



City of Palo Alto

City Council Staff Report

(ID # 6786)

Report Type: Study Session

Meeting Date: 5/2/2016

Summary Title: Safe Routes to School 10-year Anniversary Update

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From: City Manager

Lead Department: Planning and Community Environment

Recommendation

Staff recommends that Council receive and review the enclosed ten-year anniversary update for the Safe Routes to School Partnership and provide input on the identified ongoing goals for the program.

Executive Summary

Since the City Council endorsed the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) National Partnership Consensus Statement in February 2006, the local Safe Routes to School partnership between the City, Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD), and the Palo Alto Council of PTAs (PTAC) has encouraged thousands of school children to walk, bike, carpool, and take transit to school. This report documents the progress of the Safe Routes partnership program since its inception and gives a status report on the Vehicle Emissions Reductions Based at Schools (VERBS) grant activities that have been the focus of the program since 2012. In addition, the report provides a summary of potential areas of focus of the partnership for the next 18-month to three-year time horizon, and requests Council input on these goals and projects.

Background

Some form of bicycle safety for children has been taught to Palo Alto students since the 1950s, when Palo Alto Police officers conducted bike rodeos at local schools. A bike rodeo is an event where children physically participate in bike-riding activities which mimic real-life traffic situations that may occur while riding to and from school; students learn these skills from licensed instructors and volunteers and are able to practice using them in a protected environment. Through the 1970s, most students walked, biked, or took the bus to school, and schools were not designed to accommodate large numbers of children being driven to school. However, as school populations declined through the 1970s, the closure of fourteen schools led to longer school commutes for many students. District budget constraints also contributed to a series of reductions in school bus service. By 1993, Palo Alto saw sharp declines in children walking and biking to school and growing vehicle congestion near schools because many more

parents were dropping off and picking up their students by car every day. In order to address the resulting concerns about school closures and cuts in busing, the City/School Traffic Safety Committee formed in the late 1970s, which included representatives from the City, PAUSD and the PTA. One of its early recommendations was that additional adult crossing guards be established to assist schoolchildren crossing at major intersections on routes where buses were no longer an option.

In the late 1980s, an increase in single-occupant vehicle trips to schools and a concern for safety spurred local parents to come together to more formally address road safety for school commutes. A Bicycle Education Task Force piloted bicycle safety education at a few schools, and this model grew to include all of the PAUSD elementary schools. Since 1994, committed PTA volunteers as well as City and School District staff have collaborated to reduce risk to students traveling to school and encourage families to try commute modes other than the solo family car. The encouragement piece of the program made walking and biking a schoolwide celebration. This focus was key in changing the culture away from daily driving by parents.

As school populations continued to rebound in the 1990's, the school district commissioned the first on-site engineering studies to reduce hazards for students accessing the school on foot or on bikes as well as improve circulation for drivers dropping off students. A significant number of recommended changes were implemented. The City's 1998 Comprehensive Plan incorporated the safety and comfort of children as a priority for street modifications affecting school travel routes. Major studies of school commute safety in both north and south Palo Alto provided the basis for developing a School Commute Corridors Network in 2003 with PTA advocacy and support. In October 2003, the City Council adopted a School Commute Corridors Network map in order to prioritize safety improvements and enhance land use scrutiny on roads that students use to go to and from school (CMR 377:03, Attachment A).

At the same time, in the early 2000s, a coalition of national, state and local non-profit organizations, professional groups and state, regional and local government agencies started working to address the decline in walking and biking to school. Their description of the problem and how it could be addressed was contained in the Safe Routes to School National Partnership Consensus Statement. In a sweeping effort to get more children walking and bicycling to schools across America, Congress approved \$612 million over five years (FY05-09) for a new federal Safe Routes to School program as part of the federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, which was adopted on July 29, 2005 and signed by the President on August 10, 2005.

In October 2005, the National Partnership Consensus Statement was endorsed locally by the Executive Board of the Palo Alto Council of PTAs, and in February 2006, the PAUSD School Board and the Palo Alto City Council followed suit. (CMR 140:06) (See Attachment B: National Partnership Consensus Statement). The endorsement of the National Consensus Statement by all three governing boards marked the official birth of the Palo Alto Safe Routes to School partnership. The mission of the program has been to reduce risk to students and to encourage more families to walk and bike or use alternatives to driving more often.

Staff is currently working to integrate School Commute Corridors Network map with the newer “Walk and Roll” maps, which were developed between 2012 and 2015 with funding from a Vehicle Emissions Reduction Based on Schools (VERBS) grant from VTA. The Walk and Roll maps highlight preferred routes for students to use on the journey between school and home, and a separate set of plans suggest current and future infrastructure improvements to optimize the safety and usability of these routes. Staff is recommending adoption of these latest maps in CMW #6875, heard this same evening.

In March 2016, representatives from PAUSD, the PTA, and city staff came together at a workshop to review the performance of the program over the last decade and to look at opportunities for improvement and further achievement. Several areas identified in the workshop are discussed later in this report, including:

- Expanding the encouragement and education program to 7th through 12th grades
- Developing programs with new partners, such as health and wellness organizations
- Updating partnership policies, and
- Improving communications, websites, and marketing

As recommended in the 2005 National Consensus Statement, the local Safe Routes to School partnership is organized around what are known as the 5 Es:

1. **Encouragement** - Using events and activities to promote walking, bicycling, carpooling, and taking the bus or shuttle.
2. **Education** - Teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong safety skills, and launching driver safety campaigns.
3. **Engineering** - Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools, reducing speeds, and establishing safer crosswalks and pathways.
4. **Enforcement** - Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure drivers obey traffic laws, and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs
5. **Evaluation** - Monitoring and researching outcomes and trends through the collection of data.

The partners meet monthly at the City/School Traffic Safety Committee meeting, where the group discusses program updates, partner activities and shares information pertaining to school commute safety. The current program activities include the following programs and partners as listed in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Safe Routes to School Program Activities, Organized by the Five E's

Activity	Description and Partners
Encouragement Activities	
Fall and Spring Walk and Roll to School Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events to encourage families to try walking, biking, carpooling, or transit Organized by PTA volunteers with PAUSD and City staff support
Middle School Back to School Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commute planning, bicycle licensing, bike check-ups, and helmet fitting Organized by PTA Safe Routes volunteers with PAUSD, City, and PAMF support
Education	
K-2 Pedestrian Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian safety training for all PAUSD K-2nd graders Organized by City staff, taught by Safe Moves contractor
3 rd Grade Bicycle Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three-lesson bicycle safety training for all PAUSD 3rd graders Organized by City staff and taught by PAUSD teachers and administrators, PAPD, PTA volunteers, Stanford Injury Prevention, Palo Alto Medical Foundation, and The Bicycle Outfitter
5 th Grade Bicycle Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicycle safety assembly for 5th graders entering middle school Taught by City staff with PAUSD support
6 th Grade Bicycle Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicycle safety assembly for 6th graders in middle school Taught by PAUSD Teachers or City Staff
Parent Class: Bringing Up Bicyclists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicycle safety education for parents with elementary-age children Organized by PTA volunteers, taught by City Staff
Middle School Bike Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicycle safety education for middle school students and parents Taught by Wheelkids Bicycle Club with support from City Staff
Family Biking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicycle safety education for families with young children Taught by Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition with grant funds
Engineering	
Safe Routes to School Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects on school routes arising from the VERBS grant analysis and from PAUSD or PTA sources Coordinated by Transportation and Public Works staff
Bicycle Boulevard Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicycle Boulevard projects that prioritize improvements for school children, pedestrians, and people on bicycles

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated by Transportation and Public Works staff
Complete Streets Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadway maintenance projects that consider all road users, including people on foot or on bicycles • Coordinated by Public Works staff with Transportation staff input
2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements identified by the community to enhance walking and bicycling • Coordinated by Transportation and Public Works staff
Enforcement	
Adult Crossing Guards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing guards for elementary and middle school students at qualifying intersections • Palo Alto Police Department
Traffic Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement of traffic laws for both drivers and bicyclists • Palo Alto Police Department
Juvenile Diversion Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Traffic School” for youth with on-bike citations • Palo Alto Police Department with support from Traffic Safe Communities Network (Santa Clara County)
Special Campaigns: Operation Safe Passage & Office of Traffic Safety Grant-funded Enforcement Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic enforcement at schools after summer and winter breaks • Special pedestrian and bicycle enforcement days • Palo Alto Police Department
Evaluation	
Elementary Commute Tallies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commute mode tallies of all PAUSD elementary students • Organized and compiled by City staff, with assistance from PAUSD teachers
Parked Bicycle Counts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counts of parked bicycles at all PAUSD schools • Organized and compiled by PTA Safe Routes Volunteers

Source: Planning and Community Environment Department, April 2016.

The Safe Routes program is results-oriented. The number of high school students who bike has grown from a low of about 300 in 2001 to about 1,700 today, a number which represents about 43% of all PAUSD high school students. [See Attachment C: Secondary Bike Count Charts] In addition, half of all PAUSD middle school students bike to school. Across all grades in the school district of 12,246 students, approximately 4,000 students ride a bicycle to get to school, while over 1,200 elementary school students walk to school. The City currently does not have data for the numbers of middle and high school students who walk or take transit to school. Therefore, a very conservative estimate is that approximately 6,000 students are not being driven to school every day. Future goals for the program include improvements in data collection so that more specific education and encouragement efforts can target certain

populations of students (e.g. middle schoolers, high schoolers).

This increase in the numbers of students walking and biking to school occurred during a period when the trend in the US is for more driving and less active transportation, and the program's results have garnered it national attention.

VERBS Grant Activities

In October 2010, the City submitted an application for funding of non-infrastructure Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program enhancements through the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Vehicle Emission Reductions Based at Schools (VERBS) program. The City was awarded a \$528,000 grant that, added to the City's \$132,000 local match fund, provided for a \$660,000 project that has significantly expanded the City's Safe Routes to School program.

Part of the grant funding was used to contract with Alta Planning + Design, Inc. (Alta) to assist in the following activities:

- a) **Walk and Roll Maps:** Developing comprehensive Walk and Roll Maps of Suggested Routes to School for each of the 17 public schools in the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) and for the south Palo Alto neighborhood served by public schools in the City of Los Altos;
- b) **School Safety Transportation Policies:** Recommending new school transportation policy guidance for elements such as reduced speed limit zones (15 to 20 MPH) near schools and establishment criteria for adult crossing guards based on data collection and industry-standard best practices;
- c) **Curriculum Updates:** Evaluating and updating the existing bicycle safety education curriculum in PAUSD schools; and
- d) **Evaluation:** Assessing the impact of the Safe Routes to School program on improving school commute safety as well as reducing peak period congestion and related greenhouse gas emissions.

An update on all of these activities has been provided below.

A. Walk and Roll Maps of Suggested Routes to School

Over the past four years, the Safe Routes to School Partnership worked with residents and PAUSD staff to develop new Walk and Roll maps that highlight the suggested routes to schools with consistent messaging and branding. An analysis of the walking and biking conditions at each school was conducted via observations, field surveys, and meetings with staff, parents, and neighbors. Parent input was solicited via meetings, a school district-wide survey, and school-specific requests for comments via email. Other factors included in the analysis at each school were intersection control, street walkability, and the *Bicycle + Pedestrian Transportation Plan*. Also noted were unsafe driver, pedestrian, and bicyclist behavior, as well as physical infrastructure needs.

On September 9, 2013, (ID# 4040), the council adopted the Walk and Roll maps for ten Palo Alto public schools: Addison, Walter Hays, Palo Verde, Ohlone, Barron Park, Briones, Escondido, Duveneck, Terman Middle, and Gunn High. Maps for the remaining schools are recommended for adoption this evening in CMR #6875. The Walk and Roll maps are supplemented with Safe Route to School plans for near-term signage or marking improvements and long-term capital projects. Many of the Safe Routes signage and striping projects have already been implemented, and several more are planned for 2016 and 2017. In addition to helping to prioritize infrastructure improvements along the school route corridors, the City will be able to use the maps internally to coordinate with other public infrastructure work and utilities services.

B. School	Safety	Transportation	Policies
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Since January 2008, California Assembly Bill (AB) 321 has allowed local jurisdictions through an ordinance or resolution to 1) extend the 25 mph speed limit in school zones from 500 feet to 1,000 feet from the school grounds and 2) reduce the speed limit to 15 or 20 mph up to 500 feet from the school grounds, under certain conditions. One of the intentions of the law is to enhance the safety of children walking and bicycling to school. If a vehicle is in a collision with a child, a slower moving collision will generally result in a less severe injury or the avoidance of a death.

The VERBS-funded contract included analysis of existing school zones to determine which roadways would be eligible for reduced speed limits under AB 321. In addition, Alta evaluated the current siting of adult crossing guards against the placement criteria established by the City of Palo Alto and the standards established by the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) 2012 Edition. The Alta analysis confirmed the validity of the Palo Alto crossing guard warrants and current placements. The Alta recommendations will be considered in concert with the future citywide speed survey recommendations which are being drafted this year.

C. Curriculum Updates

Together with City staff, Alta updated the in-class bicycle safety curriculum for the 3rd, 5th, and 6th grade bicycle safety education programs, revising teacher guides, presentation materials, videos, bike rodeo resources and parent handouts. In addition, the 6th-grade curriculum now includes the rules about riding safely without texting or wearing headphones and how to use the Walk and Roll maps to find the recommended routes to school. Another focus of this effort was to localize all the curricula to reflect infrastructure that students will encounter on their commutes. Photos of recent infrastructure improvements in Palo Alto, like green bike lanes, sharrows, and high visibility crosswalks now appear in class materials, along with photos of students participating in bike rodeos on PAUSD campuses or demonstrating safer bicycling choices on local streets.

D. Evaluation

In order to gather data about commuting habits of children and the impacts of the programs, a pre- and post- Safe Routes to School activity parent survey was required by the VERBS grant, which led to the first online Safe Routes to School parent surveys in the Palo Alto Unified School district. A sample survey from Fairmeadow Elementary is attached. (See Attachment XX: 2012 Fairmeadow Parent Survey.) Following the national model for surveying parents at schools with Safe Routes programs, City staff administered a survey with the help of PAUSD. A baseline survey was conducted in the fall of 2012, and a follow-up survey was conducted in the fall of 2014.

By evaluating survey results against classroom tallies and counts of parked bikes at each school (the usual methods used in Palo Alto), staff discovered that the online survey, while providing helpful data, ultimately garnered a biased sample of parents of children who tended to bike and walk more than average. Also, because many of the questions on the National Safe Routes to School survey template were geared towards communities where very few children walk or bike to school, parent frustration with the survey questions was a common refrain in the survey feedback. In addition, the skewed parent sample means that the population of parents who do not use alternative modes of transportation were underrepresented. Given the effort it took to edit and distribute the parent survey and the quality of the data generated, it is unlikely that staff will attempt additional parent surveys based on the national survey template but will instead pursue other avenues to improve data collection.

The VERBS grant also included \$100,000 to upgrade the City's ability to evaluate bicycle and pedestrian volumes near schools. In the fall of 2015, the City contracted with a local IoT (internet of things) landscape computing company, VIMOC, to install sensors that enable automated bicycle and pedestrian counts along school commute routes. The networked sensors have been installed and will provide year-round bike and pedestrian count data. In addition, the availability of data that shows seasonal fluctuations will help in the development of new programs to encourage walking, biking, carpooling, and the use of transit. Staff expects that information from the sensors will be available by late spring/early summer 2016.

Discussion

As a result of the community outreach process around the Walk and Roll map development, City staff have been involved in an extensive amount of follow-up and engagement with the PAUSD and PTA partners and continue to work collaboratively with representatives from the schools on additional projects. For example, in order to take advantage of time-limited Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) funds, City staff successfully acquired grants valued at approximately \$30,000 for PAUSD to improve on-campus bicycle parking at three schools. City staff also consults with PAUSD staff on potential infrastructure improvements on school property.

Exploration of new directions for the Safe Routes to School partnership was initiated with

stakeholders on March 23rd, 2016, at a workshop held at the Downtown Library. Figure 2 summarizes areas which the group identified as places which could benefit from additional resources. Future areas for expansion include policy updates, education for students in 7th through 12th grades, improved evaluation methods, and outreach to include more health-related partners.

Figure 2: SRTS Growth Areas – Suggested for Further Discussion and Implementation by the Partnership as Resources Permit

Identified Issue/Task	Description
Web Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confirm the purpose and content for the City and PTA SRTS websites- determine how best to reach potential volunteers and additional partners - Update content on the City website so that it has downloadable resources and collateral
PTA Volunteer Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage new and existing parents with SRTS message of health, safety, and community benefits - Support PTAC in developing a sustainable Safe Routes leadership recruitment model
Infrastructure Review Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff to develop a rolling process to evaluate each PAUSD site, identifying issues that affect school commutes and developing potential solutions with input from PTA and PAUSD. Engage principals and key parent stakeholders at each school.
Comprehensive Plan Policy Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff to identify new or modified policies and programs to support the Safe Routes to School mission and TDM goals for Palo Alto
Middle School Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine what additional education is needed and how it could be delivered
High School Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently there is no high school education. Determine what additional education is needed and how it could be delivered
Parent/Adult Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since children learn from their parents, determine what additional education is needed and how it could be delivered
General Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work to improve the habits of drivers so that they are more aware and sharing the road appropriately, not texting while driving; etc.
Integration with other Transportation Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further integrate SRTS with other transportation programs: Transit promotion with City Shuttle and VTA partners, carpool promotion via Scoop program, Transportation Management Association (TMA) information

Updated Policy Statements	- Ensure all SRTS partners have the right policies in the right places. Consider updating SRTS mission statement and including the “Healthy Community” approach. Engage more health and wellness partners to distribute SRTS messages and develop allies to decrease barriers to active transportation.
City Staff Resources	- Determine if the city has adequate staff resources to support the program, given additional marketing and curriculum needs
Overall Communication & Marketing	- Determine which additional resources are required for improved communications, marketing, and branding for the program so that it can continue to be a national model

Source: Planning and Community Environment Department, April 2016.

Planning for the future of the Safe Routes to School program continues. Future tasks include refining the items listed in Figure 2, prioritizing areas for future growth, and determining what kinds of additional resources are needed. Council input on these or other growth areas is requested and will be included in partnership discussions about the future direction of the program.

Policy Implications

This program is consistent with key transportation goals in the City’s Comprehensive Plan, including giving priority to facilities, services, and programs that encourage and promote walking and bicycling, and to providing a high level of safety for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists on Palo Alto streets. Specific policies and programs include:

- Policy T-14: Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to and between local destinations, including public facilities, schools, parks, open space, employment districts, shopping centers, and multi-modal transit stations.
- Policy T-39: To the extent allowed by law, continue to make safety the first priority of citywide transportation planning.
- Policy T-40: Continue to prioritize the safety and comfort of children on school travel routes. This includes program T-45, which calls for providing adult crossing guards at school crossings that meet adopted criteria, and T-46, which encourages the City-sponsored bicycle education programs in the public schools.

Timeline

The Safe Routes to School partnership supports an ongoing, year-round program which includes both engineering and programmatic elements. While enforcement and engineering continue year-round, school-based education, encouragement, and evaluation efforts generally occur in the fall and spring. A timeline of recently completed and upcoming infrastructure projects that reduce risk to students is included in Figure 3. These projects are financed

through various means, including the Street Maintenance Program, the Bicycle + Pedestrian Transportation Plan Implementation Program, and the Safe Routes to School Program and appear in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Figure 3: SRTS Infrastructure Project Timeline

Project	School Routes to be Improved	Construction Start
Churchill Ave Enhanced Bikeway, Phase 0	Palo Alto HS	Completed April 2016
Cowper/Coleridge High Visibility Crosswalk	Walter Hays	Completed April 2016
Cowper/Coleridge Traffic Circle Trial	Walter Hays	Spring 2016
Georgia Ave High Visibility Crosswalk and Bulb-out	Terman MS Gunn HS	Summer 2016
Park Blvd Early Implementation, Stanford Ave to Cambridge Ave	Jordan MS Palo Alto HS	Summer 2016
North California Ave 24-hour Bicycle Lanes	Jordan MS Palo Alto HS	Summer 2016
Garland Drive Sharrows	Jordan MS	Summer 2016
Middlefield Road Enhanced Bikeway Connection and Sidewalk Widening	Jordan MS Palo Alto HS	Summer 2016
East Meadow Drive Enhanced Bikeway	Fairmeadow Hoover JLS MS Gunn HS	Summer 2016
Overcrossing/Undercrossing Improvements	Jordan MS Palo Alto HS	Fall 2016
Bryant Street Bicycle Boulevard Extension	Fairmeadow Hoover JLS MS Gunn HS	2017
Maybell Avenue Bicycle Boulevard	Briones Terman MS Gunn HS	2017
Park Blvd/Wilkie Way Bicycle Boulevard	Barron Park Briones Terman MS Gunn HS	2017
Amarillo Ave-Moreno Ave Bicycle Boulevard	El Carmelo Ohlone Palo Verde	2017
Bryant Street Bicycle Boulevard Upgrade	Addison El Carmelo JLS MS Jordan MS	2017

	Palo Alto HS Gunn HS	
Louis Road-Montrose Ave Bicycle Boulevard	Fairmeadow JLS MS Gunn HS	2017
Ross Road Bicycle Boulevard	El Carmelo Ohone Palo Verde Jordan MS Gunn HS Palo Alto HS	2017

Source: Planning and Community Environment Department, April 2016.

Resources

The Transportation division has requested an additional 0.5 FTE position to an existing 0.5 FTE position that will support the Safe Routes program in the FY17 budget, which will bring the total number of staff dedicated to the Safe Routes program to 1.5 FTE. The Safe Routes to School CIP is currently recommended to be funded at \$150,000 per year for five years (FY2017 to FY2021) for strategic investments in school route safety infrastructure, such as crosswalks, pedestrian flashing beacons, improved signage, and street markings.

Environmental Review

This agenda item is for the purpose of obtaining City Council input and is not a “project” requiring review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Attachments:

- Attachment A: City Council Report of October 23, 2003 - CMR 377:03 (PDF)
- Attachment B: National Partnership Consensus Statement (PDF)
- Attachment C: Secondary Bike Count Charts (PDF)
- Attachment D: 2012 Fairmeadow Parent Survey (PDF)

TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

**DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT**

DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2003

CMR:377:03

**SUBJECT: PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION ON THE PROPOSED SCHOOL COMMUTE
CORRIDORS NETWORK**

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Transportation Commission and staff recommend that City Council officially adopt the following:

1. The proposed Palo School Commute Corridors Network (Attachment A)
2. Principles of Designation (Attachment B)
3. Applications of Designation (Attachment B)
4. Criteria for Inclusion (Attachment B)

BACKGROUND

The School Commute Corridors Network designates a sub-set of Palo Alto's street system for special consideration in infrastructure improvement and travel safety enhancement. The network comprises a comprehensive and continuous system of travel routes linking residential neighborhoods to all public school sites in Palo Alto. It includes residential collector and arterial streets, existing and proposed (in the draft Palo Alto Bicycle Master Plan) bicycle boulevards, off-road paths, and such residential local streets as desirable to ensure continuity of routes and direct access to each school site.

The purpose of the School Commute Corridors Network is to give priority for pedestrian and bicycle facilities improvements, sidewalk replacement, street re-paving, and other enhancements to travel safety for the most important school commute routes. It is important to note that not all of the street segments on the proposed School Commute Corridors Network are at present optimal for school commuting. Many have intersections, for example, that are currently more challenging than may be desirable for some school age commuters. Others have prevailing traffic speeds that are too high for comfortable cycling or pedestrian crossing. Nevertheless, inclusion of such streets in a comprehensive school commute network signifies the intent to create a future continuous, comprehensive network

of school commute routes accessible to and comfortable for a broad spectrum of school children and their parents and other caregivers.

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On May 14, the Planning and Transportation Commission reviewed and unanimously recommended to Council the proposed Palo School Commute Corridors Network, Principles of Designation, Applications of Designation, and Criteria for Inclusion. The Commissioners recommended a clarification that preference be given to segments of the School Commute Corridors Network for consideration of undercrossings or overcrossings pertaining to bicycle and pedestrian use only, rather than for motor vehicles.

RESOURCE IMPACTS

The School Commute Corridors Network would be implemented solely within existing resources allocated for pedestrian and bikeway facilities maintenance and improvements, augmented as appropriate and feasible by external funding from federal, state, and regional transportation grant programs and prospective citywide traffic impact fee proceeds. Within these resource constraints, funds will be allocated for both capital improvements and on-going maintenance required of any transportation facility. It is very important to note that the main resource implication of this proposal is in potential re-prioritization of such as already on-going activities, including sidewalk replacement, street resurfacing and crosswalk enhancement projects in the Infrastructure Management Plan. School commute corridors would be given priority, where it is feasible to do so, for grant funding applications, improvements to crosswalks, bicycle facilities, sidewalks, and street resurfacing.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

These recommendations support and conform to Comprehensive Plan goal T-6: A High Level of Safety for Motorists, Pedestrians, and Bicyclists on Palo Alto Streets” and Policies T-40: Continue to prioritize the safety and comfort of school children in street modification projects that affect school travel routes”, and T-28: Make effective use of the traffic-carrying ability of Palo Alto’s major street network without compromising the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists also using this network.” Council adoption the School Commute Corridors Network comprises a statement of policy for the City of Palo Alto that principal school commute routes be given priority for public investment purposes and be accorded enhanced review as regards proposals for new commercial driveways and other street changes.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. The proposed Palo School Commute Corridors Network
- B. Principles and Applications of Designation, and Criteria for Inclusion
- C. May 8, 2003 Planning and Transportation Commission Report
- D. Minutes of May 8, 2003 Planning and Transportation Commission meeting

PREPARED BY:

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Community Environment

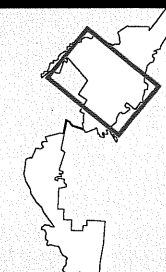
CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:

EMILY HARRISON
Assistant City Manager

cc: Planning and Transportation Commission
School Commute Corridors Advisory Panel



The City of
Palo Alto

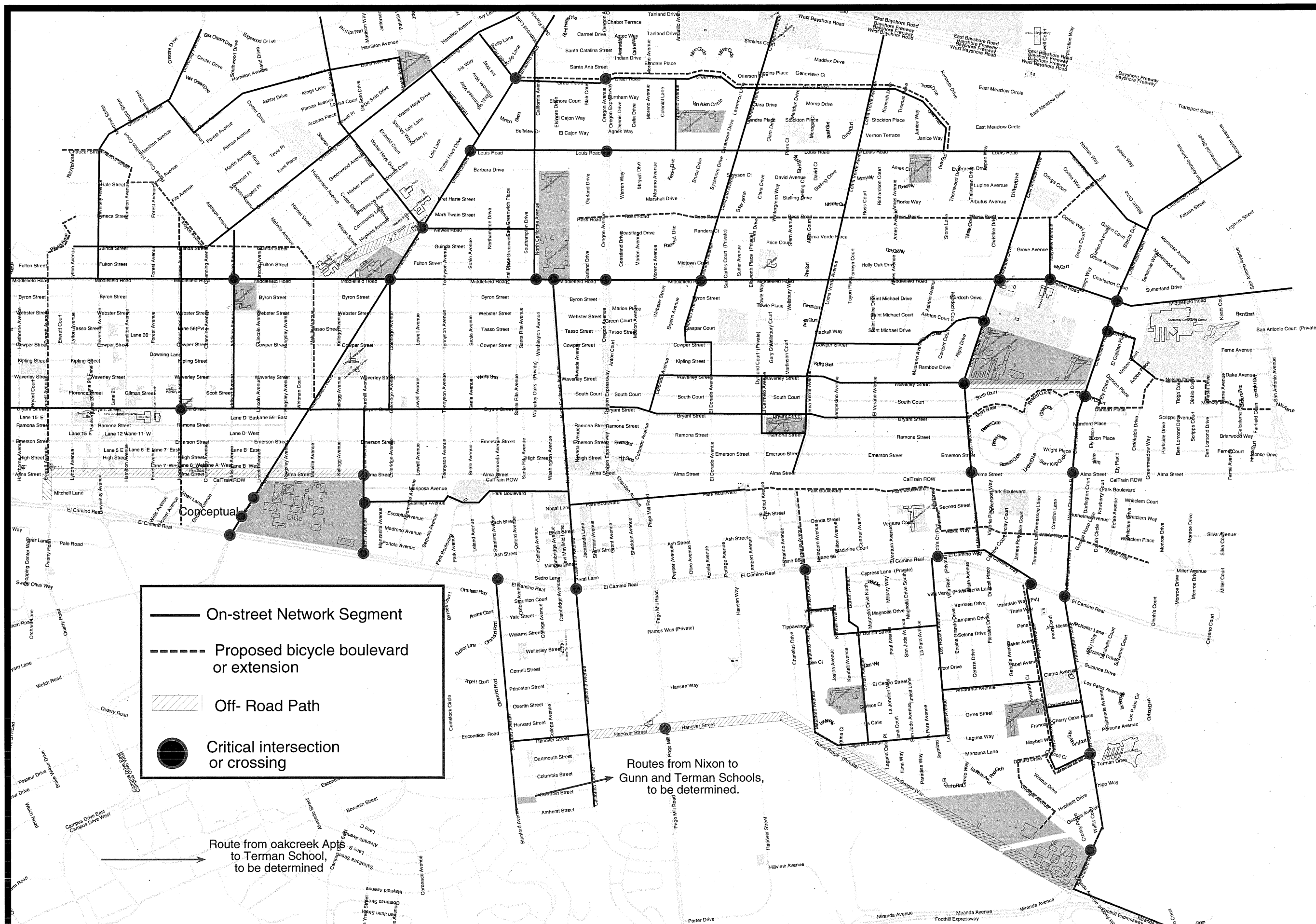


School Commute Corridors Network

This map is a product of the
City of Palo Alto GIS



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**Safe Routes to School National Partnership Consensus Statement
(as endorsed by the City/School Committee on January 25, 2006)**

We believe it is time for a change.

The Problem

In the last 30 years we have seen a loss of mobility among our nation's children that has severely impacted their personal health and their ability to explore their neighborhoods, even by walking or biking to school.

Consider these facts:

- Within the span of a single generation, the number of children walking and bicycling to school has dramatically declined. In 1969, approximately 50% of children walked or biked to school, and 87% of children living within one mile of school did. Today, fewer than 15% of school children walk or bike to school. (CDC)
- There are more than three times as many overweight children today as there were 25 years ago. (CDC, NHANES III)
- As much as 20 to 30% of morning rush hour traffic can be parents driving children to schools. (Data from local communities)

The problems are all related to the fact that many communities lack basic infrastructure - sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, pathways, and crosswalks-and are no longer designed to encourage or allow children to walk and bicycle safely. Concerns about traffic, crime, and other obstacles keep children strapped in the back seat of cars which further adds to the traffic on the road and pollution in the air.

The Solution

Communities around the country are organizing Safe Routes to School programs, which have a common goal to make it safe, convenient, and fun for children to walk and bicycle to and from school like their parents did. While each program is unique, the programs have common objectives to:

- Encourage students, families, and school staff to be physically active by walking and bicycling more often.
- Make streets, sidewalks, pathways, trails, and crosswalks safe, convenient, and attractive for walking and bicycling to school.
- Ensure that streets around schools have an adequate number of safe places to cross and that there is safe and convenient access into the school building from adjacent sidewalks.
- Keep driving speeds slow near schools, on school routes, and at school crossings.
- Enforce all traffic laws near schools, on school routes, and in other areas of high pedestrian and bicycle activity.
- Locate schools within walking and bicycling distance of as many students as possible.
- Reduce the amount of traffic around schools

- Use trails, pathways, and non-motorized corridors as travel routes to schools.
- Provide secure bicycle parking at schools.
- Teach traffic safety skill routinely in school.

Each community is unique, so every Safe Routes to School program must respond differently. Successful programs include some combination or all of the following approaches to improve conditions for safe walking and bicycling:

- **Encouragement** - Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.
- **Education** - Teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong safety skills, and launching driver safety campaigns.
- **Engineering** - Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools, reducing speeds, and establishing safer crosswalks and pathways.
- **Enforcement** - Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure drivers obey traffic laws, and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs
- **Evaluation** - Monitoring and researching outcomes and trends through the collection of data.

The Partnership

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership is comprised of multiple constituencies at the local, state, and national levels. It includes:

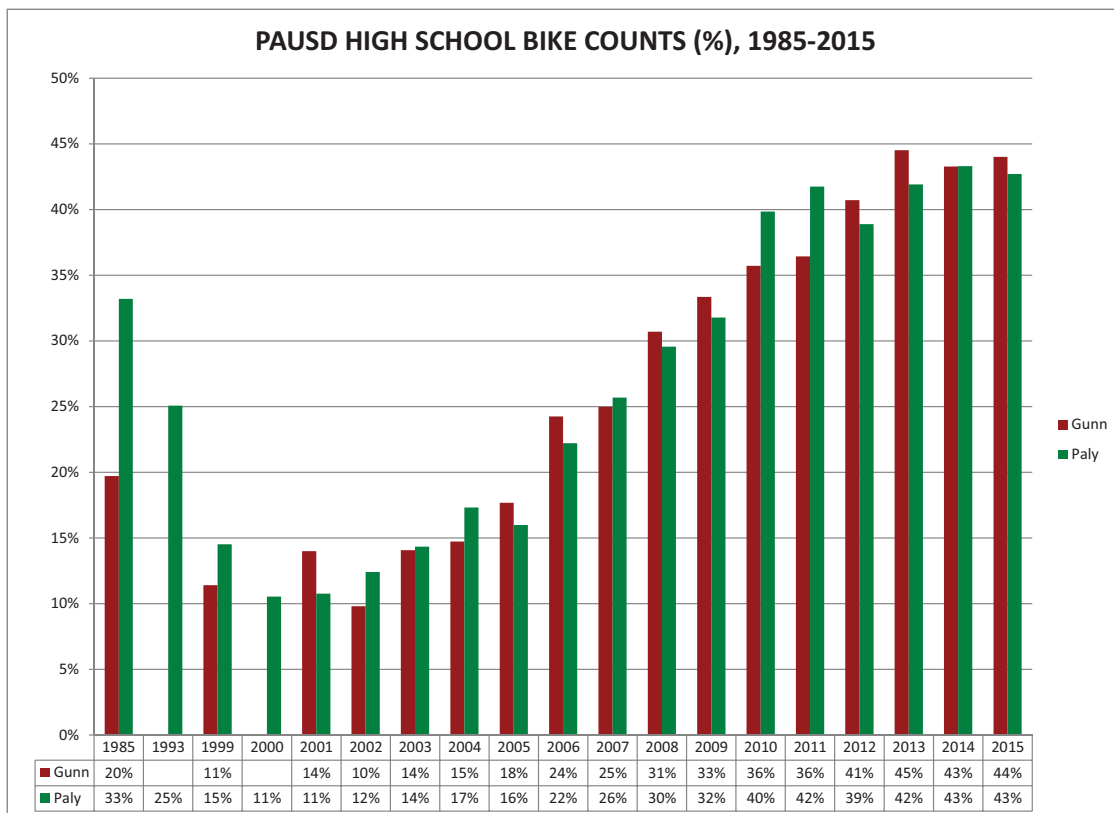
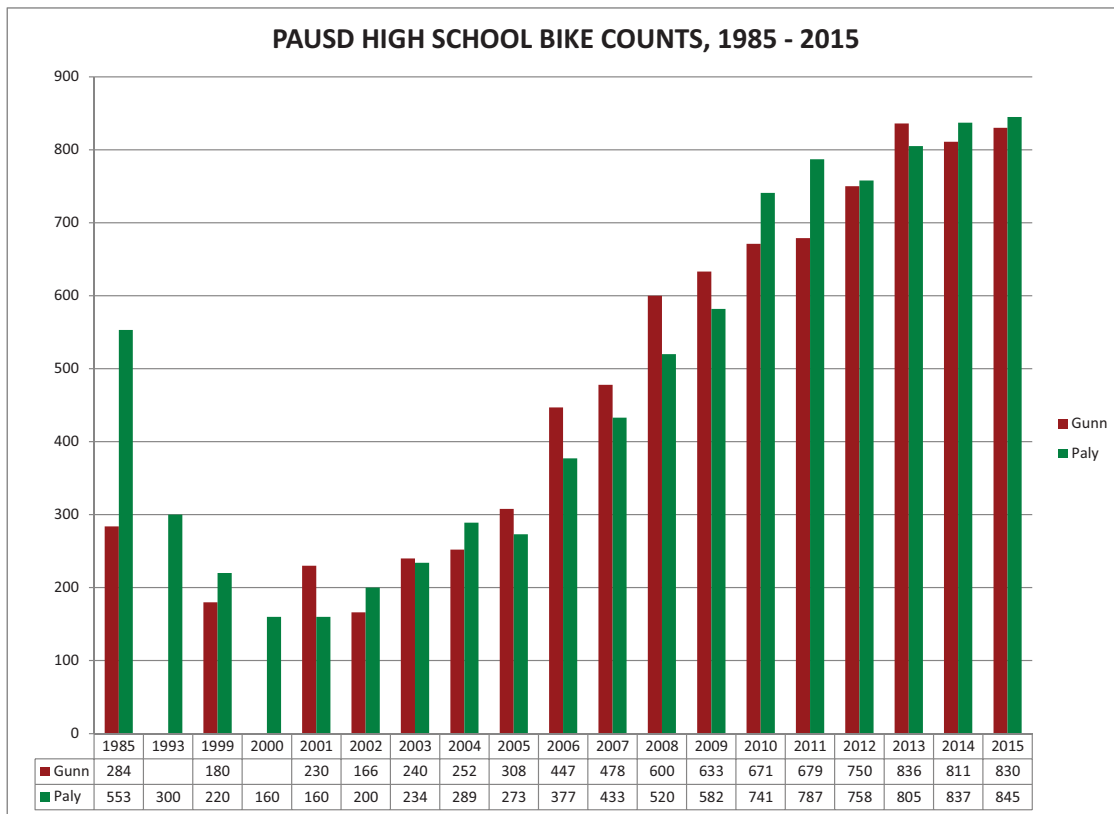
- Parents
- Students
- Educators
- Government officials
- Business leaders
- Community groups
- Advocates for bicycling and walking
- Law enforcement officers
- Transportation, urban planning, engineering, and health professionals
- Health, conservation, and safety advocates

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership works to support the development and implementation of programs by:

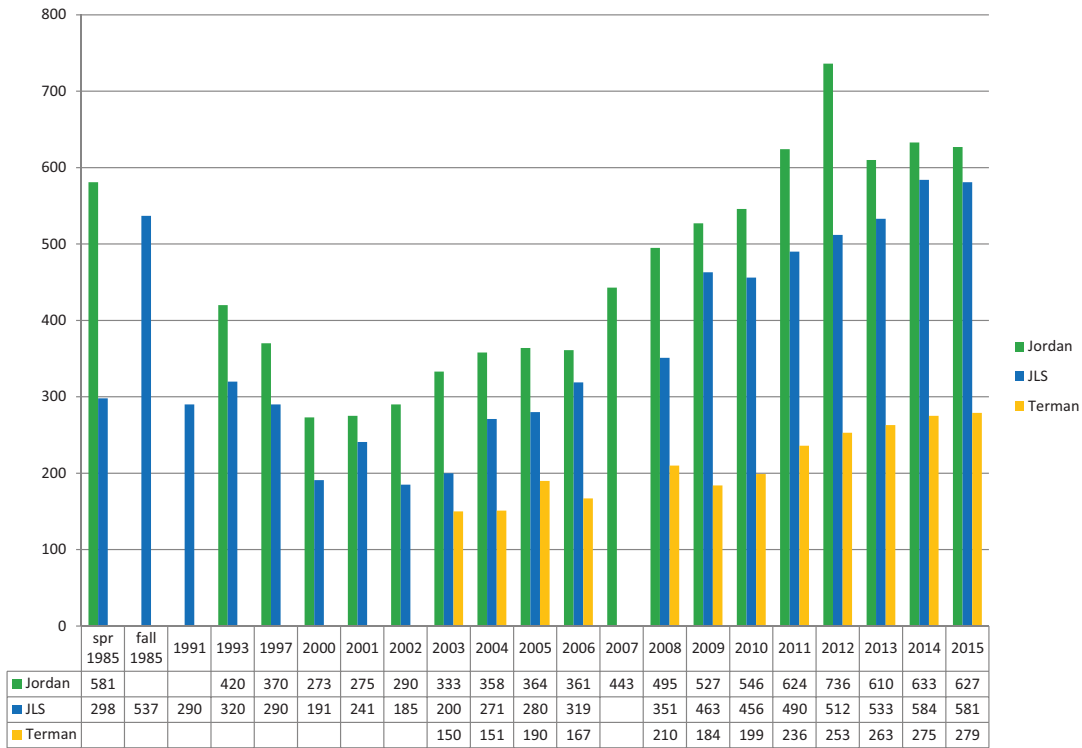
- Setting goals for successful implementation.
- Sharing information with all interested parties.
- Working to secure funding resources for Safe Routes to Schools programs.
- Providing policy input to implementing agencies.

- Providing training and resource materials to assist communities in starting a Safe Routes to School program.
- Illustrating the cost effectiveness of Safe Routes to School programs.
- Providing training and resource materials to assist communities in starting a Safe Routes to School program.
- Illustrating the cost effectiveness of Safe Routes to School programs.
- Providing a unified voice for Safe Routes to School.

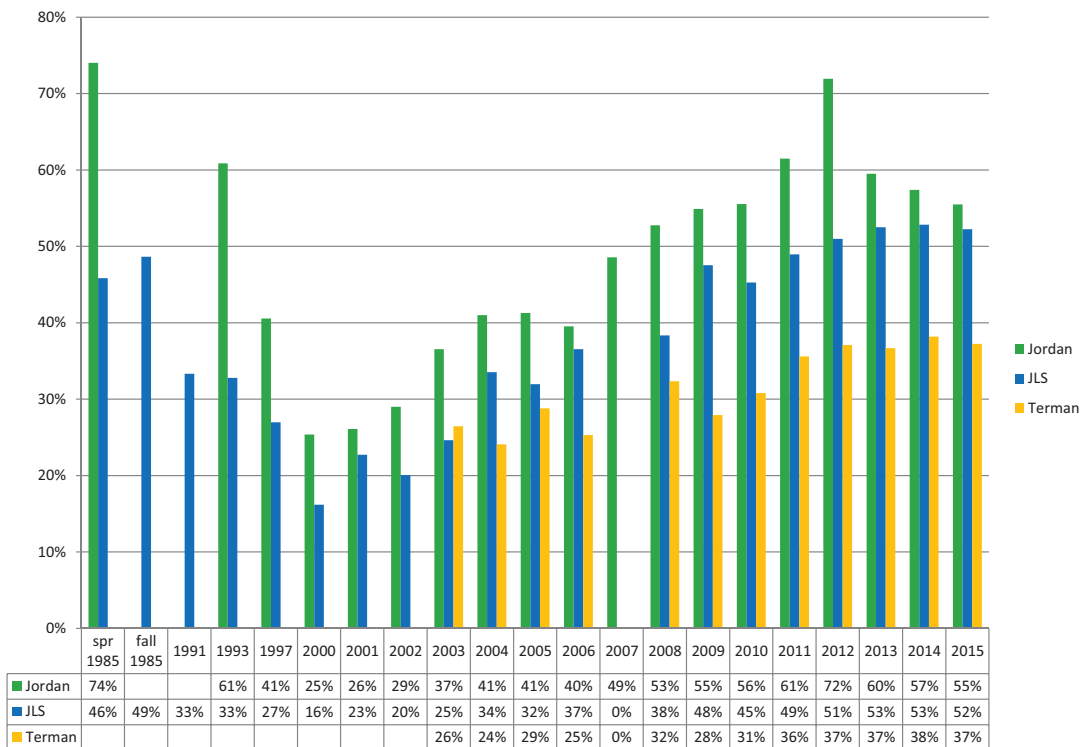
Through forming the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, we call on you to join us in giving children back the sense of freedom and responsibility that comes from walking or bicycling to and from school. Together, we can again provide children with the opportunity to know their neighborhoods, enjoy fresh air and arrive at school alert, refreshed, and ready to start the day. As partners in the Safe Routes to Schools National Partnership, we are transforming children's lives and their communities.



PAUSD MIDDLE SCHOOL BIKE COUNTS, 1985-2015



PAUSD MIDDLE SCHOOL BIKE COUNTS (%), 1985-2015



City of Palo Alto Safe Routes to School Program

Parent Survey Results

February 11, 2013



Appendix I. Fairmeadow Elementary School Survey Results

Parent Survey Results

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Fairmeadow Elementary School Parent Survey Report

Date Collected: Fall 2012

Total Surveys: 122

Total Students Surveyed: 184

Note: The 'n' for each question indicates how many respondents answered the question. For questions in the first half of the survey (questions 1 through 20, which ask the same questions for three different students), the 'n' represents all the students for which data was provided; for the second half of the survey (questions 21 through 30), the 'n' represents the number of parents who responded to the question.

The questions in the second half of the survey (questions 21 through 30) have been attributed to the first student for which the parent completed the survey. The data in the second half of the survey is not cross-referenced by student for the district-wide responses, but this is reflected in what data are retained for the results by school.

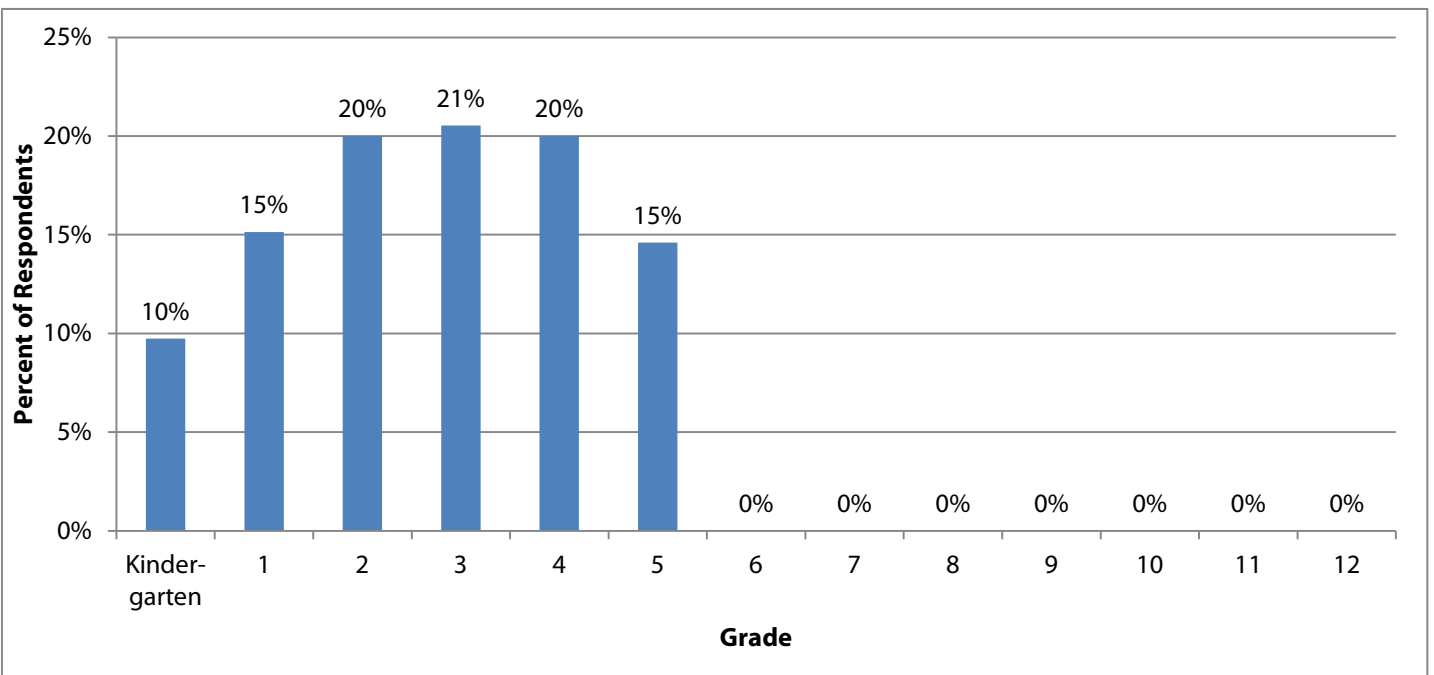
Gender

n= 184

Gender	Count	Percent
Male	89	48%
Female	95	52%

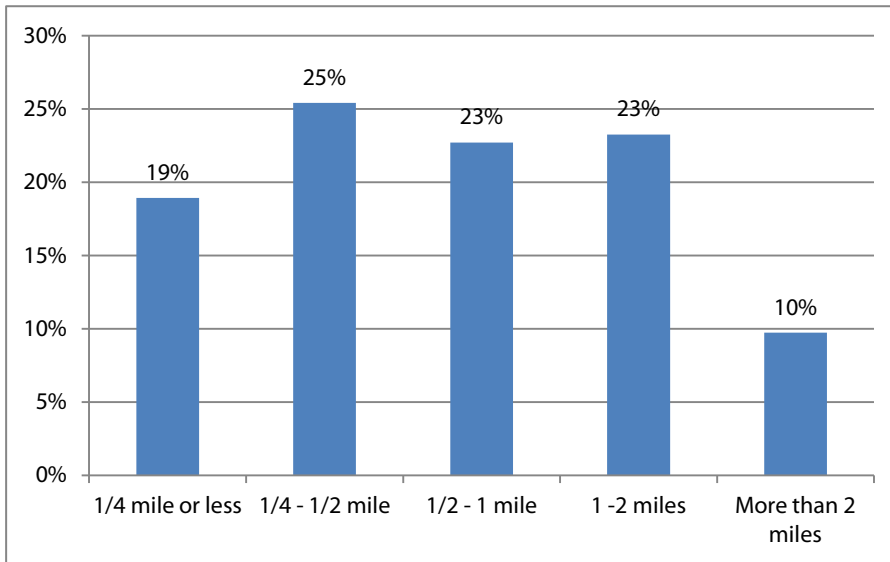
Grade

n= 185



What is the approximate distance from your home to the school?

n=185

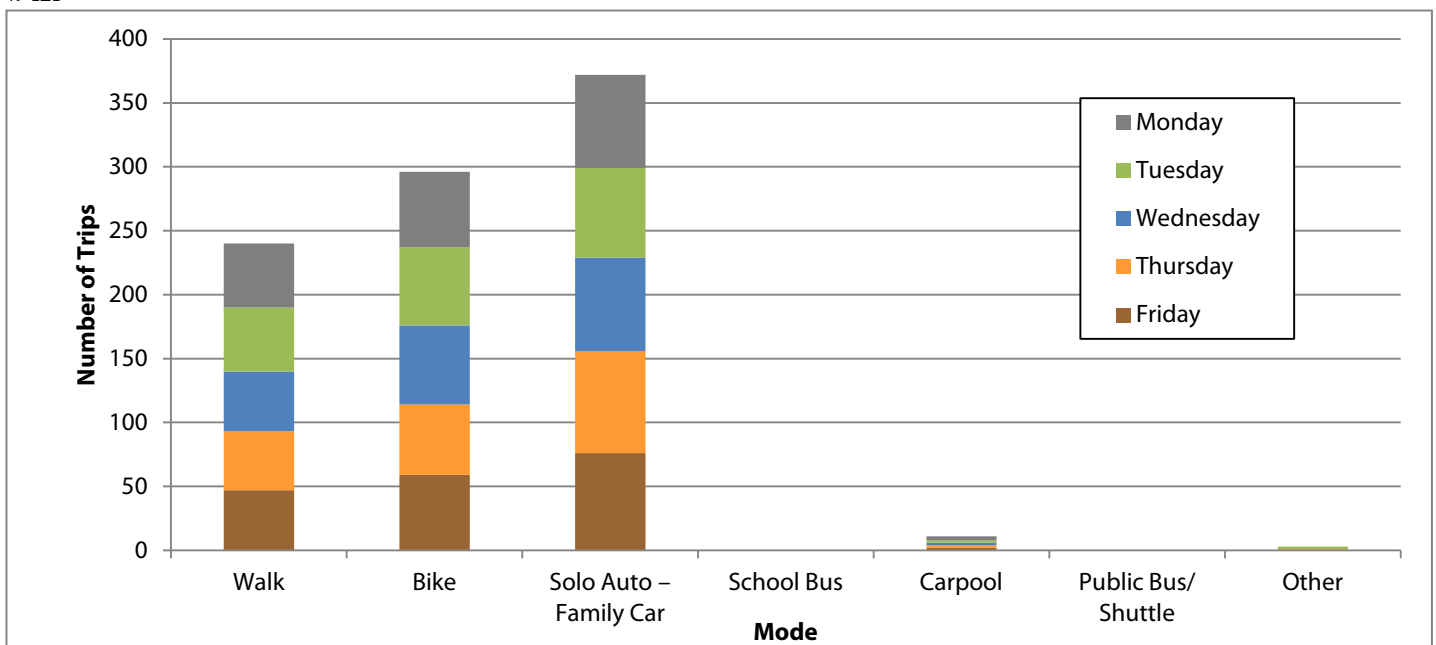


	Number	Percent
1/4 mile or less	35	19%
1/4 - 1/2 mile	47	25%
1/2 - 1 mile	42	23%
1 - 2 miles	43	23%
More than 2 miles	18	10%
Total	185	100%

On most days, how does this student travel TO school?

Mode by day of the week

n=121

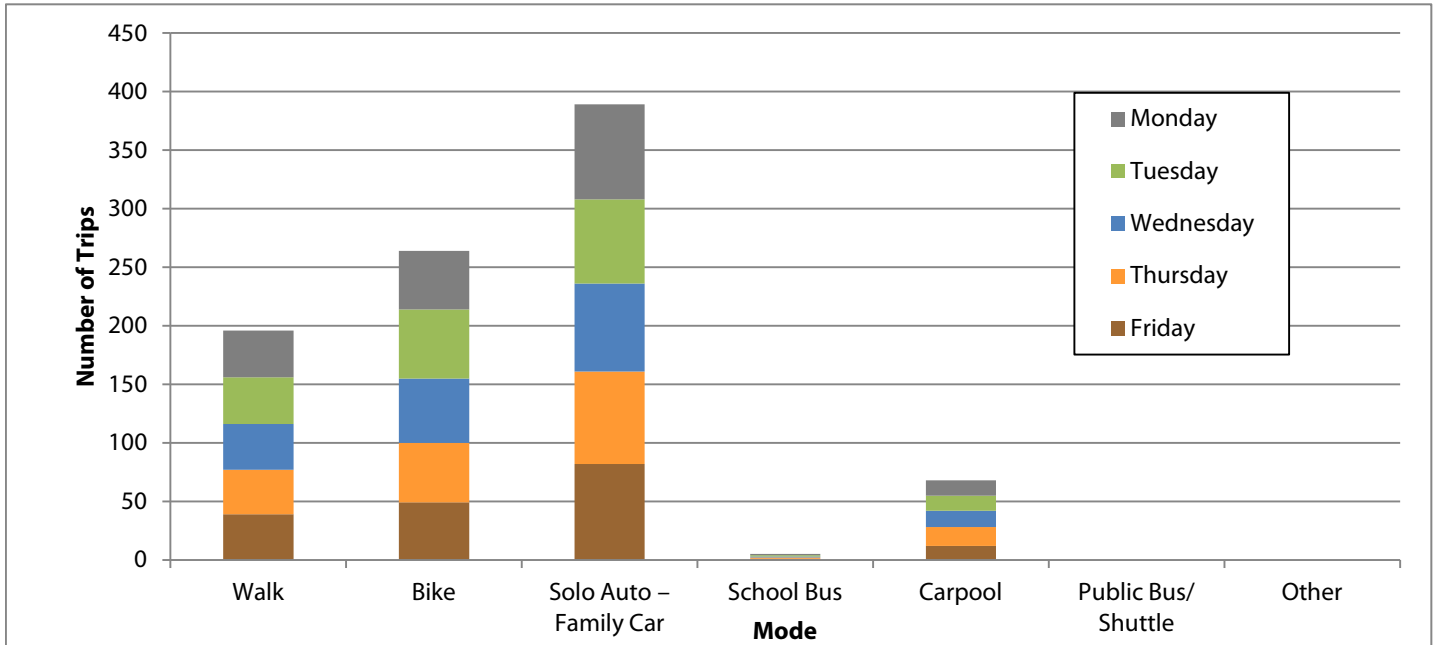


Day of the Week	Walk	Bike	Solo Auto	School Bus	Carpool	Public Bus/ Shuttle	Other
Monday	50	59	73	0	3	0	0
Tuesday	50	61	70	0	2	0	2
Wednesday	47	62	73	0	2	0	0
Thursday	46	55	80	0	2	0	1
Friday	47	59	76	0	2	0	0
Total trips	240	296	372	0	11	0	3
Percent of trips	26%	32%	40%	0%	1%	0%	0%

On most days, how does this student travel FROM school?

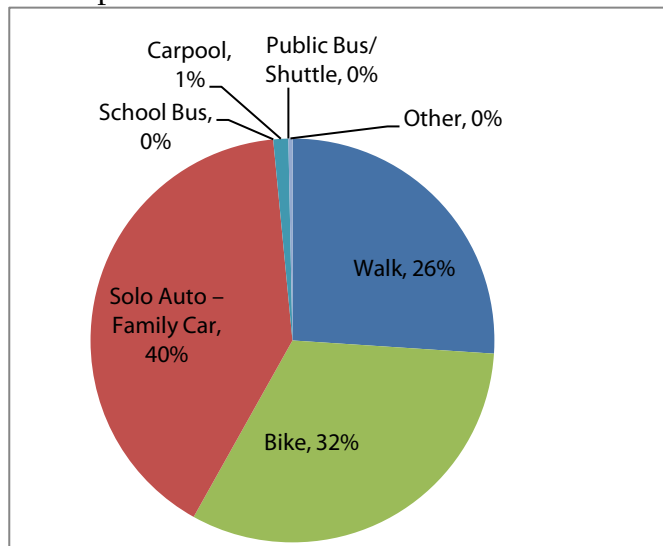
Mode by day of the week

n=121

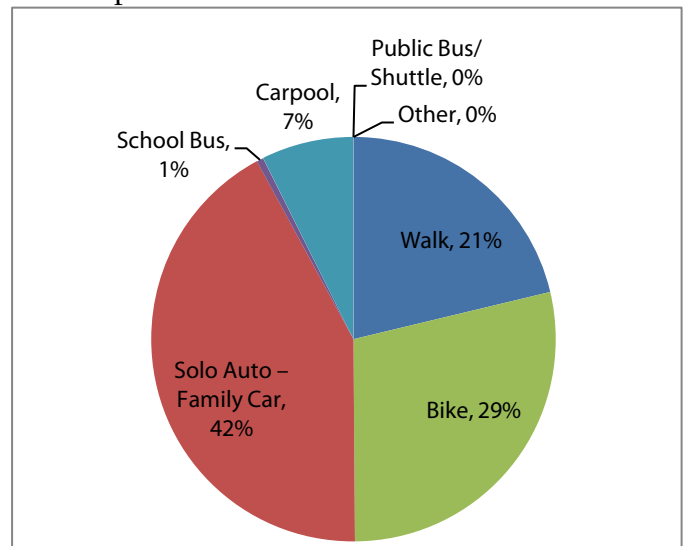


Day of the Week	Walk	Bike	Solo Auto	School Bus	Carpool	Public Bus/ Shuttle	Other
Monday	40	50	81	1	13	0	0
Tuesday	40	59	72	1	13	0	0
Wednesday	39	55	75	1	14	0	0
Thursday	38	51	79	1	16	0	0
Friday	39	49	82	1	12	0	0
Total trips	196	264	389	5	68	0	0
Percent of trips	21%	29%	42%	1%	7%	0%	0%

Mode split TO school

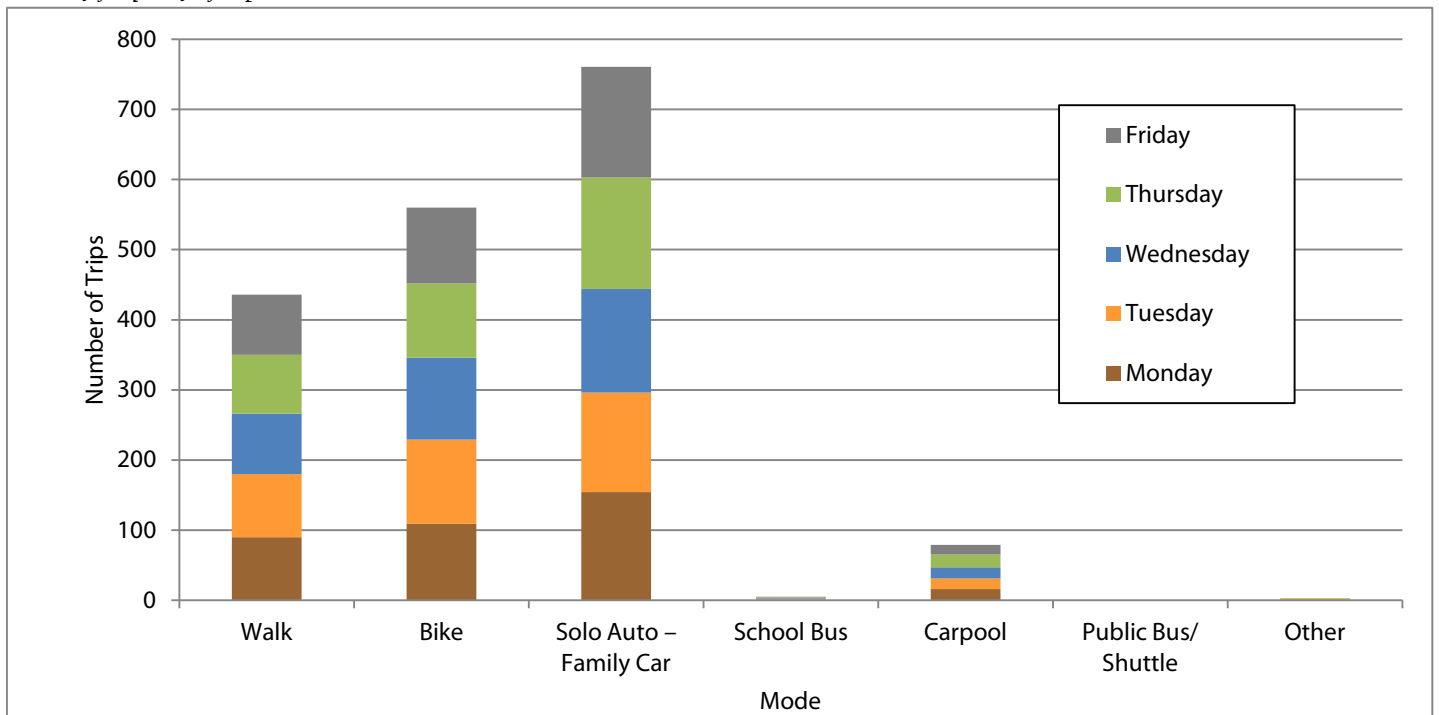


Mode split FROM school



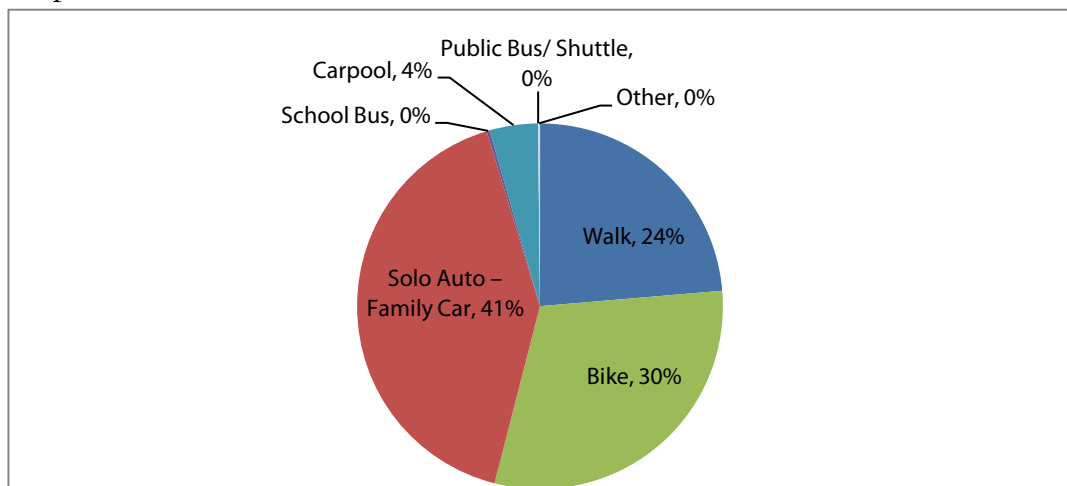
Overall mode split TO and FROM school

Mode by frequency of trips



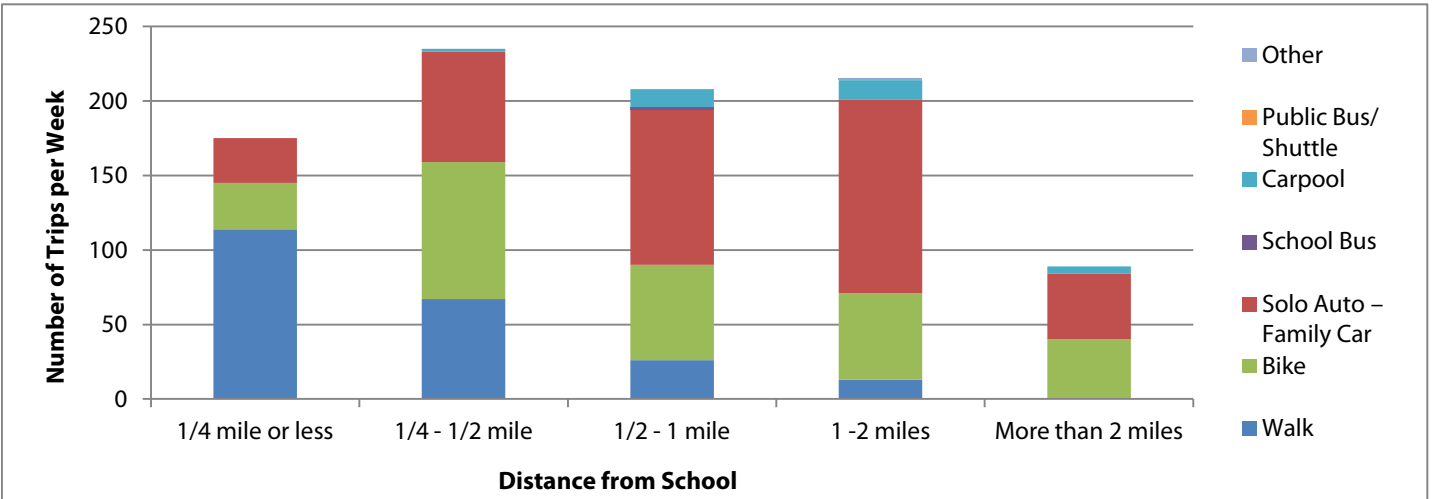
Day of the Week	Walk	Bike	Solo Auto	School Bus	Carpool	Public Bus/ Shuttle	Other
Monday	90	109	154	1	16	0	0
Tuesday	90	120	142	1	15	0	2
Wednesday	86	117	148	1	16	0	0
Thursday	84	106	159	1	18	0	1
Friday	86	108	158	1	14	0	0
Total trips	436	560	761	5	79	0	3
Percent of trips	24%	30%	41%	0%	4%	0%	0%
Parked bicycle count		20%					

Mode split for all trips

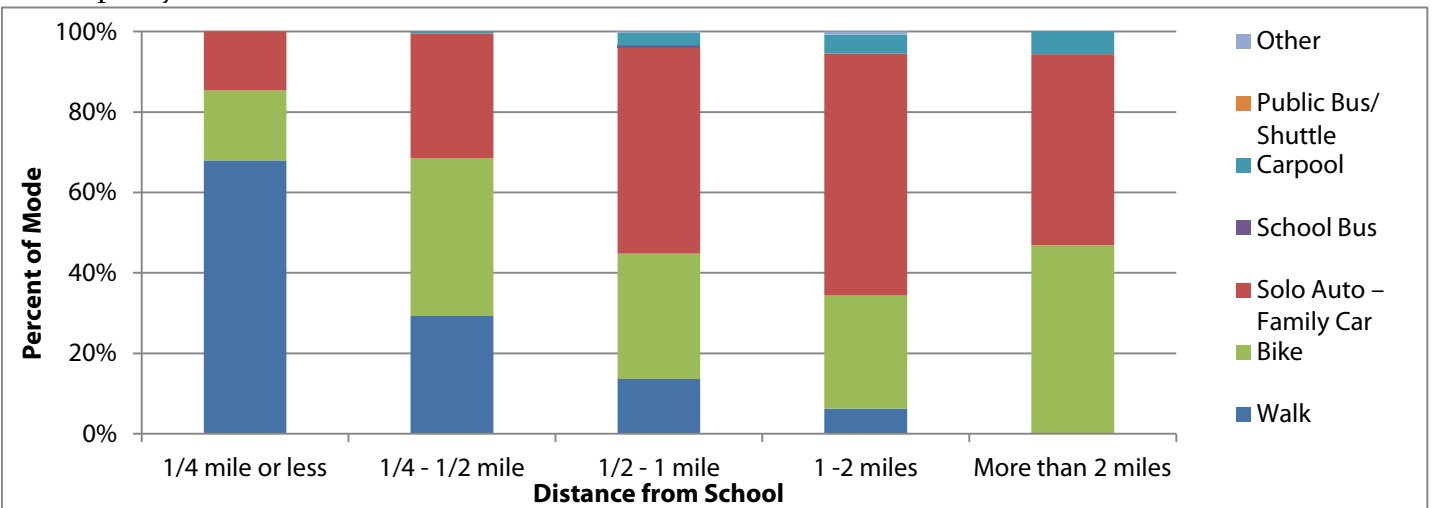


Weekly trips by mode and distance from school

Mode by distance from school

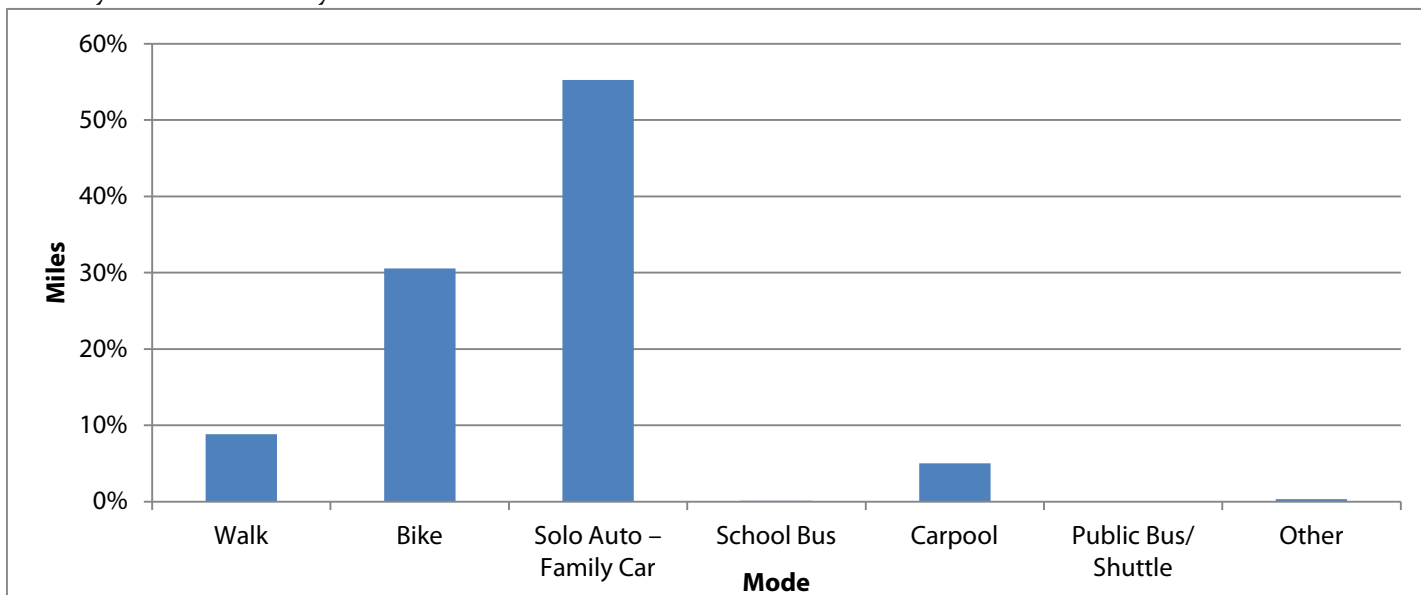


Mode split by distance from school



Distance	Walk	Bike	Solo Auto	School Bus	Carpool	Public Bus/Shuttle	Other
1/4 mile or less	68%	17%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%
1/4 - 1/2 mile	29%	39%	31%	0%	0%	0%	0%
1/2 - 1 mile	14%	31%	51%	1%	3%	0%	0%
1 - 2 miles	6%	28%	60%	0%	5%	0%	1%
More than 2 miles	0%	47%	48%	0%	6%	0%	0%
Total	25%	31%	41%	0%	2%	0%	0%

Weekly Miles Traveled by Mode



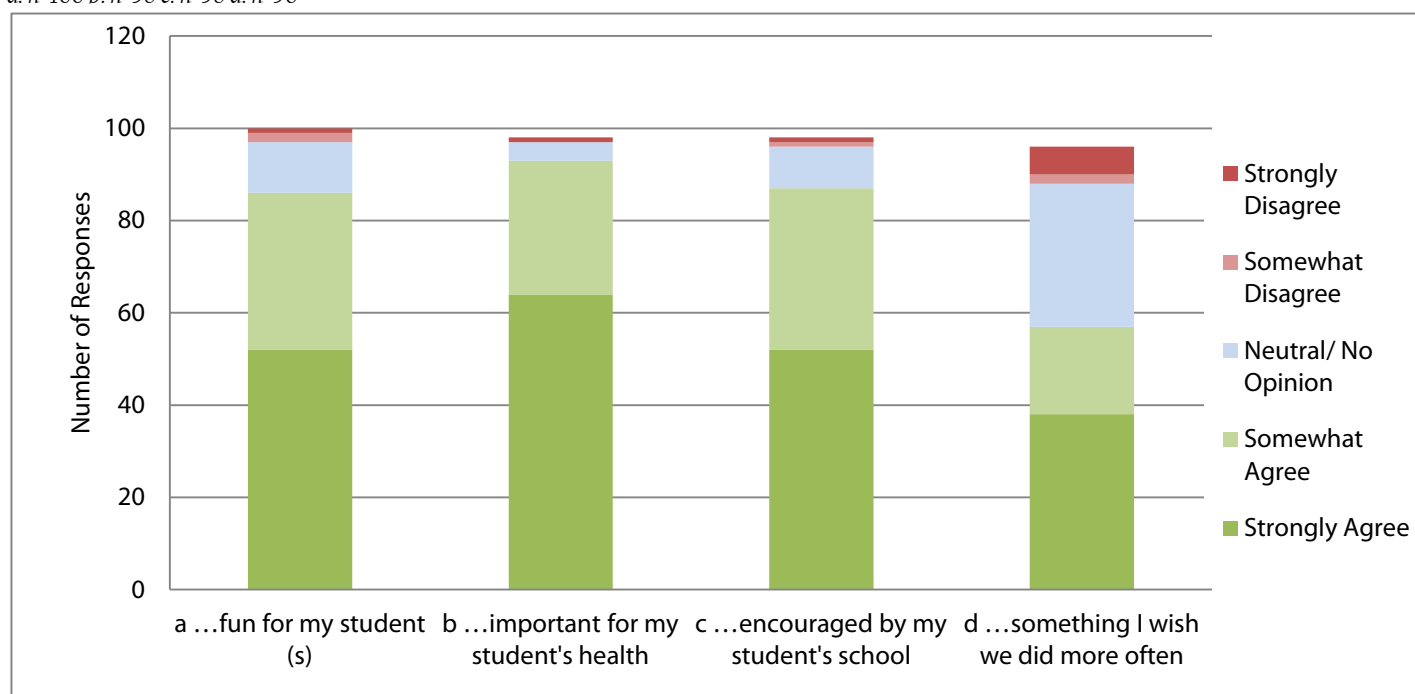
	Walk	Bike	Solo Auto	School Bus	Carpools	Public Bus/ Shuttle	Other
Morning Trips	76	268	504	1	54	0	2
Afternoon Trips	67	230	396	0	28	0	4
All Trips	144	497	900	1	81	0	5
Percent of Total Mileage	9%	31%	55%	0%	5%	0%	0%

Note: This analysis uses the mode frequency by respondent and assumes the median of the distance from school categories or the respondent-provided

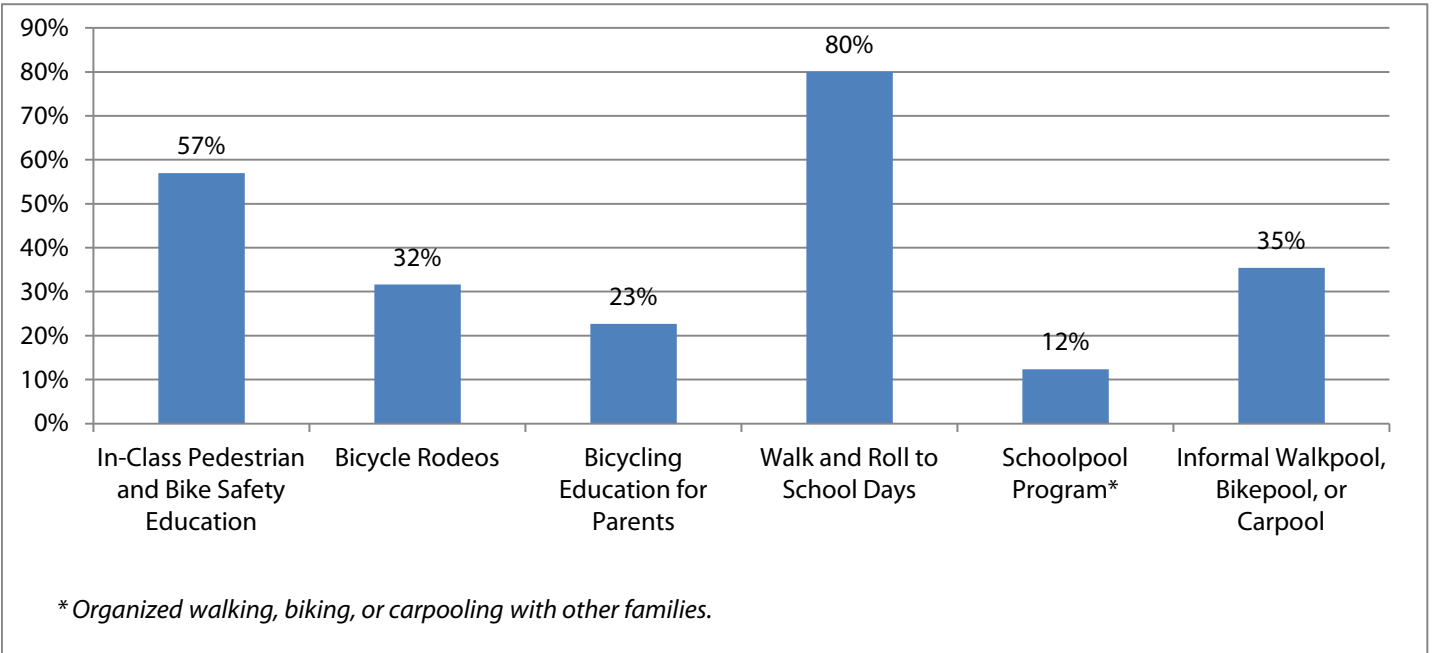
How strongly do you agree with the following statements?

Biking/Walking to school is...

a. n=100 b. n=98 c. n=98 d. n=96

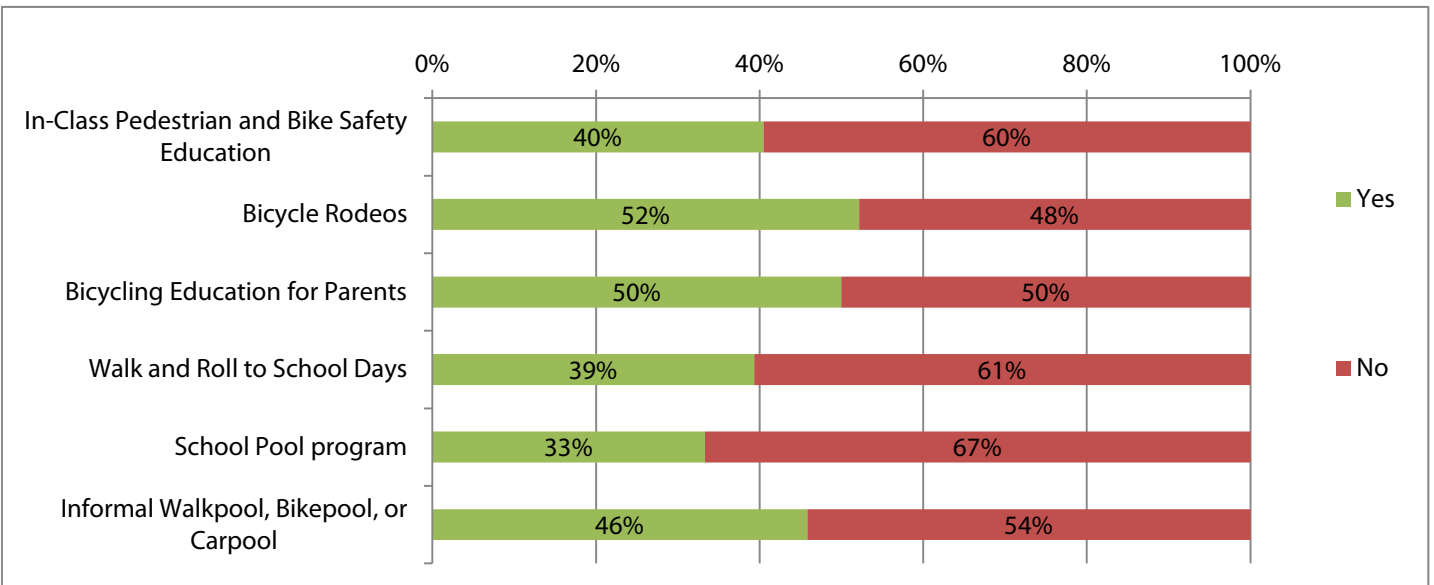


Have you or your child(ren) participated in the following Safe Routes to School events/programs?



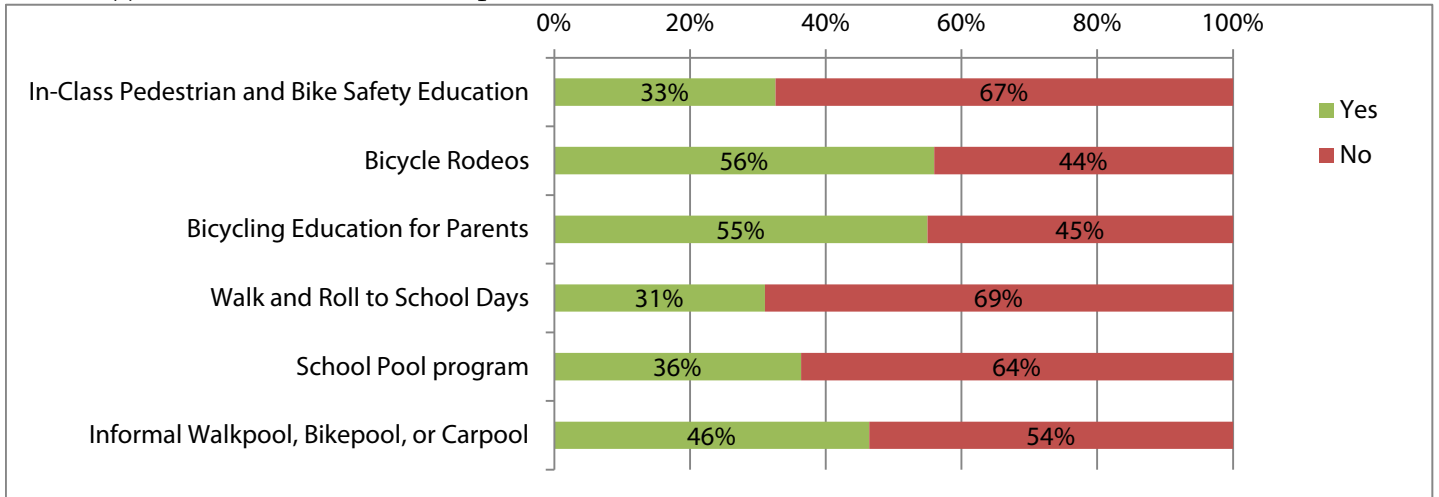
If you participated in any of the above Safe Routes to School events/programs, did your student(s) walk, bike, or carpool more often after participating?

Note: Includes responses from respondents who previously indicated that they had participated in the specific program.



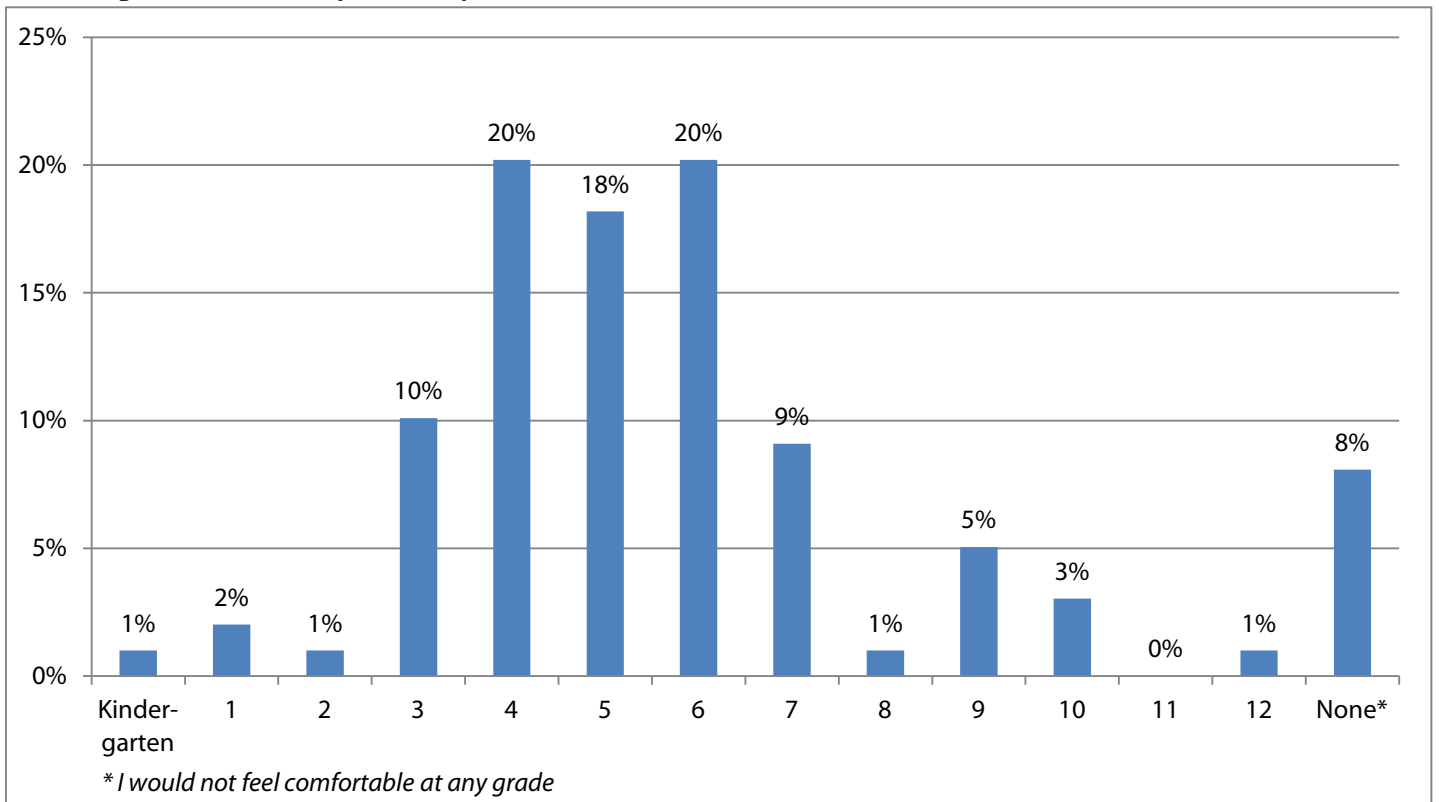
	Yes	No
In-Class Pedestrian and Bike Safety Education	40%	60%
Bicycle Rodeos	52%	48%
Bicycling Education for Parents	50%	50%
Walk and Roll to School Days	39%	61%
School Pool program	33%	67%
Informal Walkpool, Bikepool, or Carpool	46%	54%

If you have participated in any of the above the Safe Routes to School events/programs, do you drive yourself or your student(s) less often for non-school trips?



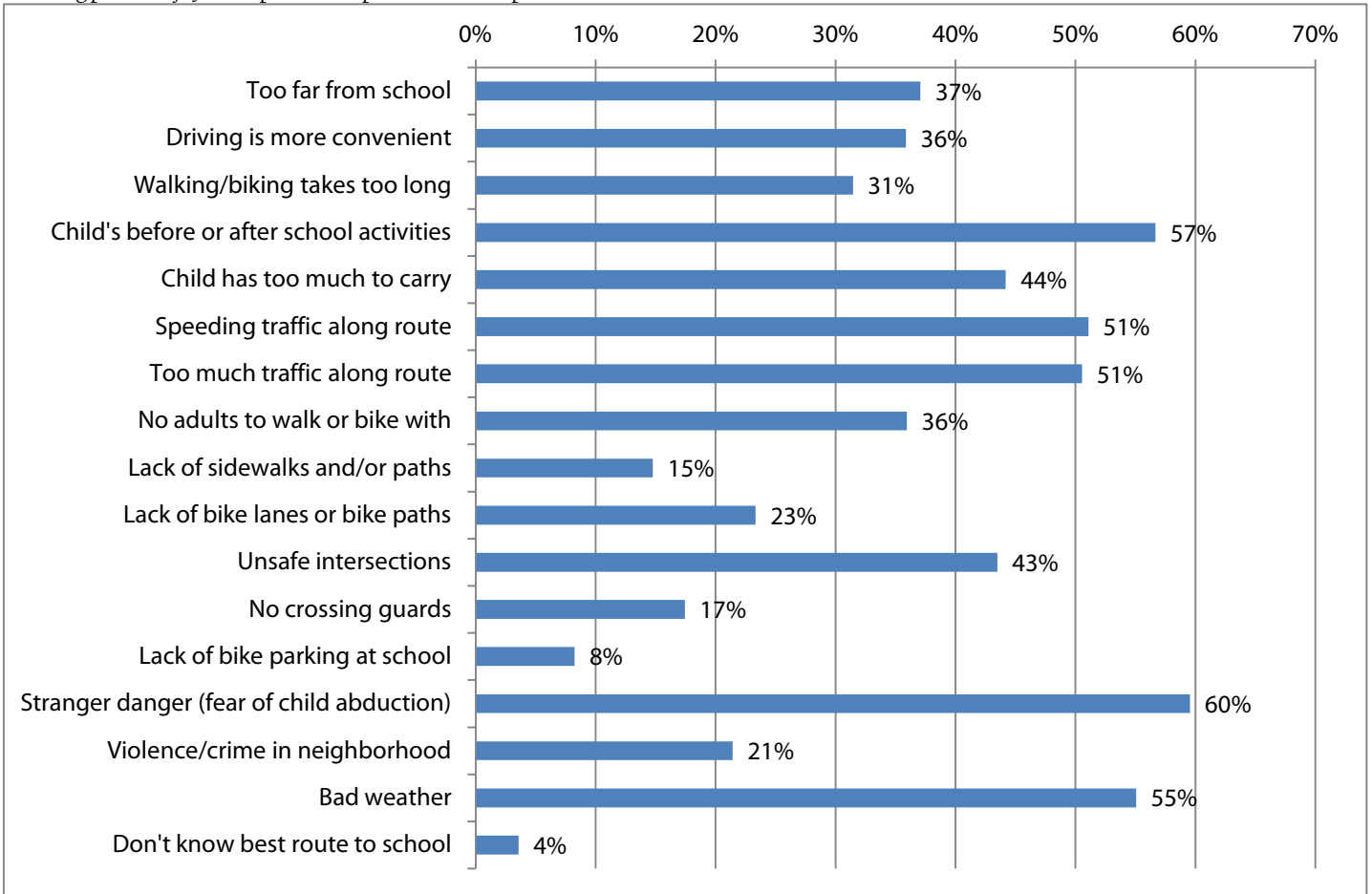
	Yes	No
In-Class Pedestrian and Bike Safety Education	33%	67%
Bicycle Rodeos	56%	44%
Bicycling Education for Parents	55%	45%
Walk and Roll to School Days	31%	69%
School Pool program	36%	64%
Informal Walkpool, Bikepool, or Carpool	46%	54%

At what grade level would you allow your student to walk or bike to/from school without an adult?



Do the following concerns limit your student's ability to walk or bike to/from school?

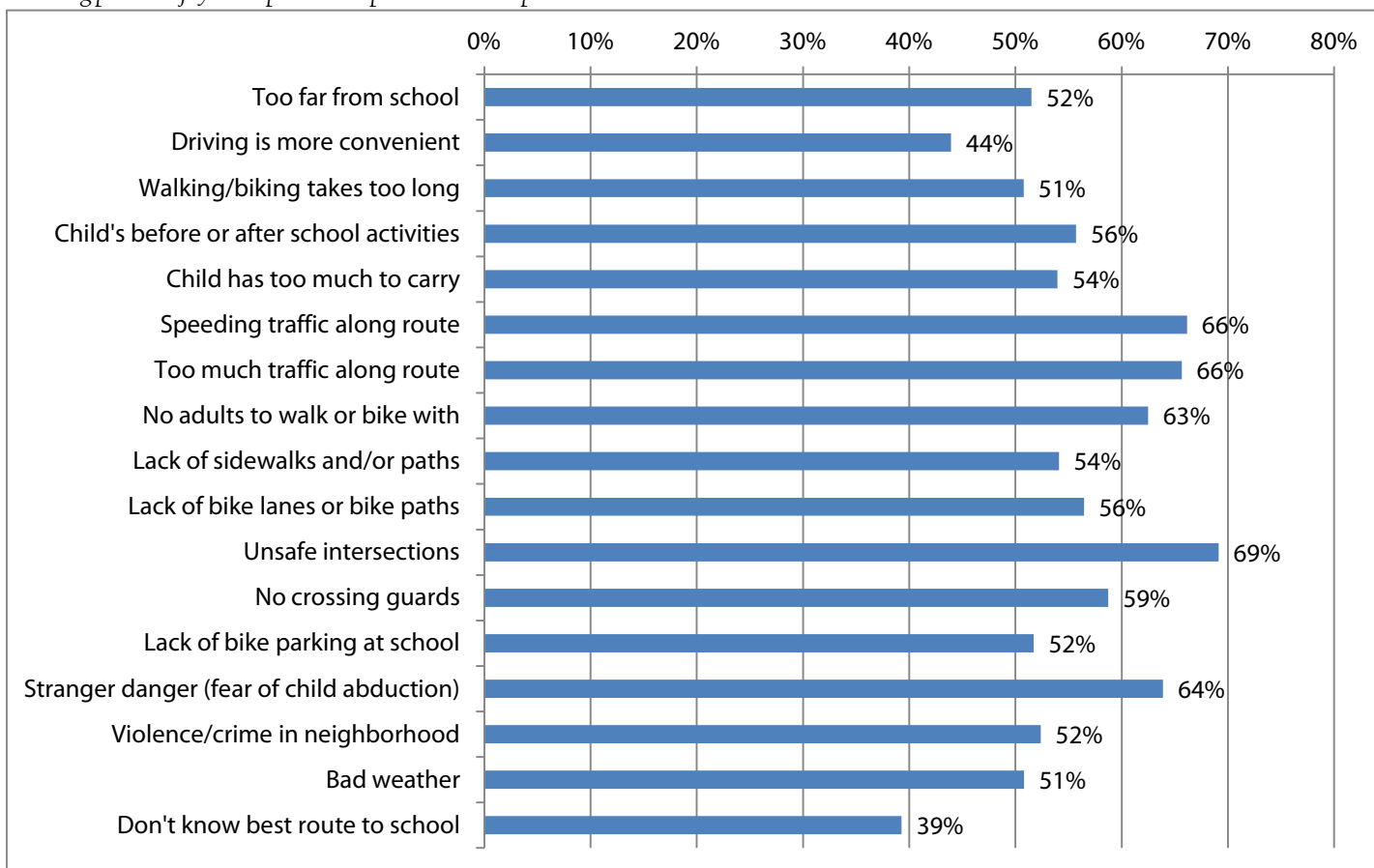
Showing percent of "yes" responses compared to "no" responses



	Yes	No	Total
Too far from school	33	56	89
Driving is more convenient	33	59	92
Walking/biking takes too long	28	61	89
Child's before or after school activities	51	39	90
Child has too much to carry	38	48	86
Speeding traffic along route	47	45	92
Too much traffic along route	47	46	93
No adults to walk or bike with	32	57	89
Lack of sidewalks and/or paths	13	75	88
Lack of bike lanes or bike paths	21	69	90
Unsafe intersections	40	52	92
No crossing guards	15	71	86
Lack of bike parking at school	7	78	85
Stranger danger (fear of child abduction)	53	36	89
Violence/crime in neighborhood	18	66	84
Bad weather	49	40	89
Don't know best route to school	3	81	84
Other	6	0	6

Would you allow your student(s) to walk/bike more often if this concern was addressed?

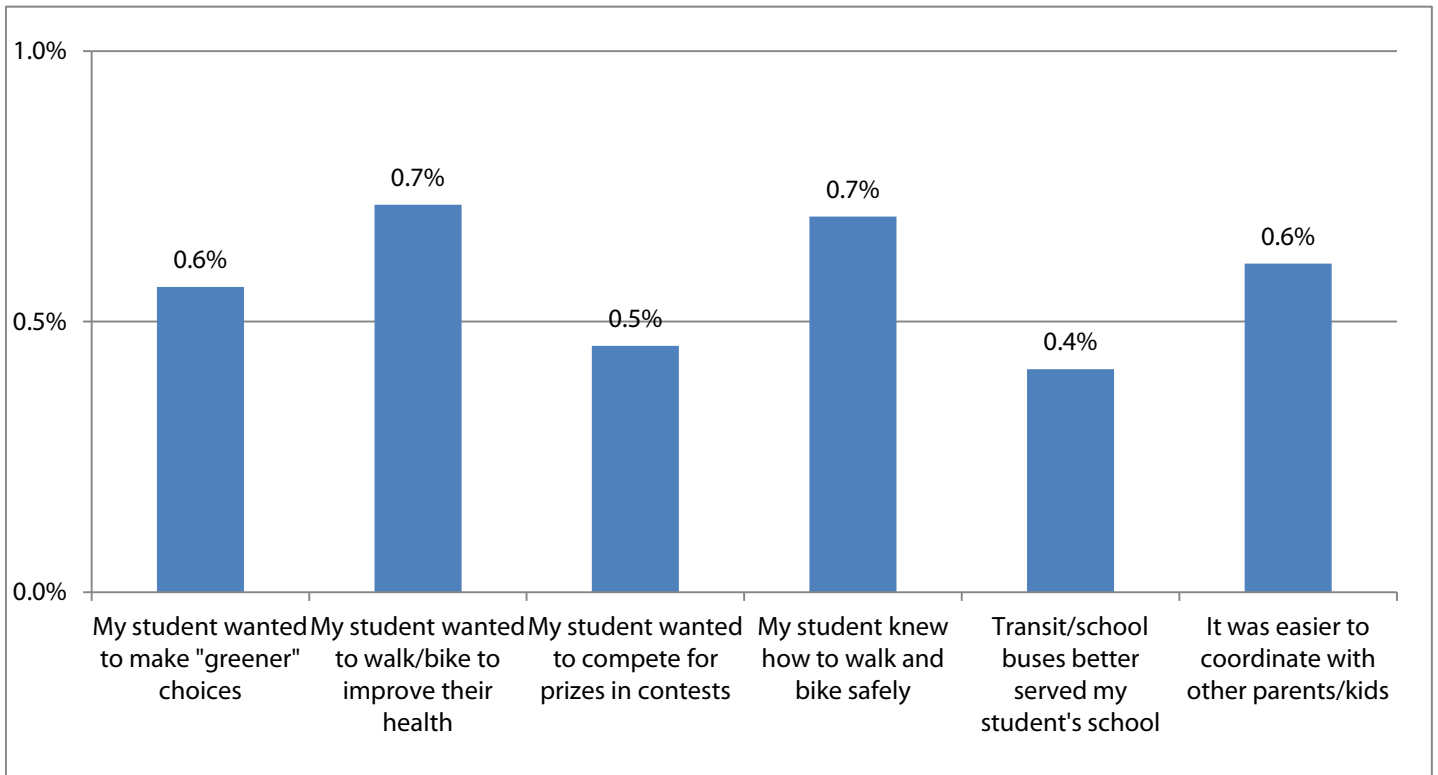
Showing percent of "yes" responses compared to "no" responses



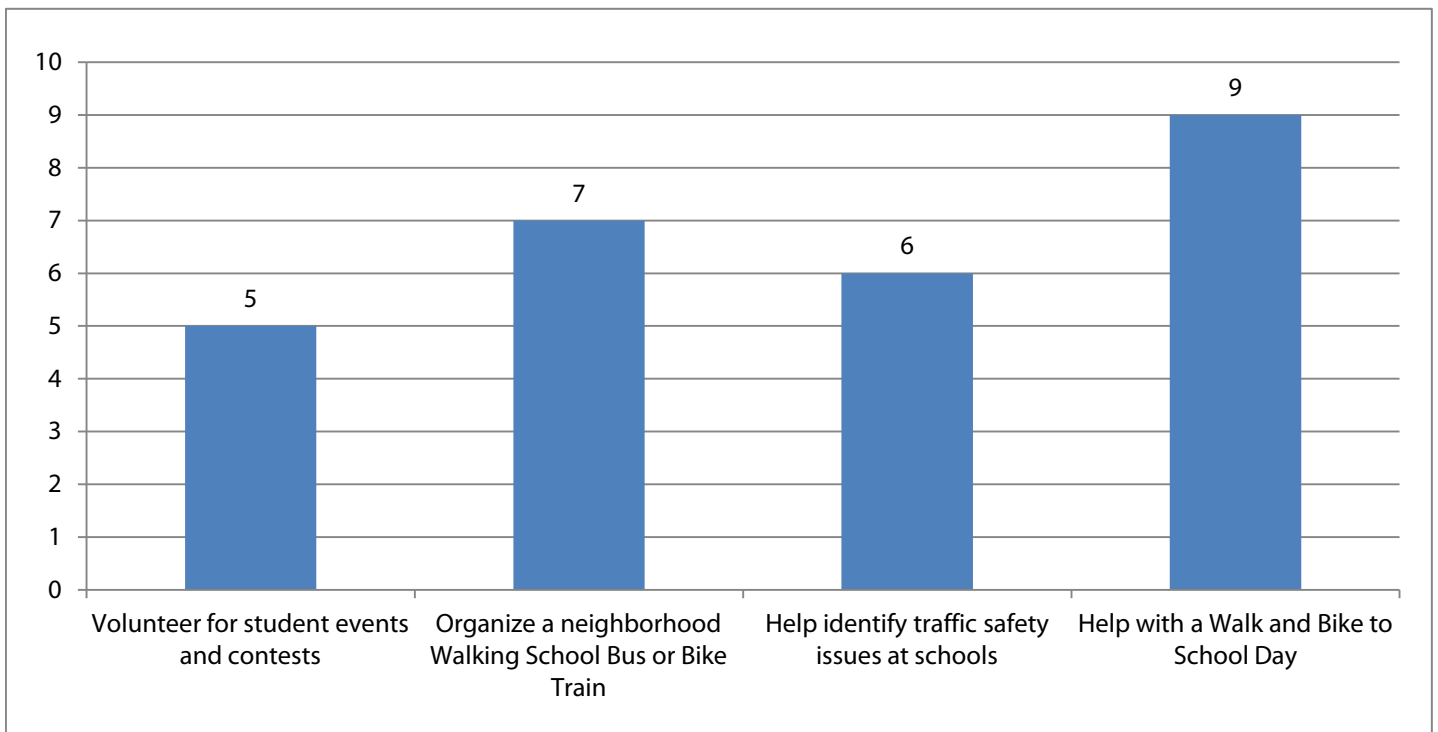
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
Too far from school	34	20	12	66
Driving is more convenient	29	24	13	66
Walking/biking takes too long	33	21	11	65
Child's before or after school activities	39	22	9	70
Child has too much to carry	34	18	11	63
Speeding traffic along route	43	12	10	65
Too much traffic along route	44	13	10	67
No adults to walk or bike with	40	16	8	64
Lack of sidewalks and/or paths	33	18	10	61
Lack of bike lanes or bike paths	35	19	8	62
Unsafe intersections	47	14	7	68
No crossing guards	37	19	7	63
Lack of bike parking at school	30	19	9	58
Stranger danger (fear of child abduction)	46	16	10	72
Violence/crime in neighborhood	33	22	8	63
Bad weather	31	22	8	61
Don't know best route to school	22	23	11	56
Other	7	0	0	7

I would reduce the number of times I drive my student(s) to school if...

n=4609



Are you interested in participating in any of the following Safe Routes to School activities?



Parent Survey Results

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