



## **Sonoma Mountain Elementary SRTS Walk Audit**

Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025



**In attendance:** Christina Panza (SRTS Director), Bjorn Gripenburg (Active Transportation Planner, City of Petaluma), Sergeant Walt Spiller (Petaluma Police Department), Indy Monday (Principal, Sonoma Mountain), Trina Marshall (parent), Margot Ocañas (Senior Transportation Planner, Sonoma County Transportation Authority)

**Route:** Began in front of the school, observing pick up. Headed south on Rainier Circle toward Matzen Ranch Circle. Walked one block in the easterly direction on Matzen Ranch Circle to the crosswalk at Matzen Ranch Circle & Selmart Lane. Headed back to Rainier Circle, traveled north to Eagle St, headed south on Eagle to Pembridge St, then back to Rainier Circle and the school.

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

Pick up and Drop off occurs in both in front of the school, on Rainier Circle, and on Matzen Ranch Circle, at the side of the school. Many parents also park and walk in the surrounding neighborhoods. A significant amount of support is provided by district staff to manage traffic and behavior (i.e. reminding drivers to move along, opening car doors, assisting students, etc) at pick up/drop off. In the morning, three district staff are stationed – two along Rainier, and one on Matzen Ranch Circle to support moving traffic along, opening car doors, etc. In the afternoon, one district staff is stationed on Rainier in front of Kid's Care, and one is stationed on Matzen Ranch Circle. In addition, there are also two district-staff crossing guards in both the morning and afternoons, one at Rainier Circle and Tulare, and one at Ranier Circle and Matzen Ranch Circle. This level of support supports what appeared to be a smooth pick-up, as compared to other sites in Petaluma.

The school places traffic cones on the west side of Rainier Circle, north of the Matzen Ranch Circle, to improve visibility at that intersection, because drivers frequently do not obey pedestrian right-of-

way. They also put out mid-block crossing signs every morning and afternoon in the crosswalks at Rainier and Matzen Ranch Circle and Rainier and Tulare.

A secure bike cage is located in the rear of the school, convenient for students bicycling to school from the trail, although it will be moved to a TBD location due to the construction of a new building in that location.

## School Information:

Address	1900 Rainier Circle, Petaluma, 94954
Morning Bell(s)	8:20am
Afternoon Bell(s)	M,T, Th-F: 2:35pm (TK-3rd) 2:50pm (4 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> ), W: 1:35pm (TK-6 <sup>th</sup> )
Grade levels	Tk-6
Enrollment	433
School type	Neighborhood
Student's proximity to school	433 geocoded students in 2024-25 336 live within 2 miles of school (78%) 271 live within 1 mile of school (63%) 139 live within ½ mile of school (32%) 70 live within ¼ mile of school (15%)
Participating School in Sonoma County SRTS program?	Yes
Student Travel Mode info (Sept 2024 student arrival/departure tally data)	Walk – 19% Bike – 5% Other active – 1% Carpool – 2% School Bus – 3% Transit – 0% Single Family Vehicle – 72%
Safe Routes to School Non-Infrastructure Programming (2024-25)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Pedestrian safety lessons 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Bicycle Basics Lessons, Family Bike Workshop 5 <sup>th</sup> 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 Old Adobe School District prior to implementation.*

## Concerns and Observations:

- Drivers “fly through” the crosswalk at Matzen Ranch Circle and Selmart Ln. School staff has made efforts to direct students/parents to cross at the crosswalk at Matzen Ranch Circle & Rainier, but many people still prefer to cross at Matzen Ranch Circle & Selmart, as it’s a natural path of travel.

- Driver's "race" down Rainier Circle in both directions, and do not always obey pedestrian right-of-way, particularly on the approach to Matzen Ranch Circle and Almanor Street. The crossing guard stationed at Matzen Ranch Circle & Rainier expressed that she has experienced near misses with drivers.
- A parent who lives on Acadia Drive indicated in the Spring 2023 parent survey that turning onto Rainier Avenue at Acadia Drive can be dangerous, and expressed that they would like to see a crosswalk at Rainier Avenue and Acadia.
- Parents frequently use Eagle St. and Almanor St. as a cut through to Rainier Circle, and tend to drive faster than comfortable, particularly given the number of kids walking/crossing through Eagle Park.
- Families utilizing active travel would benefit from improvements to Rainier Avenue and Sonoma Mountain Parkway and access to the school from the Ring Trail.

### **Potential Solutions:**

- Enhance & improve safety & visibility of crossings at:
  - Matzen Ranch Cir. and Selmart Ln.
  - Rainier Cir. and Matzen Ranch Cir.
  - Rainier Cir. And Tulare St.
    - Install bulb-outs to shorten crossing distance & improve pedestrian visibility.
    - Refresh crosswalk paint if needed
    - Update signage (double sided)
    - Add permanent mid-block pedestrian "paddles"
- Create a loading zone during drop off/pick up on the school side of Matzen Ranch Circle between crosswalk at Selmart Ln. and Rainier Circle.
- Add School zone signage throughout the neighborhood.
- Add bicycle lanes along Rainier Circle between Sonoma Mountain Parkway and Rainier Ave. to Tulare St. to provide a space for bicyclists and slow traffic.
- Lower speed limit to 15mph in the school zone. (when children are present / during school hours. Default speed limit remains 25mph.)
- City plans to implement a road diet with crossing improvements and protected bike lanes on Rainier Avenue in 2025-26.

### **District/School:**

- Consider constructing a pathway across the back field for improved access to campus from the Ring Trail.
- Continue to have 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 event, and promoting "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.

- 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](#)
  - 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.sonomasaferroutes.org](http://www.sonomasaferroutes.org). To request to receive our SRTS E-Newsletter directly, email [christina@bikeosnoma.org](mailto:christina@bikeosnoma.org)

## Appendix: Walk Audit Pictures:



Intersection of Rainier Circle & Matzen Ranch Circle – improve crossing, add permanent mid-block ped signs..



Intersection of Rainier Circle & Matzen Ranch Circle – school added cones for visibility, improve with bulb outs



Intersection of Matzen Ranch Circle and Selmart Lane – improve visibility with bulb outs, improved signage



Intersection of Matzen Ranch Circle & Selmart – double-sided signage is a potential improvement as well.



Matzen Ranch Circle between Selmar & Rainier Circle, convert to loading zone during school hours	Intersection of Rainier Circle & Tulare – refresh crosswalk, add mid-block ped signage, bulb outs
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