TOOLE DESIGN

Safe Routes to School



Our Approach

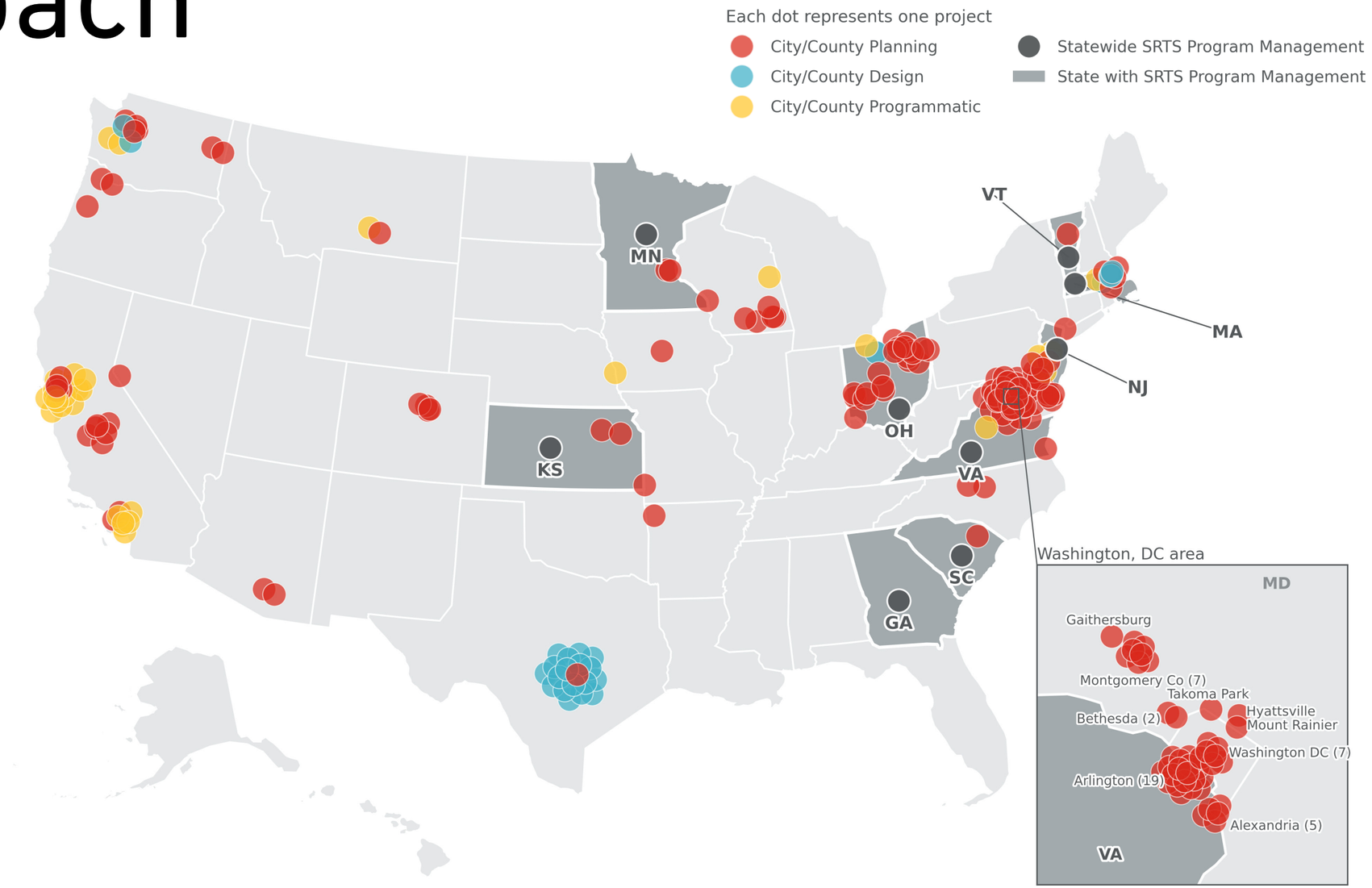
For nearly 25 years, Toole Design has shaped the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) movement in the United States.

We helped establish the National Center for Safe Routes to School, supported statewide SRTS Resource Centers in 10 states, and authored guidance that directs hundreds of millions of dollars in federal SRTS funding.

Our team has led SRTS plans and assessments at more than 1,000 schools nationwide for cities, counties, individual schools, and entire school districts. We have developed award-winning safety curricula for students of all ages and evaluated safety needs on thousands of miles of streets near schools.

Read on to learn more about how Toole Design is leading the charge around:

- Program Management and Delivery
- Engagement
- Education and Encouragement
- Engineering
- Analysis and Evaluation



01

Program Management and Delivery

Toole Design's dedicated active transportation planners, engineers, and outreach professionals have led SRTS programs at local, regional, and statewide scales. We have managed programs with a variety of budgets, clients, and audiences. Our program management and delivery work has included strategic planning, workplan creation, resource development and deployment, event design and implementation, and project prioritization. Our work is driven by the client's desired outcomes, and is centered around improving safety for students and increasing the rates of walking, biking, and rolling.





Kansas DOT Safe Routes to School

Through the on-call Kansas Active Transportation Enhancement Program, Toole Design provides statewide communications, outreach, walk audits, grant programming, and strategic planning support, while continually developing resources to make walking, biking, and rolling safer, more comfortable, and more accessible for students.



Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools

Since 2017, Toole Design has led the Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program's education and outreach arm, which serves students at more than 300 elementary, middle, and high schools. Toole Design guides efforts to promote the program, recruit new schools, design programming and curricula, support under-resourced schools, enhance program sustainability, and build partnerships.



Georgia Safe Routes to School

In 2025, Toole Design took the lead on GDOT's SRTS Statewide Program and conducts strategic planning and data analysis, school safety walks and assessments, infrastructure analysis and planning, outreach and engagement, education resources, communications and materials development, and events programming.



Boston Safe Routes to School

In Boston, Toole Design has focused on working with priority schools to complete arrival and dismissal assessments, a school bus-only street pilot and toolkit, daylighting, the Colorful Corners initiatives, city guidance documents for school bike parking, and school zone traffic calming.

02

Engagement

Inclusive, meaningful, and authentic outreach and stakeholder engagement lays the groundwork for forming partnerships, building trust, and developing a plan that the community supports. Toole Design tailors presentations, events, and experiential learning opportunities to students (whether young children, teens, or young adults), families, and communities in order to create outcomes that will see lasting benefit and safer transportation systems.





Billings SRTS

Go Slow • Be Safe • Be Kind Engagement Campaign

Working with a local marketing firm, Toole Design created and launched the Go Slow. Be Safe. Be Kind. campaign in 2026. This campaign includes social media, activities, e-newsletters, and PSAs for four pilot schools, focused around communicating how everybody should operate more safely in school zones.



Madison, WI Safe Routes to School

Toole Design held workshops at two high schools to address safety issues and infrastructure needs around each campus. During a lunch club meeting, students broke into small groups to discuss arrival and dismissal problems and brainstorm safety improvements. Their ideas shaped the final infrastructure plans, prompted follow-up talks with principals about which doors stay open during arrival and dismissal, and informed bike parking, bus pass, and encouragement recommendations in the broader Strategic Plan.



Fresno, CA

Active Transportation Traffic Gardens

In Fall 2025, Toole Design led the planning, design, and implementation of a pop-up traffic garden at a Community Center for the City of Fresno as part of the City's Active Transportation Plan. Dozens of children aged three to 13, along with their families, practiced safe biking and walking in a car-free miniature streetscape. Most children quickly learned the rules and grew more aware and confident, showing the value of play-based safety education.



San Pablo SRTS Demonstration Projects

Toole Design designed and implemented demonstration projects around schools in San Pablo to create experiential engagement for students and families using potential safety improvements. The engagement strategies were created to serve the community, and included Spanish translation and interpretation; working directly with principals, Beacon Directors, and the Youth Commission to leverage existing systems of communication; and a user-friendly, age-appropriate mapping tool to capture input.

03

Education and Encouragement

Toole Design is a national leader in creating accessible, fun, and context-sensitive education materials and programs for communities across the country. These resources include lesson plans, full curricula, workbooks, guided activities, and presentations. In addition, Toole Design's educational materials are known for their representation of the local community and ability to cover challenging topics (e.g., personal safety, e-bikes, etc.) in interactive ways that meet students where they are.

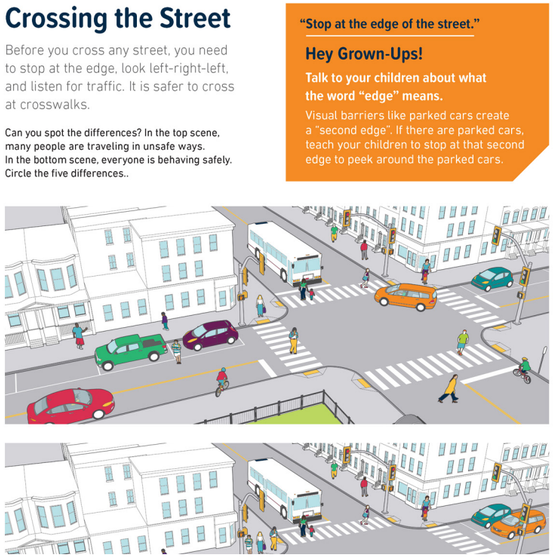
We design and facilitate fun events that encourage students and caregivers to use active transportation. These events and their materials are accessible, context-sensitive, and created in ways that allow communities to create joyful memories and lasting habits around walking, biking, and rolling.





Elk Grove Cycle Quest Activity Book

Toole Design created a bike safety-focused activity book for 3rd grade students, designed and managed a one-day educational experience along the community's train system, and created an in-class presentation. All the materials were created in multiple languages, included visuals for students of all backgrounds and abilities, and delivered consistent messaging to reinforce the unique bike safety needs in the Elk Grove community.



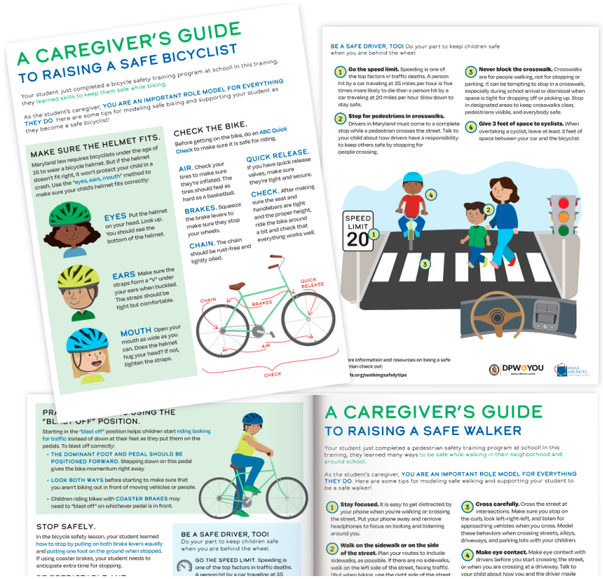
Philadelphia SRTS Curriculum

As part of its Vision Zero Action Plan 2025, the City of Philadelphia hired Toole Design to create a suite of materials that put a special emphasis on preventing traffic fatalities for its most vulnerable residents: children and young adults. Deliverables included an activity book and safety lesson plan for grades 3-5 and and in-class lessons for high school students that encourage critical thinking as they explore how community transportation systems are designed.



Minnesota DOT E-Bike Education Materials

Following a cutting-edge youth e-bike study for MnDOT, Toole Design developed education and awareness materials to clearly and visually define an e-bike, bring awareness of key regulations, and encourage safe riding practices. These resources included social media, targeted flyers for caregivers, and bike hangers to educate students who ride e-bikes or e-motos.



Anne Arundel County SRTS Training Program

Toole Design worked with Anne Arundel School District Physical Education teachers to develop a bicycle lesson format, pilot the lesson at eight schools, evaluate the pilots, and make recommendations for implementing the bicycle lessons districtwide. A pedestrian lesson was also developed for grades K-2 that included an innovative felt board to allow students to role-play pedestrian safety scenarios before testing their skills on sidewalks and streets around the school.

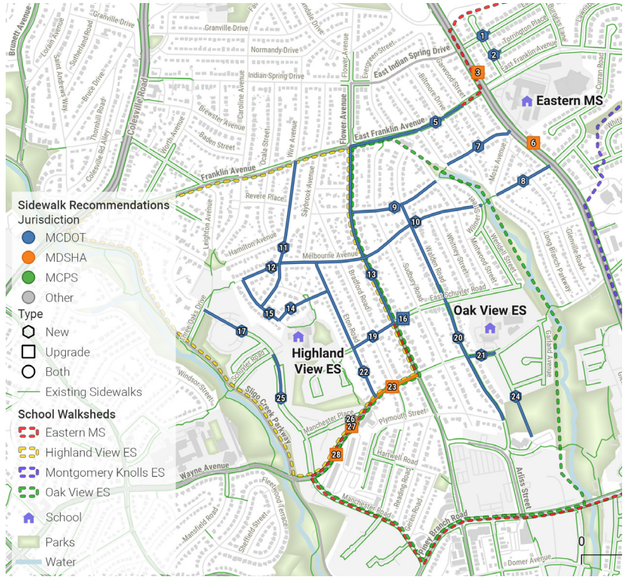
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Engineering

Toole Design understands that plans are only as good as the outcomes they help our clients achieve. Our engineering outcomes start with planning deliverables that clearly define school and community priorities, and they incorporate school travel plans, participatory programs, and evidence-based solutions through research and data.

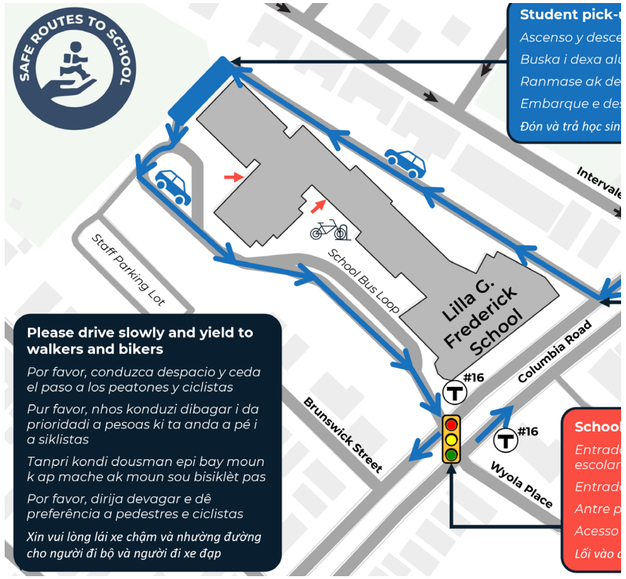
Our engineers use those plans to design projects that consider the ways that youth travel differently because of their cognitive and physical abilities. We are industry leaders in designing for children, and are consistently working to make sure our projects meet the needs of this important and vulnerable population.





Montgomery County SRTS Action Plans

Since 2022, Toole Design has supported the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) in designing infrastructure improvements for 25 schools across the county. Our planners and engineers analyze vulnerable road user crash data, engage school administrators and communities, observe student arrival and dismissal, and conduct walk audits of each school walkshed to create designs that are context-sensitive and improve safety for all users.



Boston SRTS Planning and Engineering

Toole Design worked with the City of Boston to identified priority schools based on an analysis of pediatric crashes near schools. To date, Toole Design has supported more than 30 of these schools, conducting school engagement, identifying needs, and collaborating with partners to advance appropriate operations, design, or education interventions.



Kansas School Zone Design Guide

Published in 2026, the groundbreaking Kansas School Zone Guide provides local and state engineers, planners, school staff, and community members with a resource that clarifies and aligns with the goals of the Kansas SRTS Program, meets national standards, and incorporates modern safety practices. The Guide integrates the uniformity standards of the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), 11th Edition with SRTS best practices and proven safety treatments for school areas.



Austin SRTS Infrastructure Plan and Engineering

Toole Design's on-site augmentation team with the City of Austin is responsible for designing and implementing projects identified in the 2017 Austin Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Infrastructure Plan. The Plan was developed through infrastructure audits at 137 elementary and middle schools, which produced a prioritized list of engineering solutions. Since the Plan's adoption, our staff has supported the design and implementation of over 500 safety infrastructure projects spanning 122 schools.

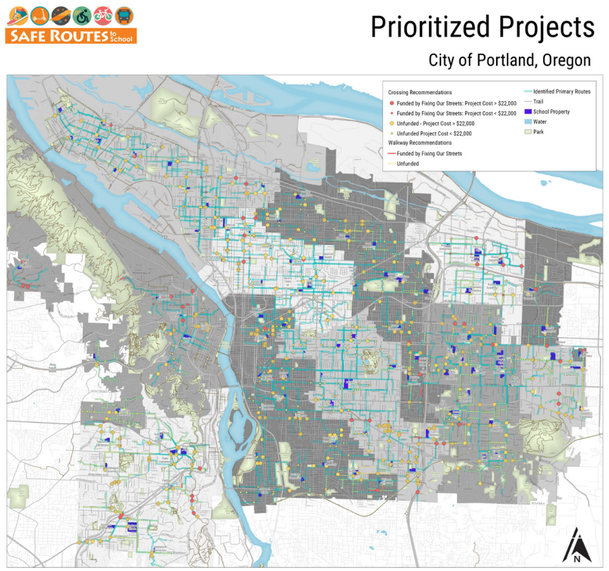
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Analysis and Evaluation

Toole Design's data science and GIS specialists have a gift for presenting data in a compelling, creative way that captures the unique story of every community in which we work. We have developed custom analyses to understand low-stress bicycle connectivity, determined transit walk- and bike-sheds, highlighted equity and access issues, and reflected realistic pedestrian and bicycle trip behavior. This work helps communities make informed and sound investment decisions.

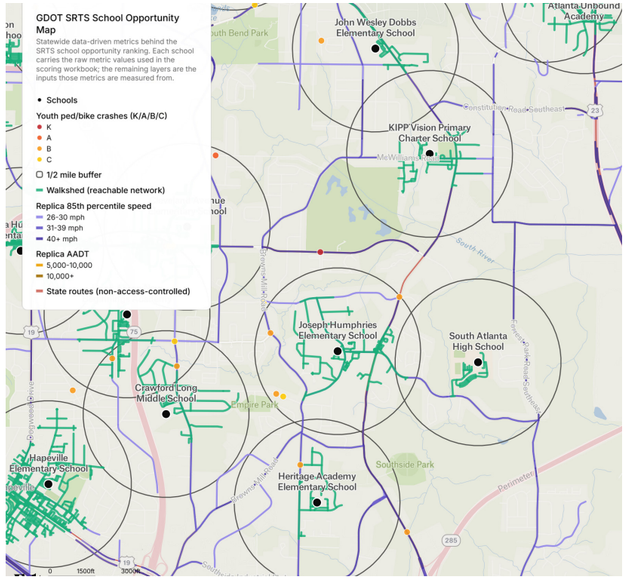
We have evaluated how program efforts impact participation, safety, and learning, and the resulting insights help us iterate and improve individual projects and refine how we apply solutions across the U.S.





Portland Safe Routes to School

Toole Design partnered with the Portland Bureau of Transportation to develop an innovative routing model to guide how $8 million in funding would be invested to improve safe routes to school. Combined with input from families and school leaders, the model produced a prioritized project list that highlighted improvements likely to serve the most students.



Georgia SRTS School Opportunities Mapping

Toole Design developed a methodology for identifying key school opportunities across Georgia's seven districts while prioritizing safety and access needs and GDOT's request for geographic diversity in resource allocation. The result is a robust data set tool that can be sorted by various priorities and highlights the needs across the state for encouragement, infrastructure safety improvements, and education.



Philadelphia

Vision Zero Pedestrian Safety and Action Plan

Toole Design analyzed pedestrian-involved injury crashes to identify common factors such as surrounding land uses, roadway characteristics at pedestrian crash locations, seasons and times of day, vehicle types, and the behaviors of drivers and pedestrians leading up to crashes. These factors informed the development of a pedestrian safety countermeasure toolkit that included systemic recommendations that can be implemented across the city.



Minnesota DOT

Demonstration Project Guide Evaluation and Updates

Toole Design is supporting updates to the MnDOT Demonstration Project Guide through literature and resource reviews, stakeholder surveys and focus groups, technical guidance evaluation, and observation of 2026 demonstration projects. Findings from research and stakeholder feedback are informing best-practice updates and new resources to help MnDOT and partner agencies implement, evaluate, and engage communities in safer mobility options across the state.



Contact Us

Our Safe Routes to School experts are ready to help your community make walking, biking, and rolling to school safer and more comfortable.

Reach out to learn more:

- Diane Lambert, MPH
  Safe Routes to School Practice Lead
- Toole Design Safe Routes to School Page