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Research Brief

Title

Peer Exchange Series 2024: My community is eager to collaborate and grow! Where do we go from here?

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Peer Exchange Series 2024:

My community is eager to collaborate and grow! Where do we go from here?

Peer Exchange Overview

The Peer Exchange Program is a three-part webinar series for individuals, community agencies, and governmental agencies interested in furthering ideas and actions that surfaced in the past Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Trainings (CPBST) or Comunidades Activas y Seguras (Active and Safe Communities) (CAyS) program trainings. As of 2023, SafeTREC and California Walks have conducted 126 Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program (CPBSP) workshops statewide.

- On February 13, 2024, SafeTREC held the first session of the 2024 Peer Exchange Program, “Building a Collaborative and Equitable Transportation Vision with Decision-Makers.”
- The second peer exchange, “Cultivating Youth Leadership in Transportation Spaces” was held on March 12, 2024.
- And, on May 14, 2024, the final installment of the series, “*Construyendo una visión de transporte colaborativa y equitativa con personas con capacidad decisoria y Rutas seguras a la escuela*” (or Building a Collaborative and Equitable Transportation Vision with Decision Makers and Safe Routes to School) was held in Spanish with simultaneous translation to English.

Participants were encouraged to network with each other to create a system of support beyond the webinars. During the discussion portion, attendees had the chance to learn from one another’s successes and challenges to implement recommendations from previous CPBSP workshops.

The 2024 Peer Exchange Series focused on the following:

- Communicate advice on how to build relationships with youth, school officials, and city and county decision-makers;
- Provide insight on local transportation projects; increase knowledge of regional, state, and local leadership and the policies that impact the implementation of recommendations from the CPBSP; and
- Strategies to center equity in transportation and community engagement.

Building a Collaborative and Equitable Transportation Vision with Decision Makers Webinar Overview

On February 13, 2024, attendees gathered virtually to share their personal experiences building relationships with city and county decision-makers. Participants and panelists shared their experiences working with decision makers to implement recommendations from the CPBSP and how policy informs city staff and council members' responsibilities. Panelists Jarrett Mullen, Sustainable Transportation Manager, City of El Cerrito, and Christina Villaseñor - Councilmember, City of Fillmore, shared their experiences and recommended strategies for bridging the relationship between community members with city staff and city council members.

The webinar began with SafeTREC staff explaining the different responsibilities and jurisdictions managed by city, county, and regional governments. During the presentation, staff gave an overview of policies that promote pedestrian and bicyclist safety, including Vision Zero Policies, Complete Streets Policies, Smart Growth and Efficient Land Use Management Policies, and Mixed-Use Zoning.

In his presentation, Jarrett Mullen underlined the need to maintain momentum in transportation projects; he shared the ten-plus-year advocacy efforts of community members in Mountain View, CA, to transform a corridor into a complete street. In 2023, the City of Mountain View received funding to install those community-led improvements.

Councilmember Christina shared her involvement with the CPBST and explained that a grassroots bike enthusiast invited her. She underlined his background, passion for transportation, and initiative as key strategies to leverage and connect with the city council. She explained that including the city council in the CPBST process allows them to show support and share the information in reports collected from the training.

During the discussion portion, webinar participants discussed strategies to promote changes that benefit populations historically excluded from transportation planning spaces, such as seniors, children, and low-income communities. Participants also discussed the conversion of former rail spaces into trails and green spaces; resources for this are shared under the Resource section.

Cultivating Youth Leadership in Transportation Spaces Webinar Overview

On March 12, 2024, staff, panelists, and participants gathered virtually for the "Cultivating Youth Leadership in Transportation Spaces" webinar. Panelists included Ann Jasper, Walk n' Roll Program Manager of the City of San Jose Department of Transportation; Faith Gonia, Westmont Student and Member of the Westmont Traffic Advisory Committee; and Amelie Arango, Founder of the Westmont Traffic Advisory Committee.

The panelists shared tips for youth who want to get involved in safety planning and, conversely, how to engage youth in safety planning. These included seeking opportunities in transportation-centered organizations. Youth can also begin by discussing transportation safety with people around them, such as friends, family, and peers. When transportation-centered organizations want to engage with youth, they can tailor messaging that promotes traffic safety in fun and exciting ways. The student panelists shared strategies to leverage social media to promote a positive response from students. These included peer-to-peer interviews and infusing humor into videos on TikTok and reels on Instagram.

Panelists also discussed emerging trends in modes of transportation used by students, such as an increase in the use of electric scooters and electric bikes. In their discussion, panelists also addressed the competing concerns in various communities, including personal security issues and food insecurity. They stressed the need for inclusivity in transportation safety discussions, which includes translating materials into the communities' most spoken language(s). For example, if participants ride bikes to school or work, San Jose Walk n' Roll offers free bike locks in underserved neighborhoods with personal security concerns and fits people with helmets free of charge. Panelists explained the value of adapting conversations that remain relevant and dynamic to the diverse needs of communities. Panelists emphasized that everyone deserves a safe commute to and from campus, but unfortunately, that is not the case.

Construyendo una visión de transporte colaborativa y equitativa con personas con capacidad decisoria y Rutas seguras a la escuela Webinar Overview

On May 14, 2024, the SafeTREC team held the third webinar of the 2024 Peer Exchange Series, “*Construyendo una visión de transporte colaborativa y equitativa con personas con capacidad decisoria y Rutas seguras a la escuela*” (or “Building a Collaborative and Equitable Transportation Vision with Decision Makers and Safe Routes to School”), facilitated in Spanish with simultaneous translation to English. The Peer Exchange focused on different strategies to engage and collaborate with decision makers on active transportation projects that promote safety for people walking, rolling, or biking in their community. Panelists shared their expertise on Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programming and how funding and policies shape their work. Panelists included Martha Sicairos, Community Programs Manager, Cal Walks; Mario Anaya, Community Development Director, City of Tulare; and Edgar Hernandez, Senior Transportation Planner/Active Transportation Specialist, Caltrans District 6.

The three panelists discussed their experiences working with active transportation decision-makers, agencies, and community-based organizations. Among these conversations, panelists shared their experiences with youth-centered active transportation policies and implementing SRTS programs. During the discussion portion, attendees had a chance to learn from one another’s experiences by collaborating with people with decision-making capacities and successes, challenges, and lessons learned from SRTS projects and partnerships.

Panelists also provided insights into participation strategies to engage stakeholders, tips for connecting with decision-makers, engaging in public meetings, and collaborating among various agencies and organizations. Panelists explained the positive value of attending community events to meet people where they are. They also emphasized that transportation is a salient issue that is stronger when multiple stakeholders are involved.

Conclusion

About 60 participants from urban, suburban, and rural communities throughout California attended the virtual series. Panelists from across California shared their expertise in SRTS, transportation decision-making processes, and strategies to connect with local leaders to make actionable changes that promote pedestrian and bicyclist safety. SafeTREC staff and panelists connected with previous and current Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program (CPBSP) participants to discuss challenges and strengths in their community. Topics discussed included infrastructure changes, policies, and programmatic approaches to help participants envision safe, equitable, and inclusive communities.

Resources

- [Types and Responsibilities of Local Agencies](#)
- [StoryWalk® Week 2023](#)
- [Focusing on the Safety of Children Can Propel Vision Zero Initiatives](#)
- [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#)
- [Engaging youth to advance safer streets for all Recommendations for meaningful youth engagement](#)
- [Engaging youth to advance safer streets for all Guide and inspiration for partnership between youth and adults](#)
- [Ruby Bridges Foundation: Walk to School Day](#)
- [Walk Bike & Roll to School](#)

Resources Shared in Chat

- [Alameda Jean Sweeney Open Space Park](#)
- [Rails to Trails](#)
- [Rails to Trails: Old Train Tracks May Be Key in Solving Central OC’s Green Space Shortage](#)

Appendix

Peer Exchange #1 - [Building a Collaborative and Equitable Transportation Vision with Decision-Makers](#) Presentation

Peer Exchange #2 - [Cultivating Youth Leadership in Transportation Spaces](#) Presentation

Peer Exchange #3 - [Construyendo una visión de transporte colaborativa y equitativa con personas con capacidad decisoria y Rutas Seguras a la escuela](#) Presentation

About the Program

The Peer Exchange series was conducted as part of the Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program (CPBSP). The aim of the CPBSP is to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries in California. We partner with communities across California to discuss, plan, and implement safety improvements and projects.

The CPBSP prioritizes working in communities that are at disproportionate risk for road traffic injuries and addressing the safety needs of people who are underserved by traditional transportation resources and planning. For more information, visit: <https://bit.ly/CPBSP> or email us at safetrec@berkeley.edu.

About the Funder

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The Safe Transportation Research and Education Center (SafeTREC) is a University of California, Berkeley research center affiliated with the Institute of Transportation Studies and the School of Public Health. Our mission is to inform decision-making and empower communities to improve roadway safety for all. We envision a world with zero roadway fatalities or serious injuries and a culture that prioritizes safe mobility.

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