



SAFE COMMUNITY COALITION
OF MADISON & DANE COUNTY



**WALK OUR CHILDREN TO
SCHOOL / SAFE ROUTES TO
SCHOOL CAMPAIGN**

OCTOBER 6-10, 2003

***EVALUATION REPORT
MARCH, 2004***

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WALK OUR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL/ SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN - 2003 EVALUATION REPORT

BACKGROUND

The Walk Our Children to School Campaign began locally in 1999, jointly coordinated by the Safe Community Coalition of Madison and Dane County and Madison Area SAFE KIDS Coalition.

In the first two years (1999 – 2000) of the local Walk Our Children to School campaign, the focus was raising awareness about the campaign and pedestrian safety issues around schools. In 2001, collaborative efforts began to identify and resolve pedestrian safety problems in and around schools. In 2002, an evaluation of the awareness and effectiveness of the Walk campaign took place and problems were identified and validated.

This past year (2003), evaluation was combined with problem solving to improve traffic safety around schools and encourage children and families to walk to school year round. In fact, at two of the schools, the efforts to improve and create safe routes to school for children also coincide with a Safe Routes to School program.

For more information about the schools that participated in the 2003 campaign, *see Appendix 1 (list) and 2 (press releases)*.

SAFE KIDS WALK THIS WAY PEDESTRIAN SAFETY TASK FORCE GRANT

Madison Area SAFE KIDS Coalition was awarded a SAFE KIDS Walk This Way Pedestrian Safety Task Force grant from the National SAFE KIDS Coalition. This grant enabled us to set up a Pedestrian Safety Task Force and to continue evaluation efforts with local schools.

Objectives:

1. Review needs assessment and 2002 Walk evaluation results to determine focus for each school.
2. Initiate Pedestrian Safety Task Force and develop traffic safety plan. *See Appendix 3.*
3. Obtain support from the community for the plan.
4. Gain support from decision-makers/community leaders for the plan.
5. Evaluate pedestrian traffic-safety efforts.

Initiate Pedestrian Safety Task Force:

The annual county-wide Walk Campaign Planning Group (led by SAFE KIDS Coalition and Safe Community Coalition) was reconvened. This included representatives from law enforcement (Madison Police traffic enforcement and Dane County Sheriff's Office), public health (Madison and Dane County), crossing guards, traffic engineering (Madison), school

district (Madison Metropolitan) and FedEx. This group supported efforts by individual schools for Walk campaign activities.

A city Pedestrian Safety Task Force was set up to discuss pedestrian safety issues and to strategize an approach to make improvements. This group consisted of individuals from city of Madison government (police, public health, traffic engineering and common council) and Madison Metropolitan School District (facilities)

Individual School Pedestrian Safety Teams were set up at the five participating evaluation schools. These teams discussed the problems at each school (identified by all members) and potential solutions for improvement. Members included school principals and other staff, local parent and/or PTA/PTO members, local neighborhood association representatives, police (traffic & parking), public health and grant researcher.

Evaluation of Traffic Safety Efforts:

A grant Researcher was hired to work with the Safe Community Coalition Data Committee chair (Madison Public Health) to coordinate evaluation efforts and conduct observations at participating schools.

The evaluation schools were chosen as a result of knowledge of existing problems and interest expressed by the school:

School Name	Reason for Choosing
Lincoln Elementary	Two years ago a child was killed and last Spring a child seriously injured while crossing the street in front of the school.
Leopold Elementary	Long-term pedestrian safety problems existed and major engineering plans were underway to improve the situation.
Kennedy Elementary	Both of these schools had many complaints about the pedestrian safety around the schools and there was a collaborative group interested in addressing these issues.
Schenk Elementary	
Midvale Elementary	Efforts were made last year to make improvements (2002 evaluation school) and continuing reinforcement was needed.

EVALUATION METHOD

Parent Traffic Behavior around School:

Two to three people made observations of parent drop-off or pick-up behavior for a 45-minute period, using a standardized checklist. *See Appendix 4 for Parent Drop-Off Behavior Checklist.* The people recruited to assist with observations were those directly linked with the school to raise awareness of the problems, gain community buy-in and mobilize to take action. This included teachers, parents, neighborhood association members and other advocates.

The evaluation plan:

- Observations took place before the end of the 2002/2003 school year, in the morning and afternoon, to determine the extent of the problems and the changes needed to improve traffic safety in the area surrounding the school.
- Meetings took place to determine what changes/improvements were needed and the materials necessary to educate the parents.

- Observations took place in the morning during the Walk Campaign when various educational activities and enforcement took place.
- Observations took place in the morning, one month after the Campaign.

Walk To School Parent Survey:

A parent survey was sent home with the students at two of the schools (Kennedy & Schenk) to determine why the kids did or did not walk to school, the reasons for doing so and the routes taken by children who walk to school. *See Appendix 5 for Parent Walk Survey.*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Observations made at the end of the 2002/3 school year (June 2003) showed a number of unsafe practices by parents and other neighborhood drivers in the vicinity of each school (front and side). Kennedy School showed the highest number with 116 unsafe observations made. With the exception of Lincoln School, the problems were worse in the morning. Therefore, future observations took place in the morning only.

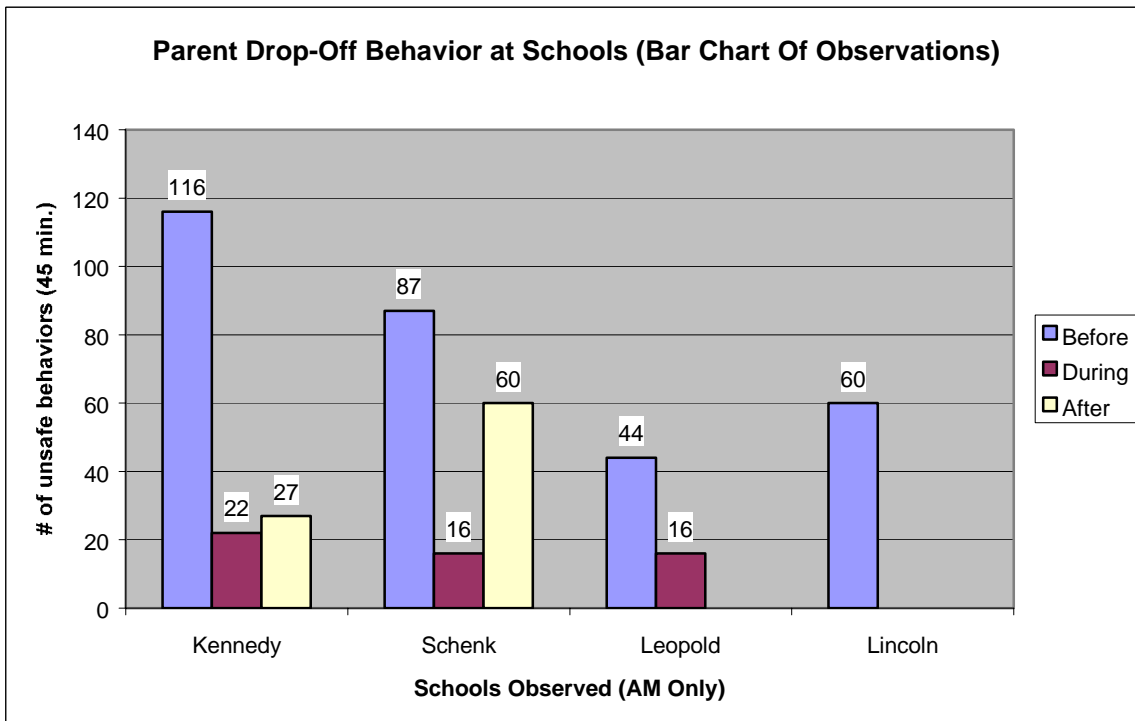
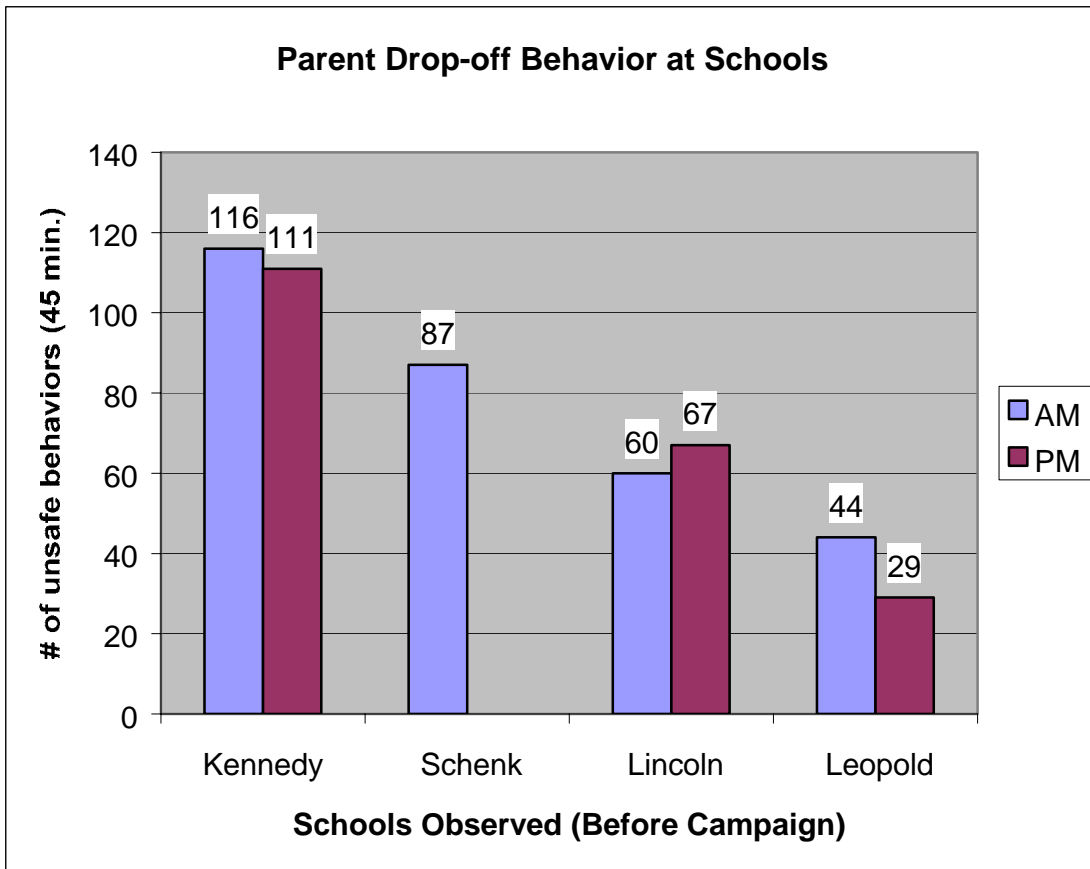
There was a dramatic improvement in unsafe behavior at the schools, as a result of increased enforcement and educational efforts made by the schools (leading up to and) during the Walk Campaign (week of October 6th). Kennedy and Schenk showed a 19% reduction.

Observations made one month after the campaign activities at two of the schools showed a sustained improvement. However, problems have begun to resurface. This is in agreement with what we have found at Midvale School (2002 evaluation school). After a year, parents began to go back to their old behavior, unless reminders and educational efforts are reinforced.

The unsafe practices made by parents dropping off their children at school could be grouped into four areas: 1) parking violations; 2) loading or unloading children in unsafe areas; 3) unsafe pedestrian behavior; and 4) moving vehicle violations. In most cases, the parking violations and unsafe loading was the biggest problem. However, unsafe pedestrian behavior was disproportionately high at Lincoln School. Details of unsafe behavior found at each school are provided in the individual school section.

Information is also provided in the individual school section about the specific problems identified, changes made to address these problems, and the current status of these efforts.

The results of the parent surveys indicated that safety reasons were the main reasons that parents drive their kids to school. The next most frequent answer had to do with time constraints and the convenience of dropping child off on the way to work. Distance, weather and child being too young were also reasons listed. Parents were asked about the kind of safety concerns. Traffic, stranger danger, no adult supervision, bullying and harassment were cited. The greatest traffic concerns listed were difficulty crossing the street and speeding cars, followed by busy intersections, parking violations and inattentive drivers. Finally, parents were asked what types of conditions would encourage them to allow their child to walk. If their child was older, if there was adult supervision along the way, if there were other kids with whom to walk, and the presence of a crossing guard (Acewood) were the most common responses. *See Appendix 6 for a detailed account of parent survey results.*



Individual Schools:

Lincoln School

PARENT DROP-OFF BEHAVIOR			
SCHOOL – LOCATION TIME - DATE	TYPE OF UNSAFE BEHAVIOR	BEFORE NO.	
Lincoln Front of school Cypress and Sequoia AM Before – Tuesday, 5/27	Unsafe parking - violation	18	
	Unsafe loading/unloading	17	
	Unsafe pedestrian behavior	16	
	Unsafe moving vehicle	9	
	Total	60	
Lincoln Front of school Cypress and Sequoia PM Before – Tuesday, 5/27	Unsafe parking - violation	11	
	Unsafe loading/unloading	1	
	Unsafe pedestrian behavior	49	
	Unsafe moving vehicle	6	
	Total	67	

Problems Identified	Solutions (Changes made/requested)	Current Status (Success*)
Parents dropping off kids in NSSP area, while buses are present	Feasibility study to put in bus drop-off cut away behind the school on the outskirts of teacher parking lot	Bus cut-away behind school approved by Madison School Board, but work will not begin until summer of 2004
Parents parking in passenger loading zone area		
Children walking midblock, in between parked cars and buses, esp. at crest of hill on Cypress	1. Request for raised, marked crosswalk at crest of hill (across from Apartment complex) 2. If marked crosswalk, pursue the idea of red pedestrian flags	Major redevelopment plans of school property and surrounding neighborhood. Traffic safety issues need consideration in these plans. Coordinated effort is needed.
No official Crossing Guard at Sequoia & Cypress	Teacher volunteers to cross kids	Enquire about crossing guard study
Vehicles not slowing down or stopping for kids at crosswalk on Sequoia and Cypress (higher percentage [2/3] of vehicles from neighborhood than parents)	1. <i>Traffic Engineering recommends pedestrian refuge islands on Cypress at Sequoia and Hughes</i> 2. <i>Request for additional school speed signs on Cypress</i>	Solutions need to be made in the context of the major redevelopment plans.
Vehicles making U-turns in front of school, to drop-off kids		

Leopold School

PARENT DROP-OFF BEHAVIOR			
SCHOOL – LOCATION TIME - DATE	TYPE OF UNSAFE BEHAVIOR	BEFORE NO.	DURING NO.
Leopold Front of school (Post Road); T-intersection at Leopold AM Before – Thursday, 5/22/02 *During – Wed., 9/10/03	Unsafe parking - violation	14	6
	Unsafe loading/unloading	19	7
	Unsafe pedestrian behavior	9	2
	Unsafe moving vehicle	2	1
	Total	44	16
Leopold Front of school (Post Road); T-intersection at Leopold PM Before – Thursday, 5/22/02	Unsafe parking - violation	1	No P.M OBSERV- ATIONS
	Unsafe loading/unloading	13	
	Unsafe pedestrian behavior	12	
	Unsafe moving vehicle	3	
	Total	29	

* During - On this day of observations, Parking Enforcement Officers and Traffic Enforcement Safety Team were out issuing warnings to violators of posted signs

Problems Identified	Solutions (Changes made/requested)	Current Status (Success*)
Parents dropping off in front of school in NSSP area, where buses are present	1. Bus cut-away constructed at end of 2002/3 school year, but buses did not start dropping off there until 2003/4 school year. 2. Signs changed to allow drop-off in front of school, between cut-way entrance/exit. 3. Parents held up signs (first week of school) to direct parents where they can drop off	Bus cut-away is complete* Some parents continue to unload in No Standing, Stopping or Parking area.
Parking on opposite side of street and child walking mid-block, esp. Post at Leopold St.	Parking Enforcement and Traffic Enforcement issuing tickets.	Most drivers did not attempt to pull over in the NSSP area when police and parking officers were present.

Schenk School

PARENT DROP-OFF BEHAVIOR				
SCHOOL – LOCATION TIME - DATE	TYPE OF UNSAFE BEHAVIOR	BEFORE #’S	DURING #’S	AFTER #’S
Schenk Front of school; along Tulane AM Before – Monday, 6/2	Unsafe parking - violation	39	3	43
	Unsafe loading/unloading	34	5	11
	Unsafe pedestrian behavior	9	8	6
	Unsafe moving vehicle	5		
	Total	87	16	60

* PM observation data could not be used at this school, however school staff have indicated that the problem was worse in the morning.

Problems Identified	Solutions (Changes made/requested)	Current Status (Success*)
Dropping off in NSSP area in front of school, esp. on Tulane where buses are present.	Parking Enforcement issued citations, TEST handed out Drop Off (DO) brochures to parents	Improved
Cars parking in No Parking area	Enforcement and educated parents via DO brochures.	Improved
Parents dropping off kids in teacher parking lot	Suggest request for “Do Not Enter” signs at teacher parking lot entrance.	No request submitted.
Parking across street (Schenk) and child walking mid-block	School requested a marked crosswalk at Schenk & Paus	Crosswalk painted before Walk event * Request crossing guard study for this crosswalk.
Children walking mid-block, in between parked cars/buses	Request bus co. to move student drop-off; educate parents with DO brochure.	Buses now drop off kids on Schenk*
Vehicles not stopping for pedestrians	Educate parents via brochure; suggest the use of pedestrian flags to raise visibility about crossing	Currently discussing the training and use of pedestrian flags by safety patrol at 3 marked crosswalks
Parents would allow their children to walk to school if they had other kids to walk with and with adult supervision	Walk routes were created to encourage “walking school buses”. They were launched on Walk event, lead by mascots and celebrities.	- “walking school buses” continue, although on a smaller scale - Currently discussing the formation of walking clubs

Kennedy School

PARENT DROP-OFF BEHAVIOR				
SCHOOL – LOCATION TIME - DATE	TYPE OF UNSAFE BEHAVIOR	BEFORE #’S	DURING #’S	AFTER #’S
Kennedy Front of school (Meadowlark); T-intersection meeting Agate AM Before – Tuesday, 6/3	Unsafe parking - violation	55	6	14
	Unsafe loading/unloading	21	9	1
	Unsafe pedestrian behavior	23	3	11
	Unsafe moving vehicle	17	4	1
	Total	116	22	27
Kennedy Front of school (Meadowlark); T-intersection meeting Agate PM Before – Tuesday, 6/3	Unsafe parking - violation	46	PM observations were not done during or after campaign	
	Unsafe loading/unloading	13		
	Unsafe pedestrian behavior	36		
	Unsafe moving vehicle	16		
	Total	111		

Problems Identified (Before Observations)	Solutions (Changes made/requested)	Current Status (Success*)
Dropping off in front of school in NSSP area - Congestion in front of school Confusing sign – NSSP/No Parking	1. Parking Enforcement; educated parents via drop-off brochure 2. Recommended to drop-off only in area where parking is allowed (Meadowlark nr Retana) 3. Parent (PTA) held up Drop Off Only sign to discourage parking 4. Requested permanent no parking or drop-off sign	- Improved but beginning to go back to old behavior - PTA member asking residents if permanent sign ok - Still awaiting permanent sign change for no parking or drop-off only sign
Blocking school driveway to drop off kids	Parking Enforcement; educating parents via drop-off brochure	Improved, but certain parents continuing to do
Blocking driveway to drop off kids (Meadowlark at Agate)	Discourage behavior in drop-off brochure (educate)	Improved
Dropping off on corner in yellow zone and in crosswalk (Meadowlark/Agate)	Requested drop-off only sign in the first two spaces on Agate	Awaiting permanent no parking or drop-off sign on Agate
Children walking midblock	Educated and reinforced parents and kids to walk to corner and cross with crossing guard (via brochure)	More kids crossing with crossing guard *
Parents entering teacher parking lot to drop off kids	Principal requested “Do Not Enter, Teacher Parking Only” from MMSD	Sign put up, but not enforceable format, awaiting correct sign
Difficult for kids to cross on Acewood – no crossing guard	Crossing Guard study done on Acewood at Agate and Onyx	No communication on study results and no crossing guard in either location
Parents would allow their children to walk to school if they had other kids to walk with and with adult supervision	Walk routes were created to encourage “walking school buses”. They were launched on Walk event, lead by mascots and celebrities.	- “walking school buses” continue, although on a smaller scale - Currently discussing the formation of walking clubs.

Midvale School (2002 Evaluation School)

Current Status:

Educational activities for kids (all school safety walk) took place in spring of 2003 to reinforce pedestrian safety messages:

1. Use the red pedestrian flags to cross at marked crosswalk
(Continuation of walking path from Owen)
2. Cross with the crossing guard at t-intersection (Caromar and Clifden)

As reported in 2002 Walk Evaluation Report, parent drop-off/pick-up behavior improved in the 2002/3 school year. However, by the beginning of the 2003/4 school year, parents were reverting back to their old unsafe behavior. The school revised their parent drop-off brochure and police officers handed out during the 2003 Walk. Drop-off only signs were also held up at this time.

Barriers & Challenges:

Huge efforts have been made at each school to identify problems and to determine solutions for improvement. As shown above, the ability to carry out these ideas has varied and not necessarily due to lack of enthusiasm on the part of the school. There are many barriers and challenges to making pedestrian safety changes at a school. They can be grouped into three areas:

1. Resources

In Madison, although we have the luxury of a dedicated police traffic enforcement safety team and parking enforcement officers to work with the schools, resources are limited. They can visit schools, with identified problems, on a rotating basis only. Resources are also limited for crossing guards.

2. Environmental

Streets and sidewalks surrounding schools are not designed for high volume traffic and the school facilities are often designed for less motor vehicle traffic (especially when it comes to parking for school staff). Some of the recommendations for traffic flow and parent drop-off and pick-up are outdated. City officials and school district personnel are sometimes reluctant to make engineering countermeasures for various reasons, e.g. cost, problem doesn't meet criteria for change, bad timing such as embarking on redevelopment of neighborhood, or lack of community support.

3. Stakeholders

Identification and collaboration of stakeholders are a huge component to guarantee success. High-level representatives (decision makers) need to be included in this stakeholder group. The stakeholders need evidence (e.g. neighborhood resident petitions, letters of support from parents) of community support, which requires the school to take ownership. However, it can be very time consuming and requires dedicated people who are not willing to give up. Opportunities for open discussion at stakeholder meetings are also needed. Hopefully this will lead to a consensus and action.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EACH SCHOOL

Lincoln

- Move bus drop-off on Cyprus to a bus cut-away behind school - move bus off street.
- Something to discourage mid-block crossing on Cypress, at crest of hill.
- Something to reduce speeding on Cypress, such as pedestrian refuge islands on Cypress/Sequoia.

Leopold

- Continued enforcement (rotating) on Post Rd., near Leopold, to discourage unloading in no standing, stopping or parking area.
- Develop parent drop-off brochure to educate parents

Schenk

- Consider applying for a pedestrian flags crossing from the Safe Community Coalition for marked crosswalks at Tulane & Ogden and Schenk & Paus.
- Provide training for safety patrol on use of pedestrian flags.
- Evaluate potential for adult Crossing Guard at Paus and Schenk (safety patrol should not try to stop traffic to cross kids).
- Consider requesting a “Do Not Enter...” sign for the teacher’s parking lot because it is still very congested in the parking lot in the morning.

Kennedy

- Request signage (no parking) to permit drop-off/pick-up in the following locations:
 - Meadowlark near Retana (2 signs)
 - Agate near corner of Meadowlark (2 signs)
- Consider adult Crossing Guard on Acewood at Onyx or Agate or Topaz.
- Request MPD Parking Enforcement and/or Traffic Enforcement Safety Team (TEST) to visit school again to discourage parent drop-off in front of the school.
- Change “Do Not Enter” sign, in teacher’s parking lot, to the correct format so that it is enforceable.
- Encourage staff supervision when kids get off bus in the morning.

Midvale

- Continue to reinforce messages of safe loading and parking areas with occasional police presence

CONCLUSION

Improving pedestrian safety around schools and determining what is needed to make improvements can become very political. It is important to keep the issues on the agenda of the various stakeholders and to make continuing efforts to bring the community and decision makers together. The schools need a simple process for raising traffic safety concerns and a clear understanding of the criteria for change. Since the problems are often multifaceted, inter-agency communication is important for an expedient response and for the necessary changes to take place and to be effective, both immediately and in the long term.

APPENDICES

1. List of Walk Schools and activity summary chart
2. Walk Press Releases
3. Preliminary Traffic Safety Action Plan
4. Parent Drop-Off Behavior Checklist
5. Parent Walk Survey
6. Parent Survey Results
7. Parent Drop-Off Brochures (3)
8. School walking maps (2)
9. Photos of Walk 2003