WINTER IS HERE!

TV SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

700 E 2nd Street, Meridian, ID

Winter 2022

Walkitbikeit.org

A PROGRAM OF VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Brr, it's cold out there! But we still say welcome to winter! In this issue you'll find info about what we've been up to, tips on how to winterize your active trips and lots of other tips.

For our teacher friends, now is the time you should reach out to schedule any upcoming classroom visits. Our active transportation safety lessons are more important than ever as we are seeing an increase in pedestrian and bicycle crashes across the area.

Fall Things!

This fall saw Ada County Safe Routes to School working on an extended program with Anser charter school PE classes. We spent four weeks with almost all students in kindergarten to fifth grade. This wide range of ages meant that we were teaching some kids how to ride and taking others for a ride to the greenbelt. It was quite a project and gave us a rare opportunity to see kids progress in their biking skills. The students remembered us from the spring sessions in 2020 and we were glad to see them again, especially the K-2 groups, where we could see bike skills had improved over the summer. We also expanded our program reach by partnering with Bailee

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ENJOY THIS ISSUE?

Feel free to share this newsletter with anyone who you think may find it useful.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, IDEAS?

Contact:

TVSafeRoutes@valleyregionaltransit.org

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Burgess from Challenged Athletes Foundation. We had a couple of students using hand cycles, which CAF provided to the school at no charge. We look forward to continuing to bring these adaptive bikes to our upcoming rodeos in the spring! We also spent a week at Sage International School with the middle school and had a great time!

Other fall things

We wrapped up the latest installment of our Wolverines on Wheels after school bike club with students from the Whitney Elementary Community Center at the end of October. We went on five bike rides around the neighborhood including to the Boise Depot and the ice cream ride, which is a perennial favorite. Look for us again this spring; we'll be the group in yellow vests rolling around on the bench and into downtown on Wednesday afternoons. If you'd like to start something like this at your school reach out, we'll be glad to help.

Nampa's Safe Routes to School Plan

Mayor Debbie Kling of Nampa is setting the city's focus on a Safe Routes to School Plan for 2022. Through a Blue Cross of Idaho grant, the City of Nampa is starting the process to create a plan which focuses on the safety of students who walk, bike, or roll to and from school.

The Safe Routes team along with our friends at Idaho Smart Growth, are working with the city on school safety assessments. The groups focus is to prioritize infrastructure projects around schools, closing gaps in the sidewalk system, assessing speeding zones around schools, creating safe crossings, and more.

We are excited for what will come about through this new plan, and we will keep sharing about how we help shape our community's safety. Stay tuned!

Partnerships in Caldwell

We get by with a little help from our friends. The Safe Routes to School team participates in various groups and committees across the Valley. The Caldwell Health Coalition is a group of businesses and nonprofits in Caldwell working alongside the University of Idaho Extension Office to address six pillars of health, centering on health equity, safety, and family.

The most recent community project of the Caldwell Health Coalition was to replace a battered in-street crosswalk sign at Van Buren Elementary and promote safety to the general student population.

Our friends at St. Luke's generously donated the funding needed to order two new crosswalk signs! The City of Caldwell Traffic Commission helped expand the school safety zone, and the Safe Routes to School team handed out reflectors and bookmarks to students as they arrived at school. We also provided new high visibility safety vests to the crossing guards.

WINTER TIPS

It's been cold and snowy here in the Treasure Valley. As winter weather continues, keep these tips in mind to make riding and walking safer and more enjoyable.

- Check your tire pressure at least once a month. Bicycle tubes naturally lose pressure over the course of several weeks. This effect can be more pronounced when the temperature gets colder.
- Use lower air pressure for better traction in slick riding conditions. Check the sidewall of the tire for pressure ratings. Make sure you inflate to the minimum pressure and check it often! Tire pressure that is too low could lead to a pinch flat.
- Wear brightly colored clothing and be predictable in your actions on the road way. Visibility is always a factor when walking or cycling, especially in times with inclement weather.
- In Idaho the law requires at least a front white light and red rear reflector on your bicycle during low light conditions. This could be early in the morning or at night. While walking, flashlights are great for nighttime visibility!
- Dress appropriately. Using three layers is ideal: Base - a thin layer worn close to the skin to wick moisture; next, Insulation - a mid-layer like a sweater or a soft jacket to keep your body warm; lastly, Shell - an outer layer acts as a wind/water resistant layer to shield you from the weather. Don't forget your gloves, hat, and warm socks too.

Follow these steps this winter for a greater level of safety, visibility, and comfort in your travels.

NEW BIKE DAY!

Did you or some you know get a new bike for Christmas? Congratulations! Here are a few things to think about to make sure the bike is ready when the time comes to go ride.

Start with ABC

A is for air! Make sure you inflate the tires to the minimum pressure. You can find the PSI number written on the side of your tire. You'll need a pump and some arm strength, but inflating your tires is the best way to keep control of your bike and avoid pinch flats. Squeeze your inflated tire with your hand. Getting a feel for how firm this is can help you to recognize an underinflated tire.

B is for brakes! Check your hand brakes by squeezing the levers and pushing the bike forward and backward. Do the brakes stop the wheels? If the wheels still move, you may need to adjust the brakes.

C is for chain. Check your chain by moving the pedals backwards and looking at the chain. Does it move freely and stay on the gears as they rotate? Make sure the chain is clean and lubed with chain oil to keep your ride smooth.

Tools

You can do a lot on your bike with just a few tools. An adjustable crescent wrench and a metric Allen set or multitool will get you pretty far. Make sure that the Allen tools are metric by looking for millimeters. 4, 5 and 6mm are the most used sizes. If your Allen set has fractions labeled, then it most likely will not work for a bicycle.

Now that we have some basic tools, it's a good idea to make sure everything is tight on your new bike. Check the wheels, check the handlebars, and stem. You don't need to really torque down on every bolt but using hand tools to check is good practice.

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SAFE ROUTES IN A GROWING REGION

Have you ever wondered how certain roads, bike lanes, sidewalks, parks, or other projects come to be built or not? Decisions made by local agencies such as the City of Boise, Meridian, Star, or our local highway districts affect all of us as we walk, bike, or drive around our neighborhoods and the region. It's important to remember that every project undertaken by a public agency has a period for public comment, but it can be difficult to keep track of all the projects happening in our rapidly growing area.

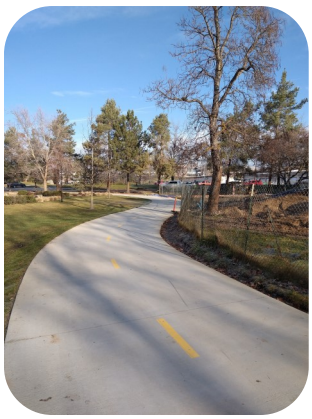
The staff of Treasure Valley Safe Routes each serve on different committees and get to see some of these big projects just before they become public. The connectivity to schools, stores, parks, and jobs is something we look for in each one. We also look for improvement to sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes across the valley, which help keep active transportation users safer.

Strategies for keeping up with projects asking for public input can include bookmarking project pages, getting updates in the mail in impacted areas, public meeting notices on your walks around the area, and press releases. Some of our partners at different active transportation advocacy groups send out emails urging us all to look at upcoming projects. Let us know if you'd like to be connected to these groups.

Policy Updates at ACHD

2021 saw some policy changes at the Ada County Highway District (ACHD,) the agency responsible for all roads within Ada County not designated as state or federal highways. When planning future arterial road paving projects, ACHD will add separated bike lanes or multi-use paths, where possible, rather than the painted bike lanes you might see on many five lane roads in Ada County. An example of a separated bike lane is found in downtown Boise on Capitol Boulevard, and a multi-use path would be similar to the path that runs along Federal Way. We think that this policy change is a step in the right direction to make our road system more useful and connected for all users.

ACHD has also started a policy to measure and use a metric called Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) when designing bike lanes and sidewalks. Essentially, LTS is lower when the car traffic is slower or when people walking or biking are separated by a buffer from car traffic. The new policy strives for sidewalks and bike lanes (or shared roadways) that are rated as high comfort for adults, with certain areas rated high comfort for all users.



Greenbelt Widening

Boise Parks and Rec has nearly wrapped up with improving and widening greenbelt sections in the Downtown and Southeast areas. While the construction period was inconvenient, the new path sections are wider and constructed of more durable concrete, rather than asphalt. We think that everyone will enjoy more space and a smoother ride on the Greenbelt for years to come.

SCHEDULING A VISIT TO YOUR SCHOOL

We are ready to serve you and your school with our in-class lessons, bike rodeos, and learn-to-ride class. Each of these events takes a different amount of time and we know that's a precious commodity right now.

Types of Education offered
We have changed some of our class offerings due to class size limitations and keeping each other safe. The following gives you an idea of what we do now and how we can bring some fun things to your classrooms.

- **In Class**: 1/2 hour Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Lessons. This is a high level overview of the basics of safety. Time allowing, we can go outside and practice road crossing techniques.
- **Bicycle Rodeo**: Limited to individual classes, we stay at the school all day or for several days, working in PE classes. The rodeo is set up all day, students come out one class at a time. We can bring bikes/ scooters.
- **Specialized lessons**: Several weeks long, learn-to-ride classes.
- **Bicycle and pedestrian counts**: Arrival/departure counts for schools requesting information, or for city/county partners.
- **Walking School Bus/Bike Train:** Real, on-the-ground help for your students to get to school safely. We would love to see more walking school buses and bike trains and can help you set them up at your school or in your neighborhood.

Please email us today to find out more details about what we're offering and how we can help.

New Bike Fleet!

Treasure Valley Safe Routes received 25 bikes thanks to Dwayne Taylor, the General Manager of PC Maintenance, LLC. These bikes were donated by Walmart to Dwayne and were eventually given to LaRita Schandorff of the Nampa Bike Project to distribute to kids and programs in the community. These bikes are in the size range used by our smallest students, from kindergarten to 2nd grade. This fleet includes many bikes with training wheels and will be used for teaching young students how to ride. Do you have young students that would benefit from a bike lesson or rodeo? Drop us an email!

New Bike Day Continued

TIME FOR A RIDE

When it's time for a ride, let's think about a few more things. Will any of your clothes get caught in the chain or wheels while you ride? Tuck in shoelaces, pant cuffs, or anything else loose. If it's cold out make sure you have gloves, a hat, a face cover, and other clothes that will protect your extremities from the wind.

When you're riding, always ride on the right-hand side of the road. A bicycle is considered a vehicle in Idaho and must travel in the same direction as every other vehicle. If you ride on the sidewalk, make sure you're paying attention to driveways and intersections. You still interact with traffic on the sidewalk! Lights are required on your bike or body if you're biking when its dark. Just like on a car, a white light goes on the front and a red light goes on the back.

KEEPING UP WITH VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT

Stay in touch with transportation in the entire Treasure Valley with the Safe Travels, Treasure Valley newsletter. There's always something interesting and you can be among the first to know!

valley regional transit

LET'S BE SOCIAL

You can find us on Facebook and Instagram, and out on the roads. Be sure to look up Treasure Valley Safe Routes to School Program and give us a like!