

Seattle Department of Transportation

# Safe Routes to School 2022-2023 Annual Report

SEPTEMBER 2022 TO AUGUST 2023

Walking & biking  
improvements near schools

Bike racks required  
at all new schools

Hands-on support

Students ride bikes in  
P.E. in 3rd-8th grade

Traffic gardens coming  
to all elementary schools



Graphic above designed by Seattle Public Schools in collaboration with the Seattle Department of Transportation



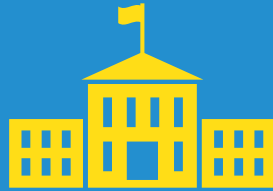
Seattle  
Department of  
Transportation

VISION  
ZERO  
SAFER STREETS FOR SEATTLE

The Levy to  
**MOVE SEATTLE**  
Icons for train, bus, car, bicycle, and pedestrian.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the 2022-2023 school year, our Seattle's Safe Routes to School program:



Completed infrastructure projects to make it easier and safer to walk and bike to school at 31 schools



Increased the number of schools with **School Streets** from 10 to 13



Supplied 16 **mini grants**, including gear and prizes for students participating in walking school buses and bike buses, prizes and incentives for walk/bike/roll events, safety gear and signage, and art installations



Created a new **Walking and Biking Package program** and distributed over 91 packages to 25 schools for schools and community groups to more easily access free supplies like walking lights, school patrol flags, helmets, and more



Continued funding the **Let's Go** program to get elementary students on bikes during Physical Education class and expanded to 5 middle schools



Attended events to give away school and safety supplies, including the Rainier Beach Back2School Bash, Bailey Gatzert Elementary's Play Day, Rainier Valley Big Day of Play, and Dunlap and Wing Luke elementary's Back to School events



Worked with the Seattle Public Schools Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator to start a bike bus and walking school buses at 4 equity priority schools



Conducted a **travel tally** with participation from 54 schools – a new record!

# OVERVIEW

Safe Routes to School is a national movement to make it easier and safer to walk, bike, and roll to school to build community, support students to get exercise, improve safety, and reduce pollution. Seattle's Safe Routes to School program builds walking and biking infrastructure and funds programming that supports schools, families, and students.

This report documents annual progress toward our [Safe Routes to School 5-Year Action Plan](#) and findings from the program's [Racial Equity Analysis](#). Adapted from the national movement, we use the 7 E's (Equity, Environment, Education, Empowerment, Encouragement, Engineering, and Evaluation) as a guiding framework. The sections of this report focus on one "E" at a time to dive in to each one. The last section zooms in on Dunlap Elementary as an example of all the E's coming together to make a measurable difference.

## Vision Zero for Youth Award

In 2022, Seattle received the [Vision Zero for Youth Leadership Award](#) from the National Center for Safe Routes to School. The award committee noted our work in creating a racial equity vision specific to the Safe Routes to School program, our use of School Streets and Healthy Streets that prioritize people rather than cars, and assuring that every elementary and middle school student receives walking and biking safety education through the Let's Go and Let's Go Further programs.



Mayor Harrell with SDOT Director Greg Spotts, SPS Superintendent Dr. Brent Jones, National Center for Safe Routes to School Director Nancy Pullen-Seufert, and Dunlap students and staff for Walk to School Day in October 2023.



## EQUITY

### **Foundational to our program, equity is infused into each of the other E's**

Example: We prioritize funding, staff time, and community partnerships in higher equity-need areas. In spring 2023, we opened a new sidewalk and bike connection on Kenyon Way S leading up to Wing Luke Elementary in South Beacon Hill. This was our largest capital investment of the year from our program.

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## ENVIRONMENT

### **Reduce driving to school to make the air cleaner and reduce climate change**

Example: We work to make walking and biking the easier choice with projects like [School Streets](#) that close the block outside the school to through traffic and open it to walking and biking.

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## EDUCATION

### **Ensure that everyone learns how to travel safely**

Example: We fund the Let's Go program so all 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders ride a bike during Physical Education class and we're partnering with Seattle Public Schools, Cascade Bicycle Club, and Outdoors for All to expand the program to all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. During the 2022-23 school year, the team brought the Let's Go Further program to 5 middle schools.

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## EMPOWERMENT

### **Provide resources for communities to take the lead**

Example: This year we provided 16 mini-grants and 91 walking and biking packages to 25 schools and community groups so they can run with their ideas to encourage more walking and biking.

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## ENCOURAGEMENT

### **Promote walking and biking in the school community**

Example: We fund the Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator within Seattle Public Schools who helps schools start proven practices like walking school buses, bike buses, and walk and bike to school days.

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## ENGINEERING

### **Design streets for safety and predictability**

Example: Completed infrastructure projects at 31 schools during the 2022-23 school year that make it safer and easier to walk and bike to school.

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## EVALUATION

### **Track progress toward our shared safety goals**

Example: Completed the [travel tally](#) in partnership with Seattle Public Schools to understand trends in walking and biking to school.





## EQUITY

Foundational to our program, equity is infused into each of the other E's

In 2019, we completed an in-depth [Safe Routes to School Racial Equity Analysis](#) to learn what barriers and opportunities communities of color have that prevent or support walking and biking to school. **Safer infrastructure and easier access to resources were two key findings.** We work to improve both with a priority in higher equity-need areas for funding, staff time, and community partnerships.

### Safer infrastructure: New sidewalk on Kenyon Way S by Wing Luke Elementary

In spring 2023, we opened a new [sidewalk and bike connection on Kenyon Way S](#) leading up to Wing Luke Elementary in South Beacon Hill. This was our largest capital investment of the year from our program. Based on community engagement, the project not only includes a sidewalk but also lighting, art designed by students, seating, and traffic calming.



A parent, Jay, with his three kids. They live close by and were very appreciative of the new connection to the school and Chief Sealth Trail.





*Kenyon Way S Before*



*Kenyon Way S After*



*Zelie designed this mushroom art during her art class at Wing Luke Elementary that we installed on the sidewalk next to new seating that looks out at Mount Rainier.*



*We held an opening event in June 2023 to celebrate the new sidewalk with neighbors.*





## Easier Access to Resources – Winter Gear

One of the resources called out during the Racial Equity Analysis was a need for warmer clothes and waterproof gear for walking and biking to school. We worked with the social workers and family support workers at 3 equity priority schools (Wing Luke Elementary, Dunlap Elementary, and Emerson Elementary) to distribute coats, shoes, umbrellas, and more to students who needed them. We provided winter gear to 40 students total. Of the students who received winter gear, 43% said this would make them more likely to walk to school in cold, wet weather and the remaining reported they'd walk to school regardless.

*Since February, with the support of the Seattle Public Schools' Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator, Wing Luke Elementary families have been leading "Walking Wednesdays" where students all walk in a group together to school. Mahamoud Gaayte, one of the parents who leads Walking Wednesdays, said the students love walking on the new sidewalk.*



# ENVIRONMENT

## Reduce driving to school to make the air cleaner and reduce climate change

### School Streets

We work to make walking and biking the easier choice with projects like [School Streets](#) that close the block outside the school to through traffic and open it to walking and biking.

School Streets started in 2020 as a response to the pandemic and a way to support schools with social distancing. Schools have requested to continue the program and each year the number of school streets grows. As stated in Mayor Harrell’s [Executive Order 2022-07: One Seattle Climate Justice Actions to Reduce Emissions](#)

from the [Transportation Sector](#), we are continuing the Schools Streets program in perpetuity. We currently have School Streets at 13 schools and we’re working to make 3 of them permanent with durable signage, painted bulbs, and student-designed art in the street.

### Planting Trees along Walk Routes

We’ve also started an annual tree planting partnership between our Safe Routes to School team and SDOT’s Urban Forestry team. In 2022, we planted about 30 trees within the walk zone for Aki Kurose Middle School and Martin Luther King Jr Elementary.



*This School Street at Genesee Hill Elementary is 1 of the 3 slated to become permanent. The other 2 are Emerson Elementary and Whittier Elementary.*



## EDUCATION

Ensure that everyone learns how to travel safely

### Let's Go Safety Education in Schools

Since 2015, we have funded the [Let's Go safety education program](#) at Seattle Public Schools. This program delivers walking and biking safety curriculum through Physical Education classes for every 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade public school student, including students with disabilities. For some students it's their first time on a bike! For others, it's a way to hone their skills and learn the rules of the road.

We're working with our partners, Seattle Public Schools, Cascade Bicycle Club, and Outdoors for All, to expand the program to middle school to provide 6 consecutive years of safety education for every public-school student. In the 2022-23 school year, the team brought Let's Go Further to 5 middle schools. Outdoors for All provided adaptive bikes for 36 schools and got 169 students with disabilities on bikes.

### Traffic Gardens

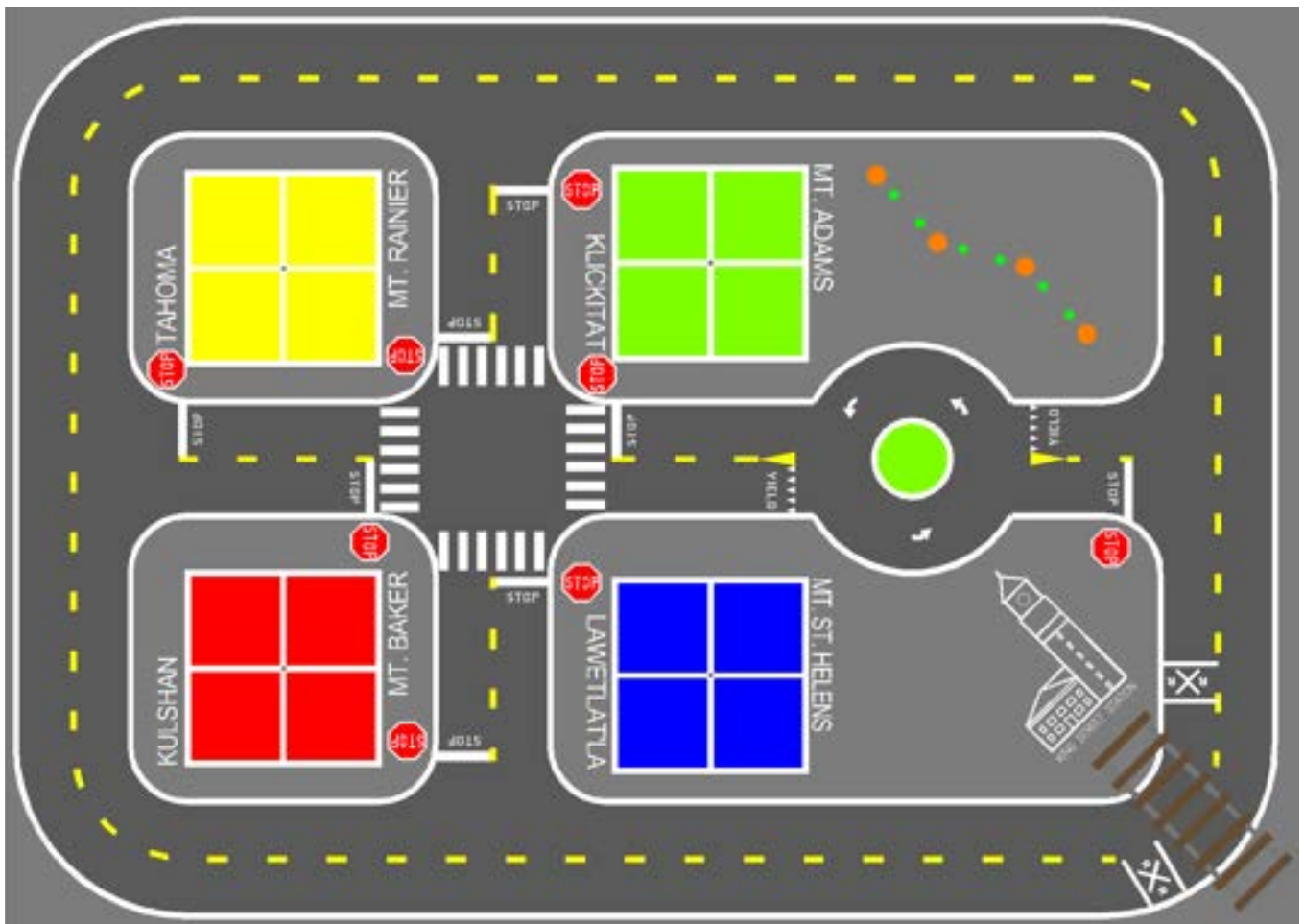
According to our new [traffic garden handbook](#), "A traffic garden is a fun play and learning space consisting of reduced-sized streets and scaled down traffic elements assembled into a network. It is a small world for active play and a purpose designed space for children to learn bicycling skills and roadway safety. Traffic gardens introduce kids to traffic rules and interactions, and, through the knowledge and self-awareness developed, make them better and safer users of the transportation system as they practice and get older."



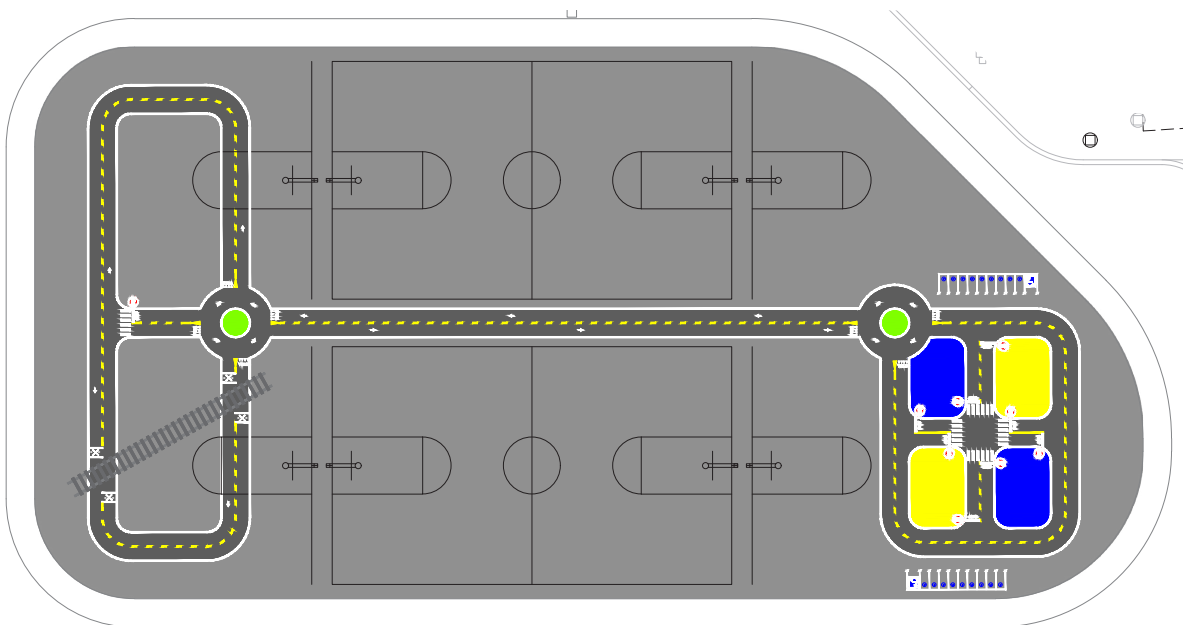
*Outdoors for All provides adaptive bikes like this one to include all students in Let's Go and Let's Go Further.*

Last year, we funded Seattle Public Schools and Cascade Bicycle Club to work with [Discover Traffic Gardens](#) to create a handbook that recommends designs for traffic gardens at all elementary and K-8 Seattle Public Schools. Seattle Public Schools is leading the charge to install the traffic gardens and already installed them at Kimball Elementary and West Seattle Elementary before the students started in their new school buildings in fall 2023.





This traffic garden was installed at Kimball Elementary in summer 2023. The team created the design in partnership with the school and included local features like King Street Station. It also incorporates 4-square so the space can serve many uses.



This traffic garden was installed at West Seattle Elementary in summer 2023. The team created the design in partnership with the school with a clever solution for maintaining the basketball courts.



# EMPOWERMENT

Provide resources for communities to take the lead

## Walking and Biking Packages

As part of our response to the Racial Equity Analysis recommendation to reduce the barriers for schools and communities to run with their own ideas, this year we expanded our traditional incentives to include more robust options. Schools and community groups can request packages by completing a [simple form online](#). Packages now include: School Safety Patrol Supplies; Bike Bus Supplies; Walking School Bus Supplies; Crosswalk Flag Set; Walk/Bike/Roll to School Encouragement Supplies; and Walk/Bike/Roll Prizes.

As another takeaway from the Racial Equity Analysis, we're shifting what we're offering to more environmentally sustainable, functional, and higher quality items. For example, we're phasing out plastic wristbands and investing in rechargeable lights and reflectors that don't require batteries. We're also including environmental messaging (e.g., bookmarks that say "Keep the earth cool, walk and bike to school!").

We rolled the packages out prior to Bike to School Month in May 2023 and saw an enormous response. This year we provided **16** mini-grants and **91** walking and biking packages to **37** schools. Likely partially because we made the process easier and partially because we now have a Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator embedded within the district, we had a **50%** increase in higher equity-need schools receiving walking and biking packages.



*Students received walking lights and Vision Zero bags at Dunlap Elementary for Walk and Roll to School Day (Photo credit: Seattle Public Schools)*

## Bike to Books Art Designed by Students during School

In April 2023, we worked with school art teachers on a contest for students at Dunlap Elementary School and South Shore K-8, challenging them to create fun and inspiring designs for bicycle sharrows that will be installed onto the street.

Twelve winners will see their designs permanently installed along the neighborhood greenway in Rainier Beach, guiding students and families to “Bike to Books” from the Othello Playground through the school campuses and ending at the Rainier Beach Branch of the Seattle Public Library. We’ll digitize and install the art in 2024.

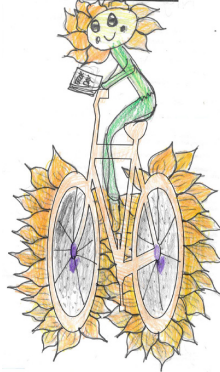
### Dolphin Ride

Artist: Ryo Taylor



### The Sunflower Bike

Artist: Riley Saetern



### The Bunny and the Nuggets with the Umbrella

Artist: Yolanda Pablo Pablo



### Biker Girl

Artist: Sophia Navarro



### The Ocean Bike

Artist: John Nguyen



### Cake Bike

Artist: Micah Chac



### Cute Puppy

Artist: Angie Tang



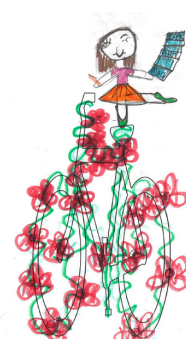
### Happy Girl

Artist: Ha Quyen



### “Slow Down I’m Reading”

Artist: Haylee Baker



*A sample of the student designs that we’ll install in the street in 2024.*





# ENCOURAGEMENT

Promote walking and biking in the school community

## Seattle Public Schools Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator

We fund the [Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator](#) within Seattle Public Schools who helps schools start proven practices like walking school buses, bike buses, and walk and bike to school days. This school year the coordinator (previously Sara Colling and now Brooke Nelson) accomplished the following:

- Worked intensively with 4 top tier equity schools to develop programs including Walking Wednesdays at Wing Luke Elementary, Bike to Books art design at Dunlap Elementary and South Shore PK-8, a Walking School Bus at John Muir Elementary, and a Bike Bus and Walk Group to school at Dunlap Elementary and South Shore PK-8.
- Supported 17 schools with walking school bus and/or bike bus programs through staffing, technical support, and/or free resources.
- Developed a model building curriculum program that brings City staff into classrooms to listen to students' input on street design and implemented the program in 9 different classes.
- Procured a \$.5 million Washington State Department of Transportation grant for Seattle Public Schools that is bringing balance bike fleets to all Kindergarten Physical Education classes in the district.
- Developed templates with language translation for events including Love Your Route, Earth Day, Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, Walk and Roll to School Day, and Bike to School Month.
- Led walking and biking events including a Walk & Roll to School Day with the Mayor and the district's first Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day.



*Model building with Mercer Middle School students led to important feedback that we shared with King County Metro and they were able to implement. (Curriculum adapted from the [Place It!](#), model created by James Rojas and John Camp)*



# ENGINEERING

## Design streets for safety and predictability

The Safe Routes to School Racial Equity Analysis identified many different types of infrastructure barriers faced by our school communities, including busy streets, confusing intersections, disconnected sidewalk networks, and lack of pedestrian lighting. Between September 2022 and August 2023, we completed infrastructure projects for **31** schools to address many of these needs. The numbers on the map correspond to each of the projects. (This is not an exhaustive list of the projects completed near schools because schools are a priority across many SDOT programs. This list includes projects that the SDOT Safe Routes to School program developed and/or funded.)

- 1 Loyal Heights** – New school crosswalk



- 2 Madison Middle School** – All way stops and marked crosswalks adjacent to the school

- 3 Montlake Elementary** – Leading pedestrian interval (to give people walking a head start to cross the street) at 24th Ave E and E McGraw St

- 4 Seattle Girls School** – School zone signs for new campus

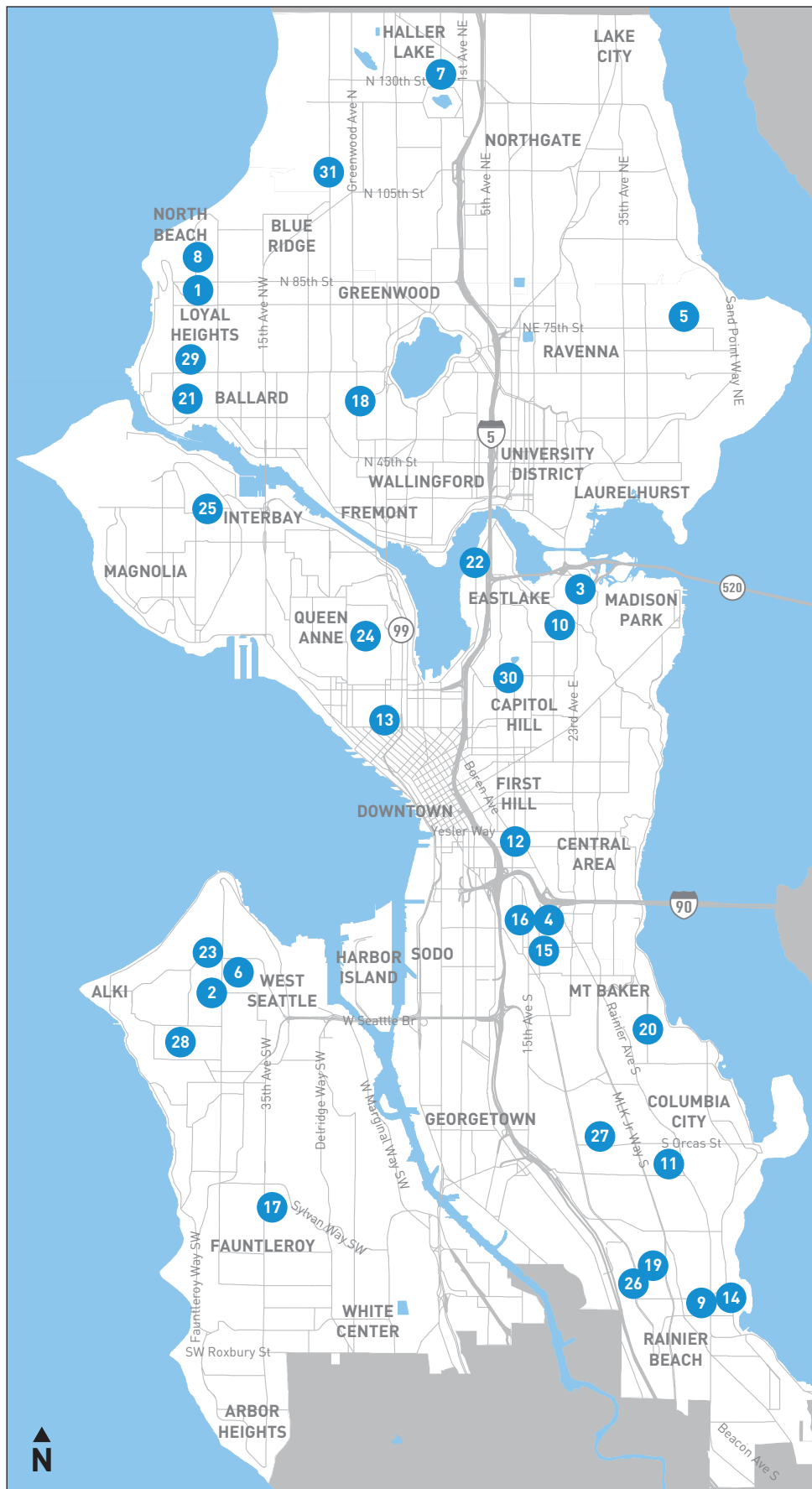
- 5 View Ridge Elementary** – Flashing beacons on NE 70th St and painted edge lines on NE 70th St from 35th Ave NE to Sand Point Way NE to visibly narrow the street

- 6 West Seattle High School** – New school crosswalks

- 7 Ingraham International High School** – Curb ramps and sidewalk at Meridian Ave/N 135th St; New signal at N 130th St and Ashworth Ave N in partnership with SDOT's Neighborhood Greenways program







- 8 **North Beach Elementary** – All way stop and crosswalks adjacent to the school



- 9 **South Shore PK-8** – Speed cushions on S Henderson St



- 10 **Stevens Elementary** – Curb ramps



- 11 **Aki Kurose Middle School** – New street trees leading up to the school



Photo credit: Postyn Smith (one of our regular bike bus leaders)

- 12 **Bailey Gatzert Elementary** – Sidewalk repair on 14th Ave S and S Main St

- 13 **The Center School** – Sidewalk repair on Broad St



**14 Dunlap Elementary** – New bike rack



**15 Giddens School** – New school crosswalks

**16 Hamlin Robinson School** – New school crosswalks and school zone signage

**17 West Seattle Elementary** – New school crosswalks and speed humps on 31st Ave SW between SW Myrtle St and SW Morgan St (in partnership with SDOT's Crossing Improvements program)



**18 West Woodland Elementary** – All way stop and crosswalk adjacent to the school

**19 Wing Luke Elementary** – New sidewalk and bike connection on Kenyon Way S with lighting, seating, and student-designed art



**20 John Muir Elementary** – All way stops and crosswalks adjacent to the school



Photo credit: Kate Hoerster (parent at John Muir Elementary)



21 **Adams Elementary** – All way stops and crosswalks adjacent to the school

22 **TOPS K-8** – All way stops and crosswalks adjacent to the school

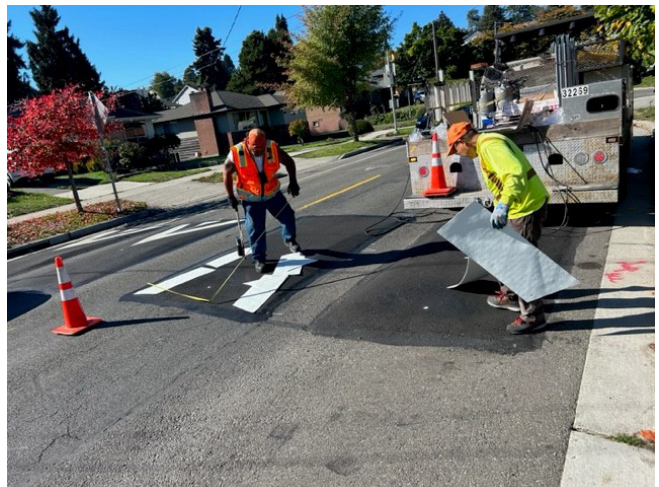
23 **Lafayette Elementary** – All way stop adjacent to school



26 **Rising Star Elementary** – Speed cushions on Beacon Ave S (in partnership with Vision Zero)



27 **Dearborn Park International Elementary** – Speed cushions on S Orcas St (in partnership with Vision Zero)



24 **John Hay Elementary** – All way stops adjacent to the school

25 **Lawton Elementary** – All way stops leading to the school



- 28 **Genesee Hill Elementary** – Speed cushions on SW Genesee St (in partnership with Vision Zero)



- 29 **Licton Springs Elementary** – All way stops leading to the school
- 30 **Lowell Elementary** – All way stops leading to the school
- 31 **Seattle German American School** – All way stops leading to the school

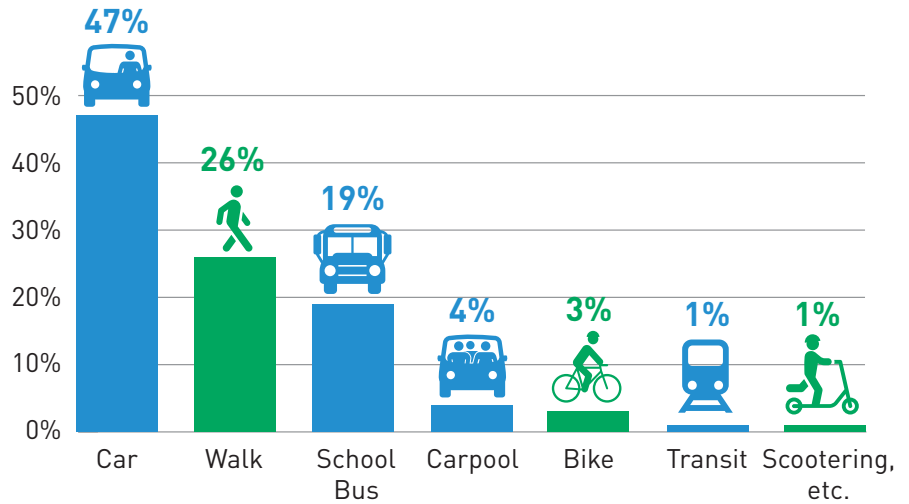




# EVALUATION

## Track progress toward our shared safety goals

In June 2023, we completed the [travel tally](#) in partnership with Seattle Public Schools to understand trends in walking and biking to school. Students raised their hands during P.E. class to tally how they got to school. See our [Travel Tally report](#) for full results and analysis.

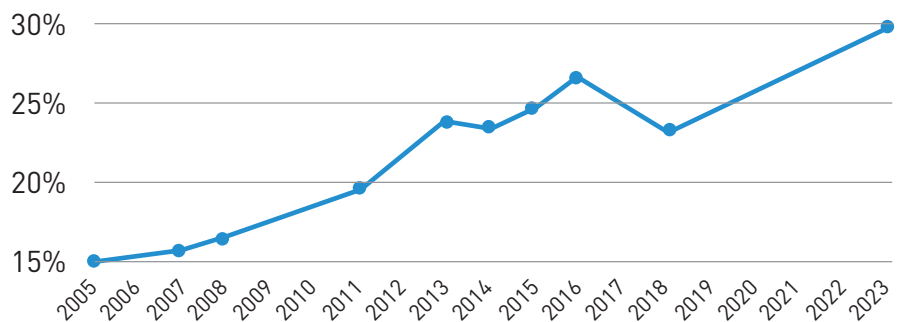


# 30%

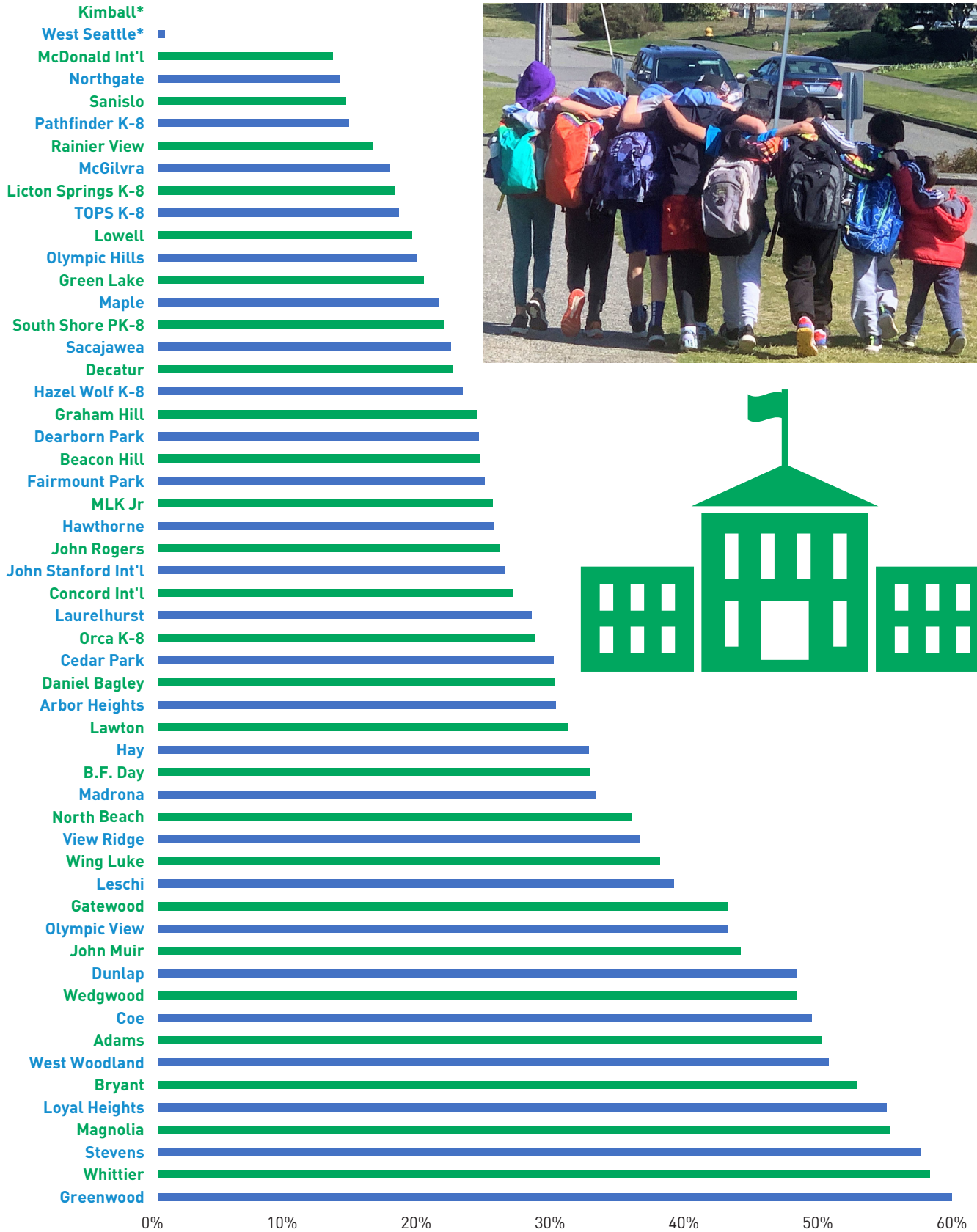
of students walked, biked, or scootered to school



## Walking, biking, and scootering to school has doubled since 2005!



# Walking, Biking, and Scootering Across the District



\*Kimball and West Seattle were both at interim sites outside of their regular walk zone.

# ALL THE E'S TOGETHER MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## Dunlap Elementary

In the 2023 travel tally, we saw an increase in walking/biking/rolling to school across the district. One school to highlight is Dunlap Elementary in Rainier Beach.

An impressive [9% of Dunlap students biked to school](#) which is a huge improvement from 1% when they previously completed the tally in 2015. It's also 3 times the biking rate than the district average of 3%!

The 7 E's (Equity, Environment, Education, Environment, Education, Empowerment, and Engineering, and Evaluation) coming together may be a big part of that increase.



**Equity:** Dunlap is a tier 1 equity priority school according to [SPS's equity analysis](#) so we prioritized staff time, engagement, and funding at this school.



**Environment and Engineering:** We recently completed a new sidewalk connection to the school on S Rose St and the school has a Healthy Street connection prioritizing walking and biking over cars that connects a high density of students to the school. (The Healthy Streets team plans to upgrade this section to permanent in 2024.)



**Education:** Dunlap's Physical Education teacher, Molly Blair, has been at the school 31 years and each year Molly teaches dozens of students how to ride a bike who have never ridden before through SDOT's Let's Go Program.



**Empowerment:** In spring 2023, Peace Peloton and the Seattle Public Schools Safe Routes to Schools Program Coordinator worked with Dunlap Elementary and South Shore PK-8 to start a "bike bus" where students biked together to school each Wednesday in May and June (as well as a walk group). Bike Works and ride volunteers partnered with Rogers Greene, the school's Family Support Worker, to get kids bikes and helmets who needed them. SDOT also partnered with Rogers to provide free winter gear to students who walk and bike. We also led a Walk to School Day event with the Mayor at Dunlap, attended school events, and engaged students in the "Bike to Books" street art design contest.



**Evaluation:** We worked with Seattle Public Schools to make the travel tally as easy as possible and got record participation. This is how we know about the measurable leap Dunlap students made in walking and biking to school. Go Dunlap Dolphins!

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"I believe this [bike bus and walk group] effort has been successful because we have had folks from key groups—community, bike organizations, schools, SDOT, SPS, PTAs, parents, kids, and families—engaged and empowered throughout the process."

—Dunlap parent

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Safe Routes to School strives to surround students with the support they need at schools like Dunlap Elementary and others across the district. This makes walking and biking to school a more viable option for more families and in turn creates safer and healthier communities.



*South Shore PK-8 and Dunlap Elementary's bike bus to school along the Healthy Street.*

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