



# SOLANO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR



# Solano Safe Routes to School

The objective of the Solano Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Program is to increase the number of students walking and biking to school by focusing on safety to make the journey a fun and healthy one. Using a comprehensive approach, the program includes 6 “e’s”: **Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering, Engagement and Evaluation**. Solano SR2S offers all Solano County schools activities and programs to educate students about walking and biking safety and health awareness. The program also identifies safety improvements within our communities to enhance active student travel.

In 2008, the STA Board adopted Solano County's first Safe Routes to School Plan and authorized staff to create a Safe Routes to School Program. This Plan provided the direction for the SR2S Program through 2012 and the adoption of second plan in 2013 which continues to guide the program today.

## Solano SR2S Program Updates

Since 2009, the SR2S Program has consistently engaged schools and the community through annual events, weekly walk and bike programs, and educational activities,. Unfortunately, with COVID protocols in place during the 2021-22 school year it made outreach challenging for staff. For FY 2021-22 the SR2S department focused acclimating to the new normal of school. While there were many staff transitions this fiscal year, SR2S focused on completing the SR2S microgrant capital projects, re-establishing relationships with schools' districts and continued to provide SR2S education and incentives whenever possible.



The Solano SR2S Program has continued to grow and increased participation of schools each year. From 2017-2022, the Program has supported 78 schools with 1,689 SR2S events, activities and meetings engaging a total of 112,612 students. This Fiscal year SR2S was able to reinstate Annual events such as International Walk to School Day (October) and National Bike to School Day (May). As the 2022-23 school year approaches SR2S staff is preparing to engage new schools to offer support and activities and reengage with administration and community members

## Safe Routes to School 2021-2022 Highlights

### Pilot SR2S Micro Grant Program Cycle 2 – 11 of 17 Projects Completed

Encouragement - Engagement – Engineering

In December 2019, SR2S launched the Pilot SR2S Micro Grant Program with \$78,000 available for projects. Funding was made possible by Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds, Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District (YSAQMD) Clean Air funds and High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) fines. Solano County schools, school districts, community-based organizations, and cities were eligible to apply for grants

for small-scale projects or walk and bike programs at schools. SR2S received 16 applications totaling \$211,466.10. SR2S Advisory Committee members reviewed the applications and recommended 14 projects for funding which included walking/biking program incentives, safety equipment, the purchase and installation of bike and scooter racks, and radar feedback signs at or near schools.

In May 2021, SR2S launched Cycle 2 of the SR2S Micro Grant Program with \$193,575 available for projects. Solano County schools, districts, community-based organizations, and cities were encouraged to apply for small-scale projects or walk and bike programs at school sites. For this cycle, 16 of the 17 submitted projects were funded.

The **City of Vacaville** installed four radar feedback signs at Padan Elementary, Cooper Elementary, Foxboro Elementary and Orchard Elementary.



**Bike Vallejo** purchased bike signs to install city-wide and at Lincoln Elementary school. These signs encourage bike safety practices.



**Saint Basils Catholic School** provided sidewalk improvements to their school. **Dixon Montessori** (Dixon), **Mare Island Health and Fitness Academy** and **DH White Elementary** (Rio Vista) installed bike racks or other bike safety equipment.

**Dan Mini Elementary** used safety cones to help parents and visitors adhere to district COVID guidelines for campus visits.

**Fairmont Charter** (Vacaville) Purchased safety equipment and incentives to encourage safe walking and biking practices.



## Active Transportation Program (ATP) - SR2S Projects

### Engineering

Since 2008, the SR2S program (working with city public works departments, schools and districts) has completed 41 pedestrian infrastructure projects across the county. In spring 2021, seven additional projects began construction as part of the Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 2 award for improvements at schools in Benicia (Benicia Middle School, Joe Henderson, Mary Farmar, Robert Semple and St. Dominic School), and at Cooper and Lincoln Elementary schools in Vallejo. These improvements include high visibility crosswalks, pedestrian activated beacons, school crossing signage, and sidewalk installation or widening.



ATP-2 Project at Sonoma Blvd. and Florida St., at Lincoln Elementary, Vallejo



ATP-2 Project at Panorama Dr. and James Ct. near Benicia Middle School, Benicia

In addition, SR2S staff worked with the City of Fairfield and consultants on the city's ATP Cycle 5 application for the West Texas Complete Street Project and was awarded \$10.8 million, including \$114,000 for SR2S programming. This project brings bike and pedestrian improvements to a heavily travelled corridor and will impact students at two elementary schools and a preschool. SR2S programmatic support is slated to start at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year.

## Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

### Engineering

The first project for HSIP Cycle 9 was completed by the City of Vacaville during the first quarter of FY 2020. The city installed Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons on Browns Valley Parkway (near Browns Valley Elementary) and at the Southside Bikeway crossing on Marshall Road. A walk audit at Padan Elementary identified that Marshall Road lacked a crosswalk for the bike path across this busy street. The new crossing serves students at Padan, Vaca Christian and Will C. Wood High Schools. Additional HSIP projects are scheduled for construction specifically around schools in Rio Vista and Suisun City later in 2021.



HSIP 9 crossing improvements at the Southside Bikeway crossing and Marshall Road (Vacaville)

In August 2020, applications were submitted for HSIP Cycle 10 for Ped Set-aside funding in 6 cities and the County. SR2S staff worked with the STA projects team, and

city engineering staff to identify locations for crossing and pedestrian improvements and prioritize locations around schools. These project locations were identified through SR2S CTF meetings, the STA Countywide ATP, and walk audits. A total of \$4.7 million was awarded for HSIP Cycle 10 projects in Solano County at locations serving schools in Benicia, Dixon, Rio Vista, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo.

## 2020-2022 Public Safety Education and Enforcement Grant (Cycle 5) Education – Enforcement

In August 2020, the SR2S Program awarded the Benicia Police Department \$75,000 for Cycle 5 of the SR2S Public Safety Education and Enforcement Grant Program for FY 2020-2021. The grant award allowed for the continuance of a SR2S dedicated non-sworn Community Service Officer (CSO) position and partnership with SR2S to provide safety education for youth in Benicia while schools were closed. During this time, Benicia PD staff engaged with youth around town to provide safety education. When schools reopened in spring 2021, CSO Kim Guggemos provided enforcement in addition to parking, distracted driver and pedestrian safety education to drivers and students.

The SR2S Program extended its partnership through fiscal year 21-22, with the Suisun City Police Department and awarded \$64,000 to fund a part-time non-sworn School Safety Traffic Officer (SSTO). Unfortunately, in March of 2022 the SSTO for Suisun Police Department resigned. Suisun PD is in the process of recruiting a new officer.

## New School Resource – Drop-off and Pick-up Plan Engagement - Encouragement

Preparing for an anticipated increase in single family vehicle trips when schools reopened, staff developed a Drop-off and Pick-up guide to help reduce school traffic. SR2S provided this resource to help schools prior to students' return in early 2021 and the guide will be offered as SR2S engages schools in the 2022-23 school year. The guide provides procedural and signage suggestions; active solutions, such as a Walk or Wheel or remote drop-off and pick-up programs; and general suggestions to encourage families to park away from schools during drop-off and pick-up and reduce traffic back-up in front of the school.

**SCHOOL DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**  
Safe routes to school  
SOLANO COUNTY

**As students return to campus, more families may choose to drive due to COVID-19 safety concerns.**

**Easy to Implement Ideas and Programs:**  
**Designate Drop-off and Pick-up Zones as "SCHOOL FREE ZONES"**  
 No private vehicles in "Free Zones"  
 Add "Please No Turnaround" signs, school traffic huddles and driver. Student seating on the passenger side only.  
**"Be Ready to Go"** - Have your students and themselves dressed and ready to go to school.  
**Practice drop-off and pick-up procedures and steps** in school parking lots and school bus routes.  
**Use a "Drop-off and Pick-up Challenge"** - Encourage students to drop-off and pick-up away from the school to help reduce traffic congestion.  
**Make a Plan**  
 In preparation for the morning "Right turn only from parking lot" back outside of school campus.  
**Keep pedestrians and drivers separate from one another** - Create separate drop-off and pick-up zones for students.  
**Identify drop-off and pick-up locations for parents** - Encourage students to use the same drop-off and pick-up locations for all of their children.  
**Develop a parking plan that allows "Kiss & Ride"** - Students are not walking and waiting for the bus to arrive at school.  
**Develop a vehicle strategy** - Encourage parents to use the same drop-off and pick-up locations for all of their children.

Contact us to see how we can help:  
 SR2S Team on Twitter: @SR2S  
 (707) 399-3222  
 solanocounty.ca.gov  
 sr2s@solanocounty.ca.gov  
 #SolanoSR2S

**BEST PRACTICE IDEAS FOR SPECIFIC LOCATIONS**

**A. HEAVILY TRAVELLED STREETS**  
 School with limited access and exit  
 If the school is located near a heavily traveled street, consider designating that as a drop-off and pick-up zone. The entrance to the school is the best location for drop-off and pick-up.

**B. LAND USE/DEVELOPMENT NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL**  
 Surrounded by residential streets and parking lots  
 If the school is located in a residential neighborhood with parking lots, consider designating that as a drop-off and pick-up zone. The school is the best location for drop-off and pick-up.

**C. NEXT TO A PARK**  
 If the school is located next to a park, consider designating that as a drop-off and pick-up zone. The school is the best location for drop-off and pick-up.

**D. NEAR A BUS STOP**  
 If the school is located near a bus stop, consider designating that as a drop-off and pick-up zone. The school is the best location for drop-off and pick-up.

**E. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
 If the school is located near a traffic signal, consider designating that as a drop-off and pick-up zone. The school is the best location for drop-off and pick-up.

**F. NEAR A BUS STOP**  
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**G. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**J. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**K. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**L. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**M. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**N. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**O. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**P. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**Q. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**R. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**S. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**T. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**Y. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**Z. NEAR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL**  
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**STP SOLANO PUBLIC TRAFFIC OFFICERS**  
 YOUR KIDS. YOUR SCHOOL. YOUR COMMUNITY.

## Bay Area Bike Mobile Education – Engagement

In response to Covid protocols changing within Solano school districts allowing visitors access to campuses, the SR2S program collaborated with Bay Area Bike Mobile to hold several outdoor Bike Mobile events beginning September 2021. SR2S participated in four community events and hosted nine school-based events. Program

Coordinators staffed SR2S tables distributing pedestrian and bike safety gear, educational materials, and bike helmets. Staff also had the opportunity to engage with staff, parents, and students to help promote the program while they waited for bike repair services. In total, Bay Area Bike Mobile completed 286 individual bike repairs across 13 events, while SR2S Coordinators fit and distributed 256 bike helmets to Solano County youths.

In addition to the standard Bike Mobile, SR2S hosted the program's first Zoom bike education Virtual Assembly in partnership with Mr. Bensko. The live, interactive 45-minute presentation included eight 4th and 5th grade classrooms at Robert Semple Elementary School in Benicia. Although virtual assemblies were initially a temporary service offered due to Covid restrictions, Mr. Bensko will continue to offer this service option going forward due to its overwhelming success and positive feedback.

## **Champion School Highlights**

### **Encouragement - Engagement – Evaluation**

Champion Schools are schools that regularly participate in various SR2S Encouragement, Education, and Evaluation program and events and have made walking and biking to school a part of their school culture by implementing an ongoing Walking Program. Eugene Padan Elementary School (Vacaville) and Dixon Montessori Charter School (Dixon) have held a WoW Wednesday throughout the 2021-2022 school year having their school volunteer's handout charms to participants.

## **Marketing and Outreach**

### **Education – Engagement**

Typically, a comprehensive Safe Routes to Schools programs contain 5 "E's." However, in Solano County a sixth "E" (engagement) was added in the Plan Update to emphasize the importance of engaging with all stakeholders to make this program successful. Engagement strategies are designed to open lines of communication and involvement among all stakeholders, especially parents, for the benefit of an improved Safe Routes to School program. SR2S maintains an up-to-date website, which includes maps with suggested walking routes to all elementary and middle schools in the county. To reach out and engage parents, the SR2S program has a presence at several community events throughout the year, including the Solano County Fair and Earth Day festivities. At these events, SR2S staff educates the public about the program and recruits' parents to be leaders for Walking School Buses.

With today's use of technology, the SR2S team set a goal of utilizing social media more to disseminate program information and reach a broader audience. For this fiscal year, our reach on Facebook had increased 55% since the previous fiscal year. Most of our audience resides in Fairfield, with the second top city being the City of Vallejo. Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District has 30 schools within its district and Vallejo City Unified School District has 24 schools compared to Benicia Unified School District which contains eight schools.

## **Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee (SR2S AC)**

### **Engagement**

The SR2S program receives guidance from the SR2S Advisory Committee (SR2S AC), which is comprised of community members from cities and disciplines within Solano County. The committee gives recommendations for funding SR2S projects and programs to the STA Board. In 2021-22 the SR2S AC met virtually each quarter where staff provided updates on completed Micro Grant projects, and current SR2S projects under construction, discussions about students' return to campus and SR2S school engagement.

## **SR2S Grant Funding Awards**

**Encouragement – Education – Enforcement**

### **Funding**

Since Solano County does not have a dedicated transportation funding source, grants are integral to the operation of the SR2S Program. The SR2S Program has received grants from the CA Office of Traffic Safety (2017, 2018 and 2021) to assist with program evaluation, addressing the high rate of youth pedestrian injuries through workshops and educational materials, and funding to support public safety partnerships. Clean Air Fund Grants from the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District (YSAQMD) have supported education and encouragement programs since 2009, and most recently the addition of SR2S Micro Grant projects in eastern Solano County.

In 2021, staff was successful in supplemental grant funding from the CA Department of Public Health's Kid's Plates Program, CA OTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Grant Program, YSAQMD Clean Air Fund Grants and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Quick Strike Grant Program. Lastly, SR2S will be applying for The One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) Cycle 3 funds which in previous cycles have been vital in supporting SR2S staffing levels, the expansion of program elements, and infrastructure projects as the SR2S program serves the needs of more schools across Solano County.