

Paving the Way for Safe Routes to School:  
Thomas Edison Language Institute  
Walkability and Active Design Audit Report  
October 2014



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## SCHOOL LOCATION

Thomas Edison Language Institute is located at 2950 Hurley Way in Sacramento, California. For the 2012-2013 school year, 554 students were enrolled, of which 81% were eligible for free or reduced price meals.<sup>1</sup> The 2012-2013 attendance boundary is shown below.



<sup>1</sup> California Department of Education, Free/Reduced Meals Program and CalWORKS Data Files, 2013. Available from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filessp.asp>. Accessed on April 24, 2014.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

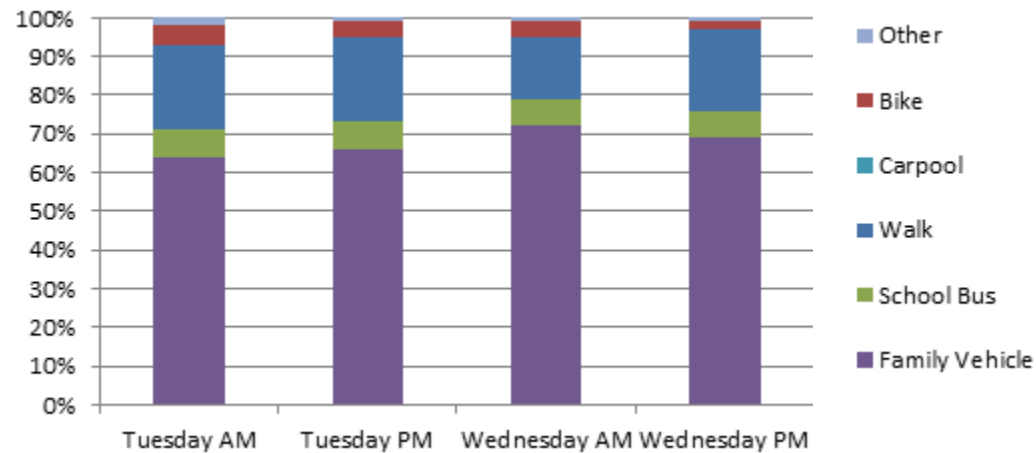
### Mode Split

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	368	22%	5%	7%	64%	0%	0.3%	2%
Tuesday PM	359	22%	4%	7%	66%	0%	0.3%	0.8%
Wednesday AM	352	16%	4%	7%	72%	0%	0.3%	1%
Wednesday PM	345	21%	2%	7%	69%	0%	0.3%	0.9%

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

### Thomas Edison Mode Share Split



<sup>2</sup> National Center for Safe Routes to School, Evaluation: Student In-Class Travel Tally, 2013, available <http://saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/evaluation-student-class-travel-tally>. Accessed April 24, 2014.

## Parent Concerns

### Sidewalks

The concern voiced most by parents is the lack of sidewalks in the Arden Manor neighborhood surrounding Thomas Edison Language Institute. Many parents express trepidation about letting their children walk along Hurley Way without sidewalks due to the fast speeds of motorists, distracted walking on road shoulders, and the number of students that walk in large groups, forced to walk close to the road. Parents are hesitant to let their children walk along Hurley Way and Morse Avenue to school and many refuse to let their children participate in events such as Walk and Bike to School days.

Studies have shown that residents of neighborhoods with sidewalks are 47 percent more likely to be active at least 30 minutes a day.<sup>3</sup> Safe, accessible, well-maintained sidewalks are a fundamental community investment that enhances public health and maximizes social capital.<sup>4</sup>

### 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>5</sup> Out of 100 surveys, 80 were returned (80%).

#### 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 distance (71%), the speed of traffic along the route (57%), and the amount of traffic along the route (46%) by parents of children who do not walk or bike to/from school.
- The issues most frequently reported to affect the decision **to allow** a student to walk or bike to/from school are distance (60%), speed of traffic along the route (20%), and amount of traffic along the route (40%).
- 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, 34% 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 (76%) and departure (82%) 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.

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<sup>3</sup> Sallis J., et al. "Neighborhood Environments and Physical Activity among Adults in 11 countries." American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Vol. 36, No.2

<sup>4</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>.

<sup>5</sup> National Center for Safe Routes to School, Evaluation: Parent Survey, 2009, available <http://saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/evaluation-parent-survey>; Internet: accessed May 2012.



## 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 walk audit was conducted on April 8, 2014. Participants included Thomas Edison Language Institute school officials and parents, Arden Manor Community Action Group members, Arden Manor Recreation and Park District staff, Safe Kids Greater Sacramento Coalition staff, WALKSacramento staff, and a California Highway Patrol officer.

The main barrier to safe walking and biking identified by the walk audit is the lack of pedestrian infrastructure, namely sidewalks.

### Traffic Observations

Traffic observations were conducted on November 12, 2013. Participants included parents, community members, WALKSacramento staff, and a school administrator.

Follow up traffic observations will be conducted in the fall of 2014.

### Video Voice

In Spring 2014, WALKSacramento hosted a Video Voice project for the Thomas Edison Leadership team with teacher, Hillary Hartwell and Communication Specialist for the San Juan Unified School District, Daniel Thigpen. In a Video Voice, students discuss their community's strengths or weaknesses through film. Thomas Edison's project highlighted student concerns related to the built environment around the school.

Students participated in National Bike to School Day on May 7 and used the opportunity to film their classmates as they commuted to school. They noted the infrastructure barriers to safe walking and biking on Hurley Way and offered insight into some of the changes that could make the streets safer for walking and biking. Examples include posting signage that alerts motorists that they are entering a school zone and adding sidewalks to protect pedestrians from bicycle and vehicle traffic. The video voice project can be viewed here: <http://vimeo.com/99355701>.



Thomas Edison students participate in the Video Voice project identifying barriers to walking to and from school.

## INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

ID	Location	Recommendation	Justification
1	Hurley Way, from Fulton Avenue to Morse Avenue ; Northwest of Morse Avenue to connect with Hurley Way	Provide sidewalk infill along Hurley Way.  Prioritize: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Northside of Hurley Way, East of school</li> <li>2. Northside of Hurley Way, West of school</li> <li>3. Morse Avenue. See ID #3.</li> <li>4. Southside of Hurley Way, East of school</li> <li>5. Southside of Hurley Way, West of school</li> </ol>	<p>Many students walk and bike along Hurley Way en route to Thomas Edison and are forced to walk in the street. Hurley Way is heavily walked by neighborhood residents. Elderly citizens living at the apartment complex on Hurley Way and Morse Avenue do not use Hurley Way because of safety concerns – concerns that may be alleviated with the addition of sidewalks. Cyclists and pedestrians compete for shoulder space along these segments. Cyclists often ride in the street to avoid hitting pedestrians. Sidewalks will make the experience safer for both pedestrians and bicyclists.</p> <p>Priorities evaluated in meeting conducted on August 18, 2014. Meeting participants included WALKSacramento staff, Thomas Edison principal, school parent liaison, and Sacramento DOT engineers.</p>

### Visual



Visual A: Dashed line indicates lack of sidewalks.



Visual B: East on Hurley Way towards Morse Avenue



ID	Location	Recommendation	Justification
2	Intersection of Hurley Way and Topaz Way/Michael Lane	<p>Consider marking the south crosswalk across Hurley Way.</p> <p>Update the traffic signal to include an advanced pedestrian signal.</p> <p>Install “no turn on red from 7am-9am and 1pm-3pm” signs on eastbound Hurley Way at Michael Lane.</p> <p>Improve corners of Hurley Way at Topaz Way/Michael Lane to current ADA standards.</p>	<p>Students enter and exit the school campus on a sidewalk along the west of Michael Lane. The intersection is often backed up and students must wait on the gravel where they are at risk of being hit by motorists turning right onto Hurley Way. The eastern crosswalk on Hurley Way provides a path for pedestrians that dead-ends at Michael Lane. Although it is unmarked, many students cross Michael Lane. A crosswalk would help to visibly identify students to drivers.</p> <p>An advanced pedestrian signal would allow students enough time to safely cross before cars enter the Michael Lane driveway.</p> <p>Vehicles back up along the Michael Lane driveway during school hours. No turn on red signs would limit the number of cars entering the driveway so they do not block the crosswalk.</p> <p>Accessible curb ramps are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at all crosswalks.</p>

#### Visual



Visual A: West on Hurley Way towards Fulton Avenue



Visual A: Intersection of Hurley Way and Topaz Way/Michael Lane.  
Construct curb ramps on the south side (left) of Hurley Way to mirror the north side.



Visual B: Walk audit participants wait to cross at the intersection of Hurly Way and Topaz Way.

ID	Location	Recommendation	Justification
3	Morse Avenue between Trussel Way and Hurley Way.	Construct sidewalks along Morse Avenue between Trussel Way and Hurley Way.	Students walk from surrounding neighborhood, particularly apartment complex on Morse Avenue and Berkshire Way, to reach Thomas Edison. Students are forced to walk on the shoulder adjacent to large ditches. In order to reach the bus stop at the corner of Morse Avenue and Hurley Way, pedestrians must walk on loose gravel, which is frequently littered with debris. Because there are no sidewalks directing movement, pedestrians cross mid – block, often with obstructed lines of sight when the bus is present.

#### Visual



Visual A: Dashed red lines indicate lack of sidewalk.  
Blue star indicates bus stop location.





Visual B: Bus stop shelter at corner of Morse Avenue and Hurley Way.



Visual C: Walking South on Morse Ave towards Hurley Way

ID	Location	Recommendation	Justification
4	Hurley Way and Fulton Avenue.	<p>Remove or construct minimum four feet clearance around utility poles obstructing sidewalk on Hurley Way.</p> <p>Decrease slope of driveway on Hurley Way near Fulton Avenue and relocate utility pole.</p>	<p>There are many utility poles that obstruct the walking path, making it difficult for wheelchair users and parents pushing strollers to navigate the tight space. Wheelchair users are unable to use the narrow sidewalk and are forced into the street where they risk being hit by motorists.</p> <p>The high slope of the adjacent driveway on Hurley Way near Fulton Avenue makes it difficult for wheelchair users to safely continue on the pedestrian path.</p> <p>According to the County Improvement Standards, Section 4: "For standard sidewalks that are attached to the roadway curbing (monolithic), all utility poles, guy wires, cabinets, hydrants, signs and other above ground facilities shall be located behind the sidewalk, within the easement for public utilities and public facilities, where possible. If such is not possible, the conflicting facility shall be located such that there is a minimum of four feet clear space for pedestrian use of the sidewalk. Where it is necessary to widen the sidewalk beyond its standard width to attain the 4-foot minimum clearance, the widened area shall extend a minimum of 10 feet beyond each side of the obstruction and a 10-foot taper on each side of the widening shall be provided."</p>

#### Visual



Visuals A + B: Utility pole on south side of Hurley Way obstructs pedestrian path.





Visual C: Utility pole on north side of Hurley Way

ID	Location	Recommendation	Justification
5	Hurley Way, between Fulton Avenue and Topaz Way	Install "SCHOOL ZONE" signage.	Motorists drive at high speeds along Hurley Way, using it to travel from Fulton Boulevard to Watt Avenue. Thomas Edison Language Institute is not visible from Hurley Way. Install signage to remind drivers they are in a school zone and there may be children present.

ID	Location	Recommendation	Justification
6	Bus stop at corner of Morse Avenue and Hurley Way.	Trim bushes along Morse Avenue.	Overgrown foliage limits pedestrian pathway accessibility. Pedestrians cross at mid-block because there are no sidewalks along Morse Avenue. Bushes limit ability to see beyond bus and make for an uncomfortable waiting experience. Overgrown bushes may also provide predators places to hide.

#### Visual

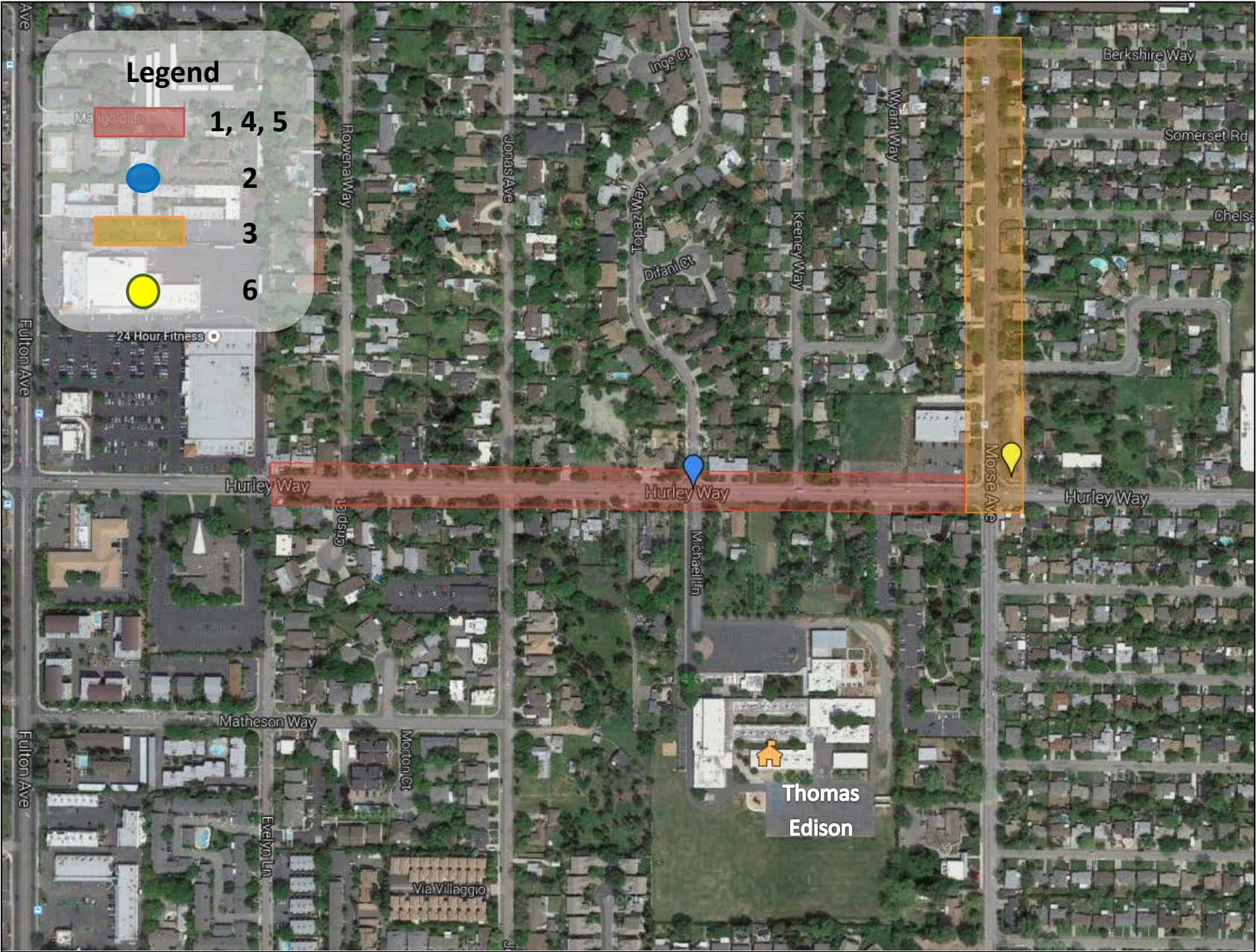


Visual A: Foliage blocking path.

Visual B: Foliage blocking bus driver line of sight and visibility of bus stop.



MAP OF IDENTIFICATIONS:



## **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **Landscaping**

Streets are not well landscaped and are aesthetically displeasing and discourage walking. Where foliage does exist, many areas are not well maintained and encroach upon the walking path. Encourage neighborhood residents to plant shade trees in their yards to provide shade for pedestrians and improve the overall walking experience.

Sidewalks are often too narrow for parents to walk side by side with their student and difficult for strollers and wheelchairs to navigate. Construct wider sidewalks to County standard. Remove utilities and other obstructions in the middle of sidewalks.

### **ADA Compatibility**

Many street corners throughout the Arden Manor neighborhood do not have curb ramps that meet the American Disability Act standards. Construct curb ramps and locate truncated domes at lacking intersections.

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

While many students already walk and bike to Thomas Edison Language Institute, there is great potential to increase those numbers. A key method to achieving these increases is to improve safety for pedestrians by constructing sidewalks. The responsibility for increasing numbers of children walking and biking to school does not fall on one group. Improvements to walking and biking are achievable through the partnership of community and school leaders, parents, the Sacramento County Department of Transportation, the San Juan Unified School District, and partner organizations. Partners are encouraged to pursue funding to implement the recommendations provided in this report as opportunities become available.



## APPENDIX A: TRAFFIC OBSERVATIONS

### Motorists:

- Speeding
- Parking in No Parking zones
- Zooming around turning cars
- Failing to yield to pedestrians
- Urging kids to run across traffic

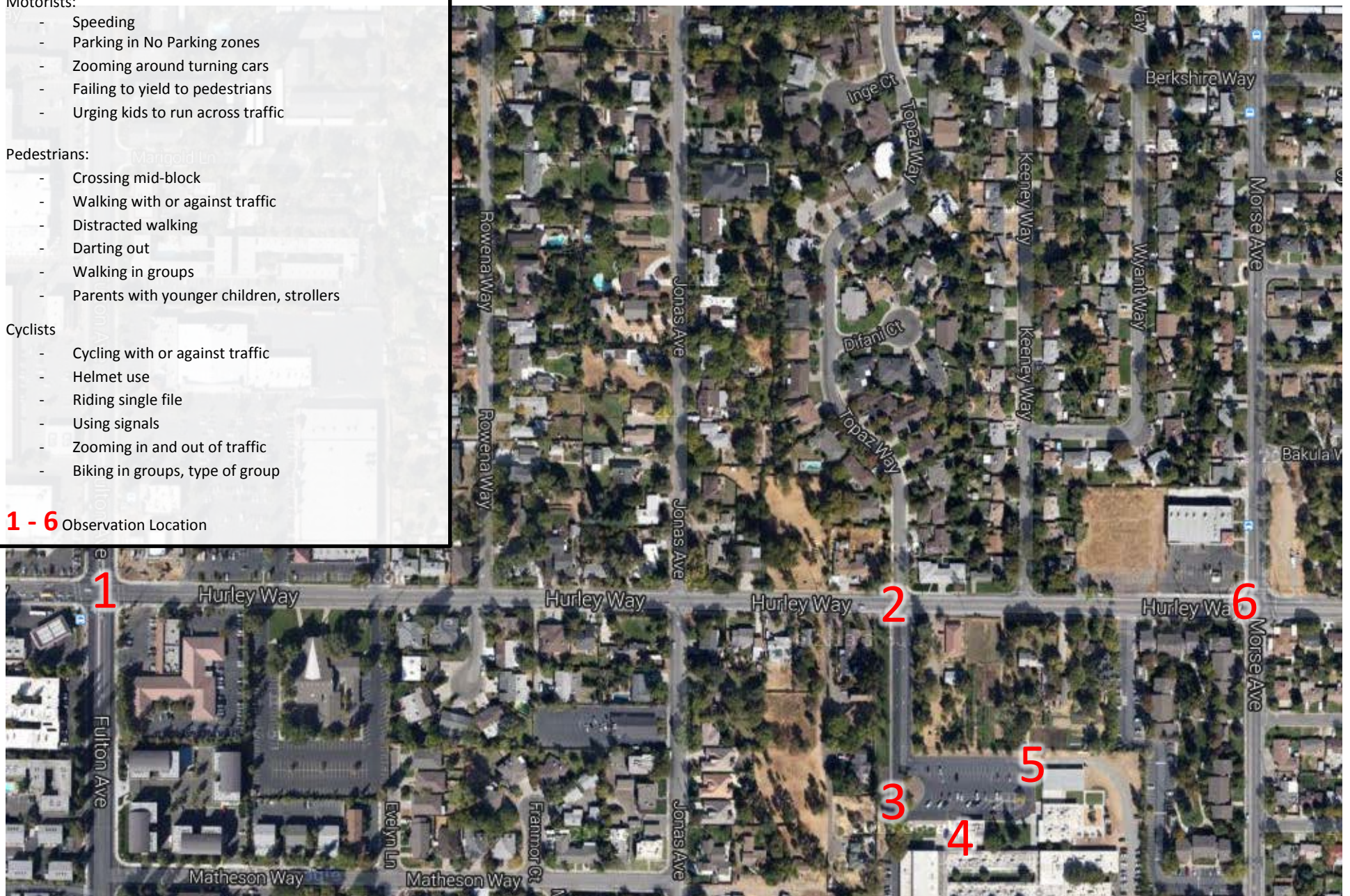
### Pedestrians:

- Crossing mid-block
- Walking with or against traffic
- Distracted walking
- Darting out
- Walking in groups
- Parents with younger children, strollers

### Cyclists

- Cycling with or against traffic
- Helmet use
- Riding single file
- Using signals
- Zooming in and out of traffic
- Biking in groups, type of group

**1 - 6** Observation Location



### **1. Notes from Fulton and Hurley**

No sidewalks, deep ditches along road, no center lanes, lots of speeding, lots of pedestrians, lots of little kids walking alone, a couple of bikes without helmets. People walk down street away from crossing guard to cross mid-block so they don't have to wait for light. Parents walk through parking lot with kids, feel safer behind cars than on road? Some older kids (high school?) walk three-deep, in road, on phone. Cars pass on right, where people walk and bike.

### **2. Notes from the Driveway Entrance**

Conflict between cars turning right and turning left into school driveway. Cars waiting to turn right clogging traffic. Cars use bike lane to go around westbound cars waiting to go right. 4 kids without helmets, but not very many bikes in general. Lots of people walking with traffic or biking against traffic. Crossing guards really good, kept kids in order; it was clear the crossing guards know the kids well. Most parents walked on street side of kids, held hands. There were lots and lots of people leaving the school on foot. People had to wait through several light cycles to cross Hurley. It is difficult to keep all the people on the sidewalk because it is so narrow. There is a grassy area on the west side of the sidewalk, but the school fence creates a bottleneck just before entering the street. People who wanted to leave the school and head west were forced to wait through many cycles of the light just to get to the exit and not cross the street. Lines on driveway exit confusing, old lines showing through.

### **3. Notes from the Bike Racks**

Cars: Parking in red zone (19 cars); Speeding (9 cars); No seatbelt (13 cars); Not in car seat (1 car)

Bikes: mostly adults, no helmets, mostly riding toward school and walking with bike and kid away from school. One kid with a helmet and one kid without

Walking: Many groups of one adult and multiple kids, a few families with dogs, and a few groups of kids without adults. A few unruly children running in parking lot, and rough housing, a few parents and kids on cell phones/with headphones, many kids walking in gutter, one kids with a yoyo.

### **4. Notes from the Administration Office Entrance**

Two lines of cars, one nearer to curb that stops, one further from curb that continues. Some parents had kids run to further line of cars and jump in without stopping all the way. Parents honk at each other, at their kids. There's a crossing guard in the parking lot crossing Kids were generally calm and waiting for their parents to come through the line to get them.

### **5. Notes from the Back Parking Lot**

Families darting through traffic (about 10); Cars parked in red zones; Car parked on sidewalk; Cars not yielding to pedestrians; Driving wrong way in parking lot  
Distracted driving; Parking lot needs to be repainted

**6. Notes from Morse and Hurley** (This group came back before school got out) There was very little traffic, but a couple of angry motorists and lots of speeding. There was also a nice man trimming a hedge.



## APPENDIX B: NATIONAL CENTER FOR SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PARENT SURVEY FORM

Parent Survey About Walking and Biking to School																	
<p><b>Dear Parent or Caregiver,</b>            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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Thank you for participating in this survey!</b></p>																	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; background-color: #d3d3d3; display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>+</span> <span><b>CAPITAL LETTERS ONLY – BLUE OR BLACK INK ONLY</b></span> <span>+</span> </div>																	
<p><b>School Name:</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; width: 100%;"></div>																	
<p>1. What is the grade of the child who brought home this survey? <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">  </span> Grade (PK,K,1,2,3...)</p>																	
<p>2. Is the child who brought home this survey male or female? <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">  </span> Male <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">  </span> Female</p>																	
<p>3. How many children do you have in Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade? <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">  </span></p>																	
<p>4. What is the street intersection nearest your home? (Provide the names of two intersecting streets)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span style="width: 45%;"></span> <span style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">and</span> <span style="width: 45%;"></span> </div>																	
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<p>5. How far does your child live from school?</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Less than ¼ mile</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> ½ mile up to 1 mile</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> More than 2 miles</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> ¼ mile up to ½ mile</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> 1 mile up to 2 miles</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</div> </div>																	
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<p>6. On most days, how does your child arrive and leave for school? (Select one choice per column, mark box with X)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Arrive at school</th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Leave from school</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Walk</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Walk</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Bike</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Bike</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> School Bus</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> School Bus</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Family vehicle (only children in your family)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Family vehicle (only children in your family)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Carpool (Children from other families)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Carpool (Children from other families)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Transit (city bus, subway, etc.)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Transit (city bus, subway, etc.)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other (skateboard, scooter, inline skates, etc.)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other (skateboard, scooter, inline skates, etc.)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Arrive at school	Leave from school	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk	<input type="checkbox"/> Bike	<input type="checkbox"/> Bike	<input type="checkbox"/> School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/> School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/> Family vehicle (only children in your family)	<input type="checkbox"/> Family vehicle (only children in your family)	<input type="checkbox"/> Carpool (Children from other families)	<input type="checkbox"/> Carpool (Children from other families)	<input type="checkbox"/> Transit (city bus, subway, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Transit (city bus, subway, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (skateboard, scooter, inline skates, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (skateboard, scooter, inline skates, etc.)
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<p>7. How long does it normally take your child to get to/from school? (Select one choice per column, mark box with X)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Travel time to school</th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Travel time from school</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 minutes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 5 – 10 minutes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 5 – 10 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 11 – 20 minutes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 11 – 20 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> More than 20 minutes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> More than 20 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / Not sure</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / Not sure</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Travel time to school	Travel time from school	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 – 10 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 – 10 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> 11 – 20 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> 11 – 20 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 20 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 20 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / Not sure				
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<p>8. Has your child asked you for permission to walk or bike to/from school in the last year? <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">  </span> Yes <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">  </span> No</p>																	
<p>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...) <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">  </span> grade (or) <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">  </span> I would not feel comfortable at any grade</p>																	
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