Paving the Way for Safe Routes to School:

Cedar Lane Elementary

Walkability and Active Design Audit

March 2015





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#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

With a special thank you to the participants who contributed to this report and their continued support in promoting safe routes to Cedar Lane Elementary.

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#### **SCHOOL INFORMATION**

Cedar Lane Elementary is located at 481 Cedar Lane in Linda, California. For the 2013-2014 school year, 509 students were enrolled, of which 96.5% were eligible for free or reduced price meals. <sup>1</sup> The 2013-2014 attendance boundary is shown below.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> California Department of Education, Free/Reduced Meals Program and CalWORKS Data Files, 2014. Available from <a href="http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filessp.asp">http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filessp.asp</a>. Accessed on October 27, 2014.

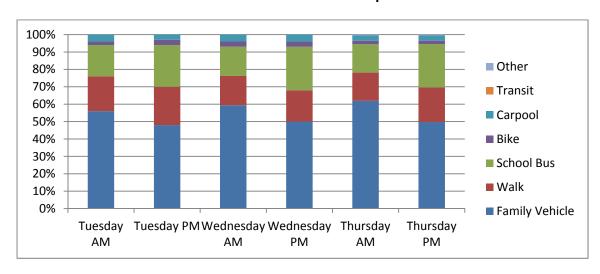
#### **Mode Split**

Using the National Center for Safe Routes to School Student Travel Tally<sup>2</sup>, in-class tallies of student travel mode were conducted over a period of three days in November 2013. The tally results are shown below.

	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Tuesday AM	399	20%	2%	18%	56%	4%	0%	0%
Tuesday PM	399	22%	3%	24%	48%	3%	0%	0%
Wednesday AM	368	17%	3%	17%	60%	4%	0%	0%
Wednesday PM	365	18%	3%	25%	50%	4%	0%	0%
Thursday AM	371	16%	2%	16%	61%	3%	0%	0.5%
Thursday PM	368	20%	2%	25%	50%	3%	0%	0.5%

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

#### **Cedar Lane Mode Share Split**



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> National Center for Safe Routes to School, Evaluation: Student In-Class Travel Tally, 2013, available <a href="http://saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/evaluation-student-class-travel-tally">http://saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/evaluation-student-class-travel-tally</a>. Accessed October 27, 2014.

#### **Existing Conditions**

The town of Linda is a census designated area in Yuba County. Sidewalks and bike lanes tends to be scarce and intermittent when provided. Often, it is the case that where sidewalks are inconsistent, to maintain a consistent path of travel, pedestrians choose to walk within the roadway for the entirety of their trip. Drainage ditches throughout the community are often muddy or flooded, forcing pedestrians and bicyclists into the middle of a street. There are almost no trees along Alicia Avenue leading up to the school. Many of the main roadways are in need of repaving to eliminate cracks and crumbling shoulders. Crosswalks, stop bars, lane markings, and other striped roadway information have faded in several locations. There are no signalized intersections within walking distance of the school. Often, intersection design is unaccommodating to pedestrians with no paved waiting areas and unsafe crossing locations.

#### **Parent Concerns**

#### **National Center for Safe Routes to School Parent Survey**

Parents' attitudes toward walking and biking were surveyed using the National Center for Safe Routes to School Parent Survey.<sup>3</sup> Out of 503 surveys, 144 were returned (29%).

#### **Key Results:**

- The issues most frequently reported to affect the decision to **not** allow a student to walk or bike to/from school are the violence or crime (74%), the speed of traffic along the route (68%), and the weather or climate (63%) by parents of children who do not walk or bike to/from school.
- There is an inverse relationship between the distance a student lives from school and the likelihood they have asked permission to walk or bike to school. Students that live within a mile of school are more likely to ask permission to walk and bike while students that live 1 mile or more from school are less likely to ask permission to walk or bike.
- The majority of parents, 31% estimated the distance between home and school was less than ¼ of a mile.
- The majority of parents reported the family vehicle as the typical mode of arrival (58%) and departure (50%) from school.
- The majority of parents reported the family vehicle as the typical mode of school arrival and departure, regardless of distance student lives from school.

#### Parent Survey Results:

The concern voiced most by parents is the violence or crime in the Linda neighborhood surrounding Cedar Lane Elementary. Many parents expressed trepidation about letting their children walk along Alicia Avenue, Feather River Boulevard, and Riverside Drive due to the lack of sidewalks. Studies have shown that residents of neighborhoods with sidewalks are 47 percent more likely to be active at least 30 minutes a day.<sup>4</sup> Safe, accessible, well-maintained sidewalks

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> National Center for Safe Routes to School, Evaluation: Parent Survey, 2009, available <a href="http://saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/evaluation-parent-survey">http://saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/evaluation-parent-survey</a>; Internet: accessed October 27, 2014.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Sallis J., et al. "Neighborhood Environments and Physical Activity among Adults in 11 countries." American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Vol. 36, No.2

are a fundamental community investment that enhances public health and maximizes social capital.<sup>5</sup> Parents are also hesitant to let their children walk or bike to and from school because of the lack of crossing guards at main intersections near the school. Some parents refused to let their children walk or bike to and from school because of drug use and violence in the neighborhood.

#### **IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO WALKING AND BIKING**

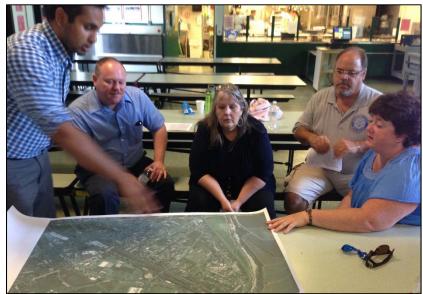
Infrastructure and non-infrastructure barriers to walking and biking to school were identified through a walk audit, field observations, and discussions with school staff, parents, and community members.

#### **Walk Audit**

A walkability and active design audit was conducted on September 5, 2014. Participants included Cedar Lane Elementary school officials and parents, Marysville Unified School District officials, the Yuba County District Supervisor, Yuba County Child Support, Linda Fire Department, Yuba Sheriff's Department, and WALKSacramento staff. The main barrier to safe pedestrian travel identified by the walk audit is the lack of pedestrian infrastructure, namely sidewalks.

#### **Traffic Observations**

Traffic observations were conducted on December 4, 2013 and March 31, 2015. Participants included parents, community members, law enforcement, WALKSacramento staff, and a school administrator. Many of the common traffic observations are listed below:



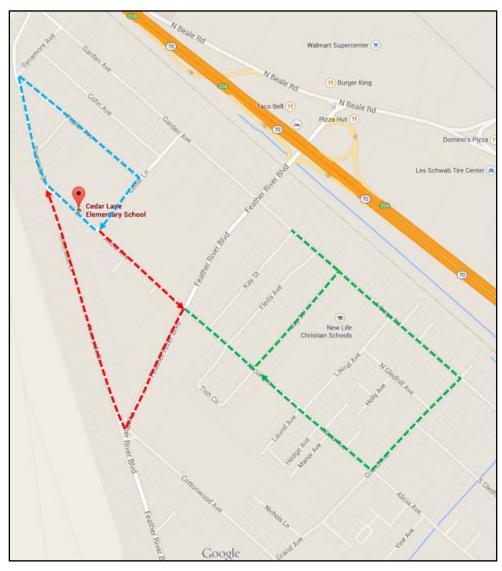
- The intersection of Alicia Avenue and Feather River Boulevard represents a significant barrier to pedestrian Travel.
- Vehicles travel at high speeds along most roadways, coming to abrupt stops at the intersections.
- Pedestrians and cyclists often choose to travel along the middle of a street to avoid uneven pavement and other obstacles
- The intersection of Alicia Avenue and Cedar Lane Avenue is heavily trafficked. The single pedestrian crossing does not accommodate all pedestrians who choose to cross at this intersection
- Stop bars throughout the community are not advanced far enough to allow for adequate spacing between pedestrians and the front of vehicles.
- Vehicle paths of travel are unclear at the intersection of Alicia Avenue and Riverside Drive.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). (October 2012) Urban Street Design Guide pp 24-25. http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2012-nacto-urban-street-design-guide.pdf.

#### **Yuba Coalition Meetings**

The Yuba Safe Routes to School Coalition includes members and staff from local law enforcement agencies, fire departments, public health agencies, schools, city planning and engineering departments and other stakeholder groups and departments. Coalition meetings have been vital in developing an understanding of the built and social environments around Cedar Lane Elementary School.

#### **Walk Audit Route Map**



Cedar Lane Elementary School Walk Audit Report: Page 7

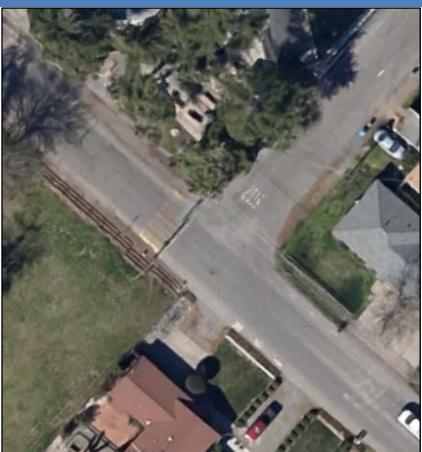
#### INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations apply to both the Marysville Joint Unified School District and Yuba County. The recommendations are in order of priority as determined by members of the Yuba Coalition including staff from: Ella Elementary, Child Support Services, the Olivehurst Fire Department, The Yuba County Sherriff's department, The Marysville Joint Unified School District's Facilities Department, and the County Health Department.

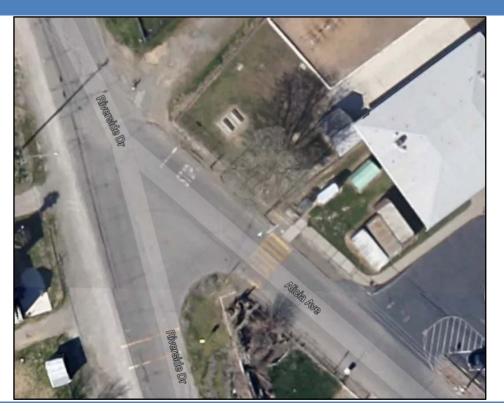
Location Recommendation	Justification
<ul> <li>Develop sidewalks leading to and from the intersection</li> <li>Pave the corners of the intersection and create paved bulb-outs.</li> <li>Pave the pork chop at the north eastern corner</li> <li>Retract the stop bars further from the crosswalks</li> <li>Install trees to provide shading at the intersection</li> <li>Install pedestrian oriented lighting and signage at the intersection</li> <li>Clean up trash</li> <li>Require vehicles to stop before making a right turn from Feather River Boulevard into Alicia Ave.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>This poor sight lines and lengthy crossing distances at this intersection create a barrier for pedestrians, especially young children. The cross walks at the intersection are faded, with no paved sidewalks or waiting areas. Although the intersection has been "squared up" to shorted pedestrian crossing distances, the lack of paved area for pedestrians allows vehicles to encroach upon the pedestrian right of way. To make a two stage crossing, a pedestrian is required to step out of the intersection into unpaved areas or parking lots to wait, effectively removing themselves from a vehicle's line of sight.</li> <li>Pedestrian bulb-outs will not only provide pedestrians an area to stand before crossing, but will force vehicles to slow at corners when making right turns.</li> <li>At the intersection's north western corner, pedestrians traveling east along Alicia Avenue are either directed into a dirt patch or first through a parking lot barricaded by wooden logs. Instead, pedestrians choose the most direct route and walk within the right turn lane, placing themselves in danger of oncoming, often rapidly moving, vehicles.</li> <li>The advanced stop bars were observed to be ineffective. If a vehicle's tires are stopped at the stop bar, it is often the case that the front of the vehicle continues into the pedestrian right-of-way. In addition, several motorists ignored the stop bars all together.</li> <li>The corners of the intersection are littered with trash because the unpaved areas are below grade and collect debris. Pedestrians waiting to cross often must stand in piles of trash. This creates a potential hazard for students and other pedestrians, further discouraging walking or biking.</li> <li>Signage and lighting will help further alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians, especially in the winter months when students may be traveling to and from school in the dark.</li> </ul>



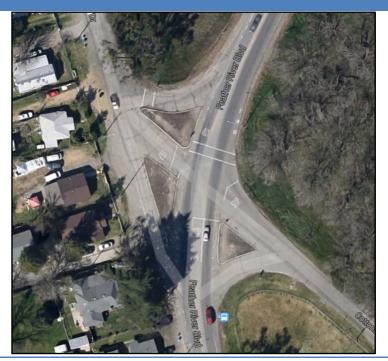
Location	Recommendation	Justification
Alicia Avenue and Cedar Lane Avenue	<ul> <li>Install a three-way stop with retracted stop bars</li> <li>Restripe the intersection with high visibility crosswalks</li> <li>Install pedestrian oriented lighting</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>This intersection is heavily trafficked as the school site's main ingress and egress point. Several students cross at this intersection daily and would be better protected with a three way stop and crosswalks at all legs of the intersection.</li> <li>Pedestrians traveling North along Alicia will often cross diagonally at this intersection to reach the school because the crosswalk is not convenient to the pedestrian path of travel. Additional crosswalks will better direct pedestrian travel and alert drivers to their presence.</li> </ul>
Visual		



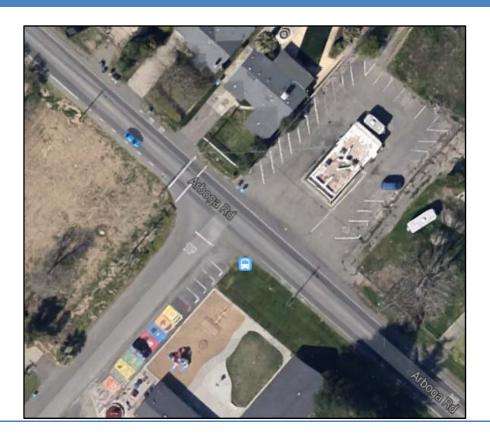
Location	Recommendation	Justification
Alicia Avenue and Riverside Avenue	<ul> <li>Develop an extended paved or vehicle-restricted corner to provide better lane delineation, slow traffic, and reduce confusion at this heavily trafficked intersection.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>The intersection at Alicia Avenue and Riverside Drive is confusing for pedestrians and vehicles because of the amount of non-useable roadway that is formed a result of the two roads coming to a point. Vehicles turning from Alicia Avenue onto Riverside Drive will often not travel all the way to the stop sign first, but simply cut around the corner. This places pedestrians in danger as they make the two stage crossing across both roads.</li> <li>An extended, paved or at least restricted corner at this intersection will provide much better lane delineation, slow traffic around the corner, and provide clearer direction for all modes of traffic.</li> </ul>
3.00		



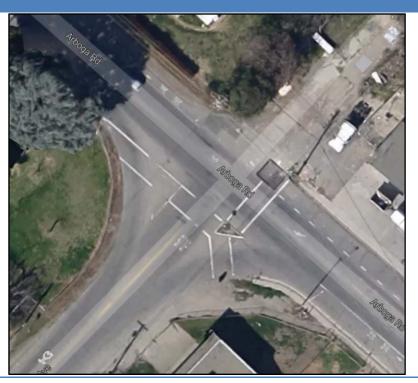
Location	Recommendation	Justification
Feather River Boulevard and Riverside Ave.	<ul> <li>Consider installing a round-a-bout or other methods to improve pedestrian and motorist circulation through this intersection</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>This intersection is severely confusing and creates a significant barrier to pedestrian travel to and from the school. To cross Feather River Boulevard at any location, pedestrians are required to make a multi-stage crossing. There are only three marked crosswalks. The third crosswalk is unsafe, as it is at the late stage of a quick, almost blind, right turn onto Riverside Drive from Feather River Boulevard. There is no yield or stop sign at that location.</li> <li>Pedestrians are unprotected as they travel to the intersection with no sidewalks or paved corners. The pork chop islands are unpaved and do not contain ADA compliant ramps.</li> <li>Because there are essentially 4 separate intersections at this location, it becomes difficult to determine vehicle travel paths as a pedestrian. A round-a-bout would effectively replace the multiple intersections with a far simplified path of travel for both pedestrians and vehicles.</li> </ul>
Vigual		



Location	Recommendation	Justification
Arboga Ave. and Jay Street	<ul> <li>Install a three way stop at this intersection and marked crossings at each leg.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Pedestrians travel along Arboga Avenue on both sides of the road. There are no controlled crossings for pedestrians across Arboga between Feather River Boulevard and Grand Ave, a distance of over half a mile.</li> <li>A crosswalk is already present at this location. An all-way stop would facilitate safe pedestrian crossings. This location is ideal for controlled crossings considering the nearby land uses that include a church, daycare, and commercial market.</li> </ul>
Vicual		



Location	Recommendation	Justification
Arboga Avenue and Grand Avenue	<ul> <li>Install an all-way stop</li> <li>Install accessible pork-chop islands</li> <li>Install marked crosswalks at all legs of the intersection.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Vehicles travel at relatively high speeds along Arboga Avenue. With only two crosswalks, pedestrian travel at this intersection is underaccommodated. Often, because of the lack of paved waiting areas at the corners of the intersection, pedestrians are unseen by motorists who continue through the intersection without stopping long enough.</li> <li>Without pork chop islands, the crossing distance is quite long, and allows for vehicles to make wide, quick turns. An all-way stop, additional crossing opportunities, and paved waiting areas at corners will better facilitate pedestrian travel and safety at this intersection.</li> </ul>
Vigual		



#### Location

# Recommendation Install a continuous

Justification

- Along Alicia Between Grand Ave. and Riverside Drive
  - sidewalk network
- Along Arboga Ave.
- Along Feather River Boulevard between Riverside Ave. and Alicia Ave.
- Restripe shoulders and bike lanes
- Fix drainage issues

• The sidewalk network is either nonexistent or inconsistent along these major roadways and routes to school. Pedestrians, often frustrated with inconsistencies in the sidewalk network choose to walk consistently within the road for the entirety of their trip. Also, along roads with poor drainage and no sidewalks, pedestrians have been observed walking down the center of the road to avoid parked cars, ditches, and uneven paving.



#### **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **Repaving and Restriping**

Several major roadways including Arboga Avenue, Alicia Avenue and Feather River Boulevard are in need of repaving. Cracked and crumbling roads often create barriers to safe, efficient pedestrian travel. Crumbling infrastructure often forces pedestrians out of their paths of travel and sometimes into vehicle lanes.

Crosswalks, lane delineators, and stop bars have faded at several locations throughout the community. Faded crosswalks and lane markings can create a barrier to pedestrian travel and safety. Motorists not aware of crosswalks or stop bars are more likely to impede upon the pedestrian path of travel and put non-motorists in danger.

#### Lighting

Several lamp posts throughout the community require new light bulbs. Lighting, especially in communities with little pedestrian accommodation, is essential for overall safety.

#### **Aggressive Animals**

During the walk audit, several residences were identified as being home to aggressive dogs. Aggressive animals that rush fences can be dangerous, especially to students who may jump away from the animal into the roadway. Local residents should be contacted about their aggressive animals.

#### **ADA Compatibility**

Many street corners throughout the community do not have curb ramps that meet the Americans with Disability Act standards. Construct curb ramps and locate tactile guide strips at intersections.

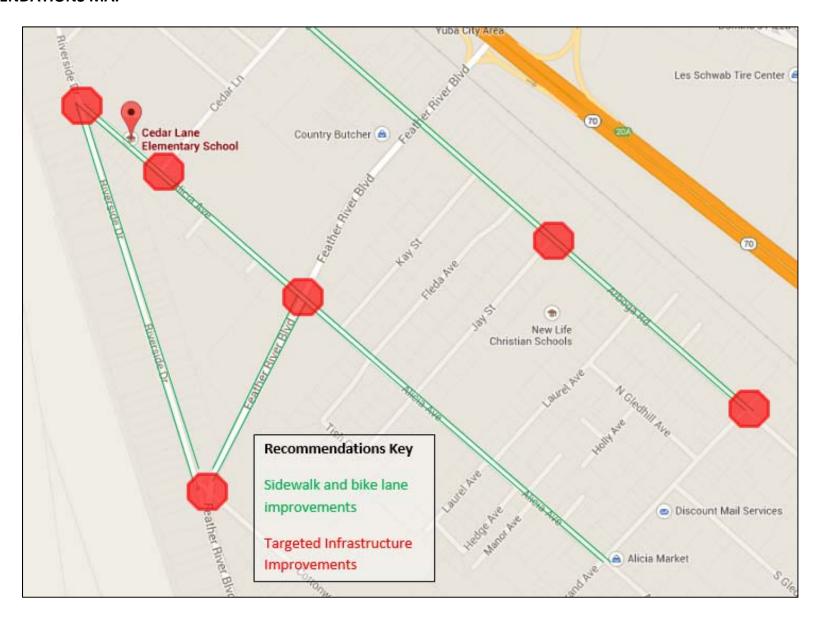
#### Overgrowth

Overgrowth of shrubbery and landscaping can pose a significant barrier to pedestrian travel, as the overgrowth may require pedestrians to go out of their way, often within the street. Local businesses and landowners should be contacted about trimming their unruly yards.

#### Parked cars and trash cans

Parked cars and trash bins along roadways without sidewalks can pose yet another impediment to pedestrians. Large objects within the pedestrian path of travel may require pedestrians to travel out of their way, often into the street. Also, larger objects may shield smaller pedestrians (students) from the view of motorists.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS MAP**



## **APPENDIX A: National Center for Safe Routes to School Parent Survey Form**

Parent Survey About Walking and Biking to School	+ +
Dear Parent or Caregiver, Your child's school wants to learn your thoughts about children walking and biking to school. This survey will take about 5 - 10 minutes to complete. We ask that each family complete only one survey per school your children attend. If more than one child from a school brings a survey home, please fill out the survey for the child with the next birthday from today's date.	8. Has your child asked you for permission to walk or bike to/from school in the last year? Yes No  9. At what grade would you allow your child to walk or bike to/from school without an adult?  (Select a grade between PK,K,1,2,3) grade (or) I would not feel comfortable at any grade
After you have completed this survey, send it back to the school with your child or give it to the teacher. Your responses will be kept confidential and neither your name nor your child's name will be associated with any results.  Thank you for participating in this survey!	Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box  10. What of the following issues affected your decision to allow, or not allow, your child to walk or bike to/from school if this problem were changed or improved? (Select one
+ CAPITAL LETTERS ONLY - BLUE OR BLACK INK ONLY + School Name:	school? (Select ALL that apply) choice per line, mark box with X)
	My child already walks or bikes to/from school  Distance
1. What is the grade of the child who brought home this survey?  Grade (PK,K,1,2,3)	Convenience of driving
2. Is the child who brought home this survey male or female?	Time
3. How many children do you have in Kindergarten through 8 <sup>th</sup> grade?	Child's before or after-school activities
4. What is the street intersection nearest your home? (Provide the names of two intersecting streets)	Speed of traffic along route
and	Amount of traffic along route
Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box.  5. How far does your child live from school?	Adults to walk or bike with
Less than ¼ mile	Sidewalks or pathways
☐ ¼ mile up to ½ mile ☐ 1 mile up to 2 miles ☐ Don't know	Safety of intersections and crossings
Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box.	☐ Crossing guards         Yes         No         Not Sure
6. On most days, how does your child arrive and leave for school? (Select one choice per column, mark box with X)	Violence or crime
Arrive at school   Leave from school   Walk   Walk	Weather or climate
Bike Bike	+ Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box
	12. In your opinion, how much does your child's school encourage or discourage walking and biking to/from school?
School Bus School Bus  Family vehicle (only children in your family)  Family vehicle (only children in your family)	Strongly Encourages Encourages Neither Discourages Strongly Discourages  13. How much fun is walking or biking to/from school for your child?
Carpool (Children from other families)  Carpool (Children from other families)	Very Fun Fun Neutral Boring Very Boring
Transit (city bus, subway, etc.)	14. How healthy is walking or biking to/from school for your child?
Other (skateboard, scooter, inline skates, etc.)  Other (skateboard, scooter, inline skates, etc.)	Very Healthy Healthy Unhealthy Very Unhealthy
+ Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box +	+ Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box +
7. How long does it normally take your child to get to/from school? (Select one choice per column, mark box with X)	15. What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?
Travel time to school  Travel time from school	Grades 1 through 8 (Elementary)  College 1 to 3 years (Some college or technical school)
Less than 5 minutes	Grades 9 through 11 (Some high school) College 4 years or more (College graduate)
5 – 10 minutes 5 – 10 minutes	Grade 12 or GED (High school graduate) Prefer not to answer
11 – 20 minutes 11 – 20 minutes	16. Please provide any additional comments below.
More than 20 minutes More than 20 minutes	
Don't know / Not sure	
+ +	

## **APPENDIX B: National Center for Safe Routes to School Travel Tally Form**

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Key	S= sur R= rai O=ove SN=sn	ny ercast	Nu	ımb	er in when made		-			-			-			Only with			m ch	Riding with m children from other families			City bus,				Skate-board scooter, etc		
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'hurs. PM Please lis																													

## **APPENDIX C: WALKSacramento Traffic Behavior Observation Form**

Scho	ol:				Date:/	/	Observer Name:				
Addr	ress:				Begin Time: _		Notes:				
Loca	tion:				End Time: _		_				
	ERAL QUESTIONS ABO	UT INTERSECTION & MC	OVEMENT SU		No d)	Mara tha inters	sections difficult to negotiate?				
b) Is	there a crossing signal	for the movement surve		Yes	No e)	Are motorists d	Iriving safely and obeying the law?				
		ed by Crossing Guard/Stu				in general, are	drivers yielding (closest to intersection)? Yes No				
#	MODE	DEMOGRAPHIC (#)	e one (1) obse	ervation line per pe	erson]:		Notes: Example- Arrived at crossing alone, pair, groups. Crossing behind cars.				
	Pedestrian Cyclist, Helmet? Yes No Other (specify):	Preschool (0-5):	Crossing at designated crossing?  Yes	Pushed signal button (individual or group)?	Waited for light/ guard to cross? Yes	Looked L/R/L before crossing? Yes					
	Pedestrian Cyclist, Helmet? Yes No Other (specify):	Preschool (0-5): Child (6-12): Teen (13-18): Adult (19-60): Senior (60+):	crossing? or group)?  Yes  Yes	designated button (individu crossing? or group)?  Yes Yes	designated button (individual crossing? or group)?  Yes		designated button (individual crossing? or group)?  Yes Yes		Waited for light/ guard to cross? Yes	Looked L/R/L before crossing? Yes	
	Pedestrian Cyclist, Helmet? Yes No Other (specify):	Preschool (0-5):	Crossing at designated crossing?  Yes	Pushed signal button (individual or group)? Yes	Waited for light/ guard to cross? Yes	Looked L/R/L before crossing? Yes					
	Pedestrian Cyclist, Helmet? Yes No Other (specify):	Preschool (0-5):	Crossing at designated crossing?  Yes	Pushed signal button (individual or group)? Yes	Waited for light/ guard to cross?  Yes	Looked L/R/L before crossing? Yes					
‡of N	Viotorists:	# of Motorists parked in No Parking zone:	# of Motorist pedestrians:	s don't yield to	# of Motorists street:	U-turn in	Other Motorist behavior:				