

# Witch Hazel Elementary

## Safe Routes to School Action Plan



### SafeRoutes

Hillsboro Safe Routes To School



# Witch Hazel Elementary Safe Routes to School Action Plan

## CONTENTS

### Introduction

What is Safe Routes to School	2
School Information	4

### Existing Conditions

District Transportation Policy	5
District Supplemental Transportation Plan	5
School Attendance Area	5
Walk Boundary and Suggested Walk Path	6
Walk Audit	7

### Evaluation and Data

Student Travel Surveys	8
Parent Surveys	9

### Recommendations 12

### Next Steps 14

### Appendix 14

## Introduction

**WHAT IS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL?** The City of Hillsboro Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program works to promote and support the use of safe, healthy and active transportation (like walking and biking) to and from school. The benefits of walking and biking include increased daily physical activity, enhanced student alertness and readiness to learn, improved air quality around the school, and reduced vehicle congestion at and around the school. According to a [2009 school travel study<sup>1</sup>](#), almost 50% of students nationally walked or biked to school in 1969. In 2009, approximately 13% of students nationally were using active transportation to get to school. This significant decrease in walking or biking to school occurred in just a generation and a half. The City of Hillsboro SRTS Coordinator is working with each school to develop a comprehensive SRTS Program specific to each school's unique context and environment to help increase the number of students walking and biking to/from school.

The principles of the SRTS Program are outlined nationally by the "Six E's," which include:

**Equity** – Reduce health and wealth disparities by providing equitable services in all school communities.

**Education** – Students learn lifelong safety behaviors and skills. Parents learn about the benefits of active transportation for students to/from school.

**Encouragement** – Parents and students are invited to engage in biking and walking events and activities that promote healthy and active transportation options.

**Enforcement** – Promote safe walking and biking through consistent enforcement of traffic laws around schools.

**Engineering** – Implement engineering improvements such as improved sidewalks, crossings, and other traffic calming devices to support students as they walk or bike to school.

**Evaluation** --Survey parents and students regarding modes of travel to and from school, assess the neighborhood travel routes, and drop-off and pick-up processes at the school; evaluate the success of the SRTS Program as a whole.

This Action Plan identifies challenges to walking or biking to Witch Hazel Elementary School and identifies the potential engineering and programmatic strategies to address those barriers. The Action Plan is available for use by the city, the Witch Hazel SRTS Project Team (see page 3), the Hillsboro School

### Safe Routes to School Goals

1. Increase the number of students walking or biking to school;
2. Reduce the number of driving trips to schools;
3. Improve traffic and environmental factors around schools;
4. Identify barriers and possible solutions to safe, active commuting.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(11\)00263-7/pdf](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(11)00263-7/pdf)

District, parents, students and community members as a framework to guide Witch Hazel's work on SRTS.

## School Information

School Name: **Witch Hazel Elementary**

School Address: **4950 SE Davis Road Hillsboro, OR 97123-8523**

County: **Washington County**

School District: **Hillsboro School District**

School Website: <http://schools.hsd.k12.or.us/witchhazel/>

Enrollment: **540 students**

Enrollment by Grade: **K-73; 1-75; 2-89; 3-83; 4-84; 5-60; 6-79**

Free/ Reduced Lunch

(2016/2017): **All students receive lunch through the Community Eligibility Provision<sup>2</sup>**

Action Plan Contact: **Bernadette Le, Bernadette.le@hillsboro-oregon.gov, 503-681-5294**

### THE PROJECT TEAM:

School Principal: **Jennifer Hernandez (at the time project commenced)**

School Dean of

Students: **Jamie Lentz (at the time project commenced)**

Parent Representatives: **Witch Hazel PTA and Watch Dogs Group**

City Safe Routes to

School Coordinator: **Bernadette Le (current), Carolyn Baar (at time plan commenced)**

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<sup>2</sup> 2016-17 Hillsboro School District Annual State Report Card Data Summary, <https://www.hsd.k12.or.us/>

## Existing Conditions

### District Transportation Policy

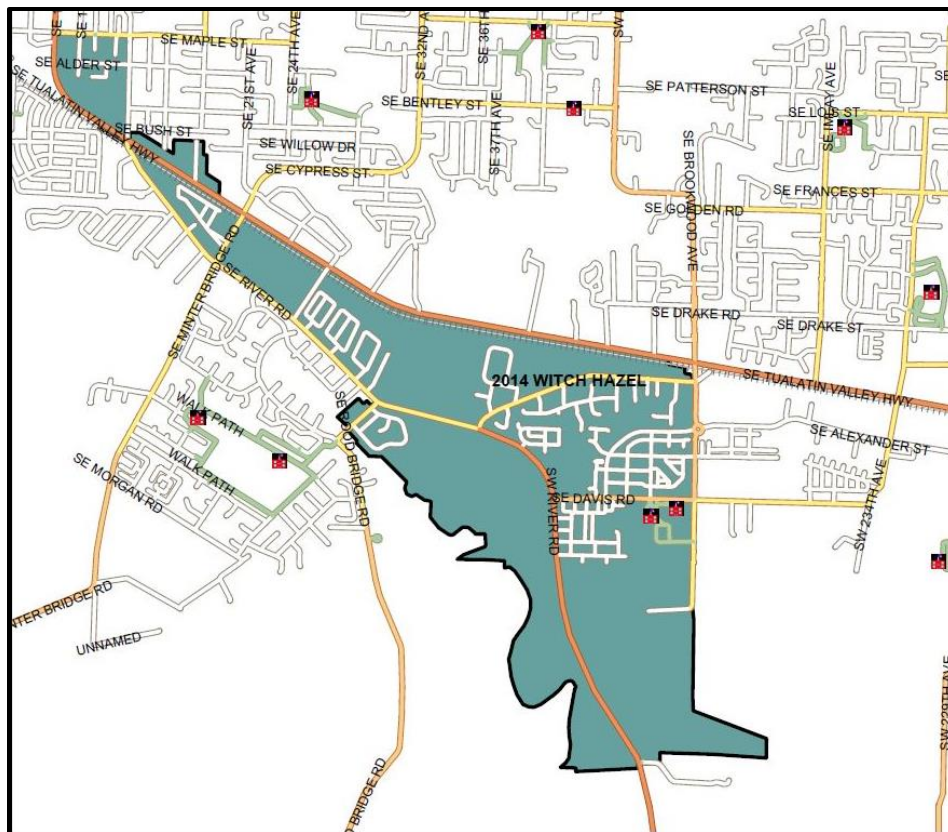
Students in grades kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade who live less than a mile from the school are encouraged to walk, bike, or carpool to school each day. In cases where the student lives more than 1 mile from the school, the Hillsboro School District's preferred method of travel is by school bus.

### District Supplemental Transportation Policy

The Supplemental Transportation Plan provides buses to transport students inside Oregon's unfunded walking distances, which is 1 mile for elementary school students and 1.5 miles for middle school students, because of hazardous conditions. Hazardous conditions are defined as difficult crossings, limited infrastructure, crossing railroad tracks, freeway crossings, and high volume and high speed roadways.

### School Attendance Area

Witch Hazel Elementary is located in southern Hillsboro. Its attendance area boundary is displayed in Figure 1 below.



## Walk Boundary and Suggested Walk Paths

The walking boundary of Witch Hazel Elementary, set by the school district, is well under the 1 mile distance identified in the School district transportation policy. Factors including limited infrastructure, high volume and high speed roadways, and difficult crossings reduce much of the boundary to under ½ mile.

Walking routes (identified as Suggested Walk Paths) on this map were identified by the school district prior to the beginning of this project.

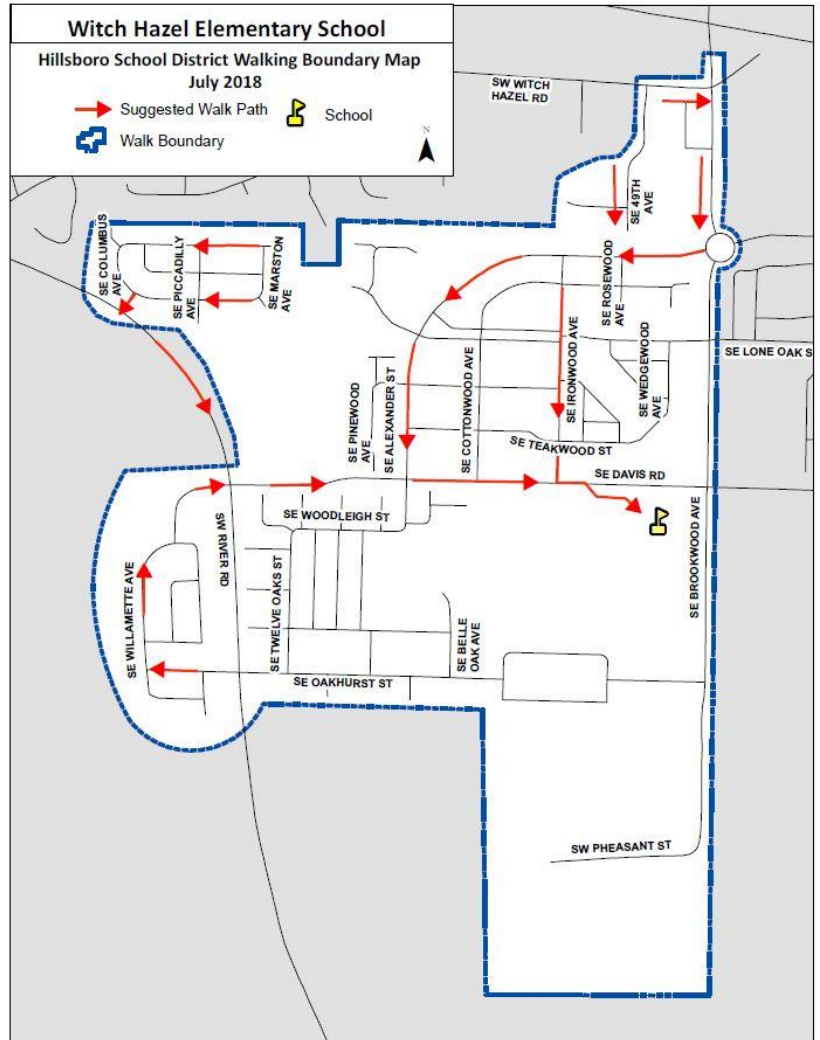


Figure 2: Walking Boundary

## Walk Audit

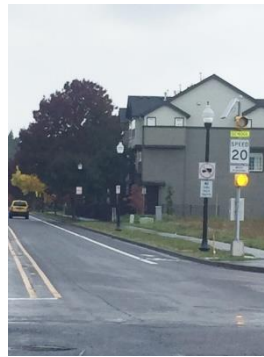
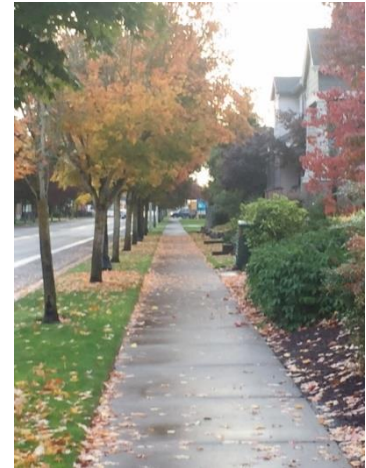


City staff walked portions of the Witch Hazel Elementary attendance area independently and with parents and students as part of Walk to School Day in May of 2017. Staff also drove the entire walk area.

The walk boundary for Witch Hazel Elementary is made up almost entirely of homes within a planned community called Witch Hazel Village. This development was approved by the city of Hillsboro in 2004.

A guiding design principle for Witch Hazel Village was to create a pedestrian-oriented, diverse street hierarchy that

included local streets, neighborhood streets, collector and arterials all carefully designed to emphasize pedestrian safety, comfort and convenience. Witch Hazel Elementary and South Meadows Middle school are co-located in the southeast corner of the development. The plan successfully yielded a very walkable school zone with almost no physical barriers to walking and biking to school (Appendix B).



The homes along 49<sup>th</sup> Ave. and SE Stewart Ct. are within the walk boundary but are not part of the planned development. Students in this area can access routes to school that have sidewalks by using a gravel walk path through the greenspace that runs along SE Alexander St.

As part of the walk audit, parents primarily expressed concerns about speed on Davis Street and congestion during drop-off and pick-up times.



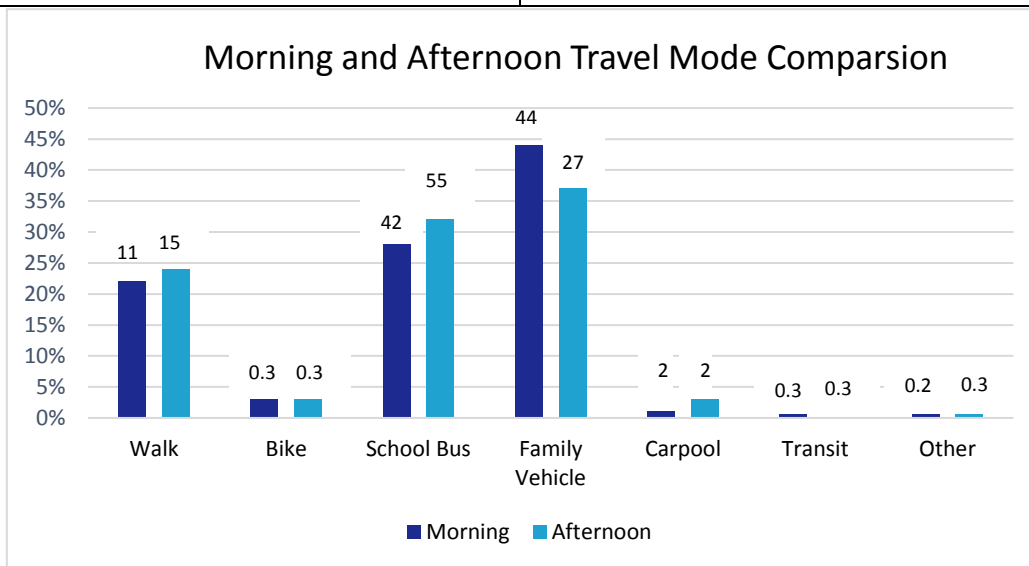


## Evaluations and Data

### Student Travel Surveys

On February 28 and March 1, 2017 student surveys were conducted to gather information on student travel modes to and from school. Data was collected using the in-class “hand raise” Student Travel Tally questionnaire from the National Center for Safe Routes to School. Teachers asked students each morning how they arrived at school and how they planned to leave school that afternoon. The results of this tally are below. This data will be used as a baseline with a recommendation to repeat the survey in March 2018 for comparison purposes.

<b>School Name:</b> Witch Hazel Elementary School	<b>Set ID:</b> 22796
<b>School Group:</b> City of Hillsboro Pilot Group	<b>Month and Year Collected:</b> February & March 2017
<b>School Enrollment:</b> 540	<b>Date Report Generated:</b> 03/13/2017
<b>% of Students reached by SRTS survey:</b> 98%	<b>Tags:</b> Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet
<b>Number of Classrooms Included in Report:</b> 20	



	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	1057	11%	0.3%	42%	44%	2%	0.2%	0.2%
Afternoon	950	15%	0.3%	55%	27%	2%	0.3%	0.3%

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

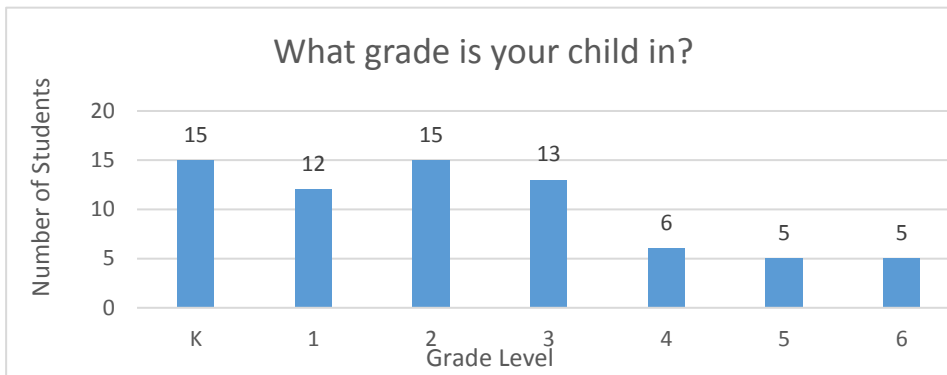
#### **Data Observations**

City staff noted a low number of bicycle riders, which may result from the equipment needs (i.e. bicycle and helmet). Staff also noted the significant number of students arriving by family vehicle and believe that these are the most likely targets for conversion to active transportation.

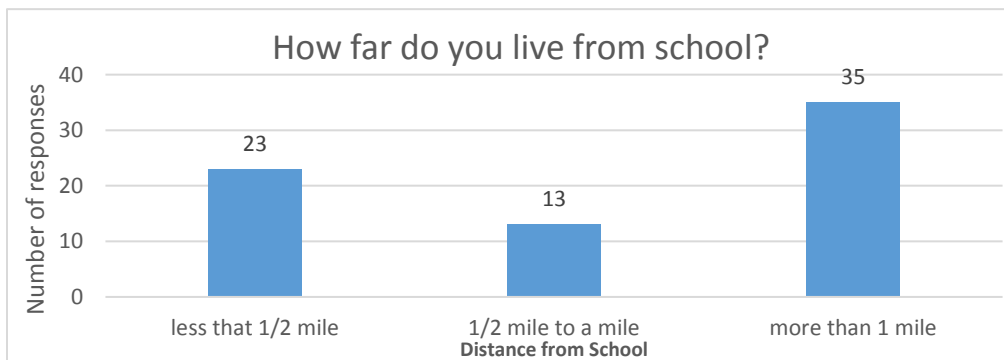
## Parent Surveys

In addition to the Student Travel Data tallies, the City conducted a Parent Survey to gather information about how students get to and from school and to learn about concerns and issues related to walking and biking to school. The City set up a table at Witch Hazel’s Science Night, which traditionally has strong parent attendance. The city used 8 electronic, hand held devices and offered survey incentives in the form of slap bracelets, pencil toppers and reusable bags. The 5 question survey was presented in both English and Spanish. A total of 71 parents took the survey. Results follow:

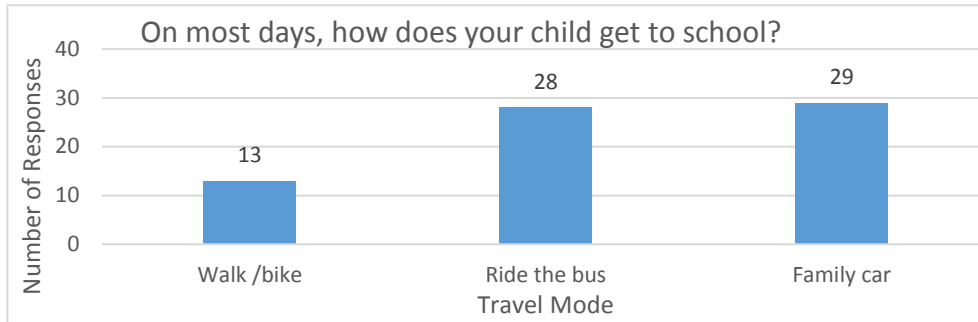
Parents were asked what grade their child was in. The majority of the respondents were answering for a child in in third grade or younger.



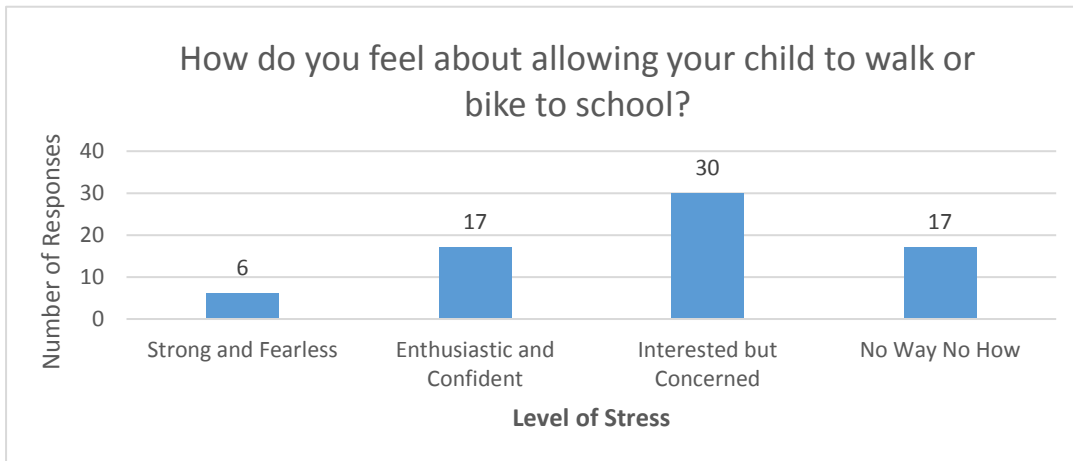
Over half of the respondents (51%) indicated that they live within a mile from the school. Twenty-three out of 71 respondents (32%) indicated that they live less than half a mile away from the school.



Parents were asked “On most days, how does your child get to school?” A high number of parents indicated that their child is brought to school by family car or school bus. Thirteen of the 70 responses stated that the child walks or bikes to school on most days.

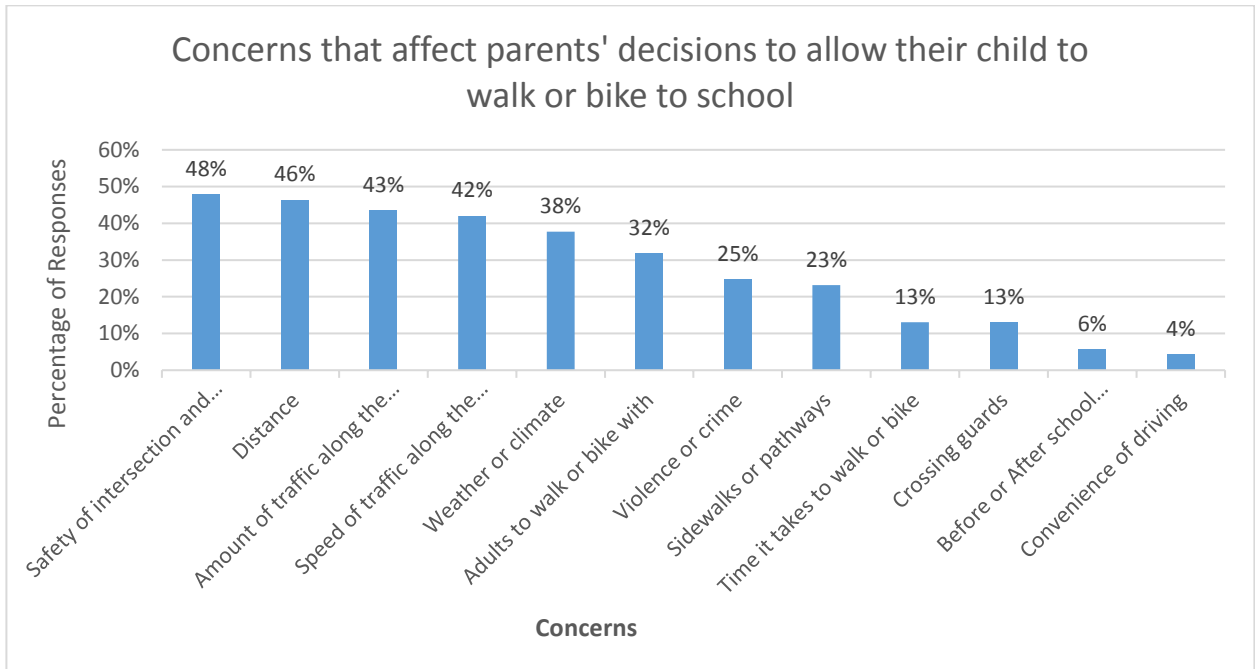


Using a scale called “Level of Stress” parents were asked to identify how they felt about allowing their child to walk or bike to school. The highest number of respondents answered that they were “Interested but Concerned.” This category is encouraging as it represents those who might be convinced to walk or bike in the future.



On the final question, parents were asked to identify all the issues that affect their decision to let their child walk or bike to school. Because multiple responses were allowed, the totals are greater than the number of respondents. The top four responses were:

- Safety of intersection and crossings
- Distance
- Amount of traffic along the route
- Speed of traffic along the route



## Recommendations

The following specific recommendations are made for the Witch Hazel Elementary Safe Routes to School Program. This set of recommendations will require participation by partners, such as parent organizations, the City of Hillsboro SRTS coordinator, the Hillsboro School District and the Hillsboro Police Department. Recommendations are outlined based on the Six E's of the SRTS Program and result from the existing conditions evaluation, walk audits, survey results, and communication with Witch Hazel parents and staff (see Appendix E), Hillsboro School district representatives and the Hillsboro Police Department.

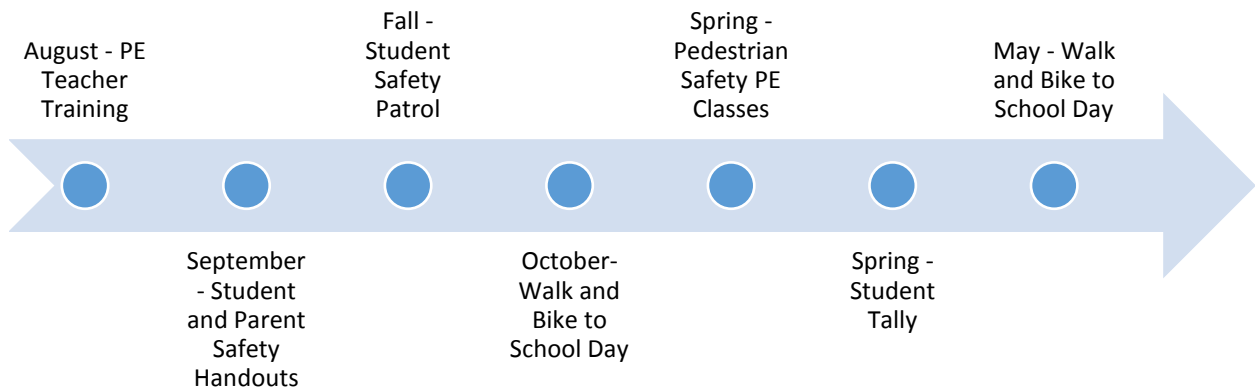
Program Component	Existing Condition	Recommendation	Lead/Partner
<b>Overall Program Implementation</b>	Witch Hazel did not have an existing program in place. The first SRTS activity was the Walk and Bike to School Day co-led with the SRTS Program Coordinator this past fall.	Witch Hazel Elementary should identify a program champion to facilitate the Safe Routes to School program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Witch Hazel Staff</li> <li>•SRTS Coordinator</li> </ul>
<b>Encouragement</b>	No previous encouragement activities exist.	Participate in the fall Walk to School day October 2018.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SRTS Coordinator</li> <li>•Parent Organizations- PTA and Watch Dogs</li> <li>•Witch Hazel Staff</li> </ul>

<b>Education</b>	No pedestrian or bike safety is currently being taught.	Put pedestrian safety curriculum into physical education course curriculum.	•Hillsboro School District
		Implement a student safety patrol in Fall of 2019.	•Witch Hazel Staff •SRTS coordinator
		Distribute Back to School safety handout to educate parents about stopping behind the crosswalk on Davis Street and complying with the 20 MPH school zone speed.	•Hillsboro School District •SRTS coordinator
<b>Enforcement</b>	Speed Data collected on Davis Road shows that 85% of the cars are traveling at 27 MPH when the beacon is on in the morning and at 36 MPH when the beacon is on for the elementary school's release in the afternoon. (Appendix A).	Ask HPD for speed enforcement in this area.  Consider installing a speed feedback sign.	•Hillsboro Police Department
	Vehicles have been observed blocking the enhanced crossing at SE Ironwood Ave and SE Davis Road.	Ask HPD for crossing enforcement in this area.	•Hillsboro Police Department

<p><b>Engineering</b></p>	<p>There is backup on SE Davis caused by westbound drivers turning left into the school parking lot. The queue backs up through the enhanced crossing and crossing guards find it difficult to stop traffic for students in the enhanced crossing at SE Ironwood Ave.</p>	<p>Install an in-street pedestrian crossing sign.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•City of Hillsboro Public Works</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p>	<p>Students and parents were surveyed in Spring 2017. Student travel mode was assessed and parents' attitudes regarding their opinions and concerns about allowing their children to walk and bike to school were assessed.</p>	<p>It is recommended these evaluations be repeated yearly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SRTS Coordinator</li> <li>•School Staff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Equity</b></p>	<p>Witch Hazel's student population is 64% Hispanic.</p>	<p>Provide all SRTS information in both English and Spanish.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SRTS Coordinator</li> <li>•School Staff</li> </ul>

## Next Steps

Witch Hazel Elementary should work to identify a parent or staff champion to help coordinate ongoing efforts with the City of Hillsboro SRST Program Coordinator. Additionally, City staff will provide citywide encouragement and education events open to all families in the community. The timeline below outlines the annual SRTS events that Witch Hazel elementary could participate in.



*Figure 3: Annual SRTS Activities Timeline*



## Appendix A

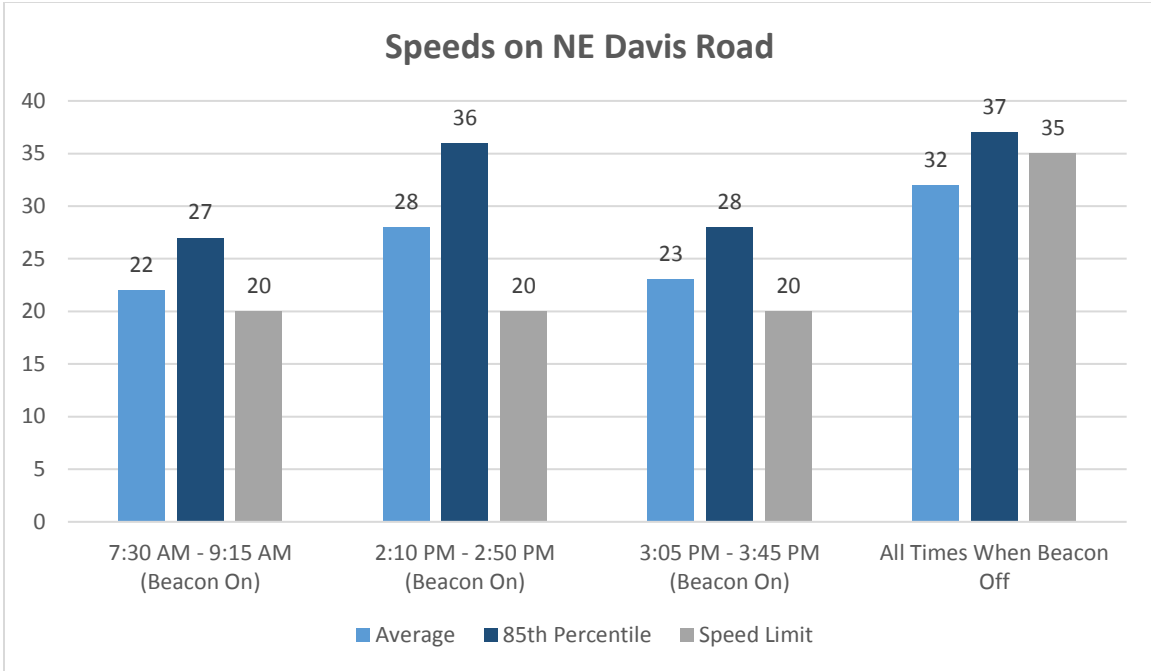
### Speed and Traffic Counts

The City conducts annual traffic volume counts and speed monitoring on streets throughout the city. One of the annual counts fall within the walk zone for Witch Hazel Elementary at Davis Road between Cottonwood and Ironwood. Davis Road is classified as a collector road which means that higher levels of traffic are expected on this road. The speed limit along Davis Road is 25 MPH and includes a school zone located directly in front of the school. When the flashing beacon is active, it directs drivers to reduce their speeds to 20 MPH. Speed and traffic count data was collected within the school zone. The following table shows the time the flashing beacon is on and traffic is directed to reduce their speeds to 20 MPH as of 3/19/18. The beacon is not activated days the school is not in service and the active times are reviewed annually. There are no other traffic count areas within the walking zone at this time.

Times Flashing Beacon Is On

Day	Time
Monday	7:30 AM to 9:15 AM
	2:10 PM to 2:50 PM
	3:05 PM to 3:45 PM
Tuesday	7:30 AM to 9:15 AM
	2:10 PM to 2:50 PM
	3:05 PM to 3:45 PM
Wednesday	7:30 AM to 9:45 AM
	1:40 PM to 2:20 PM
	3:05 PM to 3:45 PM
Thursday	7:30 AM to 9:15 AM
	2:10 PM to 2:50 PM
	3:05 PM to 3:45 PM
Friday	7:30 AM to 9:15 AM
	2:10 PM to 2:50 PM
	3:05 PM to 3:45 PM

Data was collected on 9/7/17. The Average Daily Total (ADT) for vehicles was 4598.



## Appendix B

### Crosswalk and Sidewalk Prioritization Review

The Public Works department maintains the Bicycle and Pedestrian Capital Improvement Program (BPCIP), which is a prioritized work program of sidewalk, bike lane, and enhanced crossing projects. The list was last updated in 2007, and resulted in the 2010-2019 BPCIP. As Public Works is in the design phase of the final project on the 2010-2019 BPCIP it is time to develop the 2020-2029 BPCIP. In developing the 2020-2029 BPCIP, staff sought to create a system that:

- Met the Transportation Committee priorities for improvements that benefit school walk routes and serve as access within one quarter of a mile of a transit stop
- Would be transparent to the community on how projects are selected
- Aligned with goals outlined in the Transportation System Plan, Transportation Safety Action Plan, and Safe Routes to School program.

A list of evaluated projects for the update were collected from citizen requests (2007 – 2017), the Transportation System Plan, and locations requested by Hillsboro School District. Staff developed a point system to evaluate and rank each project using criteria including the roadway functional classification, average daily traffic counts, speed, whether the project was in a walk boundary for an elementary, middle or high school and if the project overlapped with the Transportation System Plan Bike Project.

During the end of 2017 and early 2018, the draft evaluation criteria and scores were presented to the Transportation Committee and the public was invited to comment on the evaluation criteria and project list. The next steps for this project will be to present the final evaluation criteria and Tier 1 project list to the Transportation committee, prepare cost estimate for the Tier 1 projects, and present a final 2020-2029 BPCIP for adoption.

## Appendix C

### Projects Scheduled and Completed in Neighborhood

There were no projects scheduled or recently completed in the Witch Hazel walk boundary that would benefit children walking or biking to school.

## Appendix D



## Appendix E

### Witch Hazel Elementary Parent/Staff input June 15, 2017

#### Equity

- The group suggested trying to connect with families at the Summer Outpost food distribution centers as well as at movie nights and Farmers Markets.

#### Evaluation

- Student surveys were conducted February 28 and March 1. Parent Surveys were conducted at the Science Fair night. Both methods of evaluations went very well and will be repeated at the same time next year.

#### Education

- Use Kindergarten kids holding signs to educate drivers that the area is a school zone.
- Pedestrian Safety as a health class in school
- Traffic education for Students
- Form a student Safety Patrol
- Host a Community Safety Fair
- Safety Education for Adults re: seat belt laws, booster seats, where children should legally ride, proper installation of car seats
- Safety Assemblies
- Crosswalk education
- Billboards—“School is in Session—Watch for Kids”
- Speeding fines doubled in school zones? Do education campaign

#### Encouragement

- Witch Hazel had a great Walk to school Day in the spring. Will repeat in the upcoming school year.

#### Engineering

- Request for sidewalks on Witch Hazel – same area that has been identified by HSD transportation staff
- The intersection at Witch Hazel and Brookwood is troubling. It comes immediately after a signal at TV Highway and the railroad track. The intersection itself causes problems for eastbound traffic from Witch Hazel Road, crossing traffic released by the light, to turn north on Brookwood.
- Parents asked that the intersection at Davis and Brookwood be evaluated for 4 way stops sign
- Parents asked that the intersection at Alexander and SE Davis be evaluated for a 4 way stop sign
- Parents asked that Alexander be evaluated for road diet/sidewalks/ crosswalks.
- Parents asked that HSD evaluate the walking route along River Road from Witch Hazel south to Davis Road.

- Parents asked that the walk patterns/cut throughs from Witch Hazel Road to Alexander be evaluated.

**Enforcement**

- Areas of High Concern to ask for attention from law enforcement:
  - Davis—Speed Control
  - More aggressive enforcement and ticketing on Davis
  - Asked for a traffic control officer or method at peak hours. West bound left turn from Davis into school drop-off combined with cross walk and through traffic eastbound causes backups that cannot be controlled by crossing guard.
  - Davis and Alexander crosswalk needs enforcement attention
  - Dress someone in a banana suit to attract attention—do anything to make people think!
  - Look at traffic patterns on Davis. Is there a better way to route traffic into the school?

**City of Hillsboro Feedback on Engineering Input – 3/19/2018**

City of Hillsboro staff reviewed the parent input for potential engineering improvements in the Witch Hazel walk boundary. The following table provides an update on the proposed improvements.

<b>Proposed Improvement</b>	<b>Staff Feedback</b>
Sidewalks on Witch Hazel	Students living on the south side of Witch Hazel are currently provided bus service because there is not a sidewalk. Witch Hazel is on a list of proposed Washington County improvement projects.
Witch Hazel/Brookwood Intersection	The area on the north side of Witch Hazel is industrial so this intersection should not affect a child’s ability to safely walk to school. This is also a hazard area so students will receive bus service.
4 way stop at Davis and Brookwood	The City places stop signs along roads that have a specific number of vehicle traveling along it. This intersection does not meet that requirement.
4 way stop at Alexander and Davis	The City places stop signs along roads that have a specific number of vehicle traveling along it. This intersection does not meet that requirement.
Road diet/sidewalks/crosswalks on Alexander	Road diet and sidewalks – Alexander has sidewalks. The street is fairly narrow and parking is permitted on one side of the street. Crosswalks – The City places marked crosswalks at locations that have a certain number of pedestrian crossings. This location would not probably meet the crossing requirement. All intersections are crosswalks, although they may not be marked.