

# **Grand Mesa Middle School**

## **Walking and Biking Audit**



**October 11, 2016**

## **Grand Mesa Middle School Walking and Bicycling Audit Report**

October 11, 2016

### **Audit Team Members:**

Jason Eidinger, Assistant Principal, Grand Mesa Middle School  
Jennifer Fox-Colwell, Safe Routes to School, Mesa County  
Callie Fronczak, Safe Routes to School, Mesa County  
Daniel Larkin, Senior Engineer, Mesa County  
Jennifer Marsh, Principal, Grand Mesa Middle School

### **Discussion:**

The Grand Mesa Middle School walking and biking audit took place on Tuesday, October 11th, for the afternoon departure from school. This was a fairly typical afternoon.

The audit team observed:

- Crosswalk at 31 ½ Rd. and Ellingwood Ave.
- 31 ½ Rd. and the entry and exit points of the school
- 31 ½ Rd. pedestrian and bike traffic
- E ½ Rd. and 31 ½ Rd.
- The pick-up and drop-off zone
- The bus loop

Grand Mesa Middle School has about 630 students, and about 61% of them qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch. About 300 of the students ride the school bus. No annual count of student transportation is done, and students who live within walking distance are not actively encouraged to walk to school, though the school does present itself as a pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly school.



*Figure 1: South bike rack has 24 bikes on this day*

The principal cited the crosswalk across 31 ½ Rd., just south of Ellingwood Ave., as her primary concern. The assistant principal is concerned about the lack of lighting around the school and on the public roads in the vicinity. Due to the 7:25 a.m. start time, middle school students arrive at school in the dark or near-dark during several months of the year.

Grand Mesa Middle School does meet to evaluate traffic safety during beginning- and end-of-day procedures at the school. However, the team does not periodically evaluate neighborhood routes and the school site.

The bike racks are positioned well, and there are sufficient spots for the number of students. On this day, in 159 spots in two racks, 25 bikes were observed. Almost all the bikes were kept at the more southerly bike rack. If there were a significant increase in the number of cyclists, and the 106 spots on this favored south rack became about half-full with no increase at the northern rack, school administrators might want to investigate why and whether the northern rack should be moved. However, the racks do not meet standards in terms of their security. The racks are not easily visible from the school's windows, and are not lit. Lighting is a significant consideration because students arrive in the dark during several months of the year. As the students left the school on the audit day, the team saw only four helmets in use. One student left on inline skates.

On 31 ½ Rd. in front of Grand Mesa, the county has recently striped bike lanes on both sides of the road. There are no bike lane signs, however, and only parking prohibitions on the west side of the road. Drivers should not be parking in bike lanes, so additional No Parking signs and parking enforcement are needed.

Grand Mesa's drop-off/pick-up area runs very smoothly, and there is little to no congestion. The principal credits the \$12,000 spent by the school several years ago to add an exit to the parking lot on the south side end of school property. On the west side of 31 ½ Rd., immediately in front of the school, signs that say "No Stopping at Curb" keep traffic from backing up and consequently slowing non-school traffic along the west side of 31 ½ Rd. The bus zone is at the north end of the school property.

Pick-up and drop-off is on the south side of the school, in the parking lot. Cars enter the parking lot on 31 ½ Rd. at the north side of the parking lot, pass through the pick-up zone, and continue through the parking lot to exit at the south end of the lot. The "Right Turn Only" sign keeps the traffic moving. Signs tell drivers to stay in their vehicles, but there are no signs asking them to turn off their engines in the interest of air quality.

Crossing guards are used in the pick-up/drop-off zone and at the crosswalk at 31 ½ Rd. and Ellingwood Ave. The principal reports that crossing guards receive on-site training, and their stop signs are very good. On this day, neither crossing guard was wearing a vest.

Crossing guard training (on- or off-site) is available through the District Safety office in coordination with the City of Grand Junction Transportation Engineering and Police Department.

Proper vests should be worn for staff and student safety.



*Figure 2: Parking lot crossing guard has a great sign and no vest.*

Many students live south of the school, on the south side of US 6. This is true of many students at neighboring Central High School as well. To get home, these students need to cross E ½ Rd., and take a pedestrian walkway to US 6, where they can use a pedestrian signal that stops traffic on US6. The problem is crossing E ½ Rd. at 31 ½ Rd., where E ½ Rd does not have a stop sign, only pedestrian warning signs and marked crosswalks. The posted speed limit on E ½ Rd. in this section is 35 mph, and vehicles often travel over the speed limit.

### **Observations/Comments:**

The following observations and comments regarding the afternoon pick-up and departure were made by members of the audit team and members of the school community.

#### Walkers/Bikers:

- Crosswalks:
  - Crosswalk at Ellingwood and 31 ½ Rd. - Some students crossed before crossing guard arrived.
  - Crosswalk at Patterson/F Road & 31 ½ Rd has pedestrian signal.
  - Pick-up cars stop on east side of 31 ½ Rd. and kids dart across (no crosswalk) to get to vehicles.
- Crossing guards:

- Crossing guards have difficulties arriving in time in the afternoon.
- Crossing guards need better vests. The guards at Ellingwood & 31 ½ Rd. and in the parking lot were not wearing vests!
- One crossing guard on 31 ½ Rd. at bus loop.
- One crossing guard in parent pick-up/drop-off/parking lot.
- No crossing guards at signaled crossings nearby, at F Rd./Patterson & 31 ½ Rd. and E ½ Rd. & 31 ½ Rd.
- Students use the crosswalk in the parking lot where there is a crossing guard.
- Bicycling/walking:
  - Bicycle lanes on both sides of 31 ½ Rd. are striped but not signed.
  - Students do not bicycle safely with traffic.
  - 31 ½ Rd. is not well lit: difficult to see kids in the morning, especially if they are wearing dark clothes.



*Figure 3: Bike lane and crosswalk at Ellingwood.*

#### Parking Lot and Pick-up/Drop-off Zone:

- Parking lot egress and 31 ½ Rd.: “Do Not Enter” and “Right Turn Only” signs at parking lot exit are not standard.

#### At bus loop entry/exit on 31 ½ Rd.:

- Merlisa Porter (teacher and crossing guard at bus loop and 31 ½ Rd.) said this area really needs better lighting, especially in the dark mornings.

#### Intersection and Traffic Control near Grand Mesa Middle School:

- The school zone is 25 mph.
- Flashing beacons are on 31 ½ Rd. north of the school and south of the school’s exit.
- Intersection at E ½ Rd. and 31 ½ Rd. is not signalized and traffic is fast.

## Suggested Solutions:

Location of Interest	Obstacle	Proposed Solutions	Responsible Parties
General	Information sharing of available resources (Safe Routes to school maps and WebApp); promotional ideas about getting kids to walk and bike to school.	Link on school website with pertinent information including SRTS maps.	School administration; SRTS personnel; parent involvement groups; school safety teams
General	Inadequate vests for crossing guards and staff who assist in the before- and after-school process	Crossing guards need Class A, Level 2 vests.	SRO; District 51; School administration
General	Students who walk and wheel to school do not use helmets.	Promote the acquisition and use of helmets.	School Administration, PE teacher, Health Assistant
General	Drivers idle their engines while they wait to pick up their students, polluting the air.	Install "No Idle Zone" signs. See Best Practices for more information.	School administration; District 51
31 ½ Rd.	Dark mornings and dark kids' clothes make for poor visibility.	Better lighting on school property and along 31 ½ Rd. Educate kids about wearing light or reflective clothes.	Mesa County; School administration; District 51
31 ½ Rd.	Students need some instruction about riding bikes with traffic.	Teach bicycle safety using the middle school Safe Routes to School curriculum.	PE teacher
31 ½ Rd.	Kids cross 31 ½ Rd to get to waiting vehicles that are parked there.	Install bike lane signs on both sides, and No Parking signs on the east side of 31 ½ Rd and enforce parking.	Mesa County
Crossing guards	Crossing guards have difficulty arriving at their stations before students arrive.	Consider using staff who are not with students for the last period of the day for duty.	School administration
Bike lanes	More students could ride bikes to school if the bike lane were more formalized.	Sign the bike lane that passes in front of the school.	Mesa County
E ½ Rd. & 31 ½ Rd.	Crosswalk is marked, and signed but not signalized. Traffic is fast on E ½ Rd.	Conduct a traffic study to evaluate signalization of intersection.	Mesa County

## **Best Practices:**

- “Children Breathing - No Idle Zone” = Engines off sign (e.g. West MS photos)
- Pick-up/Drop-off areas by grade (e.g. Bookcliff MS, Pear Park ES). This may create a safer situation for walkers and bikers.
- Crossing guard gathers kids by school for crossing busy street (e.g. Mesa View ES)
- Crossing guards have standard stop signs, and Class A, Level 2 vests.
- Crossing guards are well trained -- on site training available (e.g. Chipeta report for more on this). Crossing guards need to be paid to take the training.
- Take the time to teach parents how to go through pick-up/drop-off process correctly. (e.g. Bookcliff MS)
- Teach kids to wear helmets.
- Having staff and faculty outside the building at the beginning and the end of day. (e.g. West MS, Rocky Mountain ES)
- Clear and predictable flow of traffic through parking lots. (e.g. Bookcliff MS)
- The Health Assistant and PE teachers are active in promoting healthy transportation to and from school. (e.g. Mesa View ES)
- Hosting a bike rodeo and teaching the bike safety and skills unit in PE.
- Crossing guards shouldn't be teachers or other staff who can't get to their stations in time. (e.g. Tope ES, where the PTO pays crossing guards, and “specials” teachers also have duty)

# Walk Route Maps

## Grand Mesa Middle School Walk Route Map Summary

	1-Mile Radius ~ 372 street crossings		2-Mile Radius ~528 street crossings		3-Mile Radius ~927 street crossings	
	Length	Percent	Length	Percent	Length	Percent
<b>Least Favored - 4</b>	23.6	37%	45.6	29%	44.9	28%
<b>Not Favored - 3</b>	10.7	17%	27.6	19%	31.4	20%
<b>Favored - 2</b>	21.9	34%	65.4	44%	68.8	44%
<b>Most Favored - 1</b>	7.3	11%	11.2	8%	14.3	9%
	63.5	100%	147.8	100%	160.4	100%

### Key to Walk Route Map Ratings:



**GREEN**

Most favored route. May have a detached sidewalk and/or a bike lane. May be a path that has no vehicle traffic. (A detached sidewalk is separated from the roadway, often by a strip of grass, dirt or rocks.)



**BLUE**

Has attached sidewalks that are wide enough for 2 people to walk side by side. (An attached sidewalk is right next to the roadway).



**YELLOW**

Has a place to walk or ride that may be a sidewalk, but could be a path or simply sufficient unpaved space on the side of the road.



**RED**

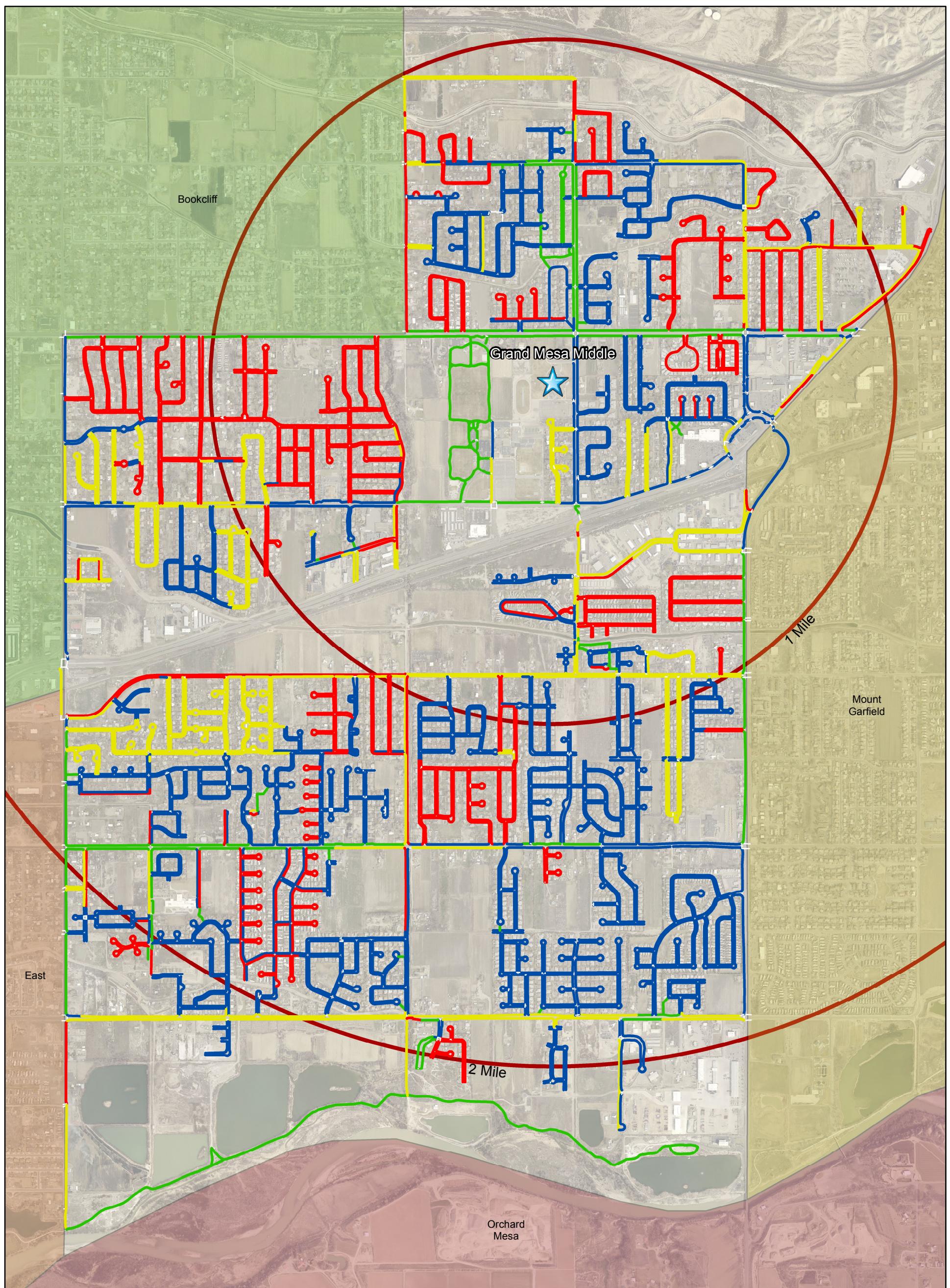
Least favored route. Pedestrians and bicyclists must use the vehicle lanes to walk or ride. (No sidewalk and little or no space beyond the white edge line on the side of the road.)

# SRTS 2016 - Grand Mesa Middle Path Ratings within 1 & 2 Mile Radii

## Legend

Most favored      Not favored  
Favored            Least favored

Crosswalk      1 & 2 Mile Radii



# Parent Surveys

## Parent Survey Report: One School in One Data Collection Period

**School Name:** Grand Mesa Middle

**Set ID:** 15792

**School Group:** Mesa County Valley School District 51

**Month and Year Collected:** October 2016

**School Enrollment:** 0

**Date Report Generated:** 12/30/2016

**% Range of Students Involved in SRTS:** Don't Know

**Tags:** Safe Routes To School

**Number of Questionnaires Distributed:** 0

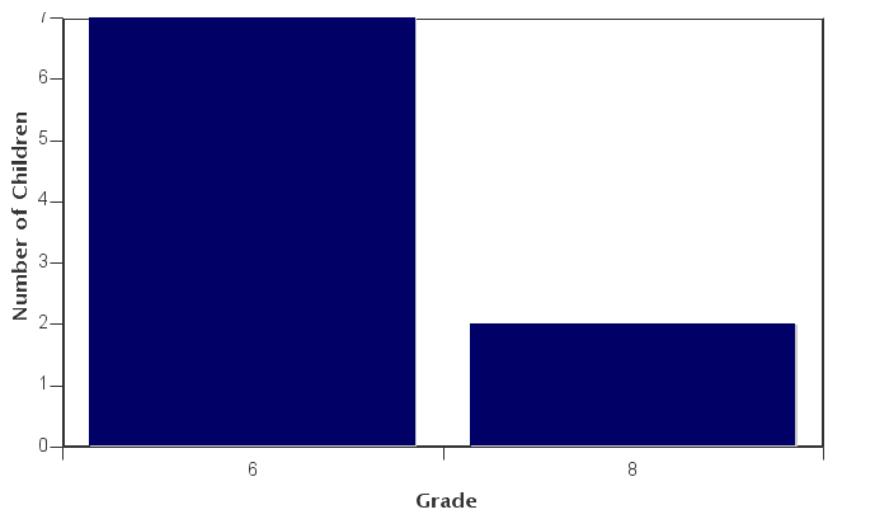
**Number of Questionnaires**

**Analyzed for Report:** 9

This report contains information from parents about their children's trip to and from school. The report also reflects parents' perceptions regarding whether walking and bicycling to school is appropriate for their child. The data used in this report were collected using the Survey about Walking and Biking to School for Parents form from the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

\*\*Because less than 30 questionnaires are included in this report, each graph and table display counts rather than percentage information.

Grade levels of children represented in survey



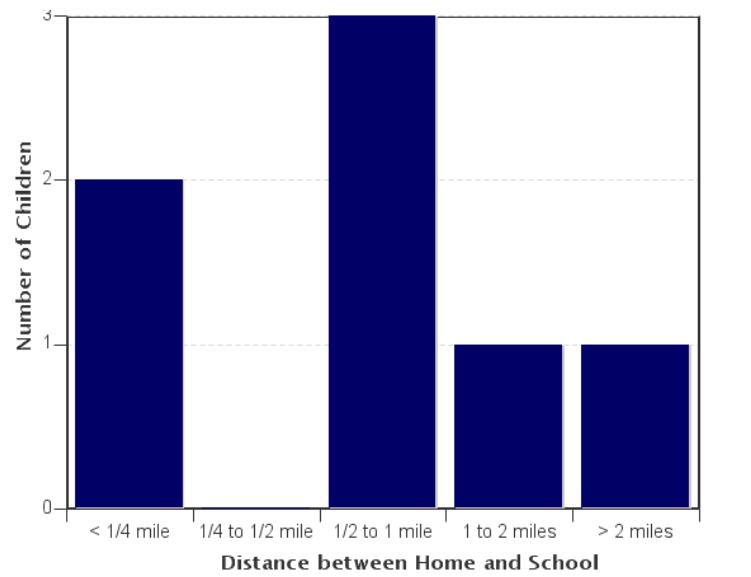
Grade levels of children represented in survey

Grade in School	Responses per grade
	Number
6	7
8	2

No response: 0

Numbers rather than percents are displayed because the number of respondents for this question was less than 30.

Parent estimate of distance from child's home to school



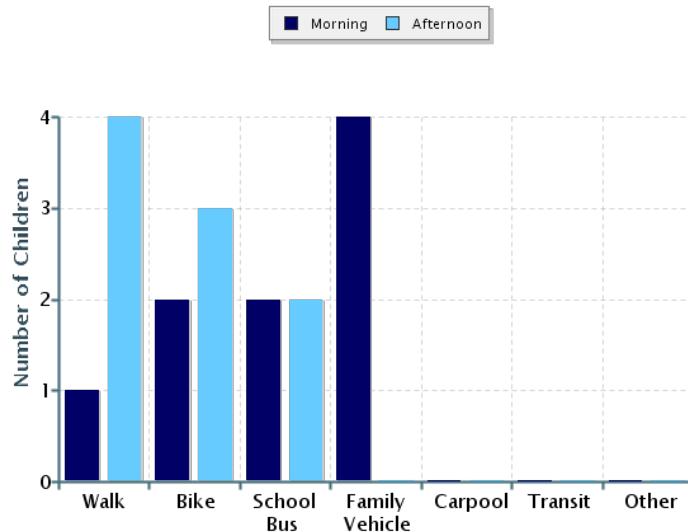
Parent estimate of distance from child's home to school

Distance between home and school	Number of children
Less than 1/4 mile	2
1/4 mile up to 1/2 mile	0
1/2 mile up to 1 mile	3
1 mile up to 2 miles	1
More than 2 miles	1

Don't know or No response: 2

Numbers rather than percents are displayed because the number of respondents for this question was less than 30.

Typical mode of arrival at and departure from school



Typical mode of arrival at and departure from school

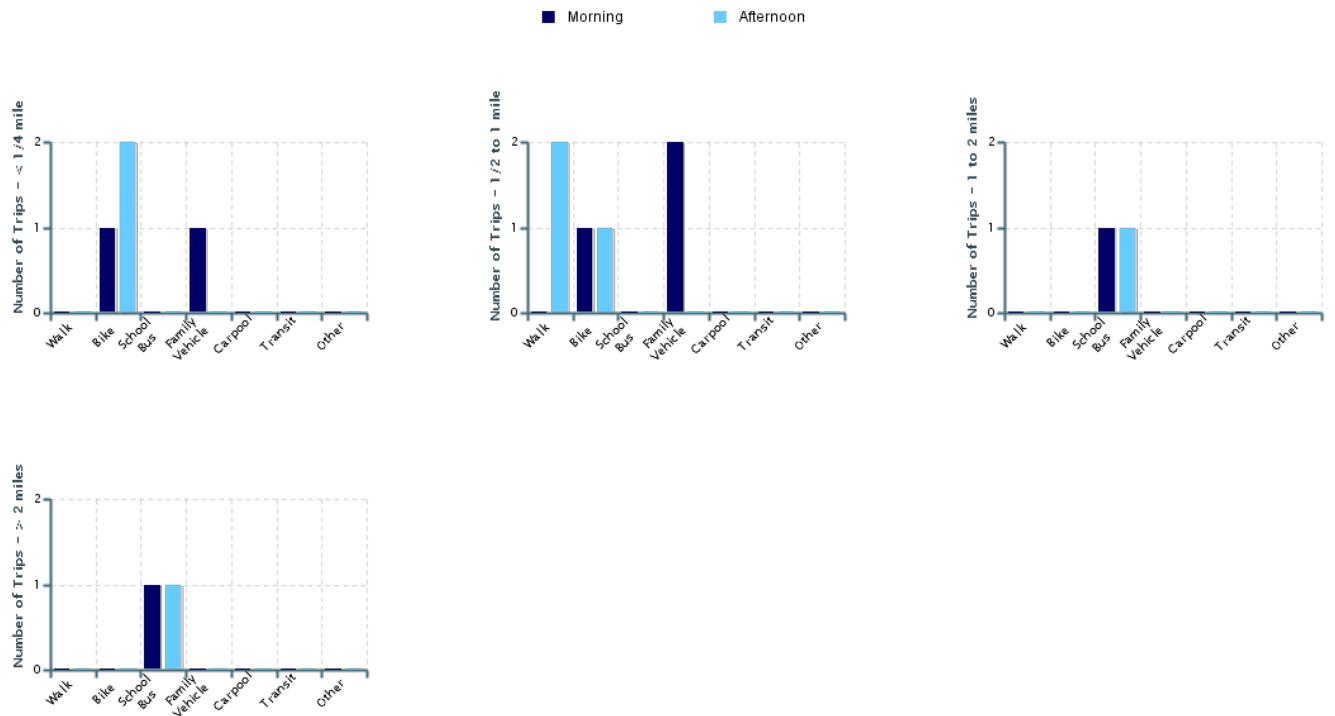
Time of Trip	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	9	1	2	2	4	0	0	0
Afternoon	9	4	3	2	0	0	0	0

No Response Morning: 0

No Response Afternoon: 0

Numbers rather than percents are displayed because the number of respondents for this question was less than 30.

Typical mode of school arrival and departure by distance child lives from school



Typical mode of school arrival and departure by distance child lives from school

School Arrival

Distance	Number within Distance	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Less than 1/4 mile	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
1/4 mile up to 1/2 mile	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1/2 mile up to 1 mile	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	0
1 mile up to 2 miles	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
More than 2 miles	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

Don't know or No response: 2

Numbers rather than percents are displayed because the number of respondents for this question was less than 30.

School Departure

Distance	Number within Distance	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Less than 1/4 mile	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
1/4 mile up to 1/2 mile	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1/2 mile up to 1 mile	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
1 mile up to 2 miles	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
More than 2 miles	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

Don't know or No response: 2

Numbers rather than percents are displayed because the number of respondents for this question was less than 30.

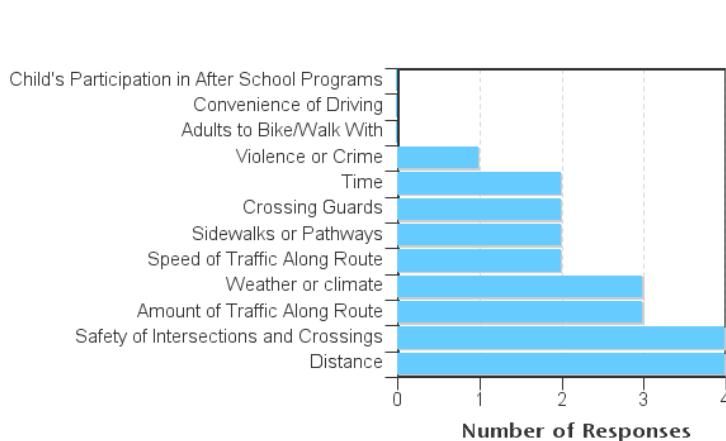
Number of children who have asked for permission to walk or bike to/from school by distance they live from school

Asked Permission?	Number of Children	Less than 1/4 mile	1/4 mile up to 1/2 mile	1/2 mile up to 1 mile	1 mile up to 2 miles	More than 2 miles
Yes	7	2	0	3	1	1
No	0	0	0	0	0	0

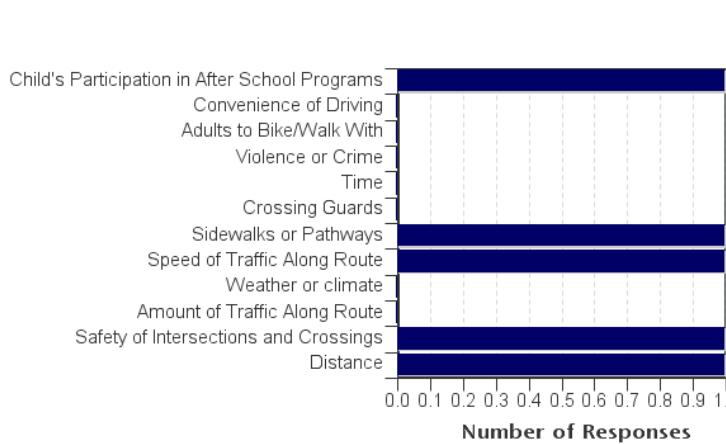
Don't know or No response: 2

Numbers rather than percents are displayed because the number of respondents for this question was less than 30.

Issues reported to affect the decision to not allow a child to walk or bike to/from school by parents of children who do not walk or bike to/from school



Issues reported to affect the decision to allow a child to walk or bike to/from school by parents of children who already walk or bike to/from school



Issues reported to affect the decision to allow a child to walk or bike to/from school by parents of children who already walk or bike to/from school

Issue	Child does not walk/bike to school	Child walks/bikes to school
Distance	4	1
Safety of Intersections and Crossings	4	1
Amount of Traffic Along Route	3	0
Weather or climate	3	0
Speed of Traffic Along Route	2	1
Sidewalks or Pathways	2	1
Crossing Guards	2	0
Time	2	0
Violence or Crime	1	0
Adults to Bike/Walk With	0	0
Convenience of Driving	0	0
Child's Participation in After School Programs	0	1
<b>Number of Respondents per Category</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>

No response: 3

Note:

-Factors are listed from most to least influential for the 'Child does not walk/bike to school' group.

Parents' opinions about how much their child's school encourages or discourages walking and biking to/from school

Level of support	Number of children
Strongly Encourages	0
Encourages	3
Neither	5
Discourages	0
Strongly Discourages	0

Parents' opinions about how much fun walking and biking to/from school is for their child

Level of fun	Number of children
Very Fun	0
Fun	4
Neutral	2
Boring	2
Very Boring	0

Parents' opinions about how healthy walking and biking to/from school is for their child

How healthy	Number of children
Very Healthy	4
Healthy	3
Neutral	1
Unhealthy	0
Very Unhealthy	0

### Comments Section

SurveyID	Comment
1493368	He has a medical issue w/ his feet bilateral club feet and biking is good for his feet and it's a good exercise.
1493890	There is no help or additional safety at Patterson Rd.