Wedgwood Elementary Walking Audit Participants. November 18 and 21, 2014
# Table of Contents

The Safe Routes to School Program at Wedgwood Elementary School in Seattle ................................................................................................................. 1

Why Safe Routes to School Matters ........................................................................................................................................................................................................... 1

Who is Involved? ................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 1

What is a Walk/Bike Audit? ..................................................................................................................................................................................................... 1

Overview of Wedgwood Elementary School .................................................................................................................................................................................. 2

Neighborhood Characteristics ..................................................................................................................................................................................................... 2

School Walk Zone ................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 2

Figure 1: Wedgwood Transportation Boundaries .............................................................................................................................................................. 2

Walk/Bike Audit Route ......................................................................................................................................................................................................... 3

Top Recommendations ....................................................................................................................................................................................................... 3-9

Next Steps ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 9

Wedgwood Walking Audit Field Notes ......................................................................................................................................................................................... 10-14

Wedgwood Biking Audit Field Notes ....................................................................................................................................................................................... 15-17

Contacts and Project Information ................................................................................................................................................................................................ 18
Safe Routes to School Program at Wedgwood Elementary School in Seattle

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a growing movement to encourage and support active commuting by school children and families. At the intersection of public health, public safety, education, and transportation, SRTS helps communities create a balanced alternative to car travel. Safe Routes to School programs break barriers and solutions into their “5 E” components: Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering, and Evaluation. The goal of the Safe Routes to School program is to encourage more students and families to walk and bike safely to school.

Why SRTS Matters
The practice of walking and biking to school has positive effects on fitness, overall activity levels, and student readiness to learn. Over the past generation, active school commuting has steadily declined, while childhood obesity rates have increased. The share of students who walk or bike to school has fallen from 48 percent to 13 percent since the 1960s, while childhood obesity rates have tripled in that same time period.

In addition to the positive health and educational benefits, SRTS is often credited with strengthening social ties between neighbors and enriching school communities. Walking and biking to school bring together families, neighbors and school staff who might otherwise be traveling exclusively by car.

What is the Wedgwood Children and Neighbors (WECAN) Project?
WECAN was initiated by parents and neighbors of Wedgwood School to improve walking and biking routes to school. WECAN was instrumental in securing a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant from the Washington State Department of Transportation, with additional funds and program management from the Seattle Department of Transportation. In the summer of 2015, new sidewalks will be installed on NE 85th Street, 28th Avenue NE, and NE 83rd Street and an existing sidewalk will be repaired on Ravenna Avenue NE at the intersection with NE 83rd Street. In addition to engineering improvements, the WECAN project will receive education and encouragement services from the Seattle SRTS Partnership, comprised of Feet First, Cascade Bicycle Club, Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, Harborview Injury Prevention Resource Center, and Alta Planning + Design.

What is a Walk/Bike Audit?
A walk/bike audit is an opportunity for community members and program partners to gain firsthand knowledge of the walking/biking environment, and to jointly develop improvement strategies where safety issues exist. Parents, students, school staff, city staff, and other community members tour the area as a group, discuss problems and possible solutions, and take notes which contribute to a final report. The report is used as a tool to engage city officials, policy makers, and community members in making the school neighborhood more walkable and bikeable. The report serves to document the progress of the SRTS grant and lay a foundation for further improvements.
Overview of Wedgwood Elementary School

Wedgwood Elementary serves 477 K-5 students in the Wedgwood neighborhood in Northeast Seattle. Of those, approximately 426 live within two miles of the school, with approximately 177 students residing within the school district’s one-mile walk boundary. According to a mode-choice tally conducted in 2012, eighteen percent of the student body arrives by walking, which is five percent more than the national average. Eighteen percent arrive by school bus, one percent by bike, and one percent by transit. The remaining 62 percent of students travel to school in a family vehicle.

Neighborhood Characteristics

Wedgwood Elementary is located on NE 85th Street in Northeast Seattle. Part of unincorporated King County until 1953, this area is among the once-annexed neighborhoods in North Seattle with few or no sidewalks along residential streets. The school is in a residential area five blocks west of 35th Avenue NE, a business district with grocery stores, a library and post office.

School Walk Zone

The large majority of families live within the school walk zone defined by the Seattle Public Schools (see image, right). Within the walk boundary, approximately 28 families live east of 35th Ave NE, 7 families live south of NE 75th St, and 33 families live north of NE 95th St. Students living to the west of Ravenna Avenue NE are eligible for bus service.
Walk/Bike Audit Route
The image below shows the area covered in this report, including the November 18 walk audit route (solid orange) and bike route (solid green), and areas that were covered in a pre-audit survey in preparation for the event. The top recommendations are noted numerically on the map.

Top Recommendations for Wedgwood Elementary School

Recommendations for built environment improvements:
1. New sidewalk in front of the school on NE 85th St
2. New sidewalk along 28th Ave NE and NE 83rd St
3. Improved crossings at NE 95th St
4. Traffic calming along 32nd Ave NE between NE 95th and NE 85th
5. Traffic calming along 31st Ave NE between NE 85th and NE 75th Streets.
6. Improved crossing at 25th Ave NE and NE 90th

Recommendations for non-infrastructure activities:
- Maintain crossing guard at 30th Ave NE
- Biking and walking safety education and encouragement for students and families
- Generate circulation plan for arrival and departure
Top Recommendations for Wedgwood Elementary School, continued:

1. **New sidewalk in front of the school on NE 85\textsuperscript{th} St (between 28\textsuperscript{th} and 30\textsuperscript{th} Aves NE)**

   The current conditions on the north side of NE 85\textsuperscript{th} St immediately in front of the school’s front entrance contribute significantly to a poor atmosphere for people on foot or bike. The walkway is defined by a curb for half of the block, and by painting and marked parking spaces for the other half. The existing sidewalk has no buffer zone, so pick-up and drop off at this location has car passengers opening doors directly into the existing walkway. At the intersection of 28\textsuperscript{th} Avenue, the north side of 85\textsuperscript{th} St NE becomes gravelly and is ill-defined, leading into the playground entrance that is heavily traveled by people on foot.

   The need for new sidewalk in this location was identified in the grant process and will be funded as part of Wedgwood’s’ current SRTS grant. Construction will take place in the summer of 2015. The improved infrastructure will be factored in to the circulation plan for the school.
2. **New sidewalk along 28th Ave NE and NE 83rd St**

28th Avenue NE is heavily used by school families, particularly students on foot and drivers choosing to park and walk near this location. Without a sidewalk, pedestrians are forced into the roadway by parked cars, and encounter the many vehicles that use this corridor to connect to Ravenna Ave NE.

This need was also identified as part of the SRTS grant application process, and is scheduled to be completed by SDOT in the summer of 2015. SDOT will install two blocks of new curb and gutter on the west side of 28th Ave NE, connecting the school to the existing sidewalks on NE 82nd St. SDOT will also install new sidewalk, curb and gutter on the north side of NE 83rd St. spanning from Ravenna Ave NE to 28th Ave NE.

![Figure 3: 28th Ave NE facing south from NE 85th St. Arrow indicates sidewalk to be installed on the west side](image)

![Figure 4: NE 83rd St facing west from 28th Ave NE](image)
3. Improved crossings at NE 95th St between 30th and 32nd Aves NE

Most recent records show that 33 Wedgwood Students live north of NE 95th St. High speeds and volume of traffic combined with low visibility (due to vegetation and topography) at 30th Ave NE and NE 95th St make the crossing perilous. Recommend speed control if this crosswalk continues to be recommend route for students who live north of NE 95th St.

A speed reader is located at the NW corner of the intersection of NE 95th St and 32nd Ave NE. Sidewalks are to be installed by SDOT on the south side of NE 95th St from 32nd Ave NE to 35th Ave NE in 2015. Recommend crosswalk be installed and future circulation plans direct students to cross at this location.

Figure 5: Intersection at NE 95th St and 30th Ave NE

Figure 6: Intersection at NE 95th St and 32nd Ave NE. Facing west
4. Traffic calming along 32nd Ave NE between NE 95th St and NE 85th St

There are no sidewalks and no stop signs along 32nd Ave NE between NE 95th St and NE 85th St. This narrow road also has less traffic volume and traffic speed than other parallel north-south streets. Elevation change is also steadier making it more accessible to people who bike and walk to school. Installing traffic calming devices, including but not limited to speed humps, would enhance walkability and bikeability in this corridor. Students and families would then be encouraged to use 32nd Ave NE in future circulation plans.

5. Traffic calming along 31st Ave NE between NE 85th and NE 75th Streets.

Participants identified this route as a preferred north and south walk/bike route. While 31st Ave NE and 30th Ave NE both have sidewalks and good walk/bike potential, 31st Ave NE has lower vehicle volume and a signalized crossing at NE 75th St. 31st Ave NE is a narrow street with sidewalks along its length. Installation of speed humps or other traffic calming treatment would further enhance the walk and bike conditions along the corridor. Signage could be added to alert cross traffic that this street is a high volume walk/bike route for Wedgwood School and nearby Eckstein Middle School.
6. Improved crossing at 25th Ave NE and NE 90th St

Participants identified this as the least walkable location of a potential Walking School Bus route from Ravenna Ave NE to the school. They explain that they see more speeding here than on other residential roads because 25th Ave NE it is a straight connector to the intersection of Ravenna NE and NE 92nd St. Speed humps currently exist south of this intersection. The intersection itself has no sidewalks, curbs or markings, and some street furniture impedes sightlines. An improved crossing would make this route more walkable for young students.

7. Maintain crossing guard at 30th Ave NE

The crossing guard currently stationed at 30th Avenue NE and NE 85th St provides critical services for both safe walking and cycling, and safety education to students. She was observed facilitating 37 crossings in the morning and 97 in the afternoon in an environment heavily traveled by cars. She explains that she teaches young cyclists to dismount and walk through the intersection, lending less conflict to the shared area and teaching skills for a lifetime.
8. **Bike and pedestrian safety education for students and families**

Because the Wedgwood neighborhood has so few existing sidewalks, it would be beneficial for all students to be part of an education program for walking and biking safety. As part of the SRTS grant, Cascade Bicycle Club will provide bicycle education services both in and out of the PE classroom setting. Efforts should be made to ensure that those services are made available to all Wedgwood students. Pedestrian safety information should be made available to parents and children. If the interest exists, families can get help organizing Walking School Buses as part of the SRTS grant.

9. **Generate circulation plan for arrival and departure**

Using the information gathered by Wedgwood community members in arrival and departure observations, a circulation plan for student arrival and departure should be created. The plan should include routes indicating the preferred ways to reach campus on foot, bike or car, and should clearly indicate the locations reserved for school bus only.

---

**Next Steps**

Many of the top recommendations in this report can and will be addressed by the current SRTS grant. Sidewalk construction (recommendations #1 and #2) is scheduled for the summer of 2015. Feet First and Seattle Neighborhood Greenways will request assistance from SDOT to improve crossing safety and slow down traffic in key locations (recommendations 3-6). The City of Seattle School Traffic Safety committee will be notified of this audit’s recommendation #7 regarding crossing guard safety, as well as all other aspects of this report.

Safety education and encouragement efforts (recommendations #8 and #9) will be conducted by Feet First, Cascade Bicycle Club, and other grant partners in cooperation with school families and staff.

**Field Notes**

The attached field notes include the comments and observations made by participants of the Walk/Bike Audit. The notes document area problems, existing assets, and in some cases, recommendations for treatments to improve walkability. These field notes are intended both as a tool for advocacy and as a record against which to measure future improvements.
Wedgwood Walking Field Notes

The image to the right shows the field note observations by location. See the attached pages for specifics about each numbered location.

Wedgwood Field Notes
Recommendation by type:

- **Engineering:** recommendations for SDOT to install structural improvements such as sidewalks, curb bulbs and/or signs to adjust signal timing

- **Intersection Improvement:** Recommendations for SDOT to study intersection and increase crossing safety with improvements such as striping, signage, traffic calming, etc.

- **Circulation Plan:** Recommendations for Feet First promote education and encouragement for safe arrival and departure procedures.

- **Education:** Recommendation for Feet First, Cascade Bicycle Club and other grant partners to provide safety education programs.

- **Neighborhood Asset:** Highlights aspects of the built environment that benefit pedestrians or cyclists
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation Pt.</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Field Observations</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NE 83rd St, West of 28th Ave NE</td>
<td>Notification of upcoming school zone. One parent points out that while there is a &quot;Start School Zone&quot; sign for drivers approaching the school on 28th Ave NE south of 83rd St, there is no sign for drivers approaching from the west on NE 83rd St itself.</td>
<td>Ask SDOT to install sign on NE 83rd St before the t-intersection with 28th Ave NE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NE 77th St and 29th Ave NE</td>
<td>Steep hills in this area result in locations that are not passable by car. Outdoor staircases, such as the one here, are a neighborhood asset, especially when the design includes a passable area for bicycles.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NE 77th St and 31st Ave NE</td>
<td>Similar to the stairs located on NE 80th St and 28th Ave NE (location 3) there is an extremely steep paved pedestrian walkway. The walkway leads to a poorly-marked crosswalk.</td>
<td>Replace existing ramp with stairway to create safer pedestrian access. Consider designs to increase visibility of crosswalk.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>NE 82nd St and 31st Ave NE</td>
<td>&quot;Wedgwood Square&quot; Small triangle park maintained by community members, shows community investment and connection to the built environment, thus making this park a <em>neighborhood asset</em>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30th Ave NE between NE 85th St and NE 86th St. (School bus loading zone)</td>
<td>There is a sidewalk with no curb on the school-side of 30th Ave NE. There is no sidewalk on the east side. It looks like a community member painted a line where the curb might be, better defining the load zone. From the observation conducted by Feet First, and from input from the principal and crossing guard, this bus zone functions well, but the possibility of vehicles crossing into the path of student pedestrians is a concern.</td>
<td>Install curb and gutter here.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>NE 86th St and 30th Ave NE</td>
<td>This intersection has one painted crosswalk across NE 86th St on the west side of the intersection, and the other crosswalks are un-marked. Many pedestrians park and walk from NE 86th St, east of 30th Ave NE. Parents request a marked crosswalk to reduce incidences of pedestrians crossing at the diagonal here.</td>
<td>SDOT should do a speed study of 30th Ave NE and consider design options to increase safety at this intersection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>NE 86th St west of 30th Ave NE</td>
<td>This area is heavily used as a &quot;park and walk&quot; location for families meeting children before and after school. Drivers park on both sides of the street, though parking is restricted on the south side. Slow-speed conflicts occur between pedestrians crossing midblock to get to/from vehicles and drivers making 3-point turns in driveways. The driveway to the staff parking lot is the highest point of conflict.</td>
<td>Feet first will create a circulation plan. Communicate the plan to the school community, and enforce as necessary. Determining with SDOT whether or not parking restriction should apply to north side of street.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>NE 86th St west of 30th Ave NE</td>
<td>A parking lot behind the school is designated for school staff, although it is not heavily used. Some people would like to see this area considered as an alternate drop-off/pick-up area</td>
<td>Create a circulation plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Street Intersection</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>NE 86th St and 27th Ave NE</td>
<td>NE 86th St and 27th Ave NE meet here at a street end. There is an entrance to the school here through the playground. There are sidewalks along the south side of NE 86th St near the school. Some drivers do U-turns here after dropping off students. There are no cross walks.</td>
<td>Work with city officials and traffic engineer to explore the possibility of making a designated U-turn area here before and after school as part of the circulation plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>27th Ave NE between NE 90th St and NE 95th St</td>
<td>No sidewalks on either side off the street. Pedestrian use of this street is limited by the blind corner and hill. Shrubs and guard rail along the shoulder make it difficult for drivers to park here.</td>
<td>Pedestrian education would be helpful for children and parents who walk in this neighborhood.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>26th Ave NE and 26th Pl NE</td>
<td>This is a wide and irregular intersection produced by angled streets coming together. There are no sidewalks on the west side of the intersection and there are also no marked crosswalks. Community members participating in the audit indicated that the preferred crossing is diagonal from NE 87th St to 26th Ave NE. They also report that 26th Ave NE is the location of a monthly &quot;play street&quot; with good neighborhood involvement.</td>
<td>Explore the possibility of involving neighbors in an &quot;intersection repair&quot; mural project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>26th Ave NE between NE90th St and 87th St</td>
<td>A local family puts on play streets that happen here. They take place once a month, rain or shine. Another example of a <em>community asset</em> for neighborhood children and families.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Pt</td>
<td>Field Observations</td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Image</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Location of bicycle parking in front of school allows eyes on the racks, minimizing theft and vandalism. For students and community members this is a <em>neighborhood asset</em>. During Bike to School Month, school community uses playground for overflow parking.</td>
<td>Consider the strategic use of bicycle parking including bicycle corrals on NE 85th as part of traffic calming strategies.</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Many students choose to walk and bike on 30th Ave NE. This street is wide and includes 2-way stop signs, which control cross traffic at every intersection and sidewalks on the west side of the street until NE 90th St. The road width encourages a higher volume and higher speed of traffic than adjacent streets.</td>
<td>Recommend that the school walk route map encourage students to walk/bike on 32nd Ave NE after traffic calming measures are in place. This is an opportunity for <em>engineering improvements</em>.</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Most recent records show that 33 Wedgwood Students live north of NE 95th St and the signalized intersection where 35th Ave NE and NE 95th St are insufficient in signal timing for crossing by children.</td>
<td>Signal timing may be adjusted to reduce wait times, which can be as long as 90 second cycles crossing 35th NE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>School community living on the east side of 35th NE has the opportunity to use the 39th NE Greenway when they walk and bike.</td>
<td>Sign the connection from Wedgwood School to the Greenway and include this greenway in future school walk and bike maps.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Steep hill provides challenge to people walking and biking east-west. The current designated bicycle route on NE 82nd St is too steep for most cyclists to attempt either going up or down the hill.</td>
<td>Recommend assigning a switchback route for family biker use in the community. 27th Ave NE/ 28th Ave NE/NE 80th St/ NE 82nd St. Include in area walk and bike maps.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contacts & Project Information

For more information please contact:

Jen Cole, Safe Routes to School Program Director
Tel: 206.652.2310 x 2
jen@feetfirst.org

Lisa Quinn, Executive Director
Tel: 206.652.2310 x 6
lisa@feetfirst.org

Feet First
314 1st Ave S
Seattle, WA 98104

Feet First is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization promoting walkable communities through advocacy, community organizing, research, and education.

This document was reviewed by: Ashley Harris, SDOT; Andreas Salomon, Wedgwood Resident; and Cathy Tuttle, Seattle Neighborhood Greenways

Report completed January 22, 2015

This audit report is a product of a larger grant made possible by the Seattle Safe Routes To School Partnership: