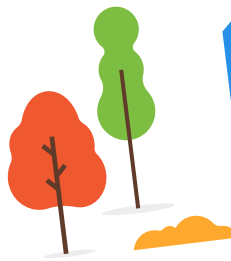
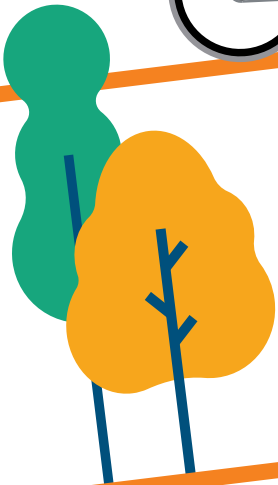




# Orange County Safe Routes to School



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# Acknowledgments

## **STAFF TEAM**

Peter Sotherland, OCTA

Maria Minaglia, OCHCA

Sam Sharvini, OCTA

Megan Beard, OCHCA

## **FUNDING PARTNER**

Caltrans Sustainable Communities Program

## **PREPARED BY**

Toole Design

*Information contained in this document is for planning purposes and should not be used for final design of any project. All results, recommendations, concept drawings, cost opinions, and commentary contained herein are based on limited data and information and on existing conditions that are subject to change. Further analysis and engineering design are necessary prior to implementing any of the recommendations contained herein.*

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# Executive Summary

This Safe Routes to School Action Plan summarizes findings and recommendations for Safe Routes to School support throughout Orange County, California. The Plan recommends that the critical first step in improving Safe Routes to School (SRTS) in Orange County is to establish a countywide Safe Routes to School program.

The project team assessed existing SRTS efforts already underway in the county and engaged with stakeholders and those impacted by or interested in supporting safe school travel to learn about opportunities and challenges for SRTS efforts countywide. Results of this engagement and research found that although schools and school districts across Orange County are already conducting a wide range of SRTS activities, they are experiencing challenges with competing priorities as well as a lack of staff resources to dedicate to ongoing SRTS programs. 70% of the county's schools fall into the top two tiers of the Plan's needs analysis, demonstrating the opportunity and need for more support for SRTS.

The Plan's main recommendations include:

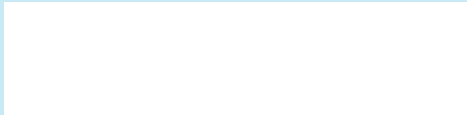
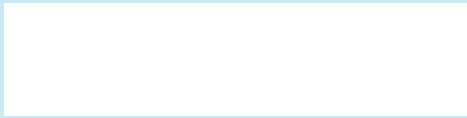
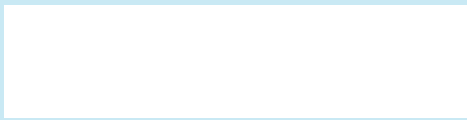
- 1) Establish a countywide Safe Routes to School Program**
- 2) Create and sustain lasting partnerships**
- 3) Develop a culture of safety**
- 4) Fund and build safe streets**

This Plan includes specific actions and strategies to achieve its four main recommendations, as well as appendices of further resources to support implementation of SRTS activities across the county.





# Background



# 1: Background

This Safe Routes to School Action Plan summarizes findings and recommendations around the need for Safe Routes to School support at schools and school districts in Orange County, California.

The Plan recommends that establishing a countywide Safe Routes to School program in Orange County is essential. This Plan provides actionable steps on how to do so as well as additional recommendations for sustaining the program into the future.

## What is Safe Routes to School?

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an international movement that uses programming and infrastructure to improve safety and encourage students to walk and bike to school.

## Why is Safe Routes to School needed?

Walking and bicycling to school can boost academic performance, improve individual physical health outcomes for students, create opportunities to mitigate the impact of climate change, and help address historical inequities in transportation infrastructure and policy.

The Centers for Disease Control recommend at least 60 minutes of daily moderate physical activity for children,<sup>1</sup> and mild exercise has been shown to improve concentration in students.<sup>2</sup> Walking or biking to school, instead of driving, is a great way for children to exercise, reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, decrease school-related traffic congestion, and reduce transportation costs.

Despite these benefits, walking and biking to American schools has declined dramatically in recent decades, from almost 50% of students in kindergarten through 8th grade in the 1960s to only 11% in 2017. SRTS programs help reverse this decline by promoting walking and bicycling through a set of strategies geared towards making walking and biking to school a viable alternative to driving. Activities, programs and policies are often organized around the 6 Es of SRTS, a national approach promoted by SRTS advocates: Engagement, Equity, Engineering, Encouragement, Education and Evaluation. For more on the 6 Es and existing SRTS programs see Page 16.



1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *The Association between School-Based Physical Activity, Including Physical Education, and Academic Performance*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2010. [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health\\_and\\_academics/pdf/pa-pe\\_paper.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/pa-pe_paper.pdf)

2 Hillman C.h., et al. "The Effect of Acute Treadmill Walking on Cognitive Control and Academic Achievement in Preadolescent Children." *Neuroscience*, vol.159, no. 3, 2009, pp.1044-1054. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2667807/>

3 Some photographs in this publication were taken before the onset of the global Covid-19 pandemic and establishment of widespread mask and social distancing requirements.

## SRTS resources

SRTS work is happening across California and North America with the support of organizations and communities large and small. Three groups have been particularly influential: [the National Center for Safe Routes to School](#), [the Safe Routes Partnership](#), and the [Caltrans Active](#)

[Transportation Resources Center](#). Each has a distinct purpose and set of methods; together, these organizations provide an array of resources for SRTS planning at a local or county level.

## SRTS Organizations

Organization	Description	Tools and resources
National Center for Safe Routes to School	As part of the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, the National Center for Safe Routes to School provides tools and resources for communities to make it safer for everyone to walk and bike. The National Center coordinates annual Walk and Bike to Schools days for school communities.	The National Center provides a <a href="#">database</a> for SRTS partners to submit and view data from student travel tallies and parent surveys. In 2015, the National Center launched Vision Zero for Youth to encourage communities and elected officials to focus traffic and safety improvements in places where children and youth travel.
Safe Routes Partnership	The Safe Routes Partnership is a nonprofit that aims to promote walking and rolling to and from school and in the wider community. The Safe Routes Partnership updates the 6 Es of Safe Routes to School, which summarize the key aspects of a holistic and integrated approach.	The Safe Routes Partnership offers webinars, factsheets, reports, evaluations, toolkits, case studies and model policies for Safe Routes to School.
Caltrans Active Transportation Resource Center (ATRC)	The grant-funded ATRC provides resources, technical assistance, and training to transportation partners in California working on active transportation projects.	In addition to training and webinars, ATRC offers online toolkits for infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects, as well as community engagement and existing conditions data-gathering.

## History of Safe Routes to School

### 1970s:

Safe Routes to School was established in Europe to address concerns about the safety of students walking and biking to school.

### 1990s:

The concept spread internationally and was popularized in the United States.

### 2005:

Congress created a standalone federal program to fund Safe Routes to School, resulting in \$1 billion of funding.

### 2012:

Congress combined the federal SRTS program with other bicycling and walking programs to form a new Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

### 2015:

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act preserved funding for Safe Routes to School through 2020.



## Spotlight: The Es of Safe Routes to School

The 6 Es are a long-standing approach to comprehensive SRTS initiatives aiming to make it easier and safer to students to walk and bike to school. Each E is described below, as defined by the Safe Routes Partnership. Although the 6 E approach is widely adopted, strictly adhering to its structure can sometimes reinforce silos among school staff, parents and other school champions and implementers of SRTS programs. The implementation plan included in this report incorporates the 6 Es, but does not mirror it, to ensure coordination and collaboration among leading entities.



### ENGAGEMENT:

All Safe Routes to School initiatives should begin by listening to students, families, teachers and school leaders, working with existing community organizations, and building intentional, ongoing engagement opportunities into the program structures.



### EQUITY:

Ensuring that Safe Routes to School initiatives are benefiting all demographic groups, with particular attention to ensuring safe, healthy, and fair outcomes for low-income students, students of color, students of all genders, students with disabilities, and others.



### ENGINEERING:

Creating physical improvements to streets and neighborhoods that make walking and bicycling safer, more comfortable, and more convenient.



### ENCOURAGEMENT:

Generating enthusiasm and increased walking and bicycling for students through events, activities, and programs.



### EDUCATION:

Providing students and the community with the skills to walk and bicycle safely, educating them about benefits of walking and bicycling, and teaching them about the broad range of transportation choices.



### EVALUATION:

Assessing which approaches are most successful, ensuring that programs and initiatives are supporting equitable outcomes, and identifying unintended consequences or opportunities to improve the effectiveness of each approach.



Anaheim Bike and Trike Rodeo

In June 2020, Safe Routes Partnership removed Enforcement from, and added Engagement to, the 6 Es. Many SRTS programs have shifted away centering the role of law enforcement in traffic safety initiatives and instead promote traffic and public safety strategies that center community-supported organizations and resources. The presence of law enforcement is not always foundational to building, maintaining or expanding a SRTS program, and this Action Plan reflects alternative, community-based approaches to safety. See the Spotlight on Page 30 for more information on how other programs are evolving their partnerships with law enforcement.



## Equity in SRTS

Engagement with the public and this plan's working group underscored the role that SRTS can play in addressing existing social inequities and improving health and education outcomes for Orange County students. As one of the newer Es, and a critical component of this action plan, Equity deserves a closer look. SRTS advocates and champions should understand that equity is not the same thing as equality. While equality can be defined as distributing resources equally to everyone, equity means distributing resources according to individual or community need and circumstance. Those needs should be understood in the context that some people and groups have disproportionately experienced oppression from inequitable investments and decisions made in the past; an equitable approach might distribute resources disproportionately back to them to reverse those disparities. Equity is achieved when inequalities, disparities and burdens are eliminated, and everyone has what they need to reach their full potential.

An equitable approach to SRTS requires paying close attention to the vulnerabilities and barriers that students of different backgrounds face to achieving safe, healthy and fair outcomes. For example, people of color walking in low-income communities are more likely than white people to be killed in traffic collisions,<sup>4</sup> the pedestrian fatality rate for Black children is more than twice that of white children,<sup>5</sup> and high-income communities are more likely than low-income communities to have sidewalks and streets with lighting.<sup>6</sup> The Orange County SRTS Action Plan must advance equity and support health and opportunity for historically underserved populations. SRTS actions and programs should include resources and targeted support for schools and districts that serve low-income neighborhoods and people of color.



### Spotlight: *OC Active*, Orange County's bicycle and pedestrian plan

*OC Active* is the first countywide plan for Orange County with a primary focus on active (bicycle and pedestrian) transportation. The plan builds on the Orange County Transportation Authority's existing initiatives to improve active transportation facilities across Orange County and promote healthy, happy lifestyles and sustainable modes of mobility.

The plan aims to provide a framework for countywide bicycle and pedestrian planning that is compliant with the Caltrans Active Transportation Program guidelines, which will help Orange County cities apply for state funding for local active transportation projects.

*OC Active* highlights the SRTS work being done in individual cities across Orange County and the importance of SRTS education and programming for better walking and biking environments. This Action Plan builds on the bicycling and pedestrian recommendations from *OC Active*, focusing in on Orange County's school communities.

4 Smart Growth America. *Dangerous by Design*. 2019. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>

5 Transportation for America. *Dangerous by Design*. 2011. [https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Lib\\_of\\_Res/SSI\\_CS\\_Dangerous-by-Design-2011.pdf](https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Lib_of_Res/SSI_CS_Dangerous-by-Design-2011.pdf)

6 Bridging the Gap. *Income Disparities in Street Features that Encourage Walking*. 2012. [http://www.bridgingthegapresearch.org/asset/02fpi3/btg\\_street\\_walkability\\_FINAL\\_03-09-12.pdf](http://www.bridgingthegapresearch.org/asset/02fpi3/btg_street_walkability_FINAL_03-09-12.pdf)

## Safe Routes to School in Orange County

SRTS activities are already underway in communities across Orange County with programming support from the Orange County Transportation Agency (OCTA) and the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA), the agencies that developed this Action Plan. OCTA led eight Walk to School Day events across the county in 2018 and 2019 and coordinated distribution of signs promoting GoHuman, a campaign by the Southern California Association of Governments to promote walking and biking. OCHCA has coordinated walk audits and provided technical assistance for programs like Walking School Buses and works with over 100 schools annually to promote Walk to School Day events.

Despite this agency support, participation by schools and districts is varied: only 15% of schools that responded to a SRTS survey stated they had an official SRTS program. Some schools in the county are not yet ready to take on SRTS programming and many lack central coordination for SRTS initiatives. This results in a patchwork of activities and leaves behind schools who lack resources or staff. The Safe Routes to School Action Plan, funded by Caltrans, was initiated by OCTA and OCHCA to investigate and propose solutions to close those gaps.

## Spotlight: Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) Injury Prevention Program

The OCHCA Injury Prevention Program (IPP) promotes walking and biking and has a long history of working with community partners on active transportation efforts. Through a variety of educational programs, OCHCA encourages children and their families to incorporate walking and biking into their daily lives. OCHCA recognizes the role that safe environments play in encouraging these behaviors.

OCHCA IPP supports jurisdictional partners to incorporate healthy transportation planning into city and county level planning efforts. IPP has over two decades of experience working with school and community partners on SRTS efforts. This includes supporting schools on education and encouragement initiatives, such as Walk to School Day campaigns and Walking School Bus Programs. IPP's flagship project includes coordination of student-led walk audits, where youth identify barriers and facilitators to walking and biking and advocate to stakeholders for changes they'd like to see.

The walk audit program has led to improvements to the built environment, increased SRTS funding for jurisdictions, and increased walking rates at schools with SRTS programming. This Action Plan is aligned with the work of OCHCA by helping to prioritize schools and communities most in need of resources and programming offered through the OCHCA's SRTS Program.



## Safe Routes to School Success Story: Garden Grove Walk Audits

The Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) participated with the Boys and Girls Club of Garden Grove in walk audits at four Garden Grove schools in late 2019. Students used detailed checklists and built a photographic inventory to track conditions around schools and determine how walkable each school environment felt for them. Their assessment of conditions on Trask Avenue, a key walking route to Clinton Elementary School, found that the avenue carries fast-moving vehicle traffic. The street offers few crossing opportunities, and students report feeling unsafe using the crosswalk at Leda Lane as drivers do not stop for pedestrians. Students presented their findings to an audience that included Public Works representatives from the City of Garden Grove. A later crash at the intersection further underscored the need for safety improvements there and, combined with the walk audit findings, prompted the City to subsequently install a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon to bring greater visibility to the crosswalk at the intersection. This win underscores the value that demonstration activities can have in bringing school communities and City leaders together to assess on-the-ground conditions and to quickly find and implement solutions that improve safety and walkability for students.

## Action Plan objectives

This Action Plan serves multiple purposes:

- It recognizes Safe Routes to School efforts already underway in communities across Orange County;
- It establishes a roadmap for developing a countywide Safe Routes to School Program and describe how schools and districts can get involved;
- It outlines how education, partnerships, programs, and infrastructure improvements can help improve traffic safety and support more walking and rolling to Orange County schools;
- It provides paths for funders, advocates, institutions, and others to support schools and districts;
- It identifies potential funding sources for Action Items;
- It complements *OC Active* (the Orange County active transportation plan) and local transportation plans.

A key task of this Action Plan was to assess the potential for a countywide program to coordinate and strengthen SRTS efforts at local schools and districts. Staff at OCTA and OCHCA hypothesized that a countywide SRTS program might provide high-level coordination to address gaps in SRTS activities and programs and asked a project team of consultants and SRTS experts to confirm that assumption. The team's analysis found that significant need exists and that a countywide program would effectively meet that need by complementing existing efforts. By better understanding countywide conditions and need, all schools and districts can advance through the next steps on the path to safer travel to school, regardless of need, context, available resources, or level of readiness.



A meeting of the SRTS Working Group

## Audiences

This report is relevant to a diverse group of audiences, each of which plays an important role in making safe school travel a reality. This Plan provides specific onramps for them to support Safe Routes to School. It broadly groups the audiences into two categories:

**Primary audiences** are made up of:

- SRTS program coordinators
- School administrators
- School families and caregivers
- Funders
- Advocates
- Institutions, and other groups that can take direct actions to implement Safe Routes SRTS in Orange County

**Secondary audiences** include Orange County residents and stakeholders whose activities influence a culture of safe school travel. Although they are usually not creating policy or leading implementation, support and involvement from these individuals and groups is critical to making walking and biking to school safe.



# Our process and what we learned





## 2: Our process and what we learned

This Action Plan is an outcome of a detailed study process to understand existing conditions for student travel in Orange County, to engage with stakeholders and those impacted by or interested in supporting safe school travel, and to assess existing Safe Routes to School efforts already underway in the county. Each part of this process was undertaken to answer these two questions:

What is needed to support Safe Routes to School efforts in Orange County?

What is the potential for a countywide Safe Routes to School program to provide that support?

This section describes how the project team learned about what was needed and how it reached its recommendation to establish a countywide program.

### Step 1: Existing conditions assessment

The project team undertook several analyses to build a baseline understanding of the challenges and opportunities for students walking and biking to school in Orange County:

- A data-driven needs analysis focused on safety, equity and community need for every school within the county
- A survey for schools and districts gauged awareness of, and participation in, SRTS
- An inventory of non-infrastructure efforts identified and assessed existing SRTS activities throughout the county.

#### The *needs analysis* scored each school according to its context.

The needs analysis examined the external factors that influence walking and biking conditions at Orange County schools. Using available data, each school was given a context score based on a variety of external factors around and near the school. Factors included:

- How well the transportation system supports walking and bicycling;
- Variables related to community well-being, like housing costs, household income, and chronic diseases.

These factors evaluate the extent to which conditions external to each school are supportive of walking to school, but every school has needs that could be addressed through a Safe Routes to School program. Schools were sorted into three tiers to help determine where SRTS activities and programs could be prioritized, and how they could be adapted to each school's circumstance.

- **Tier 1 - Sensitive:** Schools that are in the highest-need context and require the most intensive SRTS support (174 schools);
- **Tier 2 - Swing:** Schools with moderate need that may require general SRTS support (264 schools);
- **Tier 3 - Supportive:** Schools with the lowest level of need that would benefit from basic SRTS resources (184 schools).

This tiering system helps identify where targeted Safe Routes to School resources might have the greatest impact on outcomes. Tier 1 schools face the greatest challenges, and the program can therefore achieve the greatest benefit by promoting walking and rolling and addressing the needs of vulnerable students. Information on how scores were calculated and how to interpret a school's context score can be found in Appendix A.

## The school and district surveys illuminated the breadth of SRTS work schools and districts are already doing.

Schools and districts across Orange County received surveys asking about their level of awareness and participation in SRTS programs or other activities that encourage walking and biking to school. Eight districts and 56 schools responded, a respective 30% and 10% response rate.

These schools and districts generally expressed a low level of familiarity with the overarching national SRTS program, but many schools without formalized SRTS programs did participate in a few national campaigns and on-campus SRTS activities. Most district respondents had SRTS-supportive policies, like reduced vehicle speeds near schools, crossing guards, and health and wellness programs. These types of activities can help lay the foundation for establishing an official SRTS program. Few school and district respondents indicated that they participated in more direct SRTS policy and planning efforts, like infrastructure audits, creation of Action Plans, and surveys of students or parents. While traffic and personal safety were cited as common challenges, competing priorities and a lack of staff resources were chosen as the most significant barriers to establishing or implementing SRTS programs.



Crossing guards and marked crosswalks help make for a safe arrival and dismissal process.

## The non-infrastructure efforts inventory clarified the kinds of programmatic support schools need most.

The project team further analyzed survey responses to categorize existing SRTS activities in the county according to four of the SRTS Es, as engineering and equity were not explicitly addressed in the surveys. Survey responses were also reviewed to determine the primary groups and individuals involved and necessary funding and resources to begin or continue programmatic work.

- **Engagement:** Half of school respondents do SRTS marketing and communications with the school community (newsletters, posters and emails).
- **Education:** Majority of respondents did not have policies requiring bicycle and pedestrian education, and over half of respondents did not provide SRTS training opportunities for teachers, parents or students.
- **Encouragement:** One-time or annual events like Walk to School Day have robust participation from school and district respondents, but recurring events and ongoing programs like mileage clubs, walking school buses, or bike trains have lower participation.
- **Evaluation:** Most responding schools and districts lack formal methods to evaluate walking and biking safety infrastructure or measure increases in walking and biking.
- **Who's Involved:** Principals and school leaders are most often the decision-makers, and law enforcement often plays a collaborative or support role.
- **Funding and Resources:** Respondents did not identify funding as a top challenge to implementing SRTS activities, but survey participation likely skews toward schools that are already better-resourced. Responses did highlight the importance of technical assistance; schools stated that they would benefit from help identifying and accessing sources of funding.



## Step 2: Public outreach and engagement

Community engagement was conducted for three key purposes:

1. **Increase awareness of SRTS and a potential countywide program.**
2. **Invite and encourage participation from local stakeholders in Action Plan Events.**
3. **Solicit input in-person and online to learn more from stakeholders and gain buy-in for SRTS.**

Before and during the pandemic, our team engaged with the Orange County community through open houses, presentations to community groups, Walk to School Day encouragement events, and demonstration walk audits. The spread of the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 created engagement constraints that limited in-person or group events, and the project team pivoted to digital and remote strategies to allow engagement to continue during the pandemic. The following list of our engagement and outreach activities includes lessons learned from each tactic.



An example of social media messaging used to support public engagement.



### Working Group

A group of about 50 agency, city, school, and district representatives, as well as other stakeholders involved in SRTS, convened three times to support development of the Action Plan. Working group members expressed strong support for establishing a countywide SRTS program, and they generated many specific ideas about program governance and other programmatic aspects that are reflected in the final plan recommendations.

### Open houses

An open house for the project was held at Meet On Beach, an open streets event held in the cities of Buena Park and Anaheim in November 2019.. Event attendees learned about SRTS and the project and gave initial feedback on early plan ideas. The project team learned that many stakeholders wanted safer streets and more marked crosswalks in their school neighborhoods.

The second and third planned open houses were canceled due to the onset of the global pandemic. Instead the project team launched a week-long social media campaign timed to coincide with Walk to School Day on October 9, 2020. The campaign spotlighted SRTS messaging and imagery and connected viewers to an activity kit and other resources for schools and families that could be accessed and completed safely during a time of social distancing. These messages were launched on Twitter and Facebook accounts from OCTA and OCHCA and were reposted by a range of allied organizations to extend the reach of the messaging, receiving over 200 likes, comments, and shares.

## Community organization presentations

The project team presented to local community organizations across Orange County and received participants' feedback on the plan. Participants helped identify potential SRTS champions, resources, and critical strategies to include in the Action Plan. Participants underscored the importance of partnerships as a way to grow support for infrastructure changes and supplement resources for schools and districts. Recommended potential partners included:

- Assistance League Operation School Bell
- Red Cross Youth in Emergency Service
- National Night Out
- Local home owners associations
- Colleges
- Hospitals

### Community Organization Presentations (2020–2021)

- Orange County Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative (NuPAC)
- San Juan Capistrano Unified School District Safety Committee
- La Habra Unified School District Wellness Committee
- Safe Kids Orange County
- Buena Park Collaborative
- Costa Mesa Alliance for Better Streets
- Irvine Unified School District Parent Teacher Association
- Garden Grove Community Collaborative
- Network Anaheim
- 4th District Parent Teacher Association, Council President meeting

## Walk to school day events and walk audits

Walk to School Day is an annual event that brings families, teachers, and communities together across the globe for organized walk to school events. Prior to the pandemic, the project team completed Walk to School Day events at two schools. During the pandemic, schools received activity kits to coordinate virtual Walk to School Day activities (the kit included scavenger hunt bingo and a Walk to School Day coloring sheet) in lieu of regular Walk to School Day events. Families were able to do these activities together while distance learning and social distancing were in place.

A walk audit, or walkability audit, is a field visit to a school location to evaluate safety concerns and other issues that impact the ability of students to safely and conveniently walk to school. School administrators, parents, and local government representatives attended walk audits and evaluated school grounds and the surrounding neighborhood together, finding opportunities to improve walking and biking to school. These events helped demonstrate to school families and administrators that walking to school together can be fun, easy, and safe. Walk audits continued on a socially distanced basis during the pandemic, with individuals from the project team visiting school neighborhoods when it was safe to do so. Virtual meetings with school stakeholders informed key locations and areas of concern to review in these walk audits.

### The project team coordinated Walk to School Day events and/or walk audits at schools including:

- Clinton Elementary School, Garden Grove
- Viejo Elementary School, Mission Viejo
- Laguna Niguel Elementary School
- Clara Barton Elementary School, Anaheim
- Fountain Valley High School
- Ladera Ranch Middle School
- Patton Elementary School, Garden Grove
- El Cerrito Elementary School, La Habra
- Brywood Elementary, Irvine
- Orangethorpe Elementary, Fullerton

The project team engaged directly with schools to share SRTS information and coordinate these key events. The project team shared demonstration project materials with many schools through online outreach efforts during the pandemic, and provided direct support to and coordination with eight schools to help execute their demonstration events.

The project team found that many schools already have a high number of students walking to school but could use upgrades to basic infrastructure like crosswalks and signage. Most of the schools we worked with also indicated that driver behavior is a significant problem, indicating a need for resources that focus on creating and reinforcing a culture of safety for parents and others in school neighborhoods who drive where children are likely to be present.

### Conclusions and next steps

SRTS work is already happening throughout Orange County, but more resources and an organized governance structure are needed to further encourage walking and bicycling for students and the school community. 70% of schools fell into Tier 1 or Tier 2 of our needs analysis, demonstrating the opportunity for more support for SRTS programming and policies. In our survey responses, schools and districts called out the need for more resources, like financial support, technical assistance and education, stronger partnerships, and increased staffing.

A countywide program has high potential to meet those needs by creating centralized frameworks and partnership structures that help formalize existing activities and distribute new program resources. A countywide SRTS program would not replace the work that schools and districts are already doing, but rather would amplify and supplement that work by coordinating resources and growing the base of support. Individual schools understand the needs of their students and community best, and a countywide SRTS program would serve to add resources and increase staff capacity, create efficiencies across schools, build partnerships in the wider Orange County community, and connect SRTS practitioners in schools and districts to state and national resources. In this sense, the countywide program would act as a facilitator, coordinator, and partnership-builder to ensure every school and district receives the resources and support it needs to make SRTS non-infrastructure efforts successful.



# Recommendations



# 3: Recommendations

This section details our recommended actions and is structured in two phases.

The first phase includes **Recommendation #1: Establish a countywide Safe Routes to School program.**

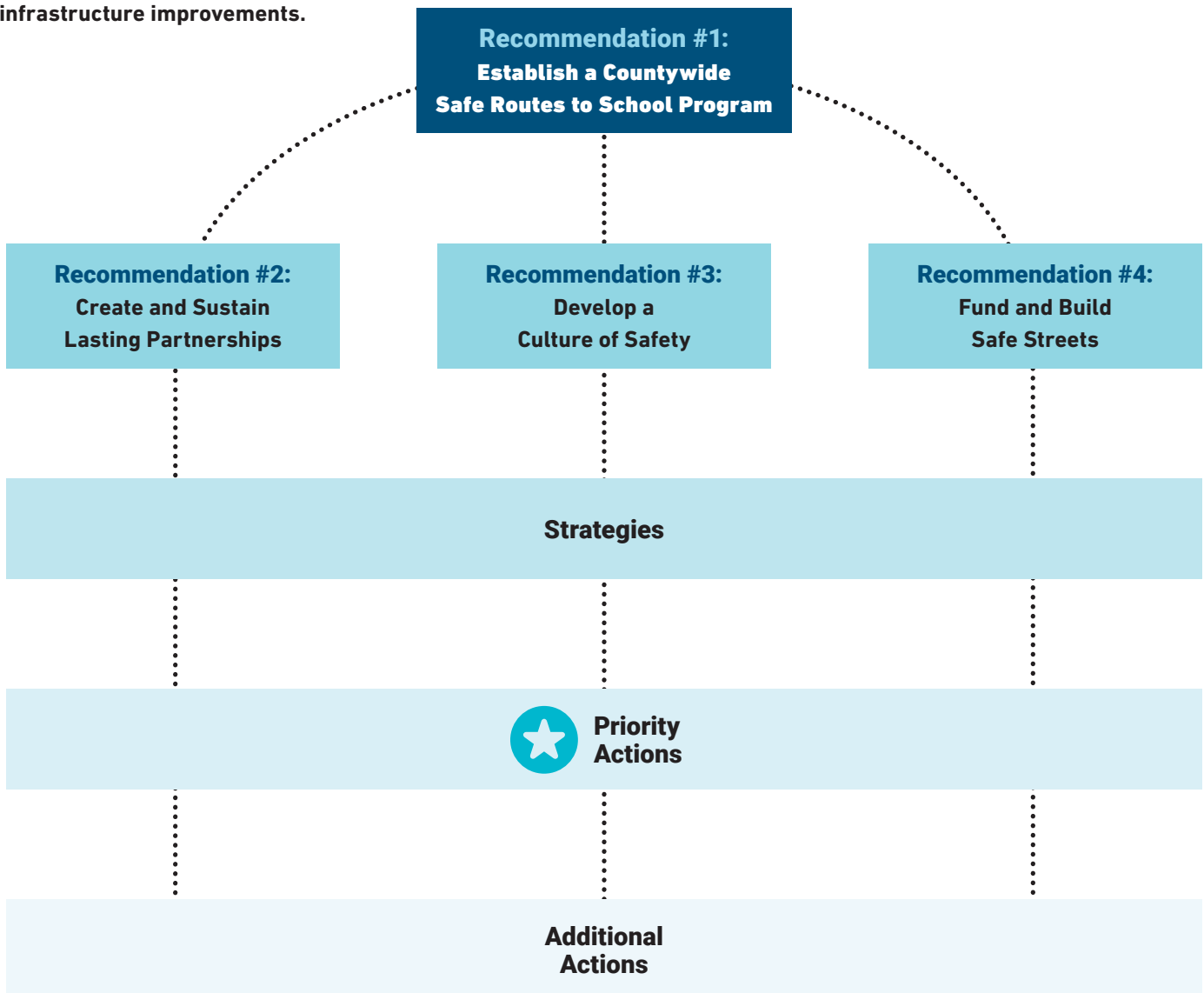
This recommendation, and all its actions, must be acted on and implemented immediately.

After the countywide program is developed the program team can move on to the next phase, which includes:

- **Recommendation #2:**  
Create and sustain lasting partnerships.
- **Recommendation #3:**  
Develop a culture of safety.
- **Recommendation #4:**  
Fund and implement infrastructure improvements.

Each recommendation provides relevant strategies and actions. We have also identified the priority action that should be tackled first. Priority actions are not the only ones that should be undertaken but are highlighted as important early work that program participants and supporters can undertake to ensure smooth delivery of other program strategies and actions.

The graphic below details recommendation structure.



## How to read this section

Each recommendation includes a written description of strategies and actions necessary to accomplish the recommended outcome. For each recommendation, there is a priority action that is critical to successful implementation of the recommendation. Following these written descriptions is a chart that details participant roles, timing, and level of difficulty. The graphic below explains how to read each portion of this chart.

### Participant roles:

The table below highlights key roles involved in planning and implementing SRTS. In addition to these key roles, secondary audiences like parents and the broader school community can provide critical support to SRTS by modeling and encouraging healthy habits for students, by driving safely in schools and neighborhoods, and in participating in SRTS events and programs.

### Timing:

The estimated number of years required to implement this strategy.

### Level of difficulty:

How challenging a strategy will be to accomplish, based on funding, coordination, and other factors.

## Relationship between Action Plan recommendations and the 6 Es

### Establish a countywide Safe Routes to School program

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engagement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encouragement |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equity     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evaluation    |

### Create and sustain lasting partnerships

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engagement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encouragement |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equity     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering           | <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation               |

### Develop a culture of safety

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engagement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encouragement |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equity     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering           | <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation               |

### Fund and implement infrastructure improvements

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engagement  | <input type="checkbox"/> Encouragement         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equity      | <input type="checkbox"/> Education             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evaluation |

## SRTS program participant roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Managing entity	Sustain the program, oversee its daily operations, seek and coordinate funding, and evaluate progress toward program objectives.
Advisory committee	Provide expertise, engagement and support to the SRTS program.
District staff	Collaborate with and provide material and resource support to schools based on need and capacity; coordinate with other districts and county agencies to strengthen partnerships.
School staff	Provide insight to school district staff about local needs, maintain direct contact with parents, and serve as a local resource for implementing SRTS actions and activities.
Local and state public agencies	Provide funding and resources to implement SRTS, as well as technical support.
Other funders (foundations, businesses, individual donors)	Provide financial, material, and other resource support to program, schools, and districts; advocate to policymakers and public; amplify SRTS communication to broaden program reach and support.



## Recommendation #1

# Establish a countywide Safe Routes to School program.

Based on findings of the existing conditions assessment and public engagement the project team recommends establishing a countywide SRTS program in Orange County. The program would build on the county's existing Safe Routes to School accomplishments and create a sustained and powerful foundation to support SRTS across the county.

The following three strategies can help bring this program to life, with additional details and considerations noted for selected actions:

### » Strategy 1: Identify program oversight.



SRTS Working Group

#### ★ Priority Action:

##### Identify the entity to oversee the countywide program.

The primary responsibilities of managing the program include guiding the program's vision and goals, overseeing its day-to-day operations, offering technical assistance to schools and communities, establishing ongoing sources of program funding, and evaluating progress toward achieving objectives.

Governance options include:

- Single government agency: Management by just one agency would simplify governance. However, a single government agency potentially has access to less resources as well as less reach. Larger agencies may have many competing priorities, and management by just one agency increases the risk that a SRTS program would get sidelined.
- Joint agency management: A joint partnership would require approval by the governing bodies of each agency and would not exclude participation by other agencies with an interest in SRTS. A partnership can leverage the complementary skills and relationships of each individual agency, but would require diligence to ensure efficient decision-making and would require a thoughtful approach to program branding. The Working Group supported a partnership between OCTA and OCHCA.
- Non-governmental agency: An NGO would have a more agile staffing structure than a public agency and would be more able to adjust and adapt to increase program management efficiencies. Unlike public agencies, NGOs are not limited by political district boundaries or directly subject to the political priorities of elected leadership. However, Orange County's public agencies have a history of SRTS leadership and involvement, and the shift to NGO management risks an incomplete knowledge transfer and loss of institutional knowledge.

## Recommendation # 1 (continued)

### Action 2:

#### Determine primary SRTS program coordinator(s).

It is critical to determine one or more program coordinators who can act as the primary point of contact for the countywide program. This will ensure clarity on roles and responsibilities. These coordinators will have responsibility for securing additional funds to hire more staff or contractors to expand its capacity for program planning and execution. The staffing plan for the program may consider balancing funding and leveraging the distinct focus areas and strengths the managing entity or entities bring to the program.

### Action 3:

#### Establish an advisory committee.

The advisory committee will serve as a resource to program staff and will play a central role in actively promoting and implementing this Action Plan. Staff should identify the key roles, perspectives, or constituencies that should be represented on the committee first, and then select individuals who meet the required qualifications. The exact number of participants may vary, but smaller is better (and ten may be a reasonable maximum) to ensure meaningful participation of each member.

Participants with diverse sociodemographic and professional backgrounds who have deep relationships with the key communities and constituencies of this Plan will best be able to support program engagement efforts. The existing Working Group for the Action Plan may serve as a template for establishing the committee. The project team recommends ensuring participation from schools and school districts as well as municipality staff. Selected individuals should also have:

- A willingness to represent the work of the SRTS program to their community or constituency;
- A willingness to connect program coordinators and other working on SRTS with the participant's community, institution, or other relevant constituency;

- An understanding of Safe Routes to School approaches and methods and an interest in learning more, with priority given to individuals with direct experience on Safe Routes to School work;
- Capacity to participate meaningfully in committee meetings, at key decision points, and in engagement or other activities between committee sessions.

It is critical to define from the outset the parameters of the committee's influence and authority. The committee should adopt bylaws that formalize its role and make explicit its decision-making or advisory scope. Potential functions may include support for grant applications across the county (gathering support letters for all applicants and other administrative tasks), funding prioritization, and grant allocations for successful applications. The committee can also help build relationships with school leaderships (for example by each committee member tasked to steward relationships with leadership at a certain number of schools) and lead annual countywide gatherings of SRTS advocates. The committee should meet at least quarterly and more often in the six months following its establishment.

## » Strategy 2: Establish ongoing sources of program funding.

Implementing SRTS programs and infrastructure improvements requires dedicated resources. The program coordinator must seek out funding streams that sustain SRTS efforts year after year.

### Action 1:

**Include two initial years of program funding in the next possible budget cycle and formulate strategies that capitalize on non-infrastructure funding sources like program and planning grants.**

### Action 2:

**Identify annual program funding opportunities at the county, state, and federal levels.**



## Recommendation #1 (continued)

### » Strategy 3: Evaluate progress toward achieving objectives.

The program coordinator should establish a baseline to track progress toward shared program objectives. Consistent evaluation ensures that programs are effective and that resources are being used efficiently.



#### Action 1:

**Develop benchmark metrics to measure program outcomes.**

When creating metrics and targets for evaluation, it is important to differentiate between measuring outputs and outcomes. Outputs are actions or items that contribute to an outcome, whereas outcomes themselves are the results of those outputs. It is easy to measure the number of SRTS events hosted during a school year (an output) but more important to measure how those events raised awareness about SRTS programs (an outcome).

#### Action 2:

**Establish a timeline for ongoing evaluation of progress toward achieving program objectives.**

Progress toward program objectives should be evaluated on an ongoing basis, using benchmarks that can easily be compared across period to determine effectiveness of existing efforts and, if necessary, the need for a shift in approach or for more resources. There is no single best cadence for evaluation; rather, evaluation periods and frequency should be matched to suit the availability of data on selected benchmarks and to align with other program milestones.

Strategies	Key Roles						Timing (Program Year)			Level of Difficulty
	Program Coordinator	Advisory Committee	District Staff	School staff	Local and state agencies	Other Funders	0	2	5	
Identify program oversight and coordinators	✓	✓					✓			Medium
Establish ongoing sources of funding	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Hard
Evaluate progress toward achieving objectives	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		Medium

## Recommendation # 2

### Create and sustain lasting partnerships.

The program coordinator cannot achieve SRTS objectives alone. Success depends on meaningful partnership among schools, districts, community-based organizations, and other agencies and supporters and on schools and districts knowing how to participate to their fullest potential.

#### » Strategy 1: Build and sustain support coalitions.

There are many stakeholders who are involved in implementing SRTS work and acting as champions of the safe routes vision. Their participation is vital to supporting the program and achieving its objectives.

#### Action 1: Create a community engagement protocol that supports ongoing outreach as part of Action Plan implementation.

This engagement protocol might initially take shape as a set of principles for engagement before being developed into actionable strategies and tactics for outreach. The advisory committee should serve a significant role in creating and executing this engagement protocol and plan.



Students from Santiago High School supporting Walk to School Day at Clinton Elementary School

#### » Strategy 2: Empower the school community to take on new SRTS programming.

Easy-to-understand resources about preparing for, planning, and implementing SRTS programs will help schools and districts find and use the resources they need and sustain their efforts over the long haul.

## Recommendation # 2 (continued)

### ★ Priority Action:

#### Provide assessment tools to schools and districts to help determine their readiness and capacity.

The existing conditions assessment for this plan illuminated external factors in the school environment that contribute to each school's need; additional internal assessment can clarify each school's readiness to take on Safe Routes to School programming and activities. Schools exist on a spectrum of readiness, and each school and district can take action to increase its readiness and raise its capacity to implement SRTS programs and initiatives.

The following four-level Readiness Spectrum for Orange County schools and districts was adapted from Safe Routes National Partnership's "[Making Strides: State Report Cards on Walking, Bicycling and Active Kids and Communities](#)," an annual evaluation of each state's progress on actions that promote and support physical activity.

- **Lacing up:** This school is still getting off the ground but may have taken some initial steps to support walking, biking and physical activity in the school community.
- **Warming up:** This school has established a few policies or initiatives and taken some strong steps that support SRTS but has not used many of the tools and techniques available.
- **Making strides:** This school has multiple policies and initiatives to support walking, biking and physical activity, but may still be missing some key strategies.
- **Building speed:** This school has made a significant commitment to support walking, bicycling and physical activity and is providing support in multiple ways.

#### How ready is your school or district?

While each school and district operate under a different set of opportunities and constraints, there are a few widely applicable considerations when evaluating readiness to implement SRTS programs and activities. These lists are not exhaustive, and schools and districts may show readiness by doing only a few of these things or in ways not listed here.

#### A district may demonstrate readiness by:

- Adopting SRTS policies with targets to increase walking and bicycling;
- Applying for and receiving funding for SRTS, providing letters of support to help pursue grant funding, or both;

- Hosting Walk or Bike to School Day;
- Allocating resources to schools based on need and capacity;
- Hiring or designating a SRTS Coordinator.

#### A school may demonstrate readiness by:

- Developing safety messaging for students and parents regarding proper drop-off and pick-up;
- Developing maps of suggested safe routes to school;
- Adopting SRTS policies with targets to increase walking and bicycling;
- Evaluating the impact of SRTS through surveys, walk audits and other community feedback;
- Hiring or designating a SRTS Coordinator or having SRTS leadership from the PTA or a group of students;
- Offering educational opportunities like bike rodeos or pedestrian safety trainings;
- Participating in annual SRTS events like Walk to School Day or Bike to School Day;
- Hosting regular encouragement events to support walking and bicycling like walking school buses or bike trains;
- Creating opportunities for students and parents to participate substantively in the SRTS planning process;
- Addressing the barriers faced by students of color, students with disabilities, LGBTQ students, and low-income families;
- Implementing physical improvements in the school community to make walking and bicycling safer and more convenient.

#### Increasing readiness

No matter where a school or district is today on the spectrum of readiness there are ways it can improve walking and bicycling. This example follows the Safe Routes Partnership "Making Strides" framework described above:

- **Lacing Up:** Identify a point person to learn more about SRTS, adopt SRTS as a school priority, or both.
- **Warming Up:** Host a Walk to School Day event.
- **Making Strides:** Identify and empower a SRTS coordinator and schedule a Walk Audit, distribute walk/bike activity guides to school population.
- **Building Speed:** Work with local agency or district to apply for funding for school improvements, host regular walk/bike activities.

## Recommendation # 2 (continued)

### Action 2:

Provide model [Safe Routes to School policy](#) language to districts and schools and advocate for policy adoption.

### Action 3:

Promote the how-to guides contained in the Action Plan toolkit (Appendix B), which help schools and districts (as well as wider supporters in the school community) learn how to execute new activities and programs.

Strategies	Key Roles						Timing (Program Year)			Level of Difficulty
	Program Coordinator	Advisory Committee	District Staff	School staff	Local and state agencies	Other Funders	0	2	5	
Build and sustain support coalitions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	Medium
Empower the school community to take on new SRTS programming	✓		✓	✓				✓		Medium
Connect potential funders to fundable SRTS projects and programs	✓	✓				✓		✓		Medium
Communicate regularly with potential and existing partners	✓		✓	✓			✓			Easy

## Recommendation # 3 Develop a culture of safety.

Infrastructure alone is rarely enough to achieve SRTS objectives; the program must support education and encouragement strategies that supplement infrastructure improvements to develop a culture of safe transportation behavior in the public at large.

### » Strategy 1: Educate and encourage students and the school community about safety.

Effective engagement and education strategies in schools can transform students into SRTS champions. Wider public buy-in is also necessary to ensure successful implementation and long-term health of SRTS programs. The school community includes parents, caregivers, neighbors, and businesses.

#### Action 1: Encourage schools to implement strategies from the Plan toolkit to increase student participation in regular walking and biking activities.

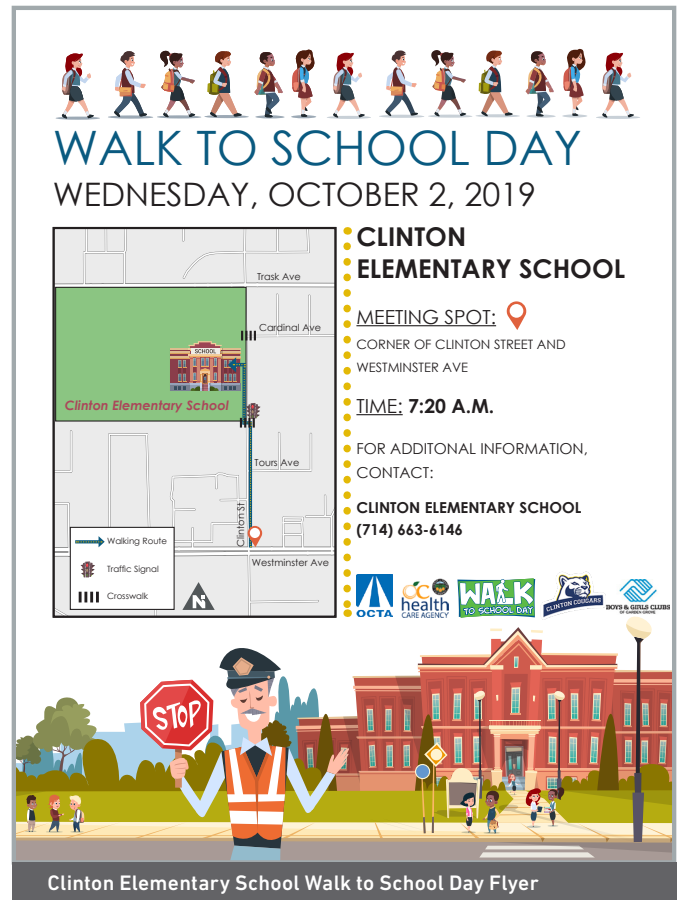
Potential activities could include student-led walkability audits, walking school buses or bike trains. Set a target of at least one monthly school-led event at each school, and annual Walk/Bike to School days for schools across the district. (See Appendix B for more information on starting a bike train, planning a walk audit, or hosting a Walk/Bike to School Day.)

#### Action 2: Integrate SRTS messaging and activities into local community events.

At these events, partner with other agencies and groups who can host activities like pop-up bike rodeos and helmet giveaways. Events should reimagine the role of law enforcement in SRTS to more closely align with community-centered approaches to safety. (See Appendix B for more information on how to plan a bike rodeo.)

#### Action 3: Create eye-catching and succinct educational materials (including walking/bicycling route maps) using the SRTS branding.

Distribute these to businesses and, through schools, to student families. Materials should be culturally sensitive and in languages reflecting the communities served. (See Appendix B for more information on creating walking route maps.)





## Recommendation # ③ (continued)

### » Strategy 2:

#### Promote community-wide behavior change.

Community-led enforcement supports behavior changes that improve safety for students walking and biking to school. The program coordinator should collaborate with businesses, groups and other supporters throughout the Orange County community to ensure education and enforcement messages are culturally relevant.

##### Action 1:

###### Promote district-wide student safety patrol programs.

Students can help promote traffic safety and enhance enforcement of existing drop-off and pick-up procedures.

##### Action 2:

Promote zero-tolerance policies for speeding in school zones, reinforced by [Neighborhood Speed Watch programs](#) for residents to record and report speed data on their local streets.

##### Action 3:

Inventory and evaluate existing crossing guard locations and staffing to ensure fair and equitable distribution of resources that maximize safety benefits.

##### Action 4:

Provide community-supported enforcement and education to improve traffic safety and personal safety for pedestrians and children walking to school.

Potential programs include Corner Captains (volunteers stationed along school routes to add eyes on the street) and Safe Havens (businesses who volunteer to be a safe location for students to enter if they're experiencing bullying or harassment). More information on these tactics can be found in Safe Routes National Partnership's "[Personal Safety in Safe Routes to School: Address Violence and Crime in Your Community](#)" factsheet.

### » Strategy 3:

#### Maintain institutional knowledge.

Institutional knowledge is critical to building a culture of safety, and SRTS cannot be sustained by the work of one or a few individuals. Creating a record of efforts, achievements, and practices can help ensure transfer of knowledge as the program evolves, participation evolves, and needs change.

## Spotlight: What is the role of law enforcement in Safe Routes to School?

Recent research by Safe Routes Partnership found that policing in the school community does not always make students and parents feel safer, and that enforcement activities can create disproportionately negative outcomes for vulnerable communities. In 2020, Safe Routes Partnership removed Enforcement from the 6 Es and advocated shifting resources away from law enforcement and toward community-based approaches to public safety.

Law enforcement agencies and officers have traditionally provided support to Safe Routes to School by managing crossing guard programs and enforcing traffic laws. Alternatives to this law enforcement role include parent and volunteer community leadership. These are three examples of agencies and organizations moving away from a reliance on law enforcement:

##### Safe & Sound Program (Milwaukee):

The Safe & Sound program promotes public safety through a combination of law enforcement, community organizing, and youth development. The city's SRTS strategic plan recommends community-supported traffic enforcement and education and building close partnerships with local partners to ensure that SRTS efforts are culturally appropriate.

##### Neighborhood Speed Watch Program (Sacramento):

Residents help reduce speeding by using County-provided radar equipment to identify speeders. Vehicle owners are then mailed an awareness letter to encourage drivers to obey the speed limit while traveling on neighborhood streets.

##### Driver Accountability Program (New York City):

Trained facilitators provide a restorative alternative to fines and fees for those who have committed criminal driving offenses. Participants take part in exercises and discussion to gain understanding of the harms of dangerous driving behavior and to identify strategies to improve their driving.

## Recommendation #3 (continued)

### ★ Priority Action:

**Compile a record of institutional knowledge to date and ensure that SRTS program staff are aware of local and national best practices.**

Turnover among staff and students creates challenges for maintaining forward momentum toward SRTS targets. Developing a plan to maintain institutional knowledge stops programs from losing forward progress and capacity. Institutional knowledge is a process, not an end state, and requires ongoing maintenance to grow over time. Compiling institution knowledge now will ensure that whoever is brought on as staff under the implementation of Recommendation #1: Establishing a Countywide Program, can hit the ground running. The following three steps can help ensure SRTS knowledge are not lost over time.

1. Compile existing knowledge. Designate a staffer to compile a record of materials and progress to date; the OCTA website has a running list of SRTS toolkit materials that provides a good start. This staffer should act as a record-keeper and create and maintain a running record of SRTS meetings, events and accomplishments. All materials should be kept in a manner allowing them to be easily transitioned to future staffers – whether digitally or as printed materials.
2. Stay up to date on best practices. Staff should look to national SRTS leaders for additional tools like webinars, case studies, and reports. Approaches to SRTS are constantly evolving, and continual SRTS education and training is an investment that will keep the program relevant and of utmost use to its constituents.
3. Share knowledge with other SRTS champions and advocates. SRTS is an interdisciplinary effort, and improved outcomes result from breaking down silos across schools, agencies, and communities.

Strategies	Key Roles						Timing (Year)			Level of Difficulty
	Program Coordinator	Advisory Committee	District Staff	School staff	Local and state agencies	Other Funders	0	2	5	
Educate and encourage students and the school community	✓		✓	✓				✓		Medium
Promote community-wide behavior change	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		Hard
Maintain institutional knowledge	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	Hard

## Recommendation #4

### Fund and implement infrastructure improvements.

Infrastructure improvements make walking and biking safer, more comfortable, and more convenient by shortening crossing distances, reducing potential conflicts between cars and students walking and biking, and creating or enhancing dedicated walking and biking facilities.

#### Strategy 1: Identify needed infrastructure improvements.

School administrators, families, and neighbors are experts when it comes to getting to and from their schools, but rarely have access to technical expertise that turns their knowledge into infrastructure improvement projects. Involving city planner, traffic engineer, and school district facilities staff at the forefront can help and educate the community on what is feasible, while managing the community's expectations. This strategy directs technical support and other resources to schools to help school communities understand what their schools need, what kinds of improvements could help, and how to go about making those improvements a reality.

**Action 1: Create and distribute an infrastructure improvement toolkit to all schools.**

**Action 2: Conduct walk audits, prioritizing schools that demonstrate high need, readiness, and capacity for SRTS improvements and programming.** (See Appendix B for more information on planning walk audits.)

**Action 3: Identify, and train if necessary, partner agency or agencies to plan, design, install, and fund improvements.**

#### Strategy 2: Direct infrastructure funding resources to school communities.

School communities often lack the funding and other resources required to independently identify and implement the right improvements. More funding to school communities for infrastructure improvements means infrastructure dollars flow to the communities that know best what they need to support safe travel to school.

#### ★ Priority Action:

Provide districts and individual schools with a funding toolkit containing funding opportunities and directions to apply for that funding.

Funding is a critical element of SRTS implementation, and financial needs vary based on school or district capacity and context.

#### Funding approach

In its "[Frequent Routes to Funding](#)" fact sheet, [Safe Routes Partnership](#) provides these steps to obtain program funding:

1. Identify funding needs and recruit leadership to pursue resources. Evaluate your funding needs. Ask questions like "How much funding is needed?", "When do we need the funding?", and "Can in-kind donations offset and funding needs?"
2. Make lists of prospective funders and build the case for your proposal. Identify who on the team seeking funding has a relationship with potential funders or state to build those relationships.
3. Ask for funding. Preparation ahead of time is key. Make sure to research grant availability, deadlines, and review previous winning applications. Grant applications will often ask for a program description, a needs statement, program objectives, timeline, budget and evaluation methods, all of which can be drafted in advance.

#### Sources of funding

Funding is available from a wide variety of sources including federal and state transportation grants, health grants, physical education grants, local foundations, local business sponsorship, and donations. Appendix C includes specific federal, state and regional funding opportunities for SRTS.



## Recommendation #4 (continued)

**Action 2: Direct funding for infrastructure improvements to individual schools based on their need (as determined by their context score) and readiness.** (See Appendix A for more information on school context scores and tiering.)

**Action 3: Provide districts and individual schools with a funding toolkit that describes potential funding opportunities and instructions for how to apply and be competitive for funding.**

## Strategy 3: Advocate for inclusion of Safe Routes to School in local and countywide plans.

**Action 1: Reach out to local and countywide planning departments and train planning staff to incorporate SRTS objectives and targets into new and updated planning documents.** (See Appendix B for more information on how to integrate SRTS into comprehensive plans.)

**Action 2: Promote parent, teacher and student involvement in ongoing community visioning and feedback for local planning efforts. Provide information on public meetings and give school community members talking points for public comments that address their concerns and needs.**

Strategies	Key Roles						Timing (Year)			Level of Difficulty
	Program Coordinator	Advisory Committee	District Staff	School staff	Local and state agencies	Funders	0	2	5	
Identify needed infrastructure improvements	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		Medium
Direct infrastructure resources to school communities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	Hard
Advocate for inclusion of Safe Routes to School in local and countywide plans	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		Hard

# Appendices

**A. Needs Analysis Methodology**

**B. Safe Routes to School Toolkit**

**C. Funding Resources for Safe Routes to School**

## Appendix A: Needs Analysis Methodology

In the Fall of 2019, the project team used available data to determine a “context score” and tier for Orange County schools. This analysis was based on factors related to safety around and near the school, to how well the transportation network supports walking and bicycling to school, and to indicators of community vulnerability such housing costs, household income, and chronic diseases.

This needs analysis results suggested where SRTS programs and activities are most needed. The project team then sorted schools into three tiers for schools based on where efforts have potential to impact the most students, to benefit the most vulnerable students, and to promote increased travel by walking and rolling.

### Factors, variables, and weights

The needs analysis process uses factors, variables, and weights calculate a score for each school in Orange County. This process is repeated separately for each level of school (Elementary, Middle, High, and Other) so that rankings are comparable at the same grade level.

- **Factors:** Categories used to express community/agency values and group variables with similar characteristics. The factors used are *equity*, *community need*, and *public safety*.
- **Variables:** Characteristics of roadways, households, neighborhood areas, and other features that can be used to measure each Factor (e.g. population density, sidewalk presence).
- **Weights:** Numbers used to indicate the relative importance of different factors based on community or agency values. Each factor depends on three variables, which vary between 0 and 3 points, for a maximum factor score of 9 points. The *equity* and *community need* factors are scaled down to 8 points each, and the *public safety* factor is scaled up to 11, such that the final score remains at 27 points.

## Summary of Factors, Variables, and Weights

<b>EQUITY</b> scaled to 8 pts	Type	Description	Source	Source Geometry	Aggregate Geometry
Obesity	Rate*	Obesity rate at school 0 pt (lowest quartile) to 3 pt (highest quartile)	OCDE	School	None
HPI	Index*	Health disparity 0 pt (highest quartile) to 3 pt (lowest quartile)	CA Public Health Alliance	Census Block	Enrollment boundary
Race	Rate*	Percent of non-white population 0 pt (lowest quartile) to 3 pt (highest quartile)	2017 ACS 5-yr	Census Block	Enrollment boundary
<b>COMMUNITY NEED</b> scaled to 8 pts	Type	Description	Source	Source Geometry	Aggregate Geometry
Existing and Planned Bike Network	Score	Existing and Planned Bikeways 3 pt: no existing or planned bikeway within 1/2 mile 2 pt: no existing or planned facility within 1/4 mile 1 pt: planned but no existing facility within 1/4 mile 0 pt: existing facility within 1/4 mile	OCTA	Distance from school point	None
Sidewalk Network	Score	Gaps and Sidewalk Exists 3 pt 2 or more gaps within 1/2 mile, and no sidewalk within 1/8 mile 2 pt 1 gap within 1/2 mile, and no sidewalk within 1/8 mile 1 pt any number of gaps within 1/2 mile, and sidewalk exists within 1/8 mile 0 pt 0 sidewalk gaps within 1/2 mile and sidewalk exists within 1/8 mile of school	OCTA	Distance from school point	None
Children under 18	Rate*	Percent of population under age 18 0 pt (lowest quartile) to 3 pt (highest quartile)	ACS 2017	Census Block	Enrollment boundary

APPENDICES

<b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b> <small>scaled to 11 pts</small>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Source Geometry</b>	<b>Aggregate Geometry</b>
Active transportation collisions (severe or fatal)	Score	Number of severe or fatal collisions 1 pt: fatality or severe injury within 1/2 mile 0 pt: no fatality or severe injury within 1/2 mile	SWITRS	Distance from school point	None
Active transportation collisions (any severity)	Score	Number of collisions 2 pt: highest quartile 1 pt: second highest quartile	SWITRS	Point	Enrollment boundary
Traffic Volumes	Score	Average volume of roadways within 1/8 mile* 3 pt: > 15,000 ADT 2 pt: 8,000-15,000 ADT 1 pt: 3,000-8,000 ADT 0 pt: < 3,000 * volume thresholds approximately equivalent to Level of Traffic Stress score thresholds	OCTA	Distance from school point	None
Number of Lanes	Score	Average number of lanes on major roads within 1/8 mile 3 points: > 2 lanes 0 points: <= 2 lanes	OCTA	Distance from school point	None

## Tiers

Schools were grouped into three tiers based on their scores: low, medium, and high need. Tiers are based on terciles for each level of school so that rankings are similarly comparable at the same grade level.

- Tier 1 - Sensitive: Schools that are in the highest-need context and require the most intensive SRTS support (174 schools);
- Tier 2 - Swing: Schools with moderate need that may require general SRTS support (264 schools);
- Tier 3 - Supportive: Schools with the lowest level of need that would benefit from basic SRTS resources (184 schools).

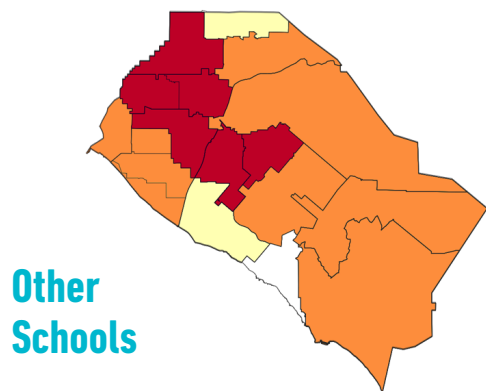
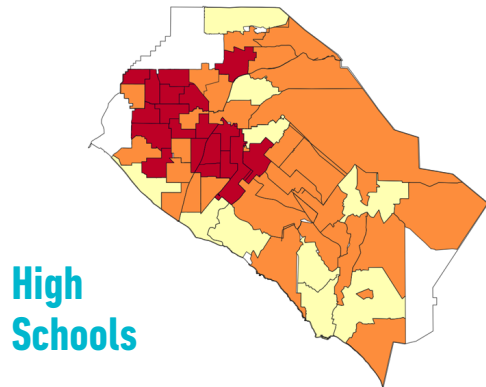
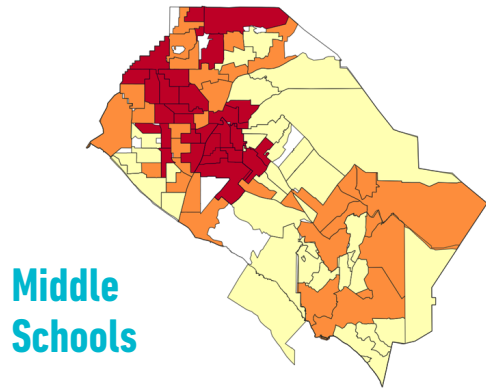
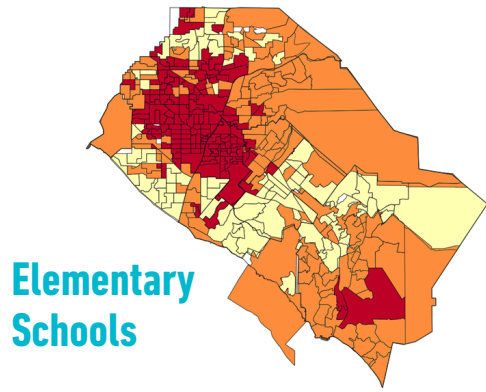
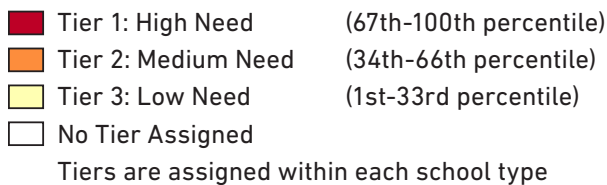
## How to read and interpret results

A school's context score and tier can assist in determining which programming options to consider based on school need but should not be evaluated in a vacuum. Tiers and scores should be considered along with information about its SRTS-related policies, programs and activities to identify how to further encourage walking and biking to schools.

For the purpose of this report, we focus on highlighting locations of Tier 1 schools. Tier 1 schools were concentrated in similar geographic locations for all school types, but the spatial distribution of schools in Tiers 2 and 3 vary by school type (elementary, middle and high school):

- Tier 1 elementary schools were concentrated in Santa Ana, Garden Grove, and Anaheim.
- Tier 1 middle schools were concentrated in the northeast corner of the County in Santa Ana, Buena Park, and Anaheim.
- Tier 1 high schools were concentrated in the northwest corner of the County in Santa Ana, part of Anaheim, Westminster, Garden Grove, and Tustin.

The following maps of tiers by school type demonstrated why breaking up schools by type is important to understand where need is highest.



## Appendix B: Safe Routes to School Toolkit

The Safe Routes to School Toolkit provides guidance for planning and executing SRTS activities and events and creating or improving SRTS programs. Resources are organized by audience, and all materials will be downloadable on the OCTA website.

### Resources for school champions (parents, faculty, and community members)

Topic	Title	Source	Description
Bike rodeo / skills clinic	<a href="#">Roll Up to a Bicycle Skills Clinic</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	Instructions for planning and hosting a bicycle skills clinic
Bike train	<a href="#">The Wheels on the Bike Go Round and Round: Bike Train Toolkit</a>	Safe Routes Partnership and Active Transportation Resources Center	A guide with “tried-and-true” methods to quickly start a bike train at your school
Parent involvement	<a href="#">How to Be a Parent Champion for Safe Routes to School</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	Instructions for parents on how to get involved in SRTS through data collection, school and neighborhood improvement, policy change, and programs
Parent-teacher association involvement	<a href="#">How to Be a PTA Champion for Safe Routes to School</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	Instructions for PTA members on how to promote policy change and improvements to the built environment
Programs for middle schools	<a href="#">Safe Routes to School and Student Leaders (middle school facilitator’s guide)</a>	Safe Routes Partnership and Active Transportation Resource Center	A guide with practical tools for adult facilitators to support middle school students in promoting SRTS
Safety - personal	<a href="#">Addressing Street Harassment</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	A report providing potential approaches to addressing street harassment
Safety – walking and biking	<a href="#">Roll Bicycle Education into Your Physical Education Program</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	A report detailing the benefits of bicycle education and steps to take to develop a bicycle education program for physical education classes
Students with disabilities	<a href="#">Engaging Students with Disabilities in Safe Routes to School</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	SRTS coordinators/staffers
Tactical urbanism	<a href="#">Tactical Urbanism and Safe Routes to School</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	A factsheet outline how pop-up projects can be used to advance SRTS projects along with examples of pop-ups
Travel tallies and parent surveys	<a href="#">School Data System for Student Travel Tallies and Parent Survey Questionnaires</a>	National Center for SRTS	A data system that allows users to enter and view data collected using Student Travel Tally and Parent Survey questionnaires

Topic	Title	Source	Description
Virtual engagement	<a href="#">Equitable community engagement in a time of social distancing</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	A blog detailing creative ways to continue equitable engagement during COVID-19
Walk audit	<a href="#">Let's Go For A Walk: A Toolkit for Planning and Conducting a Walk Audit</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	Tools and instructions for community members to host their own walk audits
	<a href="#">Keep Up the Pace: Next Steps After Conducting a Walk Audit</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	A factsheet to help analyze the results of a walk audit
	<a href="#">California Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Curriculum</a>	Active Transportation Resources Center	Bicycle and pedestrian safety curriculum for students in 4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> grade
	<a href="#">Pedestrian Safer Journey</a>	Federal Highway Administration	An interactive website with videos, quizzes and resources on pedestrian safety for students ages 5-18
	<a href="#">Bicycle Safer Journey</a>	Federal Highway Administration	An interactive website with videos, quizzes and resources on bicyclist safety for students ages 5-18
Walking route maps	<a href="#">Guide to Creating Walking Route Maps for Safe Routes to School</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	A guide with step-by-step instructions to create recommended route maps using free tools
Walking school bus	<a href="#">Walking School Bus Program</a>	OCHCA	Information on Orange County Health Care Agency's <i>Walking School Bus</i> program, with contact information for help starting a program at your school
	<a href="#">Step by Step: How to Start a Walking School Bus at Your School</a>	Safe Routes Partnership and Active Transportation Resources Center	A toolkit designed to help parents, educators, and community members plan and organize a walking school bus with adult volunteers
Walk or Bike to School Day events	<a href="#">How to Plan a Walk to School Day Event</a>	OCHCA and National Center for SRTS	Instructions and resources to plan and promote a Walk to School Day event
	<a href="#">Walk to School Day: Planning Your Program in 4 Easy Steps</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	A step-by-step guide to planning a Walk to School Day event
	<a href="#">National Walk and Bike to School Events</a>	National Center for SRTS	A resource to register for Walk to School Day, plan your own event, and learn more about what to do after the event



## City and/or County Staff (public agencies)

Topic	Title	Author	Description
Arrival and dismissal improvements	<a href="#">Keep Calm and Carry On: Improving Arrival and Dismissal</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	A brief on how to address arrival and dismissal in school travel plans as well as other planning, policy, and programming efforts
Comprehensive planning	<a href="#">Integrating Safe Walking and Biking into Comprehensive Planning</a>	Safe Routes Partnership and National Center for SRTS	A factsheet illustrating how to include walking and biking in comprehensive plans
Crossing guards	<a href="#">California School Crossing Guard Training Guidelines</a>	Active Transportation Resource Center	Guidelines and procedures for school crossing guards in California
	<a href="#">California School Crossing Guard Training (Parts 1, 2, 3, 4)</a>	Active Transportation Resource Center	Online training courses for new and existing crossing guards in California
Enforcement officer	<a href="#">SRTS Guide: Enforcement (see page 4-4)</a>	Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center	A guide detailing the multiple approaches to improve common unsafe behaviors
Personal safety	<a href="#">Personal Safety in Safe Routes to School</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	A factsheet with strategies to improve safety from crime and violence for children during their trips to and from school
School district policies	<a href="#">School District Policies: Promoting Safe Routes to School Through Policy</a>	Safe Routes Partnership	A factsheet highlighting how districts can pass simple or in-depth policies to set their commitment to SRTS

## Appendix C: Funding Resources for Safe Routes to School

Funding Source	Agency	Description	What do they fund?
<b>Federal Funding Programs</b>			
Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants	US Department of Transportation	BUILD (formerly TIGER) is a nationally competitive grant for capital investments on surface transportation projects that achieve a significant impact for a metropolitan area, region, or the nation. Selection criteria encompass safety, economic competitiveness, quality of life, state of good repair, innovation and partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders.	Roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports or intermodal transportation
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program	Federal Highway Administration	CMAQ provides funding for state and local governments for transportation programs and projects that support the Clean Air Act, improving air quality and providing congestion relief. The OCTA Bicycle Corridor Improvement Program uses CMAQ funds.	Bicycle infrastructure
<b>State Funding Programs</b>			
California Active Transportation Program (ATP)	California Transportation Commission	The ATP resulted from the consolidation of many former federal State programs and funds a wide range of capital and non-capital projects. A strong preference is given to projects in disadvantaged communities.	Infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects (e.g., encouragement, education, and enforcement), and plans (including active transportation and Safe Routes to School plans)
California Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP)	California Air Resources Board	STEP is a transportation equity pilot project for Fiscal Year 2019-20 that aims to address community residents' transportation needs, increase access to key destinations, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by funding planning, clean transportation, and supporting projects.	Active transportation subsidies, construction of new pedestrian facilities, new bike routes and networks (Class I, II, or IV) and supporting infrastructure

Funding Source	Agency	Description	What do they fund?
Clean Mobility Options	California Air Resources Board	The Clean Mobility Options Voucher Pilot Program provides voucher-based funding for zero-emission carsharing, car- and van-pooling, bike- and scooter-sharing, innovative transit services, and ride-on-demand services in California’s historically underserved communities.	Eligible projects must be in a community that: (1) is on the Disadvantaged Communities List for Climate Investments in accordance with CalEPA’s designation (2) is a tribal land or tribal property within AB 1550 designated low-income communities, or (3) serves a deed-restricted affordable housing facility with at least five units and located within an AB 1550 designated low-income community.
California Office of Traffic Safety Grants	California Office of Traffic Safety	For traffic-safety education, awareness and enforcement programs aimed at drivers, pedestrians and cyclists.	Certain activities under the SRTS, safety/education and enforcement programs.
Highway Safety Improvement Program	California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)	For projects and programs that reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries by correcting or improving a specific problem. Highly competitive at the state level.	Safety-related pedestrian, bikeway and crossing projects. Certain activities under the SRTS, safety/ education and enforcement programs; also, certain spot improvements. Bike lanes, paved shoulders, crosswalks, intersection improvements and signage
Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program	California Strategic Growth Council	Projects that facilitate compact development, including bicycle infrastructure and amenities, with neighborhood scale impacts. Available to government agencies and institutions (including local government, transit agencies and school districts), developers and non-profit organizations.	Bicycle and pedestrian corridor and crossing improvements, particularly those in the area covered in specific plans
Transformative Climate Communities	California Strategic Growth Council and Department of Conservation	Funds community-led development and infrastructure projects that achieve major environmental, health and economic benefits in California’s most disadvantaged communities	Bicycle and pedestrian facilities and bike share programs.
Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants	Caltrans	Funds for communities to do planning, studies, and design work to identify and evaluate projects, including conducting outreach or implementing pilot projects.	Planning, community engagement, studies to improve bicycle and pedestrian connections

Funding Source	Agency	Description	What do they fund?
<b>Regional Funding Programs</b>			
Sustainable Communities Program	Southern California Association of Governments	Funds projects that are intended to: Provide needed planning resources to local jurisdictions for sustainability planning efforts; develop local plans that support the implementation of the 2016 RTP/SCS; and Increase the region's competitiveness for federal and state funds, including but not limited to the California Active Transportation Program and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds.	Bicycle, pedestrian, and Safe Routes to School plans
Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)	California Department of Education	The LCAP is a three-year plan that describes the goals, actions, services and expenditures to support positive student outcomes that address eight key state and local priorities related to school standards, student achievement, parent involvement, and school climate.	Non-infrastructure SRTS activities
Orange County United Way Healthy Schools Initiative	Orange County United Way	Orange County United Way funds four schools, partnering with parents, school districts, agencies and communities to promote health and well-being.	Funding is available for programs in physical activity, nutrition and advocacy, which can include SRTS work.
St. Jude's Hospital Grants	St Jude's Hospital	St Jude's Hospital has given grants to local Orange County jurisdictions to develop Complete Streets Master Plans	SRTS efforts that incorporate or build on complete streets concepts

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March 2021

# Orange County Safe Routes to School