

Collaborating for Impact: Advancing Youth Pedestrian Safety in Texas (Harris County)

Harris County Public Health (HCPH), Office County of Engineering (Harris County),
Houston Galveston Area Council (HGAC)





Houston-Galveston Area Council Regional Safe Routes to School Update



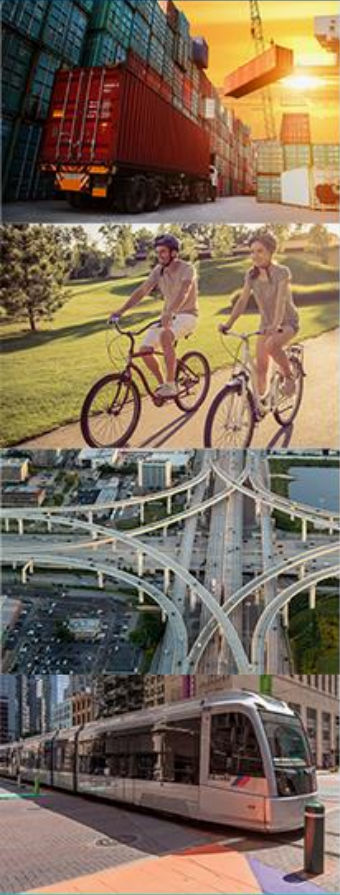
Chris Whaley
Texas Pedestrian Safety Forum
May 6, 2026

Regional Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Overview

Program Framework

Creating a regional Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is identified in the Subtask 4.5 of H-GAC's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- Conduct a literature review and best practices study of SRTS, including recommendations for the MPO's role in moving SRTS forward in the region.
- Provide planning support for implementation of SRTS best practices in the region.
- Provide technical support for regional, local area, corridor, and site-specific SRTS plans



SRTS Infrastructure vs Non-Infrastructure Project Examples



Infrastructure (Capital Improvements)

- Bikeways
- Sidewalks
- Shared-use paths
- Intersection and crossing treatments

Non-Infrastructure (Studies and Engagement)

- SRTS planning studies
- Education and encouragement events (Bike to School Day; walking school buses; learn to ride)
- Crossing guard programs
- Policy development

SRTS Infrastructure vs Non-Infrastructure Project Examples



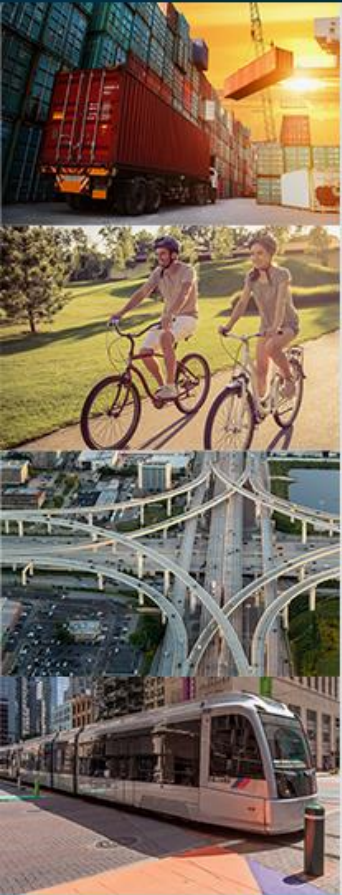
SRTS Infrastructure: TASA Call for Projects

- Currently in-progress

SRTS Non-Infrastructure Pilot: Campus-level

- Campus-level plans are more cost-effective than piloting a study at the ISD-level.
- Encouragement activities (Bike to School Day events, walking school buses, etc.) done in tandem would reinforce public engagement during plan generation.
- Opportunity to cast a wide net.

SRTS Next Steps



- Stakeholder engagement
- Local SRTS program inventory
- SRTS Non-Infrastructure Call for Projects
 - Policy development
 - Data collection
 - Pilot programs
 - Events and trainings

Staff Contact



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Harris County

Vision Zero & Safe Routes to School

May 6, 2026



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Rodney Ellis
COMMISSIONER



Harris County Transportation Master Plan Components

Harris County Transportation Master Plan



Major Thoroughfare Plan



Active Transportation Plan



Vision Zero Action Plan

Continuous engagement with county, precincts, transportation agencies, stakeholders, and community members.



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What is Vision Zero?



The image of a future where no one is killed or seriously injured in transport.



Establishes that loss of human life in traffic is unacceptable.



Responsibility of safety is shared between designers and users of transportation systems.



Increase safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.

Vision Zero Resolution adopted in August 2020

Zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries in Harris County by 2030

Vision Zero Action Plan adopted in September 2022

Goal 1: Promote a culture of traffic safety

Goal 2: Enhance Harris County processes and collaboration

Goal 3: Build safe streets that provide transportation equity for all users

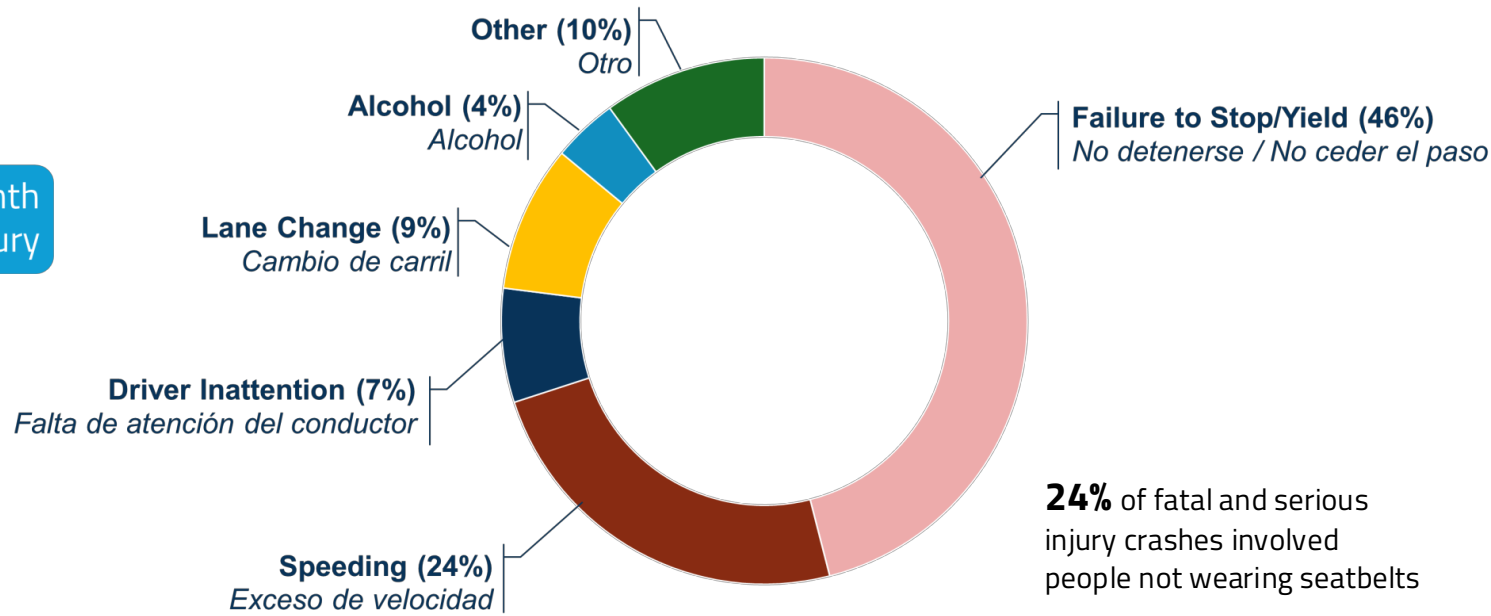
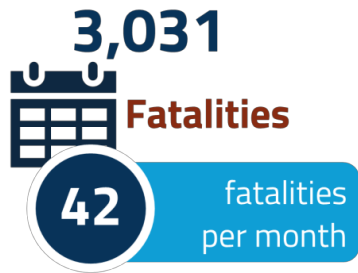
Goal 4: Improve data collection and evaluation



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Harris County Crash Data

In Harris County between 2019-2024 there have been...



Contributing factors are from fatal and serious injury crashes in Harris County between 2019-2024.

Source: Texas Department of Transportation Crash Record Information System (CRIS).

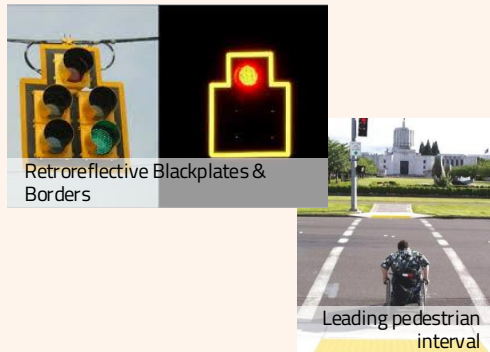


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Incorporating Vision Zero Best Practices

Failure to yield/stop at signal

- ✓ Backplates with Retroreflective Borders (Caltrans)
- ✓ Yellow Change Intervals (Phoenix, AZ)
- ✓ Signal Coordination (New York City, NY)
- ✓ Red Light Indicator Lights (Florida DOT)



Distracted Driving

- ✓ Passenger Limits for Young Drivers (USDOT NHTSA)
- ✓ Teens in Driver Seat Program (H-GAC/TTI)
- ✓ Employer Training and Incentive Programs (Texas-Our Driving Concern Program)
- ✓ Rumble Strips (TxDOT)
- ✓ Median Barriers (Dallas County, TX)



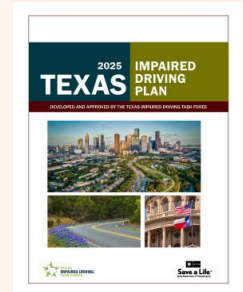
Speeding

- ✓ Lower Speed Limits (Seattle, WA)
- ✓ Enhanced Enforcement during high crash days (Oro Valley, AZ)
- ✓ Reduced Lane Width (Arlington, VA)
- ✓ Education Campaign (San Antonio, TX)
- ✓ Roadway Design for lower speeds (Illinois DOT)



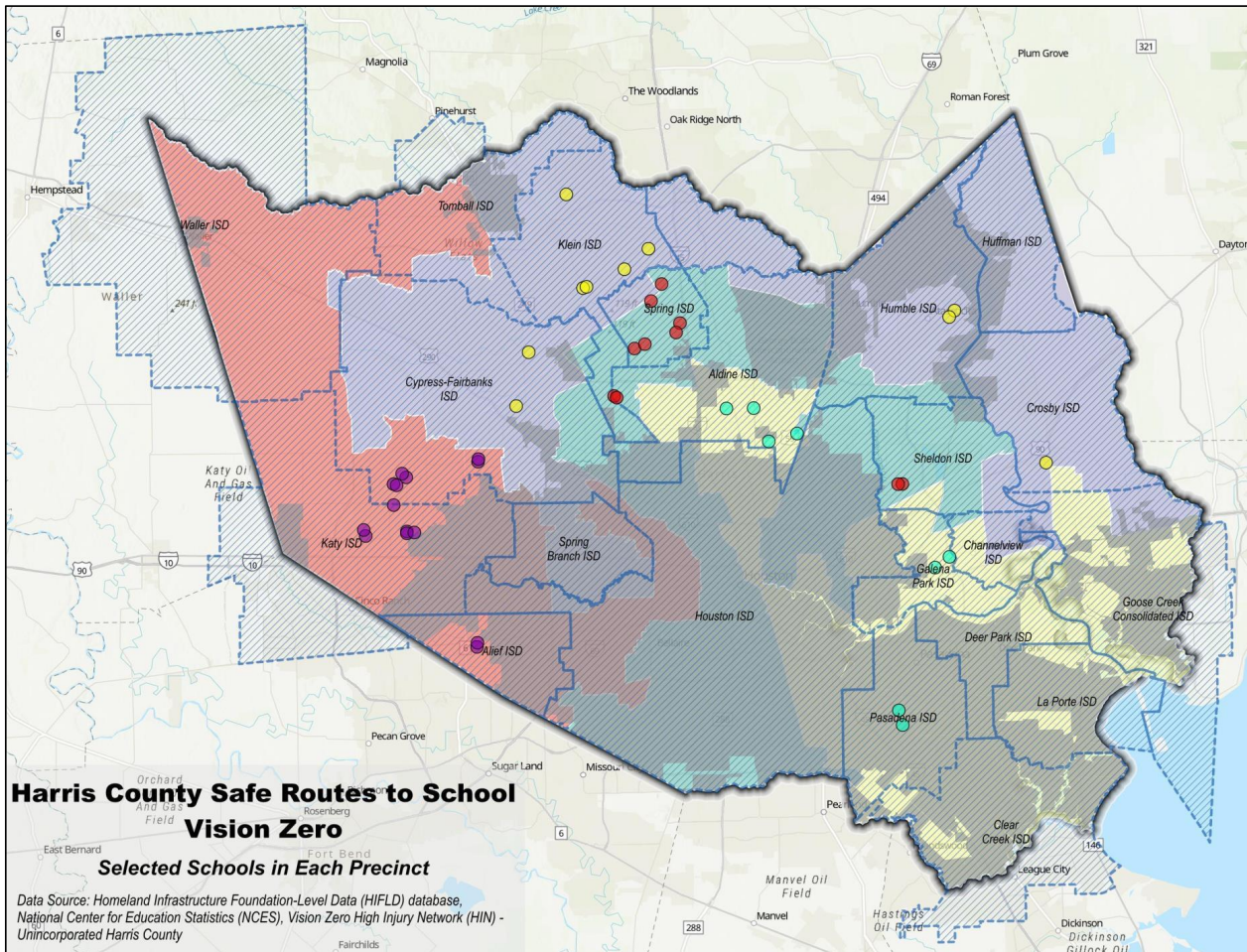
Driving Under the Influence

- ✓ Texas Impaired Driving Plan (TxDOT)
- ✓ Pavement Markings (Tarrant County, TX)
- ✓ Flashing or LED Enhanced Signs (Fort Worth, TX)
- ✓ Ignition Interlock devices (Fort Worth, TX)



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Safe Routes to School



Data Driven School Selection Process

- Crash Analysis
 - I. Frequency
 - II. Severity
 - III. Pedestrian / Bike Related Accidents
- Proximity to High Injury Network
- Traffic Volumes
- Precinct Knowledge and Feedback
- Community Complaints



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Safe Routes to School

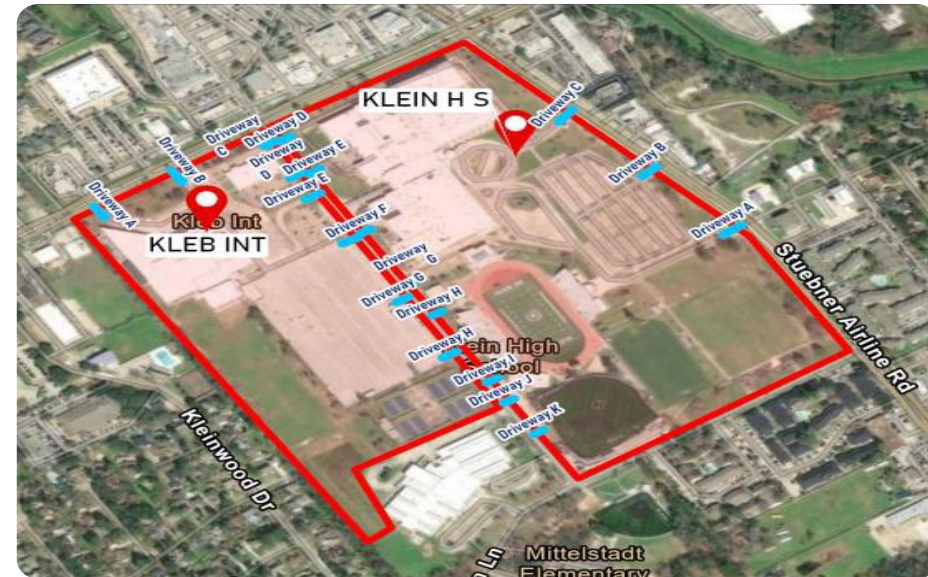
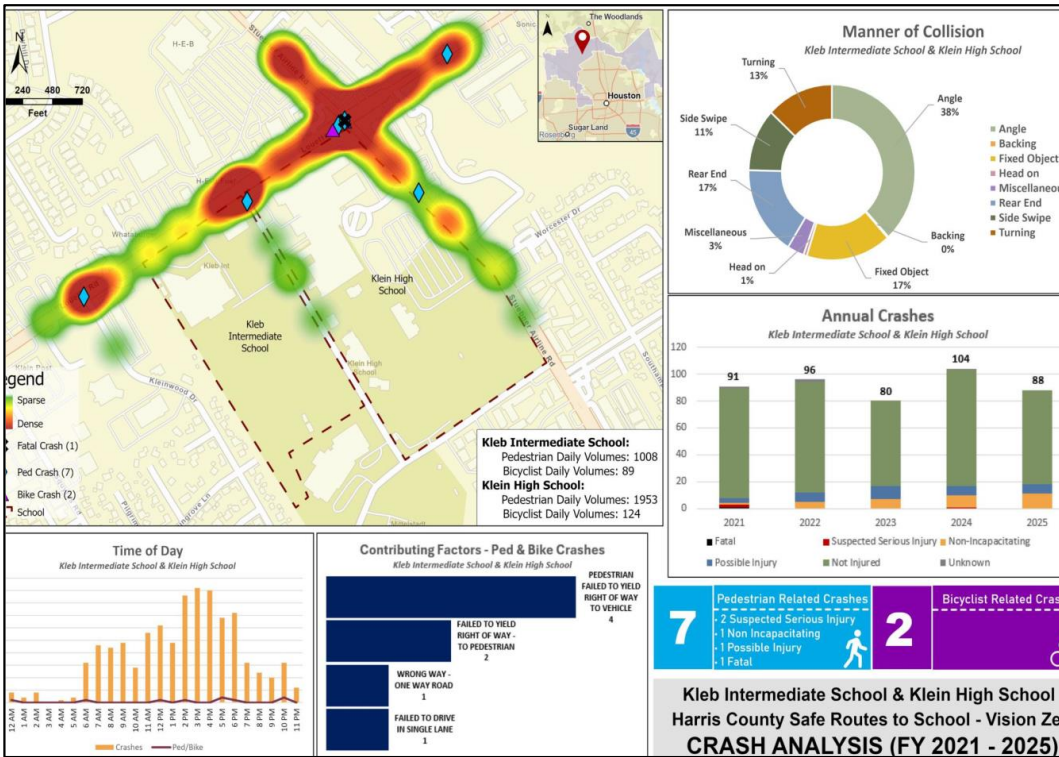
Field Visits & Data Collection

- Observe Nearby Streets, Intersections, and Driveways
- Observe School Traffic operations
- Other Notes / Concerns
- Overlapped School Hours
- Shared Driveways / Routes
- Walk Between Campus



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Safe Routes to School



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Harris County
Public Health
Building a Healthy Community

Built Environment Program

Nancy De La Fuente



[HCPHTX.ORG](https://www.hcphtx.org)



BE Program Focus Areas



Health Impact Reviews

- Assess how policies or projects affect community health.
- Examples: Safe Crossings, East End Bike Plan



Community Action Planning

- Work with residents to identify needs and create local solutions.
- Examples: Planning for a Healthier Cloverleaf (Nuisance)



Active Transportation Efforts

- Promote safe walking, biking, and other ways to stay active while getting around.
- Example: Safe Routes to School



Food & Water Systems

- Assess existing access to safe, affordable, and nutritious food and clean water.
- Example: Private Drinking Water Health Impact Report



Housing & Development

- Support safe, stable housing and thoughtful community growth.
- Examples: Healthy development Guide, Actions for Health Equity in Settegast



Infrastructure Resilience Team

- Serve as the Social Vulnerability SME on a cross-departmental team advancing flood resilience.
- Example: Harris County Flood Resilience Plan

Safe Routes to School in Harris County

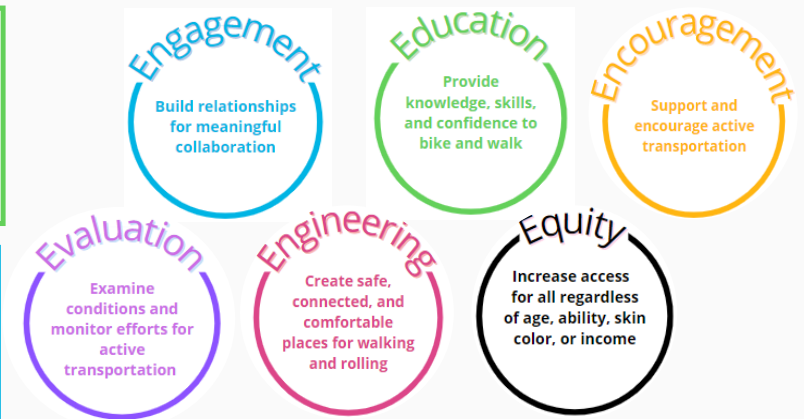
- Utilize the 6E's framework
- Increase the number of children walking and biking to school
- Increase the number of safe street segments in school zones
- Foster safer neighborhoods

Who We Partner With / Key Stakeholders

- Current partner ISDs: **Katy ISD** and **Galena Park ISD**
- Key stakeholders include district leadership, principals, school staff, and parents

Beyond Safe Routes: Our Active Transportation Work

- We lead and support broader active transportation projects
 - H-GAC Safety Task Force, local government and precinct outreach



Key Program Elements

Data Collection



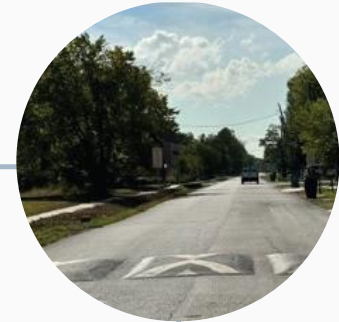
Safe Routes Plans



Education & Outreach



Collaborative Projects



Working Together for Health Impact

- ✓ Launched cross-sector 'Meet & Greet' to align on public health and safety
- ✓ Strengthened communication for better coordinated, health-focused decisions
- ✓ Established quarterly meetings to sustain collaboration and track progress
- ✓ Integrated public health into planning and infrastructure decisions
- ✓ Used data to drive targeted, equitable safety solutions

