

# **WALKABILITY HEROES** **AT-HOME STUDENT AND** **FAMILY WALK AUDIT** **GUIDE**



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## Welcome!

Welcome to becoming a walkability hero for your community! Walking and biking are fun and healthy ways to get around our community, especially school!

Before we can walk or bike to school, the park, or other cool places in our community, we have to make sure it is safe and easy to walk and bike. Walkability heroes observe the community to understand if walking and biking are safe and comfortable or if their community needs improvements. Once they identify ideas on how to improve their community, they become a walkability hero by advocating for change. This guide will walk you through how to become a walkability hero step-by-step.

## Vocabulary

First, it is important to know a few key vocabulary words:

- **Walk audit or bike audit:** - a walk or bike around a route that you choose to look at how easy or how hard it is to walk or bike. Walk audits help us discuss critical concerns or ideas about walking and biking to other community members, city/county staff, schools, and local businesses. You will conduct a walk or bike audit on your journey to becoming a walkability hero.
- **Walkability:** how easy it is to walk in a specific place
- **Bikeability:** how easy it is to bike in a specific place
- **Built environment:** the physical parts of where we live, work, and play like buildings, streets, sidewalks, and parks
- **Pedestrian:** a person who walks
- **Intersection:** where two roads meet and where there is often a crosswalk.

## Remember to practice safe and responsible walking and biking no matter where you are!

### Pedestrian Safety Tips

1. **Stop at the curb.** Look left, right, and left again before crossing. Keep looking as you cross.
2. **Cross at crosswalks.** Cross at crosswalks or intersections. Obey traffic signals when they are there.
3. **Watch for cars.** Watch for cars that are turning or backing up.
4. **Walk on sidewalks.** Walk on sidewalks or paths. If there are no sidewalks, face traffic and stay left.

5. **Make eye contact.** Make eye contact with drivers before crossing in front of them.

### **Bike Safety Tips**

1. **Check your equipment.** Check your equipment before riding, inflate tires properly and check that your brakes work.
2. **Helmets are the law.** It's the law to wear a helmet if you are under 18, whether you bike, scoot, or skate to school.
3. **Ride right.** Bikes travel with traffic, not against it, so ride on the right side of the road.
4. **Obey all traffic laws.** When riding in the street, obey all traffic signs, signals, and lane markings.
5. **See and be seen.** Wear something that reflects light and place reflectors on your bike

## **Getting Started**

Plan to go on a walk with a friend, an adult, or an entire family. On the walk, you will talk about

- How easy or how difficult it is to walk, bike, or skate
- What you enjoy or do not enjoy about walking, biking, or skating along your route
- Brainstorm ideas to make it easier or more enjoyable to walk, bike, or skate  
Examples include:
  - More sidewalks or wider sidewalks
  - More bike lanes
  - Crosswalks
  - Streetlights
- Identify other ideas that might inspire more people to walk, bike, or skate.  
Examples include:
  - More Trees
  - Places to go like a smoothie place, a teen center, a park, etc.
  - Signs for bike routes and nearby destinations

## **Materials Needed**

1. Pen or pencil
2. Notebook, your phone or clipboard, and paper to take notes (A printable note sheet and checklist are included in this packet)
3. Camera or your phone camera (photos and videos are a great way to help tell your story)
4. Personal belongings - a mask, water, bright-colored clothing, a helmet if you are biking, skating, or scooting

5. A buddy! Walk with your family or a friend
6. Your route map

## Instructions

Step-by-step directions to get you walking!

### **Step 1: Plan Your Route and Gather Your Materials**

1. Plan a route to walk with your family or friends. Think of places you regularly go, like school, a park, or another nearby area in your neighborhood.
  - *Route planning tips:*
    - i. Choose a route.
    - ii. Use Google Maps to plan your route or draw your route map on a piece of paper.
    - iii. Try to plan for a 20 - 30-minute walk.
    - iv. Don't forget to take your route map with you!
2. Gather your materials (see list above).

### **Step 2: Ready, Set, Walk!**

1. Now it is time to go out and walk! Make sure to take notes and take photos or videos of what you see. Use the printable note sheet and checklist to help guide you.

### **Step 3: You've walked, now what? Your final step to becoming a walkability hero!**

1. Once you get back from your walk, complete the checklist and note sheet included in this workbook.
2. Choose how you want to raise awareness about what you find on your walk audit and why it is important to make improvements. Here are some ideas:
  - a. Write a letter to your community leaders or elected officials (how-to guide included)
  - b. Create a video voice or photovoice showing what you found (how-to guide included)
  - c. Submit your findings on the Street Stories UC Berkley Tool.

Street Story is a community engagement tool where individuals can anonymously report collisions, near-misses, and places they feel safe or unsafe. You can use street story to input your findings during your audit or afterward. All entries are anonymous.

Visit <https://streetstory.berkeley.edu> and follow the instructions to enter your feedback on your computer or phone. You can share information on infrastructure (sidewalk and bike lane conditions) and information about actual occurrences. If you know someone or had a personal experience in a collision or near miss, you can report that too. This information

helps us better understand what is happening on the street and how we can create safe more sustainable streets. Note: If you are 13 years of age or younger, your parents or guardian must enter information on the Street Story tool. If you're 13 years of age or older, you can enter your findings on the Street Story tool on your own.

**See next page for worksheets.**

## School / Neighborhood Walk Audit Notes

### Tell us what you see.

#### Things to note when walking:

Did you have room to walk?

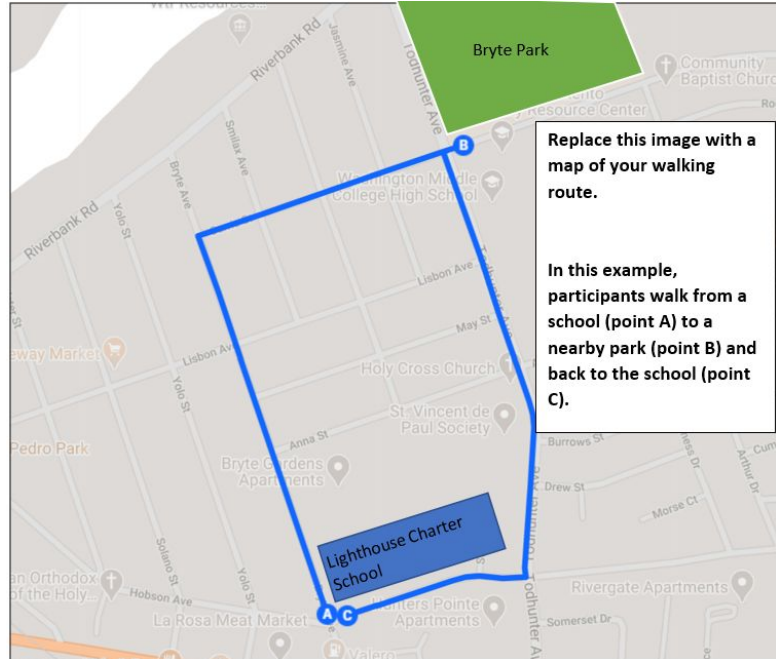
- Sidewalks are broken or cracked.
- Sidewalks blocked
- No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
- Too much traffic

Was it easy to cross streets?

- Road too wide
- Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross.
- Crosswalks/traffic signals are needed.
- View of traffic blocked by parked cars, trees, or plants.

Did drivers behave well?

- Do drivers yield to pedestrians?
- Drive too fast?
- Use cellphone or device when driving?
- Not obey stop signs or other traffic laws?



Replace this image with a map of your walking route.

In this example, participants walk from a school (point A) to a nearby park (point B) and back to the school (point C).

As you walk along the route, for each noteworthy feature you observe, write a number at the map location. Write a brief description of your observation below with the matching number on the map.

**Where are you walking? Tell us where you are walking such as a school (name of school) or neighborhood. Make sure not to share your personal information like your home address but you can share street names.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Write your notes here:**

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**Additional notes:**

## Walk Audit Checklist

*This walk audit checklist is adapted from the AARP Walkability checklist and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.*

Directions: Fill out the following checklist to note problems in the walking environment.

For each sentence you agree with, put in X in the brackets [ ]. *Example: [X] No sidewalks or paths*

### 1. Sidewalks:

- No sidewalks or paths
- Sidewalks are broken, cracked, or have trip hazards
- Sidewalks are blocked by overgrown landscaping, poles, signs, plants, vehicles, etc.
- Sidewalk is not continuous
- Sidewalk is not wide enough (two people cannot easily walk together side by side)
- Sidewalk has nothing separating it from the street (grass, trees, parked cars)
- Other things I noticed:

### Score the overall quality and safety of sidewalks.

1 = pretty bad      2 = not bad      3 = great

The overall quality of sidewalks on my walk was:      1      2      3

The overall safety of sidewalks on my walk was:      1      2      3

**Sidewalk quality and safety score (add up the two scores above):\_\_\_\_\_**



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## 2. Street Crossings and Intersections:

- The road is too wide to cross easily
- Traffic signals do not give enough time to cross the street
- The crossing does not have a pedestrian-activated button
- There is no crosswalk, or it is poorly marked
- I have to walk too far to find a safe, marked crosswalk
- Intersection does not have a curb ramp for carts, wheelchairs, strollers, walkers, etc.
- Other things I noticed:

### Score the overall quality and safety of street crossings and intersections.

1 = pretty bad      2 = not bad    3 = great

The overall quality of street crossings and sidewalks on my walk was: 1    2    3

The overall safety of street crossings and sidewalks on my walk was: 1    2    3

**Street crossings and intersections quality and safety score (add up the two scores above):\_\_\_\_\_**

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### 3. Driver Behavior:

- Drivers do not stop at stop signs or stop behind the crosswalk
- Drivers appear to be speeding
- Drivers do not yield to people walking
- Drivers are distracted (on the phone, texting, paying attention to passengers rather than the road)
- Drivers aren't looking out for people walking, make unexpected turns, or seem hostile
- Other things I noticed:

#### Score the overall quality and safety of driver behavior.

1 = pretty bad      2 = not bad      3 = great

The overall quality of driver behavior on my walk was: 1      2      3

The overall safety of driver behavior on my walk was: 1      2      3

**Driver behavior quality and safety score (add up the two scores above):\_\_\_\_\_**

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#### 4. Safety:

- Car speeds are too fast
- There's too much traffic
- Streetlights are few or not present
- There are people on the street who seem threatening
- Unleashed dogs or other loose intimidating animals are present
- Other things I noticed:

#### Score the overall feeling of safety.

1 = pretty bad      2 = not bad      3 = great

The overall safety of on my walk was:    1        2        3

Feeling of safety score (list score from above):\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Comfort:**

- There is not enough shade from canopies, awnings, or trees
- There are few or no street trees or other landscaping
- There are vacant lots or rundown buildings
- The street needs benches and places to rest
- Other things I noticed:

**Score the overall feeling of comfort.**

1 = pretty bad      2 = not bad      3 = great

The overall feeling of comfort on my walk was:                      1           2           3

**Feeling of comfort score (list score from above):**\_\_\_\_\_



Add up all the points to find your walking routes walkability/bikeability score.

**Total Points:**\_\_\_\_\_

- 1 - 6            Not very walkable. Big improvements are needed.
- 7 - 12        Okay, but I could use some significant improvements to make it better.
- 13 - 18      Pretty good but still needs some small changes.
- 19 - 24      Great for walking and biking.

## Take the next step to become a walking hero!

### Here are some ideas:

1. Create a walk audit report summarizing your findings
2. Write a letter to your community leaders or elected officials.
3. Submit your findings on the Street Stories UC Berkley Tool.  
Street Story is a community engagement tool where individuals can anonymously report collisions, near-misses, and places they feel safe or unsafe. You can use street story to input your findings during your audit or afterward. All entries are anonymous.

Visit <https://streetstory.berkeley.edu> and follow the instructions to enter your feedback on your computer or phone. You can share information on infrastructure (sidewalk and bike lane conditions) and information about actual occurrences. If you know someone or had a personal experience in a collision or near miss, you can report that too. This information helps us better understand what is happening on the street and how we can create safe more sustainable streets. Note: If you are 13 years of age or younger, your parents or guardian must enter information on the Street Story tool. If you are 13 years of age or older, you can enter your findings on your own Street Story tool.

4. Share your findings with WALKSacramento to receive your Walkability Hero Certificate. Submit this assignment in your Google Classroom or Email your results or ask your parents to email your results to Molly Wagner, [mwagner@walksacramento.org](mailto:mwagner@walksacramento.org). Molly will send you your certificate.

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## Sample Walk Audit Report and Letter Writing Curriculum

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Objectives:**

- Students will learn about civic duty, how they can influence their local governments.
- Students will write a letter using Common Core Standards of persuasive writing and letter formatting.

*From California Common Core Standards: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.*

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.A

Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.B

Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.C

Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.D

Establish and maintain a formal style.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1.E

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

- Students will learn how to use a Walk Audit report to use facts and figures to write in favor of improving their community.

<b>A Classroom Schedule Overview for Teachers:</b>
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- Brief introduction: Local Governments and You
- Role of local governments in communities
- The role of the constituent
- How the constituent can change their community through their local government
  
- Overview of how to format a letter
- Review the standards of how to write an argument
- Go over sample letter formatting.

**Brainstorming: Write your walk audit report (sample below)**

- Find relevant data and facts to insert in your walk audit report or letters to support arguments.
- Present walk audit recommendations
- Discuss which of those recommendations would improve their community the most.
  - Practice using the data to support their chosen recommendation
  - Why that recommendation? What facts presented support why you want that improvement
- Pick a recommendation you would like to write a letter about

**Write a letter (sample below)**

- Use evidence to support your claim.
- Write about the change you want to see in your community.

**Optional: Present letters at a City Council Meeting**

- Organize students, pick one or two students to read their letters to a city council meeting
- Learn how to look up when public meetings are
- Learn about in-person advocacy as another way to use your voice.

**Suggested Materials:**

- Large poster board or virtual board to brainstorm ideas.
- Sample walk audit report and notes to reference
- Sample letter to learn about letter format and general structure of the letter.
- Sample letter for students to review for guidance.

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# Oak Ridge Elementary School Walk Audit – SAMPLE Report

Note: Creating a report like this one will help you organize your notes. Include information about why you did the walk audit and other background information, what you found on your walk, and what you suggest to make it better. Don't worry! You do not have to be an expert in providing suggestions.

## Introduction

Walk audits are community assessments where participants analyze current conditions in the community and opportunities to make streets safer and more comfortable for people to walk and bike. Oak Ridge parents, students, and community partners conducted a walk audit on September 27th, 2018. The main barriers to safe walking and biking were unsafe crossings, driver behavior along main streets and neighborhood streets, maintenance, and other safety needs.

## Facts and Figures

It is important to support our recommendations with data that shows why having safe roads is needed.

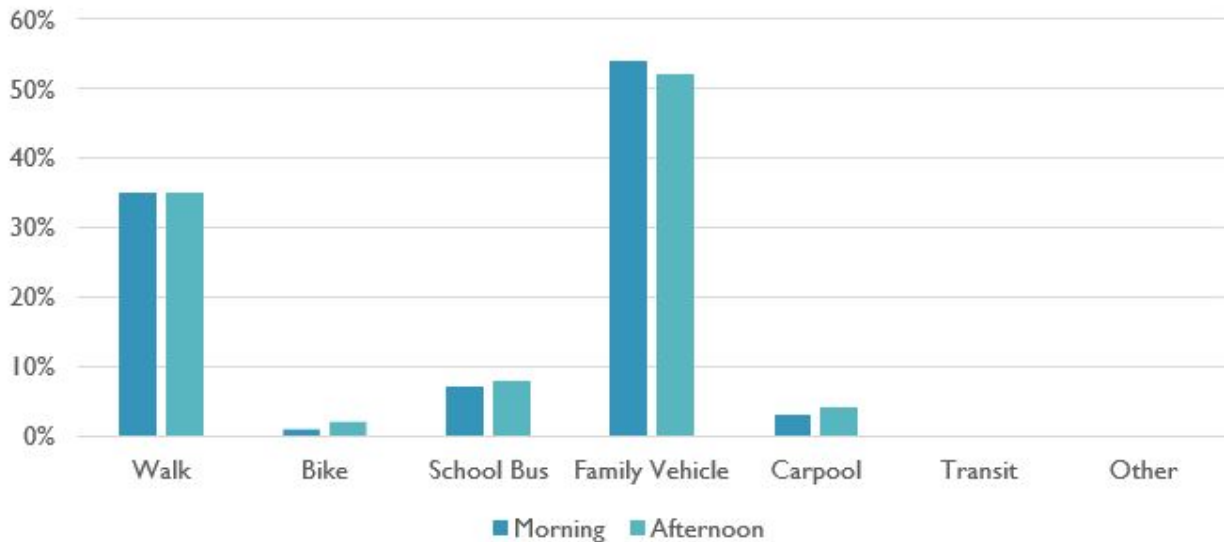
## Travel Data

Note: Sometimes, your school might have travel data information. If not, or your route is not to your school, try surveying your neighbors about how they get around. You can also leave this out if you don't have any substantial data.

- 54% of students are driven to school, and 52% are driven from school in a family vehicle.
- 35% of students walk to and from school. That's more than 1/3rd of the school, and about 176 students!



## Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison



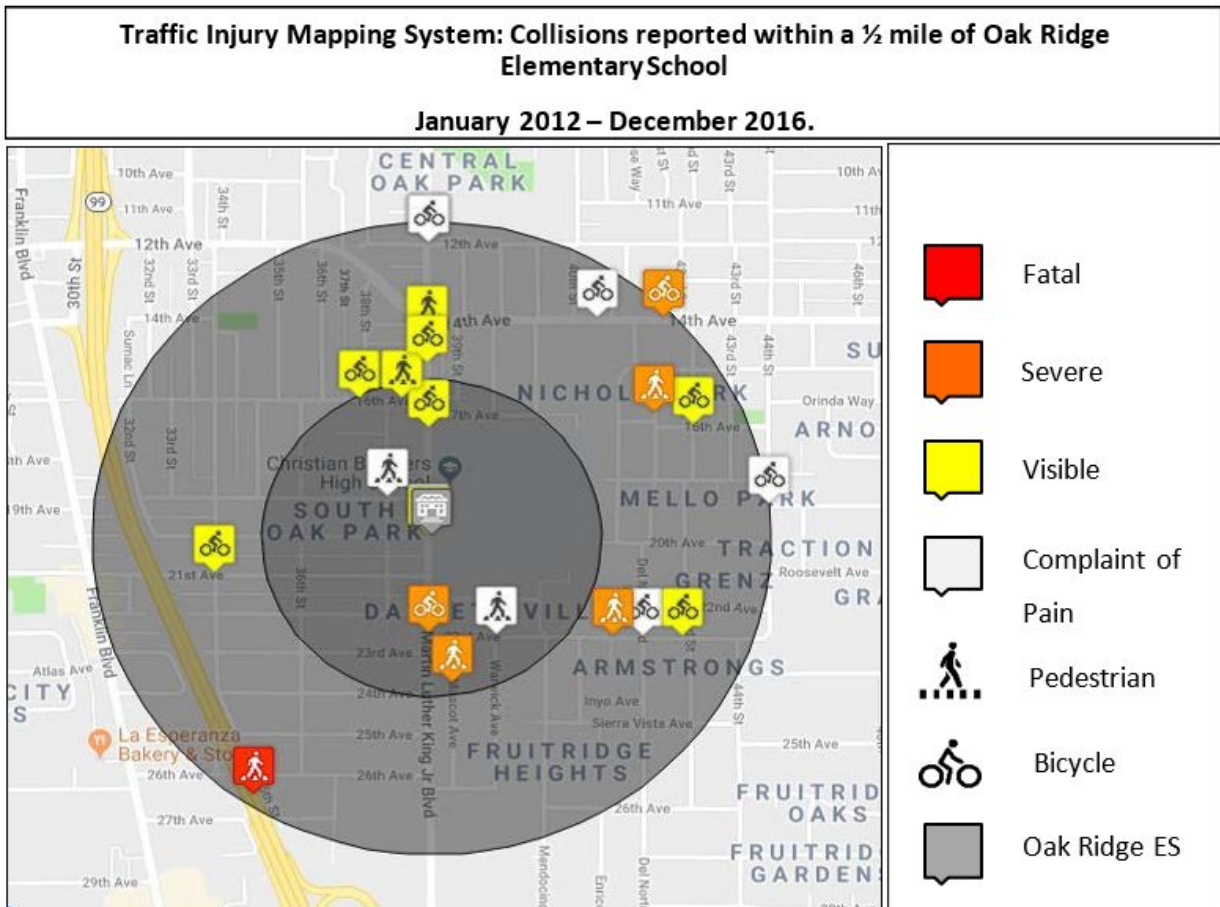
### Collision Data

Check out UC Berkley SafeTrec's Traffic Injury Mapping System tools to identify data along your route. Learn more here: <https://tims.berkeley.edu/>

- Between 2012 and 2016, there were a total of 23 collisions between a car and someone walking or biking within half a mile of Oak Ridge.
- 1 collision was fatal, 5 collisions had serious injuries, 9 collisions had visible injuries, and 8 collisions had complaints of pain but no visible injuries.
- 8 collisions involved a pedestrian. 15 collisions involved someone biking.
- Most collisions were on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, and some were in front of the school. Many students must cross Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to get to school.
- Many collisions were on 23rd Avenue.
- Most collisions occurred between 7:30am and 5:00pm on weekdays when students are traveling to or from school.

### UC Berkley SafeTrec TIMS Injury Summary Statistics: Pedestrian and Bicycle Injuries 2012-2016 within ½ Mile of Oak Ridge Elementary School

Radius	Fatal	Severe Injury	Visible Injury	Complaint of Pain	Pedestrian	Bicycle	Total
< ¼ mile	0	2	4	3	4	5	9
¼ - ½ mile	1	3	5	5	4	10	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>



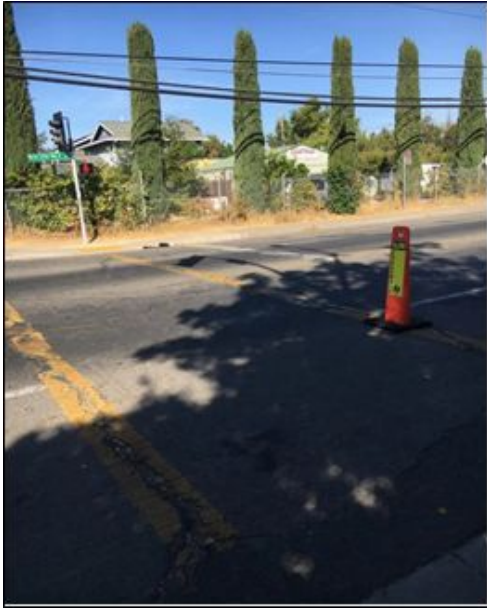
## Recommendations

The recommendations aim to improve students' safety who already walk and bike to school. Review the following four recommendations and think about which recommendation you want your councilmember to support. Think about why this recommendation is important to you. The above facts and figures help support your argument.

### Sample Recommendation 1: Intersection at Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and 21st Avenue

- Make the crosswalks safer for students to cross by restriping the crosswalk.

The intersection in front of the school has two marked crosswalks that students living west of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard must use to get to campus. Cars travel at high speeds, and drivers run the light and ignore the pedestrian right of way. A volunteer parent or school staff person is stationed at the intersection during pick up and drop off times. They have reported drivers not paying attention and exhibiting dangerous behaviors while students are crossing the street. Students wrote, "Too much traffic, and it doesn't stop even when the sign says walk."



*The crosswalk is significantly faded.*



*Restriping the crosswalks will make them more visible and safe for students.*

### **Sample Recommendation 2: Safe and Beautiful Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd**

- Create a safe and beautiful street with slower traffic.
- Create wider sidewalks.
- Make the bike lane more visible and safe to use.
- Add trees and landscaping.

Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is an important street near many homes, homes, schools, and community centers. The boulevard has a lot of fast traffic, which makes it unsafe for walking and biking. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is located on the City of Sacramento's Vision Zero High Injury Network, which identifies corridors with the highest level of severe and fatal collisions, for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Making Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard safe, comfortable and beautiful will encourage more people to walk and slow down cars near the school.



*Cars speed on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Narrow sidewalks and faded bike lanes make it unsafe to walk or bike to school.*



*Trees, wider sidewalks, safer bike lanes, and slower traffic can help make Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd safe and beautiful.*

### **Sample Recommendation 3: Safer School Parking Lot**

- Restripe the parking lot to make it safer for students who get dropped off at school. Many students are dropped off at school and drivers will often double-park or go around cars, making it unsafe for students. Restriping and adding another crosswalk at the school entrance will increase driver awareness of students traveling through the parking lot.



*Oak Ridge parking lot, lacking signage, no clear flow of traffic.*





*Restripe the parking lot to make it safer for students who get dropped off at school.*

## Letter Writing Template

**Use this template as a guide to writing your own letter to community organizations, elected officials, etc.**

Your Name  
 Your School  
 Address

Insert the date you are writing the letter

Your Councilmember's name and title  
 City Hall  
 Address

Dear Councilmember,

A part of the Safe Routes to School program at my school, I have learned how to improve walking and biking in my community. I think it is essential for you to help my school get a better crosswalk in front of my school. In the last 4 years, there have been 23 bike and walker collisions by my school. That does not make me feel safe, and I think it is important for all students to feel safe in their community. I think a better crosswalk in front of the school would help reduce collisions and make the students feel safer. I think you should support a better crosswalk because it would make it easier for students to cross the street and get to school. My school is important to me, and I think we should have safe streets because 35% of students already walk to school. I would like to see a colorful crosswalk that makes crossing the street fun, and I would be more ready to learn if there was a really safe way to cross the street in front of my school. Thank you for your time; I hope you will help my school and help put in a better crosswalk in front of my school.

Sincerely,

Your Name (add your signature above if you can)

<i>Color Key (remove highlights and this color key when you add your own information above)</i>	
	Intro and Conclusion to introduce and summarize your argument.
	Use data and facts to support your argument.
	Use your personal opinion to support your argument.