

Seattle Department of Transportation

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT



September 2020 to August 2021



Seattle
Department of
Transportation



INTRODUCTION

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national movement to make it easier and safer for students to walk and bike to school. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) use a combination of strategies to improve safety and get more students walking and bicycling to school. The strategies below are based on the national SRTS movement and have been adapted to best fit Seattle's needs.

Education	Ensure that everyone learns how to travel safely
Engineering	Design streets for safety and predictability
Encouragement	Promote walking and biking in the school community
Evaluation	Track progress toward our shared goals
Empowerment	Provide resources to school champions

In 2015, we launched our first ever Safe Routes to School 5 Year Action Plan for Seattle. This is our sixth annual report tracking our progress. We've broken down the report into each of the E's with relevant case studies for each section.

Throughout 2020 and into 2021, staff across SDOT have engaged in conversations around the role of enforcement and policing in transportation. Using a racial equity toolkit framework and led by our Vision Zero team, SDOT is examining the traditional engineering, education, and enforcement approach we've relied on. This provides us with an opportunity to understand how this approach is or isn't advancing Seattle's Vision Zero and Race and Social Justice initiatives. Importantly, it provides an opportunity to adjust the approach to actively



Student patrol funded by Safe Routes to School

advance racial justice. In addition, SDOT's Equity Interdepartmental Team continues to work hand in hand with the Transportation Equity Workgroup comprised of majority Black, Indigenous, People of Color community members to develop recommendations related to safety and transportation justice. Through these discussions, we are beginning to understand and acknowledge the harm that has occurred by way of relying on enforcement and punitive approaches that disproportionately affect BIPOC and low-income community members. Together, we are moving toward a safe systems approach that encompasses a more holistic understanding of what it means to feel safe while traveling on city streets. We no longer recognize enforcement as foundational to the success of our Safe Routes to School program and we have removed the Enforcement E from our program framework.

EDUCATION

WALKING AND BIKING SAFETY EDUCATION

As the COVID-19 pandemic closed schools for in-person learning in the spring of 2020, we worked with Seattle Public Schools to switch the Let's Go program to an online video format with at-home activities associated with them to support continued learning and engagement. They also developed online trainings for professional development with both synchronous and asynchronous content.

Video Production in support and alignment with learning objectives:

1. "Crossing Streets Safely"
 - 1b. "Adapted Pedestrian Safety/Helmet Introduction"
2. "Walk Around the Block"
 - 2b. "Adapted Getting Bike Ready!"
3. "Safe Crossing Choices"
 - 3b. "Adapted Getting on Bikes!"
4. "Helmet Safety"
 - 4b. "Adapted Skills and Drills: Start, Steer, and Stop"
5. "Start with Power, Stop with Control"
 - 5b. "Adapted Opportunities for Continued Riding"

Video production in professional development for teachers and skill development for parents/families:

1. "ABC Quick Check for Kids Bikes"
2. "ABC Quick Check for Adult Bikes"
3. "Tips for Learning to Ride a Bike"
4. "Basic Bike Fit"
5. "Safety Tips for Beginner Bicyclists"

In addition to the online videos, Cascade Bicycle Club also provided in-person direct youth engagement through the Major Taylor program. They developed a relationship with Seattle Parks and Recreation and offered COVID-19 safe youth bike rides in the fall of 2020 and spring of 2021 through the Meadowbrook Teen Hub, Southshore Teen Hub, Magnuson Park Teen Hub, and also through Eckstein Middle School.



Helmet Safety video for online learning at home

ENCOURAGEMENT

COVID RESPONSE GRANTS

We continued to offer our COVID-19 Emergency Response Grant in the fall of 2020. Building upon the existing Mini Grant program, the COVID-19 Emergency Response Grant offered funds to schools, PTAs, and education-focused non-profit organizations to facilitate and incentivize safer and more comfortable walking and biking. While students were no longer attending in person classes, many students still walked and biked daily to lunch pickups at school buildings or around their neighborhoods for exercise and other errands.

The COVID-19 Emergency Response Grant program funded awards of up to \$1,000 to 12 different Seattle schools, PTAs, and educational organizations. These grants funded a variety of supplies and resources for students such as face masks and hand sanitizer, signage for school lunch pickup locations, crossing flags, bike helmets, and gym equipment for P.E. teachers to distribute or loan to students.

MASKS AND HAND SANITIZER

We purchased more than 600 youth and adult sized face masks from two local Women and Minority Business Enterprise vendors to distribute at school lunch pickup sites and other outreach events over the course of the 2020-2021 school year. We also purchased more than 1,000 small bottles of hand sanitizer from a woman-owned business to distribute to students, families, and school staff.

BOOKS

To support students learning at home, we purchased more than 1,200 books from local, independent bookstores to send home to 3rd and 5th grade students at priority schools, including Wing Luke, Emerson, Rising Star, and Bailey Gatzert Elementaries. The books contained themes about walking and biking and exploring your neighborhood and feature characters of color.

SCHOOL VISITS

Because schools were not meeting for in-person learning during the fall of 2020, the Safe Routes to School team tabled at a few school lunch pick-up sites in order to encourage safe walking and biking during the COVID-19 pandemic. We reached out to priority schools that were serving as meal pick-up sites and hosted events at two schools, Lowell Elementary School and Rainier Beach High School. In addition to bottles of hand sanitizer and child and young adult face masks, we also handed out blinking bike lights, coloring books, bike maps, flyers on walking/biking safety, wristbands, temporary tattoos, and stickers.

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES

In August, the Vision Zero team partnered with East African Community Services (EACS) and Superpedestrian to distribute 100 bikes to middle and high school students. The three organizations handed out free bikes and related gear to a pre-selected group of middle and high school youth based primarily in the New Holly community in Rainier Valley and served by East African Community Services. Safe Routes to School funded the related safety gear for 100 youth such as bike helmets, bike locks, and bike lights.



BACK TO SCHOOL EVENTS

Each year we participate in community- and school-hosted Back to School events. This year we supported schools going back to in-person learning in April 2021 rather than the usual fall start of school. We shared information online about driving safety around schools, Stay Healthy Streets near schools, our Mini Grant program, recently completed Safe Routes to School projects, and our new [School Streets](#) program. This information was also shared through local news outlets.

SRTS funded bike helmets, locks, and lights for 100 youth receiving free bicycles through partnership between SDOT Vision Zero, East African Community Services, and Superpedestrian



King 5 News piece on back to school safety

SCHOOL STREETS

When schools returned to in-person learning in the spring of 2021, we launched a new School Streets program to provide space for social distancing and improve safety, air quality, and traffic circulation around schools. Nine schools participated in this opt-in program that shuts down one or two blocks directly adjacent to the school to through traffic and parents and opens them up to families walking, biking, and rolling. We plan to continue this program into the future.



School Streets at Whittier Elementary School

ENGINEERING

ENGINEERING IMPROVEMENTS AROUND SCHOOLS

Between September 2020 and August 2021, we completed engineering projects for 9 high-priority schools. Numbers reference the map of all the school engineering projects.



Crossing improvement at Rainier Ave S and S Rose St for Rainier Beach High School



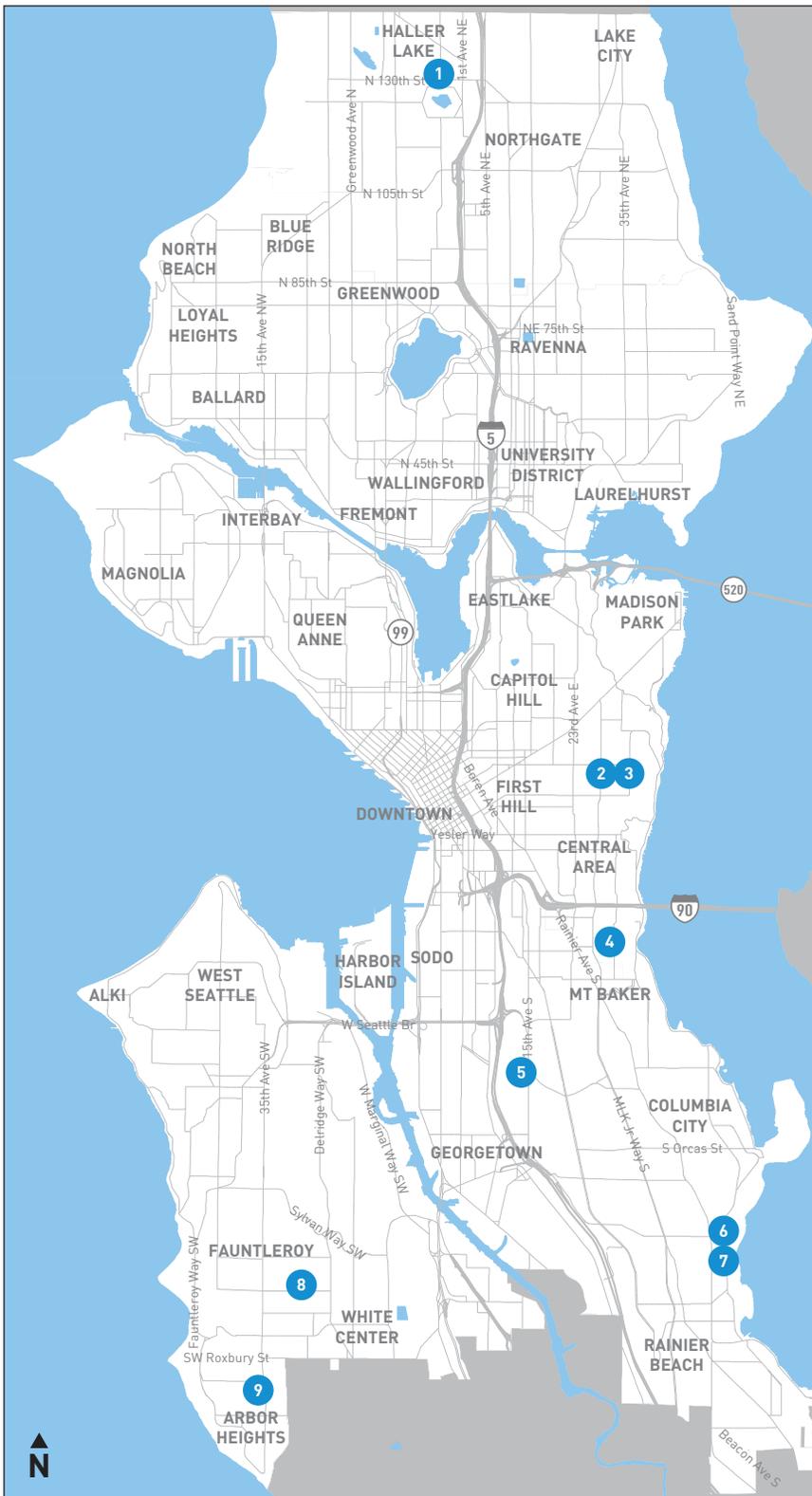
Walkway improvement on Ashworth Ave N for Ingraham High School



Crossing improvement at 31st Ave S and S McClellan St for Franklin High School



15th Ave S and S Columbian Way crossing improvement for Mercer Middle School



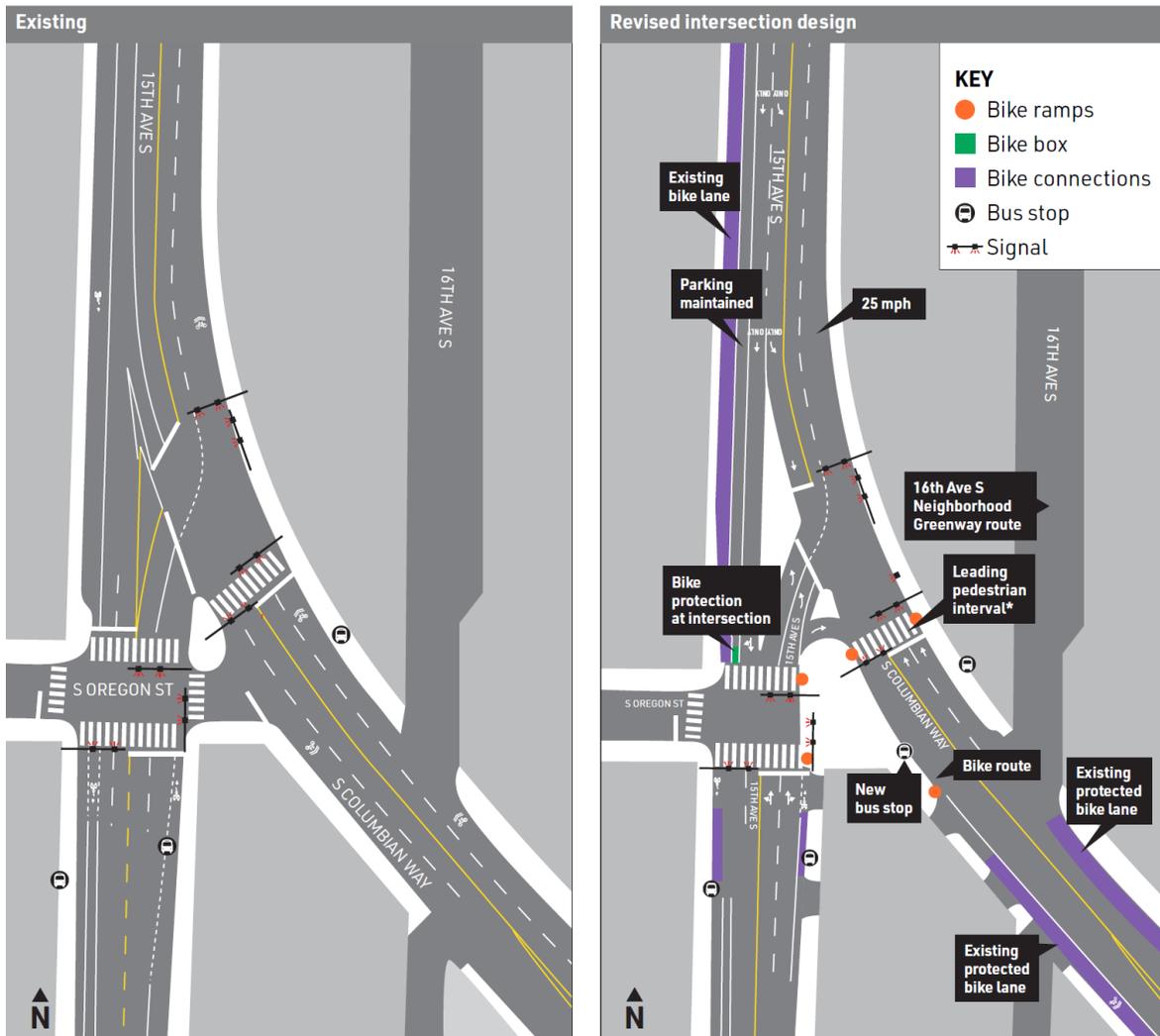
- 1 **Ingraham High School**
Walkway improvement on Ashworth Ave N from N 135th St to N 137th St
- 2 **Garfield High School and**
3 **Leschi Elementary School**
Pedestrian signal at Martin Luther King Jr Way and E Alder St
- 4 **Franklin High School**
Crossing improvement at 31st Ave S and S McClellan St
- 5 **Mercer Middle School**
Crossing improvement at 15th Ave S and S Columbian Way
- 6 **Rainier Beach High School**
7 **Crossing improvement at Rainier Ave S and S Rose St**
Curb ramps on S Kenyon St from Rainier Ave S to 52nd Ave S
- 8 **Chief Sealth High School**
Traffic calming on SW Trenton St
- 9 **Arbor Heights Elementary School**
Speed humps in the school zone

Spotlight: Mercer Middle School

For several years, we heard concerns from Mercer Middle School families and staff about safety in the intersection of 15th Ave S and S Columbian Way for students getting to and from school. We made interim improvements including closing part of the intersection to enlarge the pedestrian island and provide more space for students waiting to cross the street.

We engaged with the Mercer Middle School community, neighbors, and businesses to develop an intersection design that fits the needs of everyone. Based on feedback we heard, we developed a design for the 15th Ave S and S Columbian Way intersection and the project was constructed this year. When Mercer Middle School students return to in-person learning this fall, they will have a safer and more comfortable intersection to travel through on their way to school.

15th Ave S and S Columbian Way intersection improvements



*Leading pedestrian interval gives pedestrians more time to cross before vehicle traffic signals change

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