



Summer 2022



Coordinator's Corner

Summer has arrived, which means there is more time for our favorite outdoor activities. Walking, bicycling, and rolling are all great ways to get out and explore your community while having fun and getting exercise!



In this newsletter, we'll recap our exciting Bike to School Day and this year's Parent Survey Results. Then as we get ready for summer fun, we will learn about the connections that the Fall Line Trail will bring to central Virginia. The newsletter will close out by breaking down the benefits of asphalt art, understanding when it is time for your student to walk and bike independently, and share some summer walking safety tips!

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the topics included here, please don't hesitate to reach out! You can call the Virginia SRTS Hotline at **1-855-601-7787** or send us an email at info@virginiarts.org.

Regards,

Katherine Graham

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Virginia SRTS Coordinator

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Calendar

JULY

Park and Recreation Month

Bike to School Day Wrap Up!

Bike & Roll to School Day 2022 was a huge success in Virginia. For the first time, [Virginia was #1 in event registrations](#) this year! There were 238 events across the state.

Virginians celebrated the joys of bicycling with themed rides and fun incentives. Check out photos of the festivities on page 2.



Thanks to our local SRTS coordinators, school administrators, teachers, parents, and event organizers! Decals will be mailed to participating schools soon. Here's to an even higher turnout next year when Bike & Roll to School Day 2023 occurs [on May 3, 2023!](#)



Clover Hill Elementary School, Chesterfield



Creighton Corner Elementary School, Loudoun



Freedom Hill Elementary School, Fairfax



Bristow Run Elementary School, Prince William County

Focus on Funding



Here's a list of upcoming grant opportunities at the state and national levels.

[Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth—Healthy Community Action Team Grants](#)

- \$30,000 based on previous grant awards
- Next application round expected in fall 2022

[League of American Bicyclists—Community Spark Grants](#)

- Awards of up to \$1,500
- Deadline to apply is **July 15, 2022**

See our [Learn It. Do it. Live it! on Funding SRTS Projects](#) for time-tested tips for funding SRTS projects, a menu of common funding sources, and links to other valuable funding resources.

Parent Survey Results Are In!

The results of the Spring 2022 Parent and Caregiver Survey are in! We received over 1,400 completed responses from parents and caregivers across Virginia. Thanks to all who participated, including our 4 cash card winners!

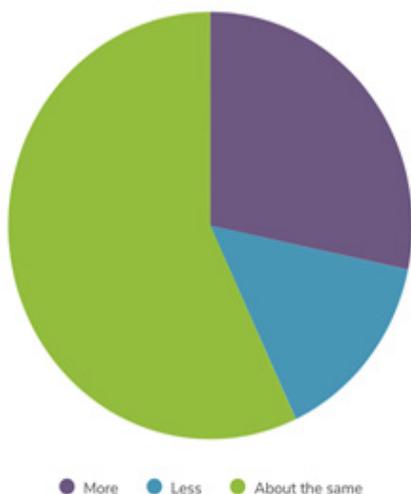
A lot has happened since our last Parent and Caregiver Survey in the fall of 2020. The biggest change is that now almost all students (96%) are going to in-person school.

More physical activity

The return to in-person school has been a net positive for student physical activity. More than a quarter of parents (28%) reported that their children were getting more physical activity this spring than in spring 2021. Only 15% said their children were getting less.

Parents gave a variety of reasons for the increase, including the return of physical education classes, organized sports, and walking and bicycling to school!

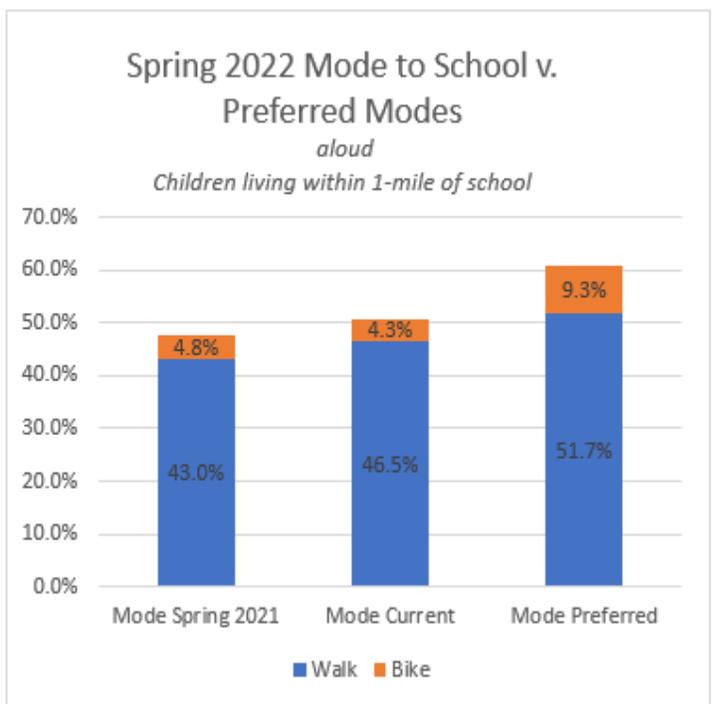
23. Compared to this time last year, does your student engage in more, less, or the same amount of physical activity?



Despite this positive news, most parents (60%) continued to report an hour or less of moderate to vigorous physical activity, suggesting that many children are not meeting the US Surgeon General's [minimum physical activity guideline](#) of 1 hour or more of physical activity per day.

Interest in More Walking and Bicycling and Some Clues for How to Make it Possible

Nearly 60% of parents whose children live within 1 mile of school said they would like walking or bicycling to be their child's primary mode of transportation to school compared to 50% who said their child walked or bicycled to school this spring.



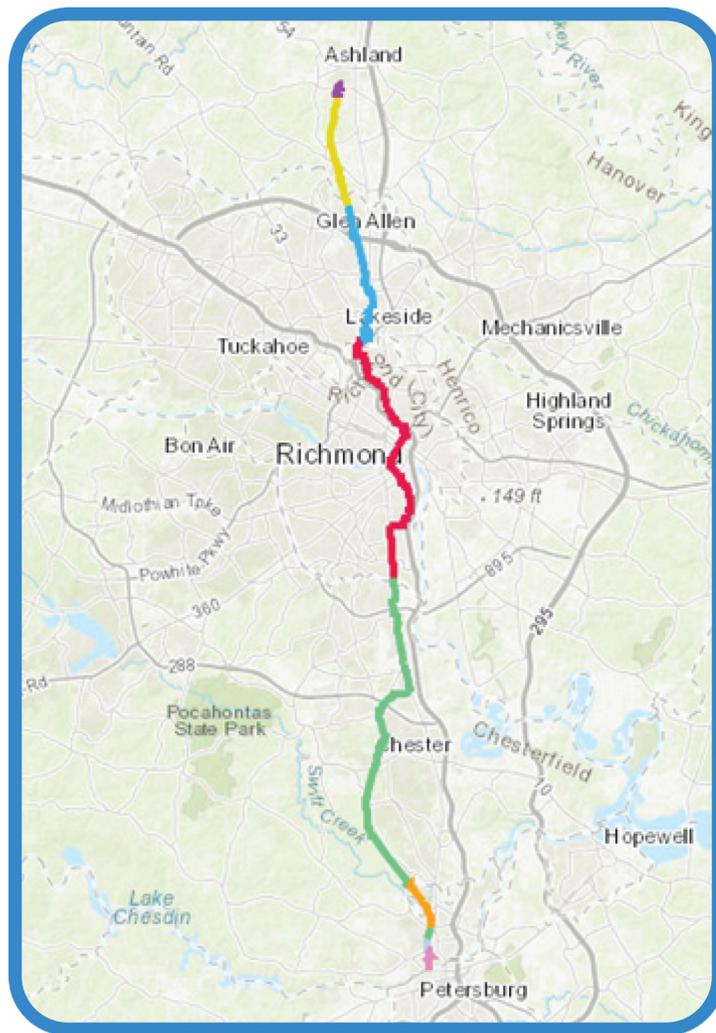
The difference between current travel modes and preferred modes may reflect concerns about walking and biking conditions. When parents whose children lived within 1 mile of school were asked

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Fall Line Trail to Bring New Opportunities for Walking, Biking, & Rolling to School

The Fall Line Trail is a notable shared-use trail coming soon to central Virginia. Planned to be over 40 miles long, the Fall Line Trail will form a new and accessible route for active transportation across seven jurisdictions. The northern end of the Fall Line Trail is located in Ashland's Carter Park and connects to the existing [Trolley Line Trail](#). Continuing south,

the Fall Line Trail will pass through Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Hanover, Henrico, and the center of Richmond, close to the [Virginia Capital Trail](#). At its southern end in Petersburg, the Fall Line Trail will provide a connection with the existing Appomattox River Trail and add to the [East Coast Greenway](#) trail network.



The project will benefit the communities surrounding the trail by providing a safer walking and bicycling path (physically separated from vehicle traffic), adding to the area's existing and planned multi-modal transportation network, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by increasing more sustainable transportation options, increasing community access to greenspace, and promoting community health.

In addition to these benefits, the Fall Line Trail will also bring new opportunities for students and families looking for easier and safer active transportation routes to school, whether they choose to walk, bike, or roll. Throughout the Fall Line Trail's route, it will connect to twenty-four public schools, as well as many parks and playgrounds. Trails like the Fall Line Trail can also provide natural settings for educational enrichment, such as outdoor classrooms, that can help school children experience the physical and mental health benefits of spending time outdoors in nature.

To learn more about the Fall Line Trail and to follow along as each section is completed, visit the [Fall Line Trail](#) website, the Virginia Department of Transportation's [Fall Line Trail project site](#), and the Fall Line [Trail Progress map](#).

Asphalt Art: Combining Safety Benefits and Creativity

Transportation agencies in many places are teaming up with artists to paint the areas near crosswalks, curb extensions, and even entire intersections. These projects often make spaces for people walking—and those people themselves—more visible to drivers, and encourage drivers to slow down. The paint is often combined with flexible posts and other infrastructure to reinforce the effect.

These projects can be as small as a parking space or as large as an entire intersection or even bigger. Murals in parking spaces are typically placed at the end of a block and combined with bike racks so that parked cars don't block drivers' view of pedestrians and so that micromobility devices don't block the sidewalk. In some places, these projects are government-led, such as the several projects throughout central Washington DC funded as part of the District Department of Transportation's (DDOT) [Near Northwest III Safety and Mobility Study](#), and in



A curb extension featuring asphalt art at 15th St NW and Church St NW in Washington, DC.

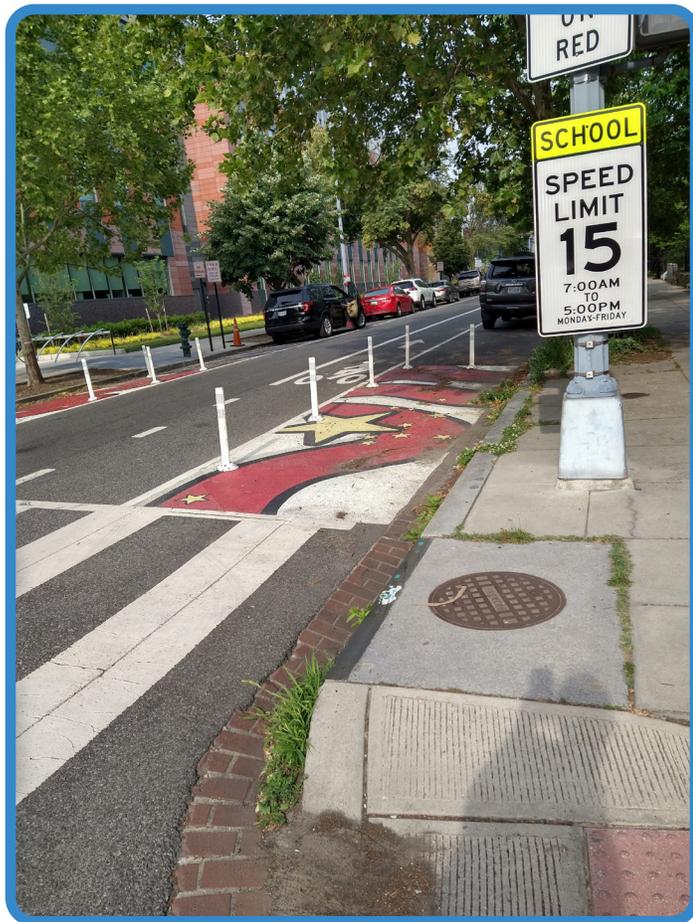
other places they are community-driven, like Seattle's [Greenlake Dragonfly](#).

Bloomberg Philanthropies has its own Asphalt Art initiative, with a published guide about these

relatively low-cost, often short-term and scalable projects which “can create immediate positive impact and catalyze long-term improvements.” Visit <https://asphaltart.bloomberg.org/> to read the guide and learn more about their grants to support asphalt projects. They've also recently published an [Asphalt Art Safety Study](#), which “found that city streets with asphalt art became considerably safer for pedestrians after incorporating art into roadway redesigns.” At locations with asphalt art installations, drivers yielded immediately to pedestrians with right-of-way more frequently, fewer pedestrian crossings involved conflicts with drivers, and total crash rates, rates of crashes leading to injuries, and rates of crashes involving people walking and other vulnerable individuals all decreased. DDOT, Howard University Transportation Research Center, Portland State University, and the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center also have [an ongoing research study](#) “to determine the actual impacts on safety and comfort for pedestrians who cross at these locations.”

Several other organizations have also created guides on how to create asphalt art and other art in the right-of-way projects (such as painting the utility cabinets that support traffic signals). While some details may be localized and not apply to you, guides like the [Made You Look Art in the Right of Way Toolkit](#) from Baltimore's MICA Center for Social Design or the [Curb Extension Mural Best Practices Guide](#) from DDOT may still help you think about, set up, and execute your project successfully.

In Washington, DC, DDOT's Arts in the Right-of-Way program and the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities have teamed up on a program called [Color the Curb](#), which has created several ground mural projects. Curb extension murals will be installed by the end of 2022 near five schools in Ward 7, at the eastern corner of the District. These murals are planned in coordination with students at the schools—like other mural projects, ground murals can be a great way to let kids use their creativity and get involved in beautifying their communities!



Curb extensions featuring asphalt art outside Washington, DC's Benjamin Banneker Academic High School. [The mural's design](#) incorporates a portrait of Banneker and constellations "that most likely guided Banneker's survey of the District of Columbia."

Walking and Riding Solo

Parents, do you know when it's appropriate to allow your child to walk or bike without adult supervision?

For many children, traveling to school independently is a rite of passage. However, there are many factors to consider when making this decision – Are they walking with friends? Do they have to cross a busy road? Do they have a sense of what is safe and what is not? Read on to understand more about your child's development when it comes to walking or biking on their own.

Children's ability to understand and make decisions about their safety changes as they grow and develop. Ultimately, parents and caregivers should make the decision about when their child is able to walk and bike without supervision. However, research shows that parents tend to overestimate their child's ability to walk and cross streets safely.

Research suggests that children in kindergarten and first grade have difficulty:

- Controlling impulses and concentrating
- Judging when it is safe to cross the street
- Staying focused on one task, such as safely crossing the road
- Understanding the differences between safe and unsafe crossings

Children in second through fifth grade:

- Can identify safe crossings with help and practice
- Can learn how to identify traffic and stay focused while crossing the street with help and practice
- Need supervision as they learn more complicated safety skills

Give these complexities, there is no exact age where children are equipped to be responsible pedestrians and bicyclists. Here is some general guidance based on your child's grade.

Kindergarten and 1st Grade

- Children ages 5-7 are still learning what it means to walk safely. They are also gaining the motor skills to ride a bike. They should always be with an adult or responsible older sibling.

2nd and 3rd Grades

- Children ages 7-9 are still developing the cognitive abilities required to consistently make safe decisions in an unsupervised setting. While they can begin to learn and practice more complicated pedestrian or bicycle safety tasks, they should be accompanied by an adult or responsible older sibling.

4th and 5th Grades

- Children ages 9-11 are still learning what it means to be safe as pedestrians. They should always be aware that they are setting an example for younger children while also proving to you that they will soon deserve independence.
- At this age, children are still developing the cognitive abilities required to consistently make safe decisions. Riding a bicycle involves the simultaneous execution of motor skills and cognitive skills. While children are able to perform two tasks at once, they often sacrifice cognitive performance for motor skill performance. As students become more confident in their bicycling skills, parents and caregivers should be involved in deciding where and when they ride their bike.

Although you might be able to quickly see that it is safe to cross the road or perform other pedestrian behaviors, your child may not know or understand why it is safe. Want to prepare your child for walking or biking on their own? Practice safe skills at home this summer! Help them understand and learn safe pedestrian behaviors by practicing them each time you walk near or around traffic. Go on a bike ride together and demonstrate non-risky behaviors.

You are your child's most important role model. Children learn by watching others, so always practicing safe behaviors is the best way to teach these valuable skills.

And remember, knowledge does not always equal behavior. It will take time and practice for your child to be prepared to walk or bike on their own.

Check out these resources to learn more about children walking and biking independently:

- [NHTSA Child Pedestrian Safety Curriculum](#)
- [Bikeology Parent Guide](#)

Parent Survey Results Are In!

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to pick the top changes that would result in their child walking more often to school, they identified safer crossings at intersections (41%), slower motor vehicle speeds (36%), more sidewalks and paths (34%), and more adult supervision (28%) as their top choices. These numbers are similar to the numbers reported in 2020, except that motor vehicle speeds is now number two on the list whereas in 2020 it was number four.

The top changes for bicycling were safer crossings at intersections (43%), slower motor vehicle speeds (37%), more paths and separated bike lanes (36%), slower motor vehicle speeds, and more adult supervision (23%). In addition, 75% of parents reported that their child did not have a secure bike lock, 26% said their child did not know how to ride a bike without training wheels, and 18% said their child did not have a helmet that fit.

[Read the full results online!](#)

From the Archives: Safe Walking Tips

In celebration of a decade of Virginia SRTS Newsletters, we will be revisiting articles from past editions. This one originally appeared in 2018, but is still relevant today!

Summers in Virginia are notoriously hot and humid, which can make getting around on foot a bit sticky. Apart from simply causing discomfort, exposure to extreme heat also poses health risks—including dehydration and heat stroke—all of which can potentially land you in the hospital. But don't panic! You can stay safe and (reasonably) comfortable by taking a few sensible precautions, brought to you by our friends at [WalkArlington](#).

WalkArlington is Arlington County's walking education and encouragement program. Our mission is to promote a culture of walkability and active transportation for all ages and abilities. Active modes of transportation, including walking, biking and rolling, are central to Arlington's vision of an equitable transportation system that enhances the overall quality of life for those who live, work and play in Arlington County. WalkArlington supports the County's vision by working collaboratively with local citizens, businesses, stakeholders and County departments to offer programs that promote active transportation choices!

WalkArlington is a program of Arlington County Commuter Services (ACCS), a bureau of Arlington's Department of Environmental Services. ACCS serves people who live, work or visit Arlington through programs and services that are designed to encourage the use of mass transit, carpooling and vanpooling, bicycling, walking, teleworking and other alternatives to driving alone.

Safe Walking Tips

Summer Edition

Summers in the Washington, DC area are notoriously hot and humid, which can make getting around on foot a bit sticky. Apart from simply causing discomfort, exposure to extreme heat also poses health risks—including dehydration and heat stroke—all of which can potentially land you in the hospital. But don't panic! You can stay safe and (reasonably) comfortable by taking a few sensible precautions.

- Check Air Quality**
In addition to temperature forecasts, be sure to check the air quality index at CleanAirPartners.net. Heat and humidity can cause increased ozone pollution at ground level, which can cause respiratory and other health problems, especially for children, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses.
- Know the Symptoms**
Be aware of the symptoms of heat-related illnesses such as confusion, anxiety, loss of consciousness or a marked decrease in sweating. Stop and seek treatment if you begin to experience any of them.
- Stay Hydrated**
Make sure you're well hydrated before walking by drinking 16 oz. of water. ALWAYS take water with you. As a general rule, drink 1 cup of water for every mile (15-20 minutes) or whenever you feel thirsty. Walking more than an hour? Switch to a sports drink with electrolytes to maintain the proper balance of salt in your body.
- Wear Proper Clothing**
Think light colors and breathable fabrics. Wicking is a good choice for longer walks, as it takes moisture away from the body. Wear a hat to provide your own shade, and avoid cotton socks which can get damp from perspiration and cause blisters. Choose shoes with breathable mesh uppers.
- Use Cooling Products**
A variety of products are available to keep you cool for hours at a time. Neck coolers are especially popular since the neck area plays an important role in cooling the rest of the body. You can purchase one, or find directions online by searching "homemade neck coolers."
- Plan your Route**
Be sure to get directions to your destination to prevent unnecessary time spent in the heat in case you get lost. Try to plan a pedestrian-friendly route that includes some shade. Trees, shrubs and water all have a cooling effect, as opposed to areas that are predominantly asphalt or surrounded by heat-absorbing buildings.
- Time your Walks**
If your schedule allows, plan your walking trips for either early morning or evening to avoid both extreme heat and increased air pollution. Take frequent breaks in air-conditioned surroundings if you're walking during the hottest part of the day.

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**Don't let the heat keep you in hiding this summer!
With a little preparation and sensible choices,
you can keep walking all summer long.**