School Of Arts + Enterprise Safe Routes To School Toolkit

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May 1, 2025

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Abstract

This report presents the findings of a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) study conducted in partnership with The School of Arts and Enterprise (SAE), a public charter school in Pomona, California. The purpose of this study was to assess barriers to walking and biking to the SAE, understand the lived experiences and safety concerns of families, and propose targeted recommendations for improving student travel safety and equity. Using a mixed-methods approach—including demographic and collision data analysis, a bilingual parent survey, and key informant interviews—the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities surrounding active transportation in the school community. Key findings reveal that while a minority of students walk or bike, many families perceive significant barriers, including long distances, traffic hazards, and concerns about crime and homelessness. Parents prioritized interventions such as supervised walking groups, crossing guards, and traffic calming measures to improve conditions. The report highlights the need for integrated parent support, community-based programs, and cross-sector collaboration to create safer, more accessible routes for SAE students. By centering the voices of parents and local stakeholders, this study offers actionable strategies to guide future SRTS initiatives, policy updates, and funding opportunities aimed at promoting health, safety, and equity for all students.

Introduction

This report presents the findings of a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) study developed through a collaborative partnership between a graduate researcher and The School of Arts and Enterprise (SAE), a public charter school in Pomona, California. The purpose of this study is to assess barriers to walking and biking to The SAE, understand the experiences and concerns of families, and recommend strategies to make student travel safer, healthier, and more equitable. Using a mixed-methods approach—including analysis of demographic and traffic safety data, a bilingual parent/guardian survey, and in-depth interviews with key community stakeholders—the report provides a comprehensive and community-driven perspective. The findings are grounded in both quantitative trends and qualitative insights, ensuring that proposed interventions reflect the lived realities of SAE students and families. Readers can expect a review of current transportation conditions, community perceptions, policy gaps, and practical tools tailored to The SAE's unique needs as a charter school in an urban setting.

About This Study

This project emerged from a shared concern between SAE leadership and the graduate researcher about unsafe walking and biking conditions affecting students. Together, they initiated a structured study that would document existing challenges and identify realistic, community-informed solutions. This report serves as the primary deliverable of that collaboration, capturing local data, surfacing resident perspectives, and offering a set of actionable recommendations. While this is a professional planning report, it is also rooted in lived experience and advocacy, designed to reflect the voices of families, youth, and residents of Pomona. It is intended to support future funding, cross-sector collaboration, and policy improvements aimed at creating safer and more equitable travel options for all SAE students.

About the Client

This Safe Routes to School project is the result of a collaborative agreement between the graduate researcher and The School of Arts and Enterprise. The SAE served as the formal client

for this study, engaging with the researcher to assess and improve transportation options for students. This partnership emerged from a shared recognition that unsafe or inaccessible walking and biking conditions pose barriers to student well-being and school access. By combining the school's institutional knowledge with the researcher's academic and planning background, the project aimed to develop grounded, realistic recommendations for improving active transportation. The collaboration underscores a mutual commitment to safety, equity, and student-centered planning.

About the School

The School of Arts and Enterprise (SAE) is a tuition-free public charter school located in downtown Pomona, serving students in grades 6 through 12 with a North Campus (Middle School) and a South Campus (High School).

Founded with a unique focus on arts and entrepreneurship, the SAE offers a specialized educational experience that draws a diverse student population from across Pomona and surrounding communities. The school operates on two campuses—one for middle school students and one for high school students—both situated in an active urban environment.

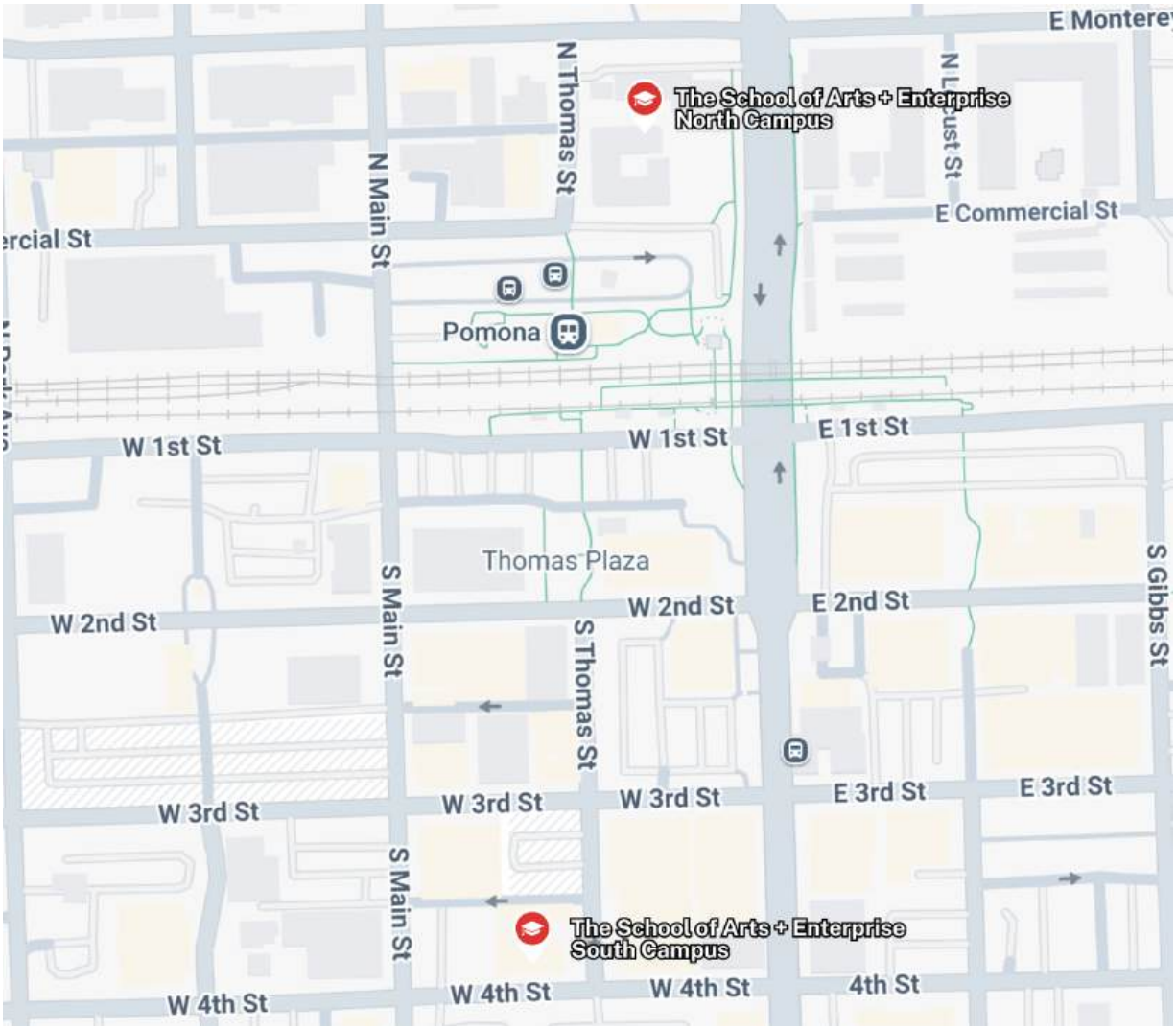


Figure 1.1. Shows where the two campuses are located within Downtown Pomona. (Source: Google Maps)

Unlike traditional public schools, the SAE does not offer yellow bus transportation. As a result, families must rely on alternative transportation options such as walking, bicycling, public transit, or private vehicles. Many students live within a walkable distance, but the quality and safety of the pedestrian environment vary widely. This context makes safe and accessible routes to school a critical issue for the school community. SAE leadership has acknowledged that improving transportation safety is not only essential for protecting students but also aligns with its mission to provide equitable, high-quality education. By addressing travel-related barriers, the school aims to support greater academic engagement, community connection, and student health.

Methodology

This project utilized a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative data analysis with qualitative insights. This approach was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) context in Pomona, leveraging the strengths of both numerical trends and personal perspectives (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). By integrating multiple data sources, the study can validate findings through triangulation, thereby increasing confidence in the results and ensuring that recommendations are grounded in both data and community experience.

The Cal Poly Pomona Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved for conduct this research involving human subjects under protocol IRB 24-252.

Quantitative Methods: Existing Conditions

The quantitative analysis focused on characterizing existing conditions in Pomona related to demographics, transportation, and safety. Demographic and socioeconomic data were sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). Key indicators such as age distribution, household vehicle availability, and income levels were analyzed to help understand mobility constraints and equity concerns in the SAE community.

Traffic safety conditions were assessed using data from the California Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS), focusing on pedestrian and bicyclist collisions near schools between 2017 and 2022 (Transportation Injury Mapping System [TIMS], 2024). The analysis helped identify high-risk areas, revealing spatial and temporal trends in traffic-related injuries that informed the prioritization of infrastructure improvements and supported the study's equity framework.

Survey Analysis

A bilingual survey was developed and administered to parents and guardians of SAE students to capture their travel behaviors, perceived safety concerns, and general attitudes toward walking and biking to school. The survey was distributed via the SAE parent portal and other digital school communication channels. Both English and Spanish versions were made available to maximize accessibility. The survey remained open for approximately four weeks during Fall 2024 and received 27 responses.

Quantitative responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the prevalence of travel modes, the most frequently cited barriers to walking and biking, and parental attitudes regarding potential improvements. Open-ended comments were reviewed qualitatively, allowing for the identification of recurring themes and context-specific concerns. This combination of structured data and narrative feedback helped provide a fuller picture of parental perspectives and priorities.

Key Informant Interview Analysis

Qualitative data was collected through key informant interviews. This method was chosen to capture detailed, experiential knowledge from individuals deeply familiar with transportation, safety, and community dynamics in Pomona. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposefully selected participants whose backgrounds offered diverse but complementary perspectives:

- A civic leader and Planning Commissioner representing Downtown Pomona
- A community advocate and SAE alumna currently working at a local nonprofit
- A regional transportation expert and veteran active transportation advocate

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the engagement method because they allow for a balance between consistency across participants and flexibility to explore new insights. A core set of open-ended questions guided each conversation, centered around student travel experiences, perceived barriers, infrastructure conditions, and recommendations for safer routes

to school. Interviewees were encouraged to expand on topics organically based on their knowledge and lived experiences.

Thematic analysis was used to identify major patterns across the interviews. Following transcription and detailed note-taking, each interview was reviewed line-by-line using open coding. Individual statements were tagged with codes reflecting key ideas (e.g., “fear of traffic,” “parental anxiety,” “lack of infrastructure,” “cultural car dependence”). After initial coding, related codes were clustered into broader thematic categories. This method allowed for both anticipated themes (such as traffic safety) and emergent themes (such as gendered safety concerns and systemic distrust) to surface naturally from the data.

Themes were then cross-validated across all three interviews to identify points of convergence and divergence. Insights from the key informants were triangulated with survey findings to strengthen the reliability of the results and to uncover new dimensions of barriers or opportunities that may not have been captured quantitatively. Using thematic analysis ensured that the qualitative data meaningfully enriched the study, providing depth and narrative context to the numerical trends.

Literature Review Note

To avoid redundancy, this report does not include a separate standalone literature review. Instead, peer-reviewed studies, state policy evaluations, and national best practices related to Safe Routes to School have been cited throughout the report at relevant points of analysis. This integrated approach ensures that academic evidence and planning theory directly support observed findings and strategic recommendations, maintaining clarity and grounding throughout the report.

Existing Conditions

Community Health and Wellness

Pomona’s health landscape reveals significant disparities in physical activity, chronic disease prevalence, and transportation-related risks—all of which intersect with the built environment

and Safe Routes to School. According to data from the California Department of Public Health and the Los Angeles County Health Survey, Pomona experiences high rates of childhood obesity, diabetes, and respiratory illnesses, particularly among its lower-income Latino communities. More than 50% of children in Pomona Unified School District are classified as overweight or obese by 5th grade (Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, 2022). These figures are not merely statistical—they represent systemic challenges rooted in environmental injustice, economic inequality, and planning decisions that have deprioritized non-automobile forms of mobility.

Physical inactivity is a key contributor to these health trends. Walking or biking to school offers students a daily opportunity for moderate-intensity physical activity, which can contribute to healthier weight, improved mood, better academic performance, and long-term prevention of chronic illnesses (Elliott et al., 2023). Yet many families in Pomona do not consider walking or biking safe due to poor infrastructure and heavy traffic. This is especially true for families living in disadvantaged communities as they often live in high-need census tracts with lower access to parks, high asthma rates, and lower life expectancy (McDonald et al., 2013; Elliott et al., 2023). Youth living in these neighborhoods are often car-dependent not by preference, but because of longstanding disinvestment in sidewalks, bike lanes, and safe street crossings.

Research consistently shows that SRTS programs improve not only travel behavior but also broader public health outcomes. For example, Hoelscher et al. (2016) found that SRTS implementation in Texas correlated with increased walking and biking and lowered body mass index (BMI) scores among children. Similarly, Muennig et al. (2014) concluded that investments in SRTS infrastructure such as curb extensions and new sidewalks produced a cost-benefit ratio comparable to widely accepted public health interventions like childhood immunizations.

Air quality is another concern. Pomona lies within the South Coast Air Basin, which regularly records some of the highest ozone and particulate matter levels in the nation due to its geography and proximity to major freeways and goods movement corridors. Children are especially vulnerable to these pollutants, which can aggravate asthma, reduce lung development, and contribute to school absenteeism (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2021). Reducing vehicle trips near schools not only improves safety but also limits children’s exposure to tailpipe

emissions during critical parts of the day. A robust SRTS program can support this by decreasing the number of single-passenger drop-offs and encouraging alternative travel behaviors that align with environmental justice goals.

From a mental health perspective, active commuting has also been linked to reductions in depression, stress, and anxiety in adolescents. Daily walking routines help regulate mood and increase social connection—both of which are critical during formative middle and high school years (D'Agostino et al., 2021). For students at the SAE, which serves youth engaged in the arts and creative sectors, integrating movement and independent mobility into their day may have added benefits in terms of focus, self-expression, and personal responsibility. Encouraging walking and biking is not just a transportation strategy; it is a holistic wellness intervention with implications for physical, mental, and emotional health.

The intersection of health and transportation is particularly evident when considering equity. Low-income households in Pomona face barriers to healthcare access, rely more heavily on walking and public transit, and live in neighborhoods with higher exposure to traffic-related harms. These inequities reflect structural decisions—such as freeway placements, zoning rules, and public infrastructure funding—that have shaped health disparities over decades. An effective SRTS program must explicitly acknowledge and address these dynamics by directing resources toward the students most impacted by these systemic burdens.

For the SAE, addressing community health through SRTS means engaging with students and families not just as users of infrastructure, but as experts in their daily mobility. Recommendations must consider the ways in which school policy, neighborhood design, parental concerns, and regional air quality intersect to either enable or hinder healthy transportation options. By viewing SRTS as a public health intervention grounded in equity, the SAE can lead by example in promoting a culture of wellness, sustainability, and youth-centered mobility in Pomona.

Existing Infrastructure for Walking and Biking

Pomona's existing infrastructure for walking and biking reflects a combination of legacy urban design, incremental upgrades, and persistent structural inequities. While certain areas -

particularly the downtown core near The SAE - feature a traditional street grid and basic pedestrian amenities, the city's broader street network suffers from incomplete sidewalks, limited bike infrastructure, and vehicle-oriented land use patterns that make walking and cycling difficult or dangerous for students.

The city's Active Transportation Plan (2012) identifies multiple deficiencies across Pomona, including gaps in sidewalk continuity, faded or missing crosswalks, narrow pedestrian right-of-way zones, and a lack of curb ramps in older neighborhoods. According to the plan, over 35 miles of sidewalk are missing citywide, and many existing segments are poorly maintained (City of Pomona, 2012).

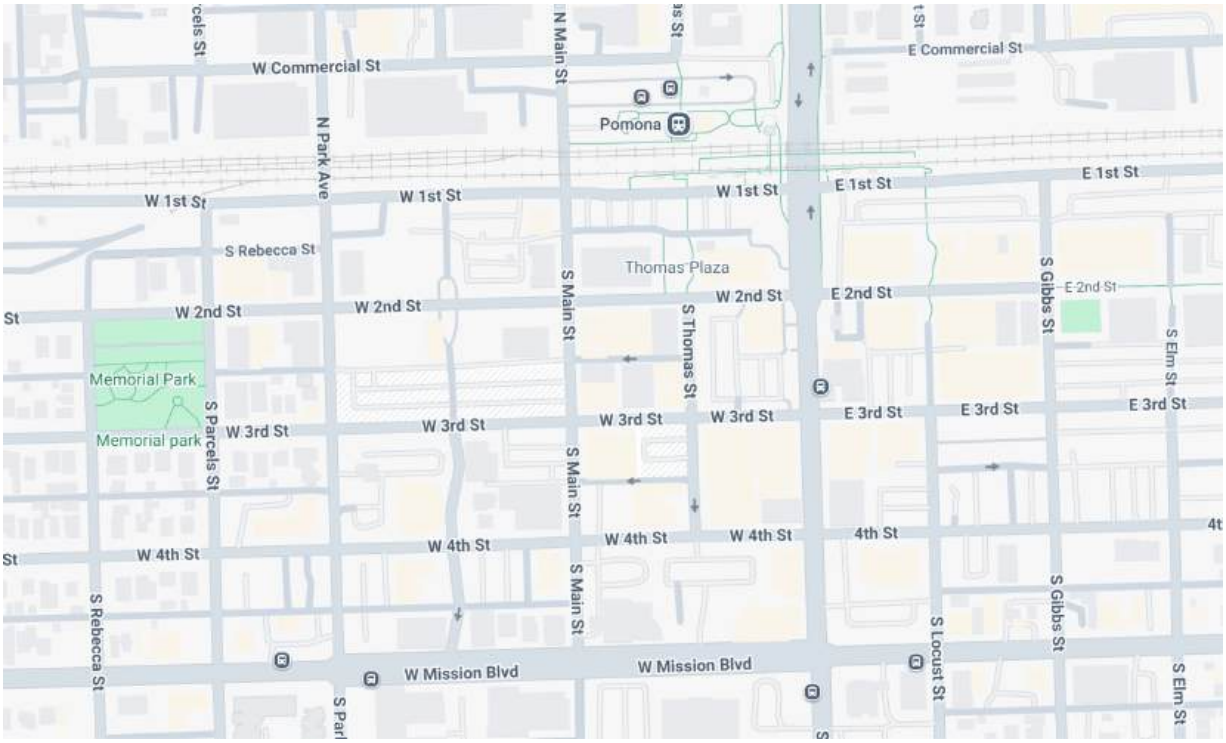


Figure 3.1. Map of surrounding streets at the School of Arts and Enterprise (Source: Google Maps)

Around the SAE's campuses, some pedestrian infrastructure is in place. The streets surrounding the North Campus at 295 N. Garey Avenue features sidewalks, traffic signals, and marked crosswalks, though the condition and visibility of these facilities varies.

Figure 3.2. Intersection between Monterey Avenue and Garey Avenue looking towards The School of Arts + Enterprise's North Campus
(Source: Google Maps)

Figure 3.3. Intersection between Monterey Avenue and Garey Avenue. This view is from the School of Arts + Enterprise looking away from the North Campus.
(Source: Google Maps)

Main Street, which connects the North and South Campuses, has relatively narrow sidewalks and minimal buffering from traffic.

Figure 3.4. Sidewalks conditions along Main St. looking South
(Source: Google Maps)

Figure 3.5. Sidewalk and crosswalk conditions along Main St. looking North.
(Source: Google Maps)

Intersections like Garey and Monterey have signalized crosswalks, but crossing distances are long and lack pedestrian refuges.

Moreover, many side streets in the surrounding Arts Colony and warehouse-adjacent areas lack curb ramps or adequate nighttime lighting, creating discomfort or hazards for students walking before or after daylight hours.

Figure 3.6. Sidewalk and crosswalk conditions along W 1st St. and Main St. looking West. (Source: Google Maps)

Figure 3.7. Sidewalk and crosswalk conditions along W 2nd St. and S. Rebecca St. looking West.

(Source: Google Maps)

Figure 3.8. Sidewalk and crosswalk conditions along W 2nd St. and S Parcels St. looking East. (Source: Google Maps)

For bicyclists, infrastructure is severely lacking. Pomona has fewer than five miles of designated bike lanes, and these are not contiguous. There are no protected bike lanes or off-street multi-use paths near the SAE. Third Street has signage designating it as a bike route, but it lacks striping or separation from traffic. Bicycle parking at the SAE is minimal and insecure. People who bike must often navigate arterials like Holt Avenue, Mission Boulevard, and Indian Hill without any cycling accommodations, putting them in direct conflict with fast-moving traffic. Such conditions discourage bicycling and disproportionately impact students without access to cars or transit.

The built environment also presents physical and psychological barriers to active transportation. Rail corridors divide the city and limit north-south connectivity. Students crossing these tracks must use at-grade crossings at Garey, White, or Main - locations that have been flagged for safety improvements in the city's Safe Paths Pomona grant application. These crossings are often uninviting, lacking tactile surfaces, countdown timers, or pedestrian-scale lighting. Their industrial character contributes to a perceived sense of danger, especially during early morning or late afternoon commutes. Research shows that perceived safety—shaped by lighting, landscape design, and driver behavior - is as influential as actual crash rates in determining whether families allow their children to walk or bike to school (Ewing et al., 2014).

The fragmentation of bike and pedestrian infrastructure is exacerbated by Pomona's land use context. Large parking lots, industrial zones, and auto-centric strip malls disrupt the continuity of the walking environment. Sidewalks may exist, but frequent curb cuts, wide driveways, and lack of shade reduce their usability. This pattern of discontinuity is particularly evident on routes leading from southeast Pomona, where families must navigate large arterial intersections, underpasses, and commercial traffic to reach downtown. These spatial barriers reflect historic planning decisions that deprioritized non-motorized users.

While Pomona's Active Transportation Plan proposes many long-term solutions - such as traffic calming, bike boulevards, and sidewalk infill - the pace of implementation has been slow due to

limited funding and staff capacity. Community members frequently express frustration about seeing plans adopted but not realized. There is also no formal Safe Routes to School infrastructure policy requiring pedestrian improvements in school zones. As a result, improvements are reactive (following crashes or complaints) rather than proactive or systematic.

The current infrastructure around the SAE demonstrates the uneven geography of safety in Pomona. Students living in newer developments or affluent neighborhoods (e.g., North Pomona near Claremont) often have access to continuous sidewalks and low-volume streets. In contrast, students commuting from older, disinvested neighborhoods face longer, more hazardous journeys. This pattern reinforces the need for targeted infrastructure investments that center equity - prioritizing those with the greatest exposure and least protection.

Addressing these conditions will require coordination among public works, planning, police, and education sectors. Infrastructure alone is not sufficient; complementary strategies such as traffic enforcement, driver awareness campaigns, and student education are necessary to create a truly supportive environment for walking and biking. Still, built environment changes are foundational. Without safe crossings, protected bike lanes, and continuous sidewalks, behavior change is unlikely to occur at scale.

Pomona's infrastructure for active transportation remains insufficient for the needs of students at the SAE. Improvements must focus not just on proximity to the campus but on the full journey to school—recognizing that safety and accessibility must extend into neighborhoods. This will require leveraging existing plans, securing grant funding, and ensuring that capital improvement programs incorporate SRTS priorities. With intentional design, collaborative leadership, and community accountability, Pomona can create the conditions necessary for safe, reliable, and equitable student travel by foot and by bike.

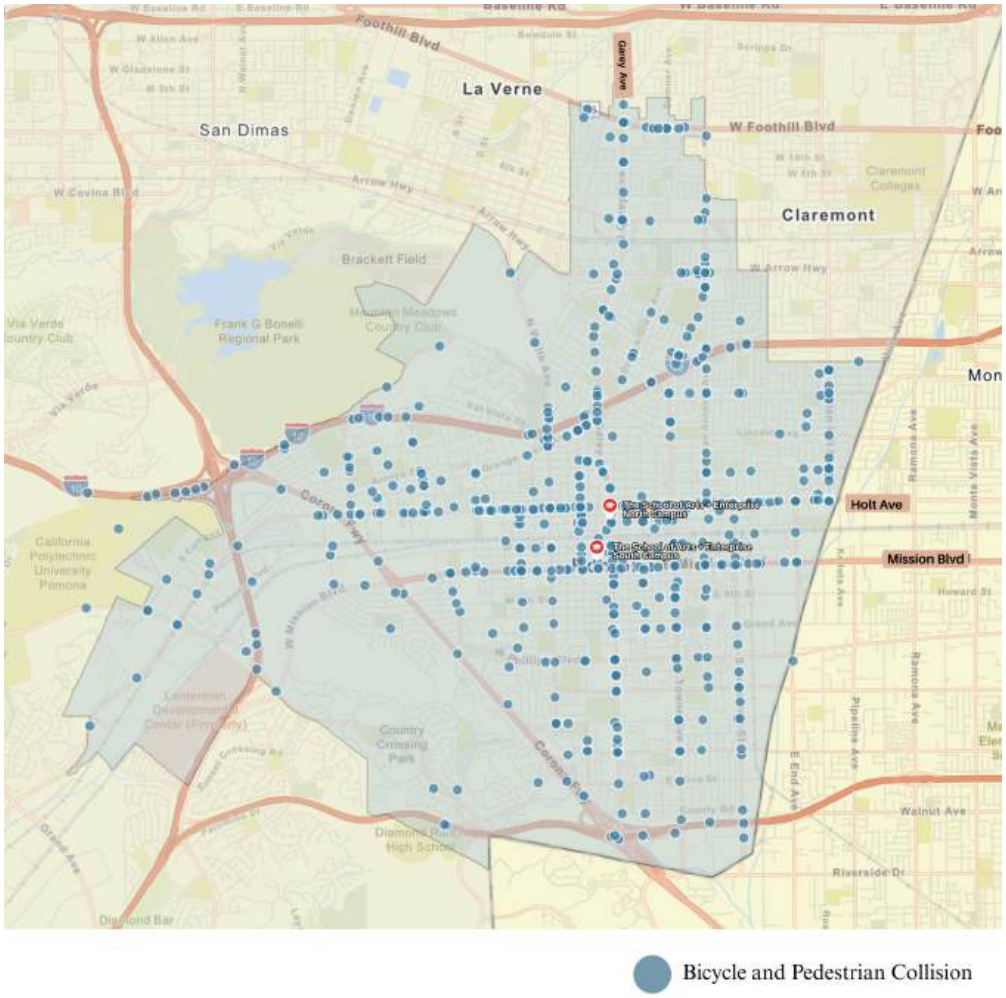
Pedestrian and Bicycle Collision History

Pomona's pedestrian and bicyclist injury history reflects long standing transportation inequities and underscores the urgency for Safe Routes to School interventions, particularly around the SAE. A review of collision data from the Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS) for the

period 2017–2022 reveals a troubling pattern: a consistent number of serious and fatal crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists, with school-age youth disproportionately affected.

According to TIMS, between 2017 and 2022, Pomona experienced 313 pedestrian-involved and 274 bicycle-involved collisions. Of those, 92 resulted in severe injuries, and 23 were fatal. Alarmingly, 59 of these crashes involved children or teens under the age of 18, including 41 pedestrian victims and 18 bicyclists (TIMS, 2024). When mapped across the city, a clear concentration emerges near high-volume arterial roads, particularly along Holt Avenue, Garey Avenue, Mission Boulevard, and Indian Hill Boulevard - corridors that students from the SAE are likely to cross or travel along.

Figure 3.1. Pedestrian and Bicycle Collisions in Pomona, 2017–2022



Source: *Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS), UC Berkeley SafeTREC, 2024.*

Table 3.1. Pedestrian and Bicycle Collisions in Pomona, 2017–2022

Type of Collision	Total Crashes	Involving Youth (<18)	Severe Injury	Fatalities
Pedestrian	313	41	68	13
Bicycle	274	18	24	10
Total	**587**	**59**	**92**	**23**

Source: *Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS), UC Berkeley SafeTREC, 2024.*

To better understand geographic disparities, TIMS data were overlaid with census tract demographic indicators. This revealed a notable correlation between collision hotspots and socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods—especially those with high proportions of Latino residents, lower median incomes, and lower rates of vehicle ownership.

Percent of Latino Residents

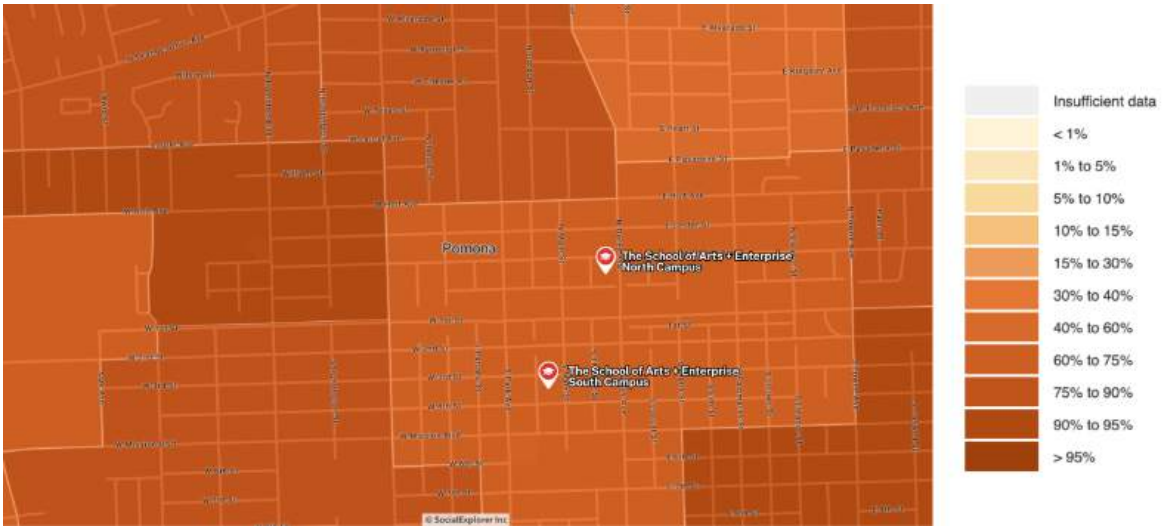


Figure 3.2. Downtown Pomona has a high concentration of Latino residents

Median Household Income

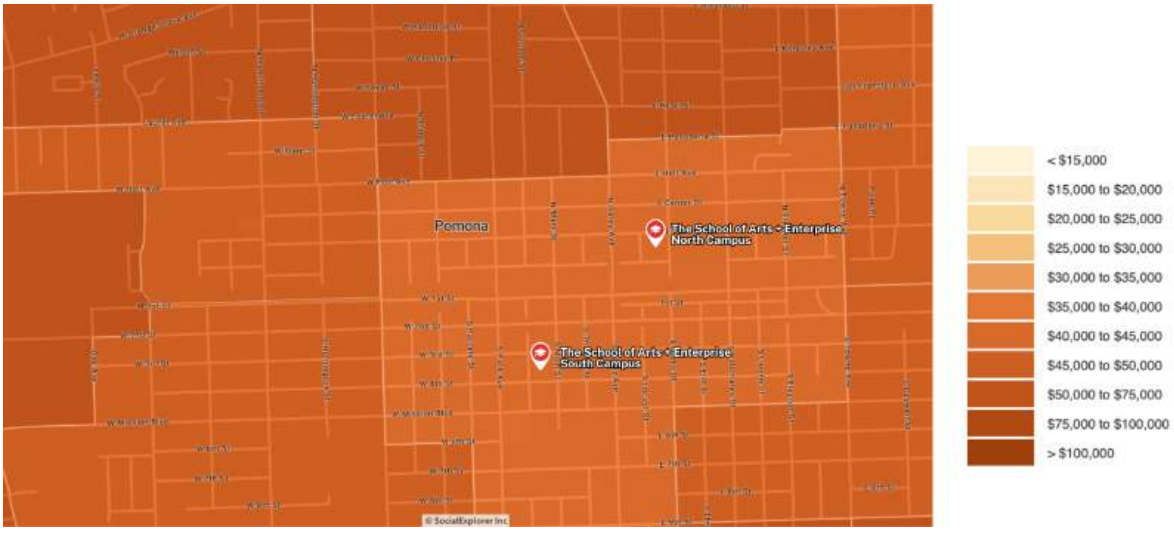


Figure 3.3. Downtown Pomona hosts a moderate median income.

These neighborhoods, largely concentrated in Pomona's central and southern sectors, lack comprehensive pedestrian infrastructure and suffer from higher traffic volumes.

Table 3.5. Comparison of Collision Density and Demographics by Census Tract

Census Tract	% Latino Population	Median Household Income	Vehicle Access (Households without Vehicles)	Crashes (2017–2022)
403300	92.1%	$45,320	12.4%	33
403100	88.4%	$48,570	10.8%	28
401700	84.6%	$52,430	9.6%	21
402200	69.3%	$61,900	7.2%	9

Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates (2023); TIMS, 2024.*

This spatial correlation between socioeconomic vulnerability and elevated crash rates supports the growing body of research demonstrating that infrastructure risk is not equally distributed. Households in Tracts 403300 and 403100 - among the lowest income in the city - are also the most car-limited, making walking and biking essential travel modes. Yet these same neighborhoods face the greatest threats to safety, reinforcing systemic inequities.

Further disaggregating the crash data by time of day and day of the week reveals additional patterns. The majority of youth-involved crashes occurred during morning or afternoon school commute periods, particularly between 7:00–8:30 AM and 2:30–4:30 PM. This aligns with when students are most likely walking or biking to and from school. Fridays saw a slightly elevated

number of youth collisions, while weekends generally reflected fewer incidents involving minors.

Table 3.3. Timing of Youth-Involved Pedestrian and Bicycle Collisions (2017–2022)

Time of Day	Total Youth-Involved Collisions	Percentage of Total
6:00–9:00 AM	22	37%
2:00–5:00 PM	19	32%
5:00–10:00 PM	11	19%
Other Hours	7	12%

Source: Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS), 2024.

This temporal distribution reinforces the need for targeted interventions during school hours—such as crossing guards, traffic calming in school zones, and enhanced visibility features like rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) and curb extensions at intersections. Pomona currently lacks a policy that mandates infrastructure audits or school zone improvements for charter schools like the SAE, creating a critical service gap.

The collision history in Pomona is not simply a transportation problem—it is a public health and racial equity issue. The city's children, particularly those from low-income Latino communities, face daily risks walking or biking in neighborhoods shaped by decades of disinvestment and exclusionary planning. Prioritizing infrastructure and safety interventions in these communities is not only a matter of fairness—it is a life-saving necessity.

In sum, the collision data validate what many SAE students and families already know through lived experience: walking and biking in Pomona often feels—and is—dangerous. Reducing these risks requires both citywide leadership and school-specific action. An effective SRTS plan for SAE must respond directly to these patterns of harm with targeted investments, interagency collaboration, and a commitment to ensuring that every student can get to school safely, regardless of their zip code or mode of travel.

Local Policies and Plans Related to Safe Routes to School

Pomona's policy landscape contains both opportunities and barriers for implementing comprehensive Safe Routes to School (SRTS) strategies. Over the past decade, the city has adopted multiple plans and policy frameworks that prioritize active transportation and public health, yet gaps in execution, coordination, and charter school inclusion persist. A close review of relevant policies reveals the need for stronger institutional alignment, sustained investment, and more equitable resource allocation.

The City of Pomona's General Plan, updated in 2014, provides a long-range vision for growth, development, and sustainability. The Mobility Element of the General Plan explicitly promotes multimodal transportation and identifies pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure as critical to neighborhood livability. It calls for the creation of complete streets that accommodate users of all ages and abilities and emphasizes safety around schools. However, the plan lacks measurable benchmarks and an implementation timeline tied specifically to SRTS (City of Pomona, 2014). While its goals align with SRTS principles, the absence of enforcement mechanisms limits its effectiveness.

Complementing the General Plan is the city's 2012 Active Transportation Plan (ATP), which offers a more detailed set of proposed infrastructure improvements. The ATP identifies key pedestrian and bicycle corridors, recommends traffic calming strategies, and includes a list of potential projects near schools.

Facility	From (N/W)	To (S/E)	Distance	Facility Type
2nd St	Chino Valley Fwy	Garey Ave	2	Bike Route
	Garey Ave	Gibbs St	0.4	TBD
	Gibbs St	Reservoir St	0.5	Bike Route
9th St	Butterfield Rd	Dudley St	0.35	Bike Route
	Dudley St	ECL	3	Bike Lane
Alameda St	Artesia St	Garey Ave	0.3	Bike Route
Alvarado St	Huntington St	San Antonio Ave	1.5	Bike Route
Artesia St	Alameda St	Orange Grove Ave	0.4	Bike Route
Butterfield Rd	Fleming St	Wright St	0.3	TBD
Casa Vista Dr	Murchison Ave	Orange Grove Ave	0.3	Bike Route
Caswell Ave	Alvarado St	Kingsley Ave	0.1	Bike Route
College Ave	Brin Mawr Rd	San Bernardino Ave	0.35	Bike Route
Dudley St	Lavita Ave	Murchison Ave	0.2	Bike Route
	Murchison Ave	Crest Way	0.3	Bike Lane
	Mission Blvd	Phillips Blvd	0.6	Bike Route
Fairplex Dr (w/o McKinley Ave)	McKinley Ave	Mountain Meadows Drvwy	0.15	Bike Route
	Mountain Meadows Drvwy	I-10 Freeway	0.95	Bike Lane
Fremont St/Franklin Ave	Hansen Ave	ECL	2.6	Bike Route
Garey Ave	Briarcroft Rd	Foothill Blvd	0.2	Bike Route
	Foothill Blvd	La Verne Ave	1.6	Bike Lane
	La Verne Ave	Artesia St	0.65	TBD
N Hamilton Blvd	Murchison Ave	Orange Grove Ave	0.2	Bike Route
Hamilton Blvd	Orange Grove Ave	Mission Blvd	1	Bike Lane
S Hamilton Blvd	Phillips Blvd	Lexington Ave	0.5	Bike Route
Humane Way	Holt Ave	Mission Blvd	0.7	TBD
Kingsley Ave	Caswell Ave	ECL	1.3	Bike Route
Laurel Ave	Erie St	Hamilton Blvd	0.9	Bike Route
La Verne Ave	Arrow Hwy	Towne Ave	1.1	Bike Lane
	Towne Ave	Mountain Ave	0.8	Bike Route
Lexington Ave	Hamilton Blvd	Garey Ave	0.8	Bike Route
	Garey Ave	ECL	1.3	Bike Lane
McKinley Ave	Fairplex Dr	Gibbs Ave	1.7	Bike Lane
	Gibbs Ave	Palomares St	0.1	Bike Route
	Palomares St	Towne Ave	0.2	Bike Lane
Mission Bl	Temple Ave	ECL	5	TBD
Monterey Ave	Myrtle Ave	Lorrane Ave	2	Bike Route
Mountain Ave	Arrow Hwy	I-10 Freeway	0.6	Bike Route
Murchison Ave	Ridgeway St	Fairplex Dr	0.7	Bike Lane
Olive St	Park Ave	ECL	1.5	Bike Route
Old Pomona Rd	Village Loop Rd	SR-71	0.45	Bike Route
Orange Grove Ave	Fairplex Dr	Lewis St	1	Bike Lane
	Lewis St	Artesia St	1.3	Bike Route
	Artesia St	E Arrow Hwy	1.1	Bike Lane
Palomares St	McKinley Ave	Pasadena St	0.7	Bike Route
	Pasadena St	Phillips Blvd	1.3	Bike Lane
	Phillips Blvd	Franklin Ave	0.25	Bike Route
Park Ave	Artesia St	3rd St	1.5	Bike Route
	3rd St	Olive St	2	Bike Lane

Facility	From (N/W)	To (S/E)	Distance	Facility Type
Philadelphia St	Garey Ave	ECL	1.3	Bike Lane
Phillips Blvd	Dudley St	ECL	2.8	Bike Lane
Phillips Ranch Rd	Village Loop Rd	Rio Rancho Rd	0.1	Bike Route
Pomona Bl	Temple Ave	Pacific Street	0.7	Bike Lane
Preciado St	White Ave	Park Ave	0.3	Bike Route
Ridgeway St	Murchison Ave	Valley Bl	0.5	Bike Lane
	Valley Blvd	Mt. Vernon Ave	0.25	Bike Route
San Antonio Ave	Towne Ave	Philadelphia St	3.7	Bike Lane
	Philadelphia St	County Rd	0.5	Bike Route
San Bernardino Ave	San Antonio Ave	Mills Ave	1.5	Bike Lane
San Jose Creek	Poly Vista	Murchison Ave	3.5	Bike Path
State St	Pomona Bl	Diamond Bar Bl	0.85	TBD
Rio Rancho Rd	Phillips Ranch Rd	Garey Ave	1.6	Bike Route
Thompson Creek	I-10	NCL	3	Bike Path
Towne Ave	Arrow Hwy	San Antonio Ave	0.2	Bike Lane
	San Antonio Ave	Holt Ave	1.75	TBD
Val Vista	Crest Way	White Ave	1.2	Bike Route
Valley Blvd/Holt Ave	Ridgeway St	Humane Way	0.25	TBD
Village Loop Rd	Pala Mesa Dr	Phillips Ranch Rd	1	Bike Path

Notes: ECL, WCL, NCL, SCL = Eastern, Western, Northern, Southern City Limit

Table 4.1. City of Pomona's ATP list of pedestrian and bicycle corridors, recommends traffic calming strategies, and includes a list of potential projects near schools
(Source: City of Pomona, 2014)

Yet much of this plan remains aspirational. As of 2024, only a fraction of the proposed infrastructure has been built, and none of the improvements specifically mention charter schools or include detailed implementation guidance for educational institutions not served by the Pomona Unified School District (City of Pomona, 2012).

This omission has practical consequences for the SAE and other charter campuses. Without inclusion in district-level planning or specific mentions in the city's ATP, these schools are often left without dedicated crosswalks, signage, or safety programs. This gap underscores a broader issue: city and school planning systems operate in silos, often without formalized partnerships or shared goals. The lack of a citywide SRTS coordinator or task force further exacerbates this disconnection.

Pomona Unified School District (PUSD) does have a wellness policy that supports physical activity and student health. It encourages active commuting and outlines the importance of

walkable neighborhoods. However, the district does not provide transportation services to charter schools like the SAE, nor does it coordinate directly with them on safety planning. This creates an accountability gap, as charter students are left dependent on fragmented municipal infrastructure without centralized support.

At the regional level, Pomona is part of several countywide and SCAG-led initiatives to promote active transportation. Los Angeles County's *Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan* (Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, 2013) and SCAG's *Active Transportation Safety and Encouragement Campaign* (Southern California Association of Governments, 2016) both include Pomona as a priority city due to its high collision rates and public health disparities. These frameworks offer guidance and potential funding opportunities but stop short of mandating municipal action. Charter schools must compete for limited grants and often lack the staff capacity to write competitive applications without city support.

Notably, Pomona recently secured an ATP Cycle 6 grant through the "Safe Paths Pomona" initiative, which includes pedestrian improvements near Main Street and Palomares Avenue—intersections relevant to SAE students who live south of downtown. This project represents a step forward, but it highlights the piecemeal nature of active transportation planning in the city. Without a centralized SRTS implementation strategy or permanent staff roles to coordinate across departments, momentum is hard to sustain.

Other cities have developed more robust institutional mechanisms to support SRTS. For example, San Francisco and Long Beach have both created interdepartmental SRTS task forces that include public works, transportation, planning, law enforcement, and public health departments. These bodies meet regularly, pool resources, and set annual goals for infrastructure and programmatic improvements. In some cases, these cities also provide mini-grants to schools to implement walking school buses, bicycle education, and temporary street closures near school sites. Pomona lacks a similar structure, though local nonprofits like Day One have stepped in to fill some of the gaps.

In interviews conducted for this report, stakeholders from SAE and the broader Pomona community expressed a desire for more formal collaboration between city agencies and schools. They noted the need for recurring safety assessments, consistent enforcement of traffic laws near

schools, and equitable access to infrastructure regardless of school type. Importantly, they emphasized that charter school students should not be an afterthought in transportation planning.

Ultimately, Pomona has the policy frameworks in place to support Safe Routes to School, but these plans require political will, inter-agency collaboration, and inclusion of all educational institutions to become a reality. Incorporating charter schools like SAE into official SRTS maps, prioritizing them in ATP projects, and institutionalizing regular cross-sector coordination are essential next steps. Doing so will ensure that the benefits of active transportation—improved safety, better health outcomes, and stronger community engagement—are distributed equitably across the city's diverse student population.

Safe Routes to School Programs and Other Related Efforts

Pomona has a history of implementing Safe Routes to School (SRTS) activities, but these efforts have largely been sporadic, grant-dependent, and unequally distributed. While past initiatives have demonstrated value, they have often lacked continuity, interagency collaboration, and inclusion of non-traditional public schools such as charter campuses. As a result, schools like the School of Arts + Enterprise (SAE) remain on the margins of official planning and programming efforts.

One of the earliest SRTS related efforts in Pomona was led by Cal Poly Pomona, which partnered with the City and local schools to conduct walk audits and engage students in assessing safety conditions near campuses. In 2016, I was part of an undergraduate study, partnered with a local nonprofit called Day One, where students captured data from pedestrian and car counts to parent interviews. Though these findings were not published, Day One used this study to help shape programming at Kingsley Elementary. These initiatives produced useful findings and generated momentum, but they were limited in scope and duration. Many recommendations from these assessments were not implemented due to budget constraints or lack of political follow-through. Additionally, because these early efforts were largely centered on Pomona Unified School District (PUSD) sites, charter schools were excluded from the assessments and subsequent improvement plans.

Pomona has also participated in national events like Walk to School Day, an annual celebration that promotes walking as a safe, healthy, and environmentally friendly mode of transportation. Several schools, including Washington Elementary and Alcott Elementary, have hosted these events with support from parent groups and community-based organizations such as Day One. While impactful, these efforts have tended to be one-off events rather than components of sustained, school-wide SRTS programs.

Nonprofits and grassroots coalitions have played a vital role in sustaining interest in active transportation. Organizations like Day One, the Pomona Valley Bicycle Coalition, and ActiveSGV have hosted bike safety workshops, community ride events, and neighborhood clean-up walks. These initiatives serve important community engagement functions and help normalize walking and biking, especially in neighborhoods where such modes are often stigmatized or perceived as unsafe. However, these efforts are often conducted without formal coordination with the City or long-term funding.

One promising recent development is the award of the Active Transportation Program (ATP) Cycle 6 grant for the "Safe Paths Pomona" project. This initiative includes infrastructure upgrades near key intersections such as Main Street and Palomares Avenue and includes sidewalk improvements, enhanced crossings, and street lighting upgrades. The California Transportation Commission approved the $20.1 million grant in December 2022, with project implementation scheduled between fiscal years 2023–24 and 2026–27 (California Transportation Commission, 2022). While not originally focused on a specific school site, the project's proximity to the SAE and its relevance to student commute patterns make it a potentially impactful intervention. The project is a collaborative effort between the City of Pomona and the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG), but notably, the SAE is not formally listed as a partner or recipient in the application—again reflecting the broader pattern of charter schools being overlooked in municipal planning processes (California Transportation Commission, 2022).

Other local initiatives have included youth empowerment programs that indirectly support SRTS goals. For example, Pomona's Youth Prevention Council has engaged teens in leadership training and civic engagement around public health issues, including access to safe recreation and

mobility. These programs build student capacity and voice but are not explicitly tied to built environment improvements or school commute safety.

From a comparative perspective, cities that have implemented more robust SRTS programs often do so through institutional coordination and dedicated staffing. San Diego, for instance, has embedded SRTS into its Climate Action Plan and Complete Streets policy, ensuring cross-departmental support. Sacramento has created a dedicated SRTS coordinator position within its Department of Public Works, which oversees infrastructure projects, school engagement, and grant writing. Pomona does not currently have such a position, nor a citywide SRTS committee, limiting the city's ability to scale efforts or sustain momentum.

Finally, the current lack of consistent evaluation mechanisms has made it difficult to assess the effectiveness of existing SRTS related programs in Pomona. Most past efforts have not been evaluated with pre- and post-intervention metrics or longitudinal tracking of student travel behavior. This makes it harder to demonstrate impact, secure future funding, and refine strategies based on outcomes. Without dedicated data collection and evaluation frameworks, Pomona risks repeating cycles of pilot projects without meaningful systems change.

To advance SRTS programming in a sustainable, equitable way, Pomona must develop a citywide strategy that includes all schools, regardless of governance structure. This includes providing resources for charter schools like the SAE to implement educational programs (e.g., pedestrian and bicycle safety curriculum), encouragement strategies (e.g., walk-to-school incentives), and enforcement efforts (e.g., speed limit signage and traffic monitoring near school zones). Partnering with community organizations and leveraging student leadership can amplify these efforts, but institutional buy-in from the City and school districts is essential.

In summary, while Pomona has demonstrated a baseline commitment to SRTS principles, the city's programming remains fragmented, reactive, and limited in scope. The opportunity now exists to build on recent ATP investments and community momentum by establishing a more unified, inclusive, and sustained Safe Routes to School program—one that recognizes the mobility needs of all students and makes walking and biking to school a safe, accessible, and equitable option citywide.

Community Engagement Findings

This section presents findings from SAE's community engagement efforts, which included a parent survey and key informant interviews. The results provide insight into current travel behaviors, perceived barriers, and suggestions for improving safety. The mixed-methods approach allows us to compare parents' perspectives with those of local stakeholders, revealing both consensus and differences on Safe Routes to School (SRTS) priorities.

Introduction

A Safe Routes to School (SRTS) parent/guardian survey was conducted via outreach over a three-week period (from April 1, 2025 to April 18, 2025). The survey was available in English and Spanish; however, all respondents chose to complete the English version. In total, 27 parents/guardians participated (with 26 providing consent and complete answers) out of 670 students. The survey gathered a snapshot of how students travel to the School of Arts and Enterprise (SAE) and the community's safety concerns. It covered current travel modes and commute times, reasons for not allowing walking or biking, perceptions of safety on routes to school, broader safety concerns in Pomona, and desired safety improvements. The questionnaire included both closed-ended items (multiple-choice and ranking questions) and opportunities for open-ended comments. This section presents the results with accompanying charts for each question, providing a detailed, graduate-level analysis. Findings are interpreted in context and, where relevant, connected to existing Safe Routes research or best practices.

Travel Mode and Distance

Just over two-fifths of surveyed parents (11 out of 26, ~42%) indicated that their child uses active transportation (walking or biking) to get to SAE, whereas the remaining 58% rely on motorized transport, predominantly parent/guardian drop-off (Figure 1). This reveals a significant minority of families embracing walking/biking. At the same time, a majority are driving, suggesting there are perceived obstacles to active travel for many. Commute distance appears to be a key factor: several students attend the SAE from outside the immediate downtown neighborhood, given the school's open enrollment. Many families live relatively far

from campus, making walking impractical due to distance or time. Survey data on travel times supports this, showing a stark contrast between those who walk/bike and those who drive.

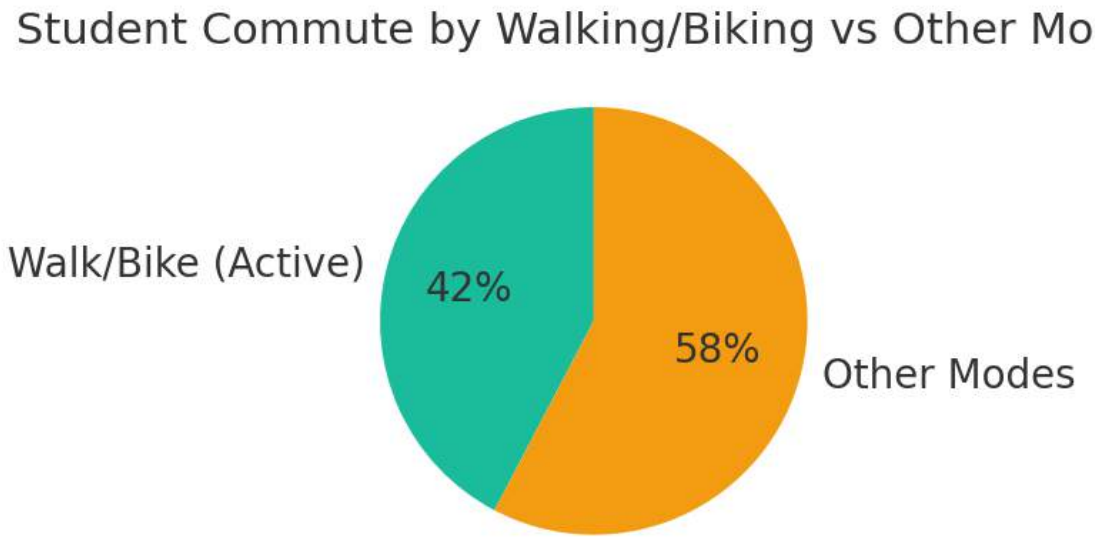


Figure 3.1: Proportion of SAE students who walk or bike to school versus those who use other modes (primarily being driven). 42% of surveyed parents reported their child walks or bikes, while 58% are driven or use other modes.

Just over two-fifths of surveyed parents (11 out of 26, ~42%) indicated that their child uses active transportation (walking or biking) to get to SAE, whereas the remaining 58% rely on motorized transport, predominantly parent/guardian drop-off (Figure 3.1). This reveals a significant minority of families embracing walking/biking. At the same time, a majority are driving, suggesting there are perceived obstacles to active travel for many. Commute distance appears to be a key factor: several students attend SAE from outside the immediate downtown neighborhood, given the school's open enrollment. Indeed, many families live relatively far from campus, making walking impractical due to distance or time. Survey data on travel times supports this, showing a stark contrast between those who walk/bike and those who drive.

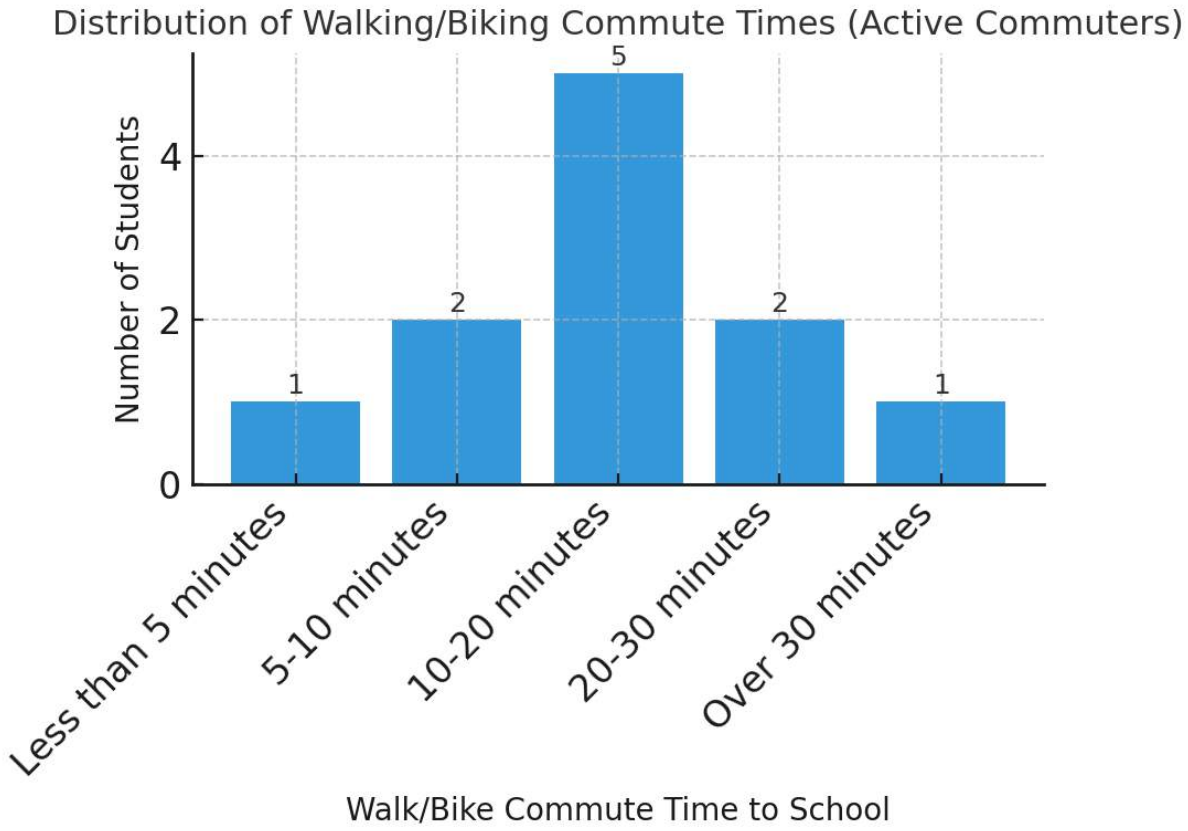


Figure 3.2: Distribution of one-way commute times for students who walk or bike to school. Most walking/biking students reach SAE in under 20 minutes, though a few have much longer walks.

Among students who walk or bike, most have a short commute. As Figure 3.2 illustrates, 8 of the 11 walking/biking students (73%) live within a 20-minute walk. Nearly half of active commuters (45%) have a walking trip of *10–20 minutes*, and another 27% walk *5–10 minutes*. A few are extremely close (one parent reported under 5 minutes). However, one student (9%) faces a *very long walk over 30 minutes*, which is an outlier. This distribution suggests that for the majority who walk, the school is within a reasonable distance. Those with shorter walks likely reside in or near downtown Pomona. The one very long walking commute hints that some families allow walking even from relatively far distances, but this is rare.

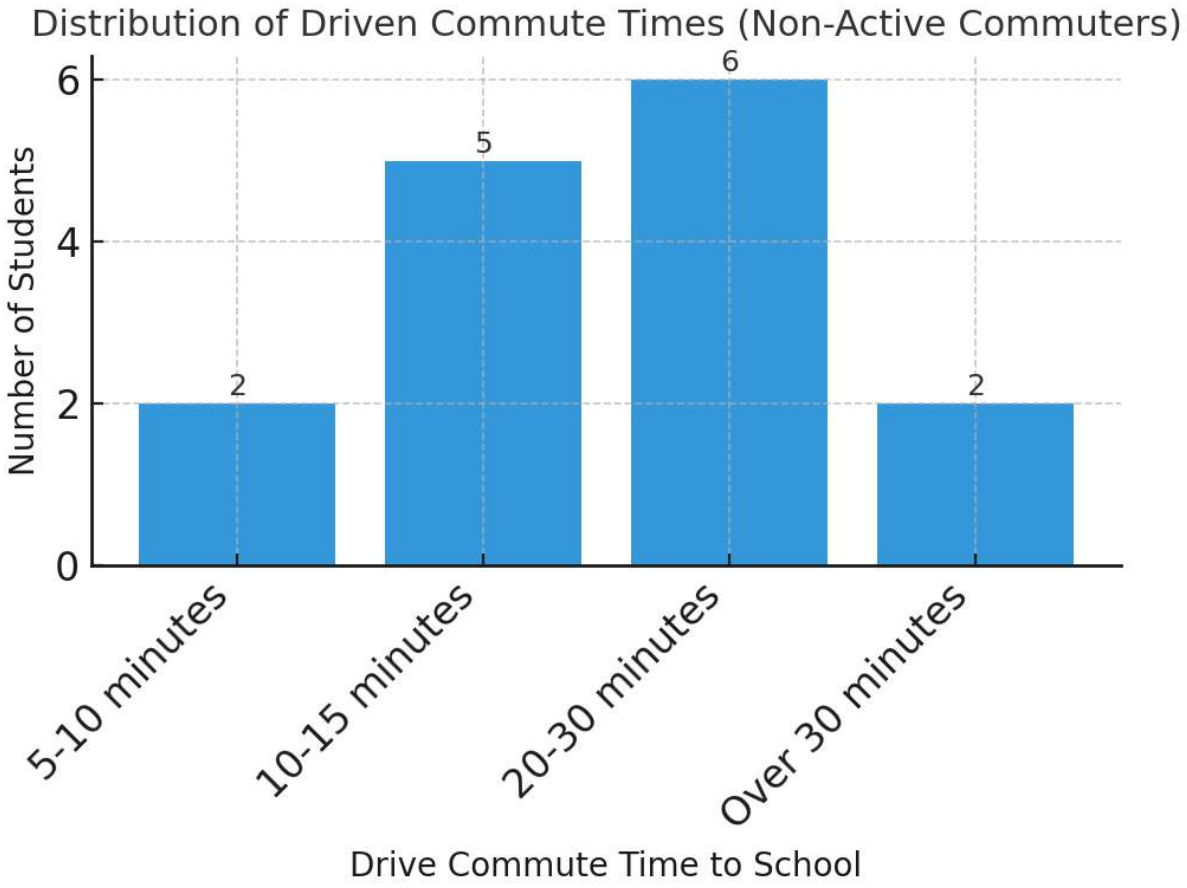


Figure 3.3: Distribution of one-way commute times for students who are driven to school. Many car commuters travel 10–30 minutes, and some drives exceed 30 minutes.

For students who do not walk/bike (i.e., primarily driven), commute times tend to be longer. As shown in Figure 3.3, about three-quarters of these parents report a drive time between 10 and 30 minutes each way. In fact, 40% of drivers travel *20–30 minutes* to reach SAE, and another third drive *10–15 minutes*. A notable subset (2 out of 15 drivers) even reported commutes *over 30 minutes*. None of the driving commutes were under 5 minutes. These longer car trips reflect that many students live relatively far from the school – often several miles away in other parts of Pomona or neighboring cities. The contrast with walking times is striking: most walkers are at school in under 20 minutes, whereas many drivers travel 20+ minutes. This distance barrier was explicitly confirmed by parents in later survey questions. In summary, families living closer to SAE are much more likely to allow walking, while those living farther must drive, contributing

to longer travel times. This pattern aligns with broader research showing that distance to school is the most commonly reported barrier to walking. In national surveys, parents who live more than a mile or two from school overwhelmingly choose driving. Our local data mirror this trend – distance is a determining factor in commute mode. (McDonald, 2008; McDonald & Aalborg, 2009; McDonald et al., 2013)

Barriers to Walking and Biking

Parents who do not allow their child to walk or bike to the SAE were asked to select all the reasons that apply. The results point to a few predominant barriers (Figure 4). The most frequently cited reason was distance – 73% of non-walking parents (11 of 15) said the *"commute is too long or far."* Nearly as prevalent were concerns about traffic danger and crime/personal safety. These were each cited by 67% of parents who drive their children (10 of 15). In other words, *almost all* of the non-active commuters' parents indicated that either distance or safety concerns (or both) keep them from allowing walking. This highlights a dual problem: many families simply live too far for walking to be practical, and many also feel the route environment is not safe enough for a child on foot or bike.

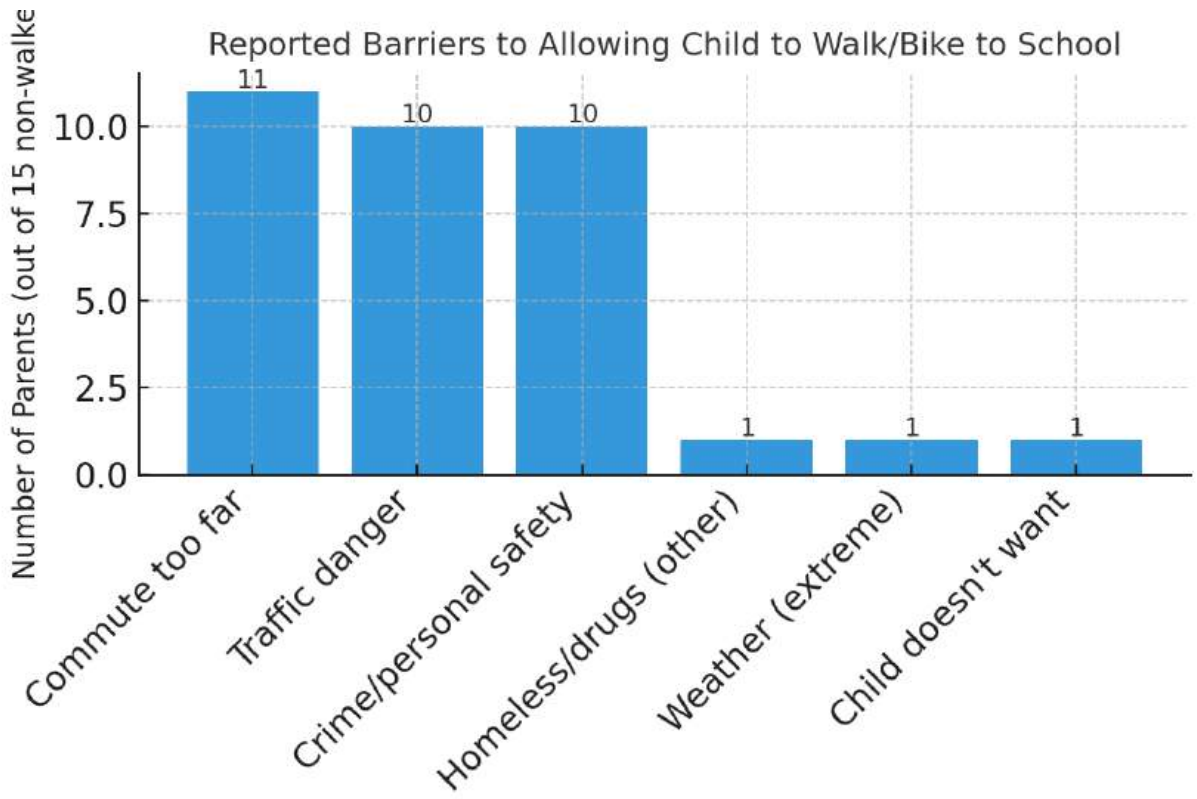


Figure 3.4: Reasons parents cited for not allowing their student to walk or bike to school. (Multiple responses were allowed; 15 parents responded.) Distance, traffic, and crime/personal safety dominate the responses.

Distance being the top barrier is consistent with nationwide SRTS findings, as noted above Heavy traffic and "stranger danger" or crime fears are also well-documented deterrents to active school travel (McDonald et al., 2013; Hoelscher et al., 2016). Our survey reinforces these patterns: long travel distances, traffic, and personal safety concerns are the primary obstacles preventing students from walking/biking to the SAE. Research shows that parents' safety perceptions strongly influence children's travel mode (Lee et al., 2024; DiMaggio et al., 2016). If parents feel a route is unsafe due to speeding cars or crime, they are unlikely to allow walking even if distance is manageable.

In addition to these major factors, a few parents mentioned other concerns in open-ended write-ins. For example, *one parent wrote: "We don't feel safe – streets are full of homeless and people under the influence."* This comment reflects a perception of encountering unsheltered

individuals or drug activity as a safety threat on the way to school. Another parent noted weather extremes (heat or cold) as a reason their child doesn't walk – a practical consideration in certain seasons. One parent simply stated that their child does not want to walk, indicating the student's personal reluctance. These individual responses were less common (each mentioned by 1 out of 15 non-walking parents), but they highlight that in a few cases, issues like environmental conditions, motivation, or the presence of homeless individuals factor into the decision. Overall, however, distance and safety (traffic and crime) overwhelmingly dominate the list of barriers. This aligns with the broader SRTS literature that finds *convenience and safety concerns* are the chief reasons parents. It underscores that absent a change in these conditions – such as closer school options or improved route safety – parents will continue to chauffeur their children despite the benefits of walking. (Lee et al., 2024; Elliott et al., 2024).

Notably, the safety concerns cited here foreshadow the more detailed safety perception questions that follow. Parents who voiced *crime* or *traffic* as barriers are echoing a general unease about the route environment that is explored in later sections. It is important to address both aspects: the *objective distance* (through potential policy measures like school buses or satellite drop-off points for far families) and the *subjective safety* (through infrastructure and programs) to encourage more active commuting.

Perception of Safety on Routes to School

Even among the 11 families who do allow walking or biking, safety perceptions were guarded. These parents were asked: *"How safe are the specific routes your student takes to SAE?"* on a scale from *Very Unsafe* to *Very Safe*. Tellingly, none of the active-commuting parents rated their child's route as affirmatively safe. As Figure 3.5 shows, a majority (7 of 11) described the route as "somewhat unsafe." The remaining active commute parents mostly chose "neither safe nor unsafe" (3 of 11, indicating a neutral stance). One parent felt their child's route was "very unsafe." And 0 parents selected "somewhat safe" or "very safe." In effect, *not a single* respondent who lets their child walk/bike expressed confidence that the route is safe – most lean toward feeling it is unsafe, albeit to varying degrees. This is a critical finding: even the current walkers/bikers are doing so despite safety concerns, not because they find the environment benign.

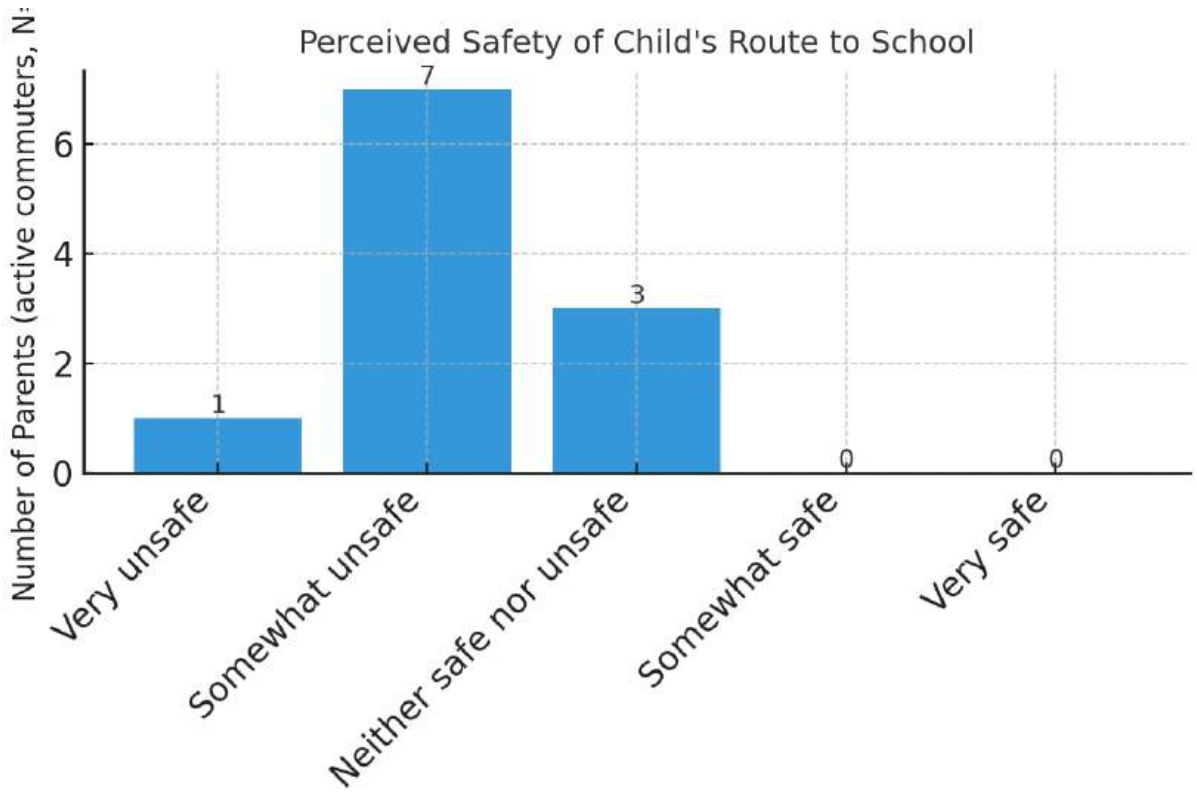


Figure 3.5: Parent ratings of how safe their child's usual route to school is (for those who walk or bike). Notably, 0 parents felt the route was safe; most rated it somewhat unsafe.

The prevalence of "somewhat unsafe" ratings (64% of active commuters) indicates that parents who allow walking are keenly aware of potential dangers, but perhaps feel the situation is manageable or have no alternative. The neutral responses (27%) suggest some parents feel the route is *just okay* – not overtly dangerous but not particularly safe either. The fact that one parent went as far as "very unsafe" underscores that for a subset, the level of risk is deeply concerning. These perceptions matter: parental worry can quickly translate to restrictions on walking. Indeed, research suggests that when parents perceive a route as unsafe, they may accompany the child or revert to driving over time (Hoelscher et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2024). The survey results imply that current walking families exercise caution and would welcome improvements that make routes feel safer.

To better understand *why* parents feel routes are unsafe, the survey asked those who walk/bike about specific hazards on their child's route. Figure 3.6 summarizes the hazards that these 11 active-travel parents reported encountering. The most common issues were related to the social environment along the route, as well as infrastructure deficiencies. Specifically, *10 out of 11* parents (91%) noted the presence of "unhoused people" or associated drug activity/loitering as a hazard. Likewise, *9 out of 11* (82%) identified heavy traffic on the route as a hazard. These two issues – encountering potentially unstable strangers and dealing with high traffic volumes – were virtually ubiquitous among the responses. About half the parents also pointed to poor infrastructure: *6 of 11* (55%) cited broken or uneven sidewalks/streets, and *2 of 11* (18%) mentioned the lack of crosswalks at key locations. (No parents specifically selected "poor lighting" in this question, even though inadequate street lighting was provided as an option; presumably, most routes are traveled in daylight, or lighting was not top-of-mind compared to other hazards.)

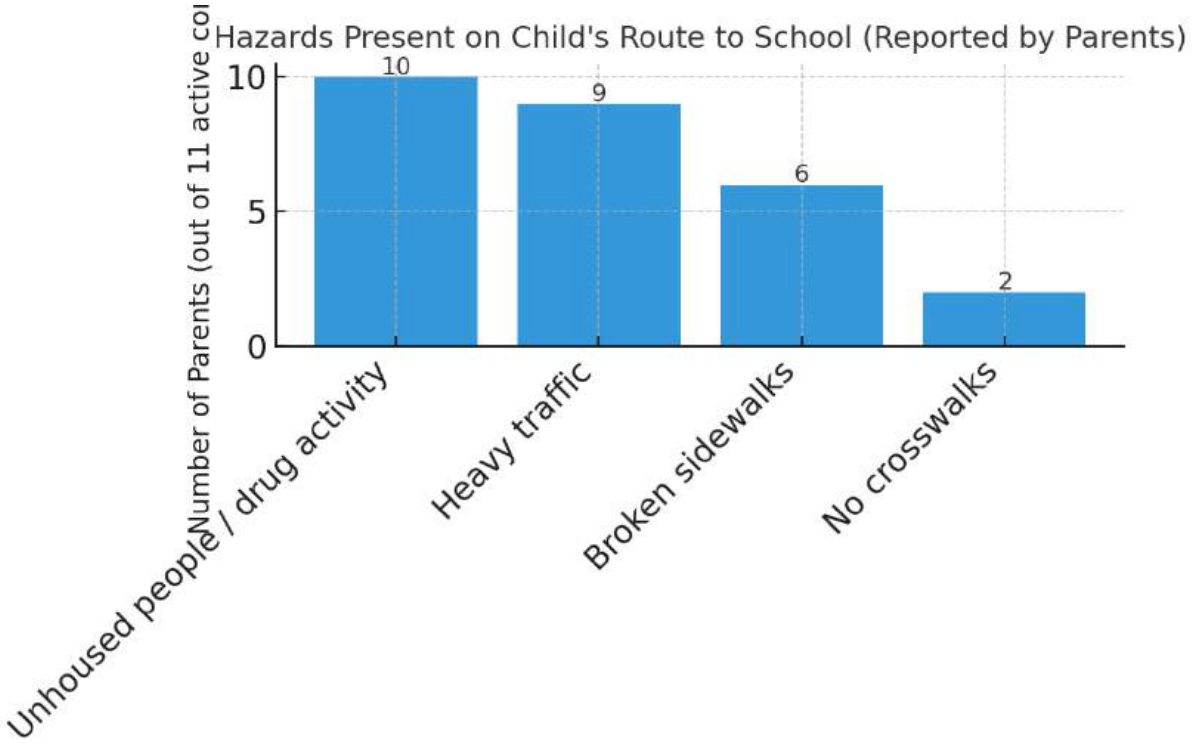


Figure 3.6: Hazards that parents say exist along their child's walking/biking route to SAE. Unhoused individuals (and related loitering/drug activity) and heavy traffic are the most

commonly cited hazards, followed by infrastructure issues like broken sidewalks and missing crosswalks.

These responses paint a picture of the challenges faced by students who walk. Nearly all are encountering strangers on the route – often individuals who are homeless or possibly using drugs – which can create a sense of unpredictability or threat. Similarly, almost all face fast or high-volume traffic, which raises the risk of accidents. About half have to navigate damaged sidewalks or lack sidewalks altogether, and some confront intersections without crosswalks, forcing unsafe street crossings. For example, a few parents specifically noted that there are *no marked crosswalks at certain busy intersections*, meaning students must dash across streets like Garey or Holt at uncontrolled points. One parent explained that their child has to cross an intersection near downtown where drivers "don't stop for pedestrians," illustrating the risk posed by missing crosswalk infrastructure. Another mentioned that broken pavement and lack of ramps make the route physically challenging.

Taken together, it's evident that even current walkers face significant discomfort due to both social and physical environmental factors. On the social side, parents worry about "stranger danger" – encountering individuals who might harass, intimidate, or simply make students feel unsafe. This includes homeless individuals and people possibly under the influence of drugs or experiencing mental health crises. On the physical side, parents see traffic and infrastructure gaps(speeding cars, lack of safe crossings, poor sidewalk conditions) as concrete hazards that could lead to injury. Parents' vigilance about these issues is well-founded – research indicates that factors like high traffic speed and incomplete pedestrian infrastructure directly increase the risk of pedestrian injuries (Boarnet, Day, et al., 2005; Muennig et al., 2014). For instance, areas that implemented SRTS engineering improvements (e.g., crosswalks, sidewalks, traffic calming) have seen significant reductions in child pedestrian injury rates (DiMaggio et al., 2016; Hoelscher et al., 2016). Thus, the hazards parents cite (speeding cars, no crosswalks, etc.) are not only perceived risks but real risk factors documented in safety studies.

It's important to note that none of the active commuting parents feel "safe" about the route – they are essentially tolerating these hazards, perhaps because their children are older or they have limited transportation alternatives. The qualitative comments suggest a strong desire for

improvements. Parents specifically want the city to address the presence of loiterers and improve infrastructure. As one parent put it, “Even though we walk, it’s not safe. Too many sketchy people and no crosswalk by [a specific intersection].” This sentiment is echoed across responses. In sum, the active commuters underscore that the current walking environment is far from ideal. Both social safety and traffic safety need to be improved to make parents (and students) feel comfortable. These findings set the stage for the next sections on broader community safety concerns and the improvements parents believe would help.

Broader Safety Concerns

All survey participants (both those who drive and those who walk) were asked about general safety concerns in the Pomona community that might affect students walking or biking. This question aimed to capture what parents see as the overarching safety issues in the city that influence whether children can travel safely to school. The results were strikingly unified (Figure 7). Nearly every parent surveyed identified crime as a major concern. Specifically, 25 out of 26 parents (96%) selected *“Crime (e.g., theft, harassment)”* as a top safety concern. Likewise, an almost equal number – 24 parents (92%) – identified drug use in public areas as a key concern. These two issues (crime and public drug use) clearly stand out as the dominant worries for the community. In contrast, about half of respondents (50% or 13 parents) noted “poorly maintained streets or sidewalks” as an issue in the community. Only a small minority highlighted lack of street lighting (8% or 2 parents) as a primary concern. This indicates that while infrastructure maintenance is on the radar for some, it is not as universally alarming as crime and drugs. Lighting, in particular, was rarely seen as a top issue, aligning with earlier data where no one cited poor lighting on their specific route (and possibly because many school commute times are during daylight).

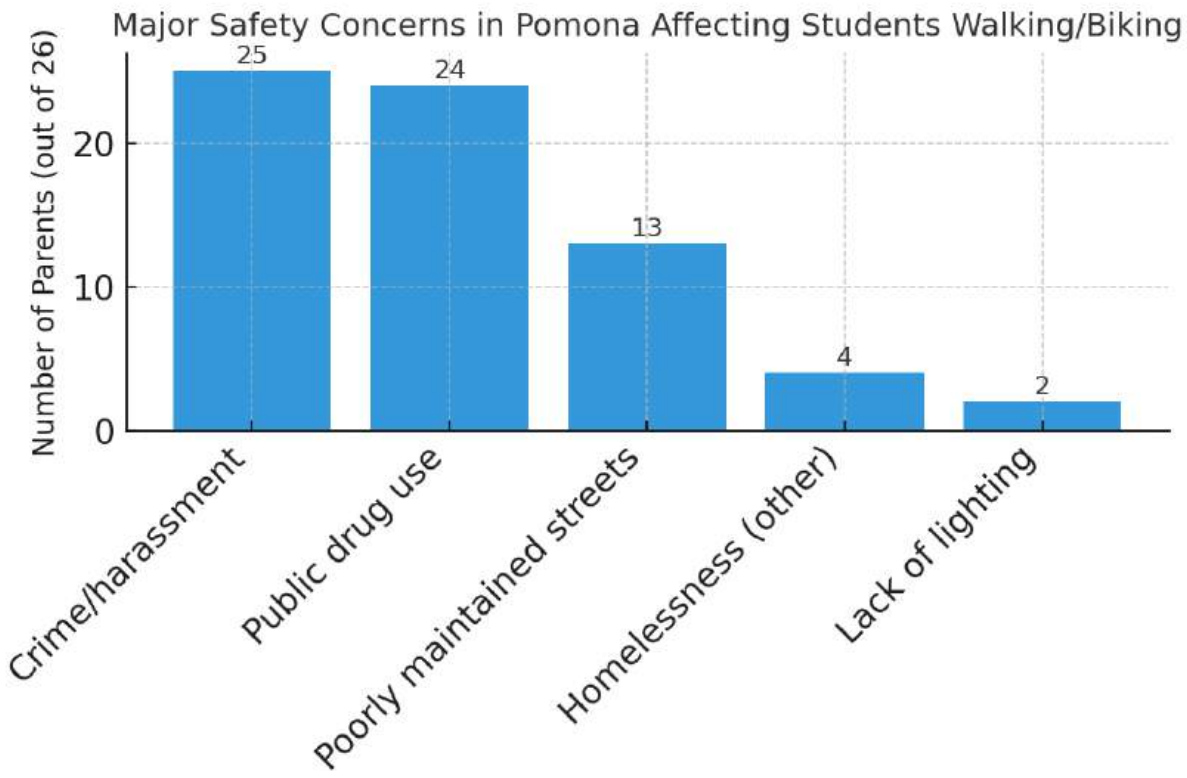


Figure 3.7: Community-wide safety concerns flagged by parents that affect student walking/biking. Crime and harassment and public drug use are nearly universal concerns. About half of parents also worry about poorly maintained streets/sidewalks. Very few emphasize lack of lighting. (Some parents provided additional "other" concerns such as homelessness, discussed below.)

The near-consensus on crime and public drug use reflects Pomona's urban context, especially around the downtown area. Parents are essentially saying that the social environment – in terms of law enforcement and public behavior – is the biggest threat to their children's safety. Theft, harassment, violence, or witnessing drug use are all fears that can discourage a parent from letting a child walk alone. It's worth noting that the level of concern for crime/drugs in our survey is higher than national averages; one large CDC survey found only ~11% of parents citing crime as a barrier to kids walking (DiMaggio et al., 2016). The 96% here suggests Pomona parents see crime as a much more present danger, likely due to real local conditions (e.g., higher crime rates or more visible drug activity) in the community. About half of parents (50%) also

worry about poor infrastructure maintenance in the community – things like broken sidewalks, potholes, or unsafe street design beyond just the school route. This indicates that physical conditions of roads and sidewalks in Pomona are on many parents' minds (consistent with some citing those hazards on their own route). However, these concerns, while significant, are secondary to the overwhelming worries about crime and drugs.

In the open-ended part of this question, several parents brought up homelessness and people experiencing mental illness as additional community safety concerns. Although "homelessness" was not explicitly listed as a checkbox, at least four parents wrote in responses about *unsheltered individuals*. For example, one parent wrote that the presence of *"homeless people all over the place"* makes them uneasy about their child walking. Another mentioned *people with mental health crises wandering the streets*. These comments reinforce the earlier point that the presence of unsheltered or unstable individuals is perceived as a safety issue. Parents are concerned not only about direct crime but also about situations like encampments or individuals behaving erratically near paths children might take. This aligns with their concerns about crime and drugs, since homelessness in the area can be associated with visible drug use or unpredictable behavior. It's a nuanced social safety concern – parents may worry about their child being approached, bothered, or simply frightened by encountering such individuals on the way to school.

One parent also commented on the lack of security or supervision in public spaces, saying there are *"not enough police or security… that's where students should be safest."* This remark, presumably referring to parks or routes near schools, underscores a desire for greater enforcement and adult supervision in the community. The parent is effectively calling for more presence of authority figures (police, security guards) in areas where students walk or gather, to deter crime and make families feel safer. This echoes a common theme in urban communities: the need for a safe corridor or guardian presence for children traveling through high-crime areas.

In summary, Pomona parents are deeply concerned about both personal security and the physical environment surrounding their children. Crime (such as theft or harassment) and public drug use top the list – these issues can directly threaten a child's safety or well-being and create a general atmosphere of unsafety. Infrastructure problems like broken sidewalks are also a concern, though more for half the respondents. And while poor street lighting was rarely selected (perhaps

because it's a daylight commute or lesser issue in this specific community), multiple parents independently raised homelessness and mental health issues, indicating that *unsheltered populations in the area contribute to their safety worries*. Taken together, these community concerns provide crucial context: even if the immediate school zone is improved, parents' willingness to let kids walk will also depend on addressing crime and social conditions in the broader neighborhood. This suggests SRTS efforts in Pomona cannot focus solely on crosswalks and sidewalks; they must be coordinated with community policing, homeless services, and other social programs to truly alleviate parents' fears.

Downtown Pomona Safety Perceptions

Because the SAE is located in downtown Pomona, the survey specifically asked: *"How safe do you feel Downtown Pomona is for students walking/biking?"* This question gauged parents' perception of the overall downtown area (not just the route to school) as an environment for student pedestrians. The responses were largely pessimistic. Roughly 73% of parents described Downtown Pomona as unsafe for students to walk or bike in, to some degree. As shown in Figure 3.88, 35% answered "Very unsafe" and 38% answered "Somewhat unsafe." About 15% were neutral (*"Neither safe nor unsafe"*), and only a small minority (~12%) felt downtown was safe (7.7% "Somewhat safe" and 3.8% "Very safe," together 3 out of 26 parents). In absolute numbers, 19 parents labeled downtown unsafe (9 very, 10 somewhat), 4 were neutral, and only 3 saw it as safe. Clearly, the prevailing sentiment is that Downtown Pomona is not a safe area for children to walk or bike without considerable risk.

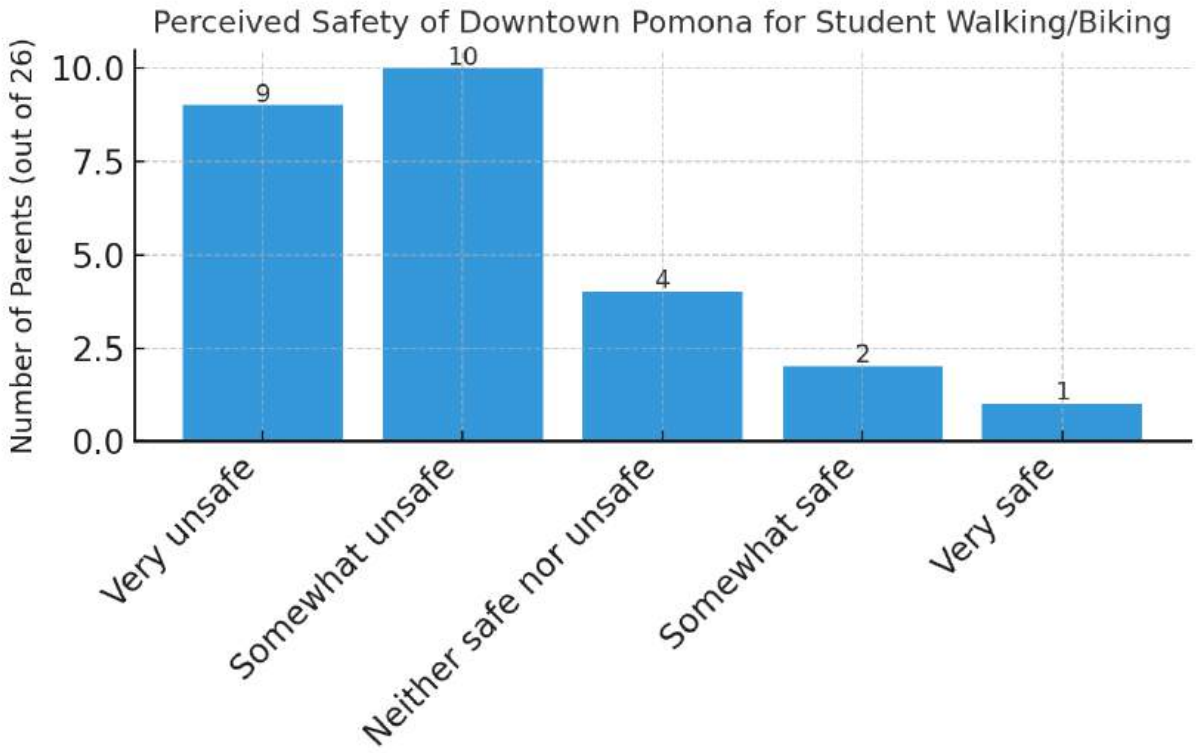


Figure 3.8: Parent perceptions of safety in Downtown Pomona for student walkers/bikers. 73% of respondents rated downtown unsafe to some degree, while very few see it as safe.

This is an important finding because SAE's students must traverse downtown or its immediate vicinity to get to school. If parents broadly feel that the downtown environment is unsafe, they will be reluctant to allow any independent student travel, regardless of specific route improvements. The qualitative reasons behind these downtown safety perceptions were not directly asked in the survey, but we can infer them from earlier questions: parents likely factor in the crime, drug activity, loitering, and traffic in downtown Pomona. Downtown areas often have higher pedestrian activity mixed with traffic, as well as concentrations of homeless individuals or crime hotspots, and Pomona is no exception. Parents see this and respond accordingly. One can imagine that the same concerns – fear of mugging or harassment (crime), exposure to drug use or dealers, and chaotic traffic – underlie the downtown safety question. In effect, parents perceive the entire downtown as a risky environment for children, not just isolated trouble spots.

The fact that only 3 parents felt downtown is safe (and even those likely only *somewhat* safe) shows a near-universal lack of confidence in the social safety of the area. Some parents might have answered neutrally if they feel parts of downtown are improving or if they rarely allow their child there alone to truly gauge. But the overwhelming majority labeling it unsafe indicates a significant barrier to SRTS. If families think that simply being in downtown poses a danger to their kids, they will understandably opt for driving to keep their children out of that environment or will escort them closely if walking.

It's also notable that this perception persists *despite* any security measures that might exist downtown (e.g., police patrols, cameras). It suggests that whatever is in place is not enough to reassure parents. Perceived safety is as important as actual safety when it comes to behavior change. Even if statistically one could argue that a child might not be directly harmed on a walk downtown, the perception of risk (73% saying unsafe) is sufficient to discourage walking.

For SRTS planning, these perceptions underscore the need for strategies beyond physical infrastructure. Even if we put perfect sidewalks and crossings, parents may still not let children walk if they believe downtown is crime-ridden or full of drug users. The community will likely need collaborative efforts with law enforcement and community organizations to improve the *social* conditions. For example, increased community policing, neighborhood watch programs, or dedicated safe corridors could help. The survey essentially tells us: "Build it and they still might not come," unless the *social environment* is also addressed. Many SRTS programs have found that combining infrastructure improvements with enforcement and safety education is key to success (McDonald et al., 2014; Elliott et al., 2023). Pomona may need to ensure there are visible safety measures (like crossing guards or volunteer walk escorts) in downtown and efforts to reduce crime/homelessness issues, so that parents feel a change.

In sum, the parent consensus is that Downtown Pomona, in its current state, is not student-friendly for walking or biking. This perception is a significant barrier – independent of distance or lack of sidewalks – because it speaks to fear of the surrounding environment. Any comprehensive SRTS initiative must therefore partner with broader community safety initiatives. It's not just about a safe route, but a safe destination and safe community. These insights from parents set a clear mandate: improving infrastructure alone won't suffice if the backdrop is a

downtown that parents deem unsafe. The next section of the survey turned to solutions – what improvements parents think would make walking and biking safer and more acceptable.

Desired Safety Improvements

Despite voicing many concerns, parents also had clear ideas about what changes or interventions could make them more comfortable allowing their child to walk or bike. The survey presented a list of potential improvements and asked parents to select all that they felt would make walking/biking safer for their students. Figure 3.9 summarizes the choices and the level of support for each. Three options emerged as overwhelming favorites, each selected by roughly two-thirds of respondents: "Supervised walking groups," "Crossing guards in Downtown Pomona," and "Speed humps or other traffic calming measures." Specifically, 17 out of 26 parents (65%) indicated that adult-supervised walking groups (often known as "walking school buses") would improve safety. The same number, 17 (65%), supported implementing speed humps or similar traffic calming on routes. And 16 parents (62%) wanted crossing guards posted in Downtown Pomona to help students cross streets and watch over key points. These top three picks suggest that parents value both community-based supervision and traffic speed management. In other words, having responsible adults present to supervise or assist student pedestrians (walking groups or crossing guards) and slowing down cars are seen as the most impactful safety measures.

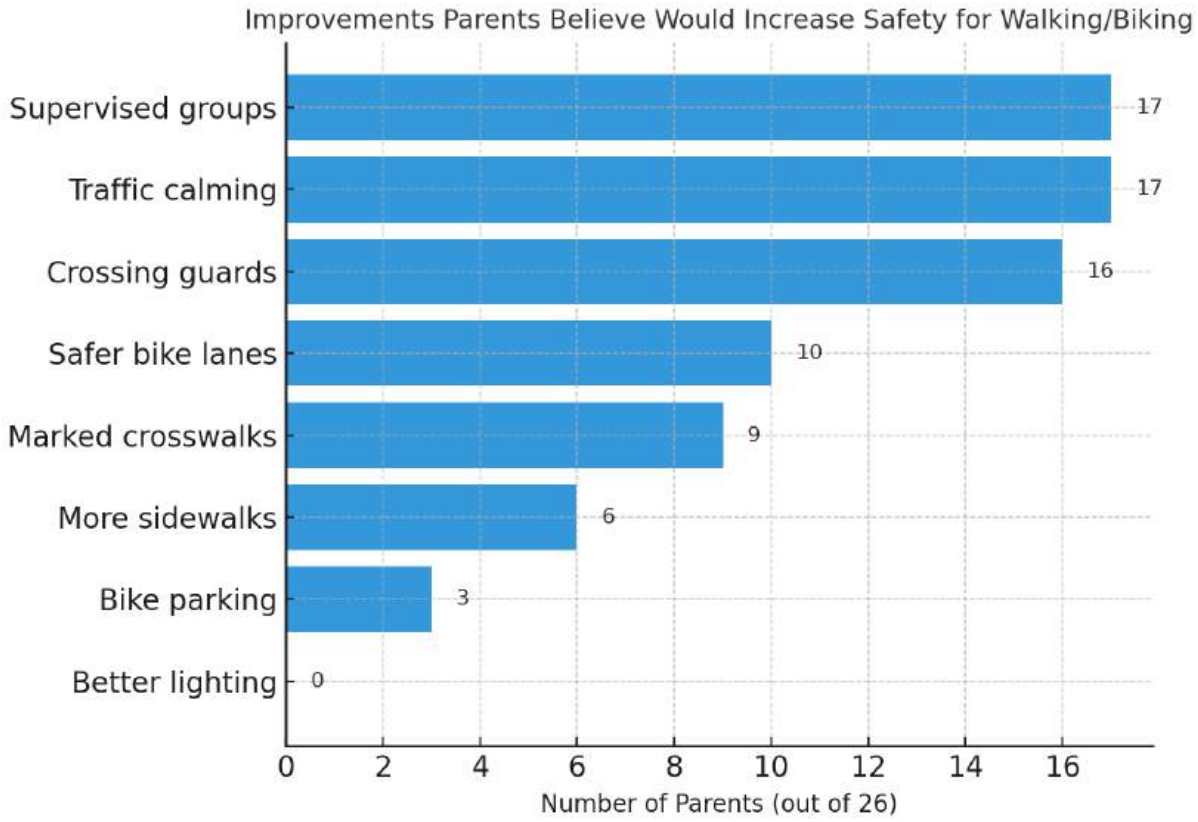


Figure 3.9: Safety improvements that parents believe would make walking/biking safer for their child (multi-select question). The most popular improvements (each ~62–65% of respondents) are supervised walking groups, traffic calming (speed humps), and crossing guards in downtown. Safer bike lanes and marked crosswalks also have significant support (~35–40%). Improved sidewalks and bike parking were less frequently chosen, and better street lighting had no support.

Beyond the top three, there was also notable support for some infrastructure improvements. Safer bike lanes were selected by 10 parents (38%), indicating a sizable minority interested in protected or improved bike lanes (likely important for those whose children might bike or for general traffic calming). More marked crosswalks were chosen by 9 parents (35%), echoing earlier concerns about missing crosswalks – parents recognize that adding crosswalks at key locations would improve safety. About 6 parents (23%) selected more or wider sidewalks, suggesting that sidewalk improvements, while important, are not as universally clamored for – possibly because downtown already has sidewalks in most areas, albeit some in poor condition.

Only 3 parents (11%) felt safe bike parking (like secure racks or lockers) would make a difference; this low number likely reflects that the primary concerns lie with the journey itself rather than the destination, and also perhaps not many students currently bike such that parking is a pressing issue. Interestingly, "Better street lighting" was not selected by any parent (0%). This aligns with the earlier finding that lack of lighting was a minimal concern – apparently, improving lighting is not seen as a priority compared to other interventions (or possibly it was overlooked because many think of safety in terms of crime and traffic rather than lighting). Regardless, it's telling that no one thinks streetlights are the missing piece here.

The dominance of supervised walking groups and crossing guards indicates parents are seeking greater adult presence and oversight in children's routes. A supervised walking group (essentially an adult or older student leading a group of kids walking to school) would directly address stranger danger concerns by ensuring children are not alone and have someone to handle any issues that arise. It also builds a sense of community safety – if multiple families participate, there are "eyes on the street," which can deter crime. Similarly, crossing guards stationed in downtown could help children navigate the busiest intersections and also act as guardians along the route. Many formal SRTS programs incorporate crossing guards near schools, but parents here specifically want them *in the downtown area*, which might be a few blocks away from the school – highlighting that parents worry about those specific high-traffic, potentially high-crime intersections downtown. This is a notable takeaway: the community is asking for supervised, protected corridors for student pedestrians.

The strong support for traffic calming (speed humps) shows parents are also highly concerned about vehicle speed and reckless driving. Speed humps, raised crosswalks, or other traffic calming measures force cars to slow down, thereby reducing the risk and severity of collisions. Two-thirds of respondents viewing this as helpful aligns with their earlier identification of heavy traffic as a hazard. Slower cars would make them feel more confident in their child's safety. It's well known that lower traffic speeds dramatically improve pedestrian survival rates and comfort, which likely informed parents' choices either explicitly or intuitively. Studies have found significant safety benefits in school zones that implemented traffic calming measures (Boarnet, Anderson, et al., 2005; Muennig et al., 2014), so parents' intuition here is supported by evidence.

The mid-tier support for safer bike lanes and crosswalks suggests that, while not the top concern for everyone, a considerable subset of parents see value in infrastructure upgrades. Ten parents wanting better bike lanes likely includes those whose kids might bike or those who view bike lanes as a way to buffer pedestrians from traffic. Nine wanting more crosswalks directly correlates with the 2 earlier who cited "no crosswalks" as a route hazard – it's likely those parents and others agree that certain intersections need marked crossings. These are relatively low-cost, high-visibility improvements that could be pursued.

Lower interest in sidewalk improvements (23%) could be because many downtown sidewalks exist (though some are rough), or because people prioritized other fixes first. And bike parking being only 11% is understandable – it's more of a nice-to-have once kids actually bike; currently, few do, so it's not seen as a safety solution per se. Lighting's complete lack of support might be due to the fact that SAE start/end times are during daylight for most of the year (except maybe winter afternoons), so it's not a foremost issue, or parents feel other problems overshadow lighting. Additionally, downtown Pomona has decent street lighting in many areas, so this might not be perceived as a gap.

Overall, parents' choices indicate a preference for tangible, on-the-ground safety measures: people who can escort or protect children, and physical changes that slow cars and create safer walking conditions. This mix of "software" (programmatic supervision) and "hardware" (infrastructure) is exactly what comprehensive SRTS programs typically employ. It is encouraging that parents have identified measures that are largely actionable. For example, walking school bus programs (supervised groups) have been implemented in many communities and shown to increase walking rates and attendance (McDonald et al., 2014; Elliott et al., 2023). Crossing guard programs are a staple around schools and could be extended along key routes. Traffic calming around schools has proven safety benefits, as noted. These improvements would directly target the barriers cited: supervised groups and crossing guards address personal safety/crime concerns, and traffic calming and crosswalks address traffic danger.

One should also note that none of these top measures directly address "distance" – the number one barrier. That is logical: distance isn't something an individual school can easily change (short of busing or remote drop-offs). Instead, parents focus on making the environment safer so that, if

distance is reasonable, they would let their kids walk. For those living far, these improvements might not convert them to walking, but for those on the fence (moderate distance but safety worried), these measures could make a difference. In fact, the combination of walking groups + crossing guards + traffic calming could create a scenario where even some moderately far families might carpool to a drop-off point and let kids do a "partial walk" with a group the rest of the way – a strategy some SRTS programs encourage.

In the next question, parents were asked to prioritize these improvements, which provides further insight into which they consider most important if trade-offs must be made.

Prioritized Improvements

After selecting all improvements they thought would help, parents were asked to rank the proposed improvements in order of importance (1 = most important, 6 = least important, in the survey; although 8 items were ultimately ranked since all options were included). This ranking forces parents to weigh which single measure they feel would make the biggest impact on safety. The results of the ranking largely reinforce the earlier selections, but add nuance on relative priority (Figure 3.10).

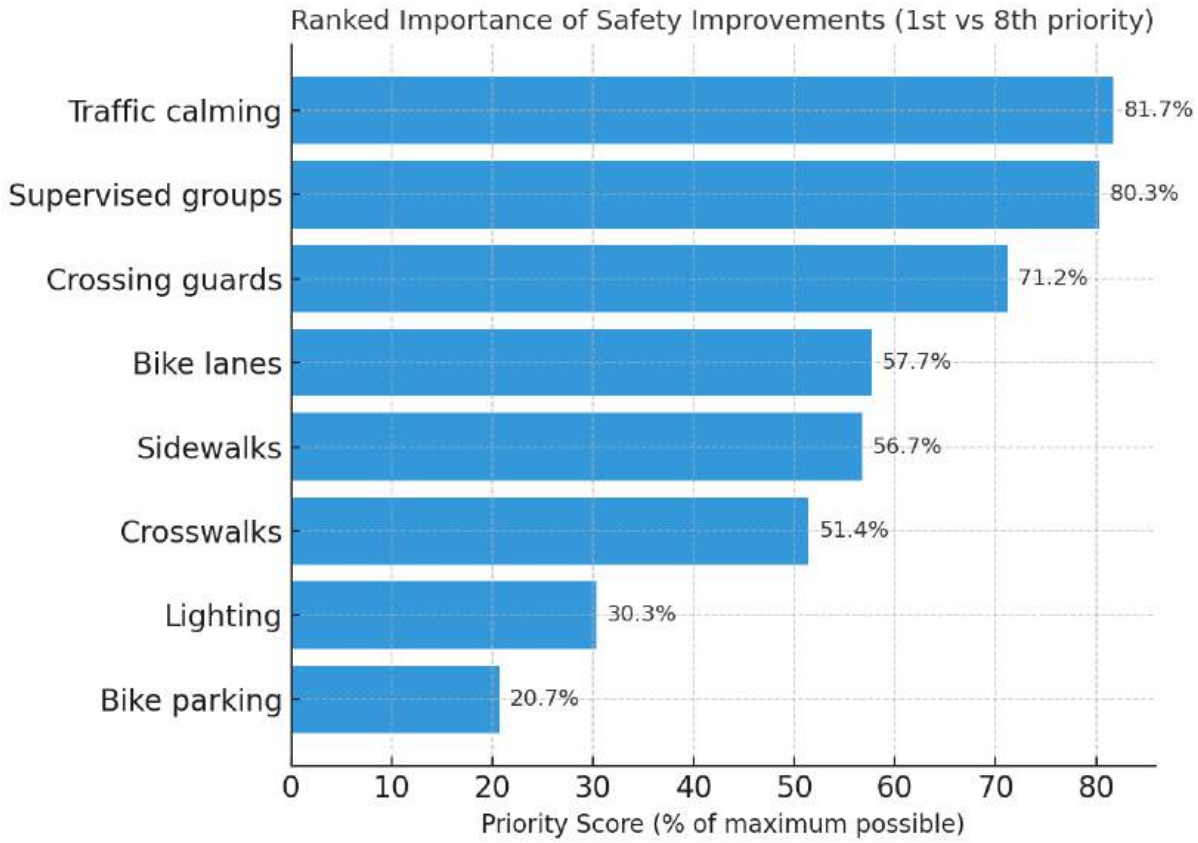


Figure 3.10: Average priority score for each safety improvement, based on parents' ranking (higher percentage = higher average priority). This reflects how parents collectively prioritized the measures from most important to least important. Speed humps/traffic calming and supervised walking groups emerge as the top priorities when forced to choose, followed by crossing guards. Bike lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks form a middle tier, while better lighting and bike parking rank lowest.

In the ranking, traffic calming measures (speed humps) and supervised walking groups came out essentially tied as the top priorities on average. By assigning a priority score (with 100% representing the highest possible priority if everyone ranked that item first), *traffic calming scored about 82%* and *supervised groups about 80%*. This means that across all respondents, those two were most frequently ranked near the top. In fact, 54% of parents (14 out of 26) gave "Supervised walking groups" the #1 rank, and many of the rest ranked it second. Meanwhile, a significant number also gave "Speed humps/traffic calming" the #1 rank (4 out of 26), and

almost everyone ranked it within their top three. The difference between these two is minimal – effectively, parents see both slowing traffic and having walking supervision as critical, top-tier interventions. When forced to pick, a slight majority picked walking groups as the single most important, but the overall weighted scores suggest both are virtually equally critical in parents' minds.

Crossing guards in Downtown Pomona emerged as the next-highest priority. It received a priority score of ~71%, placing it clearly below the top two but above the rest. Only a couple of parents made crossing guards their #1, but many ranked it #2 or #3. This suggests that while crossing guards are extremely popular (nearly everyone selected it in the previous question), when ranking, some parents perhaps viewed it as slightly less transformative than speed humps or walking groups. One interpretation is that parents might see crossing guards as addressing a more specific location or issue, whereas walking groups and traffic calming have broader effects. Alternatively, some may have assumed crossing guards would naturally be part of a supervised walking group program or that their child might not need to traverse the guarded intersection if in a group. Nonetheless, crossing guards are clearly a high priority (top-three) improvement according to the ranking.

The middle tier of priorities consisted of infrastructure improvements: safer bike lanes, more sidewalks, and marked crosswalks. These were frequently ranked in the middle (3rd, 4th, or 5th) by parents. None of these were commonly anyone's #1 priority, but many parents placed them above the least important. This indicates that while parents do value these improvements, they see them as somewhat less urgent than measures that directly involve supervision or traffic speed reduction. Specifically, *safer bike lanes* had a score of ~58%, *sidewalk improvements ~57%*, and *marked crosswalks ~51%*. The tight clustering of these scores means parents didn't differentiate hugely among these three – collectively, they form a second tier of importance. It makes sense: these address physical infrastructure that can indeed improve safety (especially for biking and crossing streets), but without addressing the social safety and driving behavior aspects, they alone don't solve the core worries. Parents likely consider these useful but perhaps "secondary" to the more human-focused interventions. It's worth noting that a few parents did rank *safer bike lanes* as their top priority (5 out of 26 gave it #1, likely those particularly interested in biking). This raised its average somewhat, meaning there is a small contingent of families for whom bike

infrastructure is extremely important (perhaps their children cycle or they would only consider biking if lanes were safer). For most others, bike lanes were lower priority if their child doesn't bike. The difference in perspectives on bike lanes hints that this improvement would benefit certain users a lot, but isn't universally needed for all students to walk.

Finally, the lowest priority improvements were better street lighting and safe bike parking. These consistently fell to the bottom of rankings. *Better lighting* had an average priority score of only ~30%, and *bike parking ~21%*. In fact, not a single parent ranked lighting or bike parking as their #1 choice, and many ranked these last (7th or 8th). This confirms that parents do not see lighting or bike parking as game-changers for safety. Lighting might have been deemed largely adequate already or simply not as pressing as having adults around and slowing cars. Bike parking is likely viewed as a nice amenity, but irrelevant if children aren't biking in the first place due to safety concerns. Essentially, parents are saying that without addressing supervision, traffic, and crossings, things like lighting or bike racks won't matter because they won't even let their kids walk or bike. This prioritization is logical and helps decision-makers focus resources on the measures parents believe will actually encourage active commuting.

To summarize the prioritization: Parents' top priorities for improving safety are (1) slowing down traffic and (1A) providing adult supervision (through walking groups), (3) having crossing guards, then (4) building out safer bike/ped infrastructure like lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks. Lower priorities are lighting and bike parking. This hierarchy provides a clear roadmap: while it's important to have a comprehensive plan, if resources are limited, the community should first implement supervised walking programs, deploy crossing guards, and install traffic calming, as these are expected to yield the greatest increase in perceived safety and are most likely to change behavior (i.e., more kids walking). The fact that these priorities align well with the earlier "select all" popularity contest strengthens the validity of the finding – parents were consistent in their opinion that people-based solutions and traffic speed management come first.

It's worth noting that many of these improvements complement each other. For instance, a "walking school bus" (supervised group) could be combined with crossing guards and traffic-calmed streets to create a very safe network for children. It's not that only one will be done; ideally, a Safe Routes program would implement multiple top-tier measures in concert.

The ranking simply helps to understand what parents want the most in case trade-offs are needed. In our case, fortunately, the top solutions (walking groups, guards, calming) are not mutually exclusive and in fact work best together – an insight that the next phases of planning can take into account.

Key Informant Interview Insights

Introduction

To deepen the understanding of barriers, perceptions, and opportunities related to Safe Routes to School (SRTS) near The School of Arts and Enterprise (SAE), three in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals possessing unique perspectives on mobility in Pomona. These interviewees were purposefully selected to reflect a diverse range of expertise: one is a civic leader and Planning Commissioner representing Downtown Pomona; another is a community advocate and SAE alumna currently working at a local nonprofit; and the third is a veteran active transportation advocate with decades of regional policy and programming experience. Their lived experience, professional roles, and proximity to the SAE provide essential context to complement the parent survey results.

The interviews were semi-structured, guided by key questions centered on students' experiences walking or biking to school, perceived barriers, infrastructure conditions, and ideas for change. What emerged from their responses is a rich narrative of both personal reflection and systemic critique. Interviewees shared candid insights on the realities facing students in Pomona, the structural neglect of pedestrian infrastructure, and the cultural dynamics shaping how communities view walking and biking. These interviews do more than echo data—they humanize it, challenge assumptions, and lay the groundwork for more responsive, place-based planning.

Student Experience: “It’s rare—and when it happens, it’s out of necessity”

Each interviewee emphasized that walking and biking to school is not the norm in Pomona. As Interviewee 1 plainly noted, “students in Pomona do not have a good experience when it comes to walking and biking.” He expressed surprise when he does see youth walking, a sentiment that

reinforces the rarity of active transportation in the city. The reasons, he argued, are not individual choices, but systemic conditions: "Cars drive faster and more recklessly, it's hot to walk outdoors due to lack of trees… ultimately the current infrastructure in the city isn't conducive towards walking which doesn't make it safe for kids."

Interviewee 2 echoed this, explaining that although she lives near two schools and sees students walk or bike out of necessity, the streets themselves are hostile. "There are a lot of cars in the morning and people drive fast and recklessly," she said. Her first hand experience taking her nephew to the SAE revealed that the route from West Pomona is not safe enough to walk, even when the distance is reasonable. Her reflection that students *still* walk and bike despite the poor conditions underscores a powerful point: walking is often not a choice but a necessity for students in Pomona.

Interviewee 3 offered broader regional context, noting that "the current percent of students walking/biking to school today is really low compared to 50 years ago." While acknowledging that cities like Pasadena once had higher rates, he emphasized that in Pomona, policies like open enrollment have physically disconnected students from neighborhood schools. Still, he saw an opportunity: "Open enrollment… in theory opens up the opportunity to bike to school instead." His statement offers an important counterpoint—while distance can't always be reduced, *conditions* for biking can be improved.

Barriers to Walking and Biking: Fear, Heat, and a Culture of Car Dependence

All interviewees agreed that barriers to walking and biking are multifaceted. When asked what they viewed as the biggest challenges, all three pointed to a mix of environmental and cultural obstacles—unsafe streets, parental fear, and deep-rooted car dependency.

Interviewee 1 described this as a "chicken and the egg situation." He noted, "It's hard to know whether kids don't walk because of the lack of infrastructure or because of parents not letting their kids walk/bike to school." Still, he was clear that the perception of safety is a massive influence: "Parents are definitely a barrier… there's a huge perception of safety issue in the city and it influences how parents feel."

Interviewee 2 added that walking “is unsafe,” and biking is worse—particularly on streets like Holt Avenue, where there are no bike lanes and traffic is fast. She observed that the environment is not just unsafe, but unpleasant: “There are not enough trees and the streets are extremely dirty with a lot of trash piling up on street corners.” And yet, “students still walk and bike to and from school out of necessity—even with all of these bad conditions.”

Interviewee 3 did not hesitate: “Parents are the biggest barrier.” He attributed this to fear, exacerbated by media and cultural paranoia: “They grow very paranoid watching mainstream news being constantly fear mongered into thinking their kid is going to get assaulted… they are more concerned about a fictional assault than pedestrian collisions from motor vehicles.” His frustration extended to schools: “Schools are also a huge barrier—liability is more important than safety.” His reflections tied these concerns to a wider national condition: “We are such a car centric society and highly depend on the car and this is really embedded in society. The car is American—it is part of our culture.”

Safety and Infrastructure: A Broken System, Not a Broken Family

When asked specifically about how safety concerns impact students' ability to use active transportation, all interviewees returned to the failures of infrastructure, enforcement, and perception.

Interviewee 1 reflected on a moment in a city council meeting when a member said, “Why do we need more bike lanes if only the homeless use them?” He recalled this with disbelief, adding that issues like homelessness, human trafficking, and crime are “connected to walkability and we cannot ignore these issues while talking about active transportation.” For him, the problem is that these issues are tackled in silos instead of being seen as interconnected: “Many of these issues are interconnected but only tried to be ‘solved’ in silos.”

Interviewee 2 centered gender and youth resilience in her response: “Kids have to be really vigilant and observing… especially girls.” She shared a personal experience of being followed to school by “an older creep,” noting that even this deeply uncomfortable and traumatic memory didn’t eliminate the necessity of walking. “Gang activity, the perception of safety, and timing

with public transportation didn't help with getting around for kids," she added, connecting issues of safety to systemic inequality.

Interviewee 3 was the most scathing in his assessment: "The sheer fact of the matter is that most cities in Southern California don't support kids walking or biking to and from school—or anywhere else actually." He criticized infrastructure design as being built for cars, not people, calling it a "vicious cycle of building car infrastructure, not letting people walk/bike to school, and which then adds more traffic." On enforcement, he was blunt: "There's a joke in the biking community that goes that if you want to get away with murder, just run them over!" He concluded: "Laws can help shape behavior—and we need better policy."

Unsafe Routes: Downtown as a Bubble, Holt as a Barrier

Interviewees identified specific problem areas around SAE that pose risks to student safety. While the locations differed slightly, all pointed to gateways into Downtown Pomona as severely neglected and hazardous.

Interviewee 1, who represents Downtown on the Planning Commission, highlighted the Garey Avenue underpass as one of the most problematic areas. "It's such an undesirable walk… many times I've come across people doing drugs or other illegal activity that even makes me feel uncomfortable." He added that "Downtown operates like a small bubble of walkability, but all the cardinal areas leading into the area are undesirable and don't keep the pedestrian in mind."

Interviewee 2 pointed specifically to Holt Avenue, calling it a necessary but dangerous arterial for students: "There are a lot of sketchy people around Holt Ave and the fact that students have to use this main arterial street to get around sucks." She also pointed out how the approaches into Downtown Pomona are often "ignored" and in poor shape.

Interviewee 3 was not asked about specific routes due to not being from Pomona, but repeatedly emphasized the importance of interconnected networks and school-centered planning: "Good integrated infrastructure for cyclists, pedestrians, and people taking public transportation is a must." He stressed that these networks must "start at schools and branch out."

Cross-Analysis of Interview and Survey Results

The data collected through the parent/guardian survey and the three key informant interviews reveal a multidimensional portrait of the barriers and conditions affecting students' ability to safely walk or bike to The School of Arts and Enterprise (SAE). Although the methods differed — one capturing anonymous, quantitative parental sentiment and the other eliciting nuanced, lived perspectives — the resulting insights are highly complementary. Together, they reinforce the urgency of SRTS interventions while highlighting where perceptions, priorities, and proposed solutions converge or diverge.

Alignment Across Data Sources

One of the strongest areas of agreement across both interviews and the parent survey is the centrality of safety concerns. In the parent survey, 67% of respondents identified crime or personal safety as a top reason their children did not walk or bike to school. This concern was vividly echoed by all three interviewees. Interviewee 1 pointed to the Garey underpass as a space where drug use and illegal activity made even him, an adult civic leader, feel unsafe. Interviewee 2 shared a personal experience of being followed to school, reflecting how fear — especially for girls — directly shapes whether a child is allowed to walk or bike. Interviewee 3 framed safety at a structural level, arguing that U.S. infrastructure and legal systems actively discourage walking and fail to protect pedestrians.

These concerns about traffic safety also surfaced consistently. The parent survey identified fast-moving vehicles and unsafe crossings as a major issue, with nearly three-quarters of respondents stating that unsafe traffic patterns were a significant barrier. Interviewees validated this, citing streets like Holt Avenue and intersections like Mission & Garey as particularly dangerous. "Downtown operates like a small bubble of walkability," said Interviewee 1, "but all the cardinal areas leading into the area are undesirable and don't keep the pedestrian in mind." Interviewee 2 described drivers on Holt as "fast and reckless," and Interviewee 3 warned that we've built streets "not conducive towards walking or biking."

Another area of convergence is the shared recognition that many students walk or bike out of necessity, not choice. In the parent survey, several respondents noted they lacked transportation

alternatives, and while they had concerns about safety, walking or biking was the only available option. Interviewee 2 observed this tension directly: “Students still walk and bike to and from school out of necessity—even with all of these bad conditions.” Interviewee 3 contextualized this further by noting that many kids walk to and from school *via bus stop connections* — meaning they’re still navigating unsafe streets even if they don’t live nearby.

There is also strong alignment around preferred interventions. In the parent survey, the most requested solutions were:

- Supervised walking groups
- Crossing guards
- Traffic calming infrastructure
- Better lighting and signage

These priorities were echoed almost word-for-word by the interviewees. Interviewee 2 called for more signage, wider sidewalks, tree canopy, and curb extensions. Interviewee 1 emphasized the need for more signage to communicate the presence of a school and better street design downtown. Interviewee 3 pushed for connected infrastructure networks, protected Class IV bike lanes, and stronger policy protections for pedestrians. In short, both groups — parents and key stakeholders — want visibility, safety, and community-backed solutions.

Divergence: Scope, Framing, and Strategy

Despite these areas of agreement, the interviews and survey responses diverge in several important ways. Most notably, there is a difference in the scope of analysis. Parents focused on immediate and tangible issues: crime, unsafe intersections, and lack of visible adult supervision. These were primarily short-term, localized concerns centered on their child’s daily experience. In contrast, interviewees often framed their responses with broader structural and cultural critiques — such as systemic disinvestment, car-centric urbanism, and fear-based parenting.

Interviewee 3, for instance, criticized liability-first mentalities in schools, explaining that “liability is more important than safety.” He also argued that policy failure, not personal failure, is to blame for unsafe streets. Interviewee 1 was similarly critical of cultural framing: “Walking

is associated with homelessness or human trafficking," he said, recalling a city council member's comment that "only the homeless use bike lanes." Such framing leads to neglect of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. Parents, meanwhile, often internalize these conditions as unavoidable — responding to them, but rarely naming the systems behind them.

Another key divergence lies in the perceived role of schools and families. While several parents in the survey expressed openness to walking groups or crossing guards, very few mentioned the school or city as proactive agents in implementing these changes. In contrast, all three interviewees emphasized the need for shared institutional responsibility. Interviewee 2 called on the SAE and the city to collaborate directly: "Give kids their humanity back and consider their safety and life outside of school as well." Interviewee 1 went further, arguing that "schools do not do enough around active transportation" and should include walking/biking guidance in orientation materials. Interviewee 3 suggested that schools must "incentivize peer-to-peer walking/biking programs" to avoid what he called the "lame" effect of parental involvement for older kids.

There was also some generational tension in how responsibility is assigned. Interviewee 1 was blunt: "Parents are lazy — not in the sense that they don't want to do anything, but they'd rather care about themselves than do a bit more and help out their neighbor." He pointed to long pick-up lines and schools' inaccessibility as "a system failure." In contrast, parents largely positioned themselves as protective and resource-constrained — trying to keep their kids safe in a system they may not feel empowered to change.

Tensions and Takeaways

These differing perspectives reveal several key tensions that will need to be addressed for an SRTS program at the SAE to succeed:

Perception vs. Probability

Parents fear crime and stranger danger, while interviewees point to actual traffic collisions as more statistically likely. Bridging this perception gap will be crucial in any safety messaging.

Individualism vs. Collective Care

Interviewee 2 and 3 both spoke of American "individualism" as a barrier. The survey suggests this mindset also shows up in practice — with parents relying on private transportation even when that may undermine broader safety goals. A successful SRTS strategy must reframe safety as a shared responsibility.

Short-term fixes vs. Long-term change

Parents overwhelmingly supported crossing guards and adult supervision. Interviewees supported those too — but also pushed for policy reform, legal enforcement, and cultural shifts. The most effective SRTS plan will integrate both: immediate tactical wins (e.g., signage, lighting, walking groups) and long-term strategic investments (e.g., Class IV bike lanes, cross-sector partnerships, legal protections).

Discussion

Toolkit for Community Action

Introduction

The Toolkit for Community Action is a no-cost, community-driven implementation guide designed specifically for the needs of The School of Arts and Enterprise (SAE) in Pomona. Its purpose is to empower families, students, and school staff to take immediate action in making routes to the SAE safer and more accessible – without waiting for new funding. This approach builds on the findings from parent surveys and key informant interviews, which highlighted concerns about traffic, personal safety, and infrastructure in downtown Pomona, as well as a strong desire for solutions like group walks and better supervision. By leveraging volunteer energy and local knowledge, the toolkit's strategies enable the SAE community to address these issues collectively. It emphasizes three pillars – Education, Parent Involvement, and Youth Leadership – as the foundation for a sustainable Safe Routes to School program that grows from within the community. Each pillar is outlined below with practical, no-cost tools that reflect what

the SAE families and interviewees want to see, along with simple steps for the SAE staff, parents, and students to activate these ideas with minimal cost and maximum engagement.

Education

Overview

Education is the cornerstone for a culture of safety. Surveyed parents noted that many drivers and students lack awareness of pedestrian safety, and key informants stressed that better knowledge could prevent accidents and ease fears. Through education, the SAE can equip students with traffic safety skills, inform parents about safe driving and walking practices, and engage the broader community in understanding the challenges students face. This pillar ties directly to themes from our findings: families want their children to know *how* to navigate busy streets, and they want drivers to be more mindful. By integrating safety education into school life, the SAE can address these concerns immediately. Importantly, all suggested educational tools rely on existing resources or free materials – requiring zero budget, only commitment and creativity.

Safety Awareness Assemblies

The SAE can host brief, periodic safety assemblies or classroom talks to teach students safe walking and biking habits.

Implementation

Staff can use a free curriculum from national Safe Routes programs or invite community experts (e.g. a local police officer, firefighter, or nonprofit) to demonstrate proper street crossing, the importance of reflective clothing, and other safety tips. These sessions familiarize students with best practices in a fun, engaging way, and they can be led by volunteers or even students themselves.

Student-Created Safety Campaign

Encourage students to develop posters, signs, or short videos that promote walking and biking safety.

Implementation

As a class project or club activity, the SAE students (especially in art and media classes) could design posters about looking both ways, or film a PSA on sharing the road. The school can display these creations around campus and on social media. This peer-to-peer approach not only reinforces safety messages for creators and viewers alike, but also builds pride – students are more likely to follow guidelines that they have communicated. (Notably, tapping into student creativity for safety campaigns is a proven way to increase engagement.)

Driver and Family Education Letters

Educate parents and drivers in the SAE community about safe driving, drop-off, and walk/bike practices through simple letters or email bulletins.

Implementation

The SAE staff (or a parent committee) can draft periodic safety reminders – for example, urging drivers to slow down and yield to pedestrians, or explaining the safest locations for student drop-off. These can include student-drawn graphics or quotes from students about why safe driving matters. By enlisting student voices ("*Please drive like your own family is walking here*"), the message resonates on a personal level. This tool costs nothing beyond time, and it builds a shared sense of responsibility among all adults driving near the school.

Neighborhood Safety Partnerships

Collaborate with local businesses and community organizations to spread safety education beyond the school.

Implementation

The SAE can ask nearby businesses, the public library, or the city to display student-made safety posters or to host a "safety corner" with flyers. In addition, partnerships with the City of Pomona's traffic safety unit or local health organizations can yield free educational materials (reflective stickers, safety tip pamphlets, etc.) for students. By educating not just students but also drivers and neighbors about Safe Routes, the entire community becomes more aware of

student pedestrians and bicyclists. This expansive education effort responds directly to parents' concerns about unsafe drivers and crime by enlisting more eyes and ears around the routes students travel.

Parent Involvement

Overview

Parent involvement emerged as a key theme in both survey responses and interviews – families want to be part of the solution. Many parents indicated they would feel safer if adults were present along walking routes or at critical crossing points, and interviewees noted that an organized parent presence could deter unsafe situations. This pillar builds on that insight by turning concerned parents into active participants. By organizing and volunteering, parents can provide the supervision, guidance, and advocacy that no infrastructure grant can immediately buy. The strategies below strengthen community bonds and ensure children have support on their journey to school. Each tool relies on donated time and cooperation – harnessing parent energy that already exists at the SAE and directing it into structured, consistent action.

Walking School Buses (Parent-Led Groups)

Form "walking school bus" groups where one or more parents walk a small cohort of students to or from school along a safe routes.

Implementation

Interested families can map out a few convenient routes from nearby neighborhoods to the SAE. Parents then take turns as "bus captains," walking the route each morning so that children are never walking alone. For example, if several students live in the same apartment complex or block, parents can rotate days to escort them on foot. This supervision not only improves safety through *strength in numbers* and adult presence, but also builds routine and confidence for students. At the SAE, nearly two-thirds of surveyed parents said supervised group walks would make them more comfortable with walking – reflecting strong support for this no-cost strategy. SAE staff can assist by coordinating route sign-ups and introducing families to one another, but

ultimately the program runs on parent power and a shared commitment to watch over all our kids.

Volunteer Corner Captains

Station parent volunteers at key corners or crossing points around the school during drop-off and pick-up times.

Implementation

With minimal organization (e.g. a sign-up sheet or WhatsApp group), parents can adopt a corner near the SAE – especially those intersections that parents and students identified as hazardous due to traffic or loitering. Outfitted with bright clothing or safety vests (which can be donated or borrowed from the city), these volunteers serve as unofficial crossing guards: they help younger students cross safely, act as a friendly deterrent to speeders, and report any suspicious activity. Even one or two parents on watch each morning makes a visible difference. SAE staff can support by providing basic training (perhaps inviting a Pomona crossing guard or police officer to give pointers to volunteers) and by adjusting volunteer placement based on feedback. This volunteer crossing guard rotation directly addresses the call for "Crossing guards in Downtown Pomona" that many families voiced, deploying parent power where city resources are currently limited.

"Walk to School" Days and Meet-up Events

Organize monthly or biweekly Walk to School Days where parents and students gather at a nearby park or safe meeting point and walk to the SAE together.

Implementation

One day a month (or every Friday, for example), parents can encourage their kids to participate in a group walk. A parent champion or teacher volunteer can choose a convenient rally point (such as a community center parking lot a few blocks away) where families from various directions converge by a set time. From there, everyone walks as a cheerful parade to campus. This event-style approach generates excitement and normalizes walking as a community. Parents who normally drive can park and walk the last stretch with their child, reducing congestion at the

school entrance. No funding is needed – just coordination and some enthusiasm. Experience from other schools shows that designated walk-to-school events enjoy strong support and can motivate more families to try walking. At the SAE, these regular meet-ups will also help parents connect with each other, strengthening the network of adults who look out for all students on the route.

Parent Safety Committee and Advocacy

Create a small parent-led Safe Routes committee to keep efforts organized and maintain communication with the school and city.

Implementation

The SAE can invite interested parents (perhaps those already volunteering in the above activities) to form a committee that meets quarterly. This group's role is to plan volunteer schedules, discuss any new safety issues noticed on routes, and collectively advocate for longer-term improvements. For example, the committee can draft letters or attend Pomona city meetings to request fixes like sidewalk repairs or better lighting on specific streets – leveraging the firsthand knowledge parents gain from walking the routes. They might also partner with nearby schools to amplify their voice. By formally recognizing a parent safety committee, the SAE demonstrates institutional support for parent leadership. This group ensures that parent involvement isn't one-off, but an ongoing, organized force pushing for safer streets. Over time, their documentation of issues and volunteer contributions can strengthen grant applications (demonstrating community buy-in) and keep pressure on municipal authorities to eventually provide crossing guards or infrastructure upgrades.

Youth Leadership

Overview

Empowering students as leaders is crucial for Safe Routes success at a 6–12 school like the SAE. Our key informant interviews underscored that students often notice dangers adults might overlook and that their buy-in can transform a safety initiative from a chore into a culture. The parent survey also hinted that older students could help – families with multiple children would

trust a responsible teen to escort younger ones, for instance. This pillar leverages the creativity, enthusiasm, and peer influence of the SAE's youth. By giving students ownership – whether through clubs, mentorship roles, or creative projects – we not only cultivate leadership skills but also make safe commuting *"cool"* and relevant. The following no-cost strategies show how the SAE's students can take the lead, amplifying the impact of education and parent efforts through peer-to-peer action.

Safe Routes Student Ambassadors

Establish a team of student ambassadors who champion walking and biking safety among their peers.

Implementation

The SAE can recruit a small group of interested students (e.g. student council members, National Honor Society, or any volunteers passionate about health, environment, or community service) to serve as Safe Routes Ambassadors. These students might meet monthly with a faculty advisor to plan and lead safety initiatives on campus. For example, ambassadors could speak at the safety assemblies, help organize the Walk to School events, or lead by example by walking or biking themselves and inviting classmates to join. They can also act as mentors for younger students – a buddy system where, say, a 11th-grader is paired with a 6th-grader who lives nearby, so the younger student has an older buddy to walk or bike with. This kind of near-peer mentorship builds confidence in the younger students and a sense of responsibility in the older ones. Through the ambassador program, students become visible role models for a walking/biking lifestyle. Notably, national best practices encourage giving youth meaningful roles like this; when students take ownership of activities, programs are more effective and age-appropriate.

Youth-Led Safety Campaigns (Arts and Media)

Harness the SAE students' arts and enterprise talents to create campaigns that promote safe routes.

Implementation

This strategy invites students – in art classes, leadership electives, or clubs – to develop creative projects around traffic safety and community awareness. Theatre students might write a short skit about a safe journey to school and perform it in a school assembly or record it for Instagram. Visual arts students could paint a temporary mural or sidewalk chalk art near campus with positive messages like "Slow down, students on foot!" or "Eyes up, phones down when crossing." Digital media students could craft a short video or social media challenge that encourages walking in groups or wearing helmets when biking. These campaigns cost nothing (materials can be donated or already available at school) but make a big splash. They speak in the students' own creative language to their peers and the community. Youth-driven messaging tends to grab attention – imagine a student-designed sticker or button that many the SAE kids start wearing on their backpacks, signaling pride in walking/biking. By integrating Safe Routes into the SAE's arts-focused culture, safety awareness becomes a student-led movement rather than an adult mandate.

Student-Led Walk Audits and Advocacy

Involve students in assessing route safety and pushing for improvements.

Implementation

The SAE classes or clubs (for example, a science class studying urban environments, or a community service club) can conduct periodic "walk audits" of the streets around the school. In a walk audit, a small group of students (with a teacher or parent supervisor) walks a particular route, notes problems (like broken sidewalks, poor lighting, stray dogs, or areas where they feel unsafe due to strangers loitering), and then brainstorms solutions. Students document their findings with photos or maps. The crucial next step is giving them a platform: these student teams can present their findings to the Parent Safety Committee or even at a city Youth Commission or traffic safety meeting. This is powerful – students can literally point out to city officials where crosswalks are needed or where they'd like to see more police presence. As research from Safe Routes programs shows, students can be effective ambassadors for safety improvements by sharing their on-the-ground observations with decision-makers. For the SAE, a

student presentation to the Pomona City Council – even informally via a letter – could carry weight, especially when it's backed by the lived experiences of teens navigating downtown streets. Beyond advocacy, the very act of conducting walk audits teaches youth to be aware of their environment and shows them that their voice matters in urban planning. It's leadership in action, with immediate relevance to their daily life.

Coordination & Sustainability

Launching these education, parent involvement, and youth leadership initiatives is only the first step – the key to lasting impact is coordination and sustainability. The SAE can ensure these efforts thrive year-round (and continue into future years) by establishing a simple but robust structure for ongoing leadership, volunteer support, and school-city collaboration. The goal is to maintain momentum until more formal funding or grants can be secured, and to do so in a way that strengthens over time rather than fizzles out. Below are core practices for making the community-led approach sustainable:

Rotating Leadership

To avoid burnout and keep ideas fresh, the SAE should encourage a rotation of leadership roles among volunteers. For instance, a parent who led the walking school bus this semester can hand off coordination to a new parent next semester, and student ambassador team captains might change annually. By sharing responsibility, more people take ownership and no single individual feels over-burdened. This can be facilitated by the Parent Safety Committee and faculty advisors – they can identify and mentor the next "lead" for each initiative. Rotating leadership also builds resilience: the program won't collapse if one champion graduates or moves away, because there's always someone ready to step up.

Volunteer Support and Recognition

Volunteers – whether parents standing guard at crosswalks or students making posters – need to feel valued to stay engaged. The SAE can foster this by regularly thanking volunteers in school newsletters, morning announcements, and events. Something as simple as a shout-out to "our safe routes parent heroes of the week" or a certificate of appreciation to student ambassadors at

the end of the year goes a long way. Additionally, maintaining a clear schedule and communication channel (like a group chat or online calendar for volunteers) will help people plan their involvement and see where help is needed. When volunteers see their impact (for example, hearing that "no incidents occurred this month on Main Street thanks to our corner captains"), it reinforces the importance of their contribution. Consistent positive feedback and easy ways to sign up will keep the volunteer pipeline strong and steady.

Documentation and Knowledge Transfer

From day one, the SAE should document what is being done – this includes recording the dates and turnout of Walk to School events, logging volunteer hours, noting any incidents or improvements on routes, and saving materials like flyers or lesson plans used in safety education. Keeping a simple Safe Routes log or binder (which could be digital, like a shared Google Drive folder) ensures that knowledge is not lost. This is critical for sustainability: new leaders can review what was tried and learned in previous semesters. For example, if a new batch of student ambassadors wants to do a project, they can look at last year's project summary to build on it rather than start from scratch. Documentation also has another benefit: it creates evidence of community efforts and needs. When the time comes to apply for grants or ask the city for support, the SAE will have concrete data and stories ready to demonstrate both the community's commitment and the areas of persistent concern. In short, good record-keeping turns our ad-hoc volunteer activities into an evolving program with memory and metrics.

School-City Collaboration

Sustaining Safe Routes also means forging and maintaining partnerships beyond the school. The SAE should establish a regular line of communication with the City of Pomona and other partners. This might involve quarterly check-ins between the parent committee (or a school administrator) and the city's traffic safety or public works staff to share what the community is doing and what help is needed. Even without dedicated funding, the city may be able to support in small ways – for example, a traffic engineer could meet with students during a walk audit, or the police department could agree to extra patrols around school during early mornings. By treating the city as a partner from the start, the SAE positions itself as a proactive collaborator. Over time, this relationship can open doors to external resources: city officials may prioritize the

SAE for future crosswalk installations or alert the school about grant opportunities. Likewise, partnerships with local health nonprofits or Safe Routes coalitions can introduce new volunteers and ideas (at no cost). The key is that the SAE's community-led efforts remain visible to those outside the school – through social media, local news, or invitations to events – so that potential partners see the momentum and want to help. Collaboration ensures that when grants do become available, the SAE already has allies and a track record to tap into.

Cultivating a Safe Routes Culture

Finally, the most intangible but powerful element of sustainability is culture. By consistently applying the toolkit's strategies, the SAE will gradually build a culture where walking and biking safely to school is valued and celebrated. This means safety and active transportation become part of the school's identity – something talked about in morning meetings, something students incorporate into projects, and something parents discuss at pick-up. A cultural shift is self-perpetuating: as new families join the SAE, they will sense that "this is a school where we walk together and look out for each other." To cultivate this, the SAE leaders (administration and teachers) should integrate Safe Routes themes into the fabric of school life, reinforcing the idea that these efforts are not extra-curricular but rather an expression of the school's community values. Over the months, small traditions can form – perhaps every semester ends with a celebratory group walk or a "Golden Sneaker" award to the grade with most walkers. Such traditions cost nothing but symbolize continuity. They inspire each new cohort of students and parents to embrace the program and carry it forward.

Next Steps

Key Takeaways: Community Voice, Infrastructure Gaps, and Behavioral Challenges

Drawing from the findings and reflections above, three core themes stand out as the key takeaways of the SAE SRTS project: the power of community voice, the urgency of addressing

infrastructure gaps, and the importance of tackling behavioral challenges. These themes encapsulate what we have learned and should drive future efforts.

Centering Community Voice in Solutions

Perhaps the most important lesson of this project is the value of *community voice*. The surveys and interviews did more than gather data – they provided a platform for parents, students, and local stakeholders to articulate their needs and ideas. This inclusive approach yielded rich insights that an outside analysis alone might have missed. For example, the stark emphasis on issues like homelessness, personal security, and even environmental comfort (shade and cleanliness) came directly from community input. These are facets of the problem that a purely technical traffic study might underplay, but for the community they are front and center. By listening to community voices, the project ensured that those lived realities became the basis for recommendations.

Moving forward, keeping community voice at the heart of the SRTS initiative will remain crucial. Community members' perspectives lend credibility and urgency to the cause. When parents say "we don't feel safe – the streets are full of homeless people and people under the influence", it is a candid expression of distress that can catch the attention of policymakers in a way that raw statistics might not. Additionally, engaging community voices cultivates buy-in. People are more likely to support and participate in programs they have helped shape. The key takeaway is that solutions must be informed by those who will use them. Whether it's deciding where to prioritize a new crosswalk or what time a walking school bus should depart, involving parents and students in the decision-making will lead to more effective and trusted outcomes. Community forums, continued surveys, and a formal mechanism (like a SRTS committee with parent and student representatives) are ways to institutionalize this voice. In essence, community voice is both a diagnostic tool and a guiding light for implementation, ensuring the project remains responsive to real needs.

Urgent Need to Address Infrastructure Gaps

Another unmistakable takeaway is that infrastructure matters – profoundly**.** All the encouragement and education in the world will have limited impact if the physical environment

remains perilous or impractical for walking and biking. The project identified several critical infrastructure gaps around the SAE: incomplete sidewalks, lack of bike lanes, insufficient safe crossings on routes to school, poor lighting, and minimal traffic calming on high-speed corridors. These deficits are not just inconveniences; they translate directly into hazard and deterrence. Parents made it clear that without visible infrastructure improvements, they would still hesitate to let their children walk or cycle. This sentiment is backed by research: studies have shown that students are more likely to walk or bike when routes have sidewalks, crosswalks, and other safety features, and that SRTS infrastructure investments can significantly increase active commuting rates (Boarnet et al., 2005; Hoelscher et al., 2016). In our case, the lack of such infrastructure has contributed to a situation where walking is seen as a last resort.

Therefore, a key takeaway is the urgency of securing infrastructure improvements as a cornerstone of the Safe Routes effort. These could range from "low-hanging fruit" (such as painting crosswalks or trimming overgrown vegetation on sidewalks) to major capital projects (like installing pedestrian signals at dangerous intersections or redesigning streets to slow traffic). Community input provides a roadmap to the priorities: for instance, Holt Avenue was repeatedly mentioned as a particularly unsafe artery lacking bike lanes and marred by speeding traffic. Similarly, the approach to downtown from the west side was highlighted as neglected and in need of attention. These specific locations can be starting points for advocacy and project development. The takeaway is not only that such changes are needed, but also that they are possible. Pomona and the wider region have started to invest in active transportation – indeed, recent news of grant funding for pedestrian and bicycle improvements in the city is encouraging (City of Pomona, 2025). The SAE and its partners should tap into these opportunities, ensuring that the school's needs are included in any infrastructure planning. Ultimately, closing the infrastructure gap will require persistence and resources, but it stands as an indispensable pillar for achieving safe routes.

Behavioral and Cultural Challenges

The third key takeaway revolves around the behavioral and cultural challenges that impact safe routes. Infrastructure alone will not solve everything; human behavior – how people drive, how families make travel choices, how the community perceives walking – plays a pivotal role. The

project underscored several behavioral challenges: drivers speeding or driving recklessly near the school, parental fear and overestimation of stranger-danger risks, students needing more safety awareness, and broader social issues (crime, homelessness) affecting behavior in public spaces. A notable insight was how deeply car-oriented culture is ingrained. One interviewee quipped that "the car is American, it is part of our culture," stressing how normal driving everywhere has become. Another pointed out that even local youth sometimes internalize negative perceptions of walking, associating pedestrians with undesirable elements.. These attitudes and behaviors can undermine SRTS goals even if physical conditions improve.

Thus, a major takeaway is the importance of incorporating education, enforcement, and encouragement strategies to complement infrastructure changes. In Safe Routes to School parlance, these are components of the "Six E's" (Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, Evaluation, and Equity). For the SAE, this means we must work to change minds and habits, not just the streets. Education might involve teaching students road safety skills and teaching drivers to be more mindful in school zones. Encouragement could mean incentive programs for kids who walk or campaigns that celebrate walking/biking (shifting the narrative to something positive and healthy). Enforcement is tricky in a community wary of policing, but targeted enforcement of traffic laws in school areas (e.g., anti-speeding campaigns, DUI checkpoints near school routes) can deter the most dangerous driving behaviors. There is also a role for community-based "enforcement," such as citizen-led crossing guards or walking patrols that increase supervision. We learned that fear cannot be dismissed but it can be managed – for example, fears about crime can be partly alleviated by having trusted adults present and by closer collaboration with local law enforcement or security where appropriate. Behavioral challenges also include overcoming apathy or fatalism; some community members might feel that "this is just how things are in Pomona." The engagement process demonstrated that when asked, people do care and have ideas – so the task is to keep people engaged and show that improvements are feasible. The takeaway here is that changing behavior and culture is a long-term endeavor, but it begins with consistent efforts to inform and involve the community. Over time, as more families see neighbors walking safely, as children bring home stories about their fun walk to school groups, and as drivers adapt to new norms (like slower speeds or more pedestrians in crosswalks), the cultural climate can shift. The project has planted the seeds of that shift by

raising awareness; the next phase must nurture those seeds through ongoing behavioral initiatives.

In summary, these three takeaways – elevating community voice, tackling infrastructure gaps, and addressing behavioral challenges – form a holistic understanding of the project. They reinforce that SRTS is inherently a *multifaceted effort*. Focusing on just one aspect (for instance, only lobbying for infrastructure, or only doing safety workshops) would not be sufficient. Success lies in a coordinated approach that blends all these elements. This understanding sets the stage for strategic guidance on how to translate what we've learned into concrete next steps.

From Grassroots Action to Long-Term Planning: Strategic Guidance for the SAE and Partners

With the insights gained, the SAE and its partners (including the City of Pomona, local nonprofits, and parent leaders) are poised to transition from initial grassroots actions to a more structured, long-term Safe Routes to School program. The following strategic guidance outlines how to make that leap – turning the community's passion and knowledge into sustained planning and policy integration.

1. Formalize a Safe Routes to School coalition or task force

What began as an informal group of concerned parents and stakeholders can be developed into a formal coalition dedicated to advancing SRTS goals. The SAE should consider establishing a Safe Routes to School Task Force that meets regularly. This task force can include parent representatives, student representatives, school administrators, city officials (such as a traffic engineer or a representative from the Pomona City Manager's office), law enforcement or school safety officers, and local nonprofit advocates (e.g., representatives from health or bicycle advocacy organizations). Formalizing the group will ensure ongoing focus and accountability. It creates a bridge between grassroots voices and institutional decision-makers. For instance, having a City of Pomona official at the table can directly connect community-identified issues (like the need for a crosswalk on a particular street) with the city's planning and public works processes. The task force can also be the body that monitors progress, coordinates events, and

strategizes on grant applications. Essentially, it becomes the engine driving the SRTS initiative forward on a long-term basis.

2. Integrate SRTS priorities into school and city planning

A crucial strategy is to weave Safe Routes considerations into existing planning frameworks, rather than treating them as stand-alone concerns. For the SAE, this might mean incorporating student transportation safety into the school's charter goals or annual plans. For example, the SAE could adopt an official policy goal of increasing the percentage of students who walk or bike to school by a certain amount over the next few years, or it could include SRTS objectives in its School Site Safety Plan. At the city level, Pomona's planning and public works departments should integrate the needs of the SAE (and other schools) into their Active Transportation Plan and capital improvement plans. Given that Pomona has an Active Transportation Plan, the city should ensure that the areas around schools like the SAE are identified as high-priority zones for improvements. Strategic guidance here includes working with city staff to ensure that SAE's neighborhood is featured in upcoming grant proposals and budgets. For instance, if Pomona is pursuing state Active Transportation Program (ATP) funds or federal infrastructure funds, including specific improvements (sidewalks, traffic calming, etc.) near the SAE can align the grassroots efforts with funded city projects. From a long-term perspective, the goal is to institutionalize SRTS so that it's not a one-time project but an ongoing consideration in urban planning. One practical step could be for the Pomona City Council to adopt a resolution supporting Safe Routes to School and directing staff to collaborate with local schools – this would signal high-level commitment and pave the way for sustained partnership.

3. Leverage partnerships for broader impact

The strategic vision should acknowledge that the SAE is not alone in this. Partnerships can amplify resources and impact. For example, collaborating with nearby schools (Pomona Unified School District schools or other charter schools in the area) could create a unified front for child pedestrian safety in Pomona. If multiple schools identify similar needs, the case for city-wide or grant-funded interventions becomes stronger. Nonprofit organizations are key partners as well. Groups like the Safe Routes Partnership, which works nationally and regionally, or local

organizations like the Pomona Valley Bicycle Coalition or public health nonprofits, can offer expertise, volunteer training, and sometimes even funding or in-kind support. The project's findings have already drawn interest – indeed, one of our key informants was a seasoned active transportation advocate who can serve as a valuable ally. Strategic guidance is to bring such allies formally into the effort. For instance, a nonprofit partner could help run safety workshops for students ("Bike/Pedestrian Safety 101" classes) or assist with organizing community walk audits. The city's police department or community safety officers are another partnership angle: rather than seeing enforcement as heavy-handed, a partnership could focus on *positive safety presence* (like officers participating in a Walk to School Day to escort kids or giving a talk on safety). Additionally, local businesses and community institutions (community centers, libraries, etc.) in downtown Pomona can be engaged – a business improvement district might support safer streets as it benefits commerce too. In sum, the strategy is to widen the circle of stakeholders who see safe routes as part of their mission. The more partners involved, the more sustainable the initiative becomes, as responsibilities and resources are shared.

4. Scale up from quick wins to long-term projects:

In moving from grassroots to long-term, it's important to score some "quick win" implementations even while planning bigger projects. Strategic guidance is to identify a few improvements or programs that can be launched in the short term to maintain momentum and demonstrate progress. For example, establishing a permanent walking school bus route led by parent volunteers for a nearby neighborhood could be done almost immediately with proper coordination – it addresses safety through supervision without needing new infrastructure. This could serve as a pilot program that, if successful, is expanded to more neighborhoods or more days of the week. Another quick win might be collaborating with the city to install temporary traffic calming measures (like portable speed feedback signs or cones to narrow a crossing) during before-and-after school hours as a trial. These can often be done with minimal cost and can prove the concept that slowing traffic improves safety. At the same time, strategic planning should continue for long-term capital-intensive projects such as sidewalk construction, intersection redesigns, or bike lanes. By pursuing a dual approach (short-term actions + long-term planning), the grassroots energy is harnessed for immediate benefit and kept engaged as bigger changes slowly materialize. Each small success (even something like a new crosswalk

painted near the school) should be publicized and celebrated – this keeps the community motivated and shows that the efforts are yielding tangible results. Ultimately, the transition to long-term planning requires patience; infrastructure projects can take years from planning to completion. However, by layering incremental improvements along the way, SAE and its partners can create a continuous trajectory of progress.

5. Advocate for policy and funding support at higher levels

Grassroots action can catalyze changes not only locally but also in policy. Strategic guidance includes advocacy beyond the immediate community. For instance, at the school district or charter network level, the SAE can share its SRTS experience to encourage adoption of safe routes policies more broadly (even though the SAE is a charter, its success can influence district schools or vice versa). At the city and regional level, parents and school leaders might engage in advocacy for policies that support pedestrian safety – such as lower speed limits in school zones, automated speed enforcement, or ordinances to address loitering and crime hot spots near schools through community policing. The community voices from the SAE can join coalitions or public forums to push for these wider changes. One interviewee insight was that "laws can help shape behavior"; this suggests that part of moving to long-term impact is to seek those law and policy changes that make drivers more accountable and streets safer by default. Pursuing a citywide Vision Zero campaign (a commitment to zero traffic deaths) or a Safe Routes to School city program funded by the city could be game-changing outcomes that go beyond the SAE's immediate circle. In terms of funding, moving from grassroots to long-term inevitably requires financial investment. The strategic outlook should include identifying and tapping into funding streams (more on this in the next section). Already, evidence from other communities shows that when funding is secured, SRTS programs can significantly increase walking and biking rates (Hoelscher et al., 2016; McDonald et al., 2013). Therefore, part of the strategic guidance is to train community leaders in advocacy skills and grant writing. Parent leaders might accompany city officials to speak at regional funding meetings or help draft testimonial letters for grant applications, ensuring the lived experiences of SAE families are front and center in making the case for funding.

6. Ensure equity and inclusion in the process

As a final strategic consideration, it's essential that the evolution from grassroots to formal planning does not lose sight of equity and inclusion – both hallmarks of the project so far. The project served an economically challenged, predominantly Latino community, and it was successful in engaging bilingual participation (surveys were available in Spanish and English, and outreach was culturally sensitive). Continuing this approach means all materials, meetings, and programs should remain accessible to non-English-speaking parents and considerate of different needs (for instance, scheduling meetings at times working parents can attend, or providing child care during meetings). Moreover, youth inclusion is just as important in long-term planning. Often, when things become formalized, youth voices can get sidelined; SAE should guard against this by perhaps creating a standing role for a student (or an alumni youth) on the SRTS Task Force or by forming a student sub-committee. This not only empowers youth but also trains the next generation of leaders who can sustain the program's vision. An equitable Safe Routes program will also pay attention to which students benefit – ensuring, for example, that improvements address routes used by those who currently have no choice but to walk (perhaps lower-income families), not just the most vocal constituents. By keeping equity at the forefront (as one of the "E's"), the SAE and its partners can make the case that SRTS is part of addressing larger disparities: it improves safety and access to education for those who might otherwise be at a disadvantage. This resonates strongly with broader findings that SRTS programs, when well-targeted, can support disadvantaged communities and contribute to fairness in urban investment (Elliott et al., 2024; McDonald et al., 2013).

In summary, the strategic guidance for moving from grassroots to long-term planning involves institutionalizing the effort without losing the community-driven spirit. By forming formal structures (task forces, plans, policies) and embedding SRTS into school and city agendas, while still fueling it with the passion and insight of the community, the SAE can create a sustainable Safe Routes model. This model will require partnerships, patience, and advocacy, but it has the potential to not only transform the SAE's immediate environment but also serve as a blueprint for other schools in Pomona and similar communities. The following section outlines practical next steps and recommendations to operationalize these strategic directions.

Practical Recommendations

Building on the strategic guidance above, this section provides concrete next steps and suggestions for the SAE and its partners to act on. These recommendations serve as a practical roadmap for the next phase of work, bridging the gap between planning and implementation. Many of these steps can begin immediately and will lay the foundation for long-term success.

Pursue Funding Opportunities Aggressively

Transitioning from a no-cost model will require external funding for infrastructure projects and program support. The SAE and the City of Pomona should collaborate to identify and apply for relevant grants. One prime target is the *California Active Transportation Program (ATP)*, which funds pedestrian and bicycle safety projects in communities like Pomona – securing an ATP grant could finance sidewalks, crosswalks, or bike lanes near the SAE. Additionally, consider smaller grants such as Safe Routes to School-specific funding (if available through state or federal initiatives) and local/regional grants. For example, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) offers Sustainable Communities grants that sometimes fund walkability plans, and the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) provides grants for education and enforcement around traffic safety. Nonprofit and foundation grants should not be overlooked either; organizations focused on public health or childhood obesity prevention (e.g., American Heart Association or local health foundations) may fund SRTS programs that encourage active commuting. As a next step, convene a grant subcommittee (perhaps within the SRTS Task Force) to start drafting proposals. Aim to have at least one infrastructure grant and one non-infrastructure (education/program) grant application in progress within the next year. Remember to leverage the data and community stories gathered – use the survey statistics and personal testimonials to make a compelling case for why the SAE needs these investments. Research indicates that well-funded SRTS programs can yield substantial increases in walking and biking as well as long-term societal benefits (Hoelscher et al., 2016; Muennig et al., 2014), so every dollar invested can be justified with evidence of high impact.

Continue Data Collection and Evaluation

Treat the surveys and data gathered so far as the beginning of an ongoing evaluation process. Continuous data collection will help track progress and support future funding requests. The SAE should plan to conduct follow-up parent surveys annually or biannually to monitor changes in attitudes and behaviors (e.g., has the percentage of students walking or biking increased? Are parents feeling any safer?). In addition, implement student travel tally counts – for instance, have teachers or volunteers count how many students arrive by walking, biking, car, or transit on select days. These tallies, done periodically, provide concrete metrics of active transportation rates. Another valuable data collection effort is to record incidents or near-misses on routes to school: encourage parents and students to report (perhaps via a simple Google form or a school hotline) any safety incidents they encounter, whether it's a car speeding through a crosswalk or a threatening situation with an individual on the street. Such incident data can pinpoint trouble spots and also be used to advocate for fixes (e.g., if many near-misses are reported at a particular intersection, that strengthens the case to install a stop sign or crossing guard there). Engaging students in data collection can also be educational – for example, a science or social studies class could take on a project of mapping how students travel to school or auditing sidewalk conditions on nearby blocks. In the next phase, aim to produce an annual "Safe Routes Report Card" summarizing key metrics (like % walking, # of incidents, improvements made) to keep everyone informed and accountable. This culture of evaluation aligns with the "Evaluation" component of the SRTS 6 E's and ensures the program remains results-oriented.

Community Mapping of Safe Routes

A practical and collaborative next step is to develop a Safe Routes Map for the SAE. Using input from students and parents, map out the common routes taken to school and identify recommended paths that are relatively safer (for example, streets with sidewalks or lower traffic volumes). Highlight on the map where crossing guards are (or could be), locations of traffic signals, and areas that should be avoided or approached with caution. This map can be a living document – updated as conditions change – and distributed to all families. The process of creating the map can itself be a community-building exercise: consider hosting a "mapping workshop" where parents and students literally draw their routes on a large map of Pomona and

mark hazards or assets. This will visually consolidate the information gathered (the hazards like "broken sidewalk here" or "encampment under this overpass" can be flagged). Once compiled, work with the city's GIS department or a volunteer with mapping skills to produce a polished Safe Routes map brochure. Such a map serves multiple purposes: it provides guidance to families on which way to walk if they choose to (increasing their confidence by knowing the recommended path), and it serves as an advocacy tool by clearly showing where infrastructure fixes are needed. For instance, if the map shows no safe crossing on a key stretch, that gap is obvious to city officials. Over time, as improvements are made, the map should be updated – e.g., "new crosswalk installed here" – demonstrating progress. The map can also be shared with Pomona's transportation planners as an unofficial community-driven plan for the area. Aim to have a first edition of this Safe Routes map within the next school year, even if it's basic, and then refine it as more data comes in.

Establish a City–School Liaison Role

Strengthening coordination with the City of Pomona is critical for long-term success. A practical step is to designate a *Safe Routes Liaison* – a point person who regularly communicates between the SAE and city government. This could be a city staff member (for example, a traffic safety engineer or a planner tasked with community engagement) formally assigned to liaise with the school on SRTS issues. Conversely, the SAE could appoint a staff member or motivated parent as the school's liaison to the city. Regular check-in meetings (perhaps quarterly) between the liaison, school leaders, and relevant city departments (Public Works, Police, Planning) will ensure that issues raised by the school community are heard and acted upon. For instance, if parents report a broken streetlight along a route, the liaison can expedite getting it fixed by directing it to the right city department. Likewise, if the city is planning road work or development near the school, the liaison can inform the school so that safety considerations are factored in. This role will also be invaluable when working on grant applications or infrastructure projects – having a dedicated contact makes collaboration much smoother. Pomona's government may already have community liaisons or a Youth and Family Services division; if so, tap into those resources and make Safe Routes a shared priority. The liaison should also be responsible for bringing updates back to the community, e.g., informing the SRTS Task Force of any upcoming city projects or relevant City Council agenda items. In essence, this

recommendation is about institutionalizing communication channels so that the grassroots concerns translate into government action efficiently. A successful liaison relationship can lead to tangible quick fixes (like signage or crossing improvements done by the city in response to school requests) and will build mutual trust.

Implement and Support Volunteer Programs for Sustainability

To prevent volunteer fatigue and maintain the no-cost efforts until bigger changes come, it's important to structure and support the volunteer initiatives. One recommendation is to create a formal volunteer program around Safe Routes, much like schools have parent-teacher organizations or booster clubs. This could be dubbed "The SAE Safe Routes Volunteer Corps" (or another friendly name) and operated with a clear schedule and roles. For example, designate specific days for the "walking school bus" and have a rotating roster of which parents lead on which days. By spreading duties across many volunteers, no single parent feels overburdened. Provide volunteers with training and resources: the school or a nonprofit partner can host a brief training on safety protocols (how to safely shepherd children across streets, what to do if encountering a stranger, etc.) and perhaps conflict de-escalation given the concerns about unhoused individuals. Equip volunteers with reflective vests or badges – not only does this improve safety and authority when they are on duty, but it also gives a sense of identity and recognition. Recognition is key to volunteer sustainability: celebrate the volunteers in school newsletters, at assemblies, or with small tokens of appreciation (a thank-you breakfast or certificates of appreciation at the end of the year). In addition, recruit new volunteers continuously. At parent orientation events or Back-to-School nights, have a sign-up sheet for Safe Routes volunteers. Emphasize that even contributing one morning a week to walk a group of students is valuable – many will find that manageable. It's also worth exploring involving older students as volunteers: for instance, high school juniors or seniors could buddy up with younger students to walk with them, perhaps as part of a community service requirement or a leadership elective. This not only adds manpower but encourages youth ownership of the program. By formalizing the volunteer structure now, SAE sets the stage for the program to endure year after year, even as individual families come and go. The next phase should see a transition from the ad-hoc volunteer approach to a resilient system where duties are shared, new leaders are mentored (e.g., a seasoned parent volunteer can mentor a newer volunteer), and the

school administration provides basic support (like coordination and communication assistance) to sustain it. Remember, the volunteer network is the lifeblood of the no-cost model – nurturing it is an investment in the program's longevity.

Launch Education and Encouragement Initiatives

Pair infrastructure advocacy with immediate programs that educate and encourage students and families. For education: coordinate with the SAE teachers or external safety educators to deliver age-appropriate lessons on traffic safety, personal safety, and the benefits of walking/biking. This could be a short module in health class or a special assembly featuring, say, a visit from a bike safety instructor who demonstrates helmet fitting and safe cycling skills. There are existing curricula from organizations like the National Safe Routes Partnership that can be adapted. For encouragement: plan events that make walking and biking fun and normalized. For example, organize a "Walk and Roll to School Day" as a kick-off – pick a day where all students and parents are invited to meet at a park or community location a short distance from school and walk together en masse. Even families that normally drive can participate by parking a bit farther and joining the walk for that day. Such events often generate excitement and media coverage, shining a positive light on the school's efforts. Additionally, consider friendly competitions or incentive programs: classes could compete on who logs the most walk/bike trips in a month, with the winning class getting a healthy breakfast party or similar reward. Create an environment where students feel proud to walk or bike – maybe featuring student stories in newsletters or highlighting "Student Pedestrians of the Month" who exemplify safe walking. These soft programs cost little or nothing (aside from perhaps volunteer time to organize) but tackle the cultural and behavioral side of the equation. They also signal to all stakeholders that the SAE is proactively fostering a pro-walking culture, which can bolster arguments when asking the city for support ("look, our kids are trying to walk more, we need the city's help to keep them safe."). As a next step, form a small committee (could overlap with the volunteer group) to plan the first Walk to School Day event and coordinate a safety workshop in the coming semester. Tie these events to the broader campaign – for instance, unveil the Safe Routes map at the Walk to School Day so parents can physically see the route recommendations. Every educational or encouragement activity will complement the engineering and enforcement efforts, embodying the comprehensive approach needed for Safe Routes success.

Identify Long-Term Champions and Maintain Momentum

Finally, a practical yet strategic recommendation is to identify and cultivate champions who will spearhead the Safe Routes cause over the long haul. Champions can be individuals or organizations. At the SAE, perhaps a particular administrator (like a vice principal or a counselor) is passionate about student wellness – enlist them to be the internal champion who keeps Safe Routes on the school's agenda. Among parents, notice those who have been especially active and encourage them to take on leadership roles (like chairing the SRTS Task Force or representing the SAE at city meetings). Sometimes having a formal title helps, e.g., "Safe Routes to School Parent Chairperson." These champions need moral support and sometimes training – consider sending a couple of parent or youth champions to any Safe Routes workshops or conferences in the region for inspiration and networking. In the city context, see if any council member or city official is willing to champion the cause; given Pomona's focus on safety and recent grants, there may be an elected official who would be proud to align with improving school routes. Having a city champion can accelerate political will for improvements. Maintaining momentum will also involve regular communication of successes and next steps. Create a timeline of goals (both short-term and longer-term) and celebrate milestones. For example, if within six months the school manages to get three new crosswalks approved by the city, celebrate that win publicly. If a grant application is submitted, acknowledge the collaborative effort in doing so (regardless of outcome, the act of applying is progress). It's useful to keep the wider community informed – share updates with the entire school community and even the neighborhood via social media or local press releases. This transparency keeps interest alive and invites new participants to join. A year from now, people should be able to look back and tangibly see how the project moved from assessment to action: "We started with surveys and concerns; now we have a parent patrol every morning and a plan in motion for new sidewalks." Documenting this journey in a simple annual report or a story map could be a motivating record. In summary, identify the torchbearers and keep feeding the flame of enthusiasm with regular achievements and storytelling.

By implementing these next steps, the SAE and its partners will transform the insights of this project into on-the-ground improvements and lasting programs. Each recommendation above is a piece of the puzzle: funding provides the means, data provides the direction, mapping and liaison

provide the coordination, volunteers and education provide the community muscle, and champions provide the leadership. Together, they create a comprehensive roadmap for action.

Conclusion

Through Education, Parent Involvement, and Youth Leadership, the SAE community can take immediate action to improve student safety without waiting for external funding. The *Toolkit for Community Action* provides a roadmap of practical steps – from walking school buses to student-led campaigns – all rooted in what our families and stakeholders have called for. By implementing these no-cost strategies and fostering strong coordination and partnerships, the SAE can create a safer environment starting now, while also laying the groundwork for future investments. The journey to a comprehensive Safe Routes to School program is ongoing, but with this toolkit, the SAE is equipped to lead the way with its own talent and passion. In doing so, the school not only addresses the current safety concerns but also empowers its students, parents, and staff as active shapers of their community. This spirit of agency and collaboration will ensure that improvements are not only achieved more quickly, but also sustained for years to come, making walking and biking to The School of Arts and Enterprise a normal, safe, and enriching part of the school day.

Appendix A

Parent/Guardian Survey

Section 1: Commuting Patterns
This section asks about how your child gets to school, how long it takes, and any barriers to walking or biking.

Q1. Does your student walk/bike to school?
Yes
No

If *Yes* go to **Q2** if *No* go to **Q3**

Q2. How long does it take for your student to walk/bike to school?

Less than 5 minutes
5-10 minutes
10-15 minutes
15-20 minutes
Over 30 minutes

Go to **Section 2**: **Route Specific Safety**

Q3. How long does it take you to drive your student to school?
Less than 5 minutes
5-10 minutes
10-15 minutes
15-20 minutes
Over 30 minutes

Go to **Q4**

Q4. Why does your student not walk/bike to school? *(Select all that apply)*
Crime and safety
Traffic
Weather (too hot or cold)
Route lacks sidewalks/bike lanes
Commute is too long/far
My student does not want to
Other: _____

Go to **Section 3: Perception of Safety in Pomona**

Section 2: Route Specific Safety
This section asks about the specific routes your child takes to SAE and any hazards they encounter.
Q5. How safe are the specific routes your student takes to SAE?
Very safe
Somewhat safe
Neither safe nor unsafe
Somewhat unsafe
Very unsafe

Q6. What specific hazards exist on your student's route? *(Select all that apply)*
Broken sidewalks/streets

No crosswalks
Heavy traffic
Poor lighting
Unhoused people/transients
Other: _____

#Q. Rank the hazards on your student's route from worst to least of a nuisance (1 being worst, 5 being least)
Broken sidewalks/streets
No crosswalks
Heavy traffic
Poor lighting
Unhoused people/transients
Other: _____

Go to **Section 3: Perception of Safety in Pomona**

Section 3: Perception of Safety in Pomona
This section asks about your concerns regarding safety in Pomona and how safe you feel the area is for students walking or biking.

Q7. What concerns you about your student's safety walking/biking in Pomona? *(Select all that apply)*
Crime (e.g., theft, harassment)
Drug usage in public areas
Poorly maintained streets or sidewalks
Lack of street lighting
Other: _____

Q8. Rank the safety concerns: *(Drag and drop to rank - 1 being most important 4 being least important)*
Crime (e.g., theft, harassment)
Drug usage in public areas
Poorly maintained streets or sidewalks
Lack of street lighting

Q9. How safe (in terms of personal safety) do you feel in Downtown Pomona is for students walking/biking?
Very Safe
Somewhat safe

Neither safe nor unsafe
Somewhat unsafe
Very unsafe

Section 4: Solutions
This section asks about potential improvements to make walking and biking safer and your interest in participating in supervised walking groups.

Q10. What improvements would make walking/biking safer for your student?
More/wider sidewalkers
Speed humps or other traffic calming measures
Better street lighting
Supervised walking groups
Secure bike parking
Safer bike lanes
Marked crosswalks
Crossing guards in Downtown Pomona

Q11. Rank the improvements that would make walking/biking safer for your student:
(Drag and drop to rank - 1 being most important 6 being least important)

More/wider sidewalkers
Speed humps or other traffic calming measures
Better street lighting
Supervised walking groups
Safer bike lanes
Marked crosswalks
Crossing guards in Downtown Pomona

THANK YOU!
Your feedback will help make SAE's commute safer.

Sección 1: Patrones de Transporte Esta sección pregunta cómo su hijo llega a la escuela, cuánto tiempo tarda y qué barreras existen para caminar o andar en bicicleta.

P1. ¿Su estudiante camina o anda en bicicleta a la escuela?
Sí
No

Si respondió Sí, pase a la pregunta 2. Si respondió No, pase a la pregunta 3.

P2. ¿Cuánto tiempo le toma a su estudiante caminar/andar en bicicleta a la escuela?
Menos de 5 minutos
De 5 a 10 minutos
De 10 a 15 minutos
De 15 a 20 minutos
Más de 30 minutos

Pase a la Sección 2: Seguridad Específica de la Ruta

P3. ¿Cuánto tiempo le toma a usted llevar a su estudiante en coche a la escuela?
Menos de 5 minutos
De 5 a 10 minutos
De 10 a 15 minutos
De 15 a 20 minutos
Más de 30 minutos

Pase a la pregunta 4.

P4. ¿Por qué su estudiante no camina/anda en bicicleta a la escuela? (Seleccione todo lo que aplique)
Crimen y seguridad
Tráfico
Clima (demasiado caliente o frío)
La ruta no tiene aceras/carriles para bicicletas
El trayecto es demasiado largo
A mi estudiante no le gusta
Otro: _____

Pase a la Sección 3: Percepción de la Seguridad en Pomona

Sección 2: Seguridad Específica de la Ruta
Esta sección pregunta sobre las rutas específicas que su hijo toma hacia SAE y cualquier peligro que encuentre.

P5. ¿Qué tan seguras son las rutas específicas que su estudiante toma hacia SAE?
Muy seguras
Algo seguras
Ni seguras ni inseguras
Algo inseguras
Muy inseguras

P6. ¿Qué peligros específicos existen en la ruta de su estudiante? (Seleccione todo lo que aplique)
Acera/calles rotas
No hay pasos de peatones
Tráfico pesado
Mala iluminación
Personas sin hogar/transientes
Otro: _____

#P. Clasifique los peligros en la ruta de su estudiante de mayor a menor molestia (1 siendo el peor, 5 el menos problemático)
Acera/calles rotas
No hay pasos de peatones
Tráfico pesado
Mala iluminación
Personas sin hogar/transientes
Otro: _____

Pase a la Sección 3: Percepción de la Seguridad en Pomona

Sección 3: Percepción de la Seguridad en Pomona
Esta sección pregunta sobre sus preocupaciones con respecto a la seguridad en Pomona y cuán segura siente que está el área para estudiantes que caminan o andan en bicicleta.

P7. ¿Qué le preocupa sobre la seguridad de su estudiante al caminar/andar en bicicleta en Pomona? (Seleccione todo lo que aplique)
Crimen (por ejemplo, robo, acoso)
Uso de drogas en áreas públicas
Calles o aceras en mal estado
Falta de iluminación en las calles
Otro: _____

P8. Clasifique las preocupaciones de seguridad: (Arrastre y suelte para clasificar - 1 siendo la más importante, 4 la menos importante)
Crimen (por ejemplo, robo, acoso)
Uso de drogas en áreas públicas
Calles o aceras en mal estado
Falta de iluminación en las calles

P9. ¿Qué tan seguro (en términos de seguridad personal) siente que es el centro de Pomona para estudiantes que caminan/andan en bicicleta?
Muy seguro

Algo seguro
Ni seguro ni inseguro
Algo inseguro
Muy inseguro

Sección 4: Soluciones
Esta sección pregunta sobre posibles mejoras para hacer que caminar y andar en bicicleta sea más seguro y su interés en participar en grupos de caminata supervisados.

P10. ¿Qué mejoras harían que caminar/andar en bicicleta sea más seguro para su estudiante?
Más/aceras más anchas
Reductores de velocidad u otras medidas para calmar el tráfico
Mejor iluminación en las calles
Grupos de caminata supervisados
Estacionamiento seguro para bicicletas
Carriles para bicicletas más seguros
Pasos de peatones marcados
Guardias de cruce en el centro de Pomona

P11. Clasifique las mejoras que harían que caminar/andar en bicicleta sea más seguro para su estudiante: (Arrastre y suelte para clasificar - 1 siendo la más importante, 6 la menos importante)
Más/aceras más anchas
Reductores de velocidad u otras medidas para calmar el tráfico
Mejor iluminación en las calles
Grupos de caminata supervisados
Carriles para bicicletas más seguros
Pasos de peatones marcados
Guardias de cruce en el centro de Pomona

¡GRACIAS!
Su retroalimentación ayudará a hacer el trayecto de SAE más seguro

Appendix B

Survey Flyer


ENCUESTA SOBRE RUTAS SEGURAS LA ESCUELA
¡Ayúdenos a establecer rutas más seguras para nuestros niños! Dedique unos minutos a completar nuestra breve encuesta sobre caminos seguros hacia la escuela y comparta sus sugerencias sobre cómo mejorar la seguridad al caminar y andar en bicicleta hacia el colegio. ¡Su opinión es fundamental!
ESCANEA AQUÍ
CalPoly Pomona
IR A
bit.ly/srts_sae

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