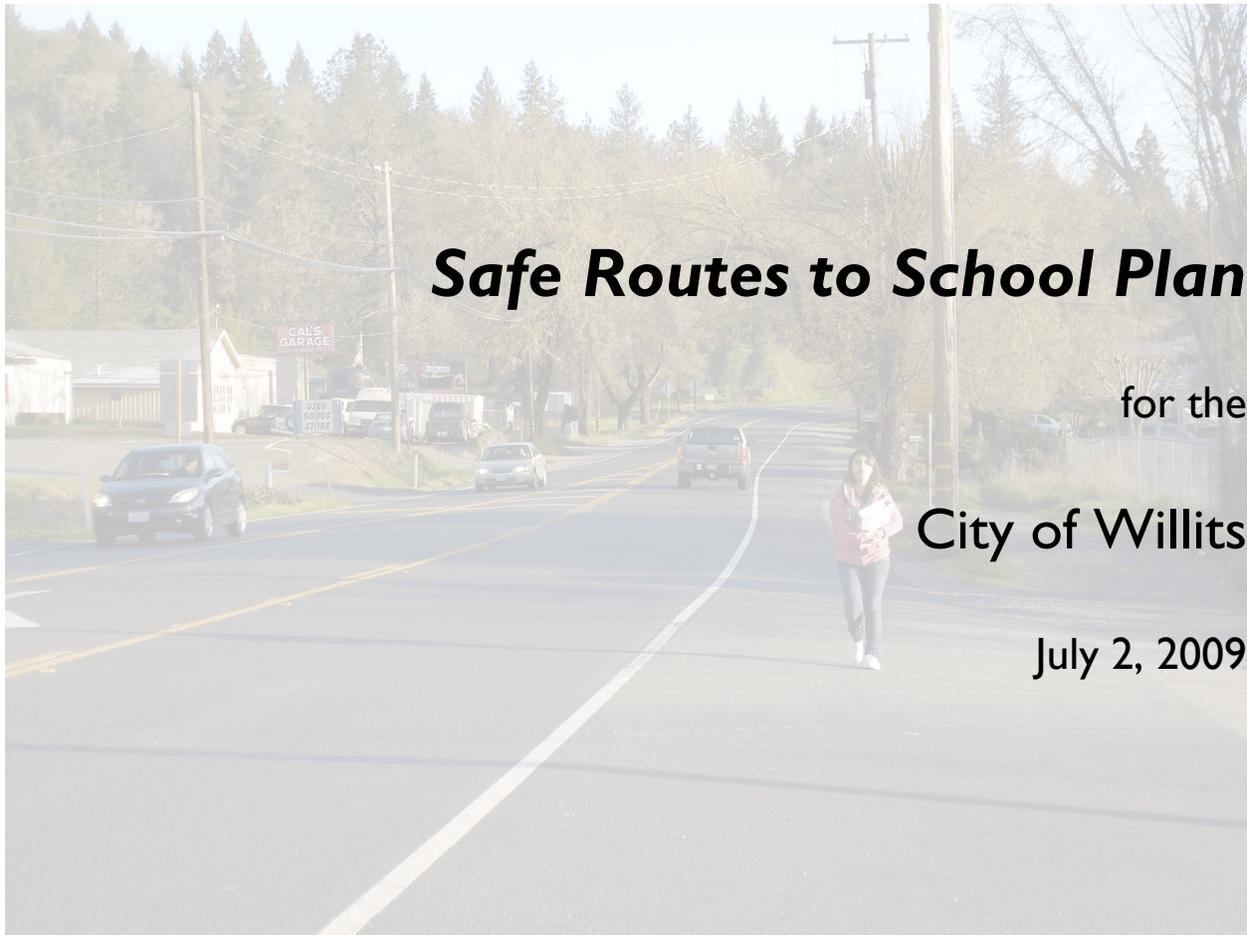




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# ***Safe Routes to School Plan***

for the  
**City of Willits**

**July 2, 2009**



## Table of Contents

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	Page
Introduction .....	I
Engineering Program .....	4
Brookside Elementary School .....	6
Blosser Lane Elementary School .....	8
Baechtel Grove Middle School .....	11
Willits Charter School .....	14
Community Day School .....	17
Sanhedrin High School .....	19
Willits High School .....	21
Engineering Recommendations .....	23
Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation Programs .....	32
References and Study Participants .....	47
<b>Figures</b>	
1 School Locations .....	2
2 North Area Map .....	27
3 Central Area Map .....	28
4 South West Area Map .....	29
5 South East Area Map .....	30
6 City Wide Area .....	31
<b>Appendices</b>	
A Collision Records	



## Introduction

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### Goals and Objectives

The aim of preparing Safe Routes to School plans is to maintain and improve safety for students traveling to and from school by bicycle and on foot, so Safe Routes to School programs focus on the safety of students walking and biking to school, rather than those being transported to school by car. These programs have the goal of encouraging more students to walk or bike, and consider school access to be part of the larger spheres of wellness, health and environmental awareness. Safe Routes to School plans generally utilize the five-pronged “5 E’S” approach, which involves Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation tools to generate a well-rounded and multidisciplinary plan for school access. Safe Routes to School programs are becoming more popular in the United States, after proving to be successful in Europe and Canada.

There are many reasons to complete a Safe Routes to School plan. Recent studies have shown a trend of parents increasingly driving students to school, which worsens neighborhood and school-site congestion, especially during the morning peak hour, and causes air pollution. Children are increasingly inactive in terms of their physical lifestyle, and many are becoming overweight. The environment has become seriously degraded due to vehicle emissions. By preparing and implementing a Safe Routes to School plan parents may become more confident that their child can safely walk or bike to school. Not only do these plans affect school children, but the nearby community benefits from safer pedestrian and bicycle facilities, reduced traffic congestion and improved air quality.

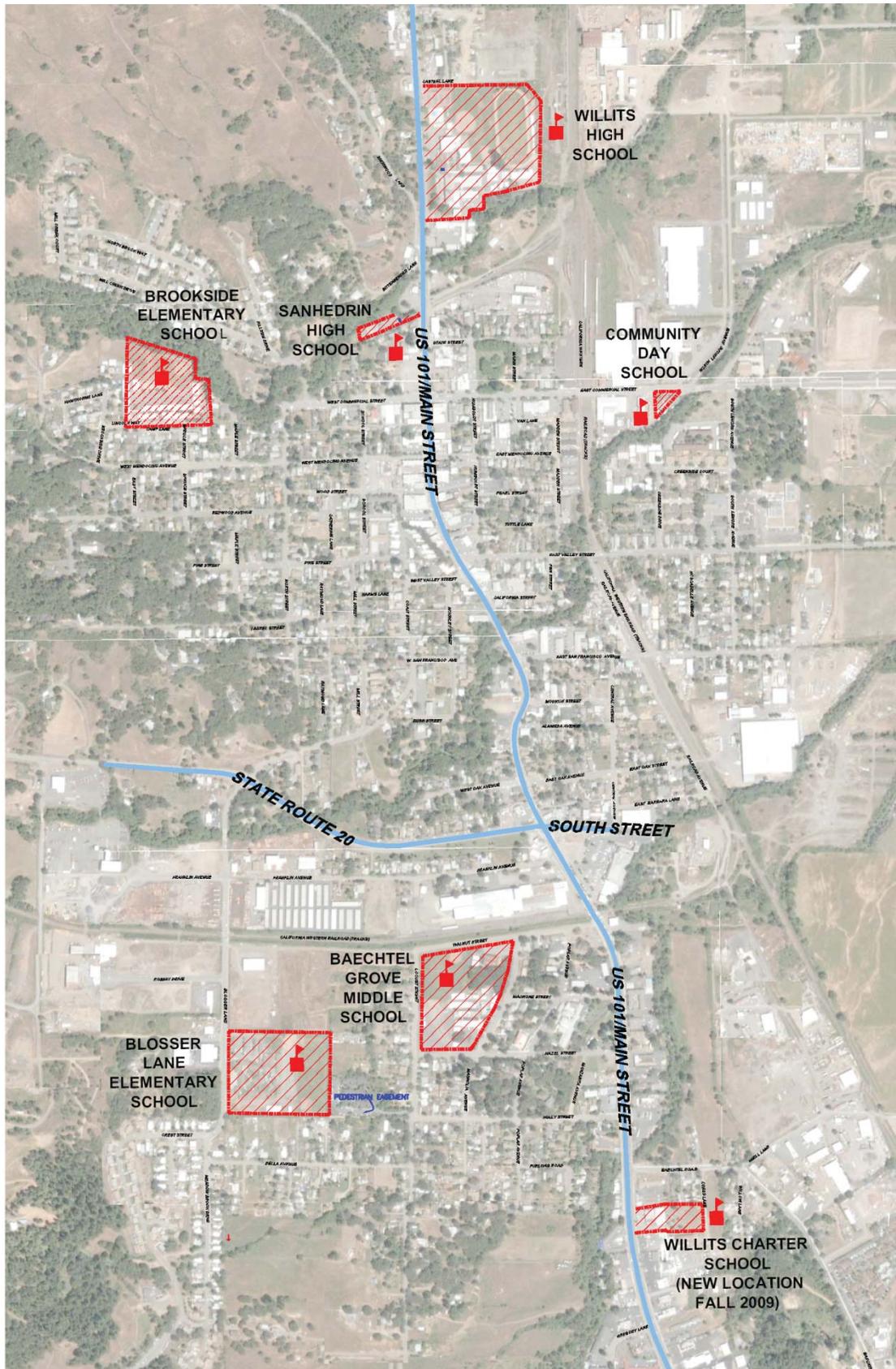
The purpose of this study was to review existing conditions for seven schools in the City of Willits, to review existing programmatic efforts by the community, if any, and to develop a city-wide Willits Safe Routes to School plan using the “5-E’s” approach. While vehicular access, parking, and on-site circulation patterns are important school-site transportation issues, these were not a focus of this study; pedestrian, bicycle and transit access routes to the schools were the chief concern. This study involved the partnership and input of many groups, including City engineers, law enforcement officers, school officials, parents, and community advocates for student health.

### Schools Studied

The following seven schools were included in this study.

- Brookside Elementary School
- Blosser Lane Elementary School
- Baechtel Grove Middle School
- Willits Charter School
- Community Day School
- Sanhedrin High School
- Willits High School

The locations of the seven schools studied are shown in Figure 1.



Safe Routes to School Plan  
City of Willits

Figure 1  
School Locations

## Background Information

### School Boundaries

Children in Willits travel from all areas within the city to each school site. The majority of school-age children attend four of the seven schools, with a small percentage attending the three alternative schools, Community Day School, Sanhedrin High School, and Willits Charter School. As the city limits essentially function as a district boundary for Willits students, it was necessary to consider a city-wide network of routes that these children may use to walk or ride bicycles as part of their respective school commutes.

### Review of Relevant Studies and Existing Programs in Willits

A review of past studies for Willits was conducted. The *Comprehensive Self-Evaluation ADA Access and Transition Plan for Sidewalks and Parking Lots for the City of Willits*, prepared by Coastland Engineering and dated June 2006, was reviewed to determine if the sidewalk inventory might be helpful for identifying the gaps in existing sidewalks that might appear on various school routes. It was determined that this information was limited to areas of existing or partially existing sidewalks, so was only marginally useful.

The *Willits Circulation and Parking Improvement Plan Final Report*, prepared by Whitlock & Weinberger Transportation, Inc. and dated December 2002, was also reviewed. In the section *School Traffic Circulation*, it is noted, "Willits City Council suggested that the School District consider reorganizing the elementary schools by creating neighborhood schools in order to reduce travel distances and provide benefits to pedestrians and bicyclists." This suggestion has not been implemented.

The *Baechtel Road-Railroad Avenue Corridor Community Design Study*, prepared for the City of Willits and dated June 9, 2004, was also reviewed. This study provides a conceptual design for a north-south connection east of Main Street, between Baechtel Road and Railroad Avenue.

In addition to these past studies, the *City of Willits Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Specific Plan*, prepared by the City of Willits, PMC and One Town One Vision and dated April 2009, was also reviewed. This study identified bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities city-wide, and described specific projects to implement these facilities.

## Report Format

This report is broken down into a review of the existing pedestrian and bicycling facilities together with the transit services provided for each of the seven schools. These "Engineering Program" sections are categorized by school site, and include recommended improvements. A summary of city-wide recommendations are listed and depicted graphically in the "Engineering Recommendations" section.

Following the engineering evaluations and recommendations is a section covering the Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation Programs, or the remaining "4-E" categories. Within this section are suggested multi-disciplinary activities that can be implemented in order to enhance existing programs in Willits aimed at promoting walking and bicycling to school and improving traffic safety around school areas through education, incentives, and law enforcement measures.

It should be noted that some recommendations may not fall neatly into one of the five "E" categories, and may include elements from two or more of the "5-E's."

## Engineering Program

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The goal of the engineering element of a SR2S program is to provide technical transportation solutions to improve the transportation network used by school children and to decrease undesirable vehicle speeds and patterns on school routes, especially near each school campus. Engineering solutions can also help to increase children's visibility to drivers, and consequently, improve their safety.

To identify deficiencies in existing student walking and bicycling school commute routes, data was collected city-wide. Decision makers and other stakeholders were involved early in the process, to obtain their knowledge on commute deficiencies. Infrastructure components such as sidewalks, crossings, and bicycle facilities were inventoried in order to identify potential gaps in student transportation routes. Operations at each school were observed during school morning drop off times and afternoon pick-up times.

### Data Collection Overview

#### Interviews

Key members of the community, including staff from City Public Works and Police Departments and School District Transit staff were interviewed together in March 2009 to discuss prior efforts to increase student commute safety. The group conducted a city-wide driving tour in order to identify their specific concerns relative to student transportation safety, visiting all seven school campuses as well as driving the most common student pedestrian and bicycle commute routes city-wide. In addition, the group conducted a detailed audit of Blosser Lane Elementary School as part of a Safe Routes to School Grant application that was to be completed and submitted in April 2009.

#### School Site Audits

Following the group field reviews, individual field visits were conducted at each of the seven schools during the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up periods in March and April 2009 to identify additional safety or access issues, if any. School daily class schedules and school transit schedules were obtained to coordinate the observation times with peak student travel periods and to identify school bus routes. Wherever possible, interviews were conducted of school staff that was providing assistance with loading zone activities, and school principals were contacted so staff would be aware that observers would be present. All reviews were scheduled to occur before Spring break.

The following seven schools were included in this study.

- Brookside Elementary School
- Blosser Lane Elementary School
- Baechtel Grove Middle School
- Willits Charter School
- Community Day School
- Sanhedrin High School
- Willits High School

In addition to observing the pick-up and drop-off activities, the conditions of the local transportation networks in the vicinity of each school were noted and data collected from City staff wherever possible, including the following:

- Sidewalk continuity
- Bike lane and bike route signs and markings
- Local traffic volumes, speeds and patterns
- Existing routes for student walkers and bikers
- Crosswalk locations and pedestrian signal phasing
- Presence of on-site bike racks
- Existing signage and pavement markings
- Crossing guard locations
- Behavior of drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists
- Bus stops

In addition to observing the traffic patterns during these critical periods, an inventory was conducted of the existing traffic signs and markings in the vicinity of each school, as well as the public infrastructure necessary to serve student walking and bicycling activities, together with a review of the transit services provided to the students. Willits Unified School District transit staff was also contacted to discuss the school bus service schedules and logistics.

### Collision History

The most recent five-year collision history for the City of Willits was reviewed to identify all collisions involving pedestrians and bicyclists. Collision records were obtained through the California Highway Patrol's Statewide Integrated Traffic Reporting System. All collisions from July 2003 through June 2008 that involved a pedestrian or bicyclist were reviewed. Though the ages of the pedestrians and bicyclists were not specified, attention was paid to the location of each collision in relation to the school campuses. A copy of the recorded collisions is included in Appendix A.

## Brookside Elementary School

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Brookside Elementary School is located in a residential neighborhood at the terminus of two streets, Spruce Street and Lincoln Way, in the northwest quadrant of Willits. The school serves children attending pre-school, and grades kindergarten through second, with a current population of approximately 370 kindergarten through second grade students plus 100 preschool/Head Start Program children, for a total of 470 children. This school is the first public school Willits children can be enrolled in, and upon completing instruction here, attend Blosser Lane Elementary School. The student population therefore includes very young and very small children. The school's location and proximity to other schools within Willits are shown in Figure 1.

Activities at and around Brookside Elementary School were observed on Friday, April 3, and Tuesday, April 8 during the morning arrival and the afternoon dismissal periods. The weather on these dates was cold, with one rainy day and one dry day.

### Opportunities and Constraints

#### Pedestrian Facilities

##### *Crossings*

During normal school hours, the school parking lot has the potential to function as a street connection between Lincoln Way and Spruce Street since it is paved and provides a direct connection between these two streets. A gate installed at the Lincoln Way terminus prevents this from occurring, and the gate is open during the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times to allow staff, school buses and limited parental access to the site. A flagger is stationed at the Spruce Street entrance in the afternoon in order to prevent parent drivers from entering the school site when buses are present, though the flagger also increases the safety of students crossing Camp Lane and Spruce Street.

While the gate is open at Lincoln Way, entrance to the school is blocked by a queue of school buses. The buses act to control the flow on-site from Lincoln Way until such time as the buses are loaded or unloaded, and leave en mass. This is an inefficient method of traffic flow, but apparently instituted in order to protect the very small children disembarking from buses or walking across the parking lot from adjacent streets, to enter or exit the school buildings.

Children walking to school either from the nearby residences or from vehicles parked on adjacent public streets would benefit from the following additional intersection markings or controls.

- Lincoln Way intersects Brookside Drive as a tee-intersection, with Lincoln Way stop-controlled and both Brookside Drive approaches uncontrolled. There is a marked crosswalk on the north leg of Brookside Drive, though since this is the intersection closest to the west side of the school grounds, all-way stop controls, another marked crosswalk and a crossing guard would be appropriate.
- For those students and parents who use Lincoln Way to enter or leave the campus, the intersection of Brookside Drive/West Mendocino Avenue is a likely crossing location. West Mendocino Avenue connects to many area streets, including Main Street, and adding a crosswalk on Brookside Drive may draw additional pedestrian activity, which could help alleviate the high level of congestion observed on the east side of campus on Spruce Street.
- Six blocks south of the campus is the intersection of Pine Street/Raymond Lane. The grid-like street network in this area provides a variety of routes for children to walk to school, and a marked

crosswalk on Raymond Lane on the south side of Pine Street would provide guidance for crossing between existing sidewalks en route to school.

- Raymond Lane/Laurel Street intersection is also part of this grid-like street network where additional crosswalks could increase driver awareness of student pedestrians.

#### *Sidewalks/Paths*

There are numerous gaps in sidewalks in the residential areas surrounding Brookside Elementary School. Providing sidewalks on both sides of Lincoln Way and Brookside Drive is essential to create a continuous safe route for these small children when walking with their parents. Adding sidewalk where it is missing on West Mendocino Avenue, Easy Street, Spruce Street, and Redwood Avenue would serve students living nearby as well as those who are driven by out-of-area parents who need to park on these streets to access the school if they are to avoid the heavy congestion on other, more proximate streets to the school campus. Additional sidewalks should be provided on North Street, Laurel Street, and Mill Creek Drive to increase the distance that area residents could safely walk to school with their student children.

#### Bicycling Facilities

There are no marked or signed bike lanes or routes in the vicinity of Brookside School, which is reasonable given the adjacent land uses and the predominant lack of street connections to outlying areas. The very young age of Brookside Elementary School children also contributes to a lower expectation on bicycling to school, though it is reasonable to encourage parents to give their children a ride to school on their adult-sized bicycle. Such bicycle-oriented travel provides these young students with role models for using bicycles for transportation purposes.

The area streets that lend themselves to bicycling include the West Commercial Street, School Street, North Street, Mill Street, Coast Street, West Valley Street, and a portion of Laurel Street, and signing these streets as Class II or III bicycle facilities is recommended.

#### Transit Services

Willits Unified School District dispatches eight to ten buses to Brookside Elementary School at the start and end of each school day. Buses load and unload on-site within the on-site drive aisle, which also appears to function as a public street since it provides a direct connection between two cul-de-sac streets, Lincoln Way and Spruce Street. The mix of bus queues, parked vehicles, and children crossing from the school building to off-site vehicles is awkward and extremely congested, though on-site circulation changes would be difficult to create given the limited campus access. With school buses providing the only transit operation serving this school, such services should be continued.

#### **Miscellaneous**

West Commercial Street area merchants and residents have developed streetscape plans for West Commercial Street with a goal of enhancing pedestrian facilities. Student bicycling facilities such as bike lanes should also be provided on this street given its geometry and its location within the community's street network.

## Blosser Lane Elementary School

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Blosser Lane Elementary School is located at 1275 Blosser Lane in the southwest quadrant of Willits. The school serves children in grades three through five, with a current population of approximately 450 students. The school is bound by residences to the south and east, and by numerous industrial uses to the west and north. It is located on a major collector street that provides a direct connection to a regional roadway, Highway 20. In addition, the Sherwood Valley Rancheria Casino is located south of the school, with some of the traffic to and from the casino passing through the school zone. The school's location and proximity to other schools within Willits are shown in Figure 1.

Activities at and around Blosser Lane School were observed on Wednesday, March 18, and Friday, April 3, during the morning arrival and the afternoon dismissal periods. The weather on these dates was cool and dry, conducive to walking and bicycling.

### Opportunities and Constraints

#### Pedestrian Facilities

##### *Crossings*

Two school staff perform crossing guard duties at the start and end of school instruction day. One is stationed at the entrance driveway, controlling traffic on Blosser Lane so that parents and students can cross to their parked vehicles on the west side of the street. The other staff crossing guard is stationed in the loading zone. Staff that provides these duties should be equipped with standard traffic control devices and receive annual training on effective flagging/crossing techniques.

Children walking to school from areas north of the campus would likely cross four challenging locations:

- Blosser Lane intersects the California Western Railroad tracks at-grade, with no grade crossing controls.
- Further north, students would likely cross Franklin Avenue which is stop-controlled at both approaches to Blosser Lane, though there is no crosswalk on Franklin at this location.
- The most challenging crossing for students commuting to campus to and from the north is at the Blosser Lane/Highway 20 intersection. This is a four-legged intersection, with stop controls on the Blosser Lane and Coast Street approaches, with the high-speed Highway 20 traffic free-flowing. Due to concerns for child safety at this intersection, district administrators have specifically instructed students not to cross Highway 20. Those children living north of this crossing are provided transit service.
- The Coast Street/Mill Street tee-intersection is all-way-stop-controlled which lends itself to a safe crossing location, though adding a crosswalk on the north and west legs would be useful in guiding students to cross.

Children walking to school from areas to the south and east of campus could walk along Blosser Lane to the south and cross one or two public street intersections, or use the dirt pedestrian path located at the southeast corner of the school fields to walk to Locust Street and beyond. The crossing challenges for these students include:

- The Crest Street/Blosser Lane intersection is a tee-intersection with all-way stop controls, though there are no crosswalk markings.
- Della Avenue/Blosser Lane is also a tee-intersection, though only Della Avenue is stop-controlled and there are no marked crosswalks.
- There is a crossing guard stationed on Locust Street at the eastern terminus of the dirt pedestrian path that links the school to the residences east of Blosser Lane School. There is only one crosswalk on this four-legged intersection, providing minimal crossing guidance.

#### Sidewalks/Paths

Other than the sidewalk on Blosser Lane adjacent to the school grounds, there are few sidewalks for students walking to and from the school. To the east of the school grounds, behind the playing fields, a dirt and gravel pedestrian easement provides a pedestrian connection to Locust Street and the residential neighborhoods to the east. Sidewalks are missing on Della Avenue, which is the public street south of the school that connects Blosser Lane and Locust Street. Though there are intermittent sidewalks on Franklin Avenue, the missing sidewalks are an impediment to walking to school, especially for the students that may reside in the homes located on both sides of the street. Providing sidewalks on these streets where there are none would significantly improve pedestrian access to the school.

#### Bicycling Facilities

There are no marked bike routes or signed bike lanes on Blosser Lane, Della Avenue, or Locust Street, nor are there bike racks on campus.

Bike racks installed on campus near the parking lot or loading zone would be useful in encouraging bike transportation. In addition, installing bike routes signs on Blosser Lane would guide student bicyclists in the area. Consideration should be given to installing Shared Bicycle Lane Markings (Sharrows) on Blosser Lane.

#### Transit Services

Willits Unified School District dispatches six to eight buses to Blosser Lane Elementary School at the start and end of each school day. Buses load and unload on-site at the loading zone immediately west of the school buildings and in the parking lot. Children are let off the bus onto the campus sidewalk system, and do not have to cross streams of traffic.

Approximately half the Blosser Lane School students ride these buses. This is the only transit operation serving this school and should therefore continue to provide such services.

#### **Other Safe Routes to School Projects and Programs**

Blosser Lane Elementary School was included in a 2009 Safes Route to School Grant Application by the City of Willits in April 2009. The application, Exhibit A – State-Legislated Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Program Application (8<sup>th</sup> Cycle), and related cover letter, figures, and several attachments, provide a detailed analysis of the school traffic safety concerns. It should be noted that the application focused on access along Blosser Lane to and from the north in order to improve the most egregious situations, including a lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities through the surrounding industrial land uses, and crossing a state highway, Highway 20, at an uncontrolled intersection. Routes to and from areas north

of the school were the primary focus in this grant application, while this city-wide Safe Routes to School Plan includes areas south and east of the school, too.

### **Miscellaneous**

The Sherwood Valley Rancheria Casino guide signs are placed in the vicinity of the elementary school, detracting from the school zone signs and markings. Working with the casino staff or owners to relocate these signs outside the school zone would benefit school area traffic safety.

## Baechtel Grove Middle School

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Baechtel Grove Middle School is located at 1150 Magnolia Street in the southwest quadrant of the City of Willits. The school serves children in grades six thru eight, with a current population of approximately 375 students. It functioned as the only middle school in Willits until the Willits Charter School opened and began to offer instruction for students in grades 6 through 12. The land uses near the campus include single family homes, townhouses, and a hospital to the south and east, industrial uses to the north, and single family homes and Blosser Lane Elementary School to the west. The school's location and proximity to other schools within Willits are shown in Figure 1.

Unlike elementary school age students, middle school age students are capable of using a bicycle or skateboard as a method of transportation, and frequently do. Since bicycling and boarding are faster than walking, middle school students can travel further than elementary school students. With an expanded travel range and increased bicycling capabilities, the routes that middle school students could use to travel to and from school are city-wide. Their walking routes can also be extensive, and frequently include after-school commercial destinations, parks, and other schools. Consequently routes between these destinations are considered part of the Safe Routes to School program.

Activities at and around Baechtel Grove Middle School were observed for this study on April 3, 2009, during the morning arrival and April 8, 2009, during the afternoon dismissal period. The weather on these dates was sunny and cloudy, respectively.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

The primary pedestrian access point to the school is along Magnolia Street. The school is fenced along its perimeter on Locust Street and Walnut Street, helping to channelize pedestrians to intersections, where drivers would expect conflicting movements such a pedestrian crossing or vehicular turning movements. The roadways near the school are primarily low-speed, two-lane residential and collector streets with on-street parking. Holly Street and Locust Street have posted speed limits of 25 mph. Each of the intersections within the 1,000 foot radius of the school is controlled by stop signs.

It appears that the majority of the student population is bussed home or picked up from the site. One crossing guard, a staff member from Blosser Lane Elementary School, is stationed at Locust Street/Holly Street, and, as such, benefits students attending Baechtel Grove Middle School, too. Middle school staff supervises school bus loading/unloading activities on-site in the designated bus loading area.

### Pedestrian Facilities

#### *Crossings*

The school is located just south of the California Western Railroad tracks and two blocks west of Main Street. Students were observed crossing Main Street at the railroad tracks, which is a mid-block crossing, likely en route to the Safeway Shopping Center on the east side of the street, and beyond. Installing a crossing on Main Street on the southerly leg of the intersection at Walnut Street would provide students with a safe crossing in the vicinity. Crossing features should include in-pavement flashers on both crosswalk approaches and high visibility signage and markings.

The intersection of Holly Street/Magnolia Street is adjacent to the school, and is stop-controlled on the Magnolia Street approaches. There are four yellow crosswalks marked at this location, and installing stop signs on Holly Street to create an all-way stop-controlled intersection would increase the safety at this popular school crossing.

### *Sidewalks/Paths*

Two of the four streets that form the school boundary have sidewalks, including Magnolia Street and Hazel Street. These streets are located along the south and east sides of the school grounds, and are the primary school approaches. The school grounds include fields and playgrounds which are bounded by Walnut Avenue and Locust Street, and these two streets are missing sidewalks. In general, while the sidewalk network near Baechtel Grove Middle School is predominantly complete, missing links on Hazel Street and Poplar Avenue limit student pedestrian safe routes.

Northwesterly of the campus the routes for students walking to and from school are obstructed by a combination of railroad tracks, large vacant parcels, and fenced industrial land uses. If a path could be constructed across the tracks, linking the intersection of Walnut Street/Locust Street to Franklin Avenue to the north, students could walk to Franklin Avenue and beyond. Franklin Avenue has intermittent sidewalk, and sidewalks should be installed on the north side of the street, to provide a continuous route between Main Street and Blosser Lane.

South of school, there are large gaps in the sidewalk network on Holly Street which decreases the safety of pedestrian students traveling to south Main Street and beyond. The intersection of Holly Street/Main Street is controlled by a traffic signal and includes pedestrian phasing and equipment. As such, Holly Street is a primary access point for students to cross Main Street, and continuous sidewalk is recommended.

### Bicycle Facilities

Baechtel Grove Middle School has two large bike racks on campus at the front of the site near the multi-purpose room. The bike racks were full on both field visit days.

There are no marked bike lanes or signed bike routes near the school, and with the exception of East Commercial Street and Baechtel Road, no such facilities are provided city-wide. As the primary north-south corridor in Willits, South Main Street/Main Street should also be a Class II bike facility, providing direct connections to high schools and middle schools, including Baechtel Grove Middle School, Willits Charter School, Community Day School, Sanhedrin High School and Willits High School. Several east-west routes should also be established with Class II bicycle facilities for students attending these schools, including the Highway 20-South Street corridor, the East Commercial Street-West Commercial Street corridor, and the East Valley Street-West Valley Street corridor.

As noted above, Holly Street provides a safe crossing of Main Street, and with its proximity to two schools, Baechtel Grove Middle School and Blosser Lane Elementary School, would be a logical bicycle route for students. Just south of the middle school Holly Street terminates at Locust Street, though there is an existing unimproved pedestrian path extending west from this intersection to Blosser Lane Elementary School campus. If this path were paved and extended to Blosser Lane, it would be a Class I Shared Use Path which would provide a very effective east-west route across the south central area of Willits.

The City of Willits and the Willits Unified School District have worked together to create a recreational facility, the Willits Kids Club. The Willits Kids Club building is located west of Baechtel Grove Middle School and adjacent to the north side of the Blosser Lane Elementary School campus, and is approximately 80 percent complete at this time. Such recreational facilities should be connected to the area pedestrian and bicycle networks, and it is recommended that a Class I Shared Use Path be constructed between the middle school campus and Blosser Lane, with a paved link and bike racks provided for the kids club building.

Further, at such time as the proposed shared use paths north and west of Walnut Street and Locust Street are installed, the intersection of these two streets should be all-way stop-controlled and marked with crosswalks on all approaches to provide safe crossings at this potential future “crossroads.”

### Transit Services

Willits Unified School District serves Baechtel Grove Middle School, and the school bus drop off/pick up zone is located on-site, with access provided from Hazel Street. Additionally, the Mendocino Transportation Authority (MTA) Willits Rider route provides bus services to campus, with bus stops at Magnolia Street/Hazel Street and Holly Street/Locust Street. MTA Route 20/21 provides a bus stop and service to the area as well, with a stop on Main Street at the Walnut Street intersection.

### **Other Safe Routes to School Projects and Programs**

Traffic conditions for Baechtel Grove Middle School were studied and documented in the *Circulation and Parking Improvement Plan Final Report*, prepared by Whitlock & Weinberger Transportation, Inc. and dated December 2002. This study documented opportunities and constraints in the transportation infrastructure serving this school, and was useful as the basis for an application for a State Safe Routes to School grant, which the school succeeded in obtaining. Improvements were constructed in 2006. Following is a summary of the improvements at this school funded through this past program:

- School loading zones were created on Magnolia Avenue, including construction of sidewalks, curb and gutter. Loading zone signing was installed.
- Sidewalks were constructed on Hazel Street along the school site.
- Yellow crosswalks were marked on all four approaches to the intersection of Magnolia Avenue/Hazel Street. Stop signs already existed on Magnolia Avenue at Hazel Street.
- School zone signs and markings were installed on Locust Street, Hazel Street, Magnolia Avenue, Walnut Avenue, and Madrone Street.

## Willits Charter School

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Willits Charter School is currently located at 7 North Marin Street on the northeast side of the City of Willits, and is scheduled to relocate to 1431 South Main Street in September 2009. The school will continue to serve children in grades six through twelve, and has an estimated enrollment of 340 students. It serves as an optional secondary school for those students who would otherwise attend Baechtel Grove Middle School and Willits High School. The school's new location and proximity to other schools within Willits are shown in Figure 1.

Activities at and around the existing Willits Charter School campus were observed for this study on April 7, 2009, during the morning arrival and April 3, 2009, during the afternoon dismissal periods, at the request of school administration staff. The weather on these dates was cloudy and sunny, respectively.

In addition to observing activities at the existing campus, new campus site was evaluated. The building located at 1431 South Main Street at the time of this review, Willits Pulse Gym, was fenced, with building modifications underway. A copy of the school renovation site plan was obtained in order to confirm site access and circulation.

As noted in the Baechtel Grove Middle School review, unlike elementary school age students, middle school age students are capable of using a bicycle or skateboard as a method of transportation, and frequently do. Since bicycling and boarding are faster than walking, middle school students can travel further than elementary school students. With an expanded travel range and increased bicycling capabilities, the routes that middle school students could use to travel to and from school are city-wide. Their walking routes can also be extensive, and frequently include after-school commercial destinations, parks, and other schools. Consequently routes between these destinations are considered part of the safe routes to school program.

### Opportunities and Constraints

The proposed site plan for the new Willits Charter School location maintains the South Main Street access configuration, including one way traffic flow with vehicular entrance to the site permitted via the southerly driveway and exit via the northerly driveway. The entrance and exit driveways are approximately 100 feet apart, and as such, the site is likely to become congested during peak pick up and drop off periods. Additionally, the site plan does not include designated student loading zones for individual vehicles or for school bus services. The site should include such loading areas for the safety of the students walking to and from the building.

Cress Lane appears as a public street on records referenced by City staff, located along the site's easterly property line, though there is minimal physical evidence of a street at this time. City staff and school administrators are interested in using this public street for access to the school and area parcels. Given the location of Cress Lane off Baechtel Road, it would function as a very low-volume roadway, which would be beneficial to student pedestrians and bicyclists traveling to and from school.

Parking for the school is expected to take place on-site in several areas, including adjacent to the front of the school building, adjacent to the Main Street sidewalk, and along the southerly fence line. Parking is currently prohibited on South Main Street, though this may change with construction of the highway bypass project currently under design. The closest on-street parking would be on Baechtel Road to the north.

South Main Street is a five-lane facility near the school, including four travel lanes and a center turn lane. It has a posted speed limit of 35 mph in proximity of the school's frontage. Each of the intersections

within the 1,000 foot radius of the school is controlled by stop signs on the minor street approaches except for the intersection of South Main Street/Holly Street, which is signalized. Land uses near the new campus are predominantly commercial retail, with several rural residences on Baechtel Road.

## Pedestrian Facilities

### *Crossings*

For students traveling to the northwest area of Willits from school, the primary walking and bicycling route is expected to be South Main Street, at least as far as Holly Street, as the intersection of Holly Street/South Main Street is signalized and equipped with pedestrian crossing equipment and phasing, providing a safe crossing of Main Street to the residential areas to the west and north. A marked crosswalk is recommended along this route on Baechtel Road at its northerly intersection with South Main Street for route guidance.

South of Willits Charter School there are several large residential areas, including two on the west side of South Main Street, one between Alder Court and Muir Mill Road, and one west of the Evergreen Shopping Center. Students walking to and from homes in this area may cross at the signalized intersection of South Main Street/Evergreen Shopping Center, though they could be expected to cross closer to campus, at Gregory Lane/South Main Street. This is a tee-intersection, with an existing marked crosswalk on South Main Street. However, the crossing should be enhanced with high visibility pedestrian crossing signs and advance crossing signs on both approaches, with consideration given to installing a pedestrian refuge island in the center turn lane and in-pavement flashers to provide crossing improvements for students on this segment of South Main Street.

A crosswalk should be installed on Manor Way at South Main Street and gaps in the sidewalk nearby filled to provide a continuous route for students to the signalized crossing of Main Street at the Evergreen Shopping Center.

There are no crossing guards stationed at the existing Charter School location or expected at the new school site.

### *Sidewalks/Paths*

In general, sidewalks are continuous and in acceptable condition along South Main Street and within the vicinity of the new Willits Charter School campus. To the north, Baechtel Road has missing sidewalk along the south side which may pose a problem to some school children walking along that area, especially considering that Baechtel Road is a major collector street in Willits. Additionally, it is understood from review of the *City of Willits Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Specific Plan* that the community may be interested in creating a Class I Shared Use Path east of Baechtel Road between East Hill Road and Railroad Avenue. The value of this path for Willits Charter School students would be greater if the sidewalks on the south side of Baechtel Road and along Shell Lane were continuous, especially in the segment between Cress Lane and the proposed path. The *Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Specific Plan* identifies a second Class I Shared Use Path in the area, to be located along the creek between the intersection of Baechtel Road/South Main Street and Railroad Avenue to the north; this facility would also be beneficial for these students.

South of the new Willits Charter School campus are several large residential areas, including one on the east side at Sandy Lane and beyond, and along East Hill Road. Sidewalk connections to these residential areas are lacking. Installing sidewalk near Sandy Lane, on the north side of Baechtel Road and on Main Street would provide a continuous walking route to all schools, including Willits Charter School.

Sidewalk should also be constructed on the south side of East Hill Road to provide a connection to the proposed large residential subdivision to the east and south of this arterial roadway. Two crosswalks should be installed at the intersection of Sandy Lane/Baechtel Road to guide students and alert drivers to the potential for student pedestrians in the intersection. A crosswalk on East Hill Road at Baechtel Road would also be useful for student crossings at this intersection.

### Bicycle Facilities

The existing location of the Willits Charter School is fenced and bike racks on school grounds were not easily visible, yet it was noted that some students did bike to school. If not planned already, the new school campus should be equipped with several bike racks, preferably sheltered, for student bicyclists.

Baechtel Road is a Class II bicycle facility, with marked bike lanes in both travel directions. As the primary north-south corridor in Willits, South Main Street-Main Street should also be a Class II bike facility, providing direct connections to high schools and middle schools, including Baechtel Grove Middle School, Willits Charter School, Community Day School, Sanhedrin High School and Willits High School. Several east-west routes should also be established Class II bicycle facilities for students attending these schools, including the Highway 20-South Street corridor, the East Commercial Street-West Commercial Street corridor, and the East Valley Street-West Valley Street corridor.

East Hill Road within the Willits city limits should also be marked as a Class II facility as the roadway appears to have sufficient width to accommodate the change in lane widths, and with a lack of sidewalks, can provide a viable alternative transportation mode for students.

### Transit Services

The new Willits Charter School location is expected to be served by several existing public transportation routes as the MTA Willits Rider route provides bus stops at the Evergreen Shopping Center, Brown's Corner, and Muir Mill Road to the south, and Route 20/21 has stops on both sides of South Main Street near Baechtel Road to the north.

## Community Day School

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Community Day School is located at 371 East Commercial Street on the northeast side of the City of Willits. It is part of the Willits School District, and serves as a continuation high school that focuses on helping students with behavioral obstacles. The school is small, and includes one classroom with an average of 15 students on a daily basis, and a maximum enrollment of 20 students. The campus is in an area of predominantly commercial land uses. The school's location and proximity to other schools within Willits are shown in Figure 1.

Activities at and around Secondary Day School were observed for this study on March 18 and April 8, 2009, during both the morning arrival period and after school. The weather on these dates was cloudy.

Secondary school students are capable of using a bicycle or skateboard as a method of transportation, and frequently do. Since bicycling and boarding are faster than walking, these students can travel further than primary school students can. With an expanded travel range and increased bicycling capabilities, the routes that high school students could use to travel to and from school are city-wide.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

All access to Secondary Community Day School is from East Commercial Street, and there are no school-related pavement legends or signing on this street to alert drivers to the presence of school activities and school-age children, though such markings are nonessential since the campus is fenced along the street. While vehicles are allowed to enter school grounds, most students were observed being dropped off near the school frontage on the adjacent sidewalk. There is very limited parking provided on school grounds.

East Commercial Street is an arterial roadway, with two lanes and striped bike lanes, on-street parking generally permitted within the study area, and a speed limit of 35 mph. All of the intersections within the 1,000 foot radius of the school are side-street stop-controlled. Main Street/East Commercial Street is outside the school zone, though it is signal-controlled with pedestrian crossing equipment and phasing on all approaches.

### Pedestrian Facilities

#### *Crossings*

Marked yellow school crosswalks are located on East Commercial Street at Marin Street. There is a public park, Snider Park, located on the north side of the street, and though these crosswalks are adjacent to the existing Willits Charter School campus, they serve students attending Community Day School which is located approximately 475 feet east of the intersection. Though the Charter School is to be relocated, these school crosswalk signs and markings should remain to serve the Community Day School students. There is a marked crosswalk at Madden Street west of the school, at the Train Depot, and several marked crosswalks east of campus along East Commercial Street, near the library and parks located on either side of the street.

There are no crossing guards in the vicinity of the school or study area.

#### *Sidewalks/Paths*

Primary walking routes near the campus include East Commercial Street, Main Street, and South Lenore Avenue. In general, sidewalks are continuous and in excellent condition near Secondary Community

Day School along East Commercial Street, with other streets in proximity to the school including North Lenore Avenue and South Lenore Avenue. North Lenore Avenue forms a tee-intersection with East Commercial Street across from the school campus. It is a rural road with no curb or sidewalk, and with no residential or commercial land uses there, students would not be expected to walk on North Lenore Avenue. South Lenore Avenue forms a tee-intersection with East Commercial Street approximately 250 feet east of the school, with side-street stop-controls. It has continuous sidewalk along both sides, and offers connections to area residences and the street network to the south and east. Students were observed walking from the campus to South Lenore Avenue.

### Bicycle Facilities

There is a bike rack on campus, with an approximate capacity of 15 bicycles.

East Commercial Street is a Class II bike facility, with bike lanes installed on both sides of the street within City Limits. School-age children were observed using these bike lanes near the community parks east of Community Day School, though it was unclear what school they were attending. As the primary north-south corridor in Willits, South Main Street-Main Street should also be a Class II bike facility, providing direct connections to high schools and middle schools, including Baechtel Grove Middle School, Willits Charter School, Community Day School, Sanhedrin High School and Willits High School. Several east-west routes should also be established Class II bicycle facilities for students attending these schools, including the Highway 20-South Street corridor, the East Commercial Street-West Commercial Street corridor, and the East Valley Street-West Valley Street corridor.

### Transit Services

Some of the students attending Community Day School ride the Willits Unified School District bus to Willits High School and walk to school from that campus on North Main Street. Students are also served by several existing public transportation routes as the MTA Willits Rider and Route 20/21 make stops in the area on East Commercial Street at the Train Depot and Snider Park to the west, and on South Lenore Avenue east of campus.

## Sanhedrin High School

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Sanhedrin High School is located at 120 North Main Street in the north-central area of the City of Willits. It is part of the Willits School District, and primarily serves students in grades ten through twelve as a continuation high school. The school had an estimated enrollment of 44 students in 2008/2009. The campus is in an area of predominantly commercial land uses. Its location and proximity to other schools within Willits are shown in Figure 1.

Activities at and around Sanhedrin High School were observed for this study on April 3, 2009, during both the morning arrival and afternoon dismissal periods. The weather on this day was clear and cool.

Secondary school age students are capable of using a bicycle or skateboard as a method of transportation, and frequently do. Since bicycling and boarding are faster than walking, these students can travel further than primary school students can. With an expanded travel range and increased bicycling capabilities, the routes that high school students could use to travel to and from school are city-wide.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

All access to Sanhedrin High School is from North Main Street, and there are no school-related pavement legends or signing on this street to alert drivers to the presence of school activities and school-age children, though such markings are nonessential since the campus is fenced along the street. In fact, the school zone markings for the nearby Willits High School conflict with this school. For example, the “end school zone” sign intended for southbound traffic traveling past Willits High School is on the Sanhedrin High School street frontage. This signing may be relocated further south on Main Street, and other school zone signs and markings for both high schools may be better installed such that they work for both campuses, not just the Willits High School campus.

North Main Street is a state highway, functioning as the major arterial in Willits, with very high volumes of daily traffic. The highway is to be reconstructed to bypass the town of Willits, and at such time as this highway bypass project has been completed and daily traffic volumes decrease, the safety of students traveling to this campus will significantly improve.

### Pedestrian Facilities

#### *Crossings*

Students traveling from areas south of campus would likely cross State Street and West Commercial Street. State Street forms a tee-intersection with North Main Street, with State Street stop-controlled. There is a marked crosswalk on State Street and one on the south leg of North Main Street. These crosswalks should be marked yellow to distinguish them as school crossings.

Students traveling from areas to the north, including from the Willits High School campus, can use the signalized crossing of North Main Street at Sherwood Lane. Traffic signal timing should provide ample crossing time for groups of students crossing during peak periods.

#### *Sidewalks/Paths*

Primary walking routes near the campus include the Main Street corridor, State Street, and the West Commercial Street-East Commercial Street corridor. In general, sidewalks are missing for students traveling on the west side of North Main Street, and these gaps in the sidewalk network should be filled

to provide a continuous route for students traveling both north and south. Specifically, the missing sidewalk to the north, between Bittenbender Lane and State Street, should be installed. There is a corresponding lack of constructed driveways in this vicinity too. Consequently, motorists turning into the various parking lots serving Sanhedrin High School and the adjacent restaurant/pizza businesses can use most of the 200 feet of street frontage to complete their turn. This lack of channelization is dangerous to students in the vicinity.

For students walking to school from the south, missing sidewalks on North Main Street, West Commercial Street, Mill Creek Drive, and North Street should be installed.

### Bicycle Facilities

Several students were observed bicycling to and from campus, though there was no visible bike rack on campus.

As the primary north-south corridor in Willits, South Main Street-Main Street should also be a Class II bike facility, providing direct connections to high schools and middle schools, including Baechtel Grove Middle School, Willits Charter School, Community Day School, Sanhedrin High School and Willits High School. Similarly, Coast Street and Mill Street could be effective north-south bicycle routes for middle school and high school students.

East Commercial Street is a Class II bike facility, with bike lanes installed on both sides of the street within City Limits, and a similar facility should be installed on West Commercial Street in order to provide an east-west route at the north end of Willits for these older students. In addition, Class II bicycle facilities in central Willits should be provided on other east-west corridors, including Highway 20-South Street and the East Valley Street-West Valley Street corridor. These and other facilities are also included in the *Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Specific Plan*.

### Transit Services

Some of the students attending Sanhedrin High School ride the Willits Unified School District bus to Willits High School and walk to school from the high school campus on North Main Street. Students can also use existing public transportation routes as the MTA Willits Rider and Route 20/21 serve area bus stops on East Commercial Street at the Train Depot and Snider Park to the east, and on Main Street at the East Valley Street-West Valley Street intersection south of campus.

## Willits High School

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Willits High School is located at 299 North Main Street at the north end of the City of Willits. It is part of the Willits School District, and is the primary high school for children living in and near the town. The school had an estimated enrollment of 590 students in 2008/2009. The campus is in an area of predominantly commercial land uses. Its location and proximity to other schools within Willits are shown in Figure 1.

Activities at and around Willits High School were observed for this study on March 18 and April 3, 2009, during both the morning arrival and afternoon dismissal periods.

Secondary school age students are capable of using a bicycle or skateboard as a method of transportation, and frequently do. Since bicycling and boarding are faster than walking, these students can travel further than primary school students can. With an expanded travel range and increased bicycling capabilities, the routes that high school students could use to travel to and from school are city-wide.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

Access to Willits High School is from North Main Street, which is a three-lane state highway, functioning as the major arterial in Willits, with very high volumes of daily traffic. The posted speed limit is 35 mph, though there are school zone signs installed in advance of the high school campus to alert drivers to the presence of students. The highway is to be reconstructed to bypass the town of Willits, and at such time as this highway bypass project has been completed and daily traffic volumes decrease, the safety of students traveling to this campus will significantly improve.

#### Pedestrian Facilities

##### *Crossings*

Students traveling from areas southwest of campus would likely cross at Sherwood Lane/North Main Street which is controlled by a traffic signal and equipped with pedestrian crossing equipment and phasing. Traffic signal timing should provide ample time for groups of students to cross during peak periods.

Students traveling from areas north of Willits High School are expected to cross Casteel Lane, and a marked yellow crosswalk on Casteel Lane would be beneficial. In addition, students were observed crossing North Main Street to the food mart located on the west side of the street. A crosswalk at this location is recommended to channelize these students to one crossing location. Crossing features should include a pedestrian refuge island within the center turn lane, an overhead light and/or in-pavement flashing lights on both crosswalk approaches, enhanced with high visibility signage and markings.

##### *Sidewalks/Paths*

The school frontage on North Main Street is missing sidewalk, creating a significant gap in the pedestrian route for students. The missing sidewalk should be installed along the high school frontage to create a continuous sidewalk on the east side of the street between Casteel Lane and Sherwood Lane and areas further south.

## Bicycle Facilities

Several students were observed bicycling to and from campus, and parking their bicycles in the bike rack provided. For added convenience, consideration should be given to providing a shelter and possible security fencing for the bike rack.

As the primary north-south corridor in Willits, the Main Street corridor should also be a Class II bike facility, providing direct connections to high schools and middle schools, including Baechtel Grove Middle School, Willits Charter School, Community Day School, Sanhedrin High School and Willits High School. Similarly, Coast Street and Mill Street could be effective north-south bicycle routes for high school students.

The *Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Specific Plan* includes a recommendation to install a Class I Shared Use Path between East Commercial Street and Willits High School east of the high school campus, essentially providing an additional north-south bike corridor for Willits High School students. This would be very helpful in encouraging bicycle commuting to/from school.

East Commercial Street is a Class II bike facility, with bike lanes installed on both sides of the street within City Limits, and a similar facility should be installed on West Commercial Street in order to provide an east-west route at the north end of Willits for these older students. In addition, Class II bicycle facilities in central Willits should be provided on other east-west corridors, including Highway 20-South Street and East Valley Street-West Valley Street. These and other facilities are also included in the *Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Specific Plan*.

## Transit Services

Willits Unified School District provides bus service to Willits High School. Students can also use existing public transportation routes as the MTA Willits Rider and Route 20/21 serve area bus stops on East Commercial Street at the Train Depot and Snider Park to the east, and on Main Street at the East Valley Street-West Valley Street intersection, south of campus.

## Engineering Recommendations

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A summary of the recommended improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle facilities and transit services for the City of Willits Safe Routes to School Engineering program are listed below, with maps showing the locations and graphical representations of the improvements included at the end of this section, as follows:

- Figure 2 – North Willits Area Map
- Figure 3 – Central Willits Area Map
- Figure 4 – Southwest Willits Area Map
- Figure 5 – Southeast Willits Area Map
- Figure 6 – City-Wide Map

### Pedestrian Facilities

- Install crosswalk on North Main Street at Casteel Lane near Willits High School to channelize students walking between the Food Mart and campus. Crossing features should include a pedestrian refuge island within the center turn lane, an overhead light and/or in-pavement flashers on both crosswalk approaches, and high visibility signage and markings.
- Install sidewalk along high school Main Street frontage to create continuous sidewalk on the east side of the street between Casteel Lane and Sherwood Lane.
- Install sidewalk near Sanhedrin High School on the west side of Main Street, between Bittenbender Lane and State Street. Create two driveway locations to channelize vehicles entering the existing parking lots that serve Sanhedrin High School and the adjacent restaurant/pizza businesses. These improvements will provide a safer walking route between the two high school campuses.
- Consider changing some of the school zone signs and markings on North Main Street intended for Willits High School to include the Sanhedrin High School campus, and change the State Street and North Main Street crosswalk color from white to yellow.
- Install missing sidewalk on streets to the north and east of Brookside Elementary School, along West Commercial Street, North Street, West Mendocino Avenue and Mill Creek Drive.
- Install missing sidewalk on streets to the south and west of Brookside Elementary School including Lincoln Way, Brookside Drive, West Mendocino Avenue and Spruce Street.
- Consider adding a crossing guard, stop signs, and a crosswalk west of Brookside Elementary School campus at the intersection of Lincoln Way and Brookside Drive to expand the number of safe crossings and possibly decrease the significant congestion east of campus along Spruce Street. Add a yellow crosswalk on Brookside at West Mendocino Avenue.
- Install missing sidewalks on the north end of Mill Street, Pine Street, Laurel Street, Redwood Avenue, Spruce Street and Easy Street for Brookside Elementary School students.
- Install intersection improvements at Highway 20/Blosser Lane-Coast Street developed by Caltrans including school zone signs and markings, pedestrian crossing signs, high visibility markings, and additional intersection markings. Also install radar feedback signs on Highway 20, together with other intersection improvements including intersection controls such as a roundabout.

- Install a crossing on Main Street at Walnut Street to channelize students walking between Baechtel Grove Middle School and Safeway Shopping Center and the bus stop on the east side of the street. Crossing features should include in-pavement flashers on both crosswalk approaches and high visibility signage and markings.
- Install crossing improvements in front of Blosser Lane Elementary School and on Franklin Avenue as identified in the Safe Routes to School grant application dated April 2009.
- If or when proposed paths are installed north and west of the intersection of Locust Street/Walnut Street, add intersection crosswalks and stop signs to improve safety for crossing students.
- Install missing sidewalk on streets south and east of Blosser Lane Elementary School, on Blosser Lane, Della Avenue and Locust Street, and add crossing improvements including new crosswalks on Blosser Lane at Crest Street and on Della Avenue at Meadowbrook Drive.
- Install crosswalk on Locust Street at Holly Street and align with the pedestrian path located west of this intersection that provides direct access to Blosser Lane Elementary School.
- Install missing sidewalks on streets north of Baechtel Grove Middle School to provide walking routes for the students along the south end of Mill Street, Coast Street, Blosser Lane and Franklin Avenue.
- Install missing sidewalk on Walnut Street and both sides of Locust Street along Baechtel Grove Middle School property.
- Install stop signs on Holly Street at Magnolia Street to increase safety at this Baechtel Grove Middle School crossing. Install missing sidewalk on streets near the middle school, on Locust Street, Holly Street, Poplar Avenue and Hazel Street.
- Install sidewalk on the south side of Baechtel Road between Main Street and Shell Lane to serve the students that will attend the relocated Willits Charter School. Add a yellow crosswalk on Baechtel Road at the Main Street intersection and change the color of the existing Holly Street/Main Street crosswalks from white to yellow.
- Install high visibility pedestrian crossing signs and advance crossing signs on both approaches to the existing crosswalk on Main Street at Gregory Lane to provide crossing improvements for students attending the relocated Willits Charter School. Consider including a pedestrian refuge island in the center turn lane and in-pavement flashers for additional visibility.
- Install missing sidewalk on the west side of Main Street between Alder Court and Manor Way and on both sides of Manor Way to provide a continuous walking route between the residences in the area and the signalized intersection at the shopping center to the north. A new crosswalk should be installed on Manor Way at Main Street.
- Install two crosswalks at the intersection at Sandy Lane/Baechtel Road, and missing sidewalk along the north side of Baechtel Road between Sandy Lane and Main Street and Main Street north of Baechtel Road to provide a safe and continuous walking route to all schools to the north from this large residential community.
- Install missing sidewalk on the south side of East Hill Road between Baechtel Road and the new residential subdivision to the south.

## Bicycle Facilities

- Install Class III bike facilities on Main Street within the City limits, and at such time as the Willits Bypass Project is completed review roadway operation to determine if it could be upgraded to provide Class II bike facilities.
- Consider providing shelter for the existing bike rack at Willits High School for the convenience of students that may ride in the rain. If bicycle security is a concern, consider providing a fenced area for the bike rack.
- Install a bike rack for students at Sanhedrin High School.
- Install Class II bike facilities as appropriate on West Commercial Street.
- Install Class III bike facilities on School Street, North Street, and a portion of Laurel Street.
- Install Class II bike facilities on Highway 20 within City limits to provide an east-west corridor for students attending schools within the City.
- Install Class III bike facilities on East Valley Street, West Valley Street and South Lenore Avenue to guide students that pedal to Community Day School.
- Install either bike route signing or bike lane signs and markings on Coast Street and Mill Street to identify routes for student cyclists.
- Install stop signs on both ends of Harms Lane and West San Francisco Avenue and the west end of Tuttle Lane for increased student bicycle safety.
- Consider creating a Class I bike facility along the Railroad Avenue corridor, including Railroad Avenue and areas to the southeast along a potential future street alignment.
- Install a bike rack for students at Willits Charter School.
- Install Class III bike facilities on Franklin Avenue within City limits to provide an east-west corridor for students attending schools within the City.
- Consider creating a Class I Shared Use Path north of Walnut Street near the Locust Street intersection to provide a connection to Franklin Avenue.
- Create a Class I Shared Use Path adjacent to the railroad right of way west of Locust Street to align with Walnut Street. If installed, the path should include a connection to the new Willits Kids Club.
- Install a bike rack at the future Willits Kids Club upon completion to promote student bicycling.
- Install Class III bike facilities on Blosser Lane. Consider adding Shared Lane markings (Sharrows).
- Consider paving the existing pedestrian path west of Locust Street at the Holly Street terminus that provides a direct connection between Blosser Lane Elementary School and Baechtel Grove Middle School and extending the path to Blosser Lane.

- Install Class III bike facilities on Holly Street to serve students in the southeast and southwest areas of Willits.
- Install Class II bike facilities on East Hill Road within City limits to promote bicycling to school.

### **Transit Services**

- Install crosswalks on East Valley Street at Pen Street, Madden Street at East Valley Street, and on East San Francisco Avenue at Boscabelle Avenue to increase safety of students walking to and from school bus stops.
- Install a stop sign for eastbound South Street traffic at the Central Avenue-Shopping Center intersection, and add a crosswalk at the same location to increase student safety at this bus stop location. Add sidewalk where missing near the intersection on Central Avenue and South Street.

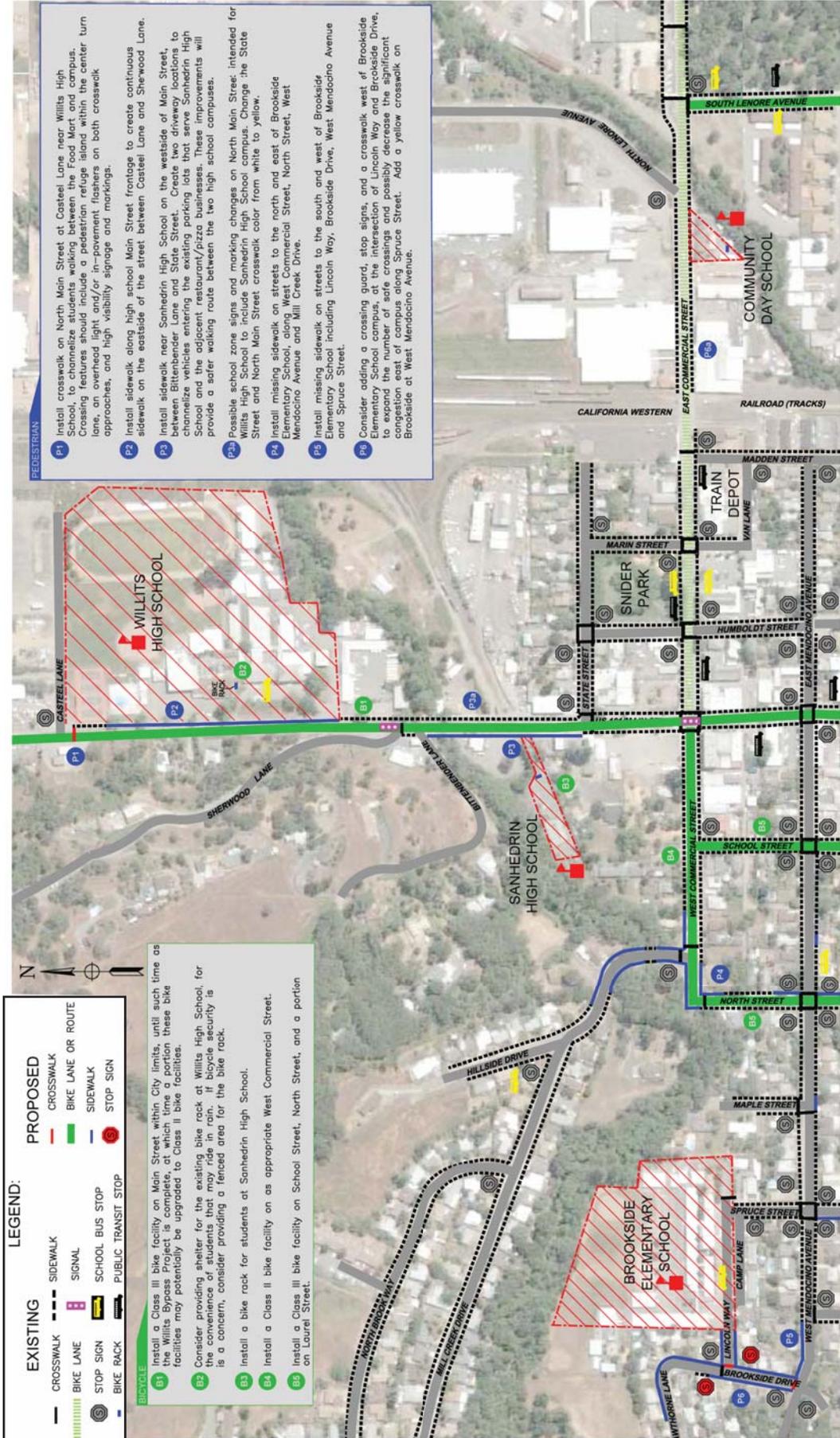


Figure 2  
North Area Map

Safe Routes to School Plan  
City of Willits

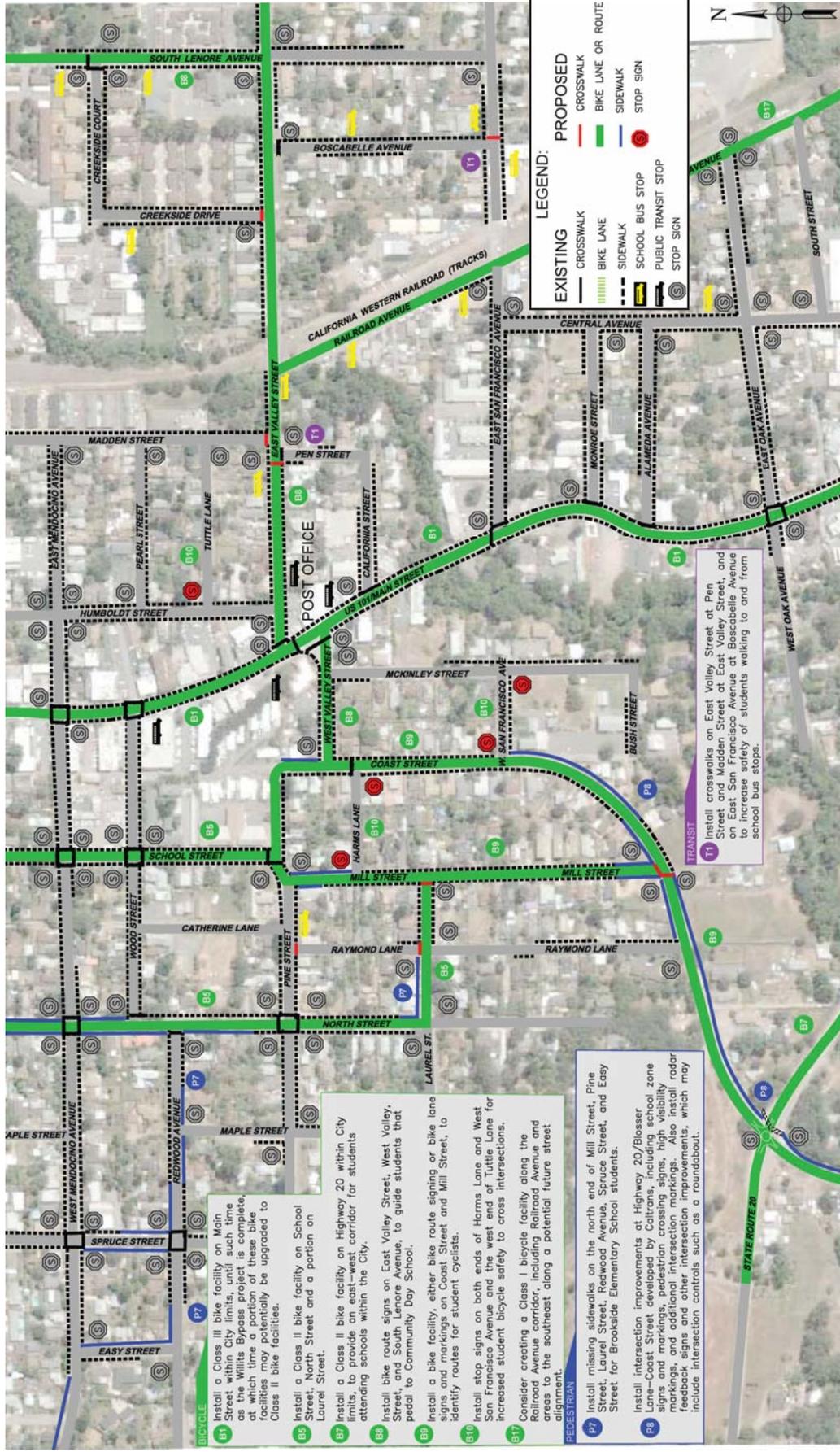


Figure 3  
Central Area Map

Safe Routes to School Plan  
City of Willits

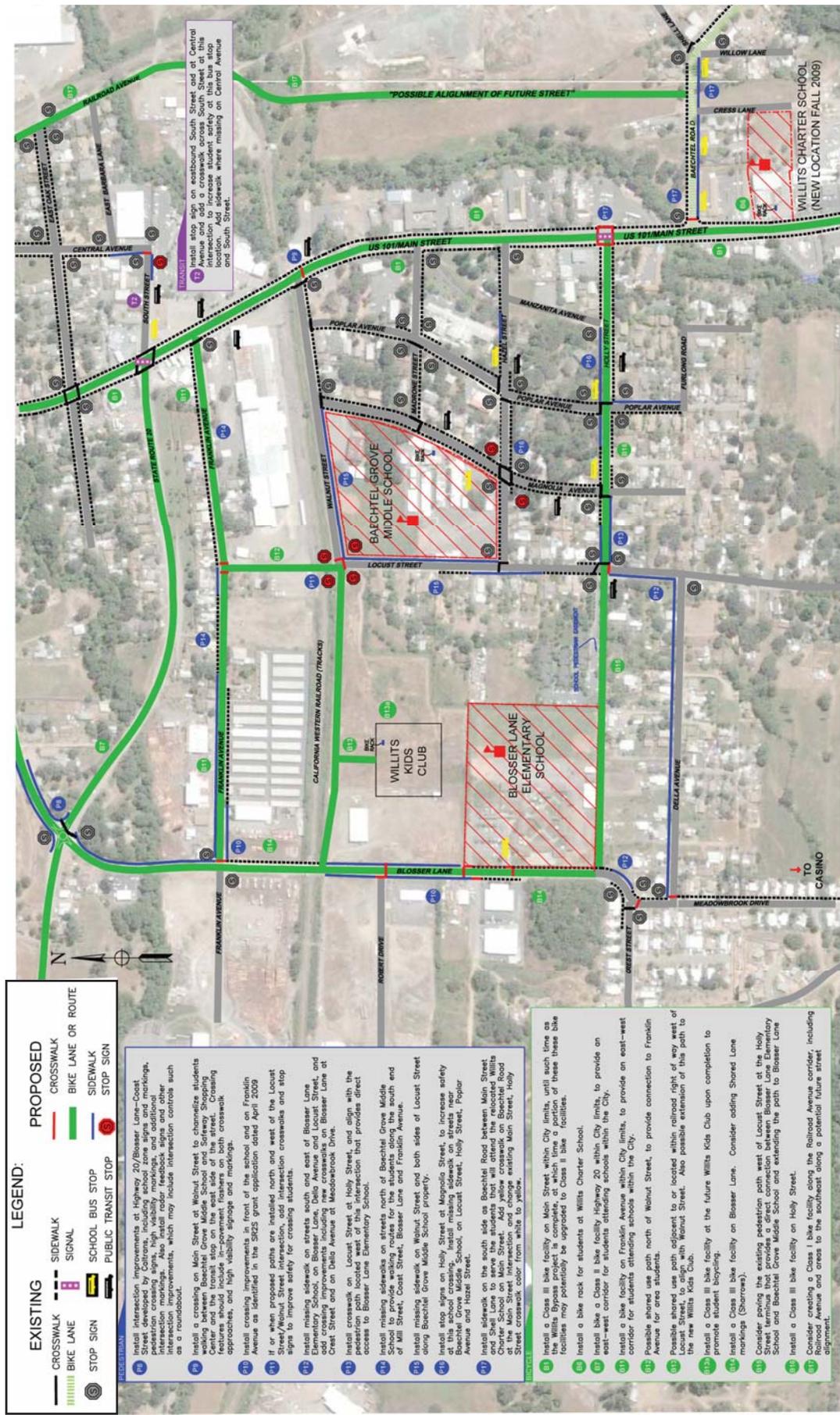
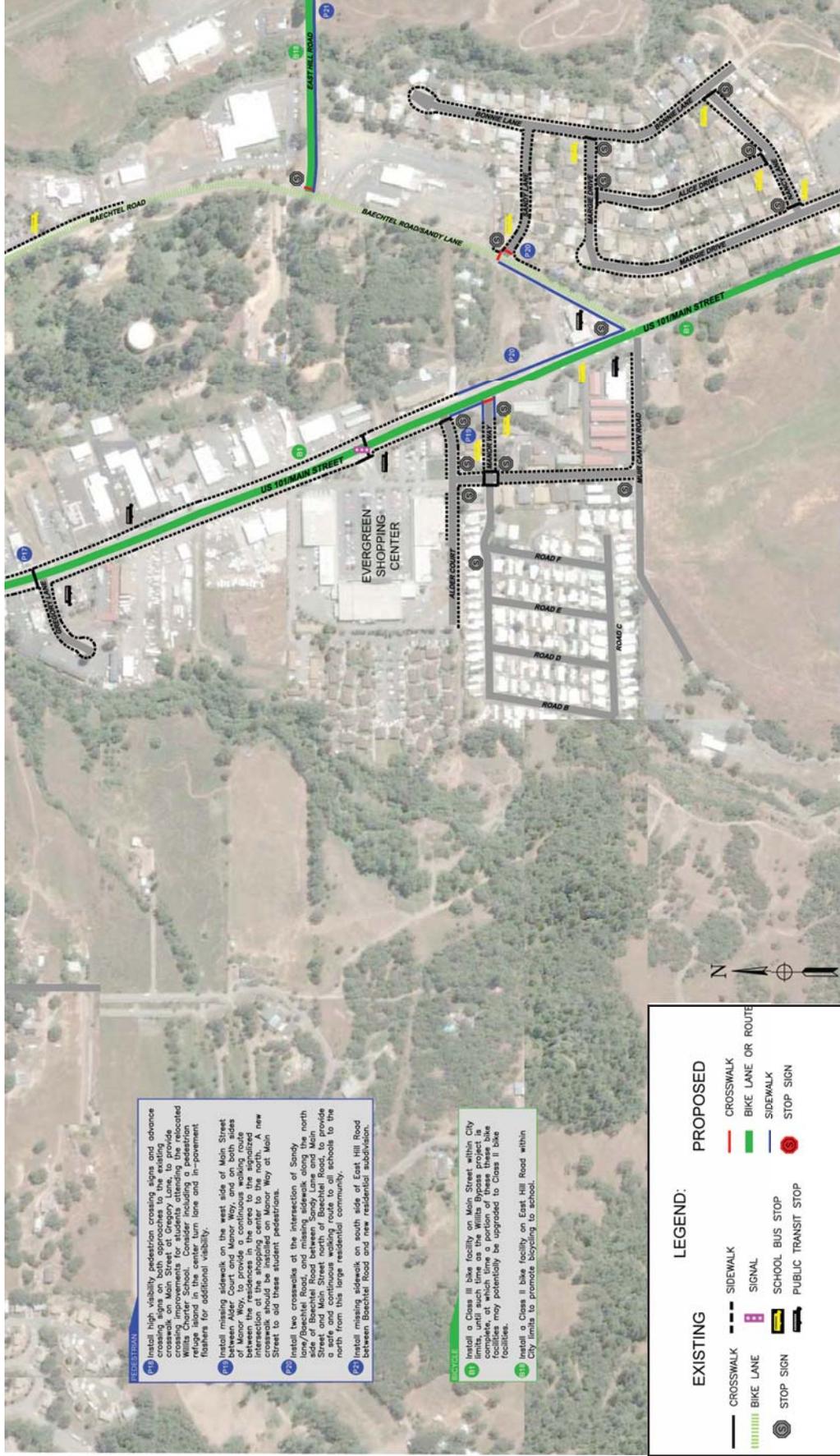
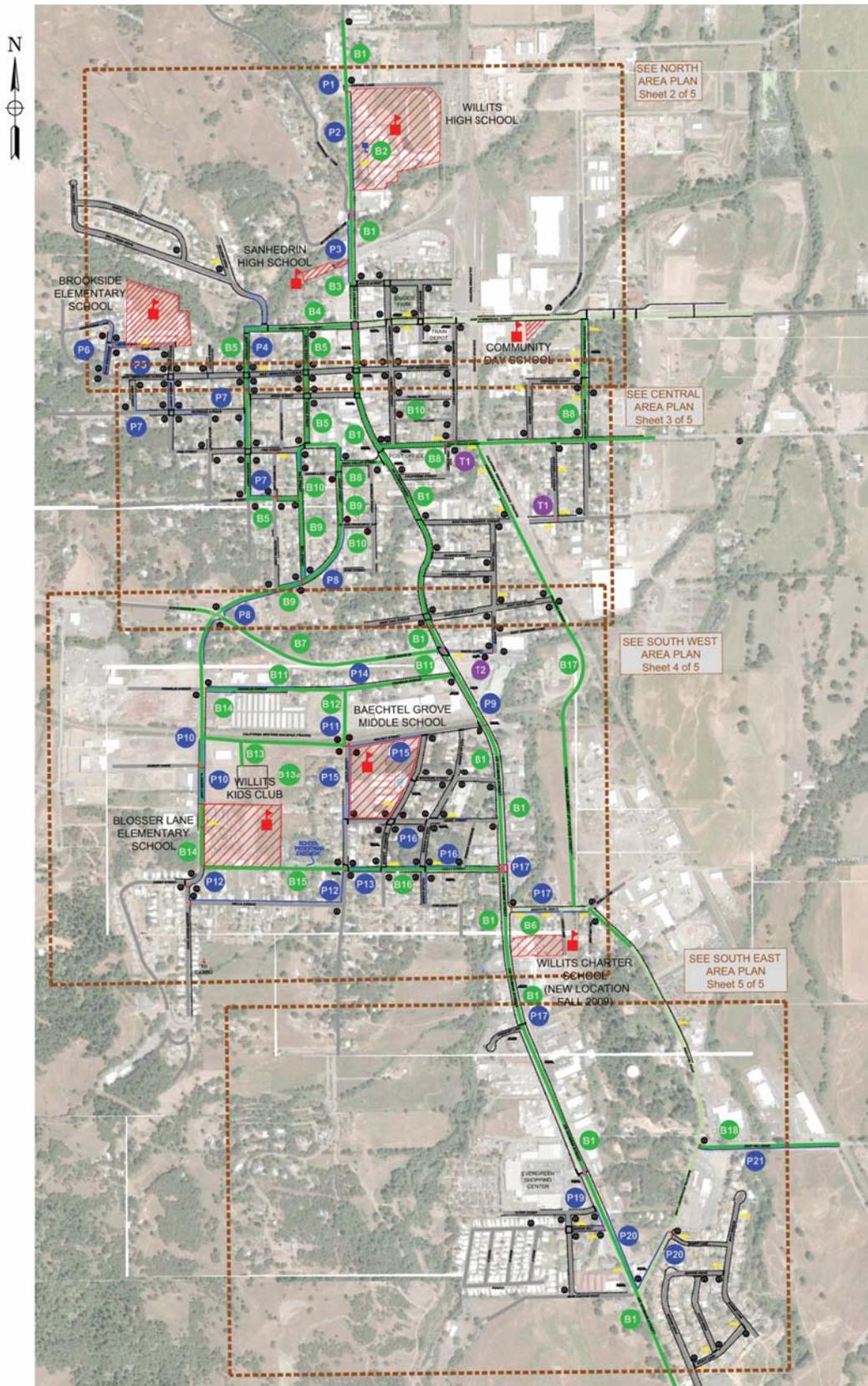


Figure 4  
South West Area Map





Safe Routes to School Plan  
City of Willits

Figure 6  
City Wide Area

## Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation Programs

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### Introduction

Safe Routes to School refers to a variety of multi-disciplinary programs aimed at promoting walking and bicycling to school and improving traffic safety around school areas through education, incentives, law enforcement, and engineering measures. Walking and biking are healthy alternatives to parents driving students to school and can provide a sense of independence for students who may otherwise be restricted by school buses or parents' schedules. The most successful Safe Routes to School programs typically involve partnerships among municipalities, school districts, community and parent volunteers, and law enforcement agencies.

Among the goals of Safe Routes to School programs are improved safety for students, establishing good health and fitness habits in students, and decreasing traffic and air pollution. Safe Routes to School programs help integrate physical activity into the everyday routine of school children. Safe Routes to School programs also address the safety concerns of parents by encouraging greater enforcement of traffic laws, educating the community, and exploring ways to create safer streets near schools.

This section of the Willits Safe Routes to School Plan provides an overview of tools and strategies for improving safety and accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists near schools, and is organized according to the subjects of education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation. Education and encouragement are grouped together since many educational programs are intended to be fun and motivating and many encouragement programs include an educational component. Below are definitions of these four programmatic elements of the Safe Routes to School Plan.

- **Education:** Students are taught bicycle, pedestrian, and traffic safety skills. Parents and motorists receive information on transportation options and driving safely near schools.
- **Encouragement:** Events and contests such as walk-to-school days are used to encourage more walking, bicycling, or carpooling using fun and incentives.
- **Enforcement:** Various techniques are used by law enforcement to ensure that traffic laws are obeyed; such as traffic stings targeted at pedestrian safety and speed feedback trailers.
- **Evaluation:** Periodic review is performed of projects and programs to measure their performance, including annual counts and surveys to fulfill Federal and State Safe Routes to School funding requirements.

There are numerous other excellent Safe Routes to School toolkits and guidebooks available, many of which are listed at the end of this chapter in the Resources section. This section of the Plan is not intended to supplant the information in those other guidebooks, but should instead be viewed as a focused guidebook for describing tools and programs that may be appropriate to implement as part of the Willits Conceptual Safe Routes Plan.

### Existing Programs, Organizations, and Events

The initial Safe Routes to School effort was in 2008 with Walk to School Day. The momentum from this event led to this plan and its recommendations. Below is a description of past and current Willits Safe Routes to School events and relevant organizations that are expected to assist with the implementation of Safe Routes to School programs into the future.

- 2008 Mendocino County Public Health Department Safe Routes to School workshop: The workshop presenters educated the School District, City, and the public about Safe Routes to School projects, programs, and outreach.
- 2008 Walk to School Day: A group of parents at Brookside Elementary School led this effort. Due to safety issues, parents wishing to participate drove students to a location several blocks from the school. Approximately 100-150 people then participated in the event, walking from the parking location to the school. Participants included the Mayor, teachers, parents, and students.
- 2009 Willits Walk to School Day Committee: This Committee is leading the fall 2009 Walk to School Day effort. The Committee includes parents, teachers, an afterschool program coordinator, and a home school representative. The Committee has representation from all of the schools in Willits. The primary goal of the Walk to School Day Committee is organizing outreach to increase participation in the event, including representation at the Kids Fair (June 20, 2009) and participation in the July 4<sup>th</sup> Hometown Celebration parade.
- Willits Healthy Action Team (WHAT): This group (<http://www.willitshealth.com/Practitioners/WHAT.html>) focuses on active transportation and the built environment. They organize walks in Willits that highlight conditions where street improvements could make walking and biking easier and safer. Approximately three of these walks occur in Willits every year.

## **Recommended Programs**

### Education and Encouragement

Educational activities teach students age-appropriate bicycling and walking skills, they familiarize students with the positive benefits of bicycling and walking, and foster greater attention by the community to operate motor vehicles safer, especially in school zones. Encouragement activities include a variety of special events and contests, outreach campaigns, presentations to school and community groups, and surveys of current practices and attitudes related to the school commute.

Program Recommendations

<b>Pedestrian Safety Education</b>	
<b>Target audience</b>	1st and 2nd grade students
<b>Primary agency</b>	City of Willits Willits Unified School District Walk to School Day Committee
<b>Potential partners</b>	Mendocino County Health Department, Willits Police Department Mendocino County Sheriff's Department, Willits Healthy Action Team
<b>Key elements</b>	Annual in-classroom education using curriculum developed by established pedestrian safety programs
<b>Time frame</b>	Annually in the fall and spring
<b>Potential funding sources</b>	Federal Safe Routes to School funds California Safe Routes to School funds
<b>Sample programs</b>	Santa Barbara Coalition for Sustainable Transportation <a href="http://coast-santabarbara.org/safe-routes-to-school/">http://coast-santabarbara.org/safe-routes-to-school/</a> Humboldt Partnership for Active Living <a href="http://humpal.org/ed.encourage.html">http://humpal.org/ed.encourage.html</a>

Pedestrian safety education helps ensure that students have knowledge of basic traffic safety rules. Pedestrian training is typically recommended for first- and second-graders, and teaches basic lessons such as “look left, right, and left again,” “walk with your approved walking buddy,” “stop, look, and listen,” and “lean and peak around obstacles before crossing the street.”

The City should work with Willits Unified School District to implement a standardized pedestrian safety-training curriculum in either the classrooms or gym classes of 1st and/or 2nd grade students in the elementary school.



Students learning pedestrian safety skills during the on-foot training

<b>Bicycle Safety Training</b>	
<b>Target audience</b>	5th and 6th grade students
<b>Primary agency</b>	City of Willits Willits Unified School District
<b>Potential partners</b>	Mendocino County Health Department, Willits Police Department Mendocino County Sheriff's Department, Willits Healthy Action Team, Willits High School Environmental Club as on-site assistance
<b>Key elements</b>	On-bicycle training that teaches students the skills necessary to ride their bicycles more safely
<b>Time frame</b>	Annually in the fall and spring
<b>Potential funding sources</b>	Federal Safe Routes to School funds California Safe Routes to School funds
<b>Sample programs</b>	Humboldt Partnership for Active Living <a href="http://humpal.org/ed.encourage.html">http://humpal.org/ed.encourage.html</a>  League of American Bicyclists, Kids II curriculum <a href="http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/courses.php">http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/courses.php</a>  Bicycle Rodeos <a href="http://www.bicyclinglife.com/SafetySkills/BicycleRodeo.htm">http://www.bicyclinglife.com/SafetySkills/BicycleRodeo.htm</a>

Bicycle safety training helps students understand responsibilities as motorists obeying traffic laws. Child bicycle safety education can be conducted in different formats including in-classroom education over the course of five to ten weeks or a “bicycle rodeo” using various stations to teach students traffic safety and bicycle control.

The League of American Bicyclists offers an extensive bicycle safety curriculum called Kids II. This seven-hour class is aimed at 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students and teaches necessary bicycle riding skills and how to pick safe bicycling routes. The curriculum is designed to have a League Certified Instructor (LCI) teach the class. There are six LCI's within 100 miles of Willits (<http://www.bikeleague.org/cogs/resources/findit/>). These instructors have extensive training from the League of American Bicyclists and are qualified to teach students on-bike training.

Bicycle Rodeos are bike fairs that incorporate a bicycle safety check, helmet fitting, instruction about the rules of the road, and an obstacle course. Often adults who are enthusiastic about bicycle safety can administer rodeos. Bicycles rodeos can be incorporated into health fairs, back to school events, and Walk and Bike to School days.



Students learning bicycle safety skills from a Certified Instructor

<b>Suggested Route to School Maps</b>	
<b>Target audience</b>	All students
<b>Primary agency</b>	City of Willits
<b>Potential partners</b>	Willits Unified School District, Willits Healthy Action Team
<b>Key elements</b>	Neighborhood maps that highlight recommended routes to school. Maps should include the locations of key street crossings, crossing guards, traffic control devices, parks, and libraries. These maps have been developed as part of this Willits Safe Routes to School Plan, and can be found in the “Engineering Program Recommendations” section
<b>Time frame</b>	Anytime
<b>Potential funding sources</b>	Federal Safe Routes to School funds California Safe Routes to School funds Community outreach/improvement grants
<b>Sample programs</b>	National Center for Safe Routes to School <a href="http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/engineering/school_route_maps.cfm">http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/engineering/school_route_maps.cfm</a> City of Pasadena <a href="http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/trans/trafficoperations/schoolzones.asp">http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/trans/trafficoperations/schoolzones.asp</a>

Suggested Route to School maps are one of the most cost-effective and tangible means available for encouraging students to walk or bike to school. These maps help illustrate the safest walking, bicycling, and crossing locations by identifying traffic controls, crossing guard locations, and sidewalk presence, pathways, or bicycle facilities along routes leading to a given school. Such maps have been developed for Willits and are included in this document as Figures 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Liability concerns are sometimes cited by cities or school districts as reasons not to publish walking route maps. While no walking route will ever be completely free of pedestrian safety concerns, a well-defined walking route should provide the greatest physical separation between walking students and traffic, expose students to the lowest traffic speeds, and have the fewest roadway crossings.

<b>Walk and Bike to School Day/Week/Month</b>	
<b>Target audience</b>	All students
<b>Primary agency</b>	Walk to School Day Committee Willits Unified School District
<b>Potential Partners</b>	Willits Healthy Action Team, City of Willits, Mendocino County Health Department, Willits Police Department, Mendocino County Sheriff's Department
<b>Key elements</b>	Encouragement event that promotes walking and biking to school during a specific day, week, or month.
<b>Time frame</b>	Anytime including International Walk to School day in October
<b>Potential funding sources</b>	Federal Safe Routes to School funds California Safe Routes to School funds Community outreach/improvement grants
<b>Sample programs</b>	International Walk to School <a href="http://www.walktoschool-usa.org/">http://www.walktoschool-usa.org/</a>

Walk and Bike to School Day/Week/Month are special events encouraging students to try walking or bicycling to school. The most well-known of these is International Walk to School Day, a major annual event that attracts millions of participants in over 30 countries in October. The Willits Walk to School Day Committee is working diligently to increase participation for the 2009 event.

Additional walk and bike to school days can be held yearly, monthly, or even weekly, depending on the level of support and participation from students, parents, and school and local officials. Some schools organize more frequent days – such as weekly Walking/Wheeling Wednesdays or Walk and Roll Fridays – to give people an opportunity to enjoy the event on a regular basis. Parents and other volunteers accompany the students and often there are designated staging areas along the route to school where different groups can gather and walk or bike together. These events should be promoted through press releases, articles in school newsletters, and posters and flyers for students to take home and circulate around the Community.



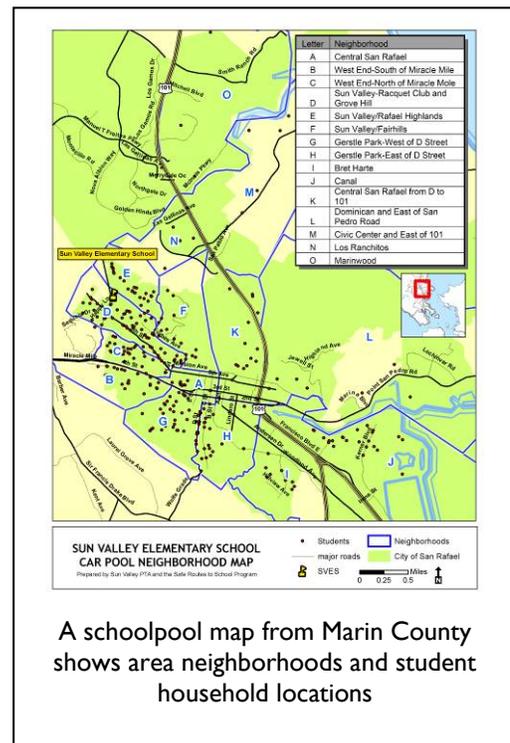
Walk and Bike to School day celebrations

<b>Back-to-School Blitz</b>	
<b>Target</b>	Incoming and returning parents and students
<b>Primary Agency</b>	City of Willits Willits Unified School District Walk to School Day Committee
<b>Potential partners</b>	Willits Healthy Action Team, Mendocino County Health Department, Willits Police Department, Mendocino County Sheriff's Department
<b>Key elements</b>	Distribute school transportation maps and transit schedules; "SchoolPool" (carpool matching) information and dot map; review parking policies and transit pass programs; one-month bike/bus/walk to school challenge program; traffic enforcement activities
<b>Time frame</b>	Fall, annually
<b>Potential funding sources</b>	Federal Safe Routes to School funds California Safe Routes to School funds Community outreach/improvement grants

Families set transportation habits during the first few weeks of the school year and many families are not aware of the variety of transportation options available to them. Because of this, most families will develop the habit of driving students to school, or students drive themselves (for students over 16 years of age). A "Back to School Blitz" is recommended to promote bus, carpool, walking and bicycling as school transportation options.

The "Back to School Blitz" includes many of the other programs in this section, including Suggested Route Maps, articles in school newsletters, and enforcement activity. Additional elements include:

- A packet given to each family containing information about school transportation options, including:
  - Cover letter signed by the principal encouraging parents to create transportation habits with students that promote physical activity, reduce congestion, increase school safety, and improve air quality
  - Well-designed school transportation maps or suggested routes to school maps that include bicycling and walking routes, transit and school bus stops, drop-off and parking areas, and bike parking locations. See Figures 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of this report.
  - Transit schedules



- Presence at back-to-school night
  - Offer all materials and answer questions
  - Offer pledge forms about not driving alone to school; entries go in raffle for a prize donated by local businesses
  - Post “schoolpool map” showing all student households as dots and subdivide the school area neighborhoods with an identifying number. Parents then check the corresponding school directory listing to see families located in their neighborhood who are interested in walking, biking and carpooling to school together. Only families who opt into the directory are listed. Families who did not opt into the directory listing are still welcome to participate
- Article in first school newsletter about transportation options and resources
- Enforcement activities
  - Strict enforcement of parking policies during first month of school (and throughout the year if possible)

Classroom Lessons and Activities	
<b>Target audience</b>	All students
<b>Primary agency</b>	Willits Unified School District
<b>Potential partners</b>	Mendocino County Health Department, Willits High School Environmental Club
<b>Key elements</b>	Integrating grade appropriate lessons on traffic safety and environmental consciousness into the classroom subjects
<b>Time frame</b>	Year round
<b>Potential funding sources</b>	Little funding needed
<b>Sample programs</b>	Center for Safe Routes to School <a href="http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/education/">http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/education/</a>  Marin County Bicycle Coalition <a href="http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/lessonplans.shtml">http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/lessonplans.shtml</a>  Alameda County TransForm <a href="http://www.transformca.org/campaign/sr2s/what-our-program-has-offer">http://www.transformca.org/campaign/sr2s/what-our-program-has-offer</a>

A variety of curricula and classroom activities are available to help teach students about walking, bicycling, health and traffic safety. These may include lessons given by law enforcement officers or other trained professionals or as a lesson plan developed by teachers. Example topic lessons are: Safe Street Crossing; Helmet Safety; Rules of the Road for Bicycles; and Health and Environmental Benefits of Walking and Biking.

The lessons should be grade appropriate and can be incorporated into the subjects of health, environment, social science, math, and physics. Sample lesson plans are available at the sample program websites.

<b>Friendly Walking/Biking Competitions</b>	
<b>Target audience</b>	All students
<b>Primary agency</b>	Walk to School Day Committee Willits Unified School District
<b>Potential partners</b>	Mendocino County Health Department, Willits High School Environmental Club
<b>Key elements</b>	Encouragement events that allow students to compete for small prizes and bragging rights
<b>Time frame</b>	Year round but best used in conjunction with a larger promotional event such as Walk and Bike to School Month
<b>Potential funding sources</b>	Little funding needed. In-kind donations can be sought from local businesses in an effort to increase participation through incentives.
<b>Sample programs</b>	Walk + Bike to School Challenge Month <a href="http://www.walknbike.org/">http://www.walknbike.org/</a> Transportation Authority of Marin <a href="http://www.tam.ca.gov/index.aspx?page=95">http://www.tam.ca.gov/index.aspx?page=95</a>

Contests and incentives activities that reward students by tracking the number of times they walk, bike, carpool, or take transit to school are included. For example, in 2008 the Skunk Train provided tickets to Walk to School Day participants. To build on this type of program, contests can be individual, classrooms, or between schools. Local businesses like the Skunk Train will often provide incentives and prizes for these activities. Students and classrooms with the highest percentage of students walking, biking, or carpooling compete for prizes and bragging rights such as a Golden Sneaker award. Small incentives such as shoelaces, stickers, and bike helmets are used to increase participation. It can also be effective to place different grades and schools (high school vs. grade school vs. middle school) against each other in a mobility challenge.

Another example is a pollution punch card program. Every time a student walks, bikes, or carpools to school, a school representative stamps the card. Then students receive a reward when the punch card is complete.

<b>School Zone Traffic Safety Campaign</b>	
<b>Target audience</b>	General public
<b>Primary agency</b>	City of Willits Willits Police Department Mendocino County Sheriff's Department
<b>Potential partners</b>	Community Groups, Chamber of Commerce, Local Media Outlets
<b>Key elements</b>	Signs and banners located near school zones that inform and encourage motorists to slow down and look for students walk and biking.
<b>Time frame</b>	Year round but best used in conjunction with a larger promotional event such as Walk and Bike to School Month
<b>Potential funding sources</b>	Federal Safe Routes to School funds California Safe Routes to School funds California Office of Traffic Safety Federal Traffic Safety Funds
<b>Sample programs</b>	Street Smarts Marin <a href="http://www.streetsmartsmarin.org/">http://www.streetsmartsmarin.org/</a>  Bicycle Transportation Alliance's Eye to Eye Campaign <a href="http://www.bta4bikes.org/at_work/eyetoeye.php">http://www.bta4bikes.org/at_work/eyetoeye.php</a>  Keep Kids Alive Drive25 Campaign <a href="http://www.keepkidsalivedrive25.org/campaign/KKAD25-Back-to-School.pdf">http://www.keepkidsalivedrive25.org/campaign/KKAD25-Back-to-School.pdf</a>

A School Zone Traffic Safety Campaign creates awareness of students walking and bicycling to school. A safety campaign is an effective way to reach the general public and reinforce other education and outreach messages such as slow down and look for students walking and biking to school.

A School Zone Traffic Safety Campaign contains signs and banners located near schools, for example on Highways 20 and 101 (e.g., in windows of businesses, yards of people's homes, and print publications). It is also suggested that this campaign be kicked off in conjunction with Walk and Bike to School Month (October).

Banners and signs can be effective tools to remind motorists about traffic safety in school zones. Large banners can be hung over or along roadways near schools with readable letters cautioning traffic to slow down, stop at stop signs, or watch for students in crosswalks with catch phrases such as:

- Drive 25, Keep Kids Alive
- Give Our Kids a Brake

If there are active local residents, lawn signs can be placed on private properties near schools and along the routes with similar messages. Signs and banners should be rotated or moved frequently so that they do not risk becoming “invisible” to motorists.

**Enforcement**

The following enforcement tools are aimed at ensuring compliance with traffic and parking laws in school zones. Through a variety of active and passive methods enforcement activities help reduce threats to the health and safety of students associated with activities such as speeding, failing to yield to pedestrians, illegal turns, illegal parking, and other violations. Enforcement strategies, in conjunction with education efforts, are intended to clearly demonstrate what is expected of motor vehicle operators and to make them accountable for the consequences of their actions.

Law enforcement agencies can increase the presence of police near schools or high-conflict areas in order to curb unlawful behavior. People tend to slow down and improve their driving behavior if they expect law enforcement presence.

*Program Recommendations*

<b>School Safety Patrols and Crossing Guards</b>	
<b>Target</b>	Students
<b>Primary Agency</b>	Willits Unified School District
<b>Potential partners</b>	Parent and community volunteers
<b>Key elements</b>	School safety patrols and crossing guards to improve safety and convenience of walking to school
<b>Time frame</b>	Daily during school year
<b>Potential funding sources</b>	Federal Safe Routes to School funds California Safe Routes to School funds State and Federal Traffic Safety Funds
<b>Resources</b>	<a href="http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/enforcement/safety_patrol.cfm">http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/enforcement/safety_patrol.cfm</a> <a href="http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/crossing_guard/index.cfm">http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/crossing_guard/index.cfm</a>

School safety patrols are trained student volunteers responsible for enforcing drop-off and pick-up procedures. Student safety patrols may also assist with street crossing; they do not stop vehicular traffic, but rather look for openings and then direct students to cross. According to the National Safe Routes Clearinghouse, “student safety patrols... [increase] safety for students and traffic flow efficiency for parents. Having a student safety patrol program at a school requires approval by the school and a committed teacher or parent volunteer to coordinate the student trainings and patrols.”

Crossing guards are trained adults, paid or volunteer, who are legally empowered to stop traffic to assist students with crossing the street. A safety patrol and additional crossing guards should be established for schools in Willits. Set up steps include:

- Securing administrative support
- Resolving liability questions with school legal/insurance counsel
- Selecting crossing guard locations and duties
- Determining safety patrol locations and duties
- Recruiting crossing guards and school safety patrol members
- Purchasing safety equipment (high-visibility vests or sashes, stop sign paddle for crossing guards, whistle, hat, and/or gloves)
- Training safety patrol and crossing guards
- Scheduling and supervising school safety patrol and crossing guards (including substitutes as needed)



Crossing guards can help students cross the street safely

The City of Willits or the Willits Unified School District should manage day-to-day operations of the safety patrol and the crossing guard program and should be prepared to supply a substitute if a patrol member or crossing guard is absent.

<b>Crosswalk Enforcement</b>	
<b>Target audience</b>	Motorists
<b>Primary agency</b>	Willits Police Department
<b>Potential partners</b>	Mendocino County Sheriff's Department City of Willits
<b>Key elements</b>	Plainclothes police officers or selected volunteer decoys attempt to cross streets and marked mid-block crossings in school zones. If motorists fail to yield to the pedestrian in a crosswalk, a second police officer issues a ticket.
<b>Time frame</b>	Annual, spring or fall (coupled with back to school and Walk and Bike to School Month)
<b>Potential funding sources</b>	Federal Highway Administration safety funding National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
<b>Sample programs</b>	Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center website <a href="http://www.walkinginfo.org/enforcement/programs-enforcement.cfm">http://www.walkinginfo.org/enforcement/programs-enforcement.cfm</a>

In crosswalk sting operations, local police department targets motorists who fail to yield to pedestrians in school crosswalks. A plain-clothes “decoy” police officer ventures into a crosswalk or crossing guard-monitored location, and motorists who do not yield are given a citation or a warning by a second officer stationed nearby. The Police Department, City, or school district may alert the media to crosswalk stings to increase public awareness of the issue of crosswalk safety, and news cameras may accompany the police officers to report on the sting.

School Parking Lot “Citations”	
<b>Target audience</b>	Motorists (especially parents dropping off their students)
<b>Primary agency</b>	Willits Police Department
<b>Potential partners</b>	Willits Unified School District, Mendocino County Sheriff’s Department
<b>Key elements</b>	School staff issue Willits Police Department warnings that look like tickets
<b>Time frame</b>	Annual, spring or fall (coupled with back to school and Walk and Bike to School Month)
<b>Potential funding sources</b>	Federal Highway Administration safety funding National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
<b>Sample programs</b>	Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center website <a href="http://www.walkinginfo.org/enforcement/programs-enforcement.cfm">http://www.walkinginfo.org/enforcement/programs-enforcement.cfm</a>

If on-site parking problems exist at a school, such as parents leaving vehicles unattended in loading zones, school staff may issue parking lot “citations” to educate parents about appropriate parking locations. These “citations” are actually warnings designed to look like actual police tickets, intended to educate parents about how parking in improper zones can create safety hazards or disrupt traffic flow for other parents during the pick-up/drop-off period.

Speed Radar Trailers	
<b>Target audience</b>	Motorists
<b>Primary agency</b>	Willits Police Department
<b>Potential partners</b>	Mendocino County Sheriff’s Department
<b>Key elements</b>	Unmanned trailer displaying speed at approaching motorists along with a speed limit sign. Should be used in school zones.
<b>Time frame</b>	Anytime but can be coupled with back to school and Walk and Bike to School Month
<b>Potential funding sources</b>	Federal Highway Administration safety funding National Highway Traffic Safety Administration California Office of Traffic Safety
<b>Sample programs</b>	Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center website <a href="http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/enforcement/speed_trailer.cfm">http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/enforcement/speed_trailer.cfm</a>

Speed Radar Trailers can be used to reduce speeds and enforce speed limit violations in known speeding problem areas. In areas with speeding problems, police set up an unmanned trailer displaying the speed of approaching motorists along with a speed limit sign.

Radar trailers can be used as both an educational and enforcement tool. By itself, the unmanned trailer serves as effective education to motorists about their current speed in relation to the speed limit. As an alternative enforcement measure, the Police Department may choose to station an officer near the

trailer to issue citations to motorists exceeding the speed limit. Because they can be easily moved, radar trailers are often brought to streets where local residents have complained about speeding problems.

### Evaluation

Evaluation is considered the fifth “E” in the Safe Routes to School efforts. It can often be challenging for schools to administer but it is important to conduct periodic review of the effectiveness of the projects and programs implemented. Also, evaluation of the number of students walking and biking to school is a critical performance measure for Federal and State Safe Routes to School grants.

### *Program Recommendations*

<b>Perform Annual Hand Tally and Parent Surveys</b>	
<b>Target audience</b>	All schools/students
<b>Primary agency</b>	Willits Unified School District City of Willits Walk to School Day Committee
<b>Potential partners</b>	National Center for Safe Routes to School
<b>Key elements</b>	Create a count database to track walking and bicycling trends and measure success of the Willits Conceptual Safe Routes to School Plan
<b>Time frame</b>	Annually, one week during the fall and one week during the spring
<b>Potential funding sources</b>	Little funding needed.
<b>Sample programs</b>	National Center for Safe Routes to School <a href="http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/evaluation/ways_to_collect_information.cfm">http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/evaluation/ways_to_collect_information.cfm</a>

It is recommended that the Willits Unified School District perform and/or coordinate an annual hand tally and parent survey according to national practices outlined by the National Center for Safe Routes to School. The National Center for Safe Routes to School has developed a recommended methodology, survey and count forms, and reporting forms.

School staff may administer the surveys themselves or assist the City of Willits with the process. The City of Willits should also handle tracking, analysis, and reporting.

### **Resources**

National Center for Safe Routes to School  
<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>

The National Center for Safe Routes to School assists communities in enabling and encouraging students to safely walk and bike to school. The Center strives to equip Safe Routes to School programs with the knowledge and technical information to implement safe and successful strategies. The website includes links to an academy of National SR2S Instructors who lead trainings and provide assistance to local jurisdictions wishing to develop a SR2S program.

California DOT Safe Routes to School Program

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/saferoutes.htm>

The California Department of Transportation has set forth specific guidance for cities and schools applying for the state and federal legislated funds.

KidsWalk-to-School: A Guide to Promote Walking to School

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/>

This guide by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is a tool to help you in the development of a walk-to-school program. It includes a checklist and step-by-step guidelines for creating a KidsWalk-to-School program such as a “walking school bus.” Sample letters, surveys, forms, and an extensive list of resources are included.

Pedestrian Safety Toolkit

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>

This toolkit includes resource materials that states and communities can use to implement their pedestrian safety programs and achieve their goals. It contains a compilation of Federal agency pedestrian safety videos; an interactive CD-ROM of pedestrian resources with subject-to-subject cross referencing; a user manual explaining how to create effective pedestrian safety programs; a resource manual that references NHTSA, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Railroad Administration materials; and sample materials and information covering the basics for all who want to do pedestrian safety and advocacy.

Safe Routes to Schools Toolkit

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/Safe-Routes-2002/toc.html>

This toolkit, developed by the Marin County Safe Routes to Schools project in California in partnership with NHTSA and the California Department of Health Services is designed for initiating and implementing a Safe Routes to Schools program. It includes examples of classroom activities, ideas for promotions, information on safe streets, resources, and forms to assist you along the way.

## References and Study Participants

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### References

*Comprehensive Self-Evaluation ADA Access and Transition Plan for Sidewalks and Parking Lots for the City of Willits*, Coastland Engineering (June 2006)

*Willits Circulation and Parking Improvement Plan Final Report*, Whitlock & Weinberger Transportation, Inc. (December 2002)

*Baechtel Road-Railroad Avenue Corridor Community Design Study*, City of Willits (June 9, 2004)

*City of Willits Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Specific Plan*, City of Willits, PMC, and One Town One Vision (April 2009)

<http://www.4mta.org>

### Study Participants

#### Whitlock & Weinberger Transportation, Inc.

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#### Alta Planning + Design

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#### City of Willits

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Gerry Gonzalez, Police Chief  
Thomas Mannatt, City Engineer  
Alan Falleri, Community Development Director  
Paul Cayler, City Manager

#### Willits Unified School District

Sandy Eddy, District Transit Supervisor  
Debra Kubin, Superintendent  
Olga Oneill, Principal, Brookside Elementary School  
Michel Frey, Principal, Blosser Lane Elementary School  
Rick Jordan, Principal, Baechtel Grove Middle School  
Tawny Fernandez, Principal, Community Day School and Sanhedrin High School  
Gordon Oslund, Principal, Willits High School

#### Willits Charter School

Sally Rulison, Director,  
Ginger Buckley, Member, Charter School Board



## Appendix A

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### Collision Records



# WIL031, Reported Ped. and Bike Related Collisions Town of Willits

## Collision Report Summary

5/11/2009

Date Range Reported: 7/1/03 - 6/30/08

Total Number of Collisions: 7

Report#	Date	Time	Location	Dist.	Dir.	Type of Collision	Motor Veh. Involved With	Dir. of Travel 1	Movement Prec. Coll. 1	Dir. of Travel 2	Movement Prec. Coll. 2	PCF	Inj.	Kil. Ver.
0913879	7/7/03	12:40	Rt 101 & Walnut St	50'	North	Broadside	Bicycle	East	Making Right Turn	North	Proceeding Straight	Unknown	0	0
1711514	9/8/04	15:00	Rt 101 & South St	100'	North	Head-On	Bicycle	South	Traveling Wrong Way	North	Entering Traffic Wrong Side of Road	Wrong Side of Road	1	0
1711447	10/10/04	15:30	Rt 101 & E Commercial St	0'	In Int.	Vehicle - Pedestrian	Pedestrian	South	Making Left Turn	West	Proceeding Straight	Not Stated	2	0
1799197	12/15/04	15:05	Main St & East Valley St	0'	In Int.	Vehicle - Pedestrian	Pedestrian	North	Proceeding Straight	East	Proceeding Straight	Ped R/W Violation	1	0
2001368	3/27/05	13:00	Rt 101 & Baechtel Rd	473'	South	Broadside	Bicycle	North	Traveling Wrong Way	East	Stopped in Road	Wrong Side of Road	1	0
2774452	5/13/06	18:06	E San Francisco Av & Rt 101	0'	In Int.	Vehicle - Pedestrian	Pedestrian	West	Making Right Turn	North	Proceeding Straight	Ped R/W Violation	1	0
3213907	3/14/07	21:00	Rt 101 & Gregory Ln	0'	In Int.	Vehicle - Pedestrian	Pedestrian	North	Making Left Turn	West	Other	Not Stated	1	0

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## Settings Used For Query

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<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Setting</u>
Starting Date	7/1/2003
Ending Date	6/30/2008
Distance from Intersection	>= 0' for non rear-end collisions >= 0' for rear-end collisions
Reporting District	'2304'