



Report to the North Fair Oaks Community Council

Reporting Agency: Office of Sustainability Active Transportation Program

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Contact Person: Ellen Barton, Active Transportation Coordinator, ebarton@smcgov.org,
(650) 599-1420

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION ENCOURAGEMENT PROGRAM (STEP) GRANT:

Grant Award for North Fair Oaks

The San Mateo County Office of Sustainability in partnership with Redwood City 2020 has been selected for award of a \$963,000 grant for the Sustainable Transportation Encouragement Program (STEP) in North Fair Oaks. STEP is a three-year education and encouragement program centered on expanding the Safe Routes to School program and offering expanded services to the whole community to reduce traffic congestion and increase walk/bike/active trips.

STEP was awarded funds through this competitive grant program because it addresses three key issues in North Fair Oaks:

1. High traffic crash rates
2. High rates of traffic congestion
3. Elevated health risk factors

Background

Active Transportation Program Grant: Redwood City 2020 has been operating the Safe Routes to School programs for elementary and middle schools in the North Fair Oaks area since the 2009-2010 school year. Redwood City 2020 is a community engagement partnership supported by the Redwood City School District and dozens of community and business partners. Redwood City 2020's Safe Routes to School work has been funded by a three-year Safe Routes to School grant awarded under a partnership with Redwood City whose funding ends in 2016.

Safe Routes to Schools Programs: With the support of Safe Routes to School (SRS) funding, communities and schools work together to make it safer and more convenient for children to walk or ride a bike to school. Examples of programs include: identifying and publishing recommended

walking routes, providing crossing guards at crosswalks, and offering educational programs to help children and families learn traffic rules. In some cases, project priorities are developed through a walk or bike audit to identify where sidewalk gaps exist or where new crosswalks or trails are needed. In the previous SRS funding cycle a School Walk Audit was conducted for Fair Oaks School. Benefits of walking and bicycling to school include improved attention and health for children, increased daily physical activity, reduced traffic congestion, reduced costs for schools and roadways, reduced air pollution around schools.

Continuing Safe Routes to School in North Fair Oaks: Redwood City 2020 partnered with the County of San Mateo Office of Sustainability in 2015 to develop a proposal for Safe Routes to School grant funds to continue to serve North Fair Oaks schools. State and federal Safe Routes to School grants are now available only through the Active Transportation Program. The STEP grant proposal includes funding for the Safe Routes to School Coordinator position from 2016 to 2019, and includes additional work elements to be performed by the San Mateo County Office of Sustainability to expand the program to include community-wide education, active trips encouragement, and transportation data collection to document results.

STEP Project

STEP includes three main components which are described in greater detail below:

- Safe Routes to School continuation and expansion
- Community-wide transportation encouragement and services
- Evaluation and documentation of travel mode rates and changes

Safe Routes to School program

Safe Routes to School programs encourage and assist students and their families to travel to school by walking, bicycling, or using other active modes of transportation such as scooters, skateboards, or riding the bus. Active modes contribute to healthy daily physical activity, reduce crash rates, and reduce traffic congestion around schools. Effective Safe Routes to School programs include several elements:

1. Evaluation of existing conditions, and evaluation of program results
2. Engagement of members of the school community
3. Education about traffic rules, bicycle skills, walking safety
4. Encouragement activities and promotions
5. Enforcement emphasis such as crosswalk yielding for drivers
5. Construction of missing infrastructure such as sidewalks or crosswalks

Redwood City 2020 has implemented several of these actions at five schools in North Fair Oaks:

- Fair Oaks School
- Garfield School
- Hoover School
- Taft School
- Selby Lane School

As a result of the Safe Routes to School work, there has been documented increase in walking and bicycling participation. STEP will fund an expansion of this work to serve these five schools with a comprehensive year-around program that includes:

Evaluation

1. Walking and Bicycling Audits at each of five schools
2. Mode-share counts at each school, Active4me technology where requested

Engagement

3. School-based collaborative program planning and parent engagement

Education

4. Traffic, walking, and bicycling safety classes for grades 3-5
5. Bicycle repair instruction and at-school services twice per year

Encouragement

6. Annual event promotions such as Walk and Bike to School Days
7. Walking school bus coordination

Enforcement

8. Crossing guard training and supplies
9. Enforcement emphasis patrols

STEP includes funding for data collection and evaluation to provide statistically-valid documentation of the effect of the program elements.

Community-wide Transportation Encouragement and Services

The STEP grant provides funding for transportation information and support that are designed to reach all residents and businesses in the North Fair Oaks area. The community-wide program is based on a traffic-congestion-relief program implemented in Portland, Oregon called “Smart Trips.” Elements of the Community-wide program are similar to those of Safe Routes to School but are applied to all ages and the full community population. STEP provides funding for the following programs:

Evaluation

1. Baseline household travel mode data collection
2. Mid-term and post-project household travel data collection
3. Data analysis and project report on traffic reduction, cost savings, etc.

Engagement

4. Community-based collaborative program planning and engagement
5. Personalized trip planning assistance and support

Education

6. Traffic, walking, and bicycling safety activities for adults
7. Bicycle repair instruction and services at community events

Encouragement

8. Annual event promotions such as Bike to Shop Day, etc.
9. Guided walks, transit outings, bicycle social rides
10. Program marketing, promotion and recognition

Evaluation and documentation of travel mode rates and changes

STEP emphasizes thorough data collection before and after program elements are implemented to measure cost effectiveness and results. Statistically-valid travel mode data on walking and bicycling trips is not currently available for neighborhood-specific projects. Data of this quality will be useful to decision makers in comparing cost-effectiveness of future infrastructure and program investments, and comparing traffic reduction effectiveness of future investment options. STEP data is designed to assist with project replicability in other communities in San Mateo County.

STEP Timeline

The Active Transportation Program funding process includes several steps prior to funding award. The following is an estimated timeline for project implementation:

October, 2015:	California Transportation Commission (CTC) approves recommended project list for Active Transportation Program grant awards (including STEP)
February, 2016:	Metropolitan Transportation Commission includes STEP in revised Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project list
March, 2016:	CTC approves updated TIP project list
June, 2016:	CTC approves Active Transportation Program funding allocation
July, 2016:	Caltrans issues award letter to San Mateo County Office of Sustainability
August, 2016:	Board of Supervisors Resolution authorizing receipt of grant award
September, 2016:	Environmental certification and Consultant selection
January, 2017:	Pre-project baseline data collection
February, 2017 – June, 2019:	Community engagement and planning; Safe Routes to School implementation
June, 2017 – June, 2019:	Community-wide transportation promotions
January, 2018:	Mid-project data collection, analysis, report
January, 2019:	Post-project data collection, analysis, report
June, 2019:	Final project report

Collaboration Opportunities

STEP is designed to build on existing community strengths and partnerships. Such partnerships are the core of the success of Redwood City 2020's Community Schools initiative. As the project begins, Redwood City 2020 and the Active Transportation Program will invite community members, organizations, students, parents, and businesses to participate in designing STEP and ensuring it aligns with community values and goals.

For more information about STEP and the Office of Sustainability Active Transportation Program, please contact Ellen Barton, (650) 599-1420 or ebarton@smcgov.org.