Safe Routes to School
Prioritizing Equity in Active Transportation Projects Near Schools

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Silicon Valley Bike Coalition Annual Summit
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Equity

**Equality = Sameness**
Equality provides the same thing for everyone. This only works when people start from the same place, history and set of circumstances.

**Equity = Justice**
Equity is about fairness, and providing people with the resources and opportunities they need, given their history and set of circumstances.
How We Got Here...

1. An idea is born
   November 2016
   Monthly Active Transportation Meeting

2. SMC-Public Health & SMCOE Collaborate
   March 2017 – first draft of the report

3. Schools & Cities
   September 2017 – December 2017
   SMC PH and SMCOE SRTS meet with principals of schools highlighted in the report and their cities counterparts

4. Final Report
   March 2018
   Creating Safer Streets Near Schools
Analysis

Data:
• ACS, 2011-2015
• SWITRS, 2009-2016
• Area poverty and bike & pedestrian collisions
Schools Identified:

1. Bayshore
2. Belle Haven
3. Brentwood
4. College Park
5. Costano
6. Fair Oaks
7. Green Oaks
8. Hawes
9. Hoover
10. Los Cerritos
11. North Star
12. Orion Alternative
13. Taft
14. Westlake
15. Woodrow Wilson
City & School Engagement
Current Work

New Crosswalk and Vegetated Curb Extension near Laurel Elementary School (photo: Kevin Robert Perry)
Lessons Learned

Relationships Matter
Thank you!

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Are we connected across jurisdictions?

Stacy Banerjee
Safe Routes Advocate
CUSD parent

August 22, 2018
Our Montclaire community

Single-family residential community in Los Altos. Traffic safety/Safe Routes is a City Council priority! BUT:

- **Rural infrastructure** with few sidewalks, many long-time residents prioritize parking & foliage over pathways & bike lanes
- **“Traffic shear”** between local streets and 280 ramps, expressway, arterial & collector streets
- Neighborhood streets not equipped for high & increasing volume of commuter traffic, cut-through traffic and distracted drivers
Our Montclaire community

Single-family residential community in Los Altos. Traffic safety/Safe Routes is City Council priority! BUT:
- **No large employers** or tech company tax base
- **Not competitive for grants**
- County-controlled Foothill Expressway runs through
- Surrounded by CA-85 on southern border, and I-280 on western border
- Everybody sends traffic through us, nobody responsible for consequences
Our CUSD community

NorCal’s largest elementary district
- 18,000+ students
- 73% Asian, 16% White, 5% Hispanic
- 25 schools in 6 cities (Cupertino, Los Altos, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, Saratoga and San Jose)

Funded like “inner-city” school
- State Aid funding (LCFF)
- 9th worst funded district in state
  (481st out of 492 LCFF districts)
- LASD received about $2700 more per student than CUSD last year.
  That’s a 1.35M difference for a school of 500 students, or 48M to our district
- Declining enrollment (less $)
- District hasn’t funded Safe Routes
Our school community fuels traffic increase

District business operations:
- Balancing enrollment across schools
- Alternative school popularity
- New programs being added (e.g. preschool, STEAM)

Student achievement focused demographic:
- Haul stuff (instruments)
- Off-site student activities (soccer, karate, piano)
- Off-site ‘juku’ (RSM, Kumon, AlphaStar)
- Off-site ‘crammers’ (SSAT, ISEE, SAT)
- Private schools

BUSY parents on way to work or activities
- Single-family car drop-off faster & easier

Injury collisions involving student cyclist/ped rising
- Driving is safer choice
Is there an elephant in the room?
Safe
Sustainable
Reduces congestion
All weather
Cost efficient at scale
Many parents will pay
End-to-end Safe Route: Nobody is responsible!

- Non-grid streets
- Barriers of creek & CA-85
- Many cross expressway first

All schools start at same time
- West Valley, CMS, HHS

“As of last year, it takes up to 40 minutes to drop my kids at CMS. This year, with HHS starting at the same time, it may take even longer.”
1/2 mile + 7 jurisdictions = Students injured in last 18 mths
SRTS: Challenges cycling across borders

**Infrastructure:** Uncoordinated, Inconsistent and Incomplete

**Route Maps:**
Haves/Have-nots

**Crossing Guards:**
3 cities, 4 programs

**Safety Policy:**
Inconsistent

**Enforcement:**
Infrequent
Is there a skeleton in the closet?
Should we encourage students to bike and walk when we know routes are not safe?

A young cyclist rides against traffic on Grant frontage Road.
Photo by Megan V. Winslow, Los Altos Town Crier
Multi-jurisdiction advocacy: Reach 7 agencies+schools

Advocacy Lessons
- Build a team
- Partner with staff
- Ask community groups for support
- Secure buy-in from officials
- Learn engineering toolkit(s) & use data
- Align plans, know policy & read code
- Get neighbor jurisdictions to talk/plan
- Track the work of appointed groups
- Know what residents want/oppose
- Understand funding options/obstacles
- Be realistic about timelines
- Insist on ACTION

Stop Finger Pointing
Find Real-World Solutions
Are you going to let the cat out of the bag?
How do education & encouragement programs fit in?

How widely is this in use?

Are programs consistent?

Are they aligned with school district borders?

What does our elementary program look like?
You need to design and collaborate for seamless safe routes.
Between Home and School
Lessons Learned in Advocacy
Lessons Learned

1. Be an advocate, not an engineer
2. Build relationships
3. Identify and overcome barriers
4. Pay attention to inside and outside “game”
5. Focus on winning hearts and minds
6. Stay informed
7. Learn as you go
8. Control what you can control
9. Stay mission driven
10. Be persistent
Lesson #1
Be an advocate, not an engineer

vs.
Lesson #2
Build relationships

- Other Safe Routes Advocates
- Other Transportation Advocates
- Advocates in Other Areas (Housing, Sustainability, Equity, etc.)
- Community Leaders (Chamber of Commerce, neighborhood groups, etc.)
- Government Agency Staff (DPW, Police, Fire, Schools)
- Local Electeds and Political Insiders
Lesson #3
Identify and overcome barriers

Money

Political Will

Capacity/
Staff Resources
Lesson #4
Pay attention to the inside and outside game

vs.
Lesson #5
Focus on winning hearts and minds
Lesson #6
Stay informed
Lesson #7
Learn as you go
Lesson #8
Control what you can control
Lesson #9
Stay mission driven
Lesson #10
Be persistent
“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Gandhi
Thank You

www.parents4saferoutes.org
Safe Routes to School