New Safe Routes Report Released

Get Healthy San Mateo County, a local collaborative working towards positive health outcomes through policy changes, has released a long awaited report regarding safe routes near schools. The report, Creating Safer Streets Near Schools - Prioritizing Health in Transportation, looked at elementary schools located in census tracts with high rates of poverty and that were also located within 1/4 mile of streets with high rates of bicycle and pedestrian collisions. In combining this information, Get Healthy San Mateo County found 90 schools in the county that fit the criteria and narrowed this list down to fifteen elementary schools that are deemed "high-priority." Thirty percent of all bike/pedestrian collisions in the county occur near these schools, and twenty percent of all collisions occur near the top six schools. Of the fifteen high-priority schools, six are located in the Redwood City School District (Hoover, North Star, Hawes, Orion, Fair Oaks, and Taft) and three RCSD schools are in the top 6 (Hoover, North Star, and Hawes). These are compelling data that reinforce the need for the Redwood City 2020 Safe Routes to School program in the Redwood City School District.

Infrastructure Grant Awarded!

Safe Routes to School partners are collaborating to both identify unsafe locations on our community's streets and implement long-term solutions that enhance our infrastructure for the better. One major tool generated by Safe Routes to School partners is a walk audit. A walk audit is a report drafted in collaboration with professional
engineers, community stakeholders, school partners, and families. These reports help identify and prioritize improvements needed near schools and catalyze the advancement of these improvements. The audits in turn help projects garner funding from a variety of local and regional sources that add to existing infrastructure funds set aside by city and county partners.

An example of the leverage generated by this collaboration and of the walk audits is a recently awarded grant to the City of Redwood City for $375,000 to improve the intersection of Cleveland Street and Jefferson Avenue near the North Star/McKinley campus. Addressed in a 2014 Redwood City 2020 Safe Routes to School Walk Audit, this intersection is a major school crossing and is identified by school staff, parents/caregivers, and crossing guards as one of the most difficult intersections in the city to cross. Including infrastructure grants that were awarded earlier this year for projects near Fair Oaks and Taft community schools, projects around RCSD schools have received $875,000 in infrastructure grant funds this fiscal year. In addition to matching funds from the city and the county, nearly $1 million dollars has been secured for safer streets near our schools this year. Improving infrastructure and building safer streets truly requires a collaborative effort.