The Transportation Authority of Marin recently released the 2011 Evaluation Report of Marin County’s Safe Routes to Schools program, looking back on its ten-year history. The report shows that SR2S continues to make a significant impact across the county, reducing car trips to and from schools and making a safer environment for all. Some of the key findings include:

- In 2000, nine schools participated in Safe Routes to Schools; today, 52 schools participate, representing more than 23,500 students.
- Since the program began, there has been an eight percent mode shift countywide from single-student car trips to walking, bicycling, riding a bus or carpooling to/from schools.
- Twenty-one schools have exceeded the countywide average since joining SR2S. Old Mill and Tam Valley elementary schools in Mill Valley and Bacich Elementary in Kentfield, for example, have increased the numbers of green trips to/from their schools by over 20 percent.

[Continued on Page 2]

Green Ways 2011 Award Winners

The Green Ways to School Campaign, which was funded by a two-year grant from the Marin Community Foundation, showed tremendous success in encouraging schools to increase their efforts to promote green trips by foot, bike, carpool or bus. Using contests and challenges with an ecological focus, the campaign has touched on Marin’s environmental ethics to encourage parents to switch to greener modes of transportation. In the two years of the program, the
According to the most recent parent survey, over 25 percent of families changed their travel mode because of SR2S.

Launched in 2009, the Green Ways to School Campaign proved a success. From its 2009 launch through Spring 2011, schools overall had a four percent increase in green trips to school, but schools participating in the Green Ways to School Programs had an increase of six percent.

Over 100 Safe Routes to Schools infrastructure projects, totaling more than $17 million, have been constructed or are currently in design stages.

Nearly 2000 families have enrolled in SchoolPool Marin or taken the Green Ways to School pledge, representing 71 schools across the county.

Street Smarts Marin was pilot-tested in 2008 in three communities. The program has now been expanded into ten out of the 12 jurisdictions in the county.

Marin’s Crossing Guard program currently deploys trained school-crossing guards at over 75 locations throughout the county.
Looking to the Future

To strengthen the relevance and long-term impacts of its program, Marin SR2S is constantly evolving and developing new ideas, and will need to continue to do so going forward. With that in mind, the Evaluation Report lists the following recommendations, intended to improve the effectiveness of the existing program, setting it up for even greater success in future years:

1. **Develop a Strategic Plan.** An overall Strategic Plan would establish an overarching vision for Marin’s Safe Routes to Schools, providing a decision-making framework that includes goals, prioritization of programs, and allocation of resources.

2. **Establish Institutional Support.** The institutionalization of SR2S at multiple levels—County, City, and school district—will ensure consistent participation among SR2S schools, while establishing it as one of the county’s top priorities.

3. **Identify and Prioritize Infrastructure Needs for Schools in Unincorporated Marin.** To further support SR2S-related requests from schools in unincorporated areas of the county, TAM would assist the County’s Public Works Department in identifying needs, setting priorities for them, and identifying potential funding sources.

4. **Expand to Other Schools.** SR2S staff will continue to find ways to extend its reach to include more middle, high, and private schools into the program.

5. **Offer New Tools.** The program will continue to develop new and innovative tools, such as social media, to further the effectiveness of the program.

6. **Participate in a Regional Clearinghouse.** A gathering of the region’s SR2S leaders in a regional clearinghouse would be a valuable opportunity for transferring knowledge among jurisdictions.

7. **Continually Evaluate the Program.** Continuously evaluating SR2S’s individual programs allows staff to review and improve existing programs, while developing new ones.

8. **Establish Sustainable Funding.** While Measure A continues to be a sustainable funding source for SR2S, outside financial support is critical to the program’s long-term success.

9. **Expand Street Smarts.** Future goals for Street Smarts include expanding the program to all parts of Marin County. SR2S will also explore additional educational and outreach tools.
schools that participated in the Green Ways to School contest showed a 6% increase in green trips. Even more significant was the number of schools in the program that demonstrated an even higher rate of increase than the average for all schools:

- 19 schools (61% of the total number of schools) +5%
- 13 schools (42% of the total number of schools) +7%
- 8 schools (25% of the total number of schools) +10%

In addition to the contests within schools, an interschool challenge rewarded schools that showed outstanding achievement.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2011 GREEN WAYS WINNERS

FIRST PLACE $2000 Green Ways to School
Edna Maguire Elementary School

SECOND PLACE $750 Green Ways to School
Rancho Elementary School

FIRST PLACE $1000 Program Achievement Award
Bacich Elementary School

SECOND PLACE $500 SchoolPool Award
Park Elementary School

Learn & Earn Bicycles at Davidson Bike Club

The idea for the bike club started with the Physical Education staff at Davidson. Longtime proponents of the Safe Routes bike safety training courses, the five PE teachers each have a positive relationship with bicycling, from triathlons to commuting. They recognize the long-term health benefits cycling can provide. Davidson PE teacher Eugene Lang commented, “If they had a bike club when I was a kid, I would have joined it.”

Thinking about my own biking experience growing up—crashing, breaking parts, clueless about traffic laws—I’m glad the members of the Davidson Bike Club won’t need to take the long and bumpy road to cycling proficiency. For them the ride can be as smooth as a freshly laid bike path.

The Davidson Bike Club is provided by Safe Routes to Schools free of charge thanks to a grant from Kaiser Permanente’s Community Grants program.

– James Sievart, SR2S Instructor

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
www.DavidsonBikeClub.com
www.saferoutestoschools.org
www.tripsforkids.org/marin
info.kp.org/communitybenefit

Edna Maguire Principal Lisa Zimmer celebrates Green Ways award with Deborah Cole. Photo provided by Deborah Cole.

Davidson Students take a trip through the Cal Park Tunnel. Photo by Peter Oppenheimer.
Mill Valley School District Adopts Policy on Safe Routes to Schools

The Mill Valley School District adopted a new policy at its regular meeting on January 3, 2012, codifying the Safe Routes to Schools program in Mill Valley schools. This is the first school district in the nation to adopt a comprehensive policy supporting Safe Routes to Schools programs.

“The Governing Board recognizes that walking, bicycling, and other forms of active transport to school promote students’ physical activity and reduce vehicle traffic and air pollution in the vicinity of schools,” reads the policy. “As part of the district’s coordinated approach to supporting student wellness and safety and enhancing student learning, the Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement strategies to establish and promote Safe Routes to School program activities.”

The policy, which is broken into board policies and administrative policies, will ensure that the Safe Routes to Schools activities are recognized as district policy regardless of staff and parent turnover. This includes identifying school site volunteers and teams, participation in the Mill Valley Safe Routes to Schools Task Force, participation in evaluation surveys and continuing the traffic-safety classes at the schools.

The District will promote walking, biking and carpooling to school and will strive to assign students to the closest school to their home, whenever possible, and in accordance with the District’s student placement procedures.

The policy stresses the need for safety and personal responsibility, encouraging staff and parents to be good role models in obeying all traffic laws.

Board Member Raoul Wertz wrote the policy in cooperation with councilmember and SR2S Task Force chair Stephanie Moulton-Peters and staff from the Transportation Authority of Marin’s Safe Routes to Schools program.

“I was pleased to introduce this important policy in order to promote healthy lifestyles, reduce pollution and reduce traffic on our roads,” said Wertz. “The new policy underscores and formalizes the Mill Valley School District’s recognition of the long-standing support our six schools and wider community have shown over many years to creating safer bike and pedestrian access to and around our schools. We’re fortunate to have a strong relationship with our city and county government to share common interests related to non-motorized infrastructure, education and enforcement.”
In Fall 2011, the Kentfield Safe Routes to School Task Force launched an ambitious new neighborhood-focused initiative called the Kentfield Schools Student Travel Program (STP). The program’s goal is to significantly increase the number of families who make green trips to school, while addressing traffic congestion and safety. Each family in the district has been assigned to one of six identified neighborhoods, which are led by volunteer parents called Neighborhood Captains. The captains help to coordinate SchoolPools of walkers, bikers or carpoolers, provide neighborhood-specific information via email and also advocate for safety concerns on behalf of the families in their neighborhood.

Parent volunteer Heather McPhail Sridharan serves as the Neighborhood Captain Coordinator within the Safe Routes to School Task Force. As a mom to four young children, Heather felt particularly vested in improving the safety and sense of community in her neighborhood and school. “I became involved with the Kentfield Safe Routes to Schools Task Force last year,” she said, “since I was worried about the safety of my daughter while walking her to preschool.”

Early Results
To date, the Kentfield school community has given an enthusiastic reception to the new Student Travel Program. In October 2011, Bacich Elementary and Kent Middle Schools celebrated International Walk & Roll to School Day. It was a huge success, with almost 90% of the students participating at Bacich and just over 60% participating at Kent.

Given the positive momentum from International Walk and Roll to School Day, the Kentfield School’s STP launched “Green Wednesdays” to encourage kids and parents to travel green to school on Wednesdays throughout the year. They also did a successful Holiday Go Green event, for which kids and parents dressed in festive attire while traveling green to school.

Keys to Success
The parent community has enthusiastically embraced the new neighborhood-focused program and actively participates in it with their children. But apart from the strong parent endorsement, the success of the program has three main drivers:

1. The dedication and organization of the parent volunteer Neighborhood Captains
2. The leadership and active involvement of Assistant Principals Billy Cameron of Bacich and Jenny Walsh of Kent
3. The unwavering support of the Kentfield Safe Routes to Schools Task Force, which is comprised of school administrators, parent volunteers, Supervisor Katie Rice, and staff from the Sheriff’s Department, California Highway Patrol, and Marin County Safe Routes to Schools

Expanding the Program to Other Schools
Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) is preparing tools to make this program available to other Marin County Schools that don’t have the database systems used by Kentfield. Using funds from a special grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the mapping process will be provided by SR2S specialists. In addition, a special SchoolPool registration system will allow parents to register for the program by identifying their neighborhoods. The schools will be assisted in recruiting Neighborhood Captains. A complete organizational guide will take people through the steps of setting up the program, and will include a Captain’s Guide to assist captains with neighborhood organizing.
Neighborhood Maps Coming to a School Near You

As part of the new neighborhood-based SchoolPool initiative, Safe Routes to Schools is working with schools and parents to develop maps to assist with SchoolPool organizing. The initial work will involve identifying and mapping neighborhood boundaries, taking into consideration school enrollment areas and any physical barriers (e.g., steep hillsides, arterial roadways). These neighborhood maps will be used to assign captains, who will be responsible for organizing families within their areas.

As a second step, route maps will be developed, showing the recommended walking and biking routes to and from school. School route maps are effective tools for informing each school's community of the safest, most convenient and accessible routes to school and can identify areas to avoid owing to traffic, lack of signage, or other conditions. The ultimate purpose of the walking routes is to encourage more children to walk and bike to school and discourage parents from driving their children to school.

To identify the neighborhoods and optimal routes, parent volunteers and/or school officials are needed to review the school's enrollment area and identify the most desirable routes for households within walking and biking distance from the school. The process may involve a walk audit or other assessments to help indicate the physical environment surrounding the school. Once the neighborhood maps are completed and reviewed by City and school officials, they will be made available for parents and students, who can use them to organize carpools, walking school buses or bike trains.

Street Smarts Expands to Novato and Sausalito

In 2011, Novato and Sausalito launched Street Smarts Marin, expanding the popular traffic safety education campaign to ten jurisdictions across the county. Starting in August, banners were displayed throughout the two cities, with varying messages that target unsafe driving habits by both motorists and bicyclists. In addition, informational signs were distributed to local schools and to residents who wished to participate in the campaign.

Street Smarts Marin is a program funded by the Transportation Authority of Marin designed to educate the public on safe roadway behavior, not only for drivers but also for pedestrians and bicyclists. The campaign works on many levels through outdoor media (e.g., banners, signs and posters) and community outreach (e.g., brochures, presentations and press coverage).

For more information on the Street Smarts Marin campaign, please go to its page on the TAM website at www.streetsmartsmarin.org.
In October 2011, the Town of San Anselmo and the City of San Rafael were awarded a total of almost $1.2 million for school access infrastructure projects through the Federal SRTS program. Improving access to four schools, the projects were identified through the SR2S Task Forces and in collaboration with both Public Works departments.

San Anselmo received $619,200 to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety near Lower Brookside, Upper Brookside, and Wade Thomas elementary schools. Projects include:

- Installation of a pedestrian safety barrier along the southwest side of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard from Butterfield Road to Broadmoor Avenue.
- Installation of a new sidewalk, curb ramps, and crosswalk improvements along Arroyo Avenue, the Alameda, Berkeley Avenue, and Broadmoor Avenue. Includes installation of a raised intersection to calm traffic at Berkeley Avenue and the Alameda.
- Reconfiguration of the existing four-way traffic signal and construction of new crosswalks and curb ramps at Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Tamal Avenue/San Francisco Boulevard.
- Construction of a new sidewalk, curb ramps, and crosswalk improvements along Santa Cruz Avenue, Veterans Place, and Los Angeles Boulevard.
- Construction of a new sidewalk, curb ramps, and crosswalk improvements along Barber Avenue. Includes installation of a raised intersection to calm traffic at Barber and Prospect Avenues.

With a grant of $565,000, San Rafael will focus on infrastructure improvements along Lindaro Street, near Davidson Middle School. These include:

- Construction of new, wide sidewalks on both sides of Lindaro Street between Woodland Avenue and Andersen Drive.
- Widening of the sidewalk on the south side of Lindaro Drive between Jordan Street and Andersen Drive. Includes comprehensive signage and striping improvements and a speed feedback sign along Lindaro Street, and a barrier fence along the center median of Andersen Drive to ensure proper and safe roadway crossings by students coming to/from a heavily used adjacent shared-use trail.

New Sidewalk and Crosswalk Improvements Constructed & Celebrated

Students at Wade Thomas and Tam Valley elementary schools have an easier time getting to school thanks to new infrastructure projects. Wade Thomas held a sidewalk dedication to celebrate their first sidewalks since the school was built 114 years ago. San Anselmo’s Public Works Director, Sean Condry, finished the project on time and under budget, enabling him to also repair sidewalks at various locations along school routes.
In Tam Valley, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on October 12, 2011 celebrating the completion of the Marin Avenue/Bell Lane Walkway Improvement project. The project provides an accessible sidewalk from Green Glen Way along Marin Avenue to Tamalpais Valley Elementary School on Bell Lane, including new curb ramps and crosswalk striping. Also benefiting the schools was the installation of new crosswalks on Shoreline Highway and Flamingo Road.

Fairfax Bike Spine Project Moving Forward

In October 2011, the Transportation Authority of Marin granted the Town of Fairfax $110,000 to install signage and street markings for identified bicycle routes to schools. The first phase of the Fairfax Bike Spine will be designated along Bolinas Road, Park Road, Arroyo and/or Sequoia Roads, Manor Drive, Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Oak Manor Drive and Glen Drive to connect much of Fairfax with Cascade Canyon School, Manor Elementary School, and White Hill Middle School. The street markings will include colored thermo-plastic markings for maximum visibility. The overall goal is to improve the safety of the Town’s streets for student bicyclists and increase the awareness of motorists who share the road with them.

The grant was the brainchild of a group of interested community members, including Mayor Larry Bragman, Council Member John Reed, and active community members Renee Goddard and Eileen Brown. John Reed and Renee Goddard are longstanding members of the Safe Route to Schools Committee in Fairfax.

A future phase of the project may extend along Olema Road. To learn more about the project please visit www.town-of-fairfax.org.
Marin SR2S tested the Save a Gallon site during Spring 2011 with students at Miller Creek Middle School. The students logged their trips using barcode tags that could be fitted on their backpacks.

Safe Routes to Schools is testing new technology to boost participation in its spring contests and thus increase green trips to schools. The website www.active4.me was designed by Tim Starbuck, who also created the Save a Gallon site (www.saveagallon.org). Tim started Save a Gallon four years ago and it has proven popular with schools, with over 3000 participants. “We started the program when the gas prices really peaked,” explained Tim. Tim and his friend Phil Cox, a Davis school teacher, originally developed the site so it could be used by Phil’s students.

After Save a Gallon took off in popularity, they found that there were limitations to the website. “Most of our schools were not interested in saving a gallon of gas,” Tim explained. “Most schools just wanted to capture trips, calories and/or recreational miles.” Also, Saveagallon.org was designed around a single-user experience, whereas most schools wanted to allow group participation. The new Active4.me site addresses these issues and allows schools or other organizations to embed the program in their own web sites.

Active4.me will function as a scanner/notification site specially designed for students. The Save a Gallon site is being retained for individual users or people who just want to use the web interface to log miles. Both sites have special features that can text or email students and/or their parents with information on activities and results. Active4.me includes a feature that can notify a parent that his or her child has arrived at school—thus assuaging parent concerns about knowing a child’s whereabouts.

Marin SR2S tested the Save a Gallon site during Spring 2011 with students at Miller Creek Middle School. The students logged their trips using barcode tags that could be fitted on their backpacks. The use of the scanning devices doubled student participation in the challenge, compared with the previous year. Forty-three percent of the students took green trips to school during the four-week period in 2011, saving 58 gallons of gas and keeping 1087 pounds of CO2 out of the atmosphere. Science classes competed for logging the most green trips during the contest period.

In Spring 2012, Bacich Elementary School, Kent Middle School and Drake High School will be using the active4.me program to encourage more green trips to school. Students will be registered online and issued shoe tags with bar codes to hang onto their backpacks. “We expect to see the scanner program as a great motivator to travel green to school,” said Bacich parent volunteer Heather McPhail Sridharan, who is organizing the contest. Kentfield students will be using the contest to raise funds for World Bicycle Relief, which provides bicycles to Africa. If it proves successful, the program will be expanded and made available to other schools in Marin.
Drake High School’s first ever “No Cars on Campus Day” was organized for May, 20th, 2011 by Drake’s Green Routes Club. “We wanted to send a strong message about the power of walking and biking to school and the possible transformation of a campus when cars are replaced with collective human celebration,” wrote the students from the club on their web site. The students conceived of the project and worked to garner administrative support.

When the day came, students enthusiastically responded, leaving their cars at home. Satellite parking was offered to those who lived long distances from school, yet few students took advantage, instead opting to find their own green ways to school. Students were seen commuting together by bike and skateboard from as far away as San Geronimo Valley. No cars were found poaching neighborhood parking places.

At lunch time, instead of cars accelerating out of Drake’s main parking lot, which typically parks 120 cars, students stayed to see the extraordinarily innovative Human Powered Vehicles created by the students of Drake’s Engineering Academy as they raced and maneuvered around courses set up in the parking lot. Students also were treated to various activities including smoothies made with Teens Go Green’s famous bike-pedaled blender. According to Anna Garfink, Co-President of the Green Routes Club with Carlea Winkler, Eve Penberthy, and Kayla Ruggiero, the goal was to get 10 percent of the student and staff who normally drive, to walk or bike to school. The actual level of participation achieved was much greater. The success of the program has prompted the school to make it an annual event.

White Hill students ride to Drake

White Hill Middle School’s Teens Go Green Club joined the fun at Drake High’s No Cars on Campus Day. With Teens Go Green Instructors, club members cycled the two miles from White Hill to Drake to join in the bustling event showcasing Human Powered Vehicles created by Drake’s Engineering students. The field trip, which was conducted during school hours, gave the 8th grade White Hill students an opportunity to see their future school taking enormous action to build awareness about the transportation choices that affect our environment.

“That was awesome” said Ben Enbom, one of the White Hill students. The middle school students’ sense of the collective spirit of cycling was definitely heightened by their trip to Drake and by seeing the tremendous achievements of the Drake Engineering students.
Green Guide Assists Green Teams with Transportation Activities for Schools

Do you have a Green Team at your school? Many schools have developed these popular clubs and committees to address issues at their schools such as reducing waste, saving energy, or growing gardens. Few of these Green Teams have tackled the more complex and challenging opportunities for reducing car trips to school. Safe Routes to Schools programs complement the goals and activities of Green Teams, but the groups often compete for volunteers. As a result many schools have combined the efforts of the two programs under one banner. Safe Routes to Schools offers multiple benefits. In places like Marin County, where most people are proud environmentalists, emphasizing the green message can help boost participation in the program. Marin proved this with its Green Ways to School campaign (see article on page 7).

School Report Cards

Safe Routes to Schools will help schools track their progress by supplying each school with its own Report Card. The Report Card will include survey results and allow each school to see its own success in increasing green trips, both from the beginning of the school year and since joining the program. Schools that achieve at least 55% green trips will earn designation as a Green School. Those schools that supply bus service will have a higher bar to achieve that designation. Higher results will earn schools higher level designations.

The Report Card will also include a checklist of participation in Safe Routes to Schools programs. This will allow each school to see how it can improve its standing. The Report Card template can be viewed at http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/documents/ReportCardForm.pdf

Using a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Marin Safe Routes to Schools is developing a Green Guide for Green Teams that will assist them in introducing programs to promote transportation. The guide includes traditional Safe Routes to Schools activities such as travel planning, new materials including the Green Ways to School Campaign guides, and new curriculum—standards-based lessons that raise awareness. SR2S also partnered with Cool the Earth (www.cooltheearth.org), the popular trading card program that promotes simple acts to reduce carbon emissions, to allow that program to provide more transportation-based activities and add to its trading cards.

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Go Green!
CLASSROOM CHALLENGE
MONDAY, MARCH 12 – FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 2012