

# **Chipeta Elementary School Walking and Biking Audit**



**October 12, 2016**

## **Chipeta Elementary School Audit for Walking and Biking**

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### **Audit Team Members:**

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### **Discussion:**

The Chipeta Elementary School walking and biking audit took place on Wednesday, October 12th, for the afternoon departure from school. This was a typical Wednesday afternoon; every Wednesday the students are released two hours earlier than on the other days. At Chipeta, students leave school by bus; are picked up in front of the school, where teachers match students to cars; or leave on foot or by bike, filtering into the surrounding neighborhood, either with or without adults.

During the audit, team members were stationed at the following locations:

- 9th and Gunnison
- 9th and Chipeta
- 10th and Gunnison
- 10th and Chipeta
- Bus zone
- Pick-up/drop-off zone in front of the school



*Figure 1: Waiting cars block bus zone exit.*

Chipeta Elementary School has about 417 students, and about 87% of them qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch. The single city block of Chipeta Elementary School is bounded by city streets. No annual count of student transportation is done, and students who live within walking distance are not encouraged to walk to school. However, the principal says that the school does present itself as a pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly school. Chipeta gives away one bicycle per month. The principal points out that this hasn't led

to a lot of bike commuting. A bike was awarded just as the audit was getting started on this day.

Chipeta Elementary does not have a Traffic Safety Team. Principal Jayme Kyle's primary concerns are the intersections at 10th and Chipeta and at 10th and Gunnison.

Chipeta's Family Center Coordinator Phyllis Galvan is concerned about the safety of the kids who walk 1.5 to 1.8 miles home, crossing 12th, and sometimes passing behind Hastings, to get home to Garden Village. Safety in the immediate vicinity of the school was the focus of this audit. However, because students can live just under two miles away from school and not qualify for bussing, some students walk a long ways to and/or



*Figure 2: Crossing guard stationed at 10th & Chipeta.*

from school, and the safety of the many other streets along their way is also important to safeguarding the students. The Family Center Coordinator at Chipeta would be an important resource for implementing a walking and biking program that promotes equity for Chipeta's many low-income students.

Chipeta Elementary School, East Middle School, and Washington Park (just east of East Middle School and north of Chipeta) form an "L" that occupies three city blocks. Because they are adjacent, it is unclear which schools are served by the flashing school zone beacons on Gunnison.

However, whether they serve the middle school or the elementary school, the location of the beacons needs to be examined. One

is right across from the East Middle School entrance, not 300 feet away from its crosswalk. The other is directly north of Chipeta Elementary, so the school zone doesn't even encompass the elementary school entirely.

The school's only bike rack is positioned well, and there were ample empty spots on this fall day with fine weather. In 31 bike rack spots, only three bikes and one scooter were observed. However, 31 bike spots for about 417 students falls well below the standard of one spot per five students. To meet this ratio, Chipeta Elementary should have about 83 spots. As the students left the school, the team saw no helmets in use. This is an area for education.

Chipeta is well served by bike lanes on Gunnison and on 10th St. However, no more than a painted white line separates cyclists from busy traffic, and riding in these bike lanes may not be suitable for elementary students. Nevertheless, Chipeta is a prime candidate for promoting healthy transportation to school. Not only is it surrounded by the neighborhood that it serves, but many students live close, the sidewalk system is complete, and many of the roads in the grid surrounding the school have slower and lighter traffic, making them appropriate for cycling. The PE teacher could use the bike fleet, to teach the bike safety unit, and host a bike rodeo, in order to promote such healthy transportation.

There are four crossing guards helping at Chipeta Elementary, who are paid by the school district, according to the principal. On this day, there were two crossing guards at 10th and Chipeta, one at 10th and Gunnison, and one at 9th and Gunnison, though the one at 9th and Gunnison didn't arrive until after some kids had crossed. It was observed that teachers need additional training, and better safety vests. Crossing guard training is available through the District Safety office in coordination with the City of Grand Junction Transportation Engineering and Police Department.

Chipeta Elementary School's drop-off/pick-up procedure runs smoothly, though there is some traffic congestion from cars waiting to pick up students. Many parents use the pick-up/drop-off zone, though it fills up quickly, and drivers wait in places that become problematic. Some parents park in the parking lot or in adjacent streets and then walk to pick up their kids. Despite the signs saying parents should stay in their cars while waiting, many get out and socialize, which actually builds community and causes few problems if their cars are in the pick-up/drop-off zone and the children have not yet been dismissed. There are no signs asking drivers to turn off their engines in the interest of air quality as they wait. Chipeta should consider installing "No Idle Zone" signs. See Best Practices for more information.

The three buses line up on 10th Street facing south, east of the school. Teachers have good control of this area, students appear to know just what to do, and the process is orderly. The only problems observed are in the road, when the bus needs to cross the

bike lane, and is at times blocked by cars waiting to enter the pick-up/drop-off zone that is two half-blocks away.

### 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:

- School Zone:
  - The posted speed limit in the school zone on Gunnison is 20 mph and the school zone is appropriately signed.
  - On Chipeta Ave., there are no school zone speed limit signs, but there are bright yellow-green signs warning of a school ahead.
  - A crossing guard, who is a staff member, suggested installing a flashing beacon east of 10th & Gunnison. Currently, there is a flashing beacon due north of Chipeta Elementary on Gunnison between 9th and 10th Sts.
- Bicycling:
  - Parked cars and waiting cars obstruct the visibility of bicycle lanes.
  - Buses have to cross the bike lane on 10th St. to pull in and out of bus zone.
  - The single bike rack has 31 spots; there were 3 bikes and 1 scooter on this day.
  - 78 walkers and bikers passed through the 10th & Chipeta Ave. intersection.
- Crossing Guards:
  - Crossing guard at 9th and Gunnison did not have a vest on, did not use proper crossing guard techniques and rules.
  - Crossing guard at 10th and Gunnison did not use proper crossing guard techniques and rules.
  - No crossing guard at 9th & Chipeta; 2 crossing guards at 10th & Chipeta.
- Crosswalks:



*Figure 3: Installation of a “No Idle Zone” sign below these might help with air pollution at the end of the school day, as parents wait for 30 minutes or more, running their engines.*

- “No Parking” sign needed for 9th St. south of Gunnison approaching stop sign.
- Painted crosswalks provide for 3 crossings per Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) at all 4 intersections except 10th & Gunnison, where there are only 2.
- Kids do a good job using crosswalks and obeying the crossing guards.
- Some pedestrians crossed Chipeta in the middle of the block in front of the school.
- Permanent fencing along the pick-up/drop-off zone on Chipeta discourages crossing in the middle of the block.
- Accessible curb ramps not compliant with ADA.
- A parent reported concern about the crossing at 10th and Grand Ave. Here there is no crosswalk. The flashing school beacon just to the west of this intersection is probably for Strive.



*Figure 4: The existing school zones on Gunnison and Grand have been in place for decades and serve both Chipeta and East Middle School. An evaluation of the location of the flashers should be conducted..*

#### Drop-off/pick-up area in front of the school:

- First cars arrived at 1:20 p.m. to wait for 1:50 dismissal.
- By 1:40 p.m., the pick-up/drop-off zone was full, and cars were already waiting outside of the zone.
- Overflow parking/standing blocks bike lane and bus zone
- Overflow parking is in No Parking zone in front of school, in front of fire hydrant, at corner pointing south on 10th at 10th & Chipeta Ave.
- Zone is detached from road, protects students waiting with a continuous raised curb and red line that they are to stay behind.
- Zone appears clean.
- Ramps are ADA compliant.
- Signs are clear and posted in good locations.
- Process seems well-organized.
- Pick-up zone spills out onto Chipeta Ave., and 10th St.
- There is some congestion.
- Drivers leave engines running. At 1:40, 5 of the 12 waiting cars had idling engines.
- Cars park in front of ADA access ramp.
- Space in the drop-off/pick-up zone accommodates 10 cars.
- School staff member is there to help, but is not identifiable to adults picking up students.
- Many adults walk up to the school after parking on a nearby street or in the school's parking lot.
- One child ran down the wrong side of the red line after his/her car.

#### Parking lot:

- Some parents park in the lot.
- There are no adults supervising the parking lot to secure the safety of students who walk through the parking lot to find their cars.

#### Bus zone:

- Students come out of side door to bus loading area.
- 4 teachers on duty.
- Waiting students are protected by a raised curb.
- 3 buses.
- Kids very well trained.
- Cars park along left of buses when the pick-up zone backed-up. At times, they are even stacked up so the buses can't get in.

## 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	Parents and kids may not grasp the benefits of healthy transportation to school.	Initiate a program to encourage walking and biking for health and independence. Walking and Wheeling Wednesdays is an effective weekly part of such a program.	School administration; PE teacher; Health Assistant
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
9th St. south of Gunnison approaching stop sign	Parking here hinders visibility of pedestrians at intersection.	Install a "No Parking" sign.	City of Grand Junction
Crossing guards	Crossing guards did not all have proper vests, were not all following proper crossing guard techniques, and were not at all four intersections.	Require training for all crossing guards. Crossing guard training is available through the District Safety office in coordination with the City of Grand Junction Transportation Engineering and Police Department.	School administration
10th St. between Gunnison and Chipeta	Drivers block the bus zone and the bike lane as they wait in their cars to enter the drop-off/pick-up zone.	Educate families about where they can wait in their cars.	School administration
Chipeta Ave. in front of the school	Cars park in No Parking Zone in front of the school, and drivers leave their cars.	Educate families about staying in cars with engines off.	School administration

9th St. between Gunnison and Chipeta	Vehicles park on grass between roadway curb and detached sidewalk.	Engage parking enforcement.	School administration; Grand Junction Police Department
Pick-up/drop-off zone	Some kids run along sidewalk in pick-up/drop-off zone, at times too close to cars.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have teachers who match students to cars wear safety vests so they can be identified by drivers and students as helpers.</li> <li>2. Empower teachers to maintain order in this line.</li> </ol>	School administration
Pick-up/drop-off zone	Waiting vehicles run engines, contributing to air pollution.	Install signs and enforce a "No Idle Zone". See Best Practices for more information.	School administration
Pick-up/drop-off zone - overflow	Waiting vehicles obstruct visibility in No Parking zone, block fire hydrant, and block stop sign at 10th and Chipeta.	Formulate a plan and engage the school community's cooperation for safety.	School administration
10th & Gunnison	Crosswalks painted only on south and west crossings. There should be 3 per Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).	Conduct a traffic study to evaluate which crossing should be painted -- north or west.	City of Grand Junction
School zone	Several surrounding streets are minor arterials, and traffic can be fast and heavy.	Conduct a study to evaluate school zone signage. Study could include adjacent East Middle School.	City of Grand Junction
General	Handicap accessible curb ramps not compliant with ADA.	Evaluate and update as needed.	City of Grand Junction
9th & Grand Ave.	No crosswalk across busy street.	Conduct traffic study to allow passage of pedestrians and cyclists across Grand. (Pedestrians and cyclists could use crosswalk at 9th and Grand,	City of Grand Junction

		but there is no signal, and no stop sign.)	
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## 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

## Chipeta Elementary School Walk Route Map Summary

	1-Mile Radius ~779 street crossings		2-Mile Radius ~966 street crossings	
	Length	Percent	Length	Percent
<b>Least Favored - 4</b>	1.1	2%	5.8	6%
<b>Not Favored - 3</b>	6.6	11%	12.5	14%
<b>Favored - 2</b>	11.1	18%	24.4	26%
<b>Most Favored - 1</b>	43.8	70%	49.8	54%
	40.7	100%	92.5	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.



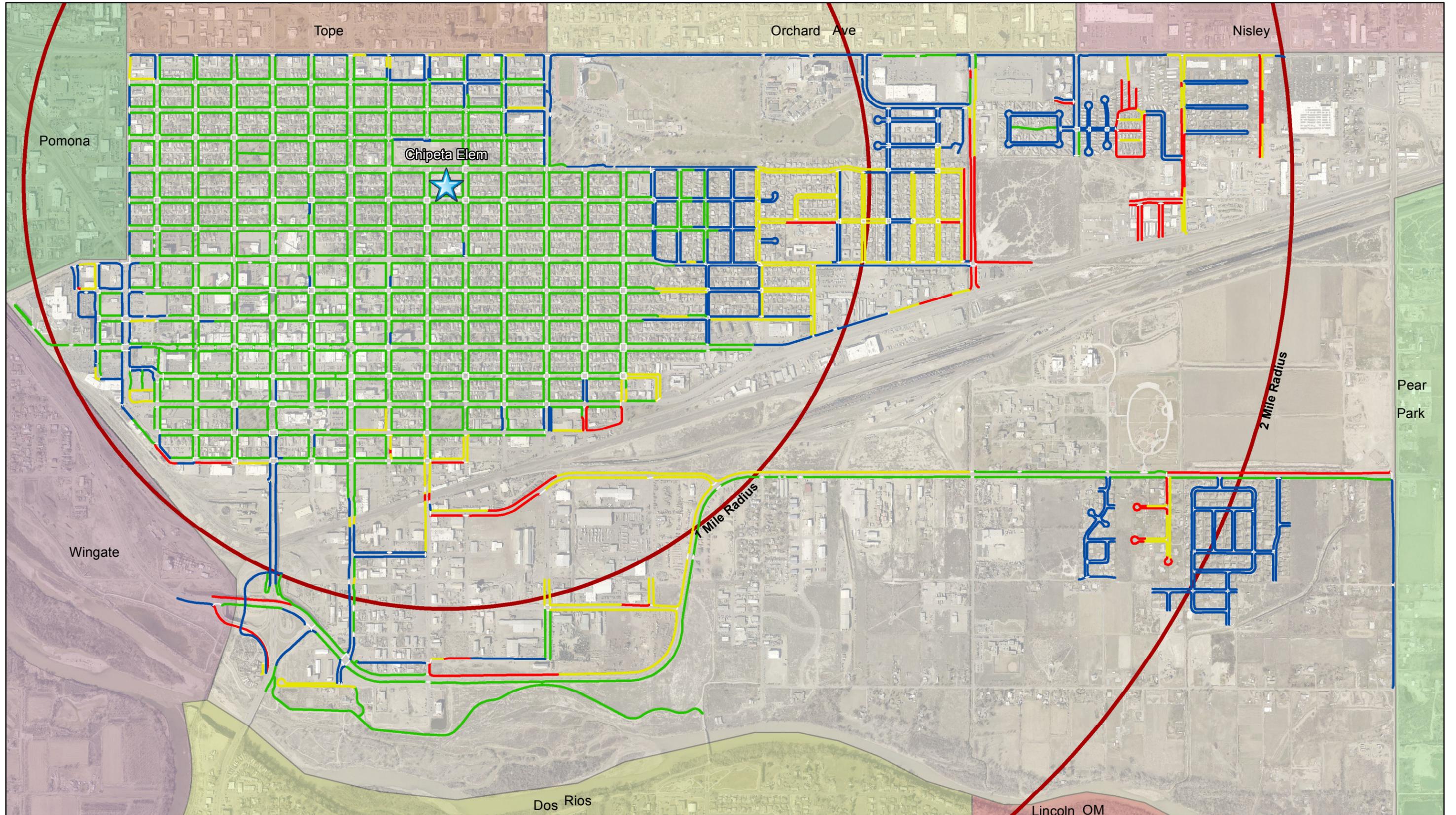
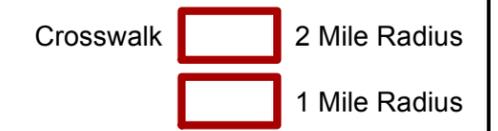
#### RED

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 - Chipeta Elementary Path Ratings within 1 & 2 Mile Radii

## Legend

- Most favored
- Not favored
- Favored
- Least favored



# Classroom Tallies

# Student Travel Tally Report: One School in One Data Collection Period

**School Name:** Chipeta Elementary

**Set ID:** 22438

**School Group:** Grand Junction Safe Routes to School

**Month and Year Collected:** October 2016

**School Enrollment:** 0

**Date Report Generated:** 01/03/2017

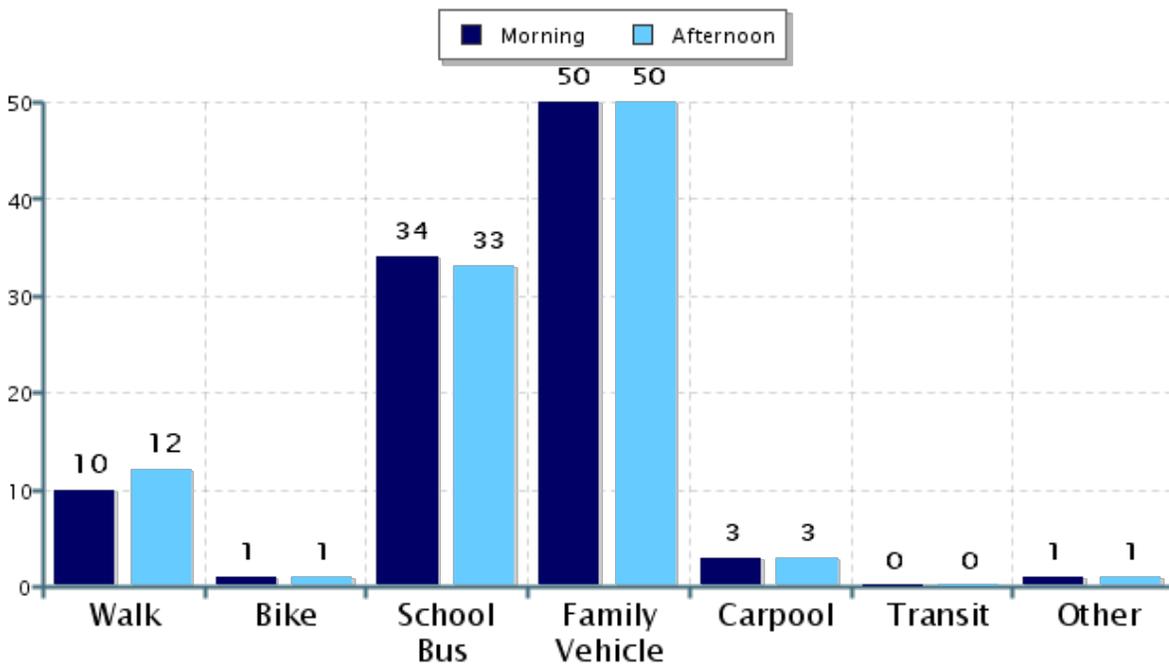
**% of Students reached by SRTS activities:**

**Tags:**

**Number of Classrooms  
Included in Report:** 4

This report contains information from your school's classrooms about students' trip to and from school. The data used in this report were collected using the in-class Student Travel Tally questionnaire from the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

## Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison



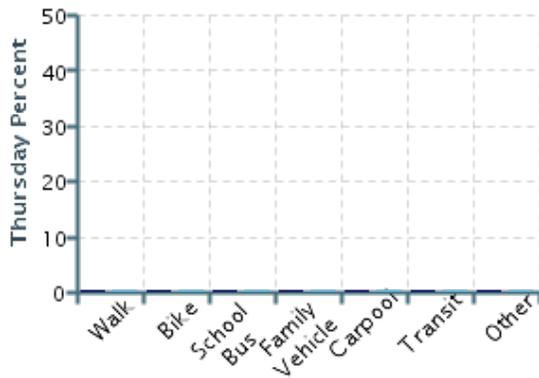
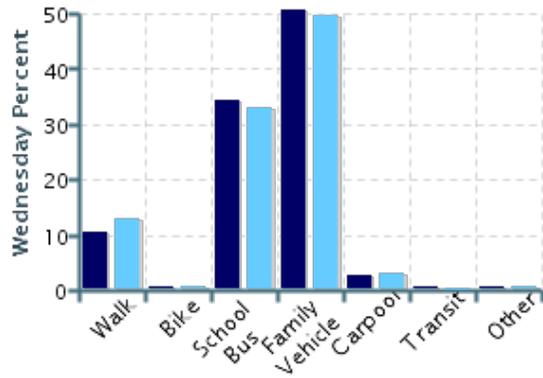
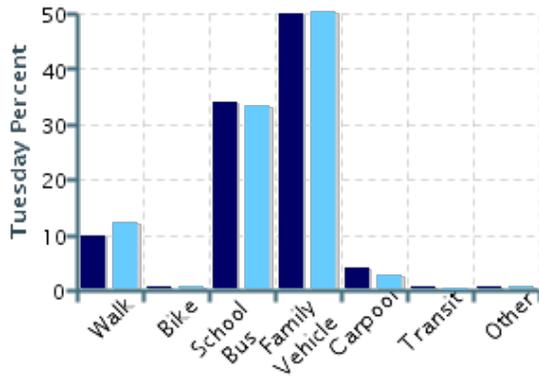
## Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	527	10%	0.8%	34%	50%	3%	0.4%	0.8%
Afternoon	521	12%	0.8%	33%	50%	3%	0%	0.8%

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

## Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison by Day

■ Morning      ■ Afternoon

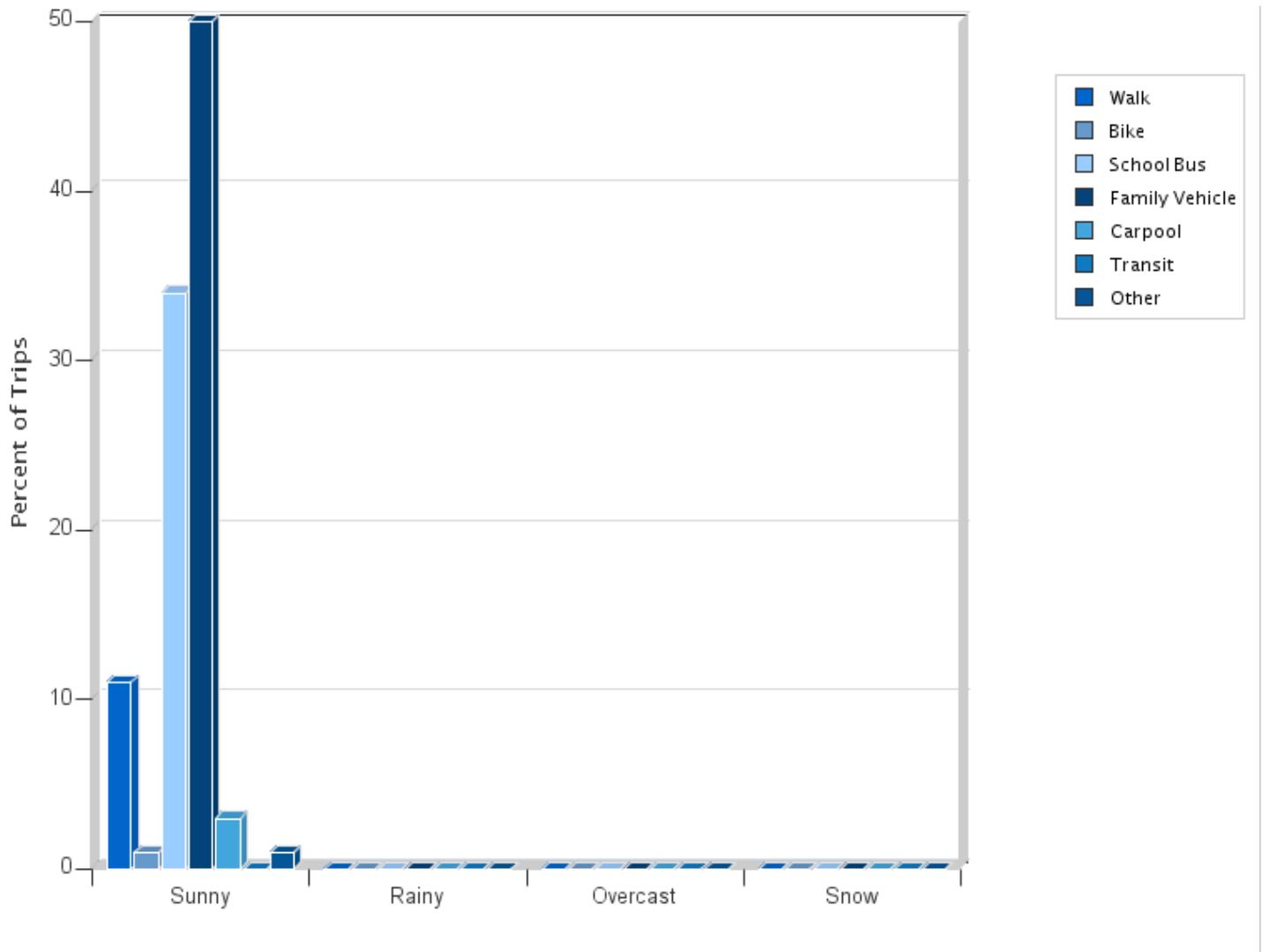


## Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison by Day

	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Tuesday AM	264	10%	0.8%	34%	50%	4%	0.4%	0.8%
Tuesday PM	263	12%	0.8%	33%	50%	3%	0%	0.8%
Wednesday AM	263	11%	0.8%	34%	51%	3%	0.4%	0.8%
Wednesday PM	258	13%	0.8%	33%	50%	3%	0%	0.8%
Thursday AM		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Thursday PM		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

## Travel Mode by Weather Conditions



## Travel Mode by Weather Condition

Weather Condition	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Sunny	1048	11%	0.8%	34%	50%	3%	0.2%	0.8%
Rainy	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Overcast	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Snow	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.