

Seattle Department of Transportation

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL 2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT



September 2021 to August 2022



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This year, Seattle's Safe Routes to School program:



Resumed the **Let's Go program** for elementary students in person and conducted the first middle school pilot of Let's Go Further



Gave out over 1,200 **books** with walking and biking themes to low-income students



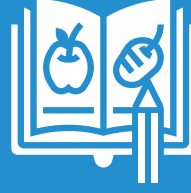
Supplied 8 **mini grants**, including 4 for outdoor clothing for students walking to school, books with walking and biking themes, bicycle racks, safety gear and signage, and art installations.



Completed 11 construction projects to make it easier and safer to walk and bike to school



Provided 19 **incentives** packages to schools and community groups sponsoring walking and biking campaigns



Updated our free activity books for **kids** and **teens**



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



Conducted a #whyiwalk, #whyibike social media campaign to highlight stories from communities of color and gave out free tickets to Woodland Park Zoo



Attended 2 back to school events to give away school and safety supplies, the Rainier Beach Back2School Bash and the Bailey Gatzert Back to School BBQ



Updated the **Seattle by Bike guide** to include neighborhood greenways, Healthy Streets, and a family biking section.



Hired a new **Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator** under Seattle Public Schools

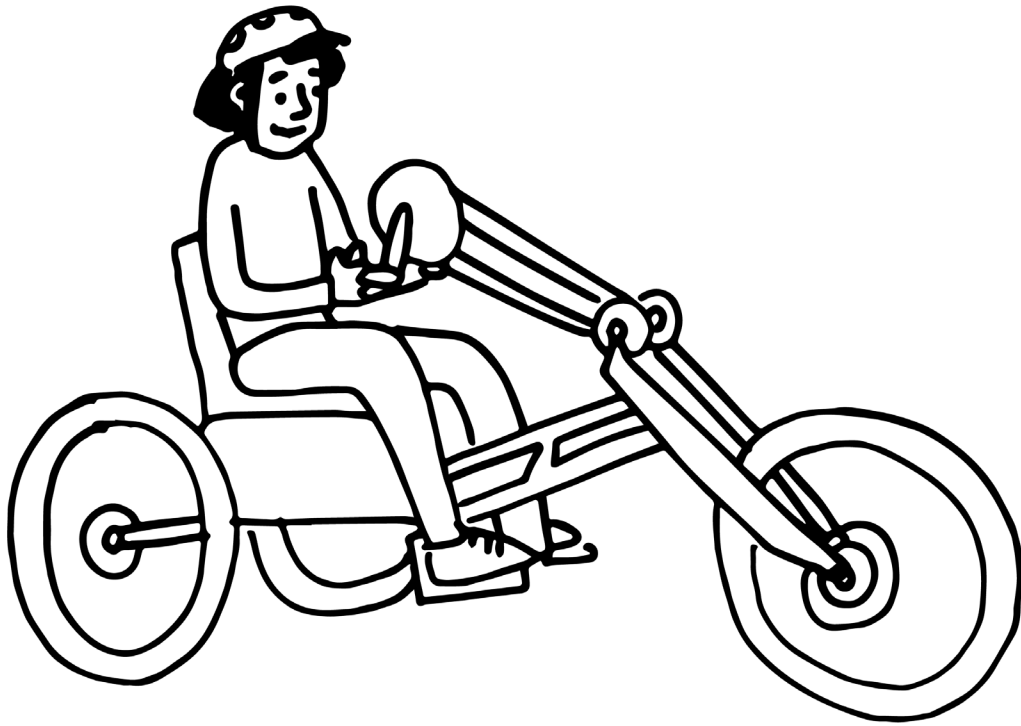
INTRODUCTION

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national movement to make it easier and safer to walk, bike, and roll to school. Our SRTS program is designed to improve safety in areas around schools and to encourage more kids to walk, bike, and roll.

“My daughter walks because it’s silly to drive while she lives so close to school. She has a big umbrella and waterproof shoes.”



Busy bike racks outside Lincoln High School. These racks were so popular that we supplied a Mini Grant for more for the school



This handcycle is one of many new illustrations in the SRTS Activity Book for Kids, demonstrating that cycling is for everyone.

It's our goal for Seattle's school children to start their day by:

- Having fun
- Strengthening connections to their communities
- Improving physical and mental health
- Arriving to school in time for breakfast and ready to learn

As part of our City's continued effort to end institutionalized racism and build a more equitable city, we are focused on extending the benefits of walking and biking to school to students in these groups:

- Communities of color
- Low-income communities
- Immigrant and refugee communities
- People with disabilities
- People experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity
- The LGBTQIA+ community
- Girls

"I walk and bike so that my community can see others walking and biking and know it's safe for them too!"

In 2021 we updated the [Safe Routes to School 5 Year Action Plan](#) by further developing our key strategies and implementing learnings from our two-year [Racial Equity Analysis](#).

EDUCATION

WALKING AND BIKING SAFETY EDUCATION

Since 2015, we have partnered with Seattle Public Schools to fund *Let's Go*, a walking and biking safety program for every 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade public school student, including students with adaptive needs. In May of 2021, we signed a new Memorandum of Agreement expanding that program into *Let's Go Further*, which will be provided to all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders in the District.

Let's Go Further will

- Build on what students learned in their *Let's Go* curriculum
- Expand the existing bicycle fleet
- Improve our program's assessment approach
- Enhance in-classroom teacher support

After going remote with online videos and at-home activities in the height of the pandemic, *Let's Go* began delivering in-person programs to elementary students as of November 2021, and the first pilot for *Let's Go Further* was delivered at Hamilton Middle School in spring of 2022.

OUTDOOR GEAR FOR ALL WEATHER

Our Racial Equity Analysis revealed that, of students who normally walk or bike to school, **over 60%** were deterred or prevented from walking or biking due to cold or rainy weather. For immigrants, refugees, and other Seattle newcomers, weather conditions can be drastically different from what they are used to, and they may not have appropriate weather gear.

Part of providing students with a safe way to walk, bike, or roll to school is giving them the ability to stay active in all types of weather. Our Mini Grant program awarded \$4,000 to schools to deliver



Students from Coe Elementary learning to ride at safe following distances.



Having fun on the playground participating in the Let's Go program.

free outdoor clothing to low-income students. Students from South Shore K-8, Kimball Elementary, Lowell Elementary, and Broadview-Thompson K-8 received rain gear and winter coats to help keep them warm, dry, and safe on their walk to school.

BOOKS

This year, we continued our partnership with Seattle Public Schools to focus on education and encouragement through reading. To support students learning at home, we purchased over 1,200 books from local, independent bookstores and sent home three books with each 3rd and 5th grade student at Martin Luther King Jr, Emerson, Bailey Gatzert, and Rising Star Elementary Schools. These books contained themes about walking, biking, and exploring your neighborhood and feature characters of color. Our Mini Grant program also helped to fund the purchase of books by the PTA at Broadview-Thompson K-8.

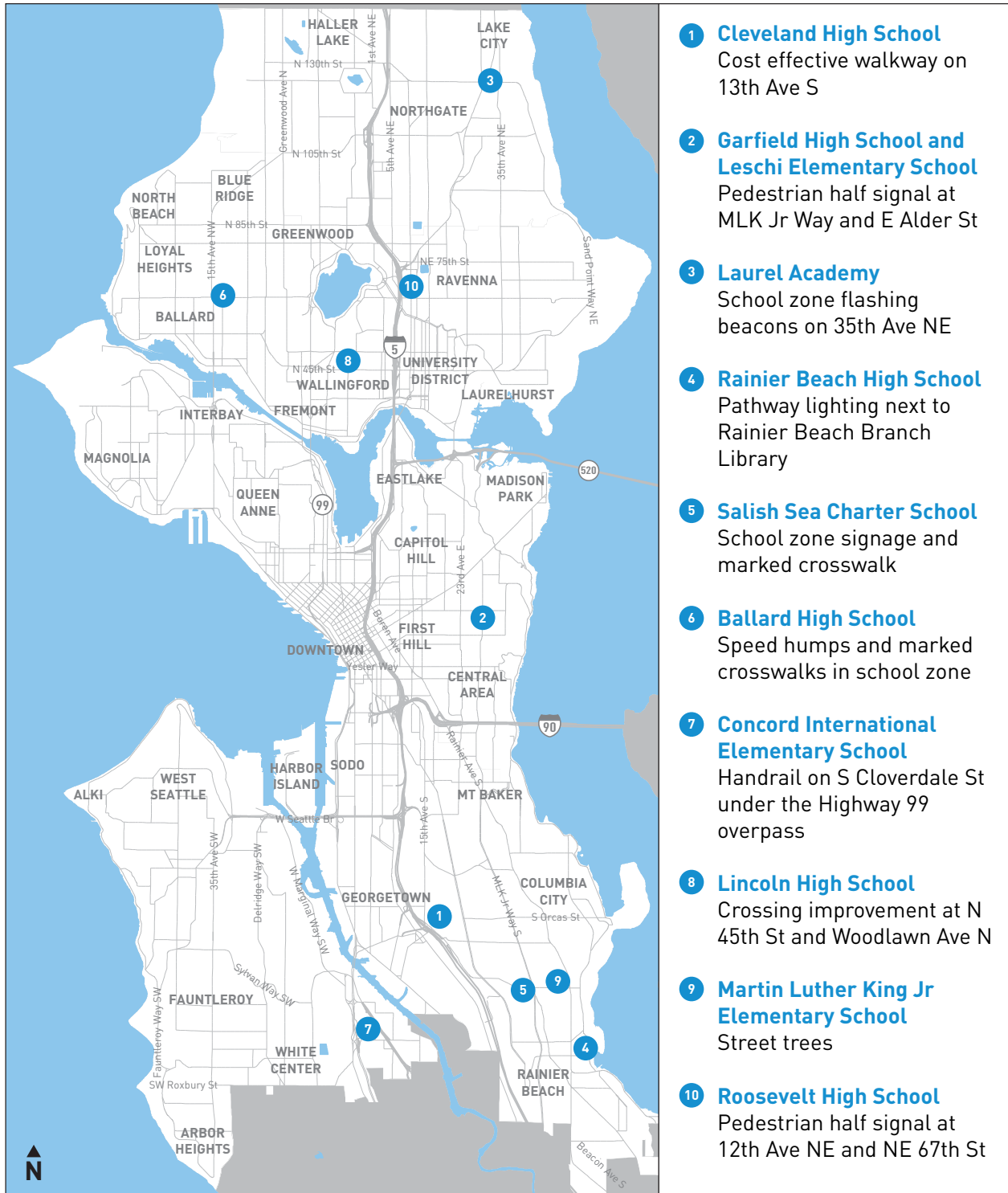
Reading is a great way for kids to learn about walking and biking safety and to get energized about walking, biking, and rolling to school and within their own neighborhoods.



Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary students proudly showing off their new books supplied by SRTS

ENGINEERING IMPROVEMENTS AROUND SCHOOLS

The SRTS 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 2021 and August 2022, we completed engineering projects for 11 schools to address many of the issues raised in the Racial Equity Analysis. The numbers on the map correspond to each of the school engineering projects.





Cost effective walkway on 13th Ave S



Pedestrian half signal at MLK Jr Way and E Alder St



School zone flashing beacons on 35th Ave NE



Pathway lighting next to Rainier Beach Branch Library



School zone signage and marked crosswalk



Speed humps and marked crosswalks in school zone



Handrail on S Cloverdale St under the Highway 99 overpass



Crossing improvement at N 45th St and Woodlawn Ave N



Pedestrian half signal at 12th Ave NE and NE 67th St

BAILEY GATZERT WALKING SCHOOL BUS PROGRAM

Most students at Bailey Gatzert Elementary School live within half a mile of the school, but the route to school requires crossing busy, complex arterial streets. We funded Central Seattle Greenways to help parent leaders organize walking school buses, where 25 children join one of three walking routes to get to Gatzert safely, on time, and have fun along the way. We also partnered with Woodland Park Zoo to hand out 100 zoo tickets to participating families.



A walking school bus of students and parent leaders headed toward Bailey Gatzert

SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM COORDINATOR



Sara Colling, the new SPS Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator, hard at work at Dunlap Elementary's curriculum night!

After advocacy to City Council from the School Traffic Safety Committee and community groups, we are now funding a Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator at Seattle Public Schools. Sara Colling started as the Program Coordinator in April. Her work revolves around 3 key goals:

1. Offer consistent, central support removing barriers to walking and biking to school. With her encouragement, Sara will work to ignite a culture around active transportation that:
 - a. Encourages physical activity
 - b. Reduces congestion and risk around schools
 - c. Strengthens school communities, and
 - d. Improves truancy.
2. Provide leadership and guidance to schools and their communities as they develop, test, and implement plans, building on successful models in Seattle and beyond.
3. Identify initiatives and programs that have been successfully developed and deployed at other school districts. This includes but is not limited to
 - a. school pools
 - b. safe routes to schools
 - c. walking school buses
 - d. bike trains, and
 - e. other successful walk and ride share programs.

Sara started developing a school district Safe Routes to School program by:

- Creating a new Seattle Public Schools webpage with resources specific to walking, biking, and rolling to school
- Submitting a WSDOT grant application to expand the “All Kids Bike” program to bring balance bikes to all Kindergarten Physical Education classrooms
- Increasing awareness among school leaders of SDOT Safe Routes to School programs like School Streets and Mini Grants
- Using SPS communications tools to broadcast resources like School Streets and Mini Grants
- Working with SDOT to collecting input from SPS students on the Seattle Transportation Plan
- Working with King County Metro to bring RideshareOnline School Pool software to Seattle Public Schools
- Sara also provides hands on school support, including:
 - Selecting three “priority schools” (based on equity, infrastructure improvements, and staff interest) and forming relationships with school staff and families and begin planning for walk to school day and other supports for walking and biking to school
 - Staffing seven “Bike to School Day” events and working with SPS and SDOT to broadcast bike to school stories
 - Organizing a community walk and tabling at Back-to-School events with giveaways, sign-ups, resources, and travel tallies to support walking and biking to school

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