

SCRTC- 2021 Consolidated Call for Projects (RSTPX, STIP, HIP, & CRRSAA)

APPLICATION/PROJECT PROGRAMMING REQUEST

A. Project Information

Applicant/Implementing Agency		Public Agency Sponsor (if different)	
Ecology Action		Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission	
Project Title			
Youth SRTS Bike/Pedestrian Education			
Brief Description/Scope of Work (attach extra pages to fully describe scope)			
Ecology Action (EA) is seeking RSTP funding to support vital, hands-on school-based bicycle and pedestrian safety education for Santa Cruz County youth through the Walk Smart and Bike Smart programs. These sister programs respectively provide 2nd graders pedestrian safety training and 5th graders bicycling safety training throughout Santa Cruz County. Please See Attached Narrative.			
Location, Limits, Length (attach map(s)/photos on separate tab)			
Schools throughout County			
 roadway Functional Classification: (if applicable)			
Summary of Project Benefits, Purpose and Need			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More youth biking and walking more frequently and safely. • Injury prevention. Program helps to prevent walking or cycling collisions and injuries by teaching safe biking and walking skills and the rules of the road. • Head injury prevention. Children experience a high level of traumatic head injury as a result of a bike crash. This can be avoided by youth learning to wear helmets properly and being provided with helmets that they can keep and use. 			
Funds requested	\$59,113	Total Project Cost	\$65,893
Estimated # of Daily User	NA		
Was project previously programmed for funds by RTC?	Y	RTIP ID	EA02
Project Cost by Mode (list approximate percentage of total project costs)			
Mode	% of Total Cost		
Pavement Preservation (rehab, overlay, etc.)			
Road-Auto serving (not rehab)			
Bicycle	50%		
Pedestrian	50%		
Transit			
Transportation System Management (TSM)			
Transportation Demand Management (TDM)			
Other:			
	100%		
Priority	Project is priority #	2	of 2 applications submitted
Contact Name	Phone	E-mail Address	
Jeanne LePage	831-234-8364	jlepage@ecoact.org	

2021 RSTP Narrative

Summary

Ecology Action (EA) is seeking RSTP funding to support vital, hands-on school-based bicycle and pedestrian safety education for Santa Cruz County youth through the Walk Smart and Bike Smart programs. These sister programs respectively provide 2nd graders pedestrian safety training and 5th graders bicycling safety training throughout Santa Cruz County.

Since 2004, Ecology Action has trained over 53,949 students in pedestrian and bicycle safety skills. Our vision to reach every 2nd grader and 5th grader in Santa Cruz County annually so that we can decrease the number of youth involved in pedestrian and bicycle collisions and grow lifetime habits of safe biking and walking. We aim to provide students and their families with the best tools to make cycling and walking safer in our region. We have prioritized this education model and found funding to work towards this initiative with public and private sources over the past 15 years. Flexible funding is critical to reaching this goal as there are many schools that request these safety trainings but our location-specific funding often does not allow for program funding in diverse regions. Currently there is not enough funding sources to support every school in Santa Cruz County.

This application will allow us to provide bike and walk safety education to 300 second and 450 fifth graders at 30 classrooms over the 2-year grant period at schools throughout Santa Cruz County including Watsonville, Live Oak, San Lorenzo Valley and Scotts Valley.

Project Description

Program Basics: Ecology Action classroom, walk around the block, and bicycle rodeo trainings are integrated into regular class time. Holding the training during standard class time ensures that we reach all grade-level students rather than only a small, self-selected group (as in an after-school model). We negotiate classroom time as we work with school principals and staff members to schedule convenient times for program delivery.

Our instructors are League of American Bicyclists certified, trained in classroom management and we always provide bi-lingual and bicultural instruction if appropriate. Our staff has decades of experience delivering these comprehensive programs to youth.

Our education programs are modeled on the best national practices in terms of age of delivery, diversity of teaching methods, interactive delivery, and course content. In a typical year (2018/2019 pre-covid) we taught 7,916 students with our classroom programs. Teachers rated the programs 96% effective at teaching safe biking and walking behaviors to prevent injury while conducting those activities.

2nd Grade Walk Smart Presentation: The Walk Smart classroom presentation introduces the “Stop, Look, and Listen” street-crossing method and typically lasts 45 minutes. Staff members administer a bilingual (English/Spanish) pre-program quiz to gauge students’ knowledge and then use a variety of techniques (discussion, demonstration, brainstorm, media, etc.) to teach the health and environmental benefits of walking. Students get the opportunity to practice safe walking through a combination of role-playing, dance, and Simon Says.

Walk Smart Walk Around the Block (WAB): We offer a unique Walk Around the Block or pedestrian rodeo as a complement to our classroom teaching segment. In this active session, the students practice stopping, looking both ways, and crossing the street independently and safely. The WAB is typically conducted off campus, in the

school's neighborhood. Parents, local law enforcement, and public works staff are invited to join. The WAB begins in the classroom, where our instructors review critical pedestrian safety tips, as well as field trip rules. Students are divided into two smaller groups to keep a student-to-instructor ratio at approximately 5:1 and issued brightly colored safety vests before heading off campus. During the walk, they engage in actively observing their surroundings and developing safe walking practices, while learning about driveways, parked cars, mid-block crossings, and traffic signs and signals. Under adult supervision, each student crosses an intersection independently with a student 'buddy'. Students are excited by the challenge which occurs at least twice, although routes can incorporate as many as 5 crossings. After completing the Walk Around the Block, students are presented with a certificate and a pedestrian safety bookmark. The certificate acknowledges the skill mastery by the individual child and communicates to parents the important lessons learned. Part of the students' take-home assignment is to share pedestrian safety tips with their families. The trainings give students the necessary knowledge and hands-on experience to walk to school, and parents the confidence to allow them to. The program evaluations demonstrate that the trainings improve students' and guardians' attitudes. Safety instruction and practice is an important first step in encouraging and increasing safe student biking and walking.

5th Grade Bike Smart Presentations: Bike Smart is generally presented as a two-part training, including a presentation and a bicycle rodeo for each 5th grade class. The one-hour Bike Smart presentation can be delivered in an assembly format or in the classroom. The Bike Smart presentation uses a variety of media—live demonstrations, custom-created animations, videos, and participatory discussion—to teach safety behavior to students. Our presentation provides in-depth training on the following four critical components of bicycle safety: being prepared, being visible, being predictable, and being alert. Students are asked to complete pre- and post-program quizzes to assess learning. Our program evaluations show that our trainings improve students' and parents' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Results of our surveys and evaluations are included in our program reporting.

Bike Smart Rodeos: Our Bike Smart rodeos are fun, engaging, and allow students to practice important road safety skills. Unlike other rodeo programs, Bike Smart works with one class for a 2-hour time slot and further divides the class so that ~15 students get to ride the rodeo course at a time. This guarantees experiential learning, and with a 5:1 ratio of students to instructors and 45 minutes on a bike, students receive individualized coaching. After both groups have ridden the course, students return to the classroom to review the safety material, complete a rodeo survey, and participate in a bicycle safety raffle.

Bikes and Helmets: To ensure every student can participate, we provide a large fleet of approximately 18 bicycles of various sizes and 30 adjustable, universal-fit Specialized helmets for students to use during the rodeo. We use a protective liner to ensure the helmets are hygienic and staff members personally fit each helmet while reminding students of the "two-finger" safety check. We also encourage students to bring their own bicycles and helmets so that our staff can ensure they fit and are in good working order. In addition, if any student brings their own bike for the rodeo but does not have a helmet, we provide them with a free helmet to take home so we can guarantee that they will ride home with the proper safety equipment.

The Rodeo Course: Our innovative, intersection-based course allows students to refine the skills they need to travel safely on real streets. Every student has the opportunity to ride through the intersection while traveling in every direction. Students practice riding in a straight line, avoiding objects in the path, riding on the right side of the road, doing shoulder checks, crossing railroad tracks, making turns, traveling straight through an intersection, navigating traffic conflicts at intersections, being aware of cars and distracted drivers, using hand signals, and using other communication techniques.

Inclusivity: Because of our core belief that bike skills are life skills; we have developed effective methods for quickly teaching new riders to move from basic balancing to actually riding a bike. We have found that up to 25% of the fifth-grade students we serve need basic bike riding instruction. The vast majority of these new riders are able to ride by the end of the rodeo due to our teaching method, individual attention, and time on the bikes. We have also developed a customized training for Special Day Class students to ensure inclusivity and fun for all students.

Online Presentation: We also offer an online, interactive version of both programs should schools prefer this contact-less option. The interactive presentation features two trained instructors and can be delivered in both English and Spanish.

Location: Countywide

Summary – project benefits, purpose and need

Need: Santa Cruz County unfortunately has some of the highest pedestrian and bicycle fatality and serious injury rates in the State. In 2018 the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) ranked the County of Santa Cruz as the 3rd worst for bicyclists killed and injured compared to 58 California counties. In 2017, OTS ranked Santa Cruz County the worst county in California for crashes involving bicyclists under age 15 and 10th worst county for pedestrians under age 15. The number of pedestrians injured and killed from 2016 to 2018 has increased compared to the previous three years in Santa Cruz County. According to local police data from June 2020 – January 2021, 2 pedestrians were killed in traffic collisions in Watsonville and one killed and one seriously injured in Santa Cruz. In the past 10 years OTS rankings have vacillated a little but overall, our County is consistently found by OTS to have an extraordinarily high pedestrian and bicycle fatality and serious injury rate.

There is a need for universal safety education to reverse these trends. Surveys from multiple school districts across the County indicate "safety of intersections and crossings" as the number one reason parents do not allow their student to ride or walk to school. For these reasons Ecology Action has adopted a goal of serving every child in the County with walk and bike safety training. Together with our public agency partners, we have worked to increase the public grant funding toward this goal as well as securing private donations. However, the annual funding for the program still leaves many schools unserved in a given year. The RSTP funding is necessary to ensure continuity of service for schools during grant gap years, as well as expanding service to schools unserved to date.

Benefits:

- More youth biking and walking more frequently and safely.
- Injury prevention. Program helps to prevent walking or cycling collisions and injuries by teaching safe biking and walking skills and the rules of the road.
- Head injury prevention. Children experience a high level of traumatic head injury as a result of a bike crash. This can be avoided by youth learning to wear helmets properly and being provided with helmets that they can keep and use.
- Empowering youth by teaching them how to ride a bike. We have found that up to 25% of the fifth-grade students we serve need basic bike riding instruction. The vast majority of these new riders are able to ride by the end of the rodeo.

- Reducing school drop-off and pick-up vehicle congestion. Our programs provide youth with the necessary knowledge and skills to bike and walk to school therefore helping to reduce vehicle drop offs at school sites.
- Promotion of active lifestyles to help with obesity prevention. Local youth have high obesity rates—in Watsonville they are well over the state average. Obese children face four times the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Walking or biking to school increases health, improves school performance, and can add on average of 24 minutes of exercise to their day.

Purpose: To provide lifelong pedestrian and bicycle safety skills to the youth of Santa Cruz County with special focus on the 2nd and 5th grade populations

B. Project Benefits/Evaluation Criteria

Information in this section will be used to evaluate projects. The RTC is required to consider how well projects advance

Project Title:	Youth SRTS Bike/Pedestrian Education
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Generally, what are the benefits of this project?

Increase bicycle and pedestrian safety education for youth in our County thereby increasing safe bicycling
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Benefit Category (see Attachment 2 of Call for Projects for additional information and supporting data)	How does this project address any of the following? Projects are not expected to address all of these; if not applicable or not a primary purpose, write "N/A".
1 Safety (reduce fatal or injury collisions)	Santa Cruz County unfortunately has some of the highest pedestrian and bicycle fatality and serious injury rates in the State. In 2018 the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) ranked the County of Santa Cruz as the 3rd worst for bicyclists killed and injured compared to 58 California counties. In 2017, OTS ranked Santa Cruz County the worst county in California for crashes involving bicyclists under age 15 and 10th worst county for pedestrians under age 15. The number of pedestrians injured and killed from 2016 to 2018 has increased compared to the previous three years in Santa Cruz County. According to local police data from June 2020 – January 2021, 2 pedestrians were killed in traffic collisions in Watsonville and one killed and one seriously injured in Santa Cruz. In the past 10 years OTS rankings have vacillated a little but overall, our County is consistently found by OTS to have an extraordinarily high pedestrian and bicycle fatality and serious injury rate. Our education programs directly confront this challenge and provide hands-on education to some of our most vulnerable road users -- our children.
2 System preservation (maintain existing transportation infrastructure, service, or program)	NA
3 System Performance	NA
3a Reduce emissions and/or vehicle miles traveled	Our programs are designed to provide students and their families with both the knowledge and confidence to use active transportation rather than commute to school in vehicles which will reduce VMT and/or emissions
3b Improve travel times, travel time reliability; reduce delay	More active transportation to school sites will reduce the drop off and pick up congestion.
3d Improve freight or goods movement efficiency	NA
4 Increase Access for All (Expand multi-modal travel options/choices, especially to and within key	Bike and pedestrian safety education is a key to reducing barriers and demonstrate that this transportation mode is viable for most users.

5	Health and Equity - Enhance health, safe access to key destination for transportation-disadvantaged populations	An important consideration in choosing the school sites we serve is ensuring that DAC students are served so that have all of the tools necessary to bike/walk safely as many already do out of necessity. We have also found that a large percentage of DAC students do not know how to balance on a bike and our program is designed these students how to actually ride a bike. It is a hugely successful and empowering aspect of our program.
5a	Improve public health or promote healthy communities, provide outreach to targeted users/health issues	Our focus on active and safe transportation is interconnected with promoting healthy communities. As stated previously we have a deep history of working within DAC school communities.
5b	Serve people who are transportation disadvantaged due to age, income, ability or language or other challenges	Our instructors provide bilingual programing as well as serving students in the Special Day Class programs. We have created programing that is specifically geared to teach children of differing abilities.

Additional Considerations in Project Evaluation:

A.	RTP Consistency: If project is included in the 2040 or Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Project List, list RTP Project Number	NA
B.	Consistency with Complete Streets guidelines and policies: Describe how is project consistent with guidelines, integrates complete streets elements	This NI bike program complements Complete Street policies and IN projects.
C.	Consistency with other plans. What other plans is this project listed in, if	Santa Cruz City Complete Streets to School; Watsonville City Complete Streets to School
D.	Public engagement: How was this project determined to be a priority? What outreach will occur during implementation?	Ecology Action has continued to survey parents, school community members and the general public as to their priorities and across the board safety education comes up as a top priority and need. These surveys are implemented within planning work, program implementation and at public events.
E.	Scale of Benefits- How many users are expected to use the facility, service or program? What is the source of this estimate?	We aim to serve 15 2nd grade classes and 15 5th grade classes. Typically 2nd grades have 20 students and 5th grades have 30 students.
F. Potential Risks (and plans to mitigate them)		
F1	Funding - Is this project fully funded?	Yes.
	How will potential cost increases be	Through other funding sources such as donors and sponsorships.
F2	Schedule: Describe any potential delays to schedule	No delays are anticipated.

F3	Deliverability: Describe why your agency is capable of delivering this project. (sufficient staff, project management, performance in past)	Ecology Action has the staff capacity and experience to successfully deliver this program.
F4	Environmental: Describe any potential environmental issues, mitigations, risks associated with current and future environmental conditions (climate change, extreme weather, seismic)	NA.
F5	Other: Describe any other potential risks and plans to mitigate risks	NA.

D. Non-Infrastructure Projects: Task, Cost and Schedule Information

For non-capital projects, summarize tasks/work/activities to be completed; estimated cost/funding for each; and schedule Below is a sample, but update to match work anticipated for your project - ex. preliminary planning, project implementation, public outreach project completion and timeline for each. Add additional lines if needed to reflect all tasks and additional columns if needed to reflect other funding sources.

Project Title:	Youth SRTS Bike/Pedestrian Education
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Task #	Task Title	RTC Grant Request*	Fund Source:	Estimated Local In-Kind	Estimated Total Project Cost	FY2021/22					FY 2022/23					FY 2023/24														
						D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1	Ecology Action Staff Time	\$52,898			\$52,898																									
2	Consultants/Contractors	\$3,750			\$3,750																									
3	Mileage	\$815			\$815																									
4	Supplies	\$1,650			\$1,650																									
Totals		\$59,113	\$0	\$0	\$59,113																									

\$6,780.26 Minimum match = 11.47% of total cost

* Use only whole dollars in the financial information fields.

E. Certification and Assurances - After reading each item, initial and sign to certify your agency agrees to each.

Project Title:

Youth SRTS Bike/Pedestrian Education

INITIALS

As authorized representative for my agency, I hereby certify that the information contained in this application, including required attachments, is accurate and hereby certify the following:

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|----|---|----|
| 1 | The project implementing agency possesses legal authority to nominate projects and to finance, acquire, construct, and/or implement the proposed project; | JL |
| 2 | This project is among the highest priorities for this agency; | JL |
| 3 | The proposed transportation investments have received the full review and vetting required by law; | JL |
| 4 | Such investments are an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars. The agency shall adhere to principles and policies that ensure government oversight and management of the contracting process to ensure taxpayer funds are spent wisely; contracts are not wasteful, inefficient, or subject to misuse; unnecessary no-bid and cost-plus contracts are avoided; and contracts are awarded according to the best interests of California taxpayers; | JL |
| 5 | The agency will maintain and operate the property acquired, developed, rehabilitated, or restored for the life of the resultant facility(ies) or activity. I understand that with the approval of the California Department of Transportation, the Administering Agency or its successors in interest in the property may transfer the responsibility to maintain and operate the property; | JL |
| 6 | If these new funds are used to replace funds previously committed to this project, the agency will maintain its effort with regard to redirecting those funds to similar transportation projects; | JL |
| 7 | The agency will give RTC and California Department of Transportation’s representative access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the project; | JL |
| 8 | Work on the project shall commence within a reasonable time after receipt of notification that funds have been approved, allocated or obligated, as applicable, and that the project will be carried to completion with reasonable diligence; | JL |
| 9 | The agency will comply where applicable with provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation, and any other federal, state, and/or local laws, rules and/or regulations; and | JL |
| 10 | The agency shall comply with all reporting requirements outlined by FHWA, FTA, RTC, Caltrans, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) or state statute, as applicable; | JL |
| 11 | The agency will commit the funds necessary to ensure this project is fully funded. | JL |

Implementing Agency Representative:

Signed  _____
 Jennifer Lape Ecology Action
 Strategic Fund Development Director

Date 9.30.21