



R.L. Stevens Elementary School SRTS Walk Audit

Tuesday, November 19th, 2024



In attendance: Christina Panza (SRTS Director), Sarah Hadler (SRTS Program Manager), Alexander Oceguera (City of Santa Rosa Active Transportation Planner), Mike VanMidde (City of Santa Rosa Traffic Engineer), Lori Pola-Hoard (Principal, RL Stevens), Lauren Von Arx (3rd Grade Teacher/SRTS Champion), Vicky Cendejas (Bilingual Community Liaison), Monica Perez (parent, ELAC Committee Rep); David McPherson (parent), Officer Matt Crosbie (Santa Rosa Police Department; for debrief session only)

Route: Met in school office then split up to observe drop off both on Giffen Avenue in front of the school, and on Campbell Avenue behind the school. After drop off, the two groups met on Giffen and walked west on Giffen to Lathrop Drive. We then headed back east on Giffen toward Stony Point, headed north on Stony Point to Campbell, then west on Campbell to Doane Street and entered campus from the back entrance.

Pick up/Drop off:

Morning drop-off takes place on both Giffen Avenue and on Campbell Drive. The majority of parent drivers appear to drop off at the front/Giffen entrance. Parents who wish to park their cars and walk their students in can park in the school parking lot off of Giffen. Some parents also drop off students without parking in the school parking lot, circling around the edges of the parking lot to drop off. The parking lot has one entrance/exit, so vehicles both turn right and left into that driveway, and turn right and left out of that driveway. Because of traffic backed up from the light at Stony Point & Giffen all the way to the school driveway exit, there can be delays for drivers turning left out of the school parking lot.

In addition to the school parking lot, parents can drop off students in the school driveway loop, formerly the bus loop, just a few feet west of the school driveway. The school driveway loop also has one entrance/exit that vehicles are able to turn right and left into and out of. A staff person monitors the entrance/exit to the school parking lot loop between 7:55am-8:15am. Parents are instructed to

drop off their students and move along without parking. However, some parents stop for longer periods or park, blocking traffic, despite the presence of the monitor. As a result, the driveway loop becomes congested and parents often double park, pass one another unsafely, kids get out and walk in-between vehicles, etc. There also can be delays in exiting the school driveway loop due to traffic backed up in the loop and on Giffen.

We observed some parents pulling over and dropping off on the south side of Giffen Avenue, but not a significant amount. We did not observe many parents parking and dropping off in the Church parking lot across the street (sometimes used as an overflow parking lot). According to school staff, the Church lot used to be utilized as a drop off-pick up zone more frequently, but its use has declined in recent years, possibly due to declining enrollment at the school. The school principal indicated that use of the church parking lot is neither encouraged nor discouraged.

Students can also enter campus from a gate on the north side of Giffen slightly east of Lathrop Avenue. This entrance appears to be utilized infrequently, and mostly by students walking who live in the nearby neighborhood

There is a crossing guard stationed at Stony Point and Giffen Avenue every morning, and a different crossing guard is also stationed at that location on M, T, Th and F afternoons. The afternoon crossing guard is not present on Wednesdays, and if the afternoon crossing guard is absent, there are no available staff to replace them.

On Campbell Avenue, there were a few parents in cars who park and either walk in with their children or drop off their children to enter the school through the gate at the south end of Doane. Cars can also enter campus at the end of Doane St and make a left and they can drop students off in a small loop. These are mostly younger Kindergarten students as the Kinder classrooms are very close to the small drop off loop. Drivers can then either leave campus by Doane or follow the driveway around which connects to the much larger parking lot off of Giffen. Staff and parents said that sometimes drivers leave their cars parked in the small drop off loop while they walk their children in and this can cause congestion.

We also observed about five families (parents with children or older siblings with younger siblings) walking in from the surrounding neighborhoods. School staff mentioned that cars go fast on Campbell and that the visibility can be low for people using the crosswalk across Campbell east of Doane because of where cars are parked and the way that the road curves.

At one point, there was a crossing guard monitoring the crosswalk at Campbell/Doane but it was determined there was not a need as few families/students use this crosswalk.

Pick up/Drop off Considerations for School/District:

- Consider enrolling with AAA to establish a student [AAA School Safety Patrol](#) (or alternatively assigning additional school staff if feasible) to support a smoother, safer drop off. Student Safety Patrols (or staff) can help kids exit vehicles, enable parent drivers to move along more quickly, and even help kids who require support to get to/from class.
- Continue to frequently communicate clear English/Spanish drop off/pick up procedures & other travel safety recommendations and share with parents/students via multiple channels on a regular basis including but not limited to Back-to-School Night, Parent Square, School newsletters, PFO, etc.

School Information:

| | |
|---|---|
| Address | 2345 Giffen Ave, Santa Rosa, 95407 |
| Morning Bell(s) | 8:15a, |
| Afternoon Bell(s) | M, T, Th, F: (TK-K: 1:15pm), (1 st -3 rd : 2:25pm), (4 th -6 th : 2:45pm) W: (TK-K: 11:45am), (1 st -3 rd : 12:15pm), (4 th -6 th : 12:30pm) |
| Grade levels | Tk-6 |
| Enrollment | 416 (24-25) |
| School type | Traditional |
| Student's proximity to school | 416 geocoded students in 2024-25 335 live within 2 miles of school (81%) 242 live within 1 mile of school (58%) 168 live within ½ mile of school (40%) 75 live within ¼ mile of school (18%) |
| Participating School in Sonoma County SRTS program? | Yes |
| Student Travel Mode info (Sept 2024 student arrival/departure tally data) | Walk – 14% Bike – 1% Other – 0% Carpool – 4% School bus – 0% Transit – 0% Single Family Vehicle – 82% <i>*totals do not equal 100% due to rounding</i> |
| 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 and/or Santa Rosa City School District prior to implementation.

Giffen Avenue, east of school parking lot to Lathrop Dr. (and beyond)

Concerns:

- Participants expressed concerns about speeding on Giffen Avenue. Although it is too congested during pick-up/drop off for speeding to occur in the vicinity of the school drop-off zone, neighborhood residents and parents do have concerns about speeding on that corridor outside of those time-frames.
- Students/parents walking west on the sidewalk on the north side of Giffen have to cross both the school parking lot driveway where vehicles are both entering and exiting, and the school driveway-loop driveway, where vehicles are also both entering and exiting, to get to the

sidewalk that takes you to the school entrance. We observed numerous parents/kids avoiding this by walking through the school parking lot (where there are no sidewalks). There is no safe path of travel for pedestrians through or alongside the school parking lot.

- Students/parents crossing Stony Point on the south side of Giffen were observed walking west on the south side of Giffen, and crossing Giffen mid-block, at or near the Church across the street, west of or directly across from the school driveway loop entrance, presumably to avoid crossing the two driveways on the south side of Giffen, and also possibly to avoid crossing Giffen from south to north at Stony Point. This mid-block crossing is unmarked.
- School participants expressed concern that there are no designated crossings on Giffen Avenue, with the exception of Stony Point Rd. They expressed the desire for a crossing at a location between the school parking lot and Lathrop Avenue, either mid-block across from the United Methodist Church, or across Lathrop Avenue.

Potential Solutions:

City of Santa Rosa

- City to consider traffic calming measures along Giffen Avenue, such as painting edge lines to create a perception of a narrower roadway to slow traffic, bulbing out curbs at select intersections, or a speed cushion/cushion(s) at TBD location(s).
- City to consider installing a mid-block crossing between the church property on the south side of Giffen and the school driveway loop (likely directly across from the west side of the driveway loop).
 - Consider enhancing pedestrian safety at the mid-block crossing with one or more of the following measures:
 - Bulb outs/curb extensions
 - Rectangular-rapid flashing beacon (RRFB)
 - Raised crosswalk
- It was determined that the designated crossing/crosswalk at the church would be preferred to a crossing at Lathrop Avenue, because the church crossing is utilized far more frequently. Additionally, a crossing at Lathrop Avenue would be costly to implement due to ADA compliance requirements, drainage issues, and more. Pedestrians traveling from Lathrop could walk east on the south side of Giffen and cross at the mid-block crossing at the church. There is no reason for them to cross Lathrop at that location other than to travel to school or toward Stony Point, since it is a T-intersection.

Giffen Ave. & Stony Point Rd. intersection (and Stony Point Rd.)

Concerns:

- The crossing at Stony Point Rd and Giffen Avenue is a barrier for many families who otherwise might allow their children to walk/bicycle to school. The main issue is the speed and volume of traffic on Stony Point Rd, which is busy at all times of day, but another concern is the significantly long crossing distance. Note: recently the speed limit on Stony Point Rd. was reduced from 40 mph to 35mph (25mph in the school zone during school hours).
- Both the crossing guard and parent participants indicated that drivers frequently run the red-light or speed through the yellow light at Stony Point & Giffen, particularly when making left turns from Stony Point to Giffen or Giffen to Stony Point. They have observed many near misses with pedestrians where drivers have not obeyed right-of-way.
- The timing of the pedestrian-activated signal does not appear to be working properly; when the light is green and a pedestrian presses the button, they should immediately get the walk signal.

However, this does not happen and pedestrians have to wait longer to cross than they normally should.

Potential Solutions:

City of Santa Rosa:

- Review and repair timing of pedestrian activated signal at Giffen and Stony Point
- Add leading pedestrian intervals to the pedestrian activated signal, to give pedestrians a head start to cross the street before vehicles are given a green light.
- Eliminate the yellow-flashing left turn option and convert to a “protected left turn” for all legs of the intersection (i.e. a dedicated green light for left turns).
- Consider other measures to enhance safety for pedestrians/bicyclists at this intersection that are feasible given existing design, such as conversion to a “protected intersection,” with curb extensions and delineators. A protected intersection creates shorter, simpler crossings, more predictable movements, and better visibility between people bicycling and people driving.

Santa Rosa Police Department:

- Enforce speed and other moving violations along Stony Point Rd & at Stony Point and Giffen in particular.
- *Note: there is no room for the radar speed trailer in the street or in the planter strip area on the west side of Stony Point.*

Campbell Dr. between Stony Point Rd. and Doane

Concerns

- Participants expressed concern that drivers tend to speed on Campbell Dr., and the curve in the road makes it hard to see, so people drive down the center of the road.
- Cars travelling east on Campbell tend to not stop at the intersection of Campbell and Doane, particularly if they are taking the right onto Doane Avenue into the school’s Campbell Drive entrance.
- There is a crosswalk crossing Campbell at the east side of Doane, but it is not used often, perhaps due to the reasons listed above, or perhaps because it is in a bit of an awkward location.
- The principal indicated that visibility of pedestrians crossing at that location is often restricted by cars parked close to the stop-sign on the SW corner of Campbell and Doane.
- The principal mentioned that she would like to see flashing stop signs at the two stop signs on Campbell near the school and that this would bring increased visibility and attention to those two areas.
- School crossing/zone signage along Campbell is faded and only one-sided.
- Doane Avenue near the school entrance is periodically a “dumping ground” for trash from residents or houseless people.

Potential Solutions:

City of Santa Rosa

- Review and replace school zone & school crossing signs along Campbell Avenue

- Consider restricting parking on the southwest corner of Campbell and Doane, at the stop sign (paint curb red to improve visibility).
- Consider replacing the two stop signs at Campbell/Doane with flashing stop signs. Note: City does not have a policy for installing these, so they will need to check if funds are available to purchase, and if they meet installation guidelines.
- Consider lowering the speed limit on Campbell in the future, with other neighborhood residential streets near schools.

School/District:

Contact Transportation and Public Works at 707-543-3800 to request removal of trash on city property.

Santa Rosa Police Department:

- Respond to school requests for enforcement support on Campbell

Additional District/School SRTS Considerations:

- Continue to collaborate with SRTS to collect student arrival/departure tally data annually, to have visibility into how many students are utilizing each mode of transportation (walk, bike, other active, school bus, public transit, carpool, single family vehicle)
- Continue enrolling in/participating in the County SRTS program 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.
- Continue operating & promoting “Walking School Bus” (WSB) meet up spots at previously identified locations, and supporting school staff to facilitate promotion and community participation. Consider identifying additional locations that could be led by parents or to operate more frequently. The following Walking School Bus locations currently operate once per month on Walk/Roll event days:
 - Meet at the corner of Pear Blossom and Stony Point at 7:45am and continue to the Northpoint Apartments (2145 Stony Point Rd) at 7:55am
 - Meet at the corner of Lombardi and Gardner (near Cook Park) at 7:45am and continue to the corner of Campbell and Lombardi at 7:55am
- Report incidents to Santa Rosa 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 continuing to make U-turns, opening doors into traffic, etc.
- Provide students/parents with information re: how to utilize public transportation. Santa Rosa City bus provided the following information for the site to consider, whether it’s communicating with parents about public transit, or advocating for improved transit options.
 - All students at the school can ride **CityBus, Sonoma County Transit and SMART free of charge.**
 - If the school needs assistance planning school trips on transit, please use the tools on the Santa Rosa Transit website or contact Yuri Koslen, City Transit Planner, directly at ykoslen@srcity.org. If staff at the school need training passes in order to train students on riding the bus, the city can make those available to staff at any school in Sonoma County.
 - For your walking audit notes here are a list of transit infrastructure related to this site.
 - Current
 - The closest **CityBus** bus stop in front of the school on Stony Point Road served by;

- [Route 2](#) every 30 minutes and provides direct service to Sebastopol Rd and Downtown
- [Route 12](#) once an hour and provides service south and north to Coddington
- Feasible improvement if the school would like to advocate for improved transit.
 - Bus stop improvements at the stops near the school
- City transit planning within the next 3 years
 - Route 12 will increase its frequency to every 30 minutes with Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program funding

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 Santa Rosa.
 - Provide a venue for sharing of program initiatives and projects in the city of Santa Rosa, as well as inter-agency collaboration.

Santa Rosa 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). 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

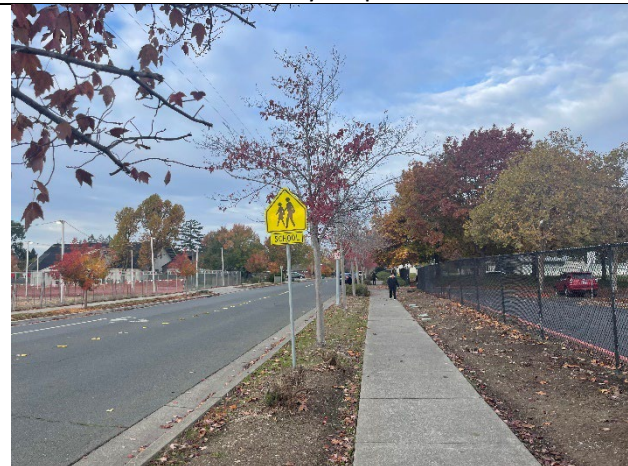
Appendix: Walk Audit Pictures:



View 1 of school driveway loop



View 2 of school driveway loop in a.m.



Heading west on Giffen, school parking lot on right



Need to cross two driveways to get to pedestrian-friendly sidewalk/walkway to school entrance



Entrance/exit to school driveway loop – see sidewalk on west side that walkers need to navigate to cross driveway/traffic.



Some of the congestion at the Stony Point/Giffen Intersection (a much longer line of vehicles is not pictured)



Intersection of Stony Point & Giffen: many safety concerns



Stony Point Rd – speed limit 25pmh when children present, bicycle lane present, but parents/kids generally do not feel safe bicycling along this corridor.



Potential location for mid-block crossing on Giffen (directly west of school driveway loop)



Intersection of Cambell Drive & Doane – review/replace signage



Another view of Campbell – can any traffic calming measures be put in place?



Consider restricting parking behind stop-sign pictured on left