

# CASE STUDY:

## Promoting Increased Physical Activity through Active Transportation Wayfinding



## A Pilot Project in West Sacramento

### What is Wayfinding?

*A Community wayfinding program is a great way to highlight key destinations in a neighborhood while promoting healthy lifestyles.*

Wayfinding is a signage system to help people orient themselves in a space. Signage uses visual cues to direct people from point A to point B or highlight points of interest. Good wayfinding systems are intuitive with clear and concise messaging, shows only information that is relevant to the space, location, or navigation path, uses graphics effectively and efficiently, and does not include excessive information that may confuse the audience. Wayfinding programs can be temporary or permanent and are a perfect way to encourage people to explore your community in a new way.

## Executive Summary

In June 2018, WALKSacramento and the City of West Sacramento launched a first-of-its-kind school-based active transportation wayfinding pilot program. The program leveraged existing Safe Routes to School efforts to encourage families to walk or bike from school to other parts of the community and provide feedback on their trips to inform future iterations of the wayfinding program.

Since the launch of the program, the City of West Sacramento has been awarded funding by the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District to permanently install wayfinding signs that focus on walking and biking.

## Project Goal

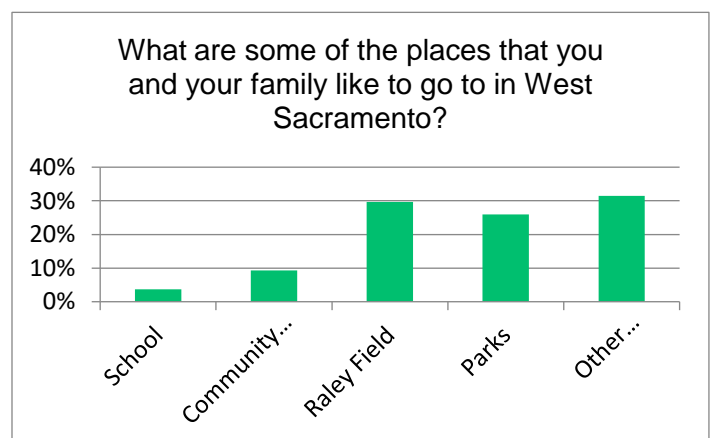
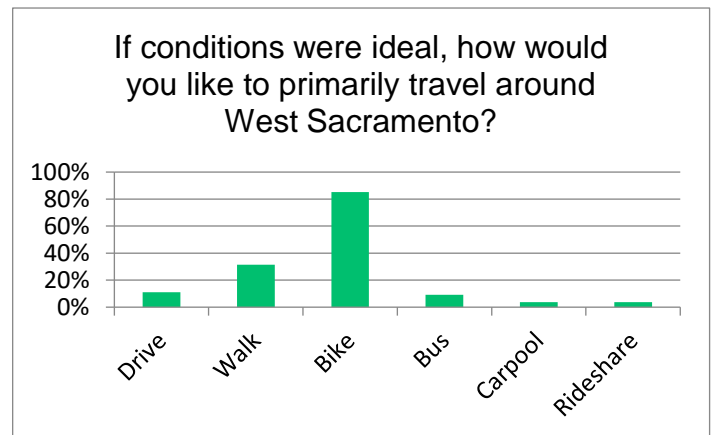
The goal of the program was to help residents and visitors make decisions about their travel behaviors to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and increase bicycle and pedestrian mode share. Furthermore, the program encouraged families to visit community destinations in West Sacramento by foot and/or bicycle, exposing students and parents to alternative modes as viable transportation options rather than just for recreation. Finally, the program was intended to highlight key community destinations and pilot an active transportation wayfinding approach with opportunities for user feedback in order to inform future, more permanent wayfinding programs as well as community-identified infrastructure improvements.

## Pre-Program Surveying and Methodology

The signage system built upon work already underway to encourage more walking and

biking to school. West Sacramento is a community with many families, and as such, the pilot program used school sites as hubs from which to direct users to other parts of the community. Community surveys were distributed to identify popular destinations within a one-mile radius of schools for walking and biking. Respondents requested community amenities such as parks, trails, community centers, and local businesses be highlighted on the signs. Respondents also indicated that they were willing to walk up to one mile or bike up to three miles to a destination in ideal conditions.

Thirty-four destinations were identified based on the survey findings, with thirty locations for sign placement. In some cases, routes to farther, high-profile destinations such as Raley Field and City Hall were included as a city-wide connection.

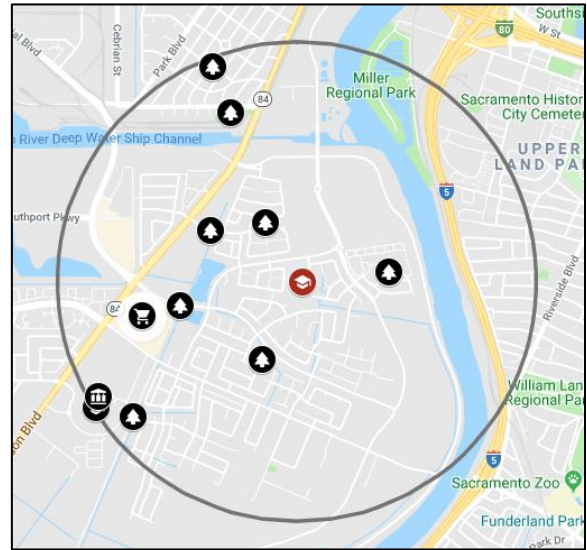


## Program Design, Development, and Promotion

Taking the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) guidelines into consideration, pedestrian wayfinding signs were designed and placed at a pedestrian scale so as not to interfere with vehicular signage. Each sign included up to four nearby destinations within a one-mile radius or less than a 25 minute walk or bike ride. Walking and biking times were included for each destination. Each sign provided a website link and QR code leading to custom maps with recommended walking and biking routes to destinations within each school's "zone". Each sign at non-school sites also directed users to other community destinations.

Branding and color cues were inspired by the City of West Sacramento's brand guidelines.

The project website, [www.wayfindws.com](http://www.wayfindws.com), was developed and used as the main hub for users to learn more about the project, view custom maps for walking and biking routes, and submit feedback via user surveys.



*Destinations located within a one-mile radius of Stonegate Elementary School*



*Wayfinding sign located at The Barn, West Sacramento*

## Implementation and Feedback

The WALKSacramento team deployed the signs in June 2018. The signs were promoted via social media through September 2018. Due to positive feedback received from the community and good condition of the signs, signs remained up through November 2018. Data collection methods included analytics data of social media activity, Google Analytics tracking on a [project website](#), and online user surveys.

Over 7,000 people were reached through social media over the course of the campaign period, including high user engagement in promoting the signs. 170 users visited the website to learn more about the project, provide feedback, or view zone maps. 52% of users visited the website on a mobile device or tablet indicating they may be accessing the site while at a specific sign location.

Survey respondents provided an overwhelmingly positive response to the signs, stating they “enjoyed extending their original walking or biking trip to discover a nearby destination” while others were pleased with the system but requested more pedestrian and biking routes between the North and South ends of the City, particularly to higher profile community destinations such as Raley Field, the Library, City Hall, or the Recreation Center. Survey respondents indicated that even though walking or biking to these destinations is desirable, residents are not likely to walk or bike there without proper pedestrian and bicycle connections. Many respondents started or ended their trips at schools in West Sacramento and traveled with adults and children, indicating a desire for family-friendly route options.

## 6 STEPS TO DISCOVERING WEST SACRAMENTO

1

### INVITE FRIENDS OR FAMILY

Invite friends or family to join you on a walk or bike ride to discover West Sacramento.



2

### LOCATE A NEARBY SIGN AND ZONE

Locate a sign near you and find the “zone” on the bottom left corner.



3

### SCAN THE QR CODE

Scan the QR code with your phone or visit [www.wayfindws.com](http://www.wayfindws.com). Follow the instructions on the website to find your zone.



4

### CLICK "DISCOVER" TO SEE ROUTES IN YOUR ZONE

Find your zone and click “discover” to find walking or biking directions to nearby destinations.



5

### CHOOSE A ROUTE

Use the map to get walking and biking directions to nearby destinations.



6

### RATE YOUR ROUTE

Take the short feedback survey for the zone you are in on [www.wayfindws.com](http://www.wayfindws.com) and be entered to win a \$50 giftcard!





## Project Outcomes

The wayfinding program with the City of West Sacramento was the first of its kind to be implemented at the school-district level in the Sacramento Region. The project supported implementation of the City of West Sacramento's Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan which includes active transportation focused wayfinding as an action item. Additionally, the project supported the roll out of the regional bike share system and the City of West Sacramento's micro-transit pilot. While it is difficult to evaluate the effect of wayfinding programs on VMT reductions, resident feedback indicated that they can be an effective tool for education and encouragement around use of alternative modes that support larger mode shift goals at the community level.

Since the launch of the program, the City of West Sacramento has been awarded funding by the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District to permanently install wayfinding signs that focus on walking and biking. Neighboring cities in the Sacramento Region have also inquired about developing active-transportation focused wayfinding programs in their own communities.

The positive reception of the system and feedback provided by the community indicated that additional, low-stress pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout the City are desired and would encourage mode shift to active transportation modes for recreation and leisure trips.

## Getting Started with Your own Wayfinding Program

Creating a wayfinding program in your community can be simple and easy to get off the ground. Wayfinding programs can be themed around events, highlight specific destinations, and incorporate fun community-elements such as public art. Below are a few tips to get started.

### 1. Decide why you want to do a wayfinding program.

- Do you want to highlight specific attractions?
- Do you want to educate or encourage active travel modes to nearby destinations?
- Do you want to highlight community events?

### 2. Get community support.

Engage the community by surveying residents about what they want to see in a wayfinding program, how far they are willing to travel, and destinations they want to see highlighted. When community members are engaged from early on, they take pride in knowing they helped create a community asset!

### 3. Involve local government.

Engage local government staff and elected officials to collaborate on signage standards and support for the project.

### 4. Determine your materials.

Ask your local sign shop for recommendations on signage. Signage can

range from temporary corrugated signs to semi-permanent aluminum signs to freestanding displays. Temporary and semi-permanent signs are great for pilot projects while freestanding displays and permanent signs are appropriate for a long term wayfinding program. Or consider a non-traditional sign such as a sidewalk stencil.

Once you determine sign materials, consider how you will install signs. While zip ties are great for temporary signage, they are easily cut. Make sure your attachment materials are secure and will prolong the life of the sign.

#### **5. Vet your sign locations before printing.**

Before finalizing sign design and printing, do a test run of sign placement to ensure that signs are placed in areas that follow the natural path of pedestrians or bicyclists. Some question to consider are:

- Where do people naturally walk in this location?
- Is there an opportunity to place a sign that will be easily noticed in this location?
- How will the sign be posted at this location?

#### **6. Print and Promote!**

Once signs are ready to install, promote your signs on social media. Consider if there are other creative ways to engage community members in interacting with the signs. Here are a few ideas:

- Create a scavenger hunt
- Create a theme or self-guided tour
- Create other printed materials for distribution
- Provide incentives for engagement

More Resources: <https://walkyourcity.org/>

### **Key Takeaways**

*1. Active Transportation wayfinding programs are simple to implement and can help build community identity.*

*2. Leveraging Safe Routes to School programs for wayfinding is a great way to knit communities together while expanding upon traditional SRTS programs.*

*3. Community wayfinding programs encourage behavior change while also creating a space for public engagement about infrastructure and mobility needs.*