

# OREGON SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

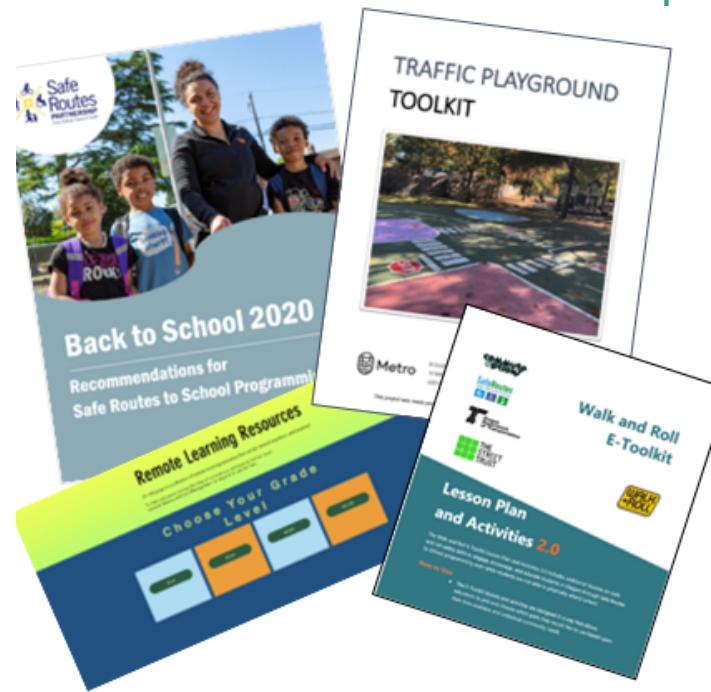
# 2020

## INTRODUCTION

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs aim to create safe, healthy, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to use active transportation for the school commute. These initiatives promote livable and vibrant communities, increase physical activity, and improve unsafe walking, biking, and skating conditions. This includes a commitment to providing safe bicycle and pedestrian construction and reducing crash rates in all communities.

The Oregon Safe Routes to School Network (ORSRTS) was created in 1999 to provide training and resources to schools around the state. The Network's Leadership Committee is a group of Safe Routes practitioners who believe that families deserve safe, accessible and healthy options for their school commute.

Though the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is a Network partner, the views expressed by the Leadership Committee may not reflect the views of ODOT.



## ORSRTS RESPONDS TO COVID PANDEMIC

In March, the COVID-19 pandemic brought the world as we know it to a screeching halt. Schools and businesses, along with nearly everything else, were closed. Families were anxiously waiting to hear if their children would finish the school year at home or return to their buildings. Oregon Safe Routes practitioners were gearing up to host bike and pedestrian education and/or organize Walk+Roll Challenge Month activities.

Next, spring break was extended by a week. Then the Governor's stay-at-home order ended everyone's activity except essential workers. Around the state, SRTS practitioners were responding to the needs of their communities – food distribution, health information dissemination, and activities to keep children moving while being homebound. Practitioners developed virtual May Challenge activities and posted educational materials and links on their websites.

As days turned into months, SRTS staff have been rethinking how they could engage with families and schools. The ORSRTS Leadership Committee hosted online webinars for practitioners to share program ideas they were developing: photo contests, temporary no-contact playspaces, bike education with small groups, and at-home activities for families to stay active.

Safe Routes practitioners continue to seek opportunities to support school communities through a variety of resources.

## BLACK LIVES MATTER AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

In May, George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis by police, sparking a national movement for Black lives and widespread calls for racial justice. The impact of disproportionate police violence on BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities is felt across sectors, Safe Routes to School included. In June, the Safe Routes Partnership removed the Enforcement 'E' from the SRTS framework and replaced it with Engagement. ORSRTS hosted Demi Espinoza from the National Partnership as part of our Annual Meeting Series to discuss this change, and further conversations about how to integrate the new 'E' into local programs are getting started through our regional groups.

## LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE MAKES A STATEMENT

Our work to address racial injustice in Safe Routes to School programming goes beyond changing the 'E's'. In June, the Oregon Safe Routes to School Leadership Committee made a commitment to taking immediate actions to address racism and its impact on our work.

To date, we have:

- Hosted a statewide webinar on the removal of Enforcement as part of the six 'E' framework with the Safe Routes Partnership
- Built up our network of regional groups to support further discussion on the role of enforcement in programs around the state
- Held a virtual 'Leading with Racial Equity' training for transportation professionals, with over 100 participants, and hosted a follow up conversation specifically on Safe Routes to School in July
- Began discussions of how to re-evaluate the structure of the Leadership Committee to create a more inclusive and representative space for the ORSRTS Network

The Leadership Committee will continue to address racial injustice in Oregon Safe Routes programming.



## SUPPORTING OREGON SRTS THROUGH REGIONAL GROUPS

In previous years at the ORSRTS Annual Meetings, participants voiced that they would like more opportunities to network with peers. In 2020, the Leadership Committee (LC) decided to organize SRTS regional groups. The purpose of the regional groups was to give space for SRTS practitioners to join their regional peers and support each other. Groups could brainstorm around activities, discuss pertinent topics to their region, watch and debrief webinars, share program resources, or just bounce ideas off each other. Also, ODOT could seek feedback from regional groups on support needs or statewide program ideas.

During the summer, the LC sent out a survey asking practitioners if they were interested in forming these regional groups. The response was a resounding YES! As part of the survey, practitioners could also volunteer to lead their region's group. We had 10 people volunteer to be leads.

Today we have groups in: Northern Oregon, Central Oregon, Eastern Oregon, Portland Metro Region, Salem Area, and Willamette Valley. We are still looking to form groups in the Coast and Mt. Hood & Columbia River Gorge regions. Since some of the regions only have one SRTS practitioner we have connected practitioners from the smaller groups until more people working on SRTS are able to join those areas. If you are interested in joining your regional group, please email [oregonsrts@gmail.com](mailto:oregonsrts@gmail.com).

The LC will continue to communicate with regional group members to see how we can help strengthen SRTS statewide.

## ANNUAL MEETING PIVOTS TO VIRTUAL SERIES

In August we held our Annual Meeting, turning a one-day meeting into a three-day virtual series!

We kicked off the series with a conversation with Demi Espinoza of the Safe Routes Partnership on the transition of the Enforcement 'E' to Engagement as part of the national SRTS framework recommendation. Demi gave background information on the Partnership's decision to make this transition, and examples on how to approach traffic safety without police enforcement.

Next, we heard from practitioners from around the state on their approaches to Back to School given the various scenarios in which school may return - virtual, hybrid, or in-person. As we headed into the beginning of the year, nearly the whole state stayed fully virtual.

We spent our final meeting prioritizing networking amongst attendees to discuss needs and opportunities for encouragement activities in the fall, as well as general school engagement.

Watch the [recordings of each meeting here](#), plus access the presenters' resources and notes from the break-out groups.

## ORSRTS LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Janis McDonald, Co-Chair, Portland Bureau of Transportation

Noel Mickelberry, Co-Chair, Metro

Hannah Day-Kapell, Alta Planning + Design

Lindsay Huber, The Street Trust

Sarah Mazze, Eugene School District 4J

Brian Potwin, Commute Options

## ODOT PARTNERS

LeeAnne Ferguson, SRTS Infrastructure Manager

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