Title

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California Walks
Stepping Up for Health, Equity, & Sustainability

Impact of the Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Training: Program Insights from the 2023 Follow-Up Survey

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Introduction

The Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Training Program (CPBST) is a collaborative effort between the Safe Transportation Research and Education Center (SafeTREC) at the University of California Berkeley and California Walks (Cal Walks), established in 2009, with funding from the California Office of Traffic Safety. Its main objective is to promote pedestrian and bicycle safety by educating residents and safety advocates, empowering community partners to advocate for safety improvements in their neighborhoods, and fostering collaborations with local officials and agency staff. The Planning Committee, consisting of local safety stakeholders, works with SafeTREC and Cal Walks to organize a workshop tailored to the community's needs and priorities. During the workshop, participants assess priority areas for walking and biking, learn about the Safe System Approach and strategies from the framework to address concerns and formulate an action plan with short, mid-, and long-term recommendations.

Since 2009, the program has conducted more than 120 community workshops across California. The program involves working with a planning committee of local stakeholders who schedule, lesson plan, and recruit participants for the workshop. Together, the planning committee and workshop participants create a customized action plan that includes a comprehensive assessment of pedestrian and bicycle conditions in areas of interest within the community and projects to address safety concerns brought up during the workshop.

SafeTREC carried out our annual CPBST survey in the Spring of 2023 among planning committee members from communities that had hosted CPBST workshops over the past five years (2018-2022). The objective of the survey was to evaluate the progress of the action plans formulated during each workshop and to determine if the communities needed additional support from the project team.

Methodology

During March 2023, SafeTREC disseminated an electronic survey link to the primary points of contact for 60 CPBST workshop sites. The survey consisted of closed-ended questions that offered a predetermined set of answer choices, and open-ended questions designed to elicit more detailed responses from participants. The survey solicited feedback on workshop outcomes, assessed the effectiveness and usefulness of the workshops, evaluated potential areas for improvement, and inquired whether the community required any additional technical support.

Key Findings

A total of 108 survey replies were received, representing over 45 different CPBST workshop sites. The survey captured responses across California, as illustrated in Figure 1. The most significant number of replies came from Fresno (ten responses) and Los Angeles (six responses).

Most survey respondents, specifically 86%, have lived in their communities for more than five years, and 85% participated in the CPBST workshops. Out of those who attended the workshops, 59% provided detailed and comprehensive answers.

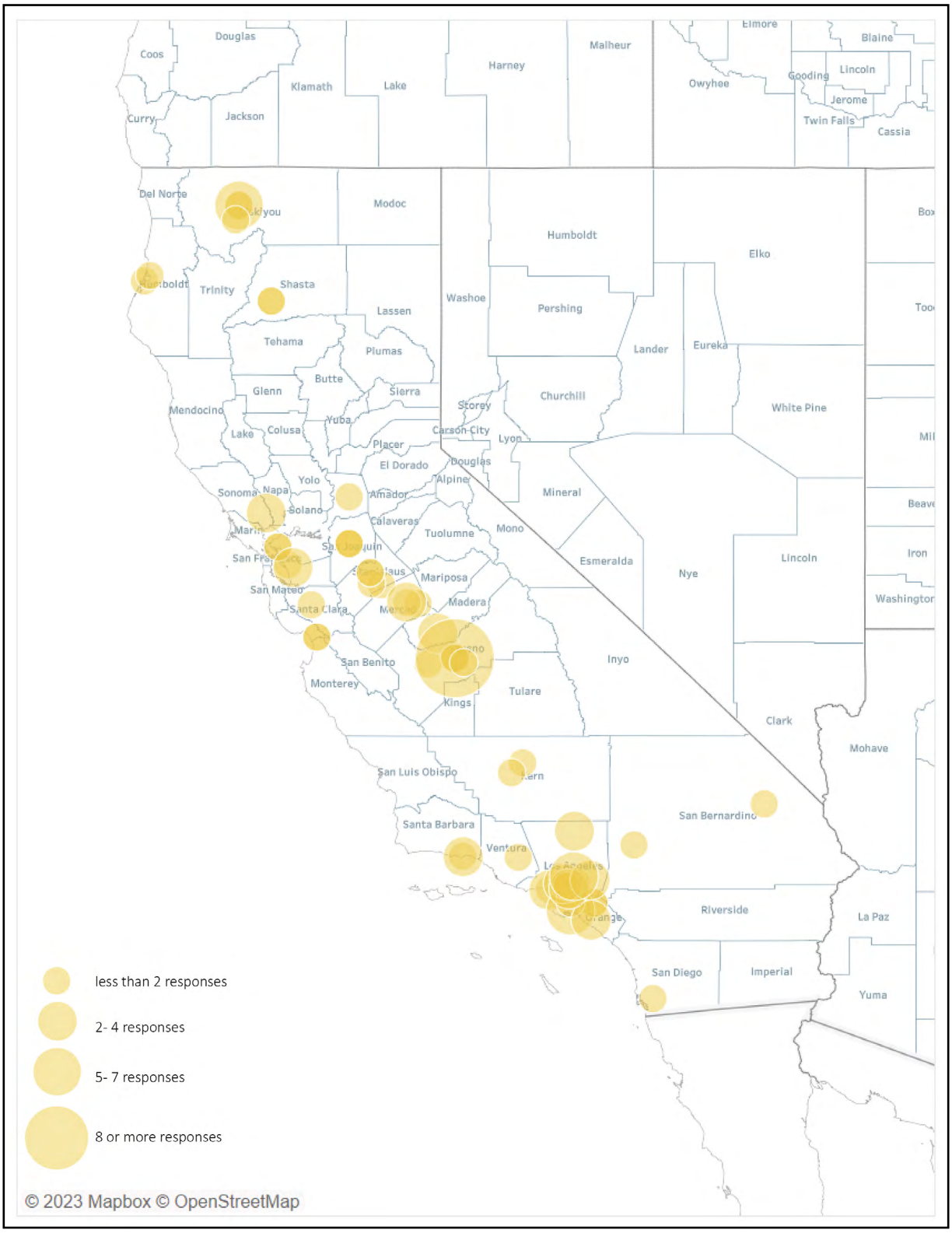

Figure 1: Map showing the number of survey responses gathered from communities across California.

Feedback on the CPBST Workshops 2018-2023

The highest percentage of respondents, at 33%, attended a workshop held in 2022, followed by those held in 2018 (19%), 2021 (18%), 2020 (16%), and 2019 (13%). Over the last five years, the workshops consistently met or exceeded the expectations of most participants. Of those who attended the 2022 workshop, 73% felt that the workshop met their expectations, while 23% felt that it exceeded their expectations.

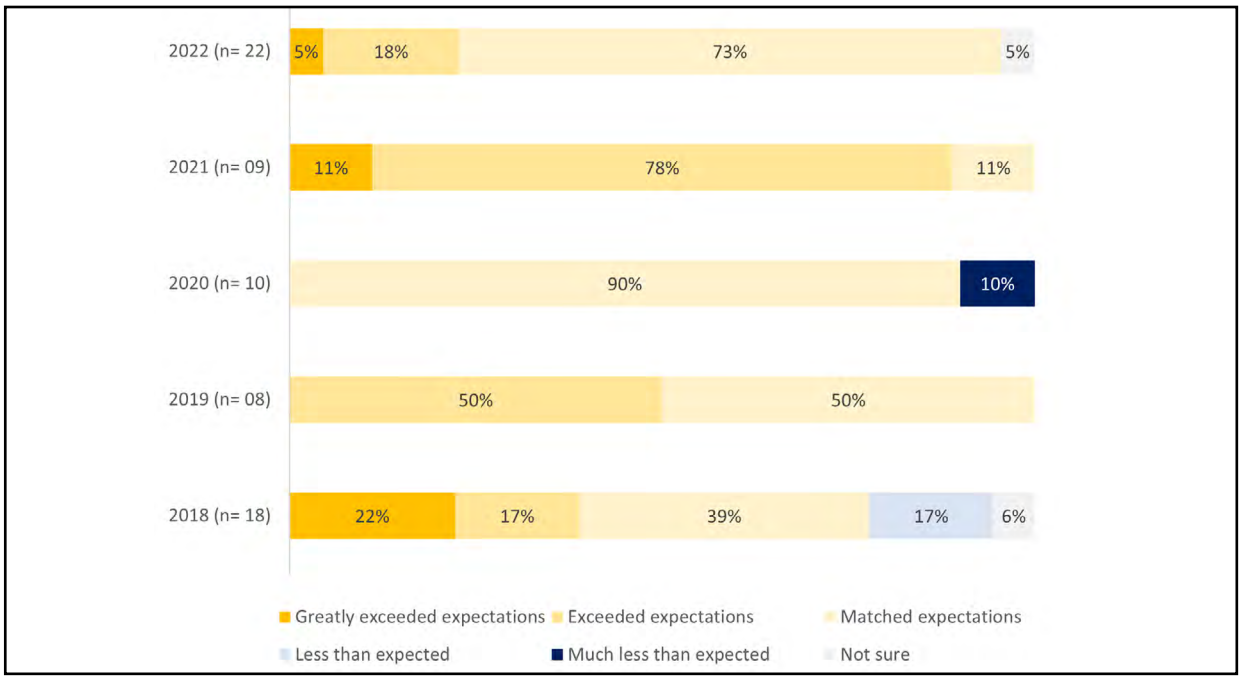

Figure 2: Chart showing the participants' feedback on the CPBST Workshops from 2018-2022.

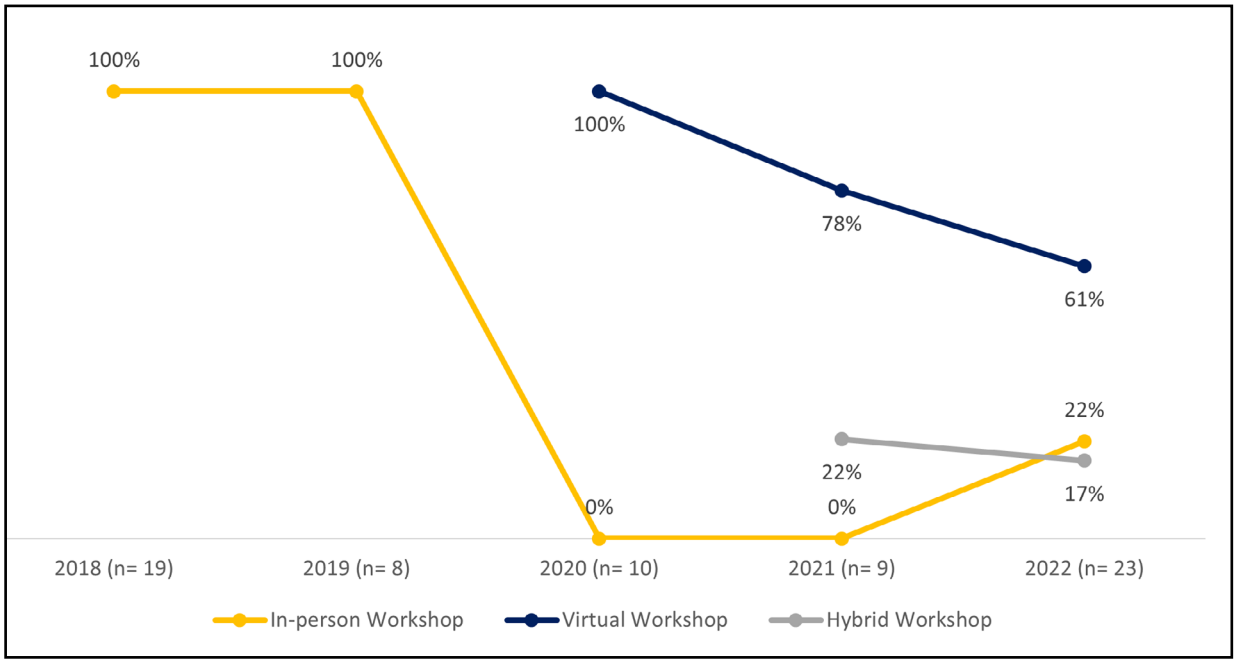

Figure 3: Chart showing the percentage of respondents and type of workshop they attended.

" (The) Virtual Workshop made it both more accessible and more challenging. With the digital option – attending was efficient, but I was unable to connect with community members."

"Early on [in] the pandemic, all attendees participated in virtual workshops, making it a bit more difficult to be able to get the idea of the safety issues without being to see the street areas in person."

Impact of the Pandemic on Workshop Participation

The workshops in the last three years were adapted to accommodate the challenges of the COVD-19 pandemic.

All workshops held in 2018 and 2019 were in-person workshops, but due to the pandemic, no in-person workshops were held in 2020 and 2021. Instead, virtual workshops were conducted in 2020 (100%), and in 2021, most workshops (78%) were virtual, with a smaller percentage (22%) being hybrid. By 2022, a small percentage of workshops (22%) were conducted in person, with most workshops being virtual (61%) or hybrid (17%).

Based on the open-ended responses from the survey, the pandemic had a significant impact on the ability of participants to attend in-person CPBST workshops.

In 2021 and 2022, virtual and hybrid options were available, respectively. While these options made it easier for participants to attend, these workshops were often less interactive than when people met in person. It was also challenging to point out recommendations via virtual maps. The pandemic also made it difficult for participants to engage in walk audits, and engagement was limited to those with Zoom access. However, the virtual workshops were impressively adaptive to the pandemic's impact, and the hybrid method made it easier for many to participate. We also saw cities and agencies providing resources previously unavailable to break down barriers to participating in virtual workshops, like providing iPads, local listening circles in community centers, Wi-Fi hotspots, etc. Overall, the alternative options put in place helped to ensure participants could still engage in the workshops.

Follow-up Meetings and Partnerships

54% of the 58 respondents took part in at least one additional workshop or meeting after attending a CPBST workshop between 2018 and 2022. 34% of the respondents joined in two or more such events. Additionally, 61% of respondents planned a community outreach event after the CPBST workshop.

Over 55% of the 59 respondents indicated the occurrence of community events, such as Safe Routes To School (SRTS), walk/bike audits, and regular meetings with community members, following CPBST workshops. 41% of these were organized by the participants themselves, with SRTS-related programming being the most popular. Around 12% of respondents attended events with the city council or elected officials, while only 2% took part in events with planning agencies/professionals. These results suggest that CPBST workshops have had a significant impact on community engagement and participation in pedestrian and bicycle safety initiatives.

Most of these follow-up events were participant-led, indicating that CPBST workshops help to build capacity within communities in order to sustain efforts and advocacy for pedestrian and bicycle safety. It is also notable that a significant number of respondents participated in events with elected officials and planning agencies/professionals, indicating that the workshops also help build partnerships and connections between community members and their decision-makers. Overall, these results suggest that CPBST workshops are successful in not only educating participants on pedestrian and bicycle safety but also in empowering them to act and engage with their communities to promote safer streets.

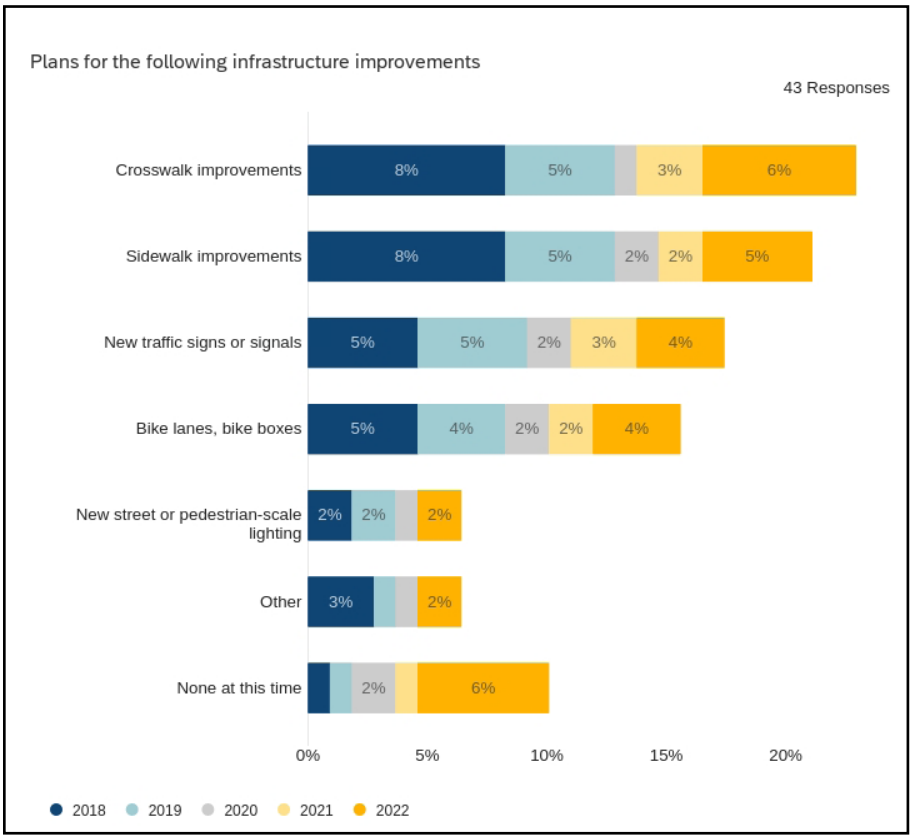

Figure 4: Chart showing the percentage of respondents that have given infrastructure improvements planned for implementation, (n=43).

The data suggests that nearly half of the 34 respondents acknowledged the formation of partnerships between community groups to address the recommendations from their CPBST workshop. Furthermore, a third of the 24 respondents from the 2022 workshops were able to build partnerships by the Spring of 2023. The most common coalitions were related to safe streets initiatives (39%) and SRTS (22%), with some related to walking/biking initiatives and Vision Zero.

Infrastructure Improvement Plans

According to the survey results, crosswalk improvements and sidewalk improvements were mentioned by 24% and 22% of respondents respectively as planned interventions. The survey showed that crosswalk improvements were consistently more popular than other interventions, likely due to their relatively low cost and high impact on pedestrian safety. Intersection improvement projects were also mentioned as planned interventions.

35% of the 31 responses also elaborated on the recommendations from the CPBST workshops that are slated for future development. For example, the city of Fresno has funded a corridor study to plan street safety improvements. Similarly, the city of South Stockton is partnering with San Joaquin County Council, to promote an e-bike share program and create a coalition to address roadway safety concerns. Additionally, there are ongoing efforts to improve infrastructure in various ways, such as improving crosswalks and sidewalks and working on projects like the improvement of San Pablo Avenue.

12% of the respondents were not aware of any recommendations or were uncertain about future developments. Two respondents suggest the need for more community attendance and providing a toolkit on how to implement pedestrian and bicycle safety policy change. Overall, there were a variety of ongoing efforts reported by respondents that would improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, but more work is needed to ensure these recommendations are fully implemented.

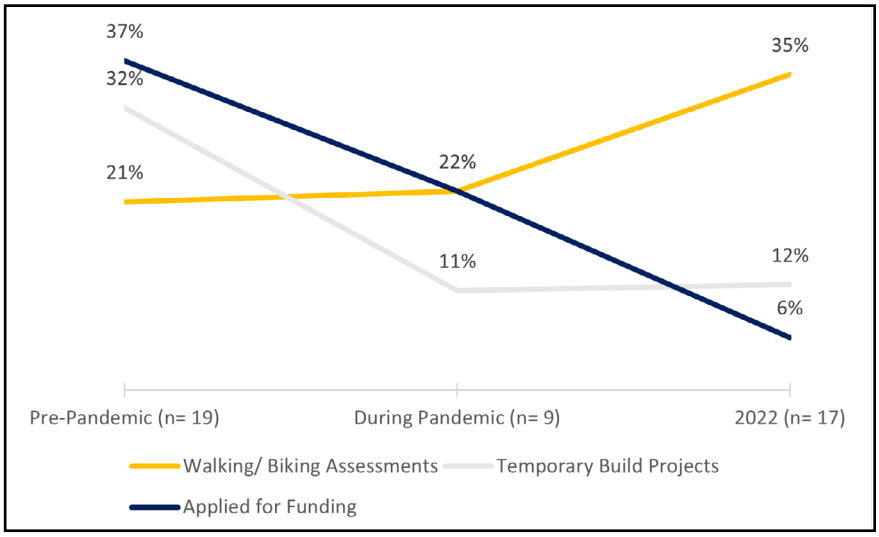

Figure 5: The chart showing the trend of project implementation stages.

Assessing Implementation Barriers

The survey aimed to assess the implementation of road safety interventions through three stages: evaluating infrastructure, testing interventions at a few locations, and expanding interventions to other areas within the community or city. This approach helps determine whether the CPBST workshop participants were able to successfully carry out the workshop's recommendations in their respective communities.

The study sorted the survey responses into three groups based on the workshop year – pre-pandemic workshops (2018 and 2019), workshops during the pandemic (2020 and 2021), and workshops in 2022. The analysis revealed that the proportion of communities conducting walking/biking assessments increased from 21% in pre-pandemic workshops to 35% in 2022. However, this rise in assessment activities does not correspond to an increase in temporary build projects or funding applications in 2022. There was a decline of over 50% in temporary builds and over 80% in funding applications in 2022.

Barriers to Infrastructure Implementation

The lack of funding emerged as the biggest barrier across all response groups, indicating that financial constraints are the most significant hurdle in executing the planned projects. In addition to funding, the lack of support from the county, city, or community emerged as another prominent barrier. This suggests that the successful implementation of infrastructure improvements requires the collaboration and support of various stakeholders.

The pre-pandemic workshop participants observed a shift in priorities that hindered the execution of planned projects. This is likely due in large part to the pandemic, which led to a reallocation of resources and a focus on other urgent matters. Similarly, participants in workshops during the pandemic recognized that street improvements were not a city priority at the time, indicating a lack of focus on infrastructure improvements during the pandemic.

Lastly, staffing shortages were identified as a significant barrier to project implementation by participants in the 2022 workshops.

The lack of an organized, committed group of advocates to lead the effort, combined with the lack of city support, follow-up support to communities to implement recommendations, and the general community understanding of the benefits of complete streets were also mentioned as barriers.

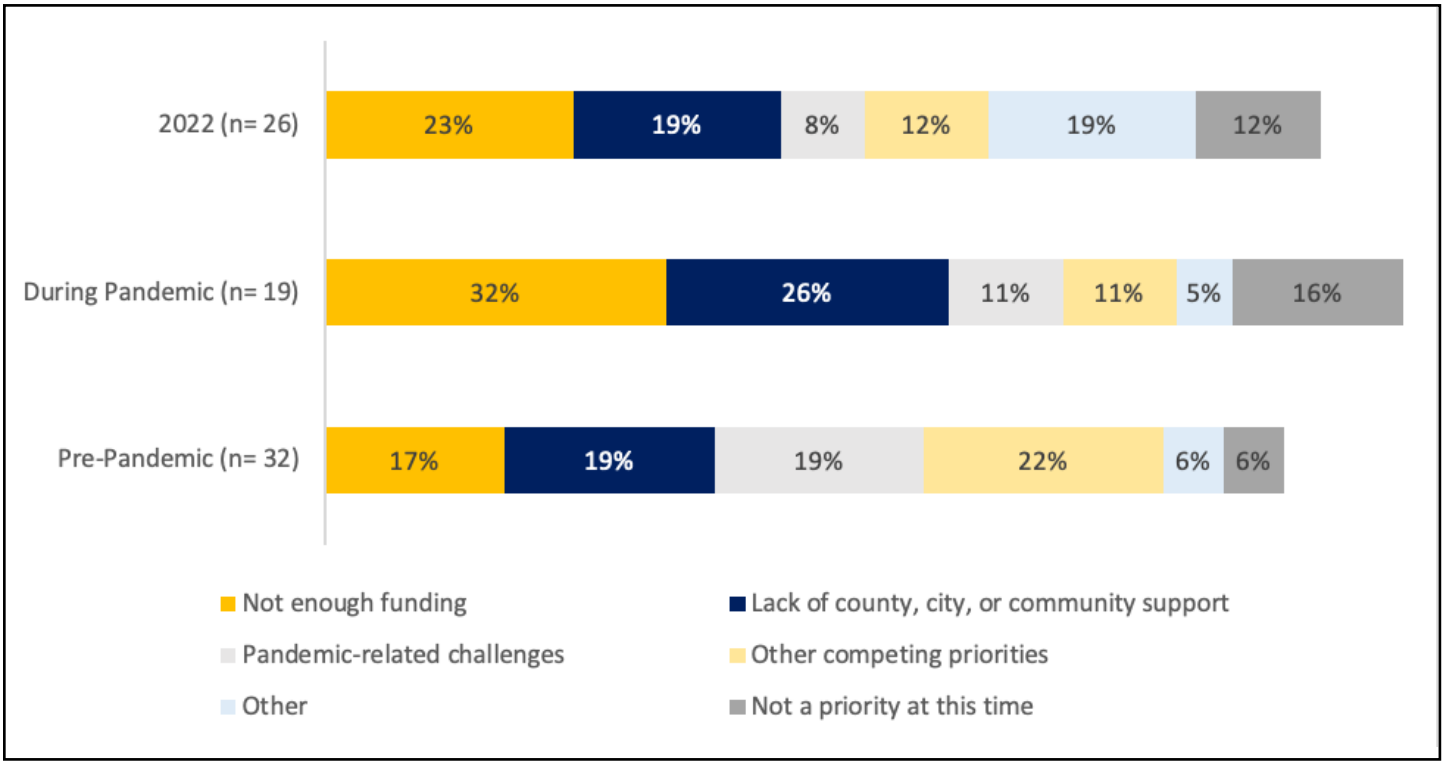

Figure 6: Chart showing the implementation barriers across three response groups.

An underlying issue is the ongoing impact of the pandemic, which has had a lasting effect on governmental budgets and limited the resources and capacity of communities to implement the recommendations from the workshops. Another reason may include the lack of follow-up support or resources provided to communities after the workshops, which limits the ability to successfully implement the recommended interventions.

Understanding the Funding Barrier

The fact that the biggest barrier identified by respondents was the lack of funds, coupled with most respondents not having applied for any funding, indicates that there is a lack of capacity in communities to identify potential funding sources and access them.

The data suggests that the barriers to completing grant applications vary depending on the timeline of the workshops and the impact of the pandemic. Respondents from the 2022 workshops mentioned that they have not come across any funding opportunities. Also, respondents who attended workshops during the pandemic reported that the lack of funding opportunities was a significant barrier, indicating that the pandemic may have affected the availability of funding. Additionally, some respondents reported that the shifting priorities of city councils were a barrier, possibly due to the pandemic and its impact on municipal budgets.

Interestingly, respondents who attended workshops pre-pandemic identified the lack of training and skilled staff members as the primary reason for not applying for funding. This suggests that capacity-building efforts such as training and professional development opportunities could be critical to improving the ability of organizations to access funding. Overall, the analysis indicates that there is a need to bridge the gap between identifying and accessing funding sources, and that training and capacity-building efforts may be necessary to improve the ability of communities to apply for and receive funding.

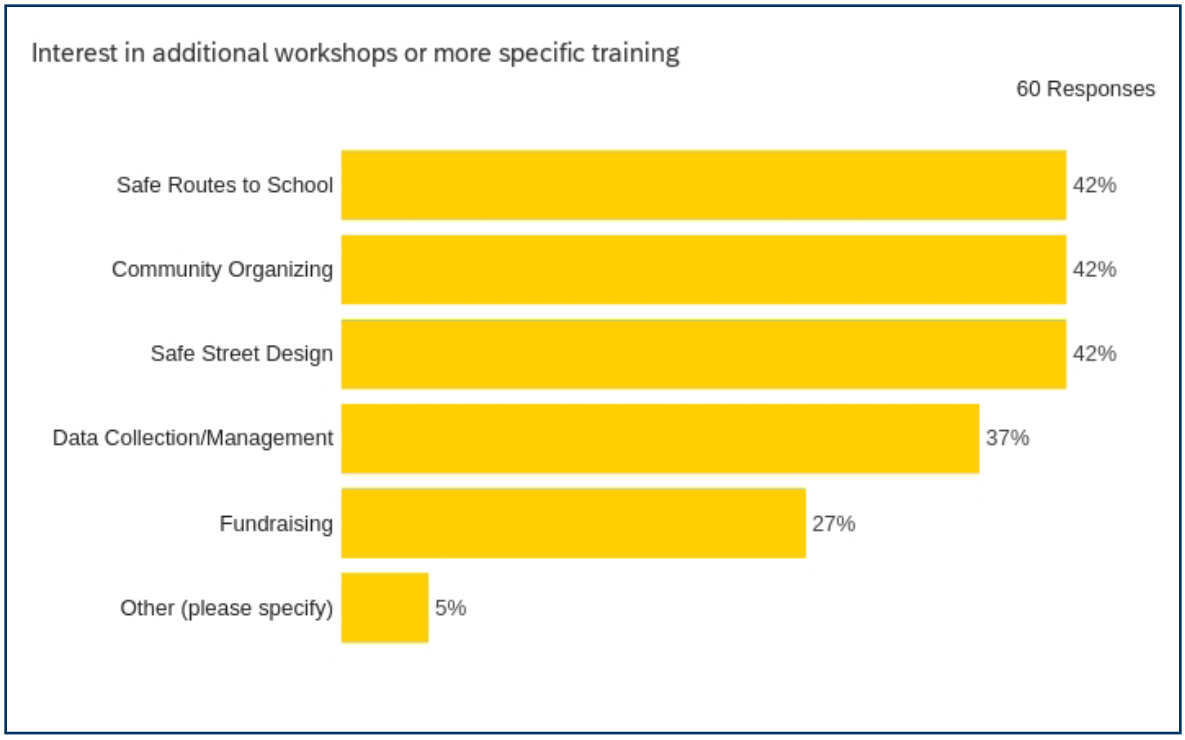

Figure 7: Chart showing the topics preferred for additional workshops (n=60).

Way Forward

The survey responses suggest that a significant majority of respondents (68%) believe that SafeTREC and Cal Walks can help with grant writing and policy advocacy. This is reflected in the previous year's survey responses as well. Respondents suggest the creation of follow-up advocacy training and a toolkit that can provide clear steps on policy advocacy and project implementation, indicating a desire for structured and practical guidance in these areas.

Additionally, 60% of respondents feel that SafeTREC and Cal Walks can assist in addressing the lack of support from the city, county, or community. Respondents suggest that workshops on how to seek out funding, gain community support, and work with departments that are responsible for project approvals can help in this regard. This indicates a desire for practical guidance and assistance in navigating the bureaucratic processes involved in securing support from various stakeholders.

Additional workshops focused on project implementation are of interest to most survey participants. Three themes for the follow-up workshop emerged as particularly popular: Safe Routes to School (SRTS), safe street design, and community organizing, as mentioned by 42% of survey respondents.

Conclusion

The findings suggest that respondents are looking for practical guidance and assistance in navigating the complex processes involved in grant writing, policy advocacy, and securing support from various stakeholders. The suggested workshops and toolkits can potentially address the identified barriers and help the respondents in accessing funding opportunities and implementing their recommendations. Additional training, too, was cited by many respondents as a need to promote the implementation of action plans.

Based on the survey responses the project team identified two potential actions to support implementation:

- **Training:** Conduct follow-up training in community organizing, advocacy, and outreach to elected officials and transportation professionals to help individuals and groups effectively implement safe walking and biking infrastructure.
- **Proposal Review:** Explore a proposal review support process for individuals or groups to get feedback or guidance on project proposals.

For more information about the CPBST, or to bring activities to your California community, contact Kristen Leckie at kristenmleckie@berkeley.edu.

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This report was prepared in cooperation with the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS). The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of OTS.

Appendix

2023 CPBST FOLLOW-UP SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE *Close-ended Questions are in black and Open-ended Questions are highlighted in blue.*		
General Info	1	How long have you been a part of your current community? *(In years)*
	2	Did you attend a Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety (CPBST) Workshop in your community?
Workshop Experience	3	How many CPBST workshops have you attended in your community?
	4	What type of workshop did you attend – in-person, virtual, or hybrid and did they meet your expectations?
	5	How did the pandemic impact your ability to participate in a CPBST workshop?
Outreach events	6	Since attending a CPBST workshop, did you participate in any follow-up meetings or workshops related to bicycling or walking safety? If so, how many?
	7	Have you planned any community outreach events since attending a CPBST workshop?
Coalition Building	8	To your knowledge, have any partnerships, groups, or coalitions been formed to address the recommendations created during the CPBST workshop(s) between community groups?
Walk/Bike Assessments	9	Have you conducted any walking/biking assessments since the CPBST workshop(s) were held?
	10	Has your community begun to plan any of the following infrastructure improvements? *(Select all that apply)*
	11	Has your community implemented any 'temporary build' demonstration projects?
Funding	12	Have you applied for any funding for the recommendations created in the CPBST workshop(s)? *(If yes, answer questions A1 & A2; if no, answer questions B1 & B2)*
		A1. What are the outcomes of the submitted funding proposals? *(Select all that apply)*
		A2. If you have received funding for recommendations that you submitted following the CPBST workshop(s) please provide the following details - from whom, for what, and about how much?
		B1. If you have not applied for funding yet, why not? *(Select all that apply)*
		B2. What can the project team (SafeTREC, California Walks) do to support your efforts to implement the recommendations? *(Select all that apply)*
	13	Is there anything else you would like to share concerning the funding process for recommendations from the CPBST workshops(s)
Barriers in Implementation	14	What are the barriers, if any, in implementing any of the recommendations put forward during the CPBST meeting(s)? *(Select all that apply and indicate if the project team can help to overcome this barrier)*
	15	If the project team could help, what would be most helpful?
	16	How has the pandemic affected your ability to implement the recommendations developed in the CPBST workshop(s)?
	17	Are there any recommendations from the CPBST workshop(s) slated for implementation in the future?
Way Forward	18	Would you be interested in any of these additional workshops or more specific training for your community? *(Select all that apply)*
	19	Are you interested in taking part in a follow-up survey regarding the recommendations your community created during the CPBST workshop(s)?
	20	Tell us about any additional recommendations or remarks about the CPBST workshop(s)