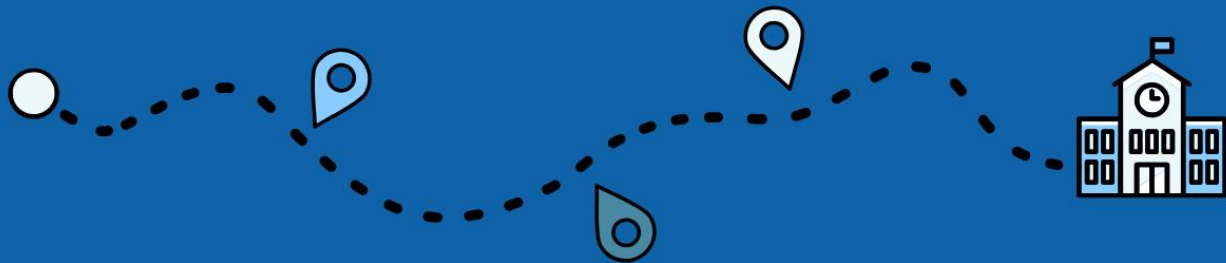


SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN



Walk Audit Summaries



TOWN OF CARRBORO • NC



Purpose

Walk audits took place at Carrboro's five schools to observe how students and families experience walking and rolling to campus. The project team coordinated outreach and scheduling of each walk audit with the respective school's PTA/PTSA and administrative teams, with varying success. By walking these routes with key stakeholders such as school staff, parents, town staff, and students, the team gained insight into their experiences and collected valuable feedback for the Safe Routes To School Action Plan Update recommendations.

Carrboro Elementary School

Six members of the project team and the following Carrboro Elementary stakeholders gathered on November 3 from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm for a walk audit: two student safety patrol leaders, three parents, and two school staff members (the principal and an assistant principal). The group assembled at the front entrance of Carrboro Elementary to review the overall project and walk audit goals. The project team shared its initial survey findings, followed by an in-depth discussion of Carrboro Elementary's strengths and gaps in safe active transportation to and from school. The group marked up a large paper map of the school's walking zone and examined individual locations, site-specific needs, and overall school transportation patterns, as well as opportunities for improved programming.

The map exercise resulted in the following main walking, biking, and rolling routes to school, identified through group collaboration:

- Hillsborough Rd to Shelton St
- Greensboro St to Shetley Bikeway
- Jones Ferry Rd to Shelton St via Davie Rd and W Main St
- E Weaver St to Shelton St via W Weaver St and Elm St

With the remaining time, the group explored and inspected the carpool lane and its conflicts; the Shelton St/Hillsborough Rd intersection; and the Shetley bike path.

Identified Issues and Needs

- *Carpool Lane Traffic and Conflicts*
 - During drop-off, parents will park and walk their younger children to the school building, causing delays
 - Vehicles with long/tall trailers create visibility issues
 - People waiting to drop off will leave the carpool line and then move forward outside the main lane to drop off their students
- *Visibility and Signage*
 - Striping and signage cause confusion for all road users at the Shelton St/Ashe St intersection

- There are significant visibility problems in the morning for those traveling eastbound on W Main St toward Carrboro Elementary because the sun rises directly in their line of sight. This affects all road users
- *Paths and Connectivity*
 - Many families come from the Robert Hunt, Cheswick, and Bell Arbor neighborhoods, with the latter mostly using Hillsborough Rd to get to school
 - Students from the Robert Hunt and Terrace neighborhoods often cut through Pine St and Oak St instead of using the Greensboro St roundabout and then head down the Shetley bike path
 - There is poor connectivity between the Carolina North area and Carrboro Elementary
 - According to attendees, most walkers use the Shelton St/Hillsborough Rd access point, and most bikers use the on-road bikelanes
- *Driver Behavior*
 - Drivers aren't aware that W Main St is part of the school zone
 - Passersby, especially motorists, often yell at and criticize crossing guards

Specific Improvement Requests

- Implement a pedestrian refuge island and a mid-block crossing on W Main St in front of Lanza's (where the School Zone sign is located)
- Increase visibility at the W Main St and Hillsborough Rd corner
- Document actual speeds along Hillsborough Rd
- Implement speed bumps and/or narrow Hillsborough Rd between Pine St and Shelton St via curb extensions
- Add a flashing/blinking light element to school zone signs
- Repave the existing crosswalk for improved visibility
- Place a stop sign ahead of the crosswalk on Hillsborough Rd
- Address confusion regarding the 2-way to 1-way transition on Shelton St
- Separate the bus and carpool drop-off areas
- Increase lighting on Shelton St
- Add a crossing at Fidelity St
- Implement speed bumps on Hillsborough Rd north of Carrboro Elementary
- Fill in sidewalk gaps along Shelton St

Photos



Photo 1: Auditing the Shelton St, Ashe St, and carpool lane intersection



Photo 2: Auditing the Shelton St and Hillsborough Rd intersection

Morris Grove Elementary School

Five members of the project team and the following Morris Grove Elementary stakeholders gathered on November 19 from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm for a walk audit: four parents and one school staff member, the principal. The group assembled at the school-side entrance to the Jones Creek Greenway and reviewed the overall project and walk audit goals. The project team shared its initial survey findings, followed by a deeper discussion of Morris Grove Elementary's strengths and gaps in safe active transportation to and from school.

The group marked up a large paper map of the school and nearby areas, reviewing individual locations, site-specific needs, and overall school transportation patterns along with opportunities for improved programming. The Jones Creek Greenway is the only active transportation route to the school. The map exercise identified the main collector roads in the surrounding neighborhoods that families use to access the greenway:

- Lake Hogan Farms Rd, Hogan Hills Rd, and Legends Way
- The above roads collect Dairy Glen Rd, Long Meadows Rd, Lake Manor Rd, and Hogan Woods Circle

Given the area's low density, the group did not audit the greenway together. However, a few members of the project team walked the greenway and took photos of it individually.

Identified Issues and Needs

- *Traffic and Congestion*
 - There are traffic issues at the intersection of Lucy Ln, Eubanks Rd, and Old NC-86. Participants suggested that the implementation of a traffic light or a traffic circle may mitigate the congestion and conflict
 - The carpool lane remains congested throughout the entirety of the arrival and dismissal windows, creating conflicts along Eubanks Rd and on the school property
 - There will be a new residential development, Jade Creek, along Old NC-86 that will bring 72 single-family homes and greenway connectivity to the area. Participants raised concerns about how this development may increase vehicle traffic along Eubanks Rd and Old NC-86, which would impact the already congested carpool system
- *Key Neighborhoods and Travel Patterns*
 - Given Morris Grove Elementary's rural setting, Lake Hogan Farms is the main walkable residential area for students, so the discussion focused mainly on their needs
 - There was a discussion about students from Chapel Hill and the Rogers Road neighborhood that focused on how travel patterns in these areas might change if bicycle infrastructure were installed along Eubanks Rd connecting the two communities. Attendees agreed that a buffered multi-use path would be the ideal facility for safe bike travel along this corridor
 - Since many of the families at Morris Grove are districted for McDougle Middle School, participants shared their desire for better connectivity across Homestead Rd once their children finish elementary school and are likely to move on to McDougle Middle
- *Jones Creek Greenway*
 - All participants raised the need to complete the Jones Creek Greenway connection to the Lake Hogan Farms neighborhood. The terrain is steep with many roots, rocks, and other obstacles during the first several yards
 - The trail is also quite isolated (one survey response noted that there is no cell phone reception along it), suggesting that infrastructure is not the only barrier to using the trail to get to and from school
 - To combat the isolation of the journey, one participant suggested a communication system for school staff to inform families that their children made it safely through the trail. Other ideas related to tracking were also discussed

Photos



Photo 3: Marking up the Morris Grove Elementary area map



Photo 4: Start of the Jones Creek Greenway

McDougle Elementary School

Six members of the project team and the following McDougle Elementary stakeholders gathered on November 17 from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm for a walk audit: two students, two parents, and three school staff members, including the principal. The group assembled at the rear entrance off Hillsborough Rd and reviewed the overall project and walk audit goals. The project team shared its initial survey findings, followed by a more in-depth discussion of McDougle Elementary's opportunities and constraints.

The group marked up a large paper map of the school's walk zone and reviewed individual locations and site-specific needs, as well as overall school transportation patterns and opportunities for improved programming. The map exercise resulted in the following main walking, biking, and rolling routes to school, identified through group collaboration:

- W Main St to rear field entrance via James St and Lisa Dr
- Autumn Dr to rear building entrance via Barrington Hills Rd and Hillsborough Rd, or via Cates Farm Rd and Hillsborough Rd
- Homestead Rd to rear building entrance via Claremont Dr, Colfax Dr, Parkview Ave, and Hillsborough Rd
- Spring Valley/Waverly Forest to Quail Roost Dr via Pathway Dr, Parkview Ave, and Hillsborough Rd
- NC-54 to front building entrance via Old Fayetteville Rd

With the remaining time, the group explored and audited the Hillsborough Rd corridor.

Identified Issues and Needs

- *Vehicle Speeds and Conflicts*
 - Speeding on Old Fayetteville Rd and Hillsborough Rd is a significant issue brought up by many participants
 - In the past, a Carrboro Police officer was stationed on Old Fayetteville Rd, and attendees noted their presence did reduce speeds
 - Parents do not follow the “right turn only” direction on Old Fayetteville Rd, which creates conflicts for all road users
 - The McDougale Middle and McDougale Elementary drop-off/pick-up times conflict
 - People park in the fire lane at the rear entrance of the school
 - Pathway Drive is a long collector road running through multiple neighborhoods that sees a lot of speeding. One participant suggested a roundabout to slow vehicle speed
 - McDougale Elementary and its entrance are a bit hidden behind shrubbery and lack overt signage to drivers
- *Biking and Walking*
 - The bike racks at the rear entrance of the school – where most student cyclists and pedestrians enter – are always full. There are racks at the front entrance, but these are less popular
 - The middle school drop-off at the rear entrance creates conflict between vehicles and the students who come from Hillsborough Rd or Quail Roost Dr
 - Many of the minor roads that connect the residential neighborhoods to Hillsborough Rd feature wide travel lanes. Attendees noted that students cycling to school tend to cut these large corners, thereby entering high-speed traffic on Hillsborough Rd. There was a request for a curb extension in the form of delineators, flexi-posts, or bollards at such locations
 - Lights outside the school don’t come on at night. Principal Jones emphasized the need for better visibility of the school itself
- *Crossings and Intersections*
 - Participants emphasized the need for a traffic signal at the intersection of James St and W Main St
 - Another dangerous crossing is at Quail Roost Dr and Hillsborough Rd, and participants emphasized the need for an additional crossing guard at that location. The existing traffic treatments seem ineffective, as participants shared that vehicles will often speed and fail to yield to children walking in the crosswalk
 - MLK Park recently added a pump track facility that attracts many students after school, adding to the need for countermeasures at the Quail Roost Dr/Hillsborough Rd intersection

Photos



Photo 5: Auditing the Hillsborough Rd route



Photo 6: Auditing the Hillsborough Rd route

McDougle Middle School

Five project team members and the following McDougle Middle stakeholders gathered on November 20 from 2:00 to 3:30 pm for a walk audit: nine students and two school staff, including the principal. The group assembled at the front entrance of McDougle Middle to review the overall project and walk audit objectives. The project team shared its initial survey results, followed by a more in-depth discussion of McDougle Middle's strengths and gaps in promoting safe active transportation to and from school.

The group marked up a large map of the school's walk zone and reviewed individual locations and site-specific needs, as well as overall school transportation patterns and opportunities for improved programming. The map exercise resulted in the main walking, biking, and rolling routes to school, identified through group collaboration:

- W Main St to rear field entrance via James St and Lisa Dr
- Autumn Dr to rear building entrance via Barrington Hills Rd and Hillsborough Rd or via Cates Farm Rd and Hillsborough Rd
- Homestead Rd to rear building entrance via Claremont Dr, Colfax Dr, Parkview Ave, and Hillsborough Rd
- Spring Valley/Waverly Forest to Quail Roost Dr via Pathway Dr, Parkview Ave, and Hillsborough Rd
- NC-54 to front building entrance via Old Fayetteville Rd

As the students had to return to class, the group did not audit the identified routes. However, the project team conducted fieldwork to walk Old Fayetteville Rd and the school campus.

Identified Issues and Needs

- *Biking and Walking*
 - Most students who walk, bike, or roll to school enter the rear entrance and take Hillsborough Rd to do so. Very few students using active transportation enter the school from Old Fayetteville Rd
 - Bike theft has been an increasing problem. The bike racks are presently located by the fields and are easily accessible to the public
 - For students who live south of NC-54, there is no safe route to school. One student in this situation shared that it takes so long to get to the “safe route” that they often just take the bus instead. The one major improvement that could encourage him to take this route would be fixing the sidewalk gaps on Old Fayetteville Rd behind the Carrboro Plaza shopping center
 - There is currently no school-supported bike education at McDougle Middle
 - Lighting and visibility are pressing concerns. Students noted that it is too dark to walk or bike home from after-school activities that may not end until dark
 - There was a specific request for improved lighting along Hillsborough Rd to MLK Jr Park
- *Speeding and Traffic*
 - People drive too fast along Old Fayetteville Rd; most students in attendance said they would rarely take that route
 - One student in attendance lives in the neighborhood just north of the mobile home community near campus, so their journey along Old Fayetteville Rd is quite short. Even so, this student often takes other modes of transportation to avoid walking or biking along this road
 - Cross-country practice and meets often take place at Anderson Park. The group discussed potentially leveraging the park as a satellite carpool location to ease congestion directly on and around campus. Attendees largely thought that the recommendation would make sense, so long as the crossing between the park and the campus was bolstered by additional traffic signals
- *Student Travel Patterns*
 - McDougle Middle students are at an age where they are old enough to walk to other destinations from school, but not old enough to drive. Students shared the following popular destinations after school or in between school events: Carrboro Plaza (“for food in between school and games”); MLK Jr Park and its pump track; Anderson Park
 - MLK Jr Park serves as a cut-through for students who live along or east of Blueridge Rd

Photos



Photo 7: Marking up the McDougale Middle area map



Photo 8: Marking up the McDougale Middle area map

Carrboro High School

Five project team members and the following Carrboro High School stakeholders gathered on November 20 from 4:00 to 5:00 pm for a walk audit: four students and two school staff members, including the assistant principal, AP Mureño. The project team was able to gather additional observations of student travel routes because the walk audit was scheduled right after the school day ended. The group assembled at the front entrance of Carrboro High and reviewed the overall project and walk audit goals. The project team shared its initial survey findings, followed by a more in-depth discussion of Carrboro High's strengths and gaps in safe, active transportation to and from school. AP Mureño also engaged four students walking by in an impromptu conversation.

The group marked up a large paper map of the school's walk zone and reviewed individual locations and site-specific needs, as well as overall school transportation patterns and opportunities for improved programming. Instead of taking a walk, the project team worked with AP Mureño to identify routes at the school entrance. The map activity resulted in the following main walking, biking, and rolling routes to school, identified through group collaboration:

- Southern Village to Rock Haven Rd entrance via Woodcrest Dr and Rossum Way (informal cut-through)
- NC-54 to Tar Hill Dr entrance via Smith Level Rd and BPW Club Rd
- Weatherhill/Tennis Club Estates to Tar Hill Dr entrance via Morgan Creek (informal path)

Identified Issues and Needs

- *Traffic*
 - Carpool congestion leads to backup past the roundabouts on Tar Hill Dr and Rock Haven Rd. However, this congestion dissipates quickly as the carpool line moves relatively fast

- A few parents parked their cars in the bus-only loading zone, creating some conflict
- Drivers do not stop and/or yield at the Smith Level Rd/Rock Haven Rd roundabout
- *Transit*
 - Chapel Hill Transit (CHT) has a stop just outside the front entrance of the school, and many students take it at various times after school
 - There are several students who walk along NC-54. Similarly, there is a Chapel Hill Transit bus stop at the Carrboro Public Works building near the NC-54/Smith Level Rd intersection. Due to the hilly nature of the route to school, students will take the bus from Public Works and then get off at the BPW Club Rd stop
- *Paths and Connectivity*
 - There are a few informal paths that students take, such as the one between Tar Hill Drive and the Chapel Hill Tennis Club. In addition, students take a cut-through by Woodcrest Dr to Rossburn Way, which connects to residential streets east of Smith Level Rd
 - Generally, there is a need for safer crossings of NC-54 for the students who live North of the arterial. AP Mureño has personally encountered several students on the way to school who are seen crossing NC-54 on foot

Photos



Photo 9: Marking up the Carrboro High area map

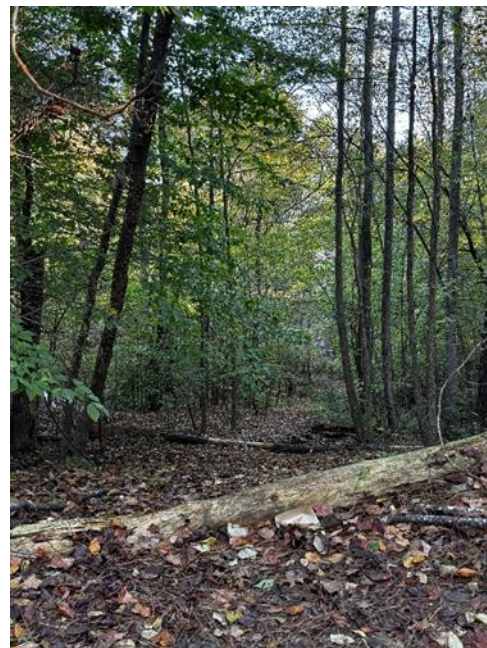


Photo 10: Informal trail to cross Morgan Creek