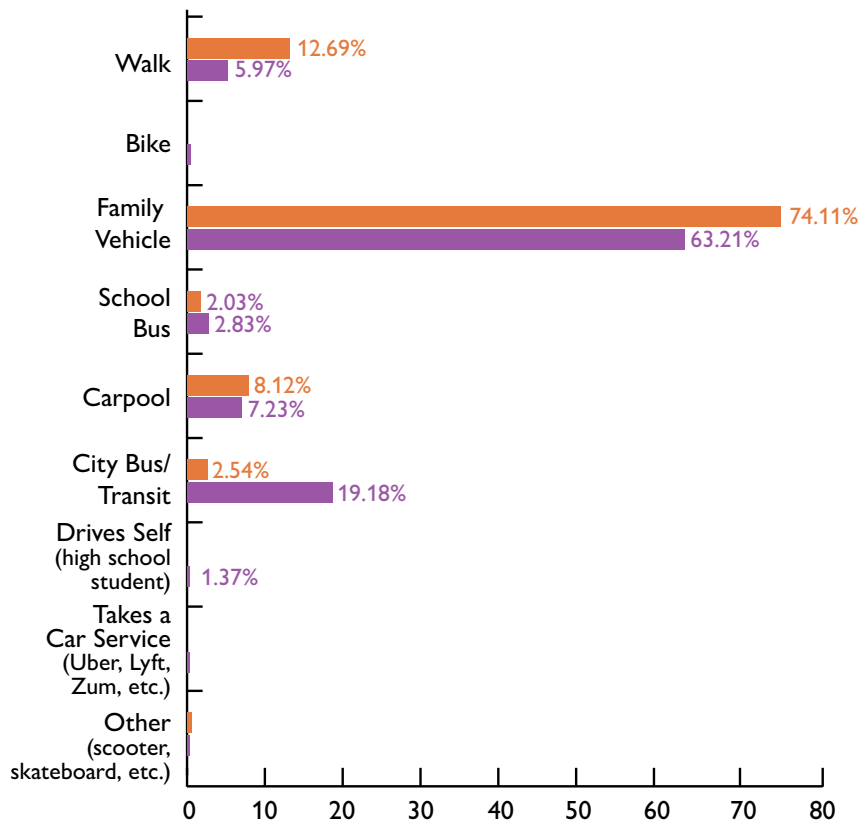


## SMALL CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SPECIAL PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE SMC TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Sequoia Union High School District - Menlo-Atherton High School Menlo-Atherton High School	Bike Shed Program
Cabrillo Unified School District - Half Moon Bay High School	Half Moon Bay High School Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety
Sequoia Union High School District - Woodside High School	Woodside High School Bike Shed Program to Promote Bike Safety and Learn Maintenance Skill
La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District - Pescadero Middle & High School	PMHS Bike Mechanic Apprenticeship Program
Pacifica School District - Ortega Elementary School	Ortega Elementary School Crosswalk Improvement and Purchase/Install Flashing Beacon
San Bruno Park School District	Improve Bike/Pedestrian safety for three San Bruno Park Schools (Belle Air, Allen, and John Muir)
South San Francisco Unified School District - Spruce Elementary School	Bike racks
Millbrae Elementary School District - Green Hills Elementary	Incorporate clear signage and crosswalk for bike and pedestrian safety
Belmont-Redwood Shores School District	Crossing Guard Program & Parking Lot Safety
Millbrae Elementary School District - Meadows Elementary	Purchase/install flashing beacon
Las Lomitas Elementary School District - Las Lomitas Elementary School	Replace existing Bike Racks and renovate the school street for Bike/Pedestrian Safety
San Mateo Union High School District - Hillsdale High School	Bike repair workshop with bike mechanic

MODES OF TRANSPORT **TO** SCHOOL

## TOP CONCERNS REGARDING CHILD/CHILDREN WALKING AND/OR BIKING TO SCHOOL

MODES OF TRANSPORT **FROM** SCHOOL

## CITIZEN SCIENCE CURRICULUM, DATA COLLECTION, AND WALK AUDITS

SMCOE Safe Routes to School, Stanford Our Voice, and San Mateo County Health Equity Policy and Planning collaborated on a curriculum focused on community health and citizen science. This curriculum was adapted to three different student populations: twelfth-grade students in Woodside High School's Green Academy (SUHSD), middle school students who volunteered as part of the Citizen Science Leadership Academy at La Entrada Middle School (LLESD), and a class of fifth-grade students at George Washington Elementary School (JESD). Students examined the critical connections between transportation, health, and education, exploring how factors like mobility and access to nutritious food shape community well-being. The curriculum highlighted the role of data collection in assessing these systems, empowering students to analyze real-world challenges. To apply their learning, they participated in a walking field trip, gathering data on walkability and bikeability in the school neighborhood. This hands-on experience encouraged them to think critically about infrastructure, safety, and accessibility while considering solutions to promote healthier, more active communities.

In each case, the data that students collected was presented to school and city leaders. Mark Fenton, a national public health, planning, and transportation consultant, used the students' data to inform walk audits at Woodside High School and George Washington Elementary. These audits were well attended by transportation engineers, council members, the police department, teachers, school administrators, and parents. Most notably, students who participated in the Citizen Science Curriculum had the opportunity to share their lived experience and changes they would like to see in their school's community to support walkability and community health.

The students at La Entrada Middle School presented their findings to the Las Lomas Elementary School District School Board. They shared changes they wished to see for greater walkability, bikeability, and traffic safety around their school.

## SLOW SPEED SCHOOL ZONES

The SMCOE SRTS program partnered with Alta Planning + Design to pilot Slow Speed School Zones in Redwood City and Daly City. This initiative aimed to enhance student safety by reducing vehicle speeds near schools, to create safer environments for walking and biking. As part of this effort, Alta



developed a *Slow Speed School Zones Guidebook*, a practical resource for cities to identify streets eligible for lower speed limits and implement these changes effectively. The guidebook provides a comprehensive framework for assessing school zone conditions, engaging stakeholders, and deploying strategies like signage, traffic calming measures, and community education. By piloting these efforts in two diverse cities, SRTS and Alta demonstrated how tailored speed-reduction strategies can address local needs, setting a model for broader adoption across San Mateo County.



*Slow Speed School Zones Guidebook*

## FUTURE OF SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

The 2023-2024 grant cycle focused on strategic planning, program implementation, and community engagement to support schools and families across San Mateo County. Through initiatives like the School Travel Fellowship, pedestrian and bicycle safety education, and outreach to vulnerable populations, the SMCOE SRTS team reinforced its commitment to equity-driven, safe transportation solutions. Educational efforts included interactive traffic safety assemblies, hands-on bike rodeos, and walking field trips that empowered students with the skills to navigate their communities safely. Events such as the Farmworker Family Bike Night showcased the program's dedication to addressing the unique needs of marginalized communities, fostering healthier, more resilient, and socially equitable neighborhoods.

### Program Goals Moving Forward:

- **Expanding Community Engagement:**  
Strengthening partnerships with schools, municipalities, and local organizations to broaden the impact of Safe Routes to School initiatives.
- **Enhancing Educational Opportunities:**  
Developing new curriculum components and interactive learning experiences to further engage students, families, and senior communities in active transportation education.
- **Advancing Policy and Infrastructure Advocacy:**  
Collaborating with local agencies to advocate for infrastructure improvements, traffic safety policies, and sustainable transportation solutions that benefit all road users.

