

*Be safe. Have fun.
Grow healthy. Get there.*



Portland Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan 2018-2023



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Safe Routes to School makes it safe, convenient and fun for children of all abilities to bicycle, walk, and roll to school.



When routes are safe, the school commute is an easy way to get the regular physical activity children need for good health.

Safe Routes to School initiatives also help ease traffic jams and air pollution, unite neighborhoods, and contribute to students’ readiness to learn in school.

West Powellhurst families and students after a group walk to school.



WHERE WE'VE BEEN

National conversation begins when Marin County (CA) program is funded; Oregon Walk + Bike to School Committee is formed

Portland Community and School Traffic Safety Partnership is established; SRTS is just one part of the community-based, coalition-led effort to improve traffic safety in Portland



2005



Walk+Bike to School Day, 2005



2008



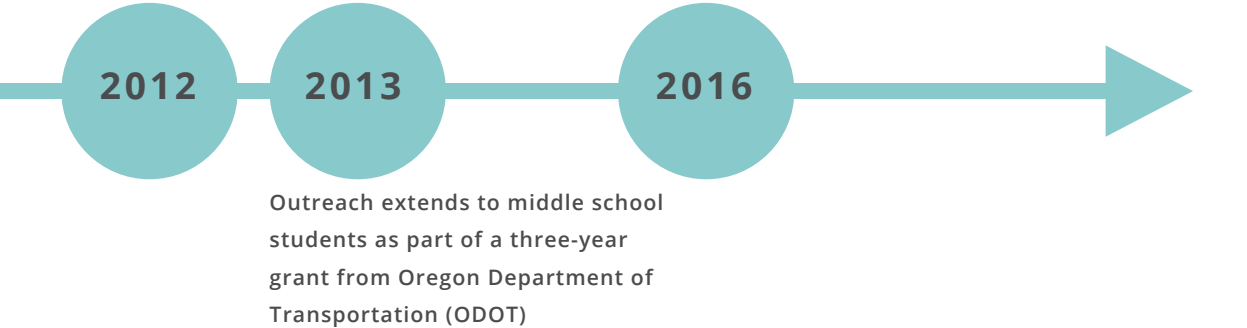
2007

Schools in photos (clockwise from top): Portland Public School, Abernethy Elementary, Sacramento Elementary, Atkinson Elementary, Bike Safety Education class

HISTORY OF PORTLAND SRTS

Community stakeholders work with Portland SRTS to create policy around equitable service delivery, adding the sixth "E," Equity

Portland SRTS serves almost every permanent public elementary, K-8, and middle school in the city, providing resources to over 100 schools across five school districts



2010



2017



2011



2012



Schools in photos (clockwise from top): Beach K-8, West Powellhurst, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Elementary, James John Elementary, Hayhurst Elementary



2013

EQUITY

Prioritize schools with high populations of communities of color, low-income families and limited English proficiency



ENCOURAGEMENT

- Encourage and support Bike Trains, Walking School Buses and Park + Walk programs
- Support schools and volunteers in celebrating walk and roll events
- Share information by newsletter, email blasts and Facebook posts
- Distribute free travel resources like safety lights and umbrellas to students and families



WHAT WE DO NOW



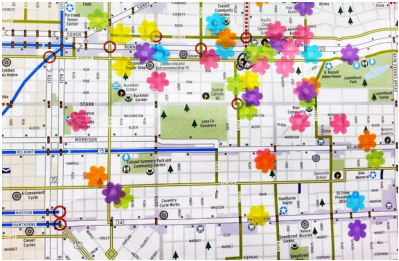
ENFORCEMENT

Partner with Portland Police to enforce school zone speeds and other traffic regulations



EDUCATION

- Provide pedestrian and bicycle safety education
- Improve pick-up and drop-off conditions with Idle-Free Schools campaign
- Lead Summer SUN Bike Safety camps at low-income schools
- Offer walking and rolling resources to families through SmartTrips to School



PC: Steve Lanigan



EVALUATION

Survey families twice a year on school travel habits



ENGINEERING

- Collaborate with traffic engineers to improve school circulation
- Aid parents and schools in navigating City bureaus to solve travel concerns

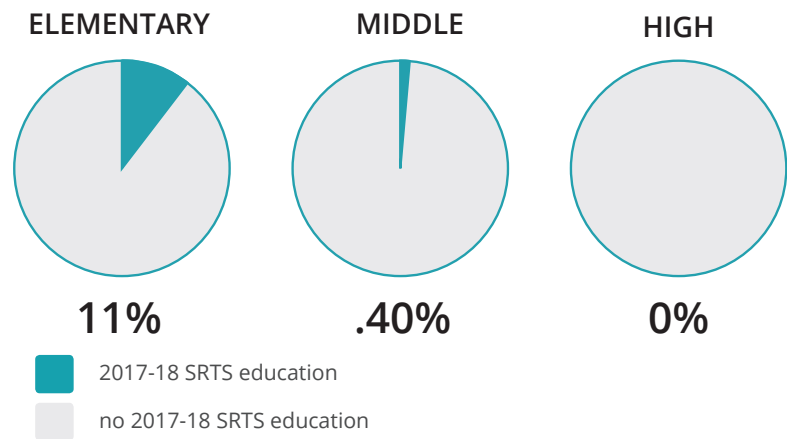
GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

We need to reach more students with safety skills education

Under the old model, a limited number of students received in-classroom bicycle and pedestrian safety education each year. Limitations on funding, staff time and use of class time led to a small number of schools participating in the current model.

A new approach will provide needed follow-up to build skills as students grow

Today, only a small percentage of school youth receive active transportation skill-building beyond fourth or fifth grade.



Schools and families need more support

Our school travel survey data highlighted the importance of encouragement. Families who were taking more walk and bike trips attributed the increase to encouragement over any other “E,” including engineering.

Encouragement events and activities help normalize active transportation, but often require extra time from parent volunteers or school staff. Less affluent schools report having fewer of these resources.

“Safe Routes had a much bigger presence plus community emphasis while my daughter attended Beach School K-7.”
- Ockley Green MS parent

“We loved [SRTS] in elementary school. Middle school is not as welcoming an atmosphere and not as family-oriented, so we heard nothing about it this year.”
- Mt. Tabor MS parent

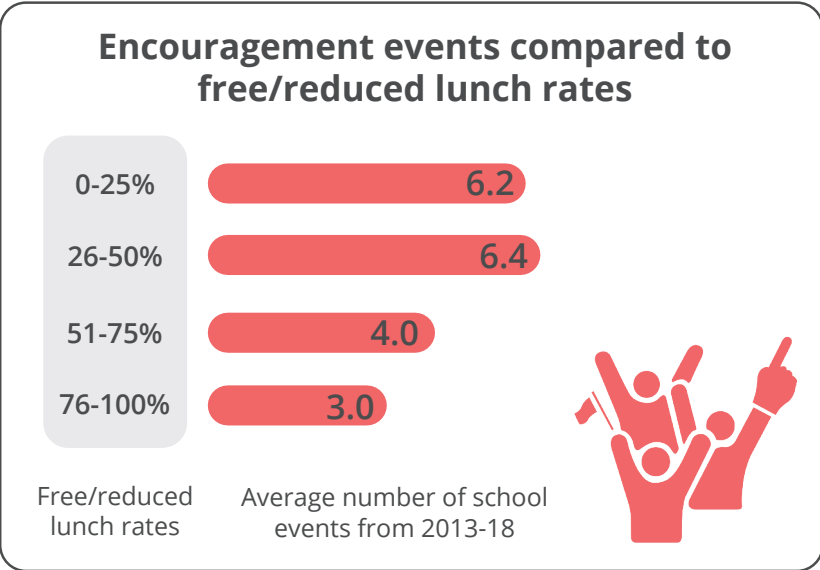
“Does Safer [sic] Routes to School help high schools too? Grant HS parents are concerned about kids getting to Marshall campus for the next two years.”
- Mt. Tabor MS parent

2017-18 Family Travel Survey Responses



Schools with high free/reduced lunch rates, while receiving similar levels of Safe Routes education, often don't participate in or organize as many encouragement events.

School support can also play a role in helping families choose active travel modes. Our 2017-18 travel survey data showed that families who thought their school supported walking, biking and rolling were more likely to travel by one of those modes on their commute to school.



Students of color often have a different experience when traveling in public spaces

Encouraging students and families of color to walk or roll to school can be challenging in the fact of the larger fears and safety concerns in the public right of way. A new approach can include additional tools and support to empower students of color in navigating our streets.

“Many people of color experience [racial micro aggressions or brief verbal or nonverbal communications that convey racial slights or hostility (intentional or not)] while walking and bicycling. Whether an isolated incident or regular occurrence, this type of experience can create a hostile environment...”

At the Intersection of Active Transportation and Equity
- Safe Routes Partnership, 2016

“As a Muslim parent I am worried about my child walking to and from school. I don't feel it is safe for us wearing our hijab.”
- Floyd Light MS parent

2018-19 Family Travel Survey Response



Our Vision
All students and families can choose active transportation as a safe, convenient, accessible and desirable option for getting to and from school and around their neighborhoods.

Guiding Principles

Developed collaboratively with our Stakeholder Advisory Committee, these Guiding Principles will serve as a roadmap for our continued program improvement and expansion.



EQUITABLE
Our programming will prioritize underserved communities



GROUNDLED IN PARTNERSHIP
We will collaborate and build strong relationships with schools, parents, other agencies and community organizations



FLEXIBLE AND INCLUSIVE
Our programs will:

- respond to those served by them
- meet the needs of a variety of schools and families
- provide activities to engage groups in different ways



CREATE CULTURE CHANGE
Our programs will inspire and empower parents, students and school personnel to be champions for safety and active youth

Strategic Priorities

Safe Routes to School will use these eight priorities to help focus our efforts and target the work areas we want to improve, especially the gaps in our programming. Each priority is listed here, with further details and priority outcomes explained on the following pages.



Safe Routes to School has a sustainable structure that allows for in-school program support



Every school has safer access via infrastructure improvements on Primary Investment Routes



Program activities for older students are youth oriented and youth driven



School districts are active leaders and champions of Safe Routes to School program elements



Education campaigns focus on all members of the school community to create a culture of safety



Safe Routes to School programming is responsive to school culture



All students can learn skills for safe and active travel as they grow



Communications about our programs and citywide resources are clear and consistent





Safe Routes to School has a sustainable structure that allows for in-school program support

We heard from partners and schools that in-school support is critical for program and community success. Too often, staffing levels and programs rely heavily on volunteers and parents, which isn’t sustainable when parents leave schools and volunteers have other projects.

A consistent presence in schools is essential to build better relationships, improve contacts and connections, and maintain momentum for students throughout their time in school.

Each school community has unique opportunities and barriers. An approach that provides resources and capacity for paid support within the school will allow for a better connection between programming and school culture needs.



PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- In-school staff have knowledge, skills and resources to provide SRTS programming
- Long-term strategy for sustainable funding



Every school has safer access via infrastructure improvements on Primary Investment Routes

There are significant disparities in available infrastructure for safe walking and bicycling at schools throughout Portland. We are working to complete Primary Investment Routes* for each school to reduce the disparities in access for students across the city.

We are committed to collaborating with school communities to find short- and long-term solutions for safety concerns and barriers families encounter on the way to school.

*Primary Investment Routes are streets likely to have the most students walking on them to access a school. They are the streets where Safe Routes will focus projects to create complete, connected routes throughout the 1- to 1.5-mile area “walkshed” of a school campus. Routes were chosen based on a computer model and school community input, then vetted by principals and school leaders.



PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- Complete Primary Investment Routes
- School communities are aware of the Primary Investment Routes and know how to use them



Program activities for older students are youth oriented and youth driven

We want to ensure Safe Routes programs are meaningful for the youth they serve. As we evolve to serve all school-aged students it is critical that materials and programs speak to middle and high school students. Even nationally, very few programs are engaging this older age group in active travel options programming.

These students are our newest drivers and active users of our public transit systems. They need information and tools to make their own transportation choices. We are committed to engaging older youth as active participants in programs to meet their needs for information and resources.



PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- High school students are informed and engaged in community dialogue about transportation options and Vision Zero
- Through regular and continuous communication, middle and high school-aged youth can influence the programming intended for them





School districts are active leaders and champions of SRTS program elements

School districts provide strategic leadership for their school communities. Strong partnerships and buy-in from Portland’s school districts is required to create effective transportation policies and spark culture change in schools.



PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- School districts provide strategic leadership for their school communities around transportation options and safety
- Partnerships with school district staff and superintendents are strong and collaborative





Education campaigns focus on all members of the school community to create a culture of safety

Getting to school safely is a shared responsibility for everyone traveling to schools in Portland.

Historically, our programs have focused on walking and biking to school, directing education and encouragement to students and families to increase active transportation. While safety for people walking and biking is still a priority, it's critical that we engage and educate the entire school community about safe travel behavior, no matter how they get there.

Not only do students have concerns about traffic safety, they must also navigate bullying, street harassment and hate speech while traveling to school.

Safe Routes programming aims to influence safer behavior around schools and equip students with skills to overcome the challenges they may face as they navigate the city.



PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- School communities report less or no dangerous behavior around schools during arrival and dismissal times





Safe Routes programming is responsive to school culture

Every school in Portland is unique and requires different levels of support to have successful Safe Routes programming. With limited resources, our goal is to provide flexible, effective and efficient programs that are aligned with overall school community needs.

We are committed to serving each school community through a variety of programs that can evolve as school capacity changes and grows.



PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- Safe Routes has flexible program options responsive to community needs and differences
- Students have tools to address personal security threats they may experience on the commute to school





All students can learn skills for safe and active travel as they grow

For the past ten years, Portland’s Safe Routes to School program has focused on elementary-aged students. We strive to provide resources and education that creates multimodal literacy and competency for students across all age groups to grow and gain independent mobility.


We are expanding our programs to support youth of all abilities in Portland from kindergarten through their senior year.



PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- Safe Routes has programs specifically designed for elementary, middle, and high school age levels
- Safe Routes programs are inclusive for students of all abilities





Communications about our programs and citywide resources are clear and consistent

In the Portland Metro region, the number of organizations working on Safe Routes programs and supporting schools can be confusing. While lots of practitioners is not a terrible problem to have, our districts, schools, parents, and students may not know who to ask when trying to access resources or to partner on programs.

We will simplify Safe Routes communication channels to help communities better navigate available programs and resources, ensuring everyone can access these essential services.



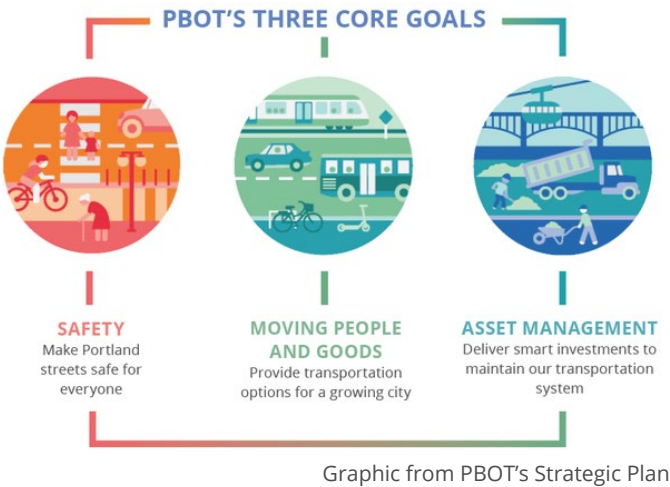
PRIORITY OUTCOMES

- Schools understand what program opportunities are available from Safe Routes
- Safe Routes practitioners meet regularly to coordinate efforts and communications with school communities

Moving to Our Future

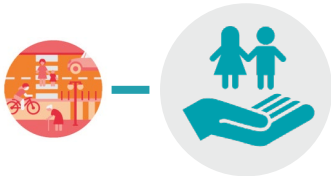
Together with our strategic priorities, Safe Routes to School also has high level outcomes guiding programming for Portland schools and families.

Each outcome nests within Portland Bureau of Transportation’s (PBOT) strategic core goals for a more efficient and sustainable city.



Graphic from PBOT's Strategic Plan

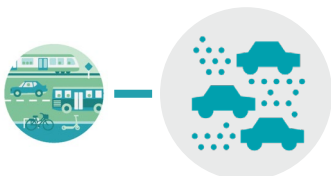
SAFE ROUTES HIGH LEVEL OUTCOMES



No child is involved in a serious traffic crash accessing school or school programs



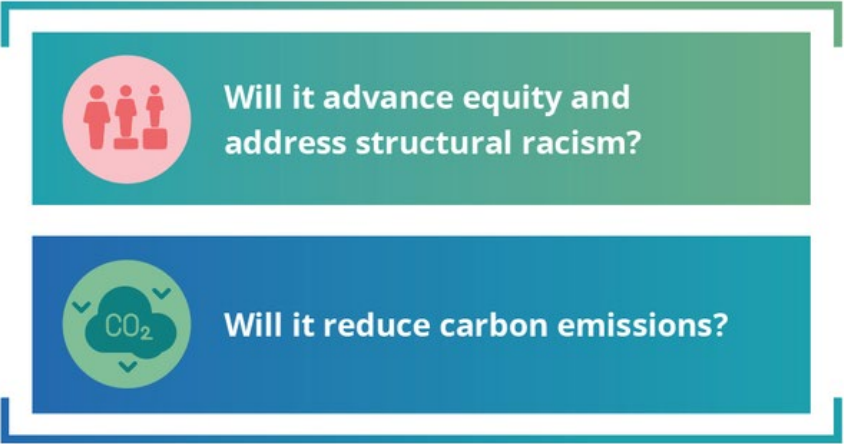
Every child who wants to walk, roll or take transit to school knows how to do so safely



Community members understand how Safe Routes to School programs are connected to congestion relief and climate change mitigation

As Safe Routes to School and PBOT work towards these goals, we also want to make sure our efforts contribute to a Portland that is more equitable and has a smaller carbon footprint.

This is why we are also asking ourselves these two fundamental questions as we pursue our goals:



Graphic from PBOT's Strategic Plan

What is transportation equity?

Over the past five years, PBOT, along with the City of Portland as a whole, has strengthened its commitment to transportation equity. What does this mean? It means recognizing the harmful legacy of past decisions and moving decisively to address these harms. Concretely, this means ensuring that communities of color and people with limited mobility, previously excluded from the decision-making process, have a prominent seat at the table and are centered in policy, investments, services and programs.

Reducing carbon emissions supports future generations

Our region is already experiencing the effects of forest fires and reduced air quality, flooding and hotter summers. The impacts are felt dis-proportionally in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. As leaders in a global movement of cities working to create low-carbon urban environments that will support future generations, Portland’s City Council has committed to 40 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030, and a 100 percent reduction by 2050. We have lots of work to do. Roughly 40 percent of our carbon emissions come from vehicle emissions, and, as of 2016, Portland showed a 1 percent increase over the previous year.

Acknowledgements

Thoughtful feedback and direction from the Stakeholder Advisory Committee helped guide us through this process. Safe Routes now has a detailed roadmap that is rooted in the values of the communities our committee members represented.

Many thanks and appreciation to the following groups who were essential to this project.



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