SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL SUCCESS STORY

Sebastopol, California
CALTRANS DISTRICT 4, SONOMA COUNTY

There was a time when the sight of children walking and bicycling to school was a familiar scene in communities across California. In fact, in 1969 approximately 50 percent of children walked or bicycled to school. Today, fewer than 15 percent of children do and rates of childhood obesity and overweight are overwhelming.¹,²

Concerns about traffic safety are often cited as one of the main reasons children do not walk or bicycle to school.³ And for good reason, as in 2010 alone, over 21,000 California school children were sent to an emergency department and over 1,500 were hospitalized due to pedestrian or bicycle injuries.⁴

Creating safe opportunities for walking and bicycling is critical to improving the safety of young pedestrians and bicyclists and to reducing overweight and obesity among California’s youth. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs are key to reversing these trends. SRTS programs increase the number of children who safely walk and bicycle to school through education and encouragement programs, enhanced enforcement, engineering improvements, and strong program evaluation.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Sebastopol SRTS Program is spearheaded by the City of Sebastopol’s Engineering Department in collaboration with the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition (SCBC). This public/private partnership also involved the Sebastopol Police Department, local elected officials, the district PTA, and many other local organizations.

The Sebastopol SRTS Program provided online resources and individualized support for four schools in the Sebastopol Union School District. SCBC established a Walk and Roll encouragement program at each school that included:

- International Walk and Roll to School Day each October;
- Weekly or monthly walk and roll days throughout the year;
- A six- to eight-week Spring walk and roll challenge;

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California Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance Resource Center, a program of California Active Communities
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100% of schools increased their rates of students walking and bicycling between 2011 and 2012

15% to 91% increase in rates of students walking and bicycling to the various schools between 2011 and 2012

1,100 students benefitted from having the Safe Routes to School program at their school
Implementing Agency
City of Sebastopol Engineering Department
Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition

Location
Sebastopol, Sonoma County
Caltrans District 4
CA Assembly District 1
CA Senate District 2

Funding
Federal SRTS Non-Infrastructure – Cycle 1

Participating Schools
Brook Haven School – 35 percent of students eligible for the Free and Reduced Price Meals (FRPM) Program
Pine Crest Elementary School – 37 percent of students eligible for the FRPM Program
Park Side Elementary School – 56 percent of students eligible for the FRPM Program
Sebastopol Independent Charter School – no students eligible for the FRPM Program

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- A Teens Go Green Club (at Brook Haven); and
- Various other activities such as parades, poster contests, and more.

SCBC also provided annual in-class pedestrian and/or bicycle safety education at each grade level each year at all four school sites, as well as a bicycle/pedestrian safety assembly, and an annual, after-school on-bicycle skills course at Brookhaven, Pine Crest and Park Side. A successful bicycle swap was also conducted in the final year of the program.

The Sebastopol SRTS Program also produced a Sebastopol Safer Routes to School Map. This success was the result of a year-long collaborative evaluation process with the City, the school district, and law enforcement that included multiple walking audits as well as evaluation and prioritization of infrastructure problems and opportunities for improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Percent of Children Walking and Bicycling</th>
<th>Increase in Children Walking and Bicycling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brook Haven School</td>
<td>Pre-Program (2011) = 31.6%, Post-Program (2012) = 38%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Crest Elementary School</td>
<td>23.5%, 27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Side Elementary School</td>
<td>15.8%, 21.8%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastopol Independent Charter School</td>
<td>16%, 30.5%</td>
<td>91%</td>
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</tbody>
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The California Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance Resource Center is a program of California Active Communities, a joint Unit of the University of California San Francisco and the California Department of Public Health, and is funded through a statewide non-infrastructure SRTS award from the California Department of Transportation.