

Neighborhood Planning for Safe Routes to School around Pacific Elementary School: A Report on Recommendations from Community Design Workshops



April 2006

Prepared for

Sacramento City Unified School District
Sacramento County
Partnership for Active Communities
Sacramento Area Council of Governments
California Department of Transportation

Prepared by

Alta Planning + Design
Local Government Commission
Walkable Communities
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Disclaimer

Adherence to the principles found in this report can lead to an overall improvement in neighborhood safety and livability. This report does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation, and is not intended to be used as a basis for establishing civil liability. This report is not a substitute for sound engineering judgment. The decision to implement any particular measure should be made on the basis of engineering studies of the location.



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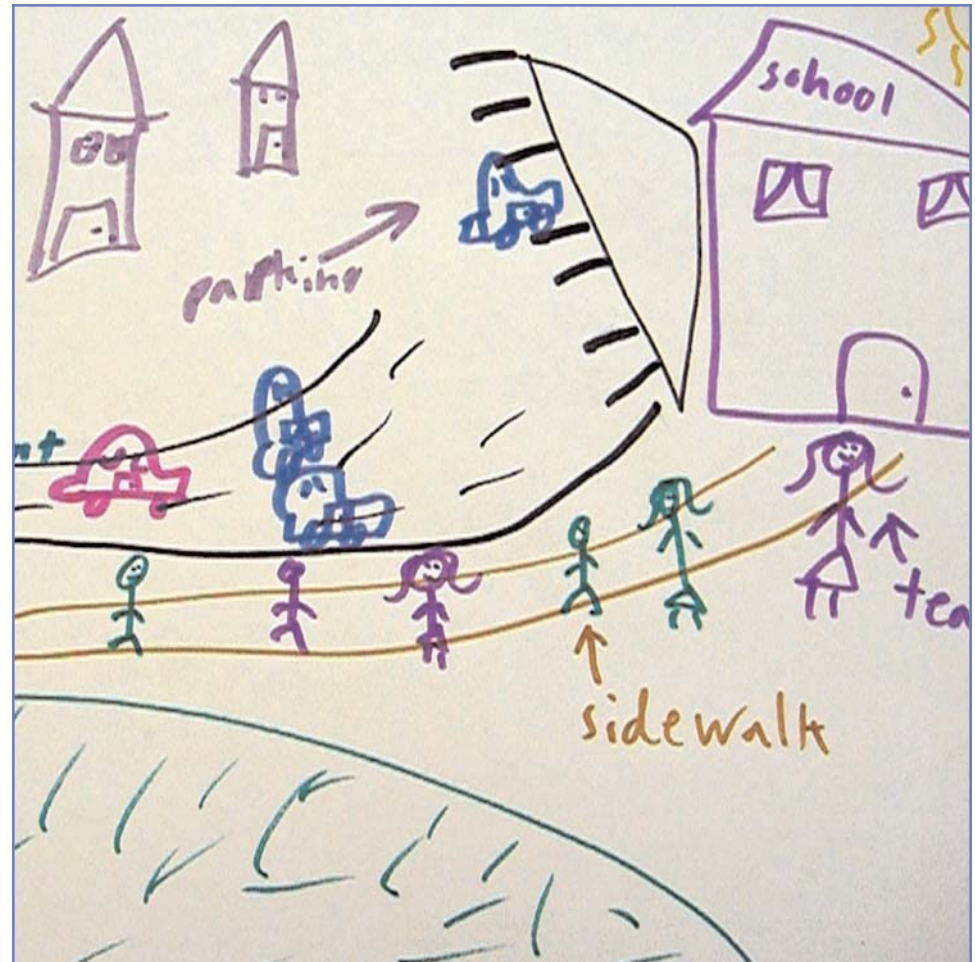
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Background

■ Project Description and Goals

In California, approximately 5,000 child pedestrians are injured each year. Vehicle collisions with pedestrians are the second-leading cause of fatal injuries among 5- to 12-year-olds statewide. This project, “Neighborhood Planning for Safe Routes to School around Pacific Elementary School,” seeks to reduce injuries and fatalities by increasing the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists around Pacific Elementary in the Sacramento City Unified School District.

An additional complementary goal of the project is to improve accessibility and livability within the neighborhoods around these schools.

The project is funded through an Environmental Justice: Context Sensitive Planning grant from the California Department of Transportation. Lead partners include Alta Planning + Design, Local Government Commission, Walkable Communities, WALKSacramento, and Sacramento Area Council of Governments.



Vehicle collisions with pedestrians are the second-leading cause of fatal injuries among 5- to 12-year-olds statewide.

The 1.4-mile stretch of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard located in the Pacific Elementary area has the most fatalities per mile and the fourth-highest for collisions per mile among Sacramento County traffic corridors.



78% of children fall short of the recommended amount of physical activity. The recommended minimum amount of activity can be met, fully or partially, if children can walk and bicycle to school.

■ **The Charrette Process**

On February 22, 2006, project partners held a series of interactive neighborhood planning exercises at Pacific Elementary involving students, parents, teachers and community leaders. These public events featured “walking audits,” focus groups, presentations, interactive design tables and a community workshop.

Through public input and analysis of existing conditions and data, the project partners developed a series of traffic-calming measures and other context-sensitive design solutions that address the infrastructure needs in the neighborhoods around this school.

■ **Benefits of Safer Routes**

The recommendations highlighted in this report will have numerous benefits if imple-

mented. Most importantly, these recommendations will reduce vehicle and pedestrian conflicts along routes to school, ensuring safer travel and fewer child pedestrian injuries and deaths. They will also encourage physical activity and reduce obesity among school children.

A recent Surgeon General report found that 78% of children fall short of the recommended amount of physical activity, thus contributing to unprecedented levels of childhood obesity. The recommended minimum amount of activity can be met, fully or partially, if children can walk and bicycle to school. Safer routes to school will result in more students and parents choosing to walk or bicycle, thus reducing congestion and traffic incidents and improving the transportation network.



In today's automobile-dominated culture, the implications of training a new generation of pedestrians and bicyclists are profound. If children are provided with transportation options now, they will be more inclined to use them in the future.

In the meantime, we all benefit from reduced auto emissions and less road congestion. A recent study from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration-funded Safe Routes to School National Model Project in Marin County revealed that at least 25% of morning traffic is attributable to parents driving their children to school. It is ironic that parents concerned about their child getting safely to school and who decide to drive them, may contribute significantly to the risk of walking or biking to school.

■ Connecting with Existing Safe Routes to School Efforts

Prior to the start of this project, various efforts to promote safer routes to schools existed at Pacific Elementary. Much of the work is associated with the Healthy Start program at the school. Healthy Start strives to make improvements in such areas as school readiness, educational success, physical health, emotional support, and family strength.

Pacific Elementary also has a crossing guard stationed at the south leg of the intersection of 43rd Avenue and 41st Street. Staff rotate this responsibility and, while they have no official training, they are a helpful and positive presence.

If implemented, the report's recommendations will encourage physical activity and help reduce obesity among schoolchildren.

Existing Conditions

■ Location and Neighborhood

Pacific Elementary School is located at the intersection of 41st Street and 43rd Avenue in unincorporated Sacramento County. Adjacent land uses are primarily single-family residential homes. Pacific Park, a small neighborhood park consisting mostly of open playfields, is contiguous to the southern boundary of the school property.

Access to the school is limited due to its location in the corner of a neighborhood that is bounded by north-south Highway 99 on the west and not connected to east-west 47th Avenue to the south. The school's enrollment area extends to the west side of Highway 99, and a pedestrian overcrossing provides access over the highway connecting 44th Avenue on the west side with 43rd Avenue on the east side. The 41st Avenue vehicular overcrossing of Highway 99 also provides a way for pedestrians and bicycles to cross the highway.

■ Current Mode Split

According to a 2002 survey, nearly 85% of Pacific Elementary's students walk to school on a daily basis; and observationally, in 2006, a similar percentage of children walk to school. As an underserved and low-income community, walking for many children is not a choice but the only transportation option. A small bus transports special education students, about 12 students per day.

■ Local Roadway Network

The roadways immediately adjacent to the school are low-volume residential streets. Because the local street network does not link to any major roadways, there is no through-traffic on the streets immediately adjacent to the school. Most of the traffic in the area is resident or school related. 41st Avenue, three blocks north of the school, does get cut-through traffic because it provides an overcrossing of Highway 99.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard is a major north-south arterial west of Highway 99 that connects to Franklin Boulevard just south of 47th Avenue. In the vicinity of the school, MLK has one travel lane in each direction, bike lanes, and a center dual turn lane. MLK is fronted by a mix of single- and multi-family residential and commercial uses. The Pacific Elementary enrollment area does include residences on the west side of MLK, so students are required to cross this roadway.

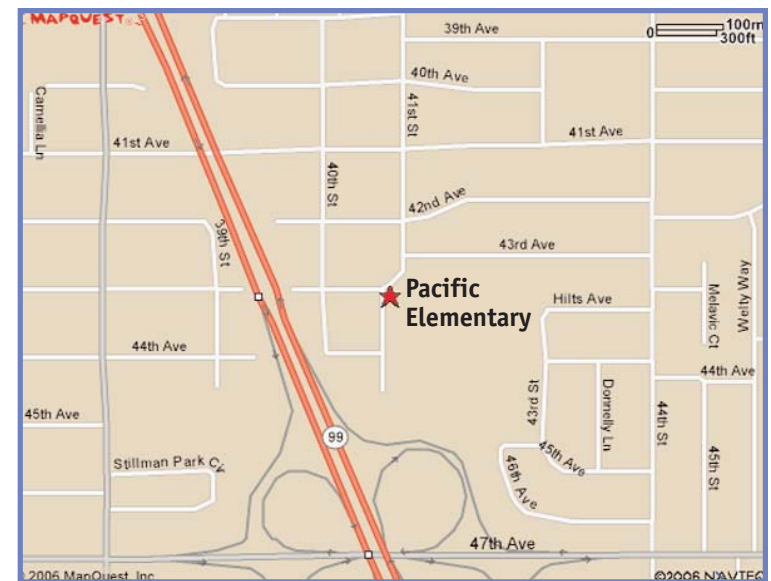
■ Parking Lot

The school's main off-street parking lot is located on 41st Street as it curves toward 43rd Avenue, along the north side of the school. A wide curving driveway provides access into this lot. Other off-street parking occurs adjacent to the kindergarten building at the south end of campus. No defined parking spaces are present, but staff vehicles park along the asphalt in this location.

North of 44th Avenue, a row of angled parking spaces have been striped along the east side of 41st Street (oriented for parking in the northbound direction) along the school's frontage. South of 44th Avenue, a series of 90-degree and angled parking spaces extend to the end of 41st Avenue at Pacific Park. During the field review, there were reports that cars had been broken into during the day while parked on 41st Street, and staff preferred to park in the on-site parking areas.

■ Sidewalks

Sidewalks in the neighborhood are typically between 4 and 4-1/2 feet wide. Most blocks had vertical curb, but some blocks with rolled curb are present. Along MLK, the sidewalks are generally 4 feet wide with vertical curb. On the 41st Avenue overcrossing, sidewalks are 4-1/2 feet wide with a vertical curb.



Along the 41st Avenue overcrossing, there is a drainage problem so that whenever it rains, water pools up adjacent to the sidewalk and pedestrians get splashed by passing traffic.

■ Crosswalks

School (yellow) crosswalks are currently striped at the intersection of 41st Street and 43rd Avenue. A high-visibility crosswalk extends north from the southeast corner, across the curve. A standard parallel yellow crosswalk extends across the south leg. A standard yellow parallel crosswalk is present at the eastern leg of the northern intersection of 41st Street/43rd Avenue (north of the curve). White parallel crosswalks are present on the eastern legs of 41st Street/42nd Avenue and 41st Street/41st Avenue.

On the west side of Highway 99, yellow parallel school crosswalks are present at all legs of the intersection of MLK/41st Street. Advance stop lines are lacking at this intersection. A mid-block, signalized pedestrian crossing with a yellow parallel school crosswalk is present across MLK, just north of 44th Avenue.

■ Bus Facilities

Pacific Elementary school has no off-street bus loading area. Bus loading and unloading occurs on 41st Street in front of the school.

■ Bicycle Facilities

Class II bike lanes are striped on MLK in the vicinity of the school. No other bike facilities are present in the neighborhood. There is a



bicycle rack for students' bikes on Pacific Elementary's campus.

■ Drop-off/Pick-up Operations

Drop off and pick up at Pacific Elementary occurs along 41st Street in front of the school, and in the school's main north parking area. Many parents drive southbound on 41st Street, then make a U-turn at 44th Avenue so that they can drop off their children on the school side. Some parents simply drop off their children in the southbound direction. Parents who want to walk their children to class use the angled parking spaces in front of the school.

The result is that at the peak drop-off period, parents are pulling into and backing out of the angled parking spaces, while drop-off occurs on the street behind them as well.

Drop off was also observed in the school's parking lot on the north side of campus. Although this is not a designated drop-off site, parents enter the lot, drop their children off, then make a U-turn in the lot to exit back onto 41st Street.

■ Known Issues

For the 41st Avenue overcrossing, when it rains it is impossible not to be splashed by passing cars and there were stories about school children not wanting to go to school because they knew they would get repeatedly splashed while crossing the bridge.

Many of the issues discussed during the field audit, charrette and public workshop related to personal safety of children and parents while walking. Criminal activity – including gunfire – was noted by several participants, particularly along 44th Avenue east of the pedestrian overcrossing. Many parents noted that they were afraid of walking across the pedestrian overcrossing, especially at night. The pedestrian overcrossing has blind corners on either end and inadequate lighting.

Nuisance dogs were cited by several participants, along 43rd Avenue and 44th Avenue on either side of the pedestrian crossing. Rainbow Park on MLK was also identified as a place where drug dealing and other criminal activity occurs. Observations of litter and discarded household items along the walking route were further evidence that the key concerns of residents are socioeconomic problems, rather than traffic engineering issues.

Many of the traffic-related concerns expressed by the participants focused on the area directly in front of the school on 41st Street, where parents dropping off children on the opposite side of the street and then making U-turns cause substantial congestion in this location.

Recommended Improvements

DISTRICTWIDE POLICY AND PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

■ School-based SR2S Task Force

Currently, there is no formal SR2S Task Force at Pacific Elementary School. Establishing such a task force is an important step to beginning a comprehensive SR2S effort, implementing educational and encouragement efforts, and getting neighborhood, elected officials, school district and County staff support for engineering improvements. These meetings can help to identify the “champions” at the school who will help push forward with improvements. It is recommended that each school form a SR2S Task Force.

Potential members include:

- School Administrators/Teachers
- Parents
- Neighbors
- Law Enforcement Representatives
- Elected Officials Representative
- City DOT Representative

■ Double Fine Zone

The State of California currently has a pilot program in three counties (Ventura, Santa Barbara and Alameda) to establish “Double Fine Zones” around schools. Additional revenues from the program can be used to fund traffic safety programs. Local officials should pursue getting this program implemented in Sacramento County. It would require action by the State Legislature to include Sacramento County in the pilot program (or to expand the program statewide).

There are currently bills in the Assembly to expand this program to San Diego and Los Angeles Counties, so expanding it to Sacramento County should be an option in the next session.

■ Alternative School Access Locations for Bicyclists and Pedestrians

Continue to encourage pedestrian and bicycle ingress/egress via path on east side of Pacific Elementary (connecting out to 44th Avenue/43rd Street) during morning and afternoon hours, to provide convenient access for children traveling from residences south and east of school. The County and the Sacramento City Unified School District should partner to ensure that this path is well lit, and provides good visibility, both on and off campus. Gates should be locked during school hours for security.



Efforts at the School District level should ensure that plans for future new school construction provides for alternative exit entry points and connections into the surrounding neighborhood to encourage walking/bicycling and take pressure off of main drop-off/pick-up area at front of school.

■ Crossing Guards

Some of the Pacific Elementary staff rotate duty to serve as unofficial crossing guards. For about a half an hour at the end of the school day, the crossing guard is positioned at the intersection of 41st Street and 43rd Avenue, and carries a “STOP” sign. The crossing guards do not receive any formal training.

Sacramento County provides adult school crossing guards at elementary school locations where school-aged pedestrians need supervision

and assistance to safely cross public streets. Each adult crossing guard costs the County approximately \$10,000 per year. There are limited County funds budgeted for crossing guards. The County's Traffic Engineering evaluates each request so that these funds can be allocated to the locations with the greatest need.

It is recommended that Pacific Elementary and the School District apply for a County-funded position for the intersection of 41st Street and 43rd Avenue. If unable to secure a crossing guard through this means, then the existing effort by school staff can be enhanced with basic safety training from a law enforcement agency and with additional equipment, such as an orange reflective vest, to more clearly indicate that they are a designated authority figure at this school site.

■ School Safety Patrols

The School Safety Patrol Program is a community safety program that involves the use of trained student volunteers to assist their peers to cross the street safely when traveling to and from school. Caltrans provides specific guidance on the use of School Safety Patrols.

In general, a student patrol may be established at locations where an existing traffic control device, police officer or adult crossing guard is in operation. They may also be used where there are adequate crossing gaps in vehicular flow at an uncontrolled crossing and it is desirable to use student patrols to guide the school pedestrians. School safety patrollers

are different than crossing guards in that they do not stop or direct traffic. The California Education Code (Sections 49300 to 49307) and the California Code of Regulations (Sections 570 to 576 and 632) authorize the development of School Safety Patrols and outline rules for implementing these programs within the state.

Student Safety Patrols can be authorized by the local school board, with school authorities responsible for organizing, instructing and supervising patrols with the assistance of the local police.

It is recommended that the School District explore the use of school safety patrols at appropriate locations in the vicinity of the schools. Many school safety patrols are conducted in partnership with the American Automobile Association (AAA), which started the program in 1920.

■ Student Valets

The school might also want to consider the use of 5th- or 6th-grade student valets to assist with curbside loading/unloading within the on-site drop-off areas. This program should be reserved for students with an outstanding academic/attendance record. Student valets are not intended to direct or monitor traffic, but simply to make the loading/unloading more efficient by helping to open doors and assist getting students and their backpacks out of vehicles (so that parents can remain in the driver seat).



It is recommended that Pacific Elementary and the School District apply for a County-funded crossing guard position for the intersection of 41st Street and 43rd Avenue.

■ Sheriff Patrols

Many residents said they were afraid of crime, drug dealing, gunshots, and other illegal activities occurring along the route to school. 44th Avenue on the west side of the pedestrian bridge was mentioned by several parents as a major trouble spot. We recommend that the Sheriff's Department continue to conduct and preferably increase regular patrols of these areas, particularly during the school commute period, to ensure the safety of children traveling to and from school.

■ Trash Cleanup

Throughout the neighborhood, trash, abandoned furniture and household goods, and other debris were observed blocking sidewalks and streets. The County should ensure that this material is not left to collect and that it is immediately cleaned up.

An aggressive campaign to stop the littering should be implemented, which should be a partnership of County agencies (such as Code Enforcement), the County Sheriff's Department, the Sacramento Regional Waste Authority (SWA), and the franchised waste haulers that contract with the SWA.

The SWA and its franchised haulers should ensure that all residents have adequately sized trash barrels and recycling bins. Residents should be notified of special days for bulky-item pickup.



The County (Code Enforcement) and Sheriff's Department) should aggressively cite violators who leave trash on the sidewalk and street.

■ Fence Setbacks

Throughout the neighborhood, a number of houses have tall (5- to 6-foot) residential security fences constructed immediately adjacent to the sidewalk. Pedestrians require a "shy distance" from fixed objects such as walls and fences, with a desirable setback of 2 feet.

The lack of this shy distance means that the effective sidewalk width is reduced, as pedestrians will tend to walk approximately 2 feet away from the fences, placing them in the middle of the narrow 4- or 5-foot sidewalks.

The County should revise its residential zoning requirements to require a minimum 2-foot setback for all walls and fences from the edge of the sidewalk for all future development and renovations.

It should also consider requiring that fences, especially along the front of properties, be no taller than 3 to 4 feet so as to provide more "eyes on the street." This helps to create greater security in a neighborhood since it creates a sense that public spaces like the street and sidewalk are being looked over by residents.

■ Nuisance Dogs

A number of students and parents complained of nuisance dogs that run loose in the neighborhood and scare pedestrians. The County should ensure that an animal control officer is available to investigate complaints of nuisance animals, and to issue citations if necessary.

The County should include the Pacific Elementary school area as part of the patrol area of its animal control officer.

The school should post the number of the Animal Control Hotline, (916) 875-5232, in the office, and distribute the number to parents at the beginning of the school year in their Back to School materials.

ENGINEERING RECOMMENDATIONS

■ Highway 99 Overcrossing

A number of improvements are recommended to improve the safety and usability of the Highway 99 pedestrian overcrossing located at the end of 43rd Avenue.

Problems observed included trash on and in the areas next to the bridge ramps, water pooling on the bridge walkways, overgrown vegetation that limited visibility, and broken lighting.

Many parents complained about security on this bridge structure. Important factors to consider in providing for a safe overcrossing include providing good visibility so that pedestrians can see and be seen as they cross, good lighting for crossing at night or early morning, and providing for a clean structure where trash is not allowed to collect.

It is recommended that Caltrans install new vandal-resistant lighting along the structure, trim the vegetation to provide for open visibility, and install security cameras for additional safety. Caltrans should also study drainage improvements to correct the pooling water on the structure's ramps and walkways.

While Caltrans should be responsible for regular maintenance and trash clean-up, neighborhood residents may need to

conduct their own neighborhood clean-up. Picking up litter as soon as possible will discourage others from throwing trash here. The County Sheriff should include this bridge in regular patrols of the neighborhood.

■ 40th Street and 41st Street

A number of new crosswalk locations were identified along the 40th Street and 41st Street corridors, leading toward the school. These include 40th Street at 41st Avenue, 42nd Avenue and 43rd Avenue, where new high-visibility crosswalks are recommended for all legs, with advance stop bars as appropriate.

Along 41st Street, new high-visibility crosswalks are recommended for 41st Avenue and 42nd Avenue, with advance stop lines as appropriate. As a mid-term recommendation, the County should consider curb extensions for these crossing areas.

■ 41st Street / 43rd Avenue

41st Street curves as it approaches the school property and the intersection with 43rd Avenue. It is recommended that the County prohibit parking along the curve to improve visibility for the existing crosswalk at 41st/43rd.

■ School Parking Lot

The school parking lot entrance is located along the curve north of the school and is configured with a very wide driveway requiring a long crossing distance for pedestrians. The school should install a landscaped area to

Important factors for a safe overcrossing include good visibility so that pedestrians can see and be seen as they cross.

narrow the driveway to a single exit/entry lane, reducing the width of the crossing for children.

To decrease the number of vehicles entering and exiting the parking lot driveway during school commute hours, the school should prohibit parents from conducting drop-off and pick-up within the lot.

The school should station a person to monitor driveway, and block the driveway with cones to only allow entry by staff.

■ 41st Street in Front of School

41st Street in front of the school currently allows for two-way traffic, with angled parking along the school. This roadway dead-ends into Pacific Park at the south end of the school boundary. This street is the primary drop-off/pick-up location for parents, however, many parents travel southbound along 41st Street and either drop their children off on the far (west) side of the street, or make mid-block U-turns to turn around to drop off on the school side.



A B C D SHORT-TERM:
Install high-visibility crosswalk
striping at all intersection legs

MID-TERM:
Install curb extensions

E SHORT-TERM:
Narrow travel lanes along 41st Ave.
east of MLK to provide for 10' travel
lanes and 5' bike lanes

F MID-TERM:
Make drainage improvements on bridge
to eliminate flooding along roadway

The flow of the pick-up/drop-off could be greatly improved if all traffic were traveling northbound along this segment of 41st Street in front of the school. To accomplish this, it is recommended that 41st Street be converted to a one-way northbound road, with access provided by looping around via 40th Street and 44th Avenue.

Providing for one-way looping pick-up/drop-off travel would eliminate the U-turns along 41st Avenue as parents turn around after dropping their children off.

By making 41st Avenue one-way in the northbound direction, children on the passenger side of the car would be in the correct location for a curbside drop off in front of the school.

In conjunction with one-way conversion, the County should narrow the intersection of 41st Street/43rd Avenue to provide for a single northbound lane. A curb extension in this location would discourage cars from illegally entering the street in the wrong-way direction, and would also shorten the crossing distance at this intersection.

■ **Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.**

A number of improvements are recommended for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. corridor. At 44th and 43rd Avenues, the County should install high-visibility crosswalks at the side

street crossings. In the mid-term, the County should consider installing curb extensions to slow the traffic and make it easier for children west of MLK to cross the street.

At the existing mid-block crossing of MLK north of 44th Street, the County should consider installing curb extensions and a median refuge island to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians.

At 41st Avenue and MLK, the County should repaint all four crosswalks in a high-visibility pattern and install advance stop lines. As a mid-term recommendation, curb extensions should be installed. In addition to shortening the crossing distance, these curb extensions will provide additional area for pedestrians to stand while waiting for the light to change, as the corner waiting areas are currently very narrow.

■ **41st Avenue Corridor**

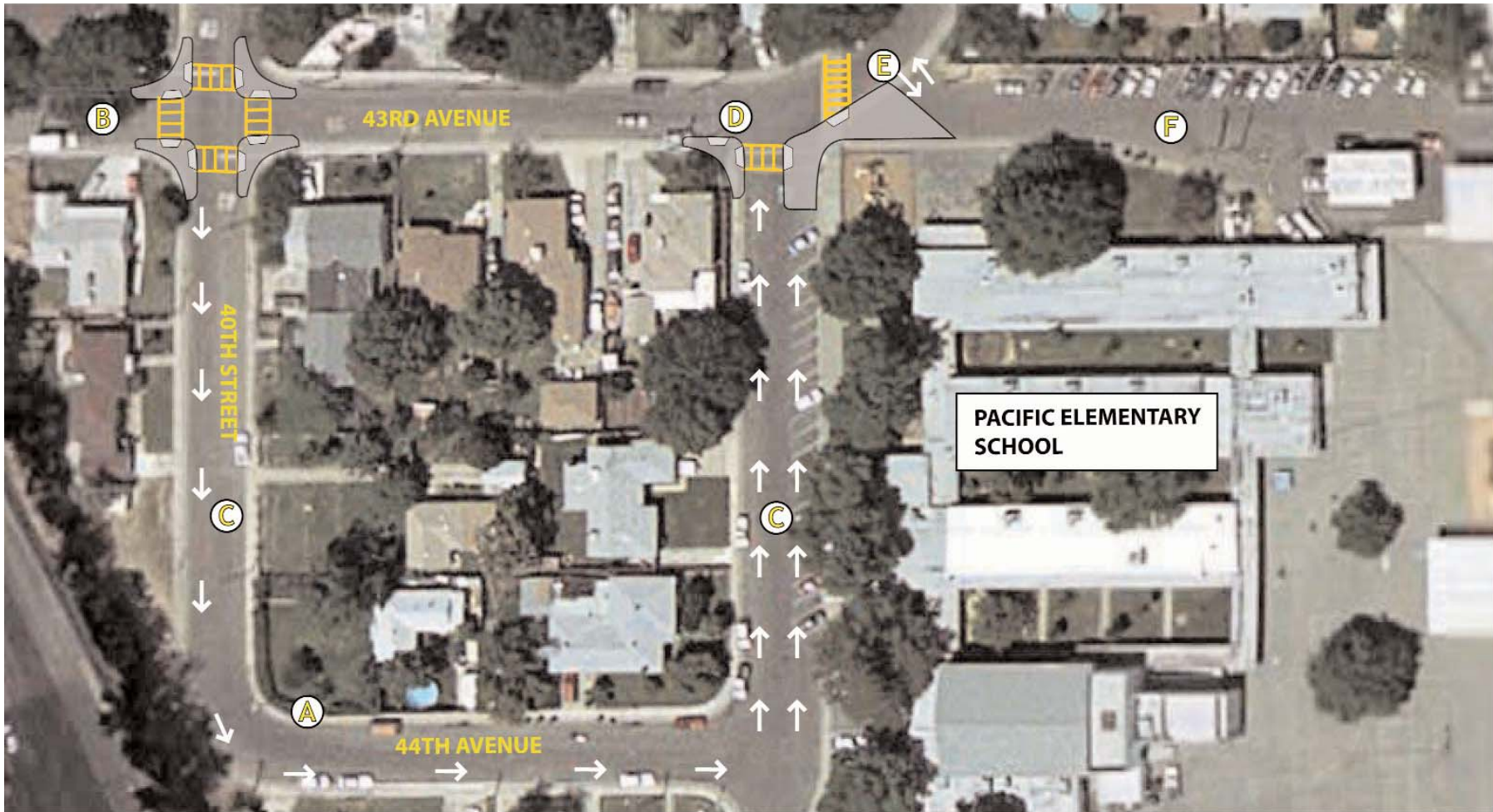
41st Avenue is currently configured with one travel lane in each direction, and on-street parking. It is recommended that the County study this segment of roadway (between Franklin Boulevard and 44th Street) for restriping to 10-foot travel lanes with 5-foot bike lanes. The bicycle lanes will help create more of a buffer for pedestrians and will reduce the splashing problems on the over-

crossing of Highway 99. At the 41st Avenue overcrossing of Highway 99, Caltrans should also make drainage improvements to eliminate the substantial water pooling along the shoulder of the road.

■ **41st Avenue between 37th Street and Franklin Boulevard**

Along 41st Avenue between 37th Street and Franklin Boulevard, there is an area of multi-family housing located on the north side of the road, and a daycare center on the south side of the road. The County should consider installing a new high-visibility mid-block crossing, with curb extensions and median refuge island in this location.

The County should narrow the intersection of 41st Street/43rd Avenue to provide for a single northbound lane to discourage cars from illegally entering the street in the wrong-way direction, and shorten the crossing distance at this intersection.



A SHORT-TERM:
Trim vegetation blocking sidewalk along 44th Ave.

B SHORT-TERM:
Install high-visibility crosswalk striping at all intersection legs, with advance stop lines

MID-TERM:
Install curb extensions

C SHORT-TERM:
Convert 41st Street to one-way circulation in front of school, using cones to block access as a short-term solution. School access to be via 40th St and 44th Avenue, exiting back onto 43rd Ave from 41st Street. (Both 40th St. and 44th Ave to remain two-way.) Need ONE WAY, DO NOT ENTER signage at 43rd Ave/41st Street.

MID-TERM:
Use curb extensions to permanently narrow 41st St at 43rd Avenue as part of one-way circulation in front of school.

D E SHORT-TERM
Prohibit parking along curve to improve visibility for children crossing at this location

MID-TERM:
As part of 41st Street one-way conversion, install a curb extension at the intersection of 43rd Ave/41st Street to narrow the exit and ensure that drivers do not enter this street in the wrong direction. Install high visibility crosswalks at this location. This extension should also narrow the width of the school entrance driveway to shorten this crossing distance

F SHORT-TERM:
Prohibit parent drop-off and pick-up within the off-street school parking lot. Use cones to block entry by parent vehicles during drop-off and pick-up periods.



A B SHORT-TERM:
Install high-visibility crosswalk striping

MID-TERM:
Install curb extensions

C SHORT-TERM:
Install new vandal-resistant lighting, security cameras, and trim vegetation around bridge to improve visibility and sight lines.

MID-TERM:
Make drainage improvements on bridge and ramp structures to eliminate water pooling on walkways

D SHORT-TERM:
Clean up trash along streets, sidewalks, and adjacent to bridge structure. Conduct code compliance to ensure that nuisance issues (litter, abandoned vehicles, overgrown vegetation) are addressed.

E SHORT-TERM:
Conduct regular police patrols of entire neighborhood, and especially roadways leading to the pedestrian bridge



A B SHORT-TERM:
Install high-visibility crosswalk
striping at all intersection legs

MID-TERM:
Install curb extensions

C SHORT-TERM:
Restripe with high-visibility crosswalk
pattern and install stop bars.

MID-TERM:
Install curb extensions to reduce crossing
width and provide a larger pedestrian
landing area for children to stand at while
waiting for the signal to change

D SHORT-TERM:
Install high-visibility crosswalk
striping at side street crossings

MID-TERM:
Install curb extensions

E SHORT-TERM:
Provide wider sidewalks and
landscaped sidewalk buffer along
Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

F SHORT-TERM:
Conduct regular police patrols of
the park to discourage drug dealing
and other criminal activity

G SHORT-TERM:
Narrow travel lanes along 41st Ave.
east of MLK Blvd. to 10' lanes, and
install 5' bike lanes in each direction

Implementation

An important step in the successful implementation of these recommendations is to have each stakeholder group – County, school district, school, parents, students and neighbors – prioritize the improvements to address their specific concerns. Considering that the priorities of one group may not match those of another, it is important for the different stakeholders to meet and discuss the issues to reach effective and lasting solutions.

It is particularly important for Sacramento County and the Sacramento City Unified School District to work together as the two groups that have the greatest fiscal ability to make improvements. Working together, the stakeholders may be able to solve problems that could not be resolved separately.

Improvements can be considered short-term, medium-term and long-term. Short-term improvements are usually problems that can be handled at a relatively low cost or time commitment. Long-time improvements may be considered overly ambitious, but they are very important to prioritize and keep in mind, as opportunities to construct such projects do arise.

A group may also decide that an improvement listed in this report as long-term may be so critical to safety that it must be completed sooner.



With the costs of the recommended improvements as a whole likely to exceed available funds, it is important that the parties pursue diverse sources of money. Appendix B provides a list of potential opportunities, including federal grants, state programs, school bonds and other resources.



The priorities of one group may not match those of another, so it's important for the different stakeholders to meet and discuss the issues.

Appendix A. Recommendation Matrix

Safe Routes to School Charrette – Pacific Elementary School

April 2006

■ Summary of Recommendations

POLICY AND PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are overall policy or program recommendations that apply to all school areas.

Policy/Program	Recommendation	Responsibility
School District Safety Task Force	Establish District-level School Safety Task Force to discuss issues of District-wide concern.	School District
School-Based Safety Task Force	Recommend forming a school-based Safety Task Force at each school to discuss issues of school area concern. It is recommended that each Task Force involve as many community stakeholders as possible. These may include: School Administration/Teachers, Parents, Neighbors, Law Enforcement, Elected official representative (e.g. local Supervisor's staff person), County DOT representative.	School
Double Fine Zone	In California, three counties (Alameda, Santa Barbara and Ventura) are currently within a Double Fine Zone trial program established by AB 1886. Recommend Sacramento County join Double Fine Zone program. Additional fine revenues put toward funding traffic safety, bicycle and pedestrian education programs at schools. This would require action by the legislature to expand the program to Sacramento County.	State Legislature; (County of Sacramento and School District could assist by sending letters of support to Legislature to recommend program)
Alternate School Access Locations for Pedestrians and Bicyclists	Continue to encourage pedestrian and bicycle ingress/egress via path on east side of Pacific Elementary(connecting out to 44th Ave./43rd St.) during morning and afternoon hours, to provide convenient access for children traveling from residences south and east of school. County and School District should partner to ensure that this path is well lit, and provides good visibility, both on and off campus. Gates should be locked during school hours for security. At School District level ensure that plans for future new school construction provides for alternative exit entry points and connections into the surrounding neighborhood to encourage walking/bicycling and take pressure off of main drop-off/pick-up area at front of school.	School District, School
School Area Law Enforcement	Increased visible enforcement of traffic violations during school drop-off and pick-up periods, and periodic events such as Pedestrian Stings.	Sheriff's Department

POLICY AND PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy/Program	Recommendation	Responsibility
On-Site Staffing Visibility	Ensure that school staff (or parent volunteers) assigned to monitor drop-off/pick-up period are visible to parents and others. Provide staff with yellow vests, caps, or other visible clothing to indicate that they are official pick-up/drop-off monitors.	School
Crossing Guards – Responsibility	In California, cities and counties may designate local law enforcement agencies, the governing board of any school district or a county superintendent of schools to recruit and assign adult crossing guards to intersections that meet approved guidelines for adult supervision.	County, School District, or Sheriff’s Department
Crossing Guard Program – Management and Funding	An adult crossing guard program can be managed and funded in several ways. These include: County Sheriff’s Department; County’s Transportation Department; School District. For comparison, most school crossing guard programs in other areas of the U.S. are managed/funded through the local Sheriff’s department.	County, Sheriff’s Department, School District
Crossing Guards – Use of vehicle fines for funding	One method of funding school crossing guards is through the use of fines and forfeitures received under the Penal Code, defined in California Vehicle Code Sections 42200 and 42201. Fines and forfeitures received by cities and deposited into a “Traffic Safety Fund” may be used to pay the compensation of school crossing guards who are not regular full-time members of the County Sheriff’s Department.	Sheriff’s Department
Crossing Guards – Alternate Funding through Partnership	Consider funding crossing guards through a partnership of Sheriff, County and School District. A portion of funding could also be provided through local donations. The City of Santa Cruz funds crossing guards through a four-way partnership, with funding and operational support from both the City and School District, additional funding from private sources, and volunteer assistance from the community.	School District, County, Sheriff’s Department
Crossing Guards – Volunteers	If funding for paid adult crossing guards cannot be obtained, use of volunteers may be an option. The school district should ensure that volunteer crossing guards are covered by insurance and receive basic traffic safety training from the Sheriff’s department.	School District, Sheriff’s Department
School Safety Patrols	Student Safety Patrols can be authorized by the local school board. School authorities shall be responsible for organizing, instructing and supervising patrols with the assistance of the local Sheriff. The California Education Code, Sections 49300 to 49307, and the California Code of Regulations, Sections 570 to 576 and 632, authorize the development of School Safety Patrols and outline rules for implementing these programs within the state. The Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices contains specific guidance on the use of School Safety Patrols. In general, a student patrol may be established at locations where an existing traffic control device, law enforcement officer or adult crossing guard is in operation. They may also be used where there are adequate crossing gaps in vehicular flow at an uncontrolled crossing and it is desirable to use student patrols to guide the school pedestrians.	School District

POLICY AND PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy/Program	Recommendation	Responsibility
Student Valets	Consider the use of 5th- or 6th-grade student valets to assist with curbside loading/unloading within the established drop-off area. This program should be reserved for students with an outstanding academic/attendance record. Student valets are not intended to direct or monitor traffic, but simply to make the loading/unloading more efficient by helping to open doors and assist getting students and their backpacks out of vehicles (so that parents can remain in the driver seat).	School, School District
Traffic Tamers	Consider developing a student-based traffic safety program, similar to after the Traffic Tamers program at Bannon Creek Elementary School in the Natomas Unified School District.	School, School District
Walking School Bus	Develop a Walking School Bus program, where parent volunteers agree to lead groups of students along a designated route each day, “picking up” other student walkers along the way. Encourage School/School District support of this program through official announcements, backpack mail, and assistance with matching potential student walkers with parent “bus driver” leaders.	School, School District
Educational/Encouragement Programs	A variety of educational/encouragement programs exist that could be implemented by individual schools or at the School District level. These include basic pedestrian and bicyclist safety education, as well as incentive programs to reward students who walk or bicycle to school, contests to see which classroom can have the highest walking/biking participation, etc. Refer to existing guidebooks such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Safe Routes to School Toolkit, or the State of Maryland Safe Routes to School Guidebook for details and additional resources.	School, School District
Police Patrols	Many residents said they were afraid of crime, drug dealing, gunshots, and other illegal activities occurring along the route to school. 44th Avenue on the west side of the pedestrian bridge was a noted by several as a major trouble spot. The Sheriff’s Department should continue to conduct regular patrols of these areas, particularly during the school commute period, to ensure the safety of children traveling to and from school.	Sheriff’s Department
Abandoned Vehicles	Conduct regular check for abandoned vehicles, have vehicles towed immediately	Sheriff’s Department
Code Compliance	Conduct regular code compliance check for nuisance properties, overgrown weeds, non-operating vehicles in front yards, debris, other nuisance issues.	County
Trash Cleanup	Throughout the neighborhood, trash, abandoned furniture and household goods, and other debris were observed blocking sidewalks and streets. The County should ensure that this material is not left to collect and that it is immediately cleaned up. An aggressive campaign to stop the littering should be implemented, which should be a partnership of the County and the waste disposal company. The waste disposal company should ensure that all residents have adequately sized trash barrels and recycling bins. Residents should be notified of special days for bulky item pickup. The County should aggressively cite violators who are found to be leaving trash on the sidewalk and street.	County

POLICY AND PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy/Program	Recommendation	Responsibility
Residential Fence Setbacks	<p>A number of houses were observed in the neighborhood that had tall (5-6 feet) residential security fences constructed against the sidewalk. Pedestrians require a “shy distance” from fixed objects such as walls and fences, with a desirable setback of 2 feet. The lack of this shy distance means that the effective sidewalk width is reduced, as pedestrians will tend to walk approximately 2 feet away from the fences, placing them in the middle of the narrow 4- or 5-foot sidewalks. The County should revise its residential zoning requirements to require a minimum 2-foot setback for all walls and fences from the edge of the sidewalk for all future development and renovations. It should also consider requiring that fences, especially along the front of properties, be no taller than 3 to 4 feet so as to provide more “eyes on the street.” This helps to create greater security in a neighborhood since it creates a sense that public spaces like the street and sidewalk are being looked over by residents.</p>	County
Nuisance Dogs	<p>A number of students and parents complained of nuisance dogs that run loose in the neighborhood and scare pedestrians. The County should ensure that an animal control officer is available to investigate complaints of about nuisance animals, and to issue citations if necessary. The County should include the Pacific Elementary school area as part of the patrol area of its animal control officer. The school should post the number of the Animal Control Hotline (916) 875-5232 in the office, and distribute the number to parents at the beginning of the school year in their Back to School materials.</p>	County, School
Non-English-Speaking Outreach	<p>The Pacific School neighborhood is home to a large percentage of Non-English-Speaking residents, including many for which Spanish or Hmong is their primary language. This language barrier can result in difficulties when residents try to communicate with local law enforcement and city departments regarding crime and other community issues. This may include reporting drug dealing to the Sherriff’s department, reporting nuisance dogs to Animal Control, reporting broken lights on the pedestrian overcrossing to Caltrans, reporting code enforcement issues to the County Code Enforcement, and reporting abandoned/stolen vehicles to County and/or law enforcement.</p> <p>The language barrier may discourage the residents from phoning the law enforcement or City regarding these issues, which means they may not be resolved or fixed. Sacramento County, the Sheriff’s Department, and the CHP should reach out to the non-English-speaking communities, providing specific phone numbers they can call to reach and operator or dispatcher in their native language. These numbers could be distributed to parents and posted in the office of Pacific Elementary. Existing community non-profits, such as the Hmong Women’s Heritage Association, may be a good partner for this issue and may already have a list of resources to assist residents.</p>	County, Sheriff’s Department, CHP, School

ENGINEERING RECOMMENDATIONS

The following lists site-specific engineering recommendations, listed by school. Recommendations are further broken into Short-, Mid- and Long-Term, based on factors such as relative cost, need to conduct future traffic and engineering studies, and political feasibility.

Location	Recommendation	Responsibility
■ Short-Term		
All school crosswalks	Check all school crosswalk locations to ensure that School Advance Warning (Assembly D) and School Crosswalk (Assembly B) installations are in place per CA MUTCD. Recommend fluorescent yellow green installations to maintain consistency with existing School Area signage.	County
43rd Ave. Pedestrian Bridge	Install new vandal-resistant lighting in bridge structure.	Caltrans
43rd Ave. Pedestrian Bridge	Trim vegetation along landings to improve visibility.	Caltrans
43rd Ave. Pedestrian Bridge	Install security cameras.	Caltrans
43rd Ave. /40th St.	Install new high-visibility crosswalks at all legs, with advance stop lines.	County
42nd Ave. /40th St.	Install new high-visibility crosswalks at all legs.	County
41st Ave. /40th St.	Install new high-visibility crosswalks at all legs, with advance stop lines.	County
41st Ave. /41st St.	Install new high-visibility crosswalks at all legs, with advance stop lines.	County
41st St./42nd Ave.	Install new high-visibility crosswalks at all legs, with advance stop lines.	County
44th Ave. , near 40th St.	Trim vegetation that blocks sidewalk.	County, Residents
On-Site School Parking Lot	Prohibit parent drop-off/pick-up within the on-site lot. Use cones to block parking lot entrance during drop-off and pick-up periods.	School
41st St. curve approaching school	Prohibit parking along curve to improve visibility for children crossing at existing crosswalk.	County
44th Ave./39th St.	Install new high-visibility crosswalks across 39th St.	County
43rd Ave./39th St.	Install new high-visibility crosswalk across west and south legs.	County
44th Ave./MLK Blvd.	Install new high visibility crosswalks along side street crossings, with advance stop lines.	County
43rd Ave./MLK Blvd.	Install new high-visibility crosswalks along side street crossings, with advance stop lines.	County
41st Ave.	Narrow travel lanes to 10 feet and stripe bike lanes along corridor including the section that crosses over Highway 99.	County
41st Ave./MLK Blvd.	Repaint crosswalks to provide high-visibility striping pattern	County
41st Ave./MLK Blvd.	Add advance stop lines	County

ENGINEERING RECOMMENDATIONS – PACIFIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Location	Recommendation	Responsibility
■ Mid-Term		
School driveway at 43rd Ave./41st St.	Install landscaped area to narrow driveway to a single exit/entry lane, reducing the width of the crossing for children.	School
43rd Ave. Pedestrian Bridge	Make drainage improvements along entire bridge structure to prevent flooding and pooling water on bridge walkways and ramps.	Caltrans
41st Ave. overcrossing of Highway 99	Make drainage improvements along overcrossing to prevent flooding and pooling water along roadway shoulder.	Caltrans
41st St. in front of school	Make 41st St. one-way northbound in front of school. School access would be via a loop using 43rd Ave. westbound, 40th St. southbound, 44th Ave. eastbound, and 41st Ave. northbound. Providing for one-way looping pick-up/drop-off travel would eliminate the U-turns along 41st St. as parents turn around after dropping their children off. By making 41st St. one-way in the northbound direction, children on the passenger side of the car would be in the correct location for a curbside drop off in front of the school.	County, School
41st St. at 43rd Ave.	In conjunction with one-way conversion, narrow this intersection to provide for a single exit-only lane. By providing a curb extension in this location you would discourage cars from illegally entering the street in the wrong-way direction, and would also shorten the crossing distance across this intersection.	County
Mid-block pedestrian crossing of MLK Blvd.	Install curb extensions and median refuge island at crossing to shorten crossing distance.	County
43rd Ave./40th St.	Install curb extensions.	County
42nd Ave./40th St.	Install curb extensions.	County
41st Ave./40th St.	Install curb extensions.	County
41st Ave./41st St.	Install curb extensions.	County
41st St./42nd Ave.	Install curb extensions.	County
44th Ave./39th St.	Install curb extensions.	County
43rd Ave./39th St.	Install curb extensions.	County

ENGINEERING RECOMMENDATIONS – PACIFIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Location	Recommendation	Responsibility
■ Mid-Term		
44th Ave./MLK Blvd.	Install curb extensions at side street crossings.	County
43rd Ave./MLK Blvd.	Install curb extensions at side street crossings.	County
41st Ave./MLK Blvd.	Install curb extensions, and widen corner landing area to provide additional curb area for children and other pedestrians to stand when waiting for the signal to change.	County
41st Ave. overcrossing of Highway 99	Make drainage improvements along curb/gutter to prevent drainage/flooding problems.	County
41st Ave./37th St.	Install curb extensions.	County
41st Ave. between 37th St. and Franklin Blvd.	Install new high-visibility mid-block crossing, with curb extensions and median refuge island, connecting between multi-family housing on north side of street and day care facility on south side of street.	County
■ Long-Term		
Entire neighborhood	Relocate utility poles from center of sidewalks to provide for clear passage space. Alternately, widen sidewalks to provide additional width around utility poles.	County, SMUD

Appendix B. Funding Opportunities

There are a number of funding sources to explore for school improvements, community facilities, and other infrastructure needs around Pacific Elementary School. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive but rather a selection of funding sources that show the variety of opportunities in region.

SCHOOL FUNDING

■ School Bonds

In addition to providing money to build new schools, school district bond funds may also be used to build new infrastructure at existing schools. Including the latter can be a way to enhance a bond so that voters in established school areas are more likely to support it. In California, voters approved an initiative to allow a 55%- or 2/3-vote for approval of local school bonds depending on the type of funds sought.

■ Parcel Taxes

Local parcel taxes provide a way to provide secure, enhanced funding for soft costs, including materials and supplies, school programs, and crossing guard salaries. A parcel tax is a qualified special tax that in California requires a 55%-majority vote for adoption.

STATE FUNDING

■ California Safe Routes to School

Established in 1999, the Safe Routes to School program makes grants available through the California Department of Transportation to local government agencies based upon the results of a statewide competition. The program seeks to reduce injuries and fatalities to school children and encourage increased walking and bicycling among students. It does this primarily by constructing facilities that enhance safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The next call for projects will be in June 2006. Agencies will be given approximately three months to complete an application after the call for projects is made.

This program is scheduled to sunset on January 1, 2008. The California program was the basis for the recently enacted federal Safe Routes to Schools program.

FEDERAL FUNDING

■ SAFETEA-LU

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was passed in 2005. SAFETEA-LU authorizes \$286.5 billion over

the next five years (2005-09) for bike and pedestrian safety programs and provides funding for a National Safe Routes to Schools program.

At the time of this writing, the California Department of Transportation is determining guidelines for the program. The approximate funding amounts available to California are:

- \$11 million for 2005-06
- \$15 million for 2006-07
- \$19 million for 2007-08
- \$23 million for 2008-09

The money can be used for infrastructure, including planning, design and construction of projects related to improving the ability of students to walk and bike to school. This includes sidewalk improvements, traffic calming and speed-reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on-street bicycle facilities, off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, secure bike parking and traffic diversion improvements within approximately two miles of schools.

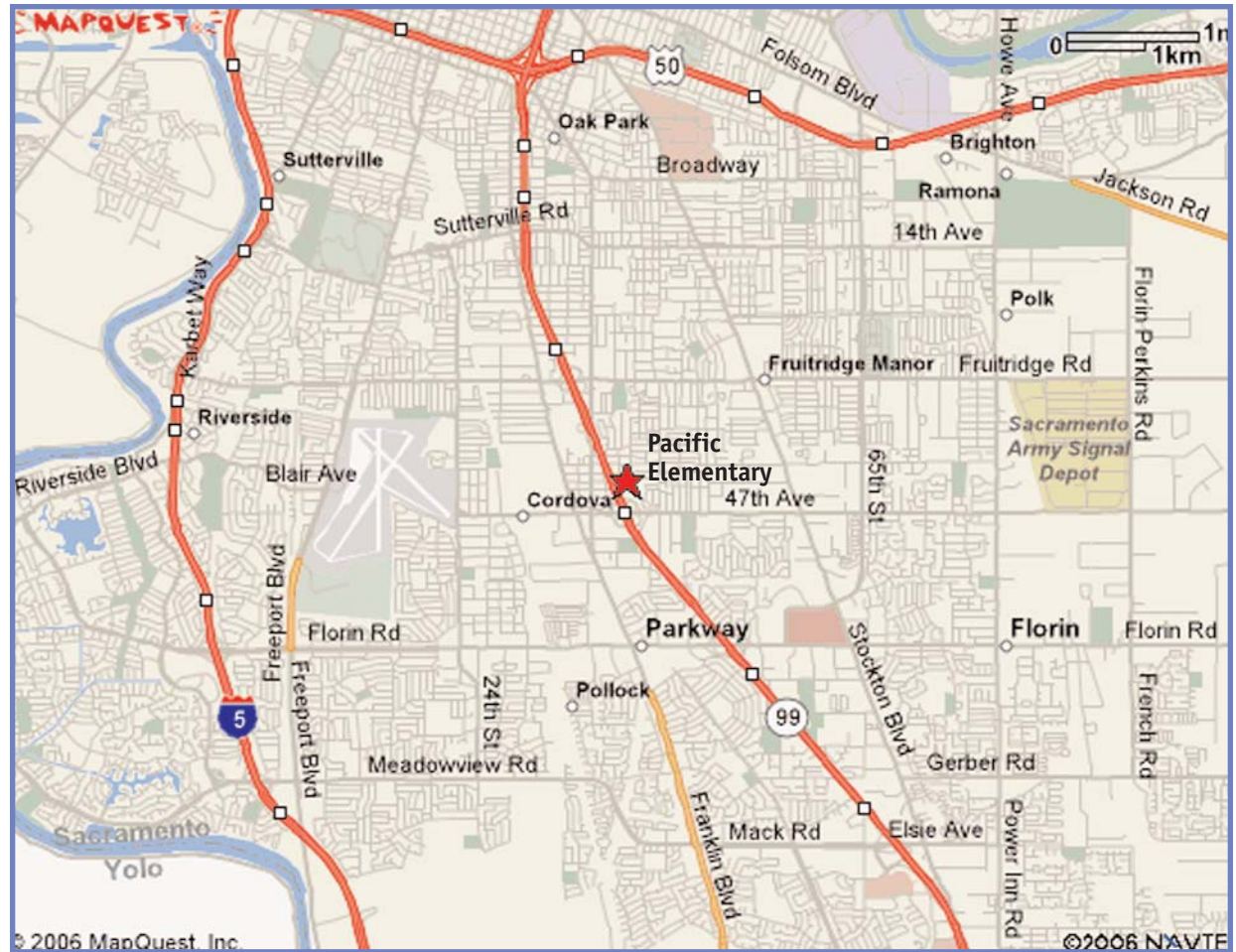
Not less than 10% and not more than 30% of the funds will be used on programs or activities that encourage walking and bicycling to school. These could include public awareness campaigns and outreach to press and community leaders, traffic education and enforcement in the vicinity of schools,

student sessions on bicycle and pedestrian safety, health and environment, and training, volunteers and managers of safe routes to school programs.

OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration web site (www.nhtsa.gov) has a very informative list of safe routes to schools related funding resources, including:

- Capital funding
- Transportation enhancements
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)
- Local county and city funding
- Sales tax funding
- Program funding
- Corporations and businesses
- Foundations
- Individuals
- Events
- Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and school districts
- City and county funds
- State Highway Safety Funds, "402 Funds"



Appendix C. Area Map

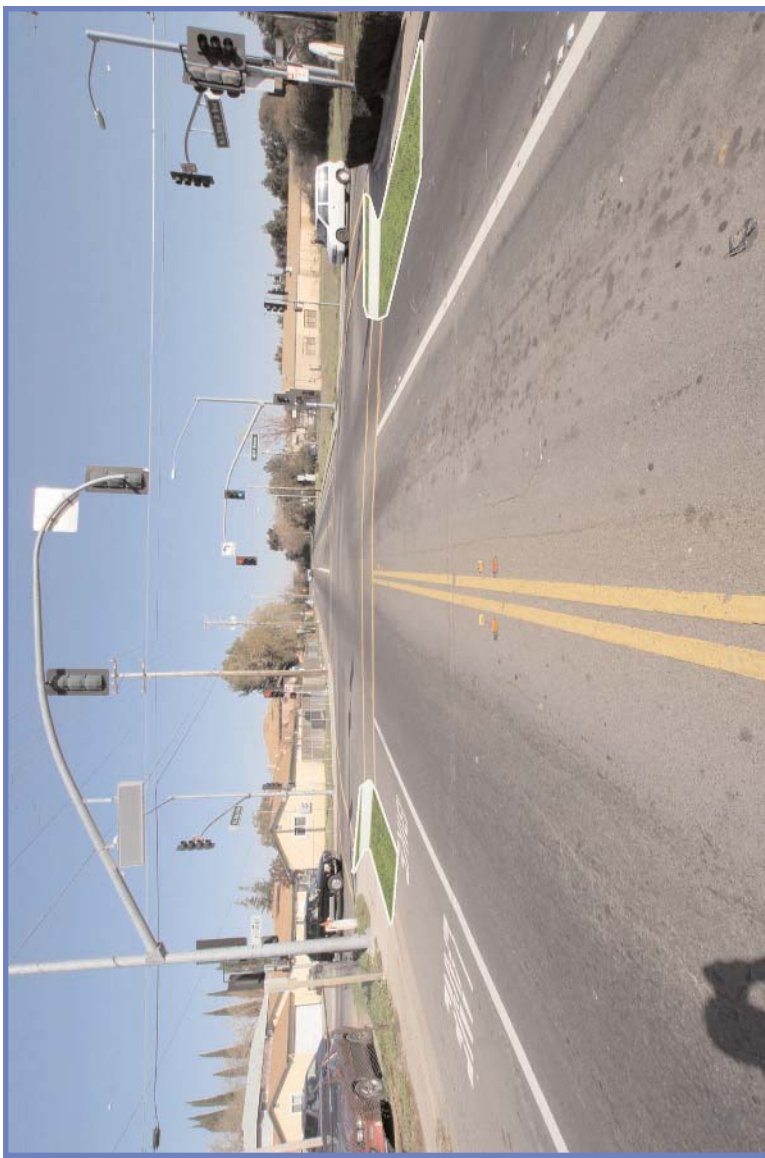
Pacific Elementary School is part of the Sacramento City Unified School District and located in Sacramento County just south of the City of Sacramento.

Appendix D. Photo Simulations

- Intersection of 4th Avenue and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard



Existing conditions

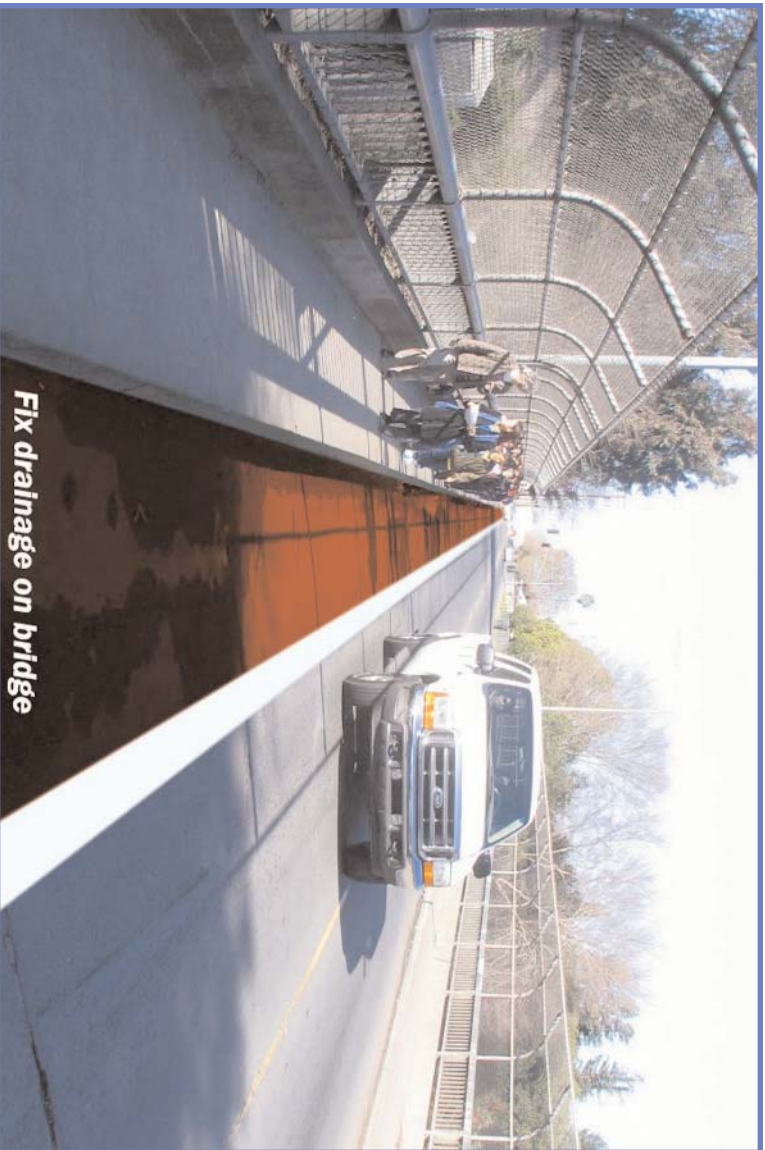


Curb extensions

■ 41st Avenue Corridor [Overcrossing of Highway 99]



Existing conditions

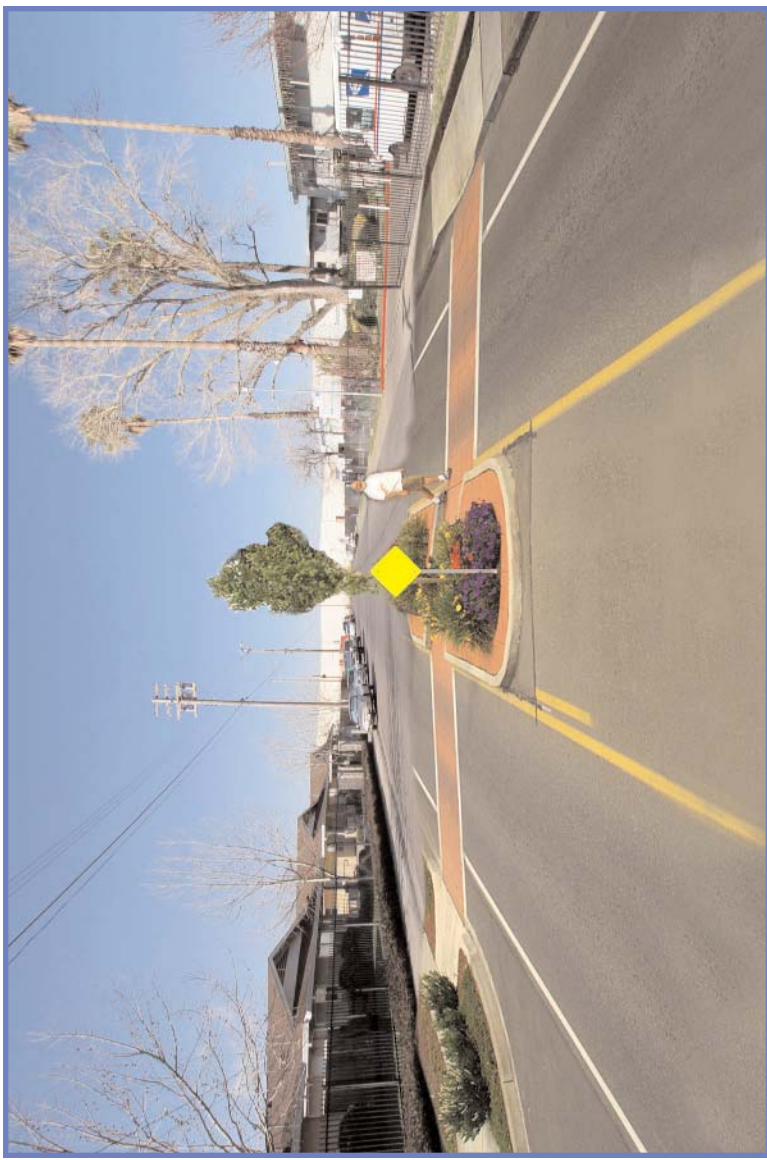


Restriping with bike lanes

■ 41st Avenue between 37th Street and Franklin Boulevard



Existing conditions



Mid-block crossing