

Seattle Department of Transportation

# SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL 2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT



September 2018 to August 2019



Seattle  
Department of  
Transportation

VISION  
ZERO  
SAFER STREETS FOR SEATTLE

The Levy to  
**MOVE SEATTLE**

# INTRODUCTION

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national movement to make it easier and safer for students to walk and bike to school. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) use a combination of strategies to improve safety and get more students walking and bicycling to school. The 6 strategies below are based on the national SRTS movement and have been adapted to best fit Seattle's needs. The 6 E's are best used in concert.

Education	Ensure that everyone learns how to travel safely
Engineering	Design streets for safety and predictability
Enforcement	Apply traffic safety laws and target risky behaviors
Encouragement	Promote walking and biking in the school community
Evaluation	Track progress toward our shared goals
Empowerment	Provide resources to school champions

In 2015, we launched our first ever [Safe Routes to School 5 Year Action Plan for Seattle](#). This is our fourth annual report tracking our progress. We've broken down the report into each of the 6 E's with relevant case studies for each section.

# EDUCATION

## **Walking and Biking Safety Education**

The Let's Go walking and biking safety education program that serves all 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade public school students completed its third full year in the 2018-19 school year. This 3-week program is administered in PE classes and provides a solid foundation of skills required for students to safely walk and roll through the built environment. We are continuing to fund the adaptive elementary program for students with disabilities, so that kids of all ability levels can participate.

This year we worked with Seattle Public Schools and Cascade Bicycle Club to expand the program to middle school by launching the curriculum development process. We formed both a strategy committee and curriculum committee to develop common objectives and lesson content. We developed a schedule for piloting the curriculum in a set of middle schools for the upcoming school year. Once rolled out, the program will provide 6 consecutive years of walking and biking safety education so that key messages are reinforced yearly, and kids develop the skills needed to keep themselves safe while walking and biking to school.



*Student using an adaptive bicycle*

# ENCOURAGEMENT



*Handing out resources and healthy snacks at a Banana Break at Lowell Elementary School*

## **Banana Brakes**

During the 2018-19 school year, we held three Banana Brake events at schools where we celebrated kids who walked and biked to school with healthy snacks and small prizes like wrist bands and stickers. We also chatted with their parents about how to find the best route to school and any upcoming or recently completed projects in the neighborhood.

- Broadview Thomson K-8 School
- John Rogers Elementary School
- Lowell Elementary School

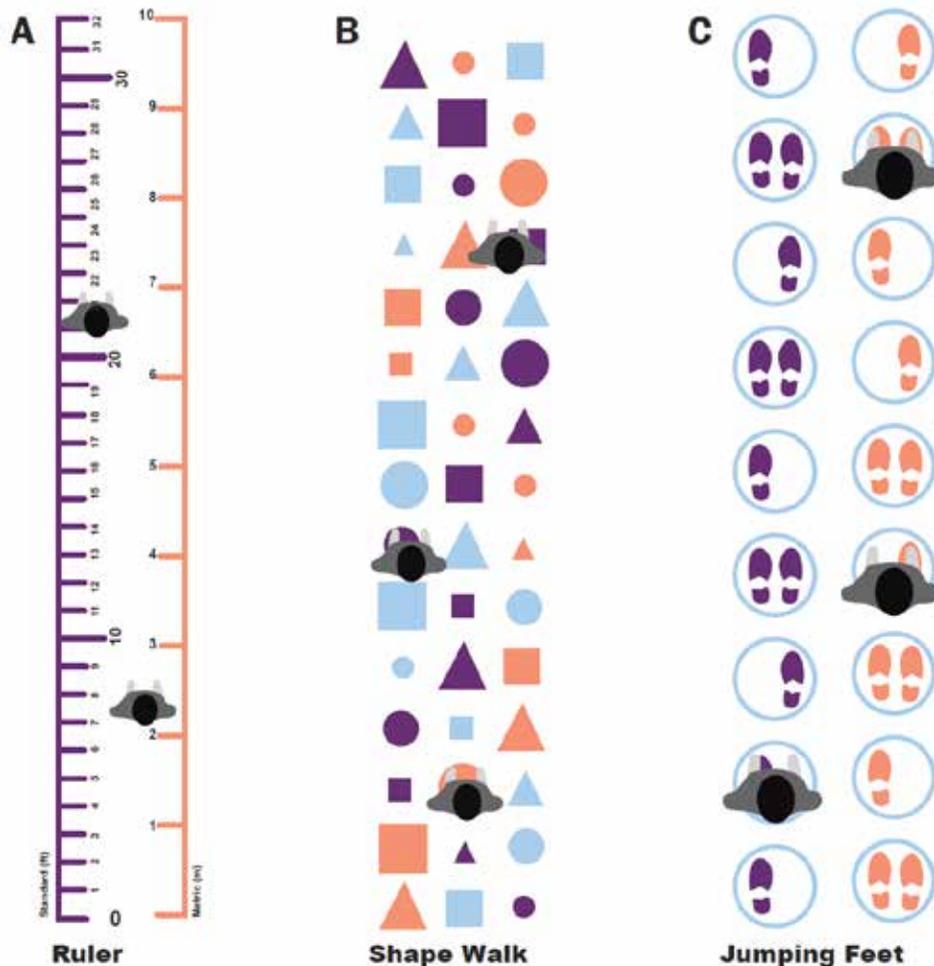
## Learning Landscapes

We continued our partnership with the Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) on a Learning Landscapes pilot project at Northgate Elementary School. Learning Landscapes is a concept developed by Kathy Hirsh-Pasek at Temple University to address educational inequities in urban areas. By installing Learning Landscapes designs onto a sidewalk, we aim to:

- Encourage safe walking to school for kids and families
- Encourage adult-child and child-child interaction
- Provide opportunities for cognitive and basic skills development

We developed a set of designs based on information from Northgate Elementary School teachers about learning areas to highlight and Temple University researchers' guidance and feedback. In the winter we shared the designs with Northgate Elementary teachers and incorporated their feedback. In the spring we participated in the school's Multicultural Night and shared the designs, printed out to scale. We observed how students and parents interacted with the designs and conducted a student exit survey to find out which designs they liked the most, which they liked the least, and which they thought were the most difficult. We incorporated the feedback we received at this event and finalized the designs.

We will install the designs next year so that we have time to conduct before and after evaluations on their effectiveness.





## High School Video Project

We partnered with Reel Grrls – a non-profit organization that teaches youth to engage critically and creatively with digital media to create positive social change. Reel Grrls invited Seattle youth to participate in a video challenge to educate people about the City’s Safe Routes to School Program and Vision Zero. The yearlong process resulted in two student developed videos with a fresh and unique perspective on Safe Routes to School and Vision Zero that can be [found here](#). The goal is to uplift youth voices and improve our messaging around safety. What better way to do that than to use content created by the youth themselves?

After Reel Grrls provided guidance, time, and space for students to finalize their videos – we organized a video showcase event. Students invited their friends and family to view the hard work they put into filming, editing, production. They showed their final video at the NW Film Forum. The two videos focus on safety messages and encourage travel by foot, bike, and transit. During the first week of school in September, KOMO News covered the project and interviewed Reynaldo Rosario, a local Seattle High School sophomore student.

## Free Online Incentives

In 2015 we launched our free incentives program, where schools can place orders online and receive their choice of free incentives that include stickers, hand stamps, temporary tattoos, and wrist bands. Participation in the program has grown over the past few years and during this past school year we received ten orders for free incentives, representing about 10% of public schools in Seattle.

## Back to School Events

Each year we participate in community- and school-hosted Back to School events. For example, we took part in the Back to School Night at John Rogers Elementary School, where we recently constructed several blocks of new sidewalks on NE 110th Street. We provided families with information about the new sidewalks, walking routes to school, and free incentives to walk and bike to school.

We were a community sponsor for the third year in a row of the Rainier Beach Back2School Bash, an annual event that gets neighborhood kids ready for school with backpacks, school supplies, and information about neighborhood and educational resources.

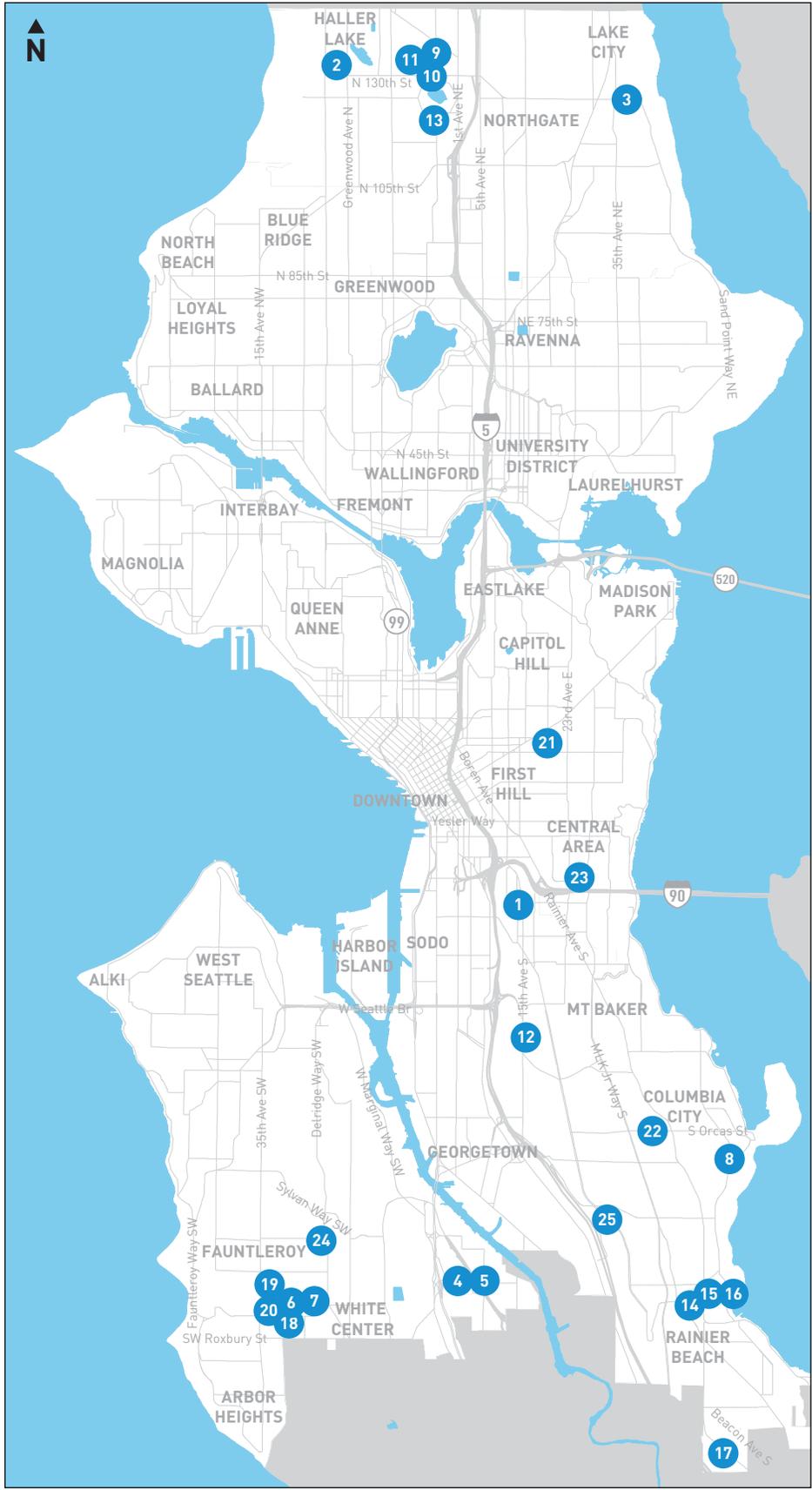
# ENGINEERING

## Engineering Improvements around Schools

Between September 2018 and August 2019, we completed 25 engineering projects at high-priority schools. Numbers reference the map of all the school engineering projects.

- 1 Beacon Hill International Elementary School**  
Relocated flashing beacon on 14th Ave S for better compliance
- 2 Broadview-Thomson K-8**  
Speed cushions on NW 132nd St
- 3 Cedar Park Elementary School**  
Cost effective walkway on NE 125th St and crosswalk beacons at 37th Ave NE and 38th Ave NE
- 4 Concord International Elementary School**
- 5** Flashing beacons on S Cloverdale St for 7th Ave S and 8th Ave S crossings
- 6 Denny Middle School and Chief Sealth High School**
- 7** Crossing improvements at 26th Ave SW and SW Kenyon St and 26th Ave SW and SW Trenton St
- 8 Graham Hill Elementary School**  
Crosswalk beacon at S Graham St and Wilson Ave S
- 9 Ingraham International High School**
- 10** Flashing beacons on Meridian Ave N for
- 11** N 133rd St and N 135th St crossings, crossing improvement at Ashworth Ave N and N 131st St
- 12 Mercer Middle School**  
Traffic signal at 15th Ave S and S Dakota St
- 13 Northgate Elementary School**  
Crossing improvement at Meridian Ave N and N 122nd St
- 14 Rainier Beach High School, South Lake High School, South-Shore K-8**
- 15** Flashing beacons on S Henderson St,
- 16** Rainier Ave S, and Seward Park Ave S
- 17 Rainier View Elementary School**  
Speed humps on streets around the school
- 18 Roxhill Elementary School, Denny Middle School, Chief Sealth High School**  
Pedestrian safety islands and marked crosswalks at 30th Ave SW and SW Trenton St
- 19 Roxhill Elementary School**
- 20** Flashing beacons on SW Holden St, crossing improvement at 34th Ave SW and SW Kenyon St
- 21 Seattle World School**  
Curb ramps on E Union St at 17th Ave, 18th Ave, and 20th Ave
- 22 St Edward's School**  
Flashing beacons on S Orcas St
- 23 Thurgood Marshall Elementary School**  
Crossing improvement at S Irving St and 26th Ave S
- 24 West Seattle Elementary**  
Crossing improvement at Sylvan Way SW and SW Holly St
- 25 Wing Luke Elementary School**  
Curb ramp for ADA access on Beacon Ave S

# Safe Routes to School Engineering Projects at Priority Schools





*Chief Sealth High School*



*Cedar Park Elementary School*



*Rainier View Elementary School*



*Cedar Park Elementary School*



*Concord Elementary School*



*Graham Hill Elementary School*

# SPOTLIGHT:

## Rainier Beach Campus School Zone Flashing Beacons

Rainier Ave S is Seattle's highest crash corridor and a focus of our Vision Zero program, which aims to end serious injury and fatal traffic collisions on our streets by 2030. This year the Rainier Ave S Vision Zero project restriped Rainier Ave S where possible in the Rainier Beach school zone, to add bus lanes and address high speeds and collisions.

We partnered with the Vision Zero program to make additional improvements to slow speeds and increase safety for kids walking and biking to school. In August, we installed six new 20mph flashing beacons for the Rainier Beach Campus schools, including Rainier Beach High School, South Lake High School, South-Shore K-8, and Dunlap Elementary School. The 20mph school zones are on Rainier Ave S, S Henderson St, and Seward Park Ave S.

When we analyzed the effectiveness of flashing beacons on streets with one lane in each direction, we found that, when flashing, they reduce speeds by 15% on average, typically down to 26mph.



*20mph flashing beacon on S Henderson St*

# ENFORCEMENT

## School Safety Emphasis Patrols

Each August we provide the Seattle Police Department with the 20mph flashing beacon schedules for the upcoming school year. We also include speed data for each of these school zones, so that traffic enforcement officers can be sure they are enforcing the speed limit in school zones with the worst speeding.

We continued our driver safety campaign into the 2018-19 school year to include the back to school season in September as well as International Walk to School Day in October. The campaign included direct mail in multiple languages, ads on Metro buses, gas station ads, digital advertising including ethnic media, social media ads in multiple languages, banners and A-frames at schools, and traffic safety yard signs.

Overall, the driver safety campaign made about 4 million impressions. We sent postcards about where and when to drive 20mph in multiple languages to 15,000 households within ½ mile of Wing Luke Elementary, Mercer Middle School, Washington Middle School, and Jane Addams Middle School. The social media ads on Facebook and Instagram ran for one month when school started in English, Spanish, Amharic, Vietnamese, and Chinese.



## School Safety Camera Program

We collected speed data for the fourth year in a row in school zones on arterial streets near both public and private schools. Based on the speeds we found in each school zone, we made recommendations for additional safety improvements like 20 MPH flashing beacons, traffic calming, and potentially new safety cameras when other traffic calming options have not been effective.

To reduce speeds and improve safety, we worked with the Seattle Police Department to identify 13 school zones to evaluate for new speed cameras, based on speed data. These locations are under review and any new cameras would be installed for the 2020-21 school year. The review involves evaluating the speed and volume of vehicles, geographic balance, equity, and context of street environment.

# EVALUATION

We completed the racial equity analysis that we began in 2017. After listening to community members about the barriers to walking and biking school, Phase II provided a natural opportunity to share the findings from Phase I (surveys and focused outreach) with community leaders to ensure City staff correctly heard and understood their respective communities. The second major focus of Phase II conversations was listening to community leaders' ideas for potential solutions to the barriers that their communities face. Community leaders, unsurprisingly, had several recommendations that were specific and actionable.

We developed a list of strategies we can use to address the racial inequities in walking and biking rates to school. These strategies will be included in our new Safe Routes to School Action Plan that will be launched next year.

To learn more about the findings of our racial equity analysis and the strategies we developed, see the final report here:  
[www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/SafetyFirst/SRTS\\_RacialEquity\\_Report.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/SafetyFirst/SRTS_RacialEquity_Report.pdf)



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