

Seattle Department of Transportation

Safe Routes to School 2023-2024 Annual Report

SEPTEMBER 2023 TO AUGUST 2024



South Shore PK-8 Bike Bus students stand next to new art designed by Riley Saetern at Dunlap Elementary.
Photo: South Shore PK-8 Bike Bus parent



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

The Levy to
MOVE SEATTLE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the 2023-2024 school year, our Seattle's Safe Routes to School program:



260+

Projects in 9 years, achieving our goal to improve the walking route at every Seattle Public School by the end of the Levy to Move Seattle AND deliver 9-12 projects per year



-21%

Reduction in speeds on arterials where we installed speed cushions



11

Middle schools added to the [Let's Go](#) program. The program reached over 14,000 students with over 1,100 students learning to ride this year.



137+

Walking and biking packages distributed to 48 schools with free supplies like walking lights, school patrol flags, helmets, and more. A 92% increase!



9

Equity priority schools worked with the Seattle Public Schools Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator to support bike buses and walking school buses



12+

Events engaging students including the Youth Transportation Summit, during class time at Emerson Elementary and Franklin High School, and at events like the Rainier Beach Back2School Bash, Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day at Denny Middle School, Rainier Beach Boo Bash, Dunlap Elementary Walk and Bike Party, and back to school events at Emerson, West Seattle, Kimball, Dunlap, and Wing Luke elementaries



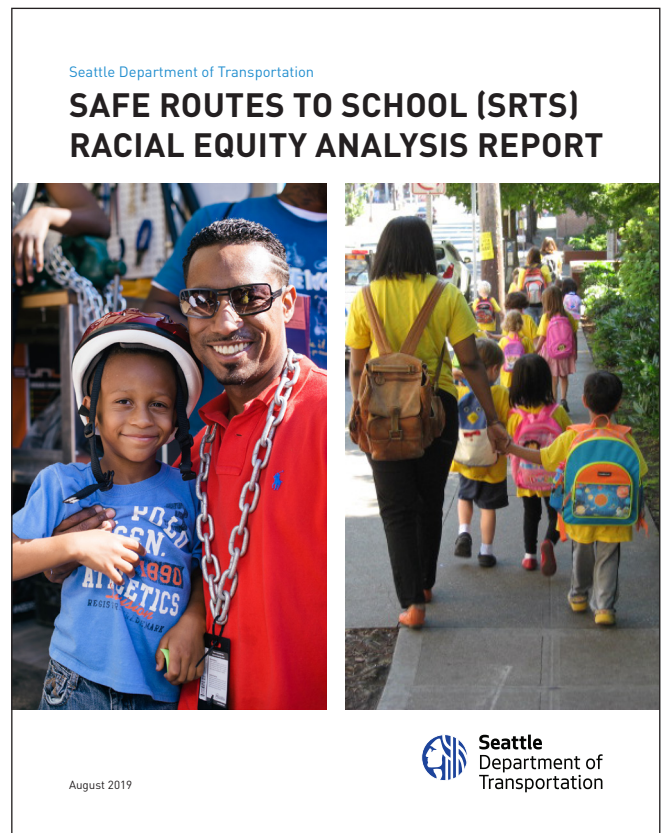
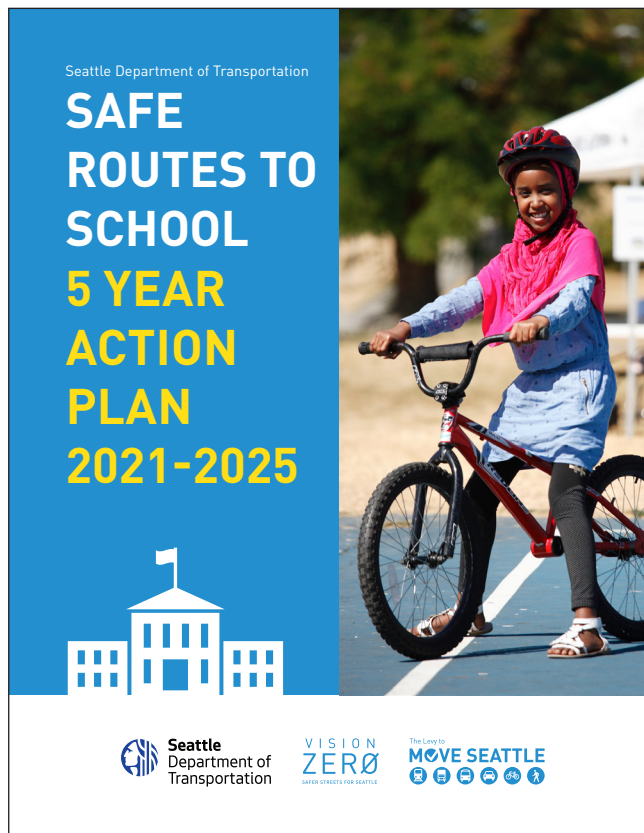
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K-5 public schools conducted a [travel tally](#) where we found 28% of students are walking/biking/rolling to school

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 [Racial Equity Analysis](#) findings. 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 into each one. The last section zooms in on John Muir Elementary as an example of all the E's coming together to make a measurable difference.





EQUITY

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

Example: [Bike to Books!](#) We installed student designed bike sharrows along the newly upgraded Healthy Street route between Othello Park and the Rainier Beach Library. Students at Dunlap Elementary and South Shore PK-8 designed the art during their school art classes. [More on page 5.]



ENVIRONMENT

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

Example: We worked with our Urban Forestry team to plant trees in the Othello neighborhood along the Bike Bus and Walk Group routes for Dunlap Elementary and South Shore PK-8. We also designed 3 of Seattle's first ever *permanent* [School Streets](#) at Emerson Elementary, Genesee Hill Elementary, and Whittier Elementary which we expect to install by the end of 2024. [More on page 7.]



EDUCATION

Ensure that everyone learns how to travel safely

Example: We provided walking and biking themed book bundles that Seattle Public Schools distributed to elementary school libraries at all Tier 1, 2, and 3 equity-priority schools with a focus on authors and characters of color. [More on page 9.]



EMPOWERMENT

Provide resources for communities to take the lead

Example: We distributed Walking and Biking Packages to **48** schools across the city to empower them to run with their own ideas for encouraging walking and biking to school. [More on page 10.]



ENCOURAGEMENT

Promote walking and biking in the school community

Example: We fund the Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator within Seattle Public Schools who supported schools in starting new walk groups, leading Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, distributing donated bikes to kids, and more. We also installed our first Learning Landscapes this year which invite play and learning on the way to school. [More on page 11.]



ENGINEERING

Design streets for safety and predictability

Example: We completed infrastructure projects at 34 schools during the 2023-24 school year including new push button crossing beacons and speed cushions to slow down drivers on arterials. [More on page 13.]



EVALUATION

Track progress toward our shared safety goals

Example: e collected vehicle speed data and found that speeds on arterials next to schools reduced by an average of **6** miles per hour **(-21%)** during school arrival/departure after we installed speed cushions. [More on page 19.]



EQUITY

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

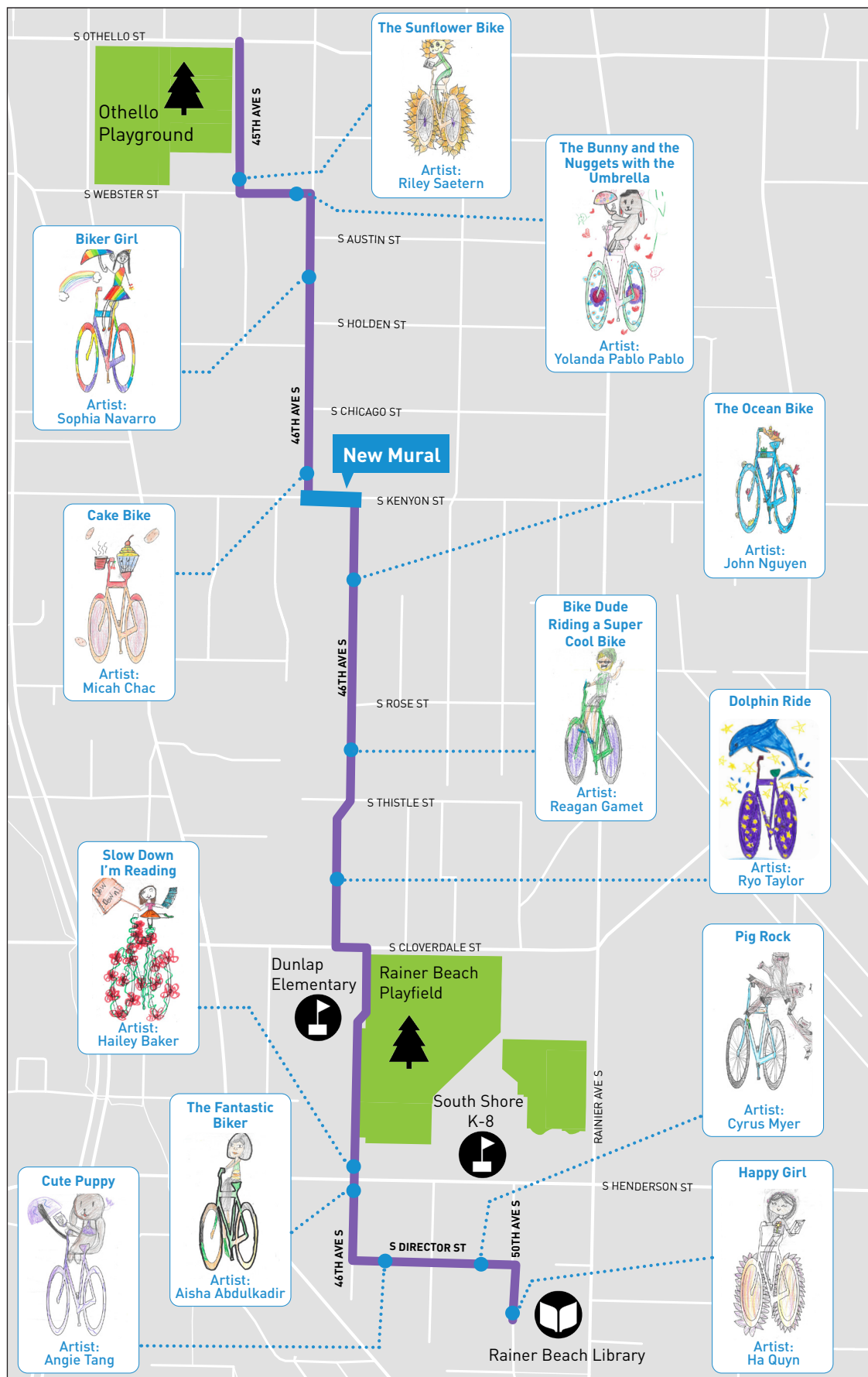
In 2019, we completed an in-depth [Safe Routes to School Racial Equity Analysis](#) to learn what barriers and opportunities communities of color have that prevent or support walking and biking to school. We prioritize higher equity-need areas for funding, staff time, and community partnerships.

Bike to Books Art Designed by Students During School

In April 2023, we led an art contest for students at Dunlap Elementary School and South Shore PK-8 in Rainier Beach, to create fun and inspiring designs for bicycle sharrows that SDOT crews installed on the street. Twelve winners from this contest have 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.



Photos: SDOT





ENVIRONMENT

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

Street Trees

We worked with our Urban Forestry team to plant trees in the Othello neighborhood along the Bike Bus and Walk Group routes for Dunlap Elementary and South Shore PK-8.

School Streets

Schools can request “[School Streets](#)” which are residential blocks adjacent to schools that we close to through traffic and open to walking and biking. School Streets help reduce congestion and idling next to schools which improves air quality and makes walking and biking more inviting.

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. We currently have 16 temporary School Streets, and we’re on track to build 3 of Seattle’s first ever *permanent* [School Streets](#) by the end of 2024 at Emerson Elementary, Genesee Hill Elementary, and Whittier Elementary which will have durable signage, painted bulbs, and student-designed art in the street.

We joined the art classes at Emerson Elementary for 3 days to engage students in designing the art we will install on their School Street.



Maple Elementary School Street Photo: SDOT



Dahvee Enciso speaks to students at Emerson Elementary. Dahvee leads the design and installation of street murals and community crosswalks across the city. Photo: SDOT



Students designed their art within eagle outlines because eagles are the Emerson Elementary mascot. Photo: SDOT



EDUCATION

Ensure that everyone learns how to travel safely

Walking and Biking Books

We worked with a local book shop, LOVING ROOM, to buy bundles of books that Seattle Public Schools distributed to elementary school libraries at all Tier 1, 2, and 3 equity-priority schools with a focus on authors and characters of color. We also distributed “Biking Uphill in the Rain: The story of Seattle from behind the Handlebars” to all public high schools.

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.



Photo: SPS

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 2023-24 school year, the team brought Let's Go Further to **11** middle schools.

*The Let's Go and Let's Go Further programs continued operation...serving 70 out of 73 elementary schools and expanding our pilot operations in the middle schools from 5 schools to 11, serving Eckstein, Broadview, Mercer, Aki, Salmon Bay, TOPS, Hamilton, Pathfinder, Denny, South Shore and Eagle Staff. **Combined, both programs reached over 14,000 students. Over 1,100 students learned to ride this year.***

—Cascade Bicycle Club



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 options that support walking and biking. 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.

This year we provided **6 mini-grants** and **137 walking and biking packages** to **48 schools** (a **92% increase** in the number of schools from the previous school year!).

CONCORD HAD A BIKING RATE OF 7%, WHICH WAS A 7% INCREASE FROM LAST YEAR!

STEAM teacher, Kate Ayers, and Physical Education teacher, Keith Lindahl, collaborate on walk and bike events and student school patrol. They also partner with Bike Works to get students free bikes.

"Thanks for the goodies! This year I had each student make their own backpack dangle with a reflector and a laminated copy of the May calendar. I'm hoping this way they might not get lost as easily! The older kids made them for my Kinders."

—Kate Ayers,
STEAM teacher at Concord



Part of our walking and biking packages are heart reflectors and earth reflectors that say "Keep the earth cool, walk and bike to school." Photo: Kate Ayers



ENCOURAGEMENT

Promote walking and biking in the school community

We fund the Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator, Brooke Nelson, 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, Brooke accomplished the following:

- Provided ongoing support at equity-priority schools, including:
 - Formalized sustainable Walk and Bike Groups at Dunlap Elementary and the parent-led Bike Bus at South Shore PK-8. Joined groups to add capacity on many Wednesdays throughout the school year.
 - Developed a Walking School Bus at Broadview-Thomson K-8.
 - Staffed James Baldwin Elementary's Bike Bus in spring 2024 to add support, share Safe Routes resources, and identify opportunities to expand.
 - Organized the assembly and distribution of 50 donated bikes to Wing Luke Elementary students.
 - Fit helmets and taught new riders basic bike skills at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary during Let's Go and All Kids Bike Physical Education units.



Photo: SPS



Photo: SPS

- Developed community partnerships with walk and bike to school stakeholders, including:
 - Started a Google Group to provide a channel for peer-to-peer support among Walk and Bike group leaders and champions.
 - Attended youth-centered engagement activities including the Seattle Youth Transportation Summit, YMCA Youth Earth Service Corps Summit, and Youth School Board representatives meeting.
 - Participated in Recreating Henderson Street Transportation Committee.
 - Connected with Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, Bike Works, The Bikery, and others to build a foundation for partnerships.
- Provided walk and bike event support and staffing at John Muir Elementary, Denny Middle School, Aki Kurose Middle School, Concord International Elementary, Dunlap Elementary, South Shore PK-8, Wing Luke Elementary, and Bailey Gatzert Elementary.
- Participated in the Seattle Public Schools Traffic Garden Implementation Team and joined school site visits, created [webpage](#) and communications materials, and connected team with walk and bike leaders at schools.
- Continued to establish the Safe Routes to School role within the Seattle Public School Transportation Department by serving as a resource for School Bus Route Coordinators and families who need transportation support.

LEARNING LANDSCAPES

We installed 5 Learning Landscapes designs at James Baldwin Elementary. Learning Landscapes are meant to stimulate play and learning outside the classroom.

Kathy Hirsh-Pasek at Temple University developed the concept of Learning Landscapes to address educational inequities. The aim is to transform public spaces into interactive playscapes that foster learning and engagement.

We partnered with Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning and James Baldwin (formerly Northgate) Elementary for a Learning Landscapes pilot project. Based on the children's play during the pilot, we adjusted the designs and this year we installed them permanently on the sidewalk surrounding the school as well as at a nearby Metro bus stop. We hope to continue installing more Learning Landscapes around the city!



Photos: SDOT



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 2023 and August 2024, we completed infrastructure projects for **34** schools to address many of these needs.

(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 funded.)

- 1 Adams Elementary:** Speed cushions on NW 65th St between 29th Ave NW and 25th Ave NW and crossing improvements on 26th Ave NW and 28th Ave NW

"Thank you! It has been amazing to see how much calmer the traffic is [on NW 65th St]."

— **Project neighbor via Facebook comment**



Photo: SDOT

- 2 Bailey Gatzert Elementary:** Signal improvements such as No Turn on Red signs and turn restrictions at 10th Ave S/S Jackson St, 12th Ave S/S Jackson St, 14th Ave/Yesler Way, Broadway/Yesler Way, and 12th Ave/E Yesler Way
- 3 B.F. Day Elementary:** All way stops and marked crosswalks at Linden/41st & Linden/40th
- 4 Chief Sealth Int'l High School/Denny Int'l Middle School:** Speed humps throughout school zone on 27th Ave SW, 26th Ave SW, SW Kenyon St, and SW Thistle St
- 5 Coe Elementary:** All way stop and marked crosswalks at 7th Ave W/W Wheeler St



Photo: SDOT

- 6 **Dunlap Elementary and South Shore PK-8:** Bike to Books student-design art from Othello Playground to Rainier Beach Library



Student artist: Yolanda Pablo. Photo: SDOT

- 7 **Gatewood Elementary:** All way stop at 44th Ave SW/SW Myrtle St and speed cushions within the school zone
- 8 **Greenwood Elementary:** Speed cushions, marked crosswalks, paint/post bulbs on 3rd Ave NW between 66th and 83rd (in partnership with SDOT's Crossing Improvements program)

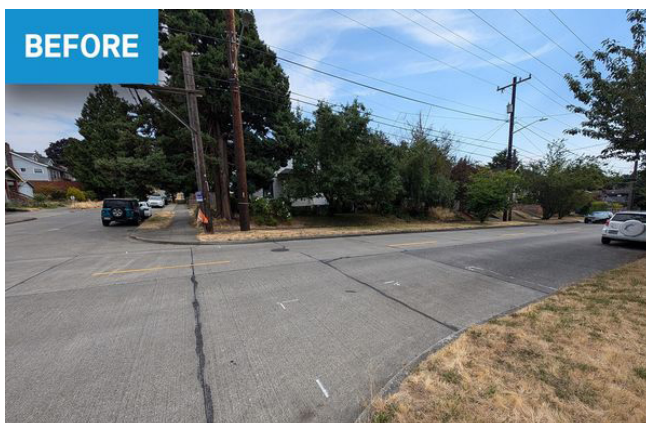


Photo: SDOT

9 Ingraham Int'l High School: Speed cushions on Meridian Ave N

10 Interagency Academy at Columbia: All way stops and marked crosswalks at S Edmunds St/35th Ave S, S Ferdinand St/35th Ave S, and S Ferdinand St/37th Ave S as well as signal improvements (No Turn on Red signs) at Rainier Ave S/S Ferdinand St

11 James Baldwin Elementary: All way stop and marked crosswalks at N 120th St/ Corliss Ave N; **Learning Landscapes** that create pop-up moments for play and learning



Photo: SDOT

12 Jane Addams Middle School: Wheel stops to protect Thornton Creek (in partnership with Thornton Creek Alliance)



Photo: SDOT

13 John Muir Elementary: Signal improvements (No Turn on Red signs and signal timing changes) at Rainier Ave S/S Walden St; New marked crosswalk at 38th Ave S and S Andover St

- 14 John Stanford Int'l Elementary:** All way stops at 5th Ave NE/NE 42nd St and 4th Ave NE/NE 42nd St



Photo: SDOT

- 15 Kimball Elementary:** New curb ramps, marked crosswalk, push button flashing beacon crossing, and sidewalk repair at 23rd Ave S/S Hinds St



Photo: SDOT

- 16 Laurelhurst Elementary:** All way stop and marked crosswalks at NE 47th St/46th Ave NE and NE 47th St/47th Ave NE

- 17 Loyal Heights Elementary:** Marked crosswalk at 32nd Ave NW/NW 75th St

- 18 Maple Elementary:** New temporary School Street and all way stops and marked crosswalks at Corson Ave S/S Ferdinand St, Corson Ave S/S Shelton St, Corson Ave S/S Hudson St



Photo: SDOT

- 19 McClure Middle School:** All way stops and marked crosswalks at 2nd Ave W/W Crockett St, 1st Ave W/W Crockett St, and 1st Ave W/W Howe St

- 20 McGilvra Elementary:** Speed hump on 38th Ave E adjacent to the school



Photo: SDOT

21 Mercer Middle School: Signal improvements (No Turn on Red signs) at 15th Ave S/S Dakota St

22 Pathfinder K-8: All way stop and marked crosswalks at 19th Ave SW/SW Genesee St



Photo: SDOT

23 Robert Eagle Staff Middle School: Signal improvements (No Turn on Red signs) at Aurora Ave N/ N 90th St

24 Sacajawea Elementary: Speed cushions on NE 90th St and all way stop and marked crosswalks at 17th Ave NE/NE 94th St



Photo: SDOT

25 Sand Point Elementary: All way stop at NE 63rd St/60th Ave NE



Photo: SDOT

26 Seattle World School: Signal improvements such as No Turn on Red signs and leading pedestrian intervals at 14th Ave/E Union St, 18th Ave/E Union St

27 South Shore PK-8: Push button flashing beacon crossing at S Henderson St/50th Ave S, channelization update to fill in bike lane gap, and no turn on red signs at Rainier Ave S/S Henderson St



Photo: SDOT

28 Thornton Creek Elementary: Paint/post curb bulbs and stop bars at 40th Ave NE/ NE 75th St

- 29 **Thurgood Marshall Elementary:** Speed humps on S Irving St and 24th Ave S
- 30 **Viewlands Elementary:** Speed humps and a short walkway connection on N 105th St



Photo: SDOT

- 31 **View Ridge Elementary:** Edge lines to visibly narrow the street and slow people driving down on NE 70th St from 35th Ave NE to Sand Point Way NE
- 32 **Washington Middle School:** Signal improvements (No Turn on Red signs) at Rainier Ave S & S Forest St
- 33 **Wedgwood Elementary School:** All way stop with marked crosswalks and a paint/post curb bulb at 30th Ave NE/NE 86th St
- 34 **Wing Luke Elementary:** All way stops and marked crosswalks at 37th Ave S/S Kenyon St and 37th Ave S/S Rose St

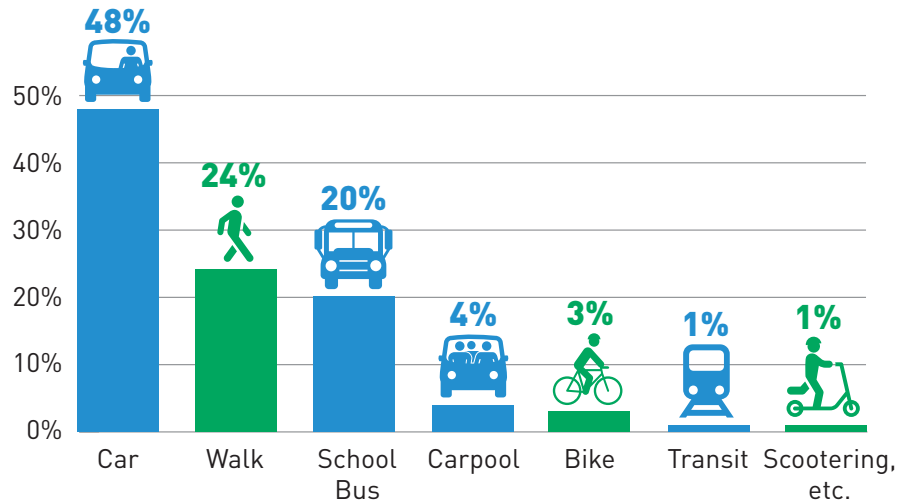


EVALUATION

Track progress toward our shared safety goals

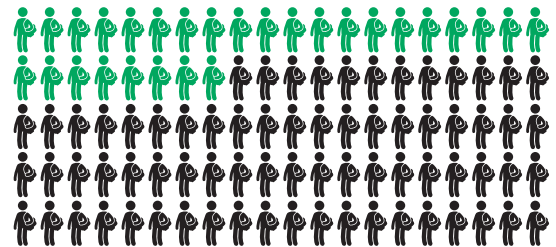
TRAVEL TALLY

In June 2024, 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 webpage](#) for full methods, results, and analysis.

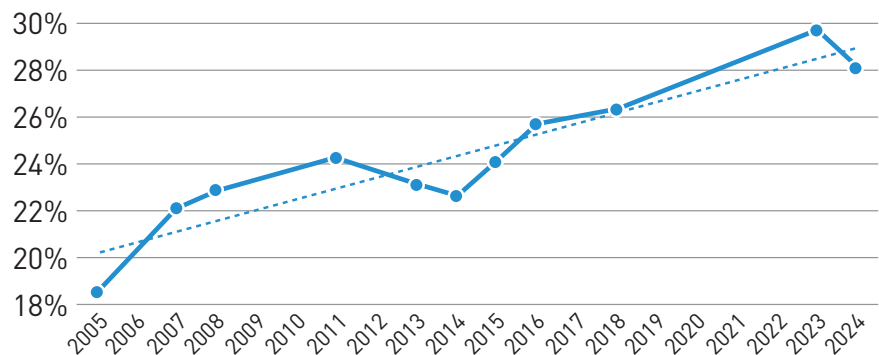


28%

of students walked, biked, or scooted to school



More and more students are walking, biking, and scootering to school!



ARTERIAL SPEEDS

We collected vehicle speed data on arterials next to schools. On arterials where we installed speed cushions, speeds dropped from an average 85th percentile speed of 28 miles per hour to 22 miles per hour (a 21% reduction) during school arrival/departure times. That kind of speed reduction is a big step forward for safety near our schools.



A family crosses 3rd Ave NW next to Greenwood Elementary where we recently installed speed cushions. Photo: SDOT

All the E's Together Make a Difference

John Muir Elementary had a 43% walk/bike/roll rate during the Travel Tally. The 7 E's (Equity, Environment, Education, Environment, Education, Empowerment, Engineering, and Evaluation) coming together may be a part of their impressive walking/biking culture.



Equity: John Muir is a tier 2 equity priority school according to **SPS's equity analysis** so we prioritized staff time, engagement, and funding at this school.



Education: John Muir's Physical Education teacher leads the School Safety patrol and teaches kids biking skills through **SDOT and SPS's Let's Go Program**.



Environment and Engineering: We recently completed new all way stops, signal improvements, and signage upgrades leading to the school. SDOT's Neighborhood Greenway team also installed **greenway improvements** like speed humps and pavement markings along S Walden St. The PTSA and staff are active partners in improving the walking and biking infrastructure for their students. Partially because of that active partnership, SDOT's Home Zone program selected this area for **Home Zone improvements**.



Empowerment: SDOT and SPS support the school's PTSA with mini grants, yard signs, flyer design, supplies, and prizes to support their 2 daily (!) walking school bus routes.

A John Muir Elementary parent shares their experience with the walking school bus:

"It's such a joyful, healthy, and empowering experience for kids. And extremely helpful for families for whom this fills a meaningful transportation gap."



Walk and Bike to School Month Event at John Muir Elementary
Photo: SDOT



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 John Muir's impressive walking and biking numbers.

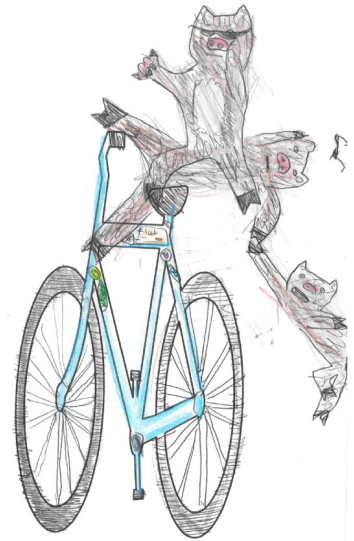
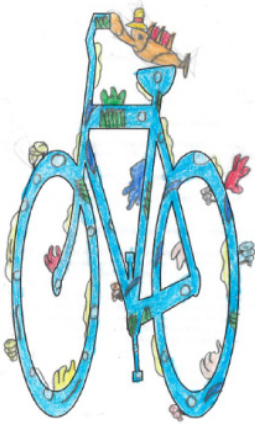
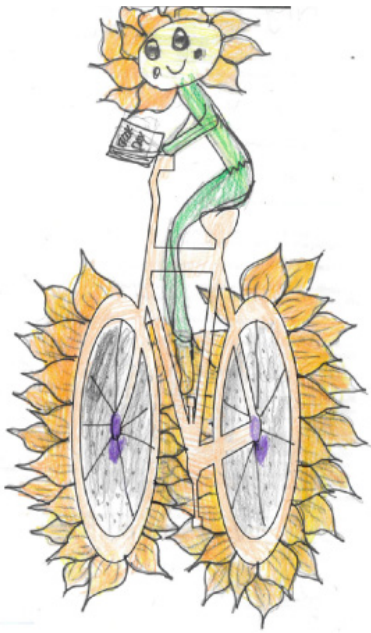


Go Muir Lions!

Safe Routes to School strives to surround students with the support they need at schools like John Muir Elementary and others across the district. This makes walking and biking to school a more viable option for more families.



Graphic developed by Seattle Public Schools in collaboration with the Seattle Department of Transportation.



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