

# Safe Routes to Ravenswood City Schools: Community-Driven Change through Citizen Science

March-May 2022

Prepared by the Stanford *Our Voice* Initiative  
August 2022



San Mateo County  
**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**  
Healthy Kids • Green Communities • Safe Journeys



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## Background

In late 2021, the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program selected the Ravenswood City School District (RCSD) as part of an inaugural School Travel Fellowship. The School Travel Fellowship<sup>1</sup>, an initiative rolled out in 2021-2022 school year, was primarily designed to promote city and school partnerships in support of SRTS efforts. Each selected city-school team received technical assistance around planning, support for walk audit, and funding to implement a quick-build or demonstration project near the schools.

The district consists of four schools located in East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park who all formed part of this project. As part of the Fellowship, RCSD elected to collaborate with the Stanford *Our Voice* Initiative to engage community members in assessing and documenting environmental features that facilitate or hinder active transportation to school. In a facilitated process in Spring 2022, community members then used locally-generated data to generate recommendations for projects, programs, and policies to support walking and biking to school across the district.

In March 2022, community members and staff from the Ravenswood district utilized the Our Voice Discovery Tool app to document facilitators and barriers to safely walking and biking to school. Community members from the Ravenswood community used the Our Voice Discovery Tool to complete 19 walks (106 photos and 104 narratives) identifying features of the neighborhood environment that facilitate or hinder active travel to school.

## Community Setting

### Safe Routes to School - San Mateo County Office of Education

The San Mateo Office of Education (SMCOE) Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is modeled after the National Safe Routes to School Program and encourages school children to walk and bike to school. By creating safe routes for children, SRTS aims to:

- Reduce traffic congestion
- lower the number of traffic deaths
- improve air quality
- increase children's physical activity to help reduce obesity and improve overall well-being.

### Ravenswood City School District

Ravenswood City School District serves 1,530 students across all school sites. Of these students, a majority (99%) identify as Latinx, African American, Pacific Islander, and/or multiple races. The four participating schools are listed below; schools in **bold** were the 2 schools specifically chosen for the SMCOE School Travel Fellowship Program:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The School Travel Fellowship was piloted in the 2021-2022 school year, and offered hands-on support to five city/school teams to implement a project to increase walking/biking safety, and encourage more students to walk/bike to school. Project can include: demonstration projects, quick-build plans, walk audits, or other short-term projects meant to increase walking and biking. East Palo Alto and Ravenswood City School District were among the five teams chosen to pilot this program, and their team leveraged the data collected from the Ravenswood City School District Our Voice project, to inform their team's School Travel Fellowship project.

- Belle Haven Elementary School - 478 students in kindergarten - 5th grade
- Costañó Elementary School - 475 students in kindergarten - 5th grade
- **Los Robles-Ronald McNair Academy** - 206 students in kindergarten - 5th grade
- **César Chavez Ravenswood Middle School** - 554 students in 6th - 8th grade

**The EPA-RCSD School Travel Fellowship consisted of a multidisciplinary team and included the following members:**

- Batool Zaro, Assistant Civil Engineer, City of East Palo Alto
- Sonali Suratkar, Community Program Specialist, San Mateo County Health Policy and Planning
- Cindy Chin, Director of Student Services, RCSD
- Gabriel Anguiano Jr., Coordinator of Family & Community Engagement, RCSD
- Christian Sbragia, Youth Commissioner, Cooline Team of East Palo Alto
- Andre-Anne Cadieux, Safe Routes to School Coordinator, City of Menlo Park
- Jeff Poetsch, President, Ravenswood Shores Business District
- Ken Williams, Live in Peace
- Jasmine Law, SMCOE Climate Corps AmeriCorps Fellow


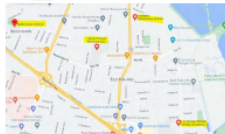
## Our Voice Implementation Steps

**Planning:** The EPA-RCSD team along with SMCOE-SRTS staff and the *Our Voice* team, worked together to plan and implement the project timeline. In recognition of the overlapping geography and demography of the District's four schools, RCSD leadership decided to coordinate orientation, training, and data collection across the entire district.

**Community Outreach and Engagement:** Extensive outreach was conducted in partnership with San Mateo County Health Policy and Planning to reach community leaders and community organizations, city and county departments and elected officials in order to make the process as inclusive as possible. The cross-sector project team undertook a number and variety of outreach activities between mid-March and early May, seeking to orient a wide range of community members to the goals and structure of the project. Outreach activities and materials, which were all available in both English and Spanish, included online orientation and training; district-wide email and newsletter announcements; individual and family outreach at each school site; presentations to school administrators and parent groups; and tabling at the East Palo Alto Farmer's Market. In addition to ensuring that bilingual/bicultural staff were present for all communication and outreach efforts, the project team worked to make the process as equitable and inclusive as possible by providing project tablets (pre-loaded with the Discovery Tool app) for ease of data collection and 24/7 on-call assistance as needed.

Join us for a...  
**Virtual Walk Assessment**  
We need your help to make walking and biking safe around Ravenswood City School District!

Register today using the link below:  
[redcap.link/RavenswoodSRTS](https://redcap.link/RavenswoodSRTS)

Belle Haven Elementary • Los Robles-Ronald McNair Academy  
Costaño Elementary • Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Middle School

**Zoom TRAINING SESSION**  
Tuesday, March 15  
6:00-6:45 PM



**Zoom GROUP DISCUSSION**  
Thursday, April 7  
6:00-7:30 PM

**What's a Walk Assessment?**  
A walk assessment is a community-driven process of making positive changes in your neighborhood to make walking and biking safer, more accessible, and comfortable for everyone! Please JOIN us to brainstorm ways to make the streets around these four Ravenswood schools safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.  
We will partner with Stanford's Our Voice Program and Discovery Tool, to share anonymous feedback about your community.

**Why you should attend...**

- To voice your concerns and share ideas for immediate street improvements.
- Help schools and city staff brainstorm projects that will help make school zones safer for all.
- Learn how to contribute and support these improvements in your community.

**This event is open to all community members!**



Unase a una...  
**AUDITORÍA DE CAMINAR**  
¡Necesitamos su ayuda para hacer que caminar y andar en bicicleta sea más seguro en el Distrito Escolar Ravenswood City School District!

Regístrese hoy en el enlace de abajo:  
[redcap.link/RavenswoodSRTS](https://redcap.link/RavenswoodSRTS)




Belle Haven Elementary • Los Robles-Ronald McNair Academy  
Costaño Elementary • Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Middle School

**Zoom SESIÓN DE ENTRENAMIENTO**  
Martes  
15 de marzo  
6:00-6:45 PM



**Zoom Conversación en Grupo (en inglés y español)**  
Jueves  
7 de abril  
6:00-7:30 PM

**What's a Walk Assessment?**  
Una auditoría de caminar es un proceso comunitario para hacer cambios positivos en la comunidad para hacer que caminar y andar en bicicleta sea más seguro, accesible y cómodo para todos. UNASE a nosotros para pensar en formas de hacer que las calles alrededor de las escuelas de Ravenswood sean más seguras para ciclistas y peatones.  
Venimos a colaborar con el programa Our Voice y Discovery Tool de la Universidad de Stanford para mejorar seguridad en su comunidad.

**¿Por qué debería asistir?**

- Expresa sus preocupaciones y comparte sus ideas para mejorar la seguridad de peatones y ciclistas.
- Ayuda intercambiar ideas sobre proyectos que ayudarán a que la zona escolar sea más segura para todos.
- Aprenda como usted puede ayudar a mejorar su comunidad.

**¡Este evento es para todos los miembros de nuestra comunidad!**



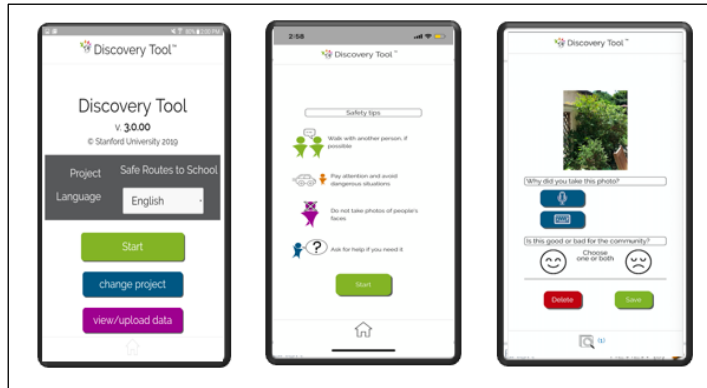
We promptly modified our virtual community data discussion session to in-person engagement based on low registration and important feedback from key community partners. We implemented partner recommendations to engage community members and saw **rich participation from community members**, who appreciated the opportunity to voice their concerns and share ideas to make the neighborhood safer for students. **This method was quite a success as many youth actively participated.**

**Registration:** During outreach activities, community members were invited to register for the project and complete a brief consent form online. All communications about the process, and the forms themselves, were offered in both English and Spanish. While registration remained low despite outreach efforts, the registration process demonstrated diversity of interest in the project. A total of 10 registration responses were completed, including three teachers, two parents, two school staff members, one School Board member, one community member, and one member of the City staff.

In April, as the project moved to direct on-site outreach, the pre-registration step was removed in the hope of decreasing barriers to engagement. As a result, while the total number of photos gathered signals moderate to high community participation, the lack of registration in the later stages of outreach makes it difficult to assess the demographics of the actual data collection. Nonetheless, the steep increase in community participation on-site is worth noting. Posters displaying photos and comments captured via Our Voice app by community members. This became our traveling Data Museum which we used to initiate and guide conversations with community members at every tabling event. Incentives and food and beverages were offered to community members as a token of appreciation for their contribution. School travel fellowship team members were present on-site to note down feedback from community members, walk them through the process, and share ideas on how their input would make a difference in the implementation of the projects, programs, and policies of the SRTS work.

**Data Gathering:** All participants were offered the use of a project device pre-loaded with the *Our Voice* Discovery Tool, a simple multilingual mobile app for gathering geotagged photos, comments and ratings about local environmental factors impacting health. Participants could also choose to use their own smartphone; the app can be downloaded free of charge from either GooglePlay (Android) or the App Store (iOS). Bilingual one-sheet QuickStart Guides were available for those selecting the latter option.

In this project, the Guiding Question for data collection was programmed into the app in both English and Spanish: *“What makes it easy or hard to walk or bike to school?”* (*“¿Qué hace que sea fácil or difícil caminar or ir en bicicleta a la escuela?”*)

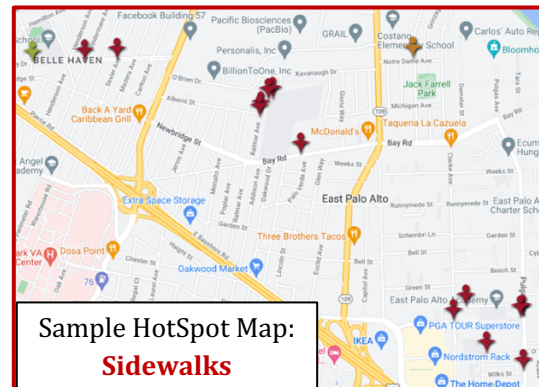
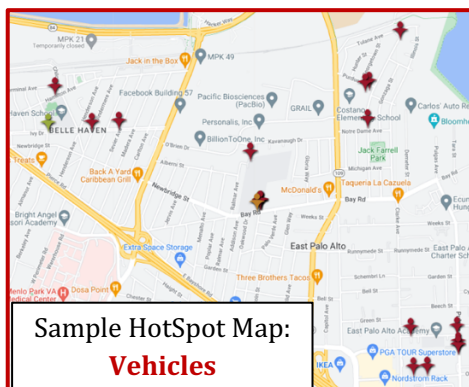


Participants completed a total of **17 Discovery Tool Walks**, comprising **103 photos** and **102 audio or textual narratives**. They also used a tagging function within the app to align the image with one or more of a set of standard SRTS themes. The thematic breakdown was as follows:

Discovery Tool data were tagged and sorted according to the themes below. Some photos were tagged with multiple themes.

Crossings – 35 photos	Bicycles – 9 photos
Vehicles – 24 photos	General Security – 22 photos
Sidewalks – 18 photos	Other – 4 photos
Signs & Lights – 11 photos	

**Data Reports and HotSpot Mapping:** The Stanford Our Voice team created reports for each of the themes, using the tags that participants had designated for each photo. Each themed report included a HotSpot Map showing color-coded location points for each photo: red for areas of concern, green for strengths/assets, and yellow for photos with both positive and negative aspects. The full data report can be found in Appendix A.



## Sample Data from Bilingual Reports

*\*Note: all data are anonymous*




Good or Bad for the Community? +


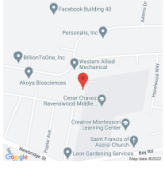
**Why did you take this picture?**

**[text]** :Flexible barriers could be used to create a "protected" bike lane.

Se podrían usar barreras flexibles para crear un carril para bicicletas "protegido".

**Tags:**

Bicycles/Bicicletas

Good or Bad for the Community? -


**Why did you take this picture?**

**[text]** :Gate is all the way open and blocking a gate students could use to walk in. There is a hole in the concrete where the gate peg could go.

La cerca está completamente abierta y bloquea una puerta que los estudiantes podrían usar para entrar. Hay un agujero en el concreto donde podría ir la clavija de la puerta.

**Tags:**

Sidewalks/Banquetas




Good or Bad for the Community? -



**Why did you take this picture?**

**[text]** :Dropping off in the red zone just beyond stop sign

Dejan en la zona roja después de la señal de alto

**Tags:**

Vehicles/Vehículos

Good or Bad for the Community? +

**Why did you take this picture?**

**[text]** :Seen on school fence - more and bigger signage like this needed

Visto en la cerca de la escuela - se necesitan más y más grandes letreros como este

**Tags:**

Signs & Lights/Señales




Good or Bad for the Community? -

**Why did you take this picture?**

**[I-1]** :Trim the tree so that we can see when students are walking into the school.

Recorte el árbol para que podamos ver cuando los estudiantes entran a la escuela.

**Tags:**

General Security/Seguridad General




Good or Bad for the Community? -

**Why did you take this picture?**

**[I-1]** :At this intersection there are five crosswalks. It would be helpful for someone to be here to help guide since at some point there are cars at every single intersection here.

En esta intersección hay cinco pasos de peatones. Sería útil que alguien estuviera aquí para ayudar a guiar, ya que en algún momento hay automóviles en cada intersección aquí.

**Tags:**

Other/Otro | Crossings/Cruces Peatonales | General Security/Seguridad General



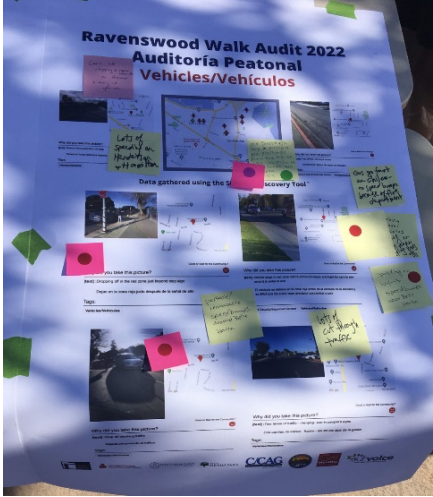
**Community “Data Museums”:** Despite low registration for the project, evidence of significant community interest in the project led to a new approach to engaging community members in using local data to inform local solution-building. Whereas previous SRTS + Our Voice projects engaged data review and action planning through facilitated in-person or virtual meetings, in this case the project team developed a strategy involving a traveling “Data Museum” to bring the collective Discovery Tool data back to the community. This involved creating and displaying bilingual theme-specific data posters during morning drop-off at each of the school sites. In an informal approach, community members were invited for coffee and snacks and encouraged to review the data posters and use sticky notes to provide written comments and ideas for change. The The EPA-RCS D School Travel Fellowship team that included partners from the city of EPA, San Mateo County Health Policy and Planning, and RCS D staff supported the SMC OE SRTS staff to engage with the community and gather their feedback. This information was then transferred to an online whiteboard (“Jamboard”) for processing and reference.

“Data Museum” Location	Approximate number of community members (caregivers/school staff/youth) who approached the “Data Museum” posters and added their comments and ideas for change
Belle Haven	30
Costano	42
Los Robles	33
CCRMS and the Farmers Market	80

**Sample Bilingual Posters Used in the Discovery Tool “Data Museums”**



**Data Museum Events**  
*\*Note: all data are anonymous*



## Community-Generated, Data-Driven Strategies and Solutions for Increasing Walking and Biking in Ravenswood City School District

*Ideas with multiple votes are highlighted.*

### A. Belle Haven Elementary School

#### General Security/Seguridad General

- Need better drop-off system for students. Maybe a crossing guard or someone to direct traffic during drop-off and pick-up
- To help with traffic, encourage parents to drop off students only in designated spots
- Trim trees so that we can see when students are walking into the school
- Monitor [to ensure] that vehicles are not stopping in red zones before the school driveway. These vehicles make it hard to see around to enter or exit.

#### Sidewalks/Banquetas

- Broken sidewalk on Henderson; trees have broken the sidewalk [repair]
- Add bike lanes on Chilco/Ivy
- Enforce helmets for all bike riders

#### Vehicles/Vehiculos

- Enforce and monitor vehicle stopping at stops signs or crosswalks on Alamanor Ave in morning and afternoon
- More P.D. presence at the school...[they] used to park in front of Belle Haven
- Respect the parking [regulations] at the entrance to the school so there is no traffic.
- Add portable/removable speedbumps around Belle Haven to reduce vehicle speeding
  - Henderson and Hamilton
  - Chilco - speed bumps may not be possible because of fire department
  - Ivy
- Monitor for vehicles stopping or dropping off in red zones

#### Crossings/Cruces Peatonales

- Review process for allowing parents to volunteer at school... Parents are afraid to volunteer [as crossing guards]...Uncertainty about fingerprinting process + paying for it
- Monitor drop-off loop to keep people from parking on red (P.D., volunteers, S.D.)
- Add Flashing lights on Chico + Ivy
- Place a crossing guard at Ivy+ Chilco
- Bring back the delineators along Newbridge and others
- Adjust timing of lights on Willow Road to be in pedestrians' favor
- [Post] crossing guard at intersection with five crosswalks to help direct traffic

#### Other/Otro

- Pick up litter in the park on Chilco + Ivy
- Have teachers usher students to car during pickup
- Designate a different pick up location for each grade
- Offer Walkie Talkies to school staff for pick up
- More signage needed to prevent car idling in drop off areas

## **B. Costaño Elementary School**

### General Security/Seguridad General

- Pick up litter near grass, parks, sidewalks
- [Address] Frequent speeding on Fordham
- [Set up] safety patrol for drop off + pick up

### Sidewalks/Banquetas

- Check for parked cars on sidewalks
- Remind parents to arrive early

### Bicycles/Bicicletas

- Add a bike lane(s)
- Add more security and space for bicycles
- Offer free helmets to students and families
- Offer bike reflectors
- [Set up] bendable bollards along Bay Road in front of School
- [Consider] flexible barriers to create a “protected” bike lane

### Vehicles

- Enforce speed limit and stop signs around Costaño.
- Monitor for vehicles that block traffic during drop off

### Crossing/Cruces Peatonales

- Refresh paint in crosswalks across Park / EPA in general
- [Post] crossing guard near Costaño to ensure pedestrian safety
  - Specifically at Fordham + Purdue
- Add crosswalks on Purdue & Fordham
- Add more stop signs
- Add more red lights

### Signs & Lights/Senales

- More RRFB near Jack Farrow Park on Fordham
- [Re-consider] “no left” on Purdue St. from 6AM - 10AM & evening; difficult for parents coming from RWC
- Add flashing lights on crosswalks
- [Add] school crossing sign at crosswalk near school

### Other/otro

- Offer more attention on the playground. Especially with “k” students
- Add stop sign when you exit the school

## C. Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Middle School & EPA Farmers' Market

### General Security/Seguridad General

- **Add Stop lights**
  - [Address overcrowded school buses; need more seating]
  - [Use] area along Bay Rd. as a drop off zone with a school safety patrol

### Sidewalks/Banquetas

- Add sidewalks
  - Especially at Clarke/Pulgas and Pulgas & East Bayshore, Goode x Bayshore
- Improve condition of sidewalks
  - [Repair] cracked sidewalks on Ralmar near Alberni
  - Fill in cracks on roads
  - Make sidewalks wider
  - [Make sure cars don't] park in pedestrian's right of way/hard to walk with stroller

### Bicycles/Bicicletas

- **CCRMS needs a bike lane**
  - [Need] overpass bridge @ corner of Home Depot parking lot.
  - Add a sensor to let drivers know a bike is coming on overpass
  - More bike lights/more bike lanes
  - Use parking ticket for cars parked in places where they shouldn't be
  - [Use] flexible barriers to create a "protected" bike lane at Bay Rd near CCRMS

### Other/otro

- Unlock gate behind college streets on Bay Trail
  - Provide students safe passage to school without vehicular traffic
- [Offer] better food/lockers
- Put in more stop signs
- Need crosswalks of crossing guards to help kids cross
- More trash cans to stop littering
- Add seats on the school bus
- [Provide] more shade in the neighborhood
- Add flexible posts along Bay Rd in front of the school

### Vehicles

- **Reduce vehicle speeding**
  - Add more speed bumps
  - More P.D. enforcement along Pulgas
  - Frequent speeding to get to the bridge on University between Bay Road and Bayshore
  - Add more stop signs
  - Digital school sign could show reminders for drivers to slow down
- Address smoke from sideshows which cause visibility issues

- Remove non-working stationary cars from neighborhood streets
- More safety features to keep cars out of crosswalk
  - Cars park right on corners making it hard to see, ex: Cooley/Woodland
- Promote use of public transit
- [Post] more crossing guards, especially On Bay

#### Crossing/Cruces Peatonales

- Flashing/audio enabled crosswalk lights to let you know when to cross
- More flashing beacons to help students/kids cross safely
  - Runnymede/Garden/Pulgas- Put in flashing crosswalks by Aspire, charters, Kipp Esperanza
  - Garden y Pulgas near Aspire School – Vehicles do not respect pedestrians. Crosswalk is dangerous with no lights
  - Bay St. in front of St. Francis Church needs a light to cross
- More crossing guards
- Make St. Francis a remote student drop off location for families

#### Signs & Lights/Señales

- Add more stop signs and signage for pedestrians (crossings signage)
  - Runnymede/Garden/Pulgas more school zone signs/speed limit
- Improve visibility of signs (stop, speed, etc.) that are covered by tree/bush overgrowth
- Fix street lights that are broken and make them brighter

## **D. Los Robles-Ronald McNair Academy**

### General Security/Seguridad General

- Monitoring kids' sign out sheet when leaving school or program
- Entrance to the school is not clearly marked and could cause accidents

### Sidewalks/Banquetas

- Improve sidewalk conditions by Los Robles
  - Make sidewalks wider
  - Many families use gate [at Los Robles] but no sidewalk for pedestrians - It could have a sidewalk
  - Add a sidewalk on Corner of Beech + Clark so pedestrians do not have to go into the street
- Preschool/Head start campus and driveway entry not clearly marked - It could have a crossing guard

### Bicycles/Bicicletas

- More bike lanes needed

### Vehicles

- Frequent vehicles speeding; add speed bumps (Pulgas Ave, Beech, & Camellia)
- Motorists don't stop at stop signs especially on Clark, Pulgas

### Crossing/Cruces Peatonales

- Needs more properly trained crossing guards on all city major intersections
  - Greene Street crossing guard is ignored by drivers
- Frequent speeding on Pulgas between school & Beech
- Request an officer to monitor Bay Road and Fordham intersections as drivers are not respecting crosswalk with lights
- Improve painting of crosswalks
- Paint all 4 crosswalks on O'Connor St./Pulgas Ave intersection
- Paint crosswalks along Myrtle and Clark

### Signs & Lights/Senales

- Street signs/poles should give more room on sidewalk

### Other/otro

- Clean up trash on streets/sidewalks

## Next Steps

Data and recommendations have been shared with the superintendent of the school district. Follow-up communication will be needed to gain understanding of how walk audit data will be utilized. Project data and recommendations have also been shared with the City of East Palo Alto, and will inform the demonstration/quick-build project that the city will undertake as part of the School Travel Fellowship. The final outcome and overall progress made will be presented by the City to partners at a SMCOE SRTS event in Fall 2022. Interest has been expressed by the City to explore integration of the “Our Voice” approach in future pop-up or demonstration projects as a way to inform development of new permanent infrastructure within the city.

In the future, data and recommendations can be shared at ‘Parent Cafecitos’ to highlight the School Travel Fellowship project. Data specifically from the Belle Haven can be shared with the City of Menlo Park. A second iteration of outreach can also take place to share with community members how changes were made as informed by their recommendations.

Successful collaboration strategy and outreach methodology that was developed during this work can be used for future projects.



**APPENDIX A:**

**Safe Routes to Ravenswood City Schools Full Data Report**

The full data reports from this project can be viewed at

<https://tinyurl.com/RCSD-SRTS-OurVoiceData>