



Creating Safer Streets Near Schools

Prioritizing Health in Transportation

March 2018

Schools in
High Poverty Areas
 with Collisions
 Involving People
 Walking or Biking *

- Woodrow Wilson
- North Star
- Hoover
- Bayshore
- Los Cerritos
- Hawes
- Orion Alternative
- College Park
- Fair Oaks
- Green Oaks
- Belle Haven
- Taft
- Westlake
- Costano
- Brentwood

*1 in 5 collisions that occur within a quarter mile of a public elementary school happened near one of six schools in bold

From reducing traffic to increasing road safety, active transportation investments in our neighborhoods are critical to improving health outcomes. Children are healthier when they have safe active transportation options such as walking or riding their bikes. Addressing the safety of our children is a key strategy in developing long-term habits and a culture of health. Investing in high poverty neighborhoods near the 15 schools identified in this report can advance health and safety in communities that need it most.

The Issue

Traffic collisions are preventable. Equitable transportation investments in street design, traffic calming measures, and programs such as Safe Routes to School ensure that all communities have healthy transportation options.

470

collisions in San Mateo County on average a year involve a person walking or biking. That's more than one collision a day ¹

91%

of youth in a Census tract that includes one of the 15 schools identify as a person of color ²

28%

of victims in a collision involving a person walking and biking near these 15 schools are children ³

The Health Connection

Neighborhood connectivity can have a tremendous health benefit. Increasing opportunities for students to safely walk, bike, and take public transit can reduce traffic, prevent injuries, and improve health.

- Students are more physically active, perform better academically, and are less likely to be injured if they travel in areas that prioritize safe walking and bicycling infrastructure. ^{4, 5, 6}
- Low-income communities and communities of color may have limited options for engaging in physical activity. ⁷
- Safe infrastructure and targeted programming is needed to encourage more students to walk and bike, particularly students and families who experience low levels of physical activity and high levels of obesity and other health issues.
- Investment in infrastructure and programs can reduce injuries or fatalities and create safe and healthy places for everyone to live.



Opportunities and Challenges

All of the 15 priority schools and their related local jurisdictions report on-going efforts to address student safety while walking and biking to school. City and school representatives collectively identified the following opportunities and challenges:

Opportunities

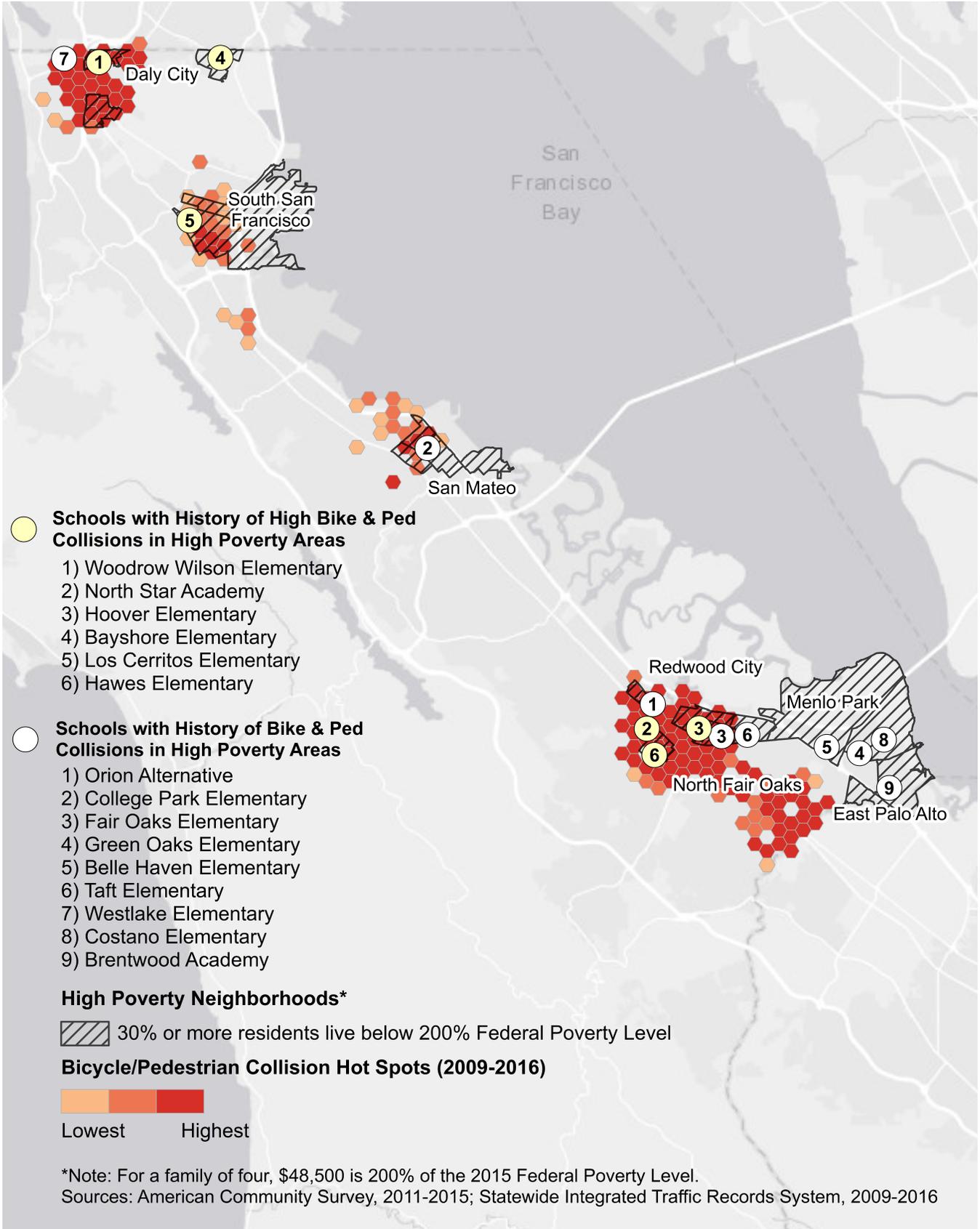
- Expanding safety education programs to address safe walking and biking practices
- Increasing traffic enforcement near schools
- Re-designing school drop-off and pick-up areas to better protect students
- Applying for local grants to improve infrastructure

Challenges

- Limited funding for programming and infrastructure improvements around schools
- Lack of staff resources to address the scale of the issue
- Limited or non-existent coordination between schools and cities
- Insufficient dedicated city staff time to support Safe Routes to School projects

For a detailed description of the study's findings, methodology, and maps, please visit: www.gethealthysmc.org/healthy-transportation-publications

Priority Public Elementary Schools



Safety Tips



Cyclists should yield to people walking, obey all traffic signs and ride with traffic.



Drivers must yield for people crossing the street and share the road with all road users.



Pedestrians should look left, then right, then left again and make eye contact before crossing.

For more safety tips, please visit:
www.smcoe.org/safety-resources

Opportunities for Action

Target Existing Resources

- Prioritize infrastructure improvements for student drop-off and pick-up zones, high-collision intersections, and mid-blocks.
- Implement consistent street design guidelines to accommodate walking, biking and driving.
- Increase knowledge of existing grant opportunities available for transportation safety improvements.
- Improve collaboration across schools, cities, and San Mateo County.
- Prioritize existing funding for schools in high collision and high poverty areas.

Expand Critical Resources

- Increase dedicated Safe Routes to School staff.
- Increase funding for Safe Routes to School.
- Increase technical assistance and grant writing capacity.

Adopt and Enforce Safety Policies

- Adopt and implement a Vision Zero policy, which aims to eliminate traffic fatalities and injuries.
- Increase enforcement of traffic laws near schools.
- Advocate for additional funding for active transportation at the state and regional level.

Citations

- ¹ Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System, 09-16
- ² U.S. Census ACS, 11-15 (Family of 4 <\$48,500/year)
- ³ Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System, 09-16
- ⁴ Policylink. Healthy, Equitable Transportation Policy. Available at: http://www.convergencepartnership.org/sites/default/files/healthtrans_fullbook_final.PDF
- ⁵ Active Living Research (2015). Active Education: Growing Evidence on Physical Activity and Academic Performance. Available at: http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR_Brief_ActiveEducation_Jan2015.pdf
- ⁶ Congress for the New Urbanism. 2010. Why Bike Friendly Places are Safer for All Road Users. Available at https://www.cnu.org/sites/default/files/marshallw_cnu18.pdf
- ⁷ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2008). Where We Live Matters for Our Health: Neighborhoods and Health. Issue Brief 3: Neighborhoods and Health. Available: <http://www.commissiononhealth.org/PDF/888f4a18-eb90-45be-a2f8-159e84a55a4c/Issue%20Brief%203%20Sept%2008%20-%20Neighborhoods%20and%20Health.pdf>



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