

OREGON SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL
PROGRAM REPORT



Oregon Department of Transportation
Safe Routes to School



ALTA • COMMUTE OPTIONS • CYCLE OREGON • THE STREET TRUST

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Alta Planning + Design

Commute Options

The Street Trust

Cycle Oregon

Learn more about the Oregon Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School Program at:
www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Programs/Pages/SRTS.aspx and
<https://www.oregonsaferoutes.org/>

Front cover photo: ODOT
Back cover photo: Commute Options



Introduction

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) advances students' options to bike, walk, and roll to school by supporting safety-oriented programs and infrastructure.

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) SRTS Team leads the statewide SRTS efforts in Oregon. In 2023, schools and communities worked hard to increase their capacity and innovate. The statewide offerings continued to evolve on both the Education and Construction sides of the program. This report is a summary of the statewide ODOT SRTS program throughout 2023. Key highlights include:

- **723 schools** ordered incentives to promote walking and biking 
- **29 Regional Hub meetings** brought SRTS practitioners together 
- **10 statewide webinars** offered training for SRTS practitioners
- **4 quarterly statewide meetings** brought the community together
- **4,652,491 people reached** through social media ads 
- **74 safety ads** placed on buses and transit stops
- **9 Jump Start bicycle and pedestrian** safety education Train-the-Trainer sessions held 
- **12 SRTS Plans completed**
- **3 SRTS Coalitions formed** with Education Grant recipients
- **5 SRTS construction projects completed** 
- **26 SRTS construction projects funded**
- **150 SRTS Activity Kits awarded**



At the end of 2022, Hub members provided feedback about what they want from the statewide program in the next year through the End of Year Hub Survey. ODOT SRTS took the following measures in 2023 to implement what Hub members asked for:

- **Additional resources and training** around first aid and liability
- **Equity-focused virtual workshops** 
- **More in-person opportunities** to connect across all Hubs
- **Hand stamps and additional reflective items** as new incentives
- **Additional resources** to improve school circulation
- **Fresh and creative ideas** for social media 

Education Program

Regional Hubs

The Regional Hubs continue to meet monthly as a space for coordinators to share ideas, challenges, and successes and to learn more about statewide program offerings. In April, all Hubs had the opportunity to come together for the first in-person Annual Meeting since 2019! The success of the Annual Meeting paved the way for another in-person all-Hub meeting in October in Salem.

New and Refreshed Resources

ACTIVITY KITS

ODOT SRTS also launched the SRTS Activity Kit program for schools, municipalities, and coordinators to order physical materials for program implementation. These kits include materials for the following programs:

- Bike buses
- Walking school buses
- Circulation planning
- Crossing guards

In all, 150 kits were awarded to communities across the state to sustain existing SRTS activities and start new ones!

INCENTIVES

The following new incentives were available to coordinators in 2023 to support Walk+Roll events:

- Shoe wings
- Sticker books
- Hand stamps
- Event-specific stickers



SRTS practitioners gather for the 2023 Annual Meeting in Portland.

OUTREACH MATERIALS

ODOT SRTS updated many resources to include relevant, fresh graphics and flyers for schools and coordinators across the state to use to plan Walk+Roll events. New outreach materials include:

- Strider and Viv seasonal graphics
- Social media campaigns and images for seasonal safety messages
- Bicycle safety activity book
- Pedestrian safety activity book
- Helmet fitting brochure





Corvallis teachers and volunteers participate in pedestrian safety training.

Training

WEBINARS

Webinars are an opportunity for training and learning best practices of SRTS programming. The topics in 2023 were chosen based on requests from Hub members and included:

- School circulation planning
- School streets
- Crossing guards
- SRTS abroad
- Supporting LBGTQIA2S+ youth
- Back to school with ODOT and Oregon Department of Education
- Liability and first aid in SRTS
- High school engagement
- Adaptive PE panel

DISABILITY JUSTICE AND ACCESSIBILITY

The YWCA provided a Disability Justice and Accessibility half-day training, which was an opportunity to go in depth on the topic of accessibility and how to integrate new ways of thinking about accessibility into local programs. Coordinators were given opportunities through the Hubs to prepare for the training and to debrief afterward to discuss how to integrate what they learned into the work they are doing.



JUMP START TRAIN-THE-TRAINER: FULL PROGRAM LAUNCH!

This year marked the full launch of the Jump Start train-the-trainer program for getting bicycle and pedestrian safety education into schools across the state. Highlights include:



9 bicycle and pedestrian safety education training sessions provided to 83 total educators



Development of Jump Start logo for bicycle trailers and other branded materials



Bicycle education implemented in 20 schools serving 2,300 students



Improved pedestrian safety kits and the addition of 1 more kit per Regional Hub



8 bicycle rodeo events across the state attended by ODOT SRTS



New bicycles added to the fleet, now totaling 5 trailers and 200 bikes



Publication of bicycle and pedestrian Jump Start curriculum for PE teachers and bicycle and pedestrian education Drill Guides



Corvallis School District teachers and volunteers participate in Jump Start training.



Bike trailer branded with program logos.

Jump Start Spreads Statewide!



Education Grantees

ODOT SRTS continued to work with five Tier One Education grantees that received funding in 2022 for a SRTS coordinator position: Portland Public Schools, City of Hood River, bike works by pear, Lane Council of Governments, and North Wasco School District. These grantees have worked to get their new SRTS programs off the ground, and in 2023 they completed:

- 4 Implementation Strategy documents guiding program activities, priorities, and timelines
- 4 SRTS Coalition groups who each met 4 times to support the coordinator in getting started

While the first year of Tier One grants is complete, ODOT SRTS is continuing support into the second year of the grant (2023–2024) to help coordinators track their work and bring the SRTS Coalitions together to collaborate. We look forward to seeing these new coordinators continue to grow!

High School SRTS

Now that SRTS funds are available for all students—kindergarten through 12th grade—there is an opportunity to design programs specifically for high school students. In 2023, ODOT SRTS began conversations about how to deliver and support high school programming. ODOT SRTS met with the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) to learn more about their Transportation Academy program in Parkrose High School, and facilitated a workshop for high school students related to SRTS as part of the Summer Transportation Camp at the Transportation Research and Education Center (TREC). This workshop provided ODOT SRTS with information about what high school students know and want to know about transportation to inform a future statewide high school SRTS program.

Construction Program

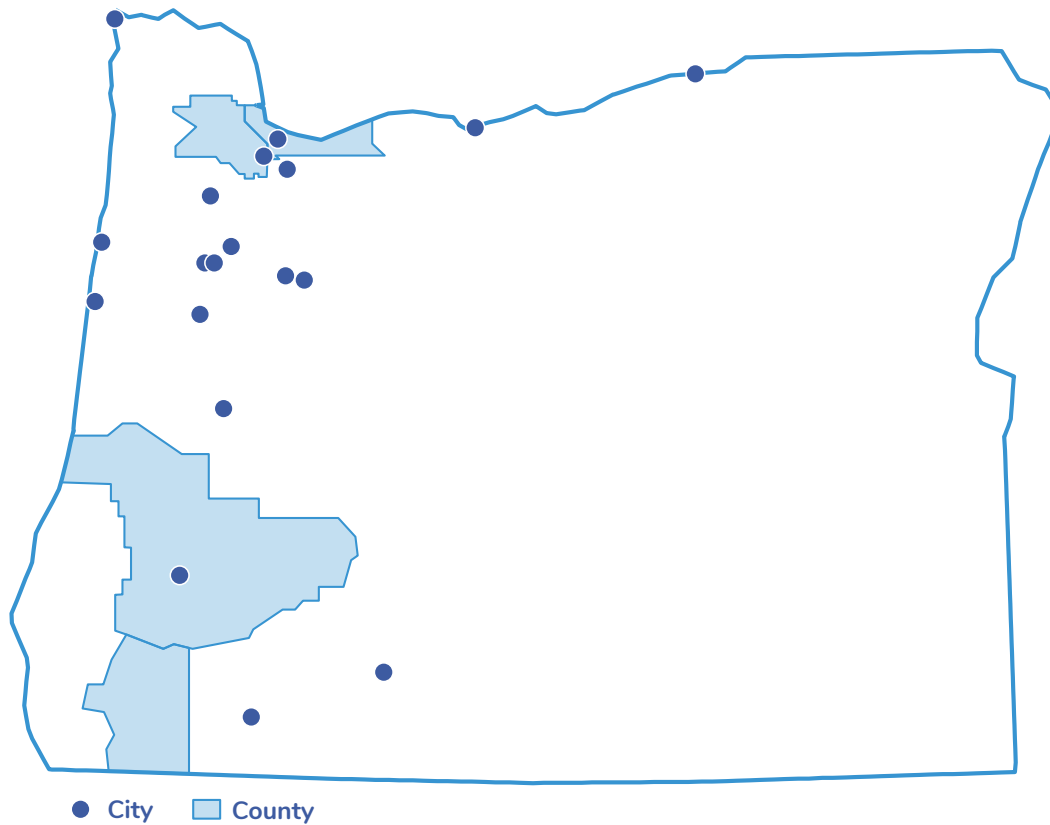
Welcoming Xiao!

In February, Xiao Posadas became the new Safe Routes to School Construction Program Manager at ODOT. Xiao is by no means new to the SRTS world! Before joining ODOT, she worked as an AmeriCorps SRTS Program Coordinator in East Multnomah County and as a Safe Routes to School Coordinator with PBOT. She is now using her Safe Routes experience to lead the Construction Program. Xiao brings new energy and expertise from past efforts to the role—including Puppy Walks to School, Hmong embroidery reflective art, Transportation Academy in partnership with Biketown, and high school focus groups—and looks forward to her future leadership of the Construction Grant program and her continuing efforts to improve safety and equity outcomes for Oregon students.



ODOT SRTS Program Managers, Heidi Manlove and Xiao Posadas, with one of the bike fleets.

Construction Grant Funding



This year saw 26 Safe Routes to School projects funded in 24 communities across the state:

- City of Chiloquin
- City of Corvallis
- City of Eugene
- City of Independence
- City of Irrigon
- City of Lincoln City
- City of Lyons
- City of McMinnville
- City of Medford
- City of Merrill
- City of Mill City
- City of Monmouth
- City of Newport
- City of Oregon City
- City of Portland
- City of Salem
- City of The Dalles
- City of Tigard
- City of Warrenton
- City of Winston
- Douglas County
- Josephine County
- Multnomah County
- Washington County



In total, the program funded \$32.4 million in projects, including adding and improving streetlights, school signage, sidewalks, crosswalks, separated bike lanes, and flashing beacons. This year's projects focus on under-resourced neighborhoods, with all awards going to Title 1 schools (where 40% or more of the student population is low income).

Completed Projects

This year also marked the completion of construction projects in the following four communities:

- City of Albany
- City of Gervais
- Clackamas County
- City of Dayton

PROJECT CHALLENGES

The biggest challenge to delivering these projects was elevated project costs, sometimes two to three times over original project estimates. Construction projects are still feeling the impacts of COVID-19 and the resulting inflated costs. Projects in rural areas also continue to see high mobilization costs. These are some of the most common reasons ODOT has heard from grantees when they reach out for support and project scope reductions or milestone extensions.

EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY

To account for these elevated project costs, for the 2024–2025 Construction Program, ODOT SRTS has proposed an option for the Oregon Transportation Commission to reduce the cash match requirement below 20% in addition to raising the grant maximum award to \$3 million.

The Construction Program is expanding its reach in another way: In the past, to be eligible, projects needed to be within one mile of a public school. Starting with the 2024 grant cycle, projects may be up to two miles from a public school. This means more schools will be eligible and new types of projects can be funded, such as Safe Routes to Bus Stops.



City of Albany completed SRTS construction project.



City of Dayton completed SRTS construction project.



City of Gervais completed SRTS construction project.

Planning Assistance

Through the Planning Assistance program, ODOT SRTS partners with representatives from cities, school districts, and local road authorities to identify and address barriers to students walking, biking, and using shared transportation to get to school. The outcome of each Planning Assistance process is a community SRTS Plan that outlines recommendations for construction projects, programs, and policies. This Plan also provides cost estimates and demographic data to equip communities to confidently and competitively apply for the ODOT SRTS Construction Grants.

In 2023, during local site visits, communities participated in walk audits to assess challenges, as well as a community meeting where members of the public shared their observations and feedback. Twelve communities in Oregon completed SRTS Plans as part of this program.

REGION 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

ODOT SRTS completed a targeted SRTS Planning Assistance program with ODOT Region 1 to develop construction recommendations on ODOT roadways for priority locations. (ODOT Regions 2, 3, 4 and 5 were completed in 2022.) The four selected Region 1 locations are all within a quarter mile of a Title 1 school:

- Highway 30 near James John Elementary School, Portland
- Highway 30 near Woodlawn Elementary School, Portland
- Highway 141 and Highway 217 near Metzger Elementary, Tigard
- Highway 281 near Parkdale Elementary, Parkdale, Hood River County

This collaborative process, which included Project Management Teams made up of city, school, and ODOT representatives, resulted in a list of recommendations to increase safe and comfortable routes for students that will inform future project prioritization and funding.

Planning Assistance Spotlight: City of Creswell



The City of Creswell worked with the Planning Assistance program to redesign the street adjacent to their elementary school as a safe and comfortable place for families to walk and bike. This plan included using traffic calming to slow vehicle speeds, adding and improving crossings, and organizing a walking school bus from a drop-off point at a neighborhood park. The City plans to apply for ODOT Construction funding in 2024.





Quick Build completed project in Sweet Home.

SRTS Construction Technical Assistance Pilot Programs

The Quick Build program installs interim infrastructure safety improvements near schools in Oregon. The improvements are low cost and do not require excavation. Potential quick build projects include crosswalks, stop bars, and painted curb extensions. Four communities in rural Oregon—Cave Junction, Mt. Angel, Sweet Home, and Cove—participated in the 2023 pilot program. The photos below show the infrastructure improvements installed as part of this pilot.

ADDITIONAL ENGINEERING

The Additional Engineering pilot program bridged Planning Assistance to the Construction Grant process through assistance with design work and implementation of lower-cost improvements. The program prepares rural and small communities in readiness for Competitive Construction Grants and other sources of funding for active transportation projects. Select communities participated in the pilot phase, and in 2024 this support will be available to all communities who have gone through Planning Assistance.



Quick Build completed project in Cove.



Quick Build completed project in Mt. Angel.

SRAC Site Visit Spotlight



Safe Routes Advisory Committee gathers for in-person site visit to bike works by pear.

In October, the Safe Routes Advisory Committee (SRAC) participated in a visit to bike works by p:ear to learn about the East Multnomah County SRTS program run in partnership with bike works by p:ear, Multnomah County, and the Cities of Gresham and Portland. This region is one of the highest need areas of the state, so it was an important community for SRAC members to visit and see the impact education programs can have. Attendees learned about the wider context of SRTS education programming, how it's implemented in East Multnomah County, and the many challenges the County faces." "The attendees also saw demonstrations of pedestrian and bike safety education as well as a new traffic playground.

Many SRAC members come from outside the SRTS education world, so this meeting gave them the chance to connect with SRTS coordinators and learn about the on-the-ground work they do, which will help inform their funding decisions in the future.

Additional SRAC changes in 2023 include the formation of a technical work group, which advises on specific funding and program implementation issues, and the introduction of high school SRAC members to represent the youth perspective.

Coming Up in 2024

High School SRTS

SRTS in Oregon now includes high schools! In the next year, ODOT SRTS will launch a high school SRTS program that will include leadership programs, collaboration with other practitioners and student groups, and partnerships with organizations across the state that work with teens. Want to get involved or make a suggestion for this new program? Contact us at Info@OregonSafeRoutes.Org.



High school students in Salem support Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day event

2024 Grant Cycle, including NEW Construction Technical Assistance

Grant applications will be open from February 12th–March 25th. The Construction Grants will once again be phased, with Phase 1 consisting of a Letter of Interest and applicants can decide based on their score whether they want to submit Phase 2 of the application. Education Grants will again have three tiers, based on the applicant's prior experience delivering SRTS Education programming.

In addition, communities will now be able to apply for Construction Technical Assistance through the following programs:

- **Planning Assistance** to identify projects at one or more schools in a community
- **Engineering Assistance** to further develop projects and provide grant-ready designs
- **Surface Treatments**, which will implement low-cost and no-dig improvements previously identified in Planning documents

Information will be online at OregonSafeRoutes.Org and provided through webinars and Hub meetings.



Oregon students crossing the street.

Updated Resources for 2024



MORE ACTIVITY KITS:

Next fall, communities will be invited to apply for SRTS Activity Kits. Coordinators, schools, and municipalities will be able to order kits to support their local bike buses, walking school buses, and crossing guard programs, and improve circulation challenges. Feedback from the first round of this program in 2023 will be integrated into the 2024 process.



MORE EQUITY TRAININGS:

ODOT SRTS looks forward to offering additional equity trainings by partnering with social justice facilitators to create opportunities for coordinators to deepen their reflection on the design and impacts of their programs. Coordinators should contact their Hub leads if there are specific equity topics they want to see reflected in upcoming training and workshops.



NEW TOOLKITS:

The following toolkits will be available: Bike Bus, Walking School Bus, Park and Walk, and Circulation Planning. These digital kits will offer resources for getting started, gathering volunteers, and getting the word out about activities. Coordinators may request hard copies at any time.



MORE BIKES AND TRAILERS:

New grants will fund the addition of more bike fleets and trailers for the Jump Start program.

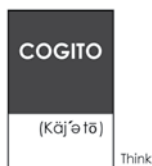


YEAR-ROUND ENGAGEMENT MATERIALS—WITH TRANSLATIONS:

Additional outreach materials including flyers and social media graphics will be available. A whole new batch of materials will be translated into Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and Chinese. If you have specific materials you would like translated, please reach out to your Hub lead or email Info@OregonSafeRoutes.Org.



Thank you to our ODOT SRTS Team!



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