



## McKinley/PACs & Live Oak School SRTS Walk Audit

Tuesday, January 16th, 2024

**In attendance:** Christina Panza (SRTS Director), Emily Shartin (SCBC Advocacy Coordinator), Carly Costello (McKinley/PACs Vice Principal/acting Principal), Linda Delgado (Director, Live Oak Charter School), Jeff Stutsman (Deputy Director of Operations, City of Petaluma), Bjorn Griepenburg (Active Transportation Planner, City of Petaluma), Ken Eichstadt (Engineer, City of Petaluma), Officer Chris Ricci (Petaluma Police Department), Deb Fox (Cool Petaluma), Danny Alvarez (Boys & Girls Club), Katleen Bunnin-Dal Porto (McKinley Parent/SRTS Champion), Charlie Bertram (Live Oak parent), Jenn Lezzini (Live Oak parent)

**Route:** Met at McKinley school entrance on Ellis St. Observed drop off from main entrance, headed South to intersection of Ellis & Madison, west on Madison to Payran, South on Payran, crossed Washington Street, to Fairgrounds Drive, east on Fairgrounds drive to Gness Concourse, then south-west on Gness Concourse to the gate at Payran & Jefferson. Debriefed at Live Oak.

### **Pick up/Drop off:**

**McKinley:** Although parents are encouraged to drop off/pick up from the Fairgrounds parking lot across the street (and some do), the majority of morning drop off and afternoon pick up for K-6 students takes place primarily on Ellis Street in front of the main school entrance, and for PACs students, primarily on Madison in front of the middle school entrance.

There are two drop off loops on Ellis St north and south of the main entrance. Kindergarten parents drop off/pick up on the south loop, and upper elementary grades in the north loop. There are no school buses, with exception of the South County Consortium preschool which has a small bus that drops off at 9:15am and picks up at 2pm in the south loop (which is generally clear at that time, although there are sometimes issues on Wednesday afternoons).

Parents are instructed not to park in the north or south loop. A parent volunteer is typically stationed in the north loop and school staff are typically stationed in the south loop to assist in encouraging traffic to move along. However, despite this, often parents do park or linger in the loops, blocking traffic.

There is a mid-block crosswalk directly in front of the school main entrance, on Ellis. A school staff crossing guard (the school secretary) is also stationed at that location at school drop-off and pick-up time.

**Live Oak:** Parents drop off students on the west side of Gness Concourse, heading south from the Fairgrounds parking lot. They are instructed not to park on the west side, but rather to move along after dropping off students. Parents are instructed to make a u-turn at the end of Gness Concourse and to head north in the same direction they entered to exit back into the Fairgrounds parking lot. There are no pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, crosswalks, etc) on Gness Concourse.

## School Information:

	<b>McKinley/PACS</b>	<b>Live Oak</b>
Address	110 Ellis St, 94952	100 Gross Concourse, Building 1, 94952
Morning Bell(s)	8:15am (Kinder), 8:25am (elementary), 8:35am (PACs)	8:00-8:15am
Afternoon Bell(s)	M,T, Th-F: 2pm (TK/K), 2:35 (1-3), 3:00 (4-6), 3:05 (7-8) W: 12:00 (TK/K), 1:05 (1-3), 1:15 (4-6), 1:00 (7-8)	M, T, W, F: 12:30pm (K), 2:50pm (1-2), 3:05pm (3-8) Th: 12:30pm (K), 12:45pm (1-8)
Grade levels	TK-8	K-8
Enrollment	418	250
School type	Charter	Charter
Student's proximity to school (2023-24)	¼ mile – 92 students (22%) ½ mile – 171 students (41%) 1 mile – 240 students (57%) 2 miles – 240 students (81%)	¼ mile – 5 students (.02%) ½ mile – 11 students (.04%) 1 mile – 50 students (20%) 2 miles – 155 students (62%)
Participating School in Sonoma County SRTS program?	Yes	No
Student Travel Mode info (Sept 2023 student arrival/departure tally data)	Walk – 21% Bike – 5% Other – 3% Carpool – 4% School Bus – 0% Transit – 0% Single Family Vehicle – 68%	n/a in 2023-24
Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Programming (2023-24)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Pedestrian safety lessons 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Bicycle Basics Lessons, Bike Rodeo 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Mapping & Communication lessons Monthly Walk/Roll to School Events Walking School Bus (Petaluma People Center organized)	n/a in 2023-24

*Please note that all recommendations on the following pages are meant to capture potential solutions to issues or ideas raised during the walk audit. Each of these recommendations are subject to additional design, analysis, outreach, funding, prioritization, and approval by the City of Petaluma and/or Petaluma City Schools prior to implementation.*

## **CONCERNS &/or POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:**

### **Ellis Street (and intersection of Ellis and Washington):**

#### **Concerns**

- Extremely busy, congested drop off/pick up area, parents park or stop at length in drop off loops despite school direction (i.e. back-to-school video, newsletters, etc), causing back-up onto street. Difficult to keep parents moving despite instructions, staff presence, etc.
- ADA spot in north driveway loop contributes to bottleneck
- Concerns about safety of children crossing mid-block on Ellis, despite presence of crossing guard (sight-lines can be blocked due to congestion)
- Concerns about traffic light timing at Ellis and Washington, not favorable to pedestrians.
- Bicycle lane on south side of Ellis abruptly ends soon after Washington intersection.

#### **Potential Solutions**

- School already encourages parents to park across street at Fairgrounds, continue encouraging this.
- District to consider moving ADA spot in driveway loop to another location where it does not contribute to bottleneck.
- District to consider improved loading zone signage, pavement markings &/or striping in school loading zone to remind about not parking/stopping, “keep clear” etc.
- City to consider improvements to mid-block crossing on Ellis
  - “Yield to pedestrians” in street pedestrian crossing sign (mid-block)
  - Bulb-outs to shorten crossing distance
  - Red curbs on either side of crosswalk
- City to consider painting “Keep Clear” on roadway on Ellis, just south of Madison, to avoid blocking intersection and improve safety for pedestrians.
- City is already planning to modify traffic light timing at Ellis and Washington with LPI’s (leading pedestrian intervals)
- City plans to study Fairgrounds parking area/Fairgrounds Drive to determine viable path of travel for pedestrians/bicyclists and overall circulation.
- City plans to install a part-time loading zone along the school frontage on Madison, relieving loading demand on Ellis Street.

### **Ellis, Madison & Holly Intersection:**

#### **Concerns**

- Very busy 4-way stop, particularly during school drop off-pick up, with no crossing guard. Parents report that “many children walk to/from school across this intersection, both accompanied by adults and on their own”
- Car drivers do not fully stop, sometimes completely blow through the stop signs (perhaps speeding when road is less congested), often not yielding to pedestrians; feels unsafe to cross at this intersection.
- Frustrated drivers sometimes drive into opposite lanes to pass line vehicles waiting to pull into drop-off zones. Traffic backs up from Ellis all the way onto Madison.

- No sidewalks on west side of Holly, challenging for people who have to cross intersection twice.
- Drivers “cut the curb” when turning right onto Ellis from Madison – black markings were observed on curb as evidence of this.
- Red curb stretches nearly a block on the south side of Madison from Ellis, then changes to yellow curb, uncertain of purpose of yellow curb or length of red curb.
- No street lights

### **Potential Solutions**

- City to consider improvements to 4-way crossing
  - Bulb-outs to shorten crossing distance
  - Move stop-signs in so more visible to drivers
  - Red curbs on all corners
- City to research possibility of ADA connection to Lynch Creek Trail via Holly, sidewalk improvements
- City to shorten red curb on Madison at approach to Ellis, and paint the curb white from San Carlos to Ellis to create a loading zone (eliminate yellow curb)
- City to consider installation of street lights at this location

### **Madison Street between Ellis and Payran:**

#### **Concerns**

- Critical for access to/from Petaluma Parent Nursery School, McKinley aftercare, and PACS pick up/drop off, but it is “super dangerous” according to parent comments.
- Many complaints of speeding traffic (when not congested)
- Parents double park, park in red zones, block driveways and crosswalks. Bottlenecked traffic along Madison (all the way from Ellis) contributes to this issue.
- It is difficult to see pedestrians in the mid-block crosswalk, both due to the way the road “humps” in the middle and due to parked vehicles on either side.

#### **Potential Solutions**

- City to consider improvements to mid-block crossing on Madison
  - “Yield to pedestrians” in street pedestrian crossing sign (mid-block)
  - Bulb-outs to shorten crossing distance
  - Red curbs on either side of crosswalk
- Petaluma PD to revisit enforcement of double parking/blocking crosswalks/driveways at Madison (PD have previously ticketed area, but received complaints so have refrained. Carly voiced support for ticketing violators in the future, as the school has warned parents that this behavior is illegal).
- City to reduce speed limit to 20 MPH in accordance with AB 43.
- City to consider installing new modified speed-tables along Madison

## **Madison & Payran Intersection:**

### **Concerns**

- Very busy intersection, multiple close calls of vehicles nearly hitting children at these crosswalks. A child was hit by a car in this intersection in the 2022-23 school year.

### **Potential Solutions**

- City to consider improvements to 4-way crossing
  - Bulb-outs to shorten crossing distance
  - Move stop-signs in so more visible to drivers
  - Red curbs on all corners (“daylighting” intersection)
  - Raised crosswalks could be considered if determined feasible (i.e. no drainage issues), however, this is a bigger project.

## **Payran between Madison & Washington:**

### **Concerns**

- Payran is a “feeder street” for at least three schools, and very busy during school travel time
- Despite being a designated bike route with “sharrows” for bicycling, street feels unsafe for bicycling, due to speeding traffic, disrespectful drivers, etc.
- Students/families travel down Marin Drive to/from school – Marin Drive also connects to Vallejo /Whole Foods. A preschool is also located across Marin Drive on Payran.
- Doris Way is also a potential safe alternate route to the school, however, the road is paved only half way and the other half gets very wet-muddy. Previously, Doris Way also was marred with a lot of refuse, but that Dumpster has been removed and as of this report, Doris Way was clear.

### **Potential Solutions**

- City to consider traffic calming measures along Payran such as:
  - High visibility sharrows (green paint, etc) – (note: no room for bicycle lanes without removing residential parking)
  - Striping parking lane to create a perception of narrower travel lanes
  - Review school signage in area – make sure all approaches are covered
  - City to explore reducing speed limit to 20 MPH in accordance with AB 43.
- City to consider installing a mid-block crossing and some type of pedestrian-activated beacon (RRFB or HAWK) at Payran & Marin Drive.
- City to improve Doris Way pathway.

## **Payran & Washington Intersection**

### **Concerns:**

- Crossing Washington is harrowing. Most of Washington is congested/scary. Drivers don't pay attention. Drivers don't always stop at 4-way stop and sometimes they only give pedestrians one lane to cross before they continue driving.

### **Potential Solutions:**

- City is already planning to modify traffic light timing at Payran and Washington with LPI's (leading pedestrian intervals)

## **Payran between Washington & Fairgrounds Drive (including 3-way intersection at Fairgrounds Dr:**

### **Concerns**

- Drivers heading SE on Payran routinely make a left turn to go into Fairgrounds Dr. and nearly hit pedestrians in crosswalk there. Sun is in eyes in early morning and without a stop-sign, drivers rush to get through the "small gap" in oncoming nw vehicles.
- Lack of school zone signage
- Speeding traffic
- Bicycling feels unsafe along Payran, must negotiate with cars in travel lane

### **Potential Solutions**

- Add school zone signage on Payran/Fairgrounds
- City to consider improvements to Payran/Fairgrounds intersection; possibilities include a traffic circle, turning lane, or limiting/eliminating this as a cut-through option.
- City to consider two-way protected cycle-track along Payran between Caulfield and Washington (proposed by consultant in Kenilworth Plan)

## **Payran & D Street:**

### **Concerns**

- Numerous parents/students/residents cross at this 3-way intersection to get to the library, school, shopping center. Currently it is not a marked crosswalk and residents experience similar issues that they experience at other intersections along Payran.

### **Potential Solutions**

- City to consider installation of a stop bar, stop signs, a crosswalk & bulb-outs similar to what was recently installed at Payran and Jefferson.

## **Fairgrounds Drive/parking lot:**

### **Concerns**

- General confusion of operations in/through Fairgrounds Dr. and the parking lot. It was not designed for through traffic. Drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists are not aware of who has right of way. It is currently a “controlled chaos” situation.

### **Potential Solutions**

- This area needs to be studied by city to determine how to better define the path of traffic for all road users and create clarity of how bicyclists, pedestrians, and drivers may travel safely through the fairgrounds. Consider potential for roundabouts in certain locations (TBD), bike/pedestrian pathway, and more.

## **Gross Concourse/Live Oak Campus:**

### **Concerns**

- Currently, parents drop off and pick up on Gross Concourse, both entering and exiting from the Fairgrounds parking lot. Parents must make a U-turn at the end of Gross Concourse after dropping off students. This adds to the general confusion of operations on and around Fairgrounds Dr.
- There is no pedestrian pathway, crosswalk or bicycle facility on Gross Concourse. Walkers either must walk on the grass or in the roadway to get to school.
- All students enter the school from Fairgrounds/Gross Concourse, whether walking, bicycling, or driving.

### **Potential Solutions**

- City to consider opening the gate at Gross Concourse/Jefferson to allow for one-way vehicle access (or giving the school/district the ability to open/close the gate themselves during school hours)
- Drop-off pick up traffic could then flow one-way, south then west on Gross Concourse, exiting at Jefferson, which would alleviate some of the confusion of operations from drivers who currently exit Gross Concourse onto Fairgrounds drive.
- City/school district to open bicycle/pedestrian access gate at Jefferson to allow for students to enter site from a 2<sup>nd</sup> location.
- City to consider adding a pedestrian walkway and crosswalks across Gross Concourse in at least two locations, to facilitate crossing to the middle school building and to other school facilities.

## Safe Routes to School Program Information

- The SRTS program coordinates a Safe Routes to School Task Force to bring together representatives from schools/school districts (school administration, staff and/or parents), city planning/engineering, law enforcement, and SRTS program staff. The goal of the Task Force is to:
  - Seek input from Task Force members and the public, in order to identify barriers to active transportation, opportunities for improvement and collaboration, and set priorities for future infrastructure projects within the city of Petaluma.
  - Provide a venue for sharing of program initiatives and projects in the city of Petaluma, as well as inter-agency collaboration.

Task Force meetings are currently held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month during the school year. Meeting notices, agendas, and meeting notes & handouts can be found on our SRTS Task Force page [HERE](#).

- Enrollment for participation in the SRTS program takes place in April each year. Schools must enroll each year to be eligible to receive visiting education services & ongoing technical support. Enrolled, comprehensive sites agree to:
  - Meet with SRTS program staff 3x per year to discuss/plan programming
  - Collect student travel tally data in September
  - Provide data for the SRTS program to enable creation of an annual SRTS “study map” showing where students live in relation to the school
  - Engage with/implement a minimum of 5 walk/roll encouragement initiatives per year.
  - Support scheduling & implementation of education programming.
- SRTS encouragement “Walk/Roll” initiatives and promotional materials are emailed to enrolled school contacts every month via our SRTS E-Newsletter, and may also be accessed at [www.sonomasaferoutes.org](http://www.sonomasaferoutes.org). To request to receive our SRTS E-Newsletter directly, email [christina@bikeosnoma.org](mailto:christina@bikeosnoma.org)



**Appendix: Walk Audit Pictures:**



Traffic in north driveway loop on Ellis



Midblock crossing on Ellis in front of school



Ellis, Madison & Holly – city to refresh crosswalks, consider treatments to shorten crossing.



Evidence that drivers “cut curb” at Ellis & Madison.



Vehicles & hump in road block visibility of mid-block crossing on Madison across from school side entrance.



Madison & Payran – city to consider treatments to shorten crossing





Payran & Marin – city to consider mid-block crossing



Doris Way alley – does city have jurisdiction to pave?



Payran & Fairgrounds – consider improvements to this intersection (TBD)



Fairgrounds drive/parking lot – create clear pathway for all road users.



Knoss Concourse – pedestrian pathway, crosswalks, consider opening gate on Jefferson & making it a one-way drop off zone instead of two-way.



Unlock (or give school ability to unlock) pedestrian gateway at Jefferson to allow bicycle/pedestrian access to school from Jefferson/Payran.