



City of Santa Barbara Transportation & Circulation Committee *Staff Report*

DATE: August 25, 2022

TO: Transportation and Circulation Committee (TCC) Members

FROM: Jessica W. Grant, Supervising Transportation Planner
Samuel Furtner, Mobility Coordinator

SUBJECT: Safe Routes To School Program Update

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Transportation and Circulation Committee (TCC) receive an update on the Safe Routes To School (SRTS) Program efforts in the City of Santa Barbara.

DISCUSSION:

The City's Circulation Element of the General Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, and Vision Zero Strategy include many policies to work with public and private schools to identify and expand safe routes to school by all modes of transportation, as well as provide safety education to students and their families. The majority of items on the TCC agenda involve SRTS capital infrastructure projects. This staff report and the upcoming presentation on August 25, 2022 focus instead on the community education component of the City's Safe Routes To School (SRTS) Program.

The mission of the SRTS Program is to encourage local students to walk, bike, or roll to and from schools and other destinations, and to enable them to do so safely by addressing common barriers. The SRTS Program started back in the early 2000's and has evolved significantly over the years.

After initial program design and implementation by the City, the SRTS Program contracted with the Coalition for Sustainable Transportation (COAST) in 2003 to increase community and school participation at a grassroots level. Non-infrastructure activities gathered more interest when they originated from schools and non-governmental organizations, rather than from public or governmental partners.

SBBIKE+COAST, the newly merged transportation advocacy entity that currently coordinates the SRTS Program, works with 22 partner agencies to secure in-kind services and direct contributions for local schools. These partners include various Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), the Area Council of PTAs, Traffic Solutions at Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, the Air Pollution Control District, the Metropolitan Transit District, Diabetes Resource Center, and the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department. SBBIKE+COAST

is also the lead in educating all north and south Santa Barbara County Schools through the program.

Santa Barbara County and the cities of Santa Barbara, Goleta, and Carpinteria contribute funds towards the SRTS Program. The City of Santa Barbara currently has 17 participating school campuses and has committed to funding \$30,000 for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY-2023) for a total of about \$1,764 per school. As a point of comparison, the County of Santa Barbara, with 11 participating schools, currently funds \$20,000, or around \$1,818 per school. The City of Goleta funds \$10,000 for their seven schools (\$1,428 per school), and the City of Carpinteria funds \$7,000 toward programs at their four schools (\$1,750 per school). Funding the SB BIKE+COAST SRTS Program is currently the most cost-effective way to coordinate efforts for improving traffic safety, education, and evaluation at our schools. The City, and its partnering governmental agencies, do not have the resources or City staff available to fulfill the roles and responsibilities at the level and cost that SBBIKE+COAST is able to provide. The SRTS Program has successfully been able to make extensive use of volunteers and obtain contributions from government agencies, non-profits, businesses, individuals, and grants.

Through the cooperative and comprehensive SRTS Program, SBBIKE+COAST leads the education, encouragement, and evaluation components, while the City takes the lead on engineering and enforcement (such as the School Crossing Guard Program). The City has been successful in supporting SRTS Program efforts through funding these highly effective program efforts. To facilitate the City's engineering efforts, SBBIKE+COAST schedules site visits with the Police and Public Works Departments and school teams to identify access issues and safety concerns in the school zone/routes. This work often leads to Capital Improvement Projects to improve school safety, traffic and operational improvements, and focuses the Police Department on key enforcement issues in school zones.

The SRTS Program currently provides the following program elements to local schools based on grade level and/or need:

- **Kindergarten:** walking safely presentations and role playing.
- **First Grade:** walking safely presentations and practice in school parking lots.
- **Second Grade:** walking safely presentations, neighborhood safety walks, and four sessions of on-bike safety education.
- **Third Grade:** walking and bicycling safely presentations focused on safe street crossing and making eye contact with drivers, and four sessions of on-bike safety education.
- **Fourth Grade:** walking and bicycling safely presentations and one session of on-bike safety skills (a "bike rodeo").
- **Fifth Grade:** walking and bicycling safely presentations with a focus on designing a "safe route", being visible and being predictable, and four sessions of on-bike safety education.
- **Sixth Grade:** walking and bicycling safely presentations with a focus on typical crash types, four sessions of on-bike safety education, and a neighborhood ride (typically to the junior high school graduating students will attend the next year).

- **Junior High:** walking and bicycling safely presentations with a focus on common crashes, helmet use, benefits to health, transportation systems and the environment. In addition, on-bike safety education includes street rides and basic bike maintenance.
- **High School:** working with students in school clubs to teach basic and advanced bike maintenance skills, rules of the road, common crashes, and benefits of helmet use.
- **Helmet and Bike Light Distribution:** distributing, fitting, and teaching of proper fitting of bicycle helmets and bike lights to students to ensure they are protected and are highly visible if riding at night.
- **Safety Assessments:** working with school leaders and City staff on traffic safety and access assessments, which include discussing and documenting areas of concern, and developing and tracking next steps to address safety.
- **Events:** Bike and Walk to School Day.

To better monitor and measure the success of SRTS programming, City staff continues to work with SBBIKE+COAST to generate bi-annual performance reports on SRTS Program efforts in local schools. This effort began in Fiscal Year 2020, with the intent to document school education and outreach efforts, financial constraints/opportunities, and to identify goals and priorities of SRTS programming efforts for the upcoming fiscal year.

Given SBBIKE+COAST's previous success in implementing the SRTS Program, the City will continue to contract with SBBIKE+COAST to coordinate the SRTS Program for FY-2023. The City's contribution will support the goal of a Citywide SRTS Program that is incorporated in all City schools at a level that withstands changeovers in school administration and parental support. Maintaining adequate funding is necessary to sustain SRTS Program efforts to improve safety around schools and make safety education available to children and families.