



## **Grant Elementary School SRTS Walk Audit**

Tuesday, February 25th, 2025



**In attendance:** Christina Panza (SRTS Director), Bjorn Gripenburg (Active Transportation Planner, City of Petaluma), Sergeant Walt Spiller (Petaluma Police Department), Sergeant Mario Giomi (Petaluma Police Department) Amy Hale (Interim Principal, Grant), Mady Cloud (PCS Trustee, former Grant parent), Melissa Poole (parent, SRTS Champion), Marquita Lee (parent, PTA President), Bruce Hagan (grandparent, Safe Streets Petaluma Rep), Gabe Brown (parent), Krista Richardson (parent), Marisa Thatcher (neighbor)

**Route:** Began in front of the school, observing drop off on Grant Avenue. Walked west on Grant Avenue to Sherri Court, then continued west to the intersection of Grant and Mountain View Avenue. Headed South on Mountain View Avenue to McNear Avenue, then followed McNear Ave to the school campus. We cut across the back field of the school campus to E. Sunnyslope Rd, then headed east on Sunnyslope to I Street. We then walked north on I Street back to Grant Avenue, and headed west on Grant Avenue back to the school campus.

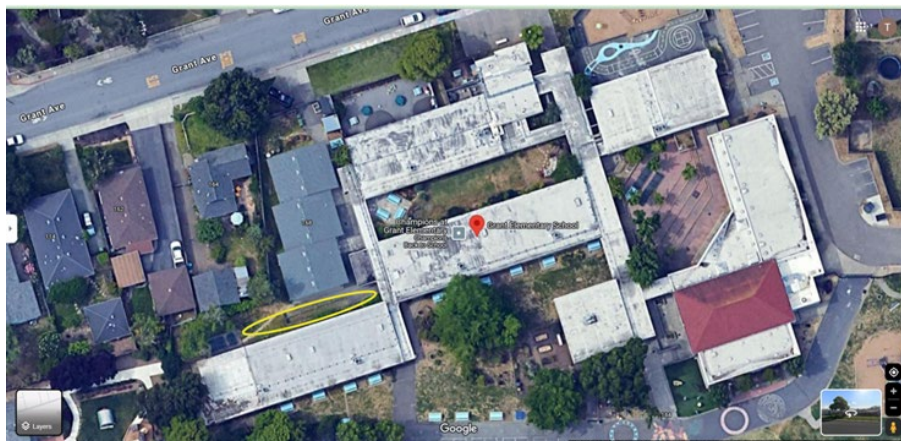
### **Pick up/Drop off:**

Pick-up/drop-off occurs primarily on Grant Avenue along the school frontage, but also on Sunnyslope Rd. at the back entrance to the school, as well as along McNear Avenue, at the side entrance to the school. Students can enter campus from all three locations. Parents also park on Kelly Lane and Sherri Court.

There is a volunteer crossing guard stationed at the crosswalk in front of the school in the mornings, and staff rotate crossing guard duty in the afternoons. The crosswalk is pedestrian-activated with both

in road flashers and flashing beacons on the signage. There were no additional staff assigned to monitor the loading/unloading zone.

## Bicycle Parking



*Location of bike rack circled in yellow*

Two traditional “grid-style” bike racks are tucked away toward the far east side of campus, wedged between two classrooms, in a location that parents have complained is not convenient and difficult to access geographically, for students or parents who are bicycling to school. The rack is also wedged in, and bicyclists are unable to fully utilize it. Kids need to climb out to get to the south side of the rack, with a narrow path thru on the north side of the rack, which is unsafe. On Walk & Roll to School days, the configuration and location of the racks were described as “chaotic,” “problematic” and “anxiety producing,” especially where it narrows toward the retaining walls.



*racks on a busy walk/roll day*

There is a strong desire for bicycle racks to be moved to a more accessible location, as students and parents have indicated that they avoid bicycling to school as a result of these challenges.

Alternative locations that have been discussed are:

1. front of school
2. either side of staff parking
3. side of aftercare building

## School Information:

Address	200 Grant Avenue, Petaluma, 94952
Morning Bell(s)	8:05am
Afternoon Bell(s)	M,T, Th-F: 1:30pm (TK-K) 2:30pm (1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> ), 3:00pm (4 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> ) W: 12:45pm (TK-8 <sup>th</sup> )
Grade levels	Tk-6 <sup>th</sup>
Enrollment	289
School type	Neighborhood
Student's proximity to school	289 geocoded students in 2024-25 234 live within 2 miles of school (81%) 194 live within 1 mile of school (67%) 89 live within ½ mile of school (31%) 38 live within ¼ mile of school (13%)
Participating School in Sonoma County SRTS program?	Yes
Student Travel Mode info (Sept 2024 student arrival/departure tally data)	Walk – 20% Bike – 5% Other active – 2% Carpool – 1% School Bus – 0% Transit – 1% Single Family Vehicle – 73%
Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Programming	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Pedestrian safety lessons 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Bicycle Basics Lessons Walk/Roll to School Events (2-5x per year)

*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 prior to implementation.*

## **Grant Avenue (school frontage) at Kelly Lane and Sherri Court**

### Concerns & Observations:

- Grant Avenue is extremely congested at drop-off in both directions. Although the loading zone in front of the school between Kelly Ln. and the eastern school gate does appear to be utilized primarily as a loading/unloading zone (rather than for parents who park and walk their kids into school), the location of the crosswalk at Grant Ave. and Kelly Lane. in the middle of the school frontage makes it difficult for traffic to move along. Parents were observed dropping off students from the traffic lane rather than the curb, making u-turns from the curb to head in the opposite direction, and pulling out in front of slow moving traffic.
- There is no center striping on Grant from the turnoff onto Mountain view to the connection with I street. Some shared that a centerlines would help better channelize traffic moving through the area, although the absence of a centerline can be advantageous for traffic calming and bike safety in some cases, especially in midblock locations away from intersections.



- Many students were observed walking on the sidewalk on both the north and south sides of Grant Ave, from both the easterly and westerly directions. Participants indicated that the majority of those students were likely dropped off in vehicles farther down the street or on a side street. The crosswalk at Grant Avenue and Kelly Lane is heavily used by both students and parents.
- Participants shared that parents park on Sherri Court, and when they are leaving it can be difficult to see around the parked cars, which block sightlines for turning as well as views of pedestrians.
- Participants shared that Kindergarteners are released at the gate on the east side of campus, and that it can be a “bit chaotic” at pick-up time, with kindergarteners congregating/running around in the grassy area adjacent to that location, and sometimes students even run into the street.
- Petaluma Transit bus stop at Grant Avenue & Kelly Lane is problematic. It is very close to the crosswalk as well as a neighbor's driveway. School staff and parents have expressed safety issues with the bus stop at this location on multiple occasions. A number of middle school/high school students waiting for the bus cause congestion on the narrow sidewalk for Grant students walking to school. This results in Grant students often stepping into the street to get around them. There is no room for a bus shelter or for waiting area for students at this location.

## **Potential Solutions:**

### **(School/District):**

- Reconfigure drop-off/pick up area on Grant to allow for a smoother flow of traffic along Grant.
  - Longer term: construction of a school drop-off loop in front of the school between Grant Court and Kelly Lane
  - Shorter term: Consider utilizing the staff parking as a one-way drop-off/pick up loop, with parent drivers entering the driveway from Grant Avenue and exiting on McNear Ave.
  - If possible consider relocating the disabled parking spot on Grant Avenue in front of the school, to free up additional drop off/pick up space for parents.
- Educate parents to avoid illegal U-turn behavior
- Encourage drop-off/pick up in alternate locations (McNear Ave, E Sunnyslope Rd) and encourage active transportation to/from school, to potentially decrease the number of parents dropping off/picking up on/along Grant Ave.
- Consider constructing a fence/barrier along the grassy area where kindergarteners are dropped off to prevent young children from running into the street.

### **(City of Petaluma)**

- Daylight Curbs (restrict parking) at Sherri Ct. and Grant Ave.
- Consider alternate locations for City Bus stop
- Extend white passenger loading zone east of the crosswalk if the school would like to remove its on-street ADA space.
- Add an edgeline and centerline along the school frontage to channelize traffic and discourage double parking. Consider adding edgelines along the full length of Grant Avenue and centerlines at intersection approaches.
- Implement a “neighborhood greenway” along Grant Avenue to identify the street as a low speed street that is safe for people walking, bicycling, and rolling.

## **Grant Avenue & Mountain View Avenue**

### **Concerns & Observations:**

- Participants indicated that the three-way stop where Grant meets Mountain View is highly concerning. Grant curves at the westerly approach to Mountain View, resulting in widening of the road that results in an excessively long crossing of Grant at Mountain View.
- There is a marked crosswalk across Grant at Mountain View, and across Mountain View just north of Colinda Drive.
- Drivers frequently do not stop and/or yield to pedestrians at the stop signs at this intersection, and participants indicated that sight lines can be obstructed. The south side of the crosswalk is especially problematic as people turning left onto mountain view will try to "beat" pedestrians who are just entering the crosswalk because it is so long.
- Participants shared that if improvements were made to the Grant/Mountainview intersection, they believe that more pedestrians would cross there rather than at the crosswalk in front of the school. It's more of an issue when students are leaving school and walking home, because they need to cross at the south end of the Grant/Mountain View crosswalk if they don't cross in front of the school. If more students/parents crossed at Grant/Mountainview overall pedestrian congestion at the school crosswalk would decrease, and fewer pedestrians would need to walk across the entrance to Sheri court, which has bad sightlines in both directions.

### **Potential Solutions:**

#### **(City of Petaluma)**

- Add curb extensions (aka bulb outs) all corners, with an emphasis on the southeast corner of the Grant & Mountain View Intersection to shorten the crossing distance at that location and improve sightlines
- Once curb extension is installed, the marked crosswalk across Mountain View can be relocated farther to the north, to just south of the residential driveway, to effectively "shrink" the entire intersection.

## **Mountain View Avenue & McNear Avenue**

### **Concerns & Observations:**

- The intersection at McNear Ave and Mountain View Ave only has two stop signs. People heading West on McNear Ave don't have a stop sign which leads to confusion among drivers and is a safety issue for pedestrians crossing the crosswalk at this intersection.
- Drivers frequently do not stop and/or yield to pedestrians at the stop signs at this intersection, and participants indicated drivers speed around the corners, due to the wide turning radius.
- Location of marked crosswalk at McNear and Mountainview is at the widest portion of the intersection, resulting in long crossing distance
- Missing ADA-compliant curb ramps
- Speeding on McNear Avenue is a concern
- There are numerous sidewalk gaps along McNear Avenue and also on upper Mountain View

### **Potential Solutions:**

- Install bulbouts to shorten the crossing distance and slow right turns from McNear onto Mt. View.

## **East Sunnyslope Road and I Street**

### **Concerns & Observations:**

- The city (in response to a parent concern) recently improved the crossing by adding zebra-stripe markings to all four legs of the intersection and adding flashing red lights to the stop-signs.
- However, participants indicated that the flashing red lights were never functional, the crosswalk paint is already beginning to fade, and that they would like to see additional improvements at this intersection.
- Speeding on I Street is a major concern. This is particularly problematic with drivers traveling southbound, downhill, toward the intersection of I Street and East Sunnyslope where many students are crossing.
- Despite improvements to the crossing, Drivers frequently run that stop sign.

### **Potential Solutions:**

#### **(City of Petaluma)**

- Replace replace flashing lights with more robust versions.

## **I Street between Adams and Independence Way**

### **Concerns & Observations:**

- This crosswalk allows you to cross “I” street to connect to Grant Ave, which is one of the main routes to Grant Elementary School. It is needed to cross “I” street because the sidewalk ends on this stretch.
- The flashing yellow school zone light is not visible on this stretch (heading north), it’s buried in vegetation/tree canopy.
- Limited sign visibility due to the neon signs being obscured by other signs.
- It is difficult to have visibility of this crosswalk especially if you are a driver heading south on I street due to the incline in the road prior to the crosswalk.

### **Potential Solutions:**

- Clear out the canopy that covers the flashing school sign (continue to maintain regularly)
- Consider an RRFB for this location

## **Grant Avenue between I Street and School Campus**

### **Concerns and observations:**

- Where Grant Avenue curves between Grant Elementary School & I St., it is difficult for drivers to see bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Bushes and/or trees at 49 Grant Avenue obstruct visibility as well.
- Grant Street has no sidewalk on the North side approaching I St. People walk there, which is very dangerous as cars whip around that corner driving away from Grant toward the I street stop sign.
- Approaching the I street stop sign from Grant, drivers can’t see around the corner to I Street, so they creep WAY up over the crosswalk without looking left for pedestrians, and simply don’t stop at the stop sign where they are supposed to.

- Turning left onto Grant from I Street poses a major threat to people crossing from the South side of Grant to the North side, at the I street crosswalk - it's a blind spot given the sun is glaring most mornings.
- Crosswalk at Grant Ave. & I Street is faded.
- Bush on SE corner of Grant Ave. & I street needs trimming.

### **Potential Solutions:**

- Paint edge lines along Grant Ave. to better define the curb & provide a traffic calming element.
- Consider removing parking on Grant Ave. where the road curves (between 104-108 Grant).
- Contact homeowners re: trimming bushes/trees.
- Consider converting the intersection of Grant Ave. and I St. to an all-way stop.
- Work with homeowners to close sidewalk gap on north side of Grant Avenue. In the interim, install a crosswalk somewhere in the vicinity of Grant Ct. to connect the alternating sides of sidewalks.

### **District/School:**

- Continue to promote Walk & Roll to School events, and to promote "Walking School Bus" (WSB) and/or "Bike Train" meet up spots, 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.
  - Current Walking School Bus/Bike Train Meet Up Spots:
    - Westridge Park at Eckman Lane (Bike Train)
    - Wickersham Park (Bike Train)
- 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.
- Assign staff to monitor the loading/unloading area to support compliance
- 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.
- 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](#)
  - E-Bicycles [English](#) [Spanish](#)
  - Park & Walk Video [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- Utilize CHP's [E-Bicycle Safety Course](#)

#### **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 30<sup>th</sup> 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.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:



Crosswalk and bus-stop on Grant Avenue in front of school



Middle/high school students waiting for bus while students cross with crossing guard



Congestion on Grant at morning drop-off



Student exiting vehicle from travel lane due to congestion



Bike racks tucked away and close to retaining wall





Sherri Court – drivers have trouble seeing pedestrians crossing at this location



Grant at Mountain View – problematic crossing & sight-lines





McNear at Mountain View – long crossing, confusing for drivers who don't stop



I Street and E. Sunnyslope Rd. intersection – frequently utilized by students, speeding/not obeying pedestrian right of way is an issue.





I St, approaching mid-block crossing



I St, mid-block crossing



Intersection fo Grant and I Street
