



San Francisco County Transportation Authority

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School Traffic Calming Program School Walk Audit Guidelines (May 2024)



Background

SFMTA's School Traffic Calming Program is a combination of school walk audits and proactive daylighting. The current Prop L allocation is intended to fund planning, design, and implementation of improvements identified through school walk audits at up to ten school sites each year, and proactive daylighting at up to fifty (50) intersections around schools each year.

Walk Audits

Walk audits are collaborative assessments that help the SFMTA identify infrastructure needs, motorist behaviors, and pedestrian/bicyclist behaviors on streets within a 2-3 block radius of public and private K-12 schools in San Francisco. With funding from this allocation, and in collaboration with local school communities, the SFMTA will conduct up to ten (10) school walk audits each school year.



School Prioritization & Selection

Each school year, SFMTA's School Traffic Calming Program selects up to ten (10) schools for walk audits. The process of selecting schools begins with a ranking of all public and private K-12 schools based primarily on the following criteria:

1. Five-year pedestrian-involved collision history within ¼-mile of the school – TransBASE
2. School enrollment data – California Department of Education
3. Department of Public Health data on student residency within a walkable radius of each school. This anonymous data (names and addresses NOT included) is used to determine the potential for walking and bicycling to school – SRTS Non-Infrastructure Program

Based on the above criteria, SFMTA staff develops a preliminary list of ten (10) schools for participation in the walk audit program, then the following factors are used to help refine and finalize school selections:

1. Existing Infrastructure – A review of planned and recently completed pedestrian safety improvements implemented in school areas during the previous 5 years (schools having already received, or with plans to receive, significant improvements may drop in ranking).
2. Equity – Where applicable, consideration may be given to schools within equity priority communities or California Communities of Concern. Also, and to the extent possible, efforts will be made to balance the number of schools across all eleven supervisorial districts. Since only ten schools are selected each year, this program will seek to ensure at least at least one school within each supervisorial district receives a walk-audit over a given two-year period.

Options available for schools not selected for a walk audit

For schools not selected to participate in the Walk Audit Program in a given school year, SFMTA continually responds to individual and school requests for evaluation of traffic safety concerns, particularly as they pertain to pedestrian and bicyclist safety in the vicinity of schools. SFMTA also provides a variety of project paths and programs offering solutions to traffic safety concerns. What follows is a partial list of ongoing projects and programs addressing traffic safety citywide:

1. Application-Based Residential Traffic Calming Program
2. Slow Streets Program
3. Quick-Build Projects on the High Injury Network
4. Vision Zero Program
5. Transportation Engineering Operations – Resident requests through 311

School Walk Audit Process

Once schools are selected, SFMTA staff will outreach to school administrators, parent-teacher groups, Unified School District transportation Staff, district supervisor Staff, and local advocacy groups, to announce the school's selection and plan for an inclusive walk audit process. The date, time and meeting location will be established by SFMTA staff in collaboration with the school community. The school principal or administrator will coordinate a walk team, typically a group of 6-12 people, including school administration, staff, students, families, advocates, and local SFMTA crossing guards.



To prepare for a walk audit, SFMTA staff will survey operational and infrastructure conditions around the school, including collision history, sidewalk and street widths, bicycle infrastructure, transit stops, nearby stop/signal controls, warning signage, pavement striping and markings, and lane configurations.

Prior to the Walk Audit, SFMTA will distribute a Walk Packet that details and explains the treatments that can be recommended (and implemented) through the walk audit program. The packet will include an outline of the walk route with space for participants to note traffic safety concerns and improvement requests. The packet also will include information about school access conditions and policies, including current access routes, student pick up and drop off activities, Muni or school district bus service, color curb zones, and school crossing guards.

Walk Audit Route

The walking route typically includes only streets within a 2-3 block radius of the school. If a school requests the walk include other streets frequently used by students, if circumstances and funding allow, SFMTA staff may expand the walking route to include those streets. However, recommended improvements are generally prioritized for streets adjacent to the school.

Day of the Walk Audit

On the day of the walk, participants meet at the agreed upon time and place. Each walker is given a Walk Packet to record notes and a pen. SFMTA staff lead the walk, encouraging participants to share perceived obstacles to safe and comfortable walking in the area around the school. SFMTA staff takes notes during the walk. Walk leaders will initiate conversations at certain locations along the walk as necessary to help generate discussion amongst group participants.

After the Walk Audit

Following the Walk Audit, SFMTA staff prepare a draft Walk Audit Report with recommendations based on feedback gathered during the walk or in subsequent communications.

Final Walk Audit Report

The draft Walk Audit Report is distributed to participants for review and comment. This comment period, generally two weeks, is the final stage of public participation in the report. Following the comment period, the report is finalized by SFMTA staff and shared with the school, Walk Audit participants, the SFCTA, and the district supervisor's office.

Implementation of Recommended Improvements

Recommendations are divided into near-term and long-term improvements. Long-term and more costly improvements are documented and made available for future coordination opportunities and/or proposed for inclusion in future capital projects. Recommendations that do not fall under SFMTA purview (e.g., street trees, landscaping, street lights, street cleaning, pot holes and other pavement defects), are documented and referred to the appropriate city department for follow up.



Near-term improvements that do not require legislation (e.g., red zones, painted safety zones, loading zone, signal timing changes, minor striping changes, pavement markings, warning signs) are designed and work ordered to the appropriate SFMTA shop(s) for implementation.

Near-term improvements that do require legislation (e.g., traffic calming, parking changes, road diets, follow the standard process of design, fire department and transit review, internal engineering review, multi-agency review, and a public hearing followed by final approval by the City Traffic Engineer. Recommendations are implemented by SFMTA and SFPW crews, or in some instances a private contractor.

School Traffic Calming Program – Projected Timeline (24-25 School Year)

Year 1 Summary (July 2024 - June 2025):

- Identify and conduct walk audits at ten schools; walk audits likely to begin in March when weather improves
- Proactive daylighting will begin once schools are identified, as early as January weather permitting

Year 2 Summary (July 2025 - June 2026):

- Finalize walk audit reports and recommended improvements
- Begin implementing recommended improvements, primarily those that don't require legislation or coordination (e.g. painting crosswalks and installing warning signs)
- Complete proactive daylighting at walk audit schools (up to 50 intersections)

Year 3 Summary (July 2026 - June 2027):

- Continue implementing recommended improvements, primarily those that require legislation and coordination (e.g. speed humps and traffic islands)

Learn More About School Walk Audits

San Franciscans can learn more about school walk audits and sign up for updates by visiting the program website: www.sfmta.com/SchoolWalkAudits.