



# Making Equitable and Sustainable Transportation a Reality in SFUSD

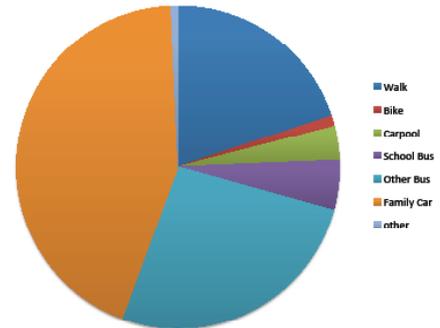
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## ISSUE

SFUSD provides school bus service to a small number of students, but the majority of SFUSD students rely on other transportation modes. Many students face excessively long or unsafe commutes, while others rely on private vehicles because alternatives are insufficient for busy lifestyles. **The complex school assignment system, diverse school contexts, and limited resources create complex transportation challenges.**

How SFUSD Students Get to School, 2014-2015:



Students need healthy, affordable, and convenient transportation to arrive at school on time and ready to learn. Improving transportation conditions is essential to achieving equitable education access and citywide sustainability. Like many school Districts, SFUSD does not have a coordinated strategy in place to reduce car dependency and ensure that transportation is not a barrier to school attendance or school choice.

## METHODS

As the transportation fellow in the SFUSD Office of Sustainability, I have participated in strategic planning, policy, and outreach efforts related to increasing sustainable, safe, and healthy school transportation since 2013.

## FINDINGS

SFUSD needs added institutional capacity in order to develop and pursue a strategic transportation plan, and to become a strong advocate for youth and family mobility among its city partners. I have identified gaps in four areas.

**Research:** Anecdotal evidence, student testimony, and recent reporting suggests that transportation is a barrier to education in San Francisco. SFUSD has not undertaken a research process to understand the impact of transportation on school attendance, school choice, and student achievement.

**Strategic Planning:** School transportation requires safe streets, convenient, affordable transit, traffic enforcement, capital improvements, and community organizing. There is a lack of leadership to facilitate a strategic planning process to systematically coordinate existing and new efforts in these areas and ensure that all students are adequately served.



**Implementation:** The SFUSD Office of Sustainability lacks sufficient capacity to implement District-wide bicycle education, install bike racks, manage the expansion of SF Safe Routes to School, streamline communication materials between District offices, schools, and families, and actively pursue collaboration with other SFUSD departments and city agencies to advance equitable and sustainable student transportation.

**Coordinated Collaboration:** Equitable and sustainable transportation depends on collaboration between school district, city, and community partners. A designated point of contact is needed to coordinate work within the district and liaison to other city departments and partner organizations.

## LESSONS

**There is no one size fits all solution to advancing equitable sustainable school transportation throughout SFUSD.** Instead, progress depends on a coordinated effort between SFUSD and the city to improve transportation conditions for families and implement targeted programs when possible. School transportation challenges are entangled with issues of housing, neighborhood safety, income, public infrastructure, and other environmental factors, and must be addressed in this context.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For research:

- Use data to create typologies of school transportation characteristics.
- Design and implement a needs assessment to understand transportation barriers and opportunities to increase sustainable commuting district-wide.
- Document and assess ongoing school or neighborhood based efforts, including walking school buses, CBO services, and other initiatives.
- Establish channels for students and parents to provide feedback and seek assistance if they face transportation barriers to education.

### For strategic planning:

- Develop a coordinated transportation plan that promotes safety, sustainability, and equity in all modes of travel to and from school.
- Develop priorities for intervention, district objectives, and advocacy issues for inter-departmental collaboration.
- Define and pursue a policy agenda to promote youth and family mobility in San Francisco

### Implementing equitable and sustainable transportation programs and support:

- Manage communications material between the district, schools, and families.
- Ensure that information about existing transportation resources is reaching all families in accessible formats and languages.
- Implement bicycle education and install bicycle parking at all schools.
- Manage Safe Routes to School expansion district-wide.

### To coordinate collaboration:

- Assign a point of contact for student transportation related efforts and inquiries. This is the liaison to SF Safe Routes to School, the Mayor's Vision Zero Coalition, and the SFMTA for bike racks, capital improvements, and Free Muni for Youth.
- Assign a representative to attend relevant meetings, report back to appropriate SFUSD departments, and advance the district's agenda in partnership efforts.