



Meadow Elementary School SRTS Walk Audit

Tuesday, November 12th, 2024



In attendance: Christina Panza (SRTS Director), Bjorn Gripenburg (Active Transportation Planner, City of Petaluma), Dylan Frisbee (Senior Traffic Engineering Technician), Sergeant Walt Spiller (Petaluma Police Department), Catina Haugen (Principal, Meadow), Michael Gardner (Superintendent, Waugh School District), Rajiv Sud (parent), John Bee (parent).

Route: Began in front of the school. Headed west on Maria Drive toward Colombard Rd, walked down Colombard Rd. to Sonoma Mountain Parkway, headed back in opposite direction back to Maria Drive. Crossed Maria, headed east to Yarberr Drive, walked alongside Meadowview Park to the intersection of Yarberr & Dupree Way. Walked up Dupree Way back toward Maria Drive. Headed west on Maria Drive, to Morning Glory Drive. Then, back east on Maria to the school campus.

Pick up/Drop off:

Pick up and Drop off occurs in both in front of the school, in the driveway loop off Maria Drive, and on Colombard Rd, at the side of the school. Although we did not observe drop-off, Catina shared that although it can get congested, it is also relatively smooth with no major concerns to report, with Tk-K parents parking and walking their children in, and parents of older kids just dropping and moving along. The school/district recently improved the drop-off loop in front of the school where the middle entrance/exit is blocked, and vehicles must enter on the eastern end of the driveway, and exit on the western end. This change has greatly improved drop-off preventing the “whale spout” of entries and exits in the middle driveway.

At pick-up, there is more congestion due to the fact that parents wait in their vehicles for students to arrive. Catina mentioned that she monitors pick up at least a couple of times a week to remind parents to move along as soon as possible, and that this does help maintain order.

There is a non-regulation “no left turn” sign at the school driveway exit. Despite this, we observed numerous parents making left turns out of the school driveway. Officer Spiller indicated that if this non-regulation sign is replaced by a regulation sign, the illegal left turns could be enforceable.

Bike racks are located near the side entrance to the school, on Colombard Rd. Catina reports that they are well utilized and that a significant number of students regularly bicycle and walk to Meadow, and even more so on their Walk/Roll encouragement days. In the Spring 2023 parent survey, one parent expressed that there is a “lack of sufficient bike parking where bikes can be locked securely.” The bike parking area is quite large in comparison to other sites, but the high or potentially high number of student bicyclists may be an argument for additional bike racks. Also, when this comment was made in Spring 2023, the school did not have secure fencing installed around it, whereas now it does, therefore, bikes parked on campus are more secure than they were then.

School Information:

Address	880 Maria Drive, Petaluma, 94954
Morning Bell(s)	8:15am
Afternoon Bell(s)	M,T, Th-F: 2:00pm (TK/K) 2:45pm (1 st -6 th), W: 1:15pm (TK), 1:30pm (1 st -6 th)
Grade levels	Tk-6
Enrollment	384
School type	Neighborhood
Student’s proximity to school	384 geocoded students in 2024-25 306 live within 2 miles of school (80%) 261 live within 1 mile of school (68%) 206 live within ½ mile of school (54%) 101 live within ¼ mile of school (26%)
Participating School in Sonoma County SRTS program?	Yes
Student Travel Mode info (Sept 2024 student arrival/departure tally data)	Walk – 26% Bike – 11% Other active – 2% Carpool – 5% School Bus – 0% Transit – 1% Single Family Vehicle – 59%
Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Programming (2024-25)	2 nd Grade Pedestrian safety lessons 4 th Grade Bicycle Basics Lessons, Bike Rodeo 5 th Grade Mapping & Communication lessons Monthly Walk/Roll to School Events

CONCERNS &/or POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS:

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 School District District prior to implementation.

Columbard Rd. between Maria and Sonoma Mountain Parkway

Concerns and observations:

- Visibility in the crosswalk at Colombard Rd. & Claret Ct. is an issue, due to the number of vehicles dropping off/picking up in the area, particularly those who pull over to stop and drop off in red zones. There are also large numbers of pedestrians/bicyclists that enter campus from Colombard, therefore conflicts can occur due to the lack of visibility and number of vehicles in the area.
- Parents perceive that cars drive too fast down Colombard Rd.
- The crossing at Columbard Rd. & Sonoma Mountain Parkway is a barrier for many families who otherwise might allow their children to walk/bicycle to school. The main issue is the significantly long crossing distance, in addition to the speed and volume of traffic on Sonoma Mountain Parkway, which is particularly busy in the mornings. In the Spring 2023 parent survey, parents also mentioned that people often run red lights along Sonoma Mountain Parkway. Although a hard-working crossing guard who “hustles” is present at this intersection in the mornings and afternoons, as well as leading pedestrian intervals to give pedestrians a head start to cross the street before vehicles are given a green light, this is not enough for the intersection to feel safe for active transportation. While minor opportunities were identified that could slow turning movements and slightly shorten crossing distances, the intersection likely would not feel more inviting absent a lane reduction on Sonoma Mountain Parkway.

Potential Solutions:

- Crosswalk at Colombard & Claret:
 - Install bulb-outs to shorten crossing distance & improve pedestrian visibility.
 - Refresh crosswalk paint
 - Update sign configuration within the school zone: speed limit, advanced warning signs & ped crossing signs
 - Consider an RRFB (rapid rectangular flashing beacon) if traffic volume meets criteria (look into whether it meets criteria)
- Consider adding edge-lines along Colombard Avenue to slow traffic. Edge-lines provide definition to the roadway and visually create an effect of narrower travel lanes, which encourage drivers to slow down.
- Lower speed limit to 15mph in the school zone. (when children are present / during school hours. Default speed limit remains 25mph.)
- Crossing at Colombard & Sonoma Mountain Parkway:
 - Move the crosswalk farther into the intersection, effectively shortening the crossing distances and widening the space for pedestrians to cross. Make xwalk min. 10'w
 - Consider adding stop bars in advance of the crosswalk
 - Consider improvements that would prevent “sweeping turning movements” by vehicles at this intersection, i.e. bulb outs.
 - Explore the feasibility of a lane reduction on Sonoma Mountain Parkway, which would allow for shortened crossing distances, slower vehicle traffic, and the installation of protected bike lanes.

Maria Drive

Concerns

- Because Maria Drive is a long straight-away, speeding is an issue. In the Spring 2023 survey a parent mentioned that drivers “may not be attentive to children vs. driving well above the 25mph speed limit with only a few stop signs and no speed humps.”
- There is a lack of marked crossings on Maria Drive. There are no crosswalks between Maria Drive and Dupree Way and Maria Drive and Sunrise Parkway. Dupree Way is slightly past the school entrance, so families walking/bicycling from any of the side streets east of the school between Yarberry and Sunrise have to walk farther down Maria than necessary in order to utilize a crosswalk.
- Despite there being no crosswalk at Maria Drive and Yarberry, many parents/kids cross at that location. Cars frequently park right at the corner of Maria & Yarberry, making it difficult for both drivers to see pedestrians crossing and for pedestrians to see cars before crossing.
- The crosswalk at the intersection for Maria Drive and Morning Glory Drive was also referenced by parents as feeling unsafe, because cars that are turning from Morning Glory Drive to Maria often drift into the crosswalk in order to see to the right, as well as close calls with drivers not stopping.

Potential Solutions:

- Lower speed limit to 15mph during school hours on Maria Drive, in accordance with AB43.
- Add a crosswalk at Maria Drive and Yarberry (on the western/park side of Yarberry).
 - School/District to also add designated crossing through school parking lot when crosswalk is constructed.
- Restrict parking at the SW corner of Maria Drive & Yarberry.
- Add a bulb-out on the Dupree Way at Maria Drive (SE corner/on the park side) to shorten crossing distance and improve visibility of pedestrians at the crosswalk of Maria Drive and Dupree.
- Look for logical spots along Maria Drive, including but not limited to the above mentioned crossings, where adding a median island would be beneficial. Median islands not only provide a refuge for pedestrians, but increase driver yield compliance.
- Shift the crosswalk at Morning Glory and Maria Drive – currently ramps are too far back and consider shifting the bike lane on Maria Drive. Current stop limit line prevents vehicles from having adequate sightlines at the intersection causing vehicles to drift into the crosswalk and into the street. A full reconfiguration of the crosswalk may be required and will be reviewed. The ADA ramps will remain as is.

Yarberry Drive:

Concerns:

- Yarberry Drive is an extremely wide neighborhood street, which encourages people to “fly down” it – despite it being a neighborhood street that many kids/parents walk/bike on, both to get to school and to Meadowview Park.
- Parents expressed concern that there are no designated crossings on Yarberry that feel safe for kids/families to cross from the neighborhood to the park/school.
- The intersection of Yarberry Drive & Dupree is particularly concerning because it is so large and crossing distances are significant, however, with the placement of driveways, there isn't a logical place to install a crosswalk.

Potential Solutions:

- Consider adding bicycle lanes along Yarberry. Not only would bicycle lanes create designated space for bicyclists, but they would also slow traffic and improve safety for all road users. Alternatively, consider edgelines if bicycle lanes are not feasible.
- Consider adding a designated crosswalk at Yarberry & Garrett Way.
- Consider improvements to the intersection of Yarberry & Dupree to improve safety for pedestrians, such as painted bulb-outs, painted medians, or even conversion of the intersection to a traffic circle.

Misc:

District/School:

- Continue to have staff (Catina or other staff) monitor the loading/unloading area to support compliance
- Continue to share clear English/Spanish drop off/pick up procedures, including demonstration videos, and share with parents/students via Back-to-School Night, Parent Square, School newsletters, PTA, etc.
- Continue to promote Walk & Roll to School events. Consider promoting “Walking School Bus” (WSB) and/or “Bike Train” meet up spots (perhaps from a spot on the other side of Sonoma Mountain Parkway), to encourage parents & students to walk or bicycle to school together, model safe behavior, create safety in numbers, and facilitate community connections. School administration, teacher(s), or parents may lead a group of students in the morning on special event days, and also encourage students & parents to walk together together on non-event days. Parents & Students who live in the vicinity may walk to the meet-up spots, and parents of kids who live farther away can park in the neighborhood and join the walking school bus to relieve traffic and congestion in the school zone. These can operate a couple times a year, once a month, or even once a week or more, depending on capacity and who is involved in leading.
 - Continue to support parents/staff to facilitate promotion and community participation.
 - Utilize the gathering at Back to School Night and all school communication channels to notify parents about Walk/Roll events and encourage participation.
 - Utilize support from SRTS program staff for identification of meet-up spots, routes, timing, parent/staff presentations, etc.
- Report incidents to Petaluma Police Department when they occur (i.e., if someone is hit in a crosswalk but not hurt, etc), as well as ongoing concerns, such as parents parking in loading/unloading zones on city property, etc. The non-emergency phone number is 707-778-4372.
- Continue enrolling/participating in the County SRTS program, to support continued collection of student arrival/departure tally data, to participate in Walk/Roll initiatives, and to be eligible to receive SRTS services such as bicycle and/or pedestrian safety lessons and/or on-bicycle education programming.
- Share or continue sharing the following SRTS tip-sheet(s) and videos to support safe walking, bicycling, drop-off, and parking & walking:
 - Walking Safety Tip Sheet [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - Bike Safety Tip Sheet [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - Driver Awareness for Safe Arrival/Dismissal [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - Park & Walk Video [English](#) [Spanish](#)

Petaluma Police Department:

- Support school requests to enforce continued violations.

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.

Petaluma Task Force 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 (deadline is April 30th of 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.sonomasaferroutes.org. To request to receive our SRTS E-Newsletter directly, email christina@bikeosnoma.org

Appendix: Walk Audit Pictures:



Crossing at Colombard & Claret – improve visibility



Colombard & Sonoma Mountain Parkway – move crosswalk in, widen, shorten crossing



Blocking the middle driveway entrance to the school frontage has improved drop off/pick up.



A new crosswalk is desired at Yarberry drive from the school to the park



Crosswalk at Dupree & Maria Drive – improve with bulb outs



Yarberry Drive is a very wide street



Yarberry & Dupree – convert to traffic circle?
Painted bulb-outs?



Morning Glory & Maria – shift crosswalk for more visibility



Maria Drive – long straightaway encourages speeding



Non-regulation right-turn only sign – replace with regulation sign to enable enforcement