



CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

MEMORANDUM

Public Works Department

DATE: January 30, 2019

TO: Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee

FROM: Nate Baird, Transportation Planner
Helen Kim, Transportation Planner
Ria Hutabarat Lo, Transportation Manager

SUBJECT: **Safe Moves**

RECOMMENDATION

Review and provide comments on the Final Report for the Safe Moves program and program evaluation data, and discuss ways to focus efforts in Mountain View's future Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program.

BACKGROUND

In 2010, the City of Mountain View was awarded a \$500,000 Vehicle Emissions Reductions Based at Schools (VERBS) grant for a multi-year program to encourage pedestrian and bicycle access to schools. The VERBS program is a Federally funded, competitive grant program administered through the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA). The purpose of the program is to:

- Facilitate planning, development, and implementation of a project or activity to reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools;
- Reduce traffic-related injuries and fatalities to schoolchildren;
- Enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; and
- Make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative.

Using this grant, the City contracted with Safe Moves in 2011 through a competitive bid process to conduct VERBS Program activities from November 2011 through October 2014.

Following the initial three-year program, the City was awarded a second three-year \$500,000 VERBS grant in 2013 to continue and build upon the previous efforts. Based on a competitive bid process, the City again contracted with Safe Moves in 2015 for the period April 2015 to March 2018. The Final Report from this program is provided in Attachment 1.

RESULTS

Staff has undertaken an analysis of school-based program activities, participation rates, and walk/bike access to schools across the six-year period covered by the two VERBS grants. This analysis is based on program reports as well as annual monitoring data that was collected by Safe Moves via Student Travel Tally Surveys. These surveys employed the National SRTS survey methodology.

Program Activities

Program activities covered all of the “7Es” of engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement, engagement, equity, and evaluation, to some degree. The key focus areas were safety education, walk/bike access encouragement, and engagement of school communities.

From 2011 through 2014, Safe Moves satisfactorily conducted the following activities:

- Developed age-appropriate educational materials and programs for parents, teachers, and students from Kindergarten through Grade 12 at public and private schools in the City, as well as Los Altos High School;
- Conducted 800 programs and events for students and parents, including workshops, bicycle and pedestrian rodeos, cyclist skills classes, Walk and Bike to School Days, Carbon-Free Commute Challenges, and PTA/Site Council meetings that reached more than 45,300 student and parent participants (including participation in multiple events);
- Developed and distributed suggested SRTS maps to identify recommended walking and bicycling routes to each school. The maps are available online on the

City's website, at each school's website, and banner-sized maps are on display at school sites.

From 2015 through 2018, Safe Moves satisfactorily conducted the following activities:

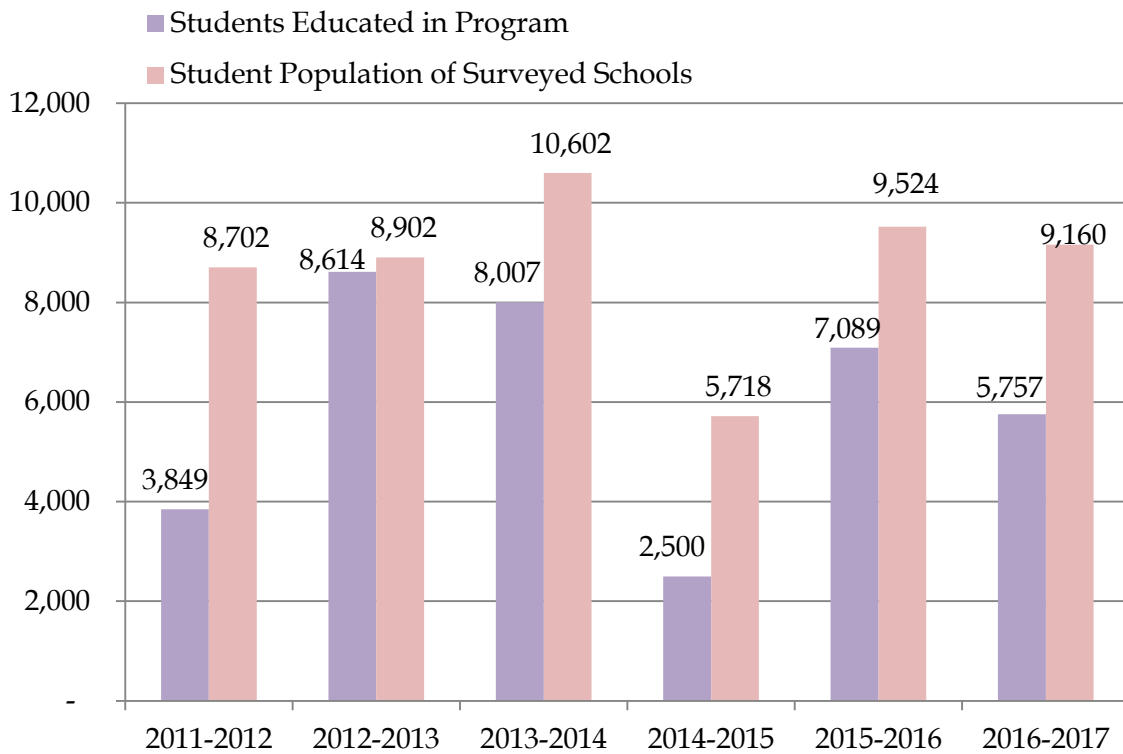
- Updated age-appropriate educational materials and programs for parents, teachers, and students from Kindergarten through Grade 12 in public and private schools in the City, as well as Los Altos High School;
- Revised SRTS maps;
- Conducted 40 presentations at local high schools;
- Conducted 221 elementary and middle school workshops;
- Carried out 241 bicycle and pedestrian safety rodeos;
- Prepared and delivered one cycle skills course and teacher training materials;
- Coordinated encouragement events, including Walk & Bike to School days, Anything But a Car days, Carbon-Free Commute Challenges, and Walking School Buses & Bicycle Trains.

More information on the program activities for April 2015 through March 2018 is provided in the Safe Moves Final Report (Pages 4 through 6 of Attachment 1).

Participation Rates

Over the six-year period of the programs, VERBS reached between 44 percent and 97 percent of students at participating schools (see Figure 1). In both periods, the initial year of the three-year program had lower participation rates due to a late start or initial activities that precluded the program from capitalizing on potential back-to-school opportunities.

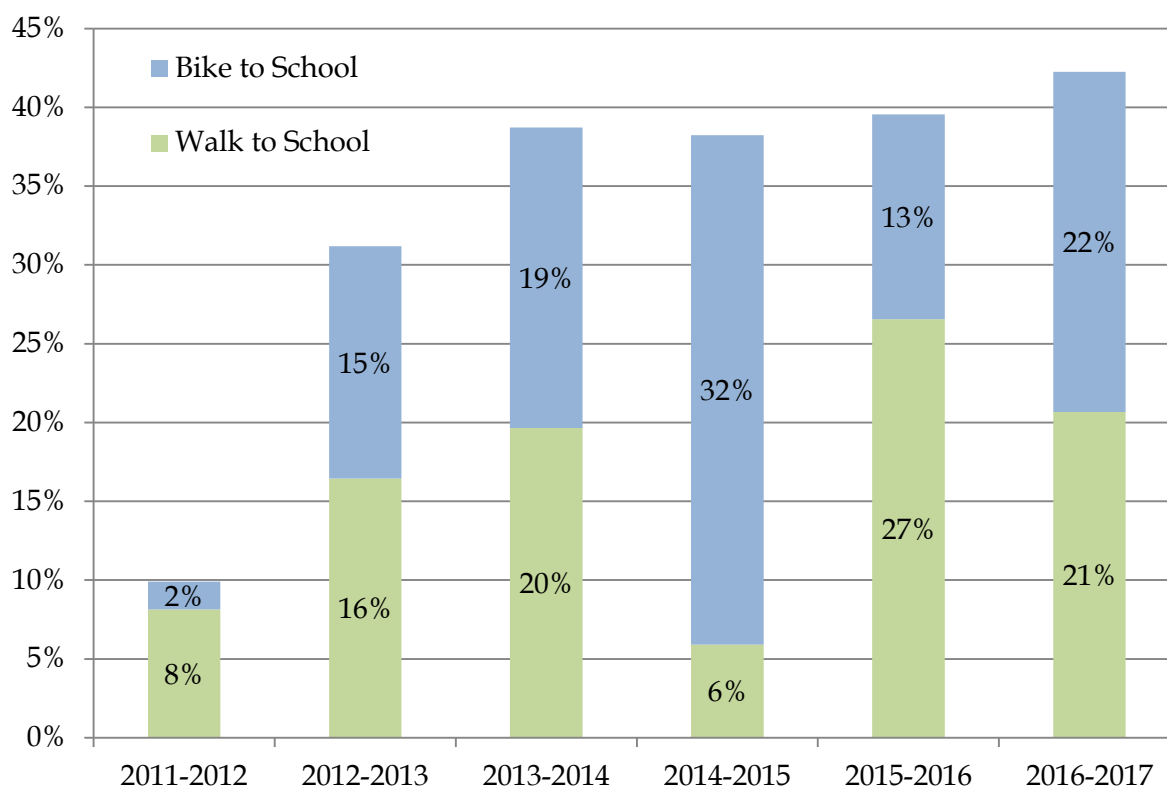
Figure 1: Participation in Safe Moves, 2011-2017



Walking and Bicycling Rates by Year

While program activities and participation varied from year to year, active school commute share built over the six-year period from an initial rate of 10 percent (8 percent walk and 2 percent bike) in 2011-12, to a rate of 23 percent (21 percent walk and 2 percent bike) in 2016-17. This is displayed in Figure 2, below.

Figure 2: School Access Walk and Bike Share for All Participating Schools, by Year



Please note that participation rates in 2014-15 may not be representative since counts were taken late in the year and during the summer. Additionally, changes in the composition of participating schools may have also affected the apparent mode share for the program. For example, some of the private schools, which tend to have lower rates of active commuting, dropped out of the program.

Notwithstanding the above qualifiers, the dramatic growth in active school commuting during the program periods suggests that the program was highly successful in achieving a core goal of reducing school-related emissions and encouraging children to walk and bike to school.

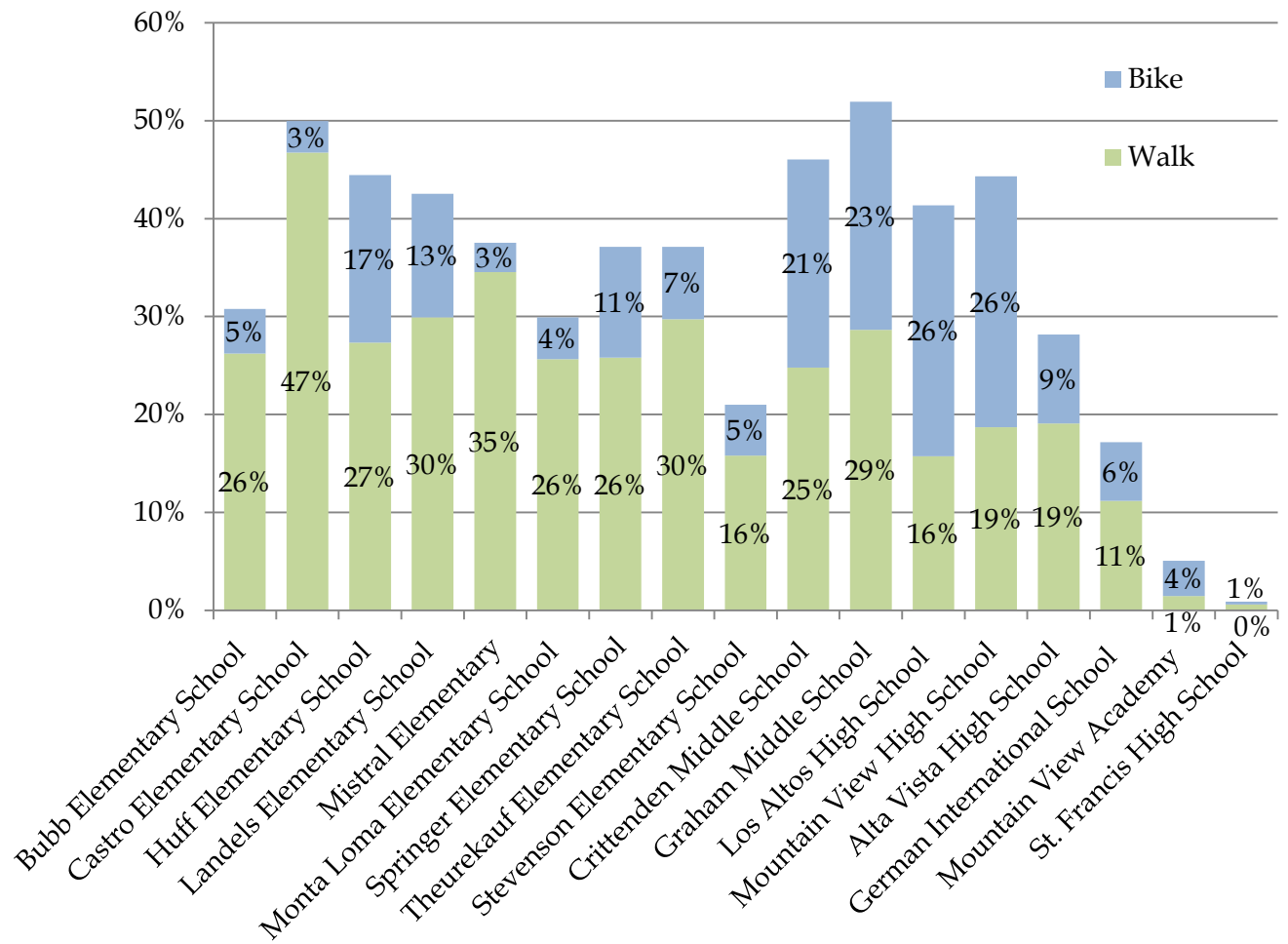
Survey data also indicates that the greatest mode share gains occurred between the first and second year, which may be explained in relation to “low-hanging fruit” of those who needed only a slight nudge to shift to active commuting. Within participating schools, a similar trend of rapid initial growth followed by slower ongoing growth of active commuting was also observed.

Walking and Bicycling Rates by School

Using data for the most recent two years of counts from all schools that participated in the program, a number of patterns can be observed in relation to active school commuting within Mountain View.

As shown in Figure 3, rates of walking to school (green) were higher for elementary school students, while rates of bicycling to school (blue) were higher for middle and high school students. This may reflect the different catchment size of the different schools as well as the more advanced biking ability of middle and high school students. Private school students had lower rates of walking and bicycling than their public school counterparts, possibly due to their larger geographic catchment.

Figure 3: Most Recent Two-Year Average School Access Walk and Bike Share, by School



Feedback from the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)

After program completion, staff visited the YAC and requested their input on the program in order to inform future SRTS efforts. The YAC recalled the program and had the following feedback and input for future efforts:

- The most effective strategies were hands-on events such as bike rodeos and demonstrations;
- Students indicated that the larger events were less effective due to the tendency for students to tune out and not pay attention at large assemblies;
- Students emphasized the need for repetition of information and presentation of more complex material at higher grade levels because high school students do not remember the rules or information they were presented in middle school or elementary school.

Ongoing Community Efforts

Based on anecdotal information, the program has helped to reinforce or spawn ongoing movements within individual schools. For example, Green Teams have emerged at a number of schools (including Los Altos High School, Mountain View High School, St. Francis, and the German International School of Silicon Valley), which continue to organize walking and bicycling encouragement events through the work of volunteers.

NEXT STEPS

In order to sustain the beneficial outcomes of the VERBS program and encourage ongoing progress as new cohorts of students advance through the school system, an ongoing program is needed. While the VERBS program is now complete, the City anticipates that future efforts will be funded by the VTA's Measure B SRTS program. The Measure B SRTS grant amount is approximately one-third of the size of the previous VERBS grant funds and, therefore, the respective program will need to be more limited, targeted, and strategic. Targeted program efforts could include:

- Updating existing maps and educational materials rather than generating any new material;
- Collaborating with school districts and Los Altos, and leveraging volunteer efforts within the school communities (e.g., Green Teams, PTAs);

- Identifying synergistic actions within other programs and efforts such as the Vision Zero Action Plan;
- Targeting efforts to key grades (e.g., Kindergarten, 3rd Grade, 6th Grade, 9th Grade);
- Focusing on those strategies that seem to be most effective (e.g., bike rodeos, teacher training);
- Leveraging the new countywide active transportation education and engagement program to be funded by Measure B; and,
- Streamlining data collection and analysis processes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Staff has the following questions for the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee:

- Do Committee members have comments on the data and information presented in this report and the Attachment?
- Where do you recommend that we focus our efforts for a future SRTS program?

Attachment: 1. Safe Moves Final Report, 2016-17