CORA KELLY ELEMENTARY
WALKABOUT: Existing Conditions, Findings and Recommendations
June 2017
CORA KELLY ELEMENTARY WALKABOUT DETAILS

- Date: May 9, 2017
- Observation: Arrival
- Participants:
  - Toole Design Group staff
  - City of Alexandria Transportation Planning staff
  - Alexandria Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee members
  - Cora Kelly Elementary School Administrator
- Purpose:
  - Observe school arrival process
  - Evaluate school-zone infrastructure
  - Assess existing Safe Routes to School programming
OVERVIEW OF CORA KELLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

STUDENT DISTANCE FROM SCHOOL
As reported in 2014 Parent Survey. (n=21)

- 67% of students live 1 mile from the school
- 33% of students live more than 1 mile from the school

Total students: 341

STUDENT TRAVEL MODES
Average of “to school” and “from school” modes as reported in 2014 Parent Surveys. (n=21)

- 45% walk
- 28% use car
- 27% use school bus

NOTE: ONLY 21 PARENTS PROVIDED RESPONSES. THIS SMALL SAMPLE SIZE MAY NOT BE REPRESENTATIVE
# STUDENT DISTANCE FROM SCHOOL DETAIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¼ mile</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ mile</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 mile</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 miles</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;2 miles</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*As reported in 2014 Parent Survey. (n=21)*

The hollow circle on the map represents a direct distance buffers from the school. The colored polygons show the distance along the road network.

**NOTE:** ONLY 21 PARENTS PROVIDED RESPONSES. THIS SMALL SAMPLE SIZE MAY NOT BE REPRESENTATIVE.
EXISTING CONDITIONS
NOTE: NUMBERS RATHER THAN PERCENT ARE DISPLAYED BECAUSE THE NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS FOR THIS QUESTION WAS LESS THAN 30. (n=21)
Issues reported to affect the decision to not allow a child to walk or bike to/from school by parents of children who do not walk or bike to/from school

Top 3 issues:
- Distance (6)
- Amount of traffic along route (3)
- Time (3)
- Weather or climate (3)
- Violence or crime (3)

NOTE: NUMBERS RATHER THAN PERCENT ARE DISPLAYED BECAUSE THE NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS FOR THIS QUESTION WAS LESS THAN 30. (n=21)
Sidewalks – There are sidewalks on at least one side of most streets in the neighborhoods around the school.

Crosswalks – There are marked crosswalks to the south of the school on Commonwealth Ave at the intersections with Reed Ave and Glebe Rd. There are faded crosswalks to the west of the school at the Reed Ave and Edison Ave intersection. There are no marked crosswalks directly in front of the school main entrance.

Curb ramps – Curb ramps are present on all corners, but several to the west of the school do not meet ADA requirements.
**BICYCLING NETWORK**

**Commonwealth Ave**— North-south connection with bike lanes south of Reed Ave. There is a proposed “enhanced bicycle corridor” north of Reed to connect with the Four Mile Run.

**Reed Ave**— East-west shared roadway.

**Four Mile Run** — Bicyclists can access the trail approximately 1000-feet to the north of the school. The trail is a popular commuting route connecting to other parts of Alexandria and Arlington.
Arrival

- Students may enter the building in 3 locations: at the north end of the building, through the front office, or through the cafeteria at the south end of the building.
- School starts at 8:00 AM, with most students arriving between 7:30 and 8:00 AM. Many students eat breakfast at school, starting at 7:30 AM.

Bus Loop

- The bus loop is directly in front of the main entrance to the school. The buses enter the loop through the exit to the parent drop off area; and the bus loop is blocked off with cones until all the buses have unloaded and departed.

Parent Drop-off

- The designated parent drop-off zone is on the north side of the school parking lot. Students walk at least 300-feet to the main entrance or longer to reach the cafeteria.
ARRIVAL OBSERVATIONS

Bus Loop
- There are 5 buses that drop off in front of the school between 7:30 and 7:45 AM.
- School staff places cones on the loop entry between 7:30 and 7:55 AM to restrict use to buses and keep cars out during bus drop off.

Sign at bus loop restricting use during arrival and dismissal

Cars can use the bus loop after 8:00 AM
Parent Drop-off
- The designated drop-off zone is on the north side of the school parking lot.
- It is 200-feet long, and holds approximately 10 cars at once.
- Most drop-offs were observed outside of the designated area in the school parking lot:
  - Closer to 8:00 AM, parents were observed using the bus loop for drop-off or short term parking.
  - Vehicles stopped on Commonwealth Ave near the front entrance and cafeteria. Most of these cars were observed making u-turns in the middle of Commonwealth Ave.
  - One car was observed dropping off a student at the corner of Commonwealth Ave and Reed Ave.
ARRIVAL OBSERVATIONS

Intersection of Commonwealth Ave and Reed Ave

- This is a 4-way stop-controlled intersection on the southeast corner of the school property.
- From 7:30 to 8:00 AM, this intersection experiences heavy volumes of motor vehicle traffic, bike commuter traffic heading to the Four Mile Run Trail, and pedestrian traffic.
- There is a crossing guard stationed at this intersection. She was observed spending about equal time crossing students and directing traffic to prevent backups at the intersection of Commonwealth Ave and Glebe Rd.
- There is a flashing school zone sign, which was not flashing during arrival hours. This sign is very close to the school entrance, which undermines the warning value of the sign.
- There is a school bus stop on the southeast corner of the intersection. Middle school students gather on the sidewalk waiting for pick up around 7:50 AM.
ARRIVAL OBSERVATIONS

Commonwealth Ave and Glebe Rd
- This is a signalized intersection one block south of the school.
- Some bicyclists at this intersection were observed running red lights.
- There is a crossing guard stationed at this intersection.
- A pole-mounted electric box on the northeast corner of the intersection blocks the pedestrian push button and crosswalk to cross Commonwealth Ave.
- The countdown timer on the southeast corner of the intersection for crossing Glebe Rd displays time for the walk phase, but does not display a countdown for the flashing “don’t walk” phase.

Push button is not accessible from curb ramp and is blocked by the signal box
ARRIVAL OBSERVATIONS

W Reed Ave
- Reed Ave has one travel lane and one on-street parking lane in each direction.
- There are “traffic calming” signs and worn speed cushions from Commonwealth Ave to Mount Vernon Ave.
- A large number of elementary students walk along W Reed Ave, and there are several middle school students that wait for the bus at W Reed Ave and Edison St.
- Cars do not slow down at the worn speed cushions.
ENGINEERING RECOMMENDATIONS
Recommendation

Ensure all curb ramps meet current ADA guidelines

Rebuild W Reed Ave speed cushions to calm traffic

These curb ramps on W Reed Avenue do not have detectable warning surfaces or level landing areas.
# SCHOOL ZONE SIGNAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map ID</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Timeframe*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Existing 15 mph school zone speed limit sign with flashing beacons on Commonwealth Ave is too close to the school to provide advance warning</td>
<td>Remove existing 25 mph speed limit sign and move 15 mph school zone speed limit with flashing beacons 200-feet south on Commonwealth Avenue</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, 3</td>
<td>No reduced school zone speed limit on Reed Ave</td>
<td>Remove existing 25 mph speed limit signs and install 15 mph school zone speed limit signs with flashing beacons on E and W Reed Ave, approximately 300-feet from the Commonwealth Ave intersection</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Short = within 1 year, Medium = within 3 years, Long = 3 or more years

This report recommends reducing the school zone speed limit to 15 mph on all approaches to the school. The existing 25 mph speed limit signs (left) should be replaced with 15 mph speed limit signs with flashing beacons (right).
## INTERSECTION RECOMMENDATIONS

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<tr>
<th>Map ID</th>
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<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pedestrian signal head on southeast corner displays countdown during walk phase only</td>
<td>Reprogram to show countdown during flashing “don’t walk” phase</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single curb ramps on each corner lack detectable warnings and are not ADA compliant</td>
<td>Ensure ramps are ADA compliant</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedestrian pushbutton on northwest corner is not accessible from the curb ramp and lacks audible clues</td>
<td>Relocate signal box away from clear zone near pedestrian ramp; upgrade pedestrian signals to APS</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crosswalk on north leg is narrowed by median island</td>
<td>If bus turning radius allows, extend island to provide pedestrian refuge with continuous 10-foot wide marked crosswalk</td>
<td>Long</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Faded crosswalk markings</td>
<td>Repaint all three crossings with high-visibility crosswalks</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insufficient sidewalk area for through travel and those waiting at the middle school bus stop on the northeast corner of the intersection</td>
<td>Widen sidewalk into grass buffer for approximately 20-feet east of the intersection</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single curb ramps on each corner are not ADA compliant since they lack detectable warnings and level landing areas</td>
<td>Ensure ramps are ADA compliant</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parked cars obstruct sight distances at corners</td>
<td>Restrict parking at corners with signs and paint to daylight intersection</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No marked crosswalks on Commonwealth Ave north of Reed Ave</td>
<td>Add high visibility crosswalk at Luna Park Dr</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
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INTERSECTION RECOMMENDATIONS

4 Pedestrian push buttons at Glebe Rd and Commonwealth Ave are not accessible.

4 Inconsistent crosswalk width at Glebe Rd and Commonwealth Ave.

5 Narrow sidewalk and short sight distance at W Reed Ave and Edison St.

5 Faded crosswalk markings at W Reed Ave and Edison St.
OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS
## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

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<td>7</td>
<td>Narrow shared use path with irregular surface on west side of Commonwealth Ave from Four Mile Run Trail to Reed Ave</td>
<td>Replace shared use path with a concrete sidewalk and install an on-street enhanced bikeway facility as recommended in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Narrow sidewalk with obstructions and multiple inaccessible driveway crossings along the south side of W Reed Ave</td>
<td>Reconstruct sidewalk with an additional 3-feet in width; redesign driveway crossings to provide a pedestrian access route across the driveway crossings that is a minimum of 4-feet wide and has no more than 2% cross slope</td>
<td>Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Faded crosswalk at main entrance to the school</td>
<td>Repaint high visibility crosswalk</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cars use bus drop off area to drop-off during restricted times</td>
<td>Use more cones and post a staff members outside to facilitate proper arrival procedures</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faded pavement markings and confusing signage at entrances to school parking lot</td>
<td>Repaint parking lot pavement markings; consider using bold colors to indicate parent drop-off zone; formalize the use of north door for students being dropped off in the morning with signs and staff support</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
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OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Faded crosswalk markings at the front entrance

The parking lot and drop-off loop at Discovery Elementary School in Arlington, VA utilizes clear arrow pavement markings and bold purple paint to indicate where drop-off should take place. The markings are reinforced by staff supervision. This is an example of the type of pavement markings that might help clarify arrival and dismissal procedures at Cora Kelly Elementary School.

Cars using bus drop-off despite restrictions
PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS
**Recommendation**

Integrate pedestrian and bicycle safety education into the school curriculum.

- Conduct a bicycle rodeo to teach the skills and precautions to ride a bike safely.
- Incorporate information about walking and bicycling to school in communications with parents.
- Provide parents and guardians with safe driving information that stresses the importance of driving safely in school zones and being alert for pedestrians and bicyclists during arrival and dismissal.
## ENCOURAGEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Continue Existing</th>
<th>Start New</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participate in International Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day.</td>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help organize and support walking school buses.</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help organize and support bike trains.</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a frequent walker / bicyclist program.</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# ENFORCEMENT

## Recommendation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establish a driver pledge program.</th>
<th>Continue Existing</th>
<th>Start New</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate Virginia Crossing Guard Appreciation Day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with the police department to provide periodic parking and traffic enforcement near the school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
## Recommendation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct Student Travel Tallies to get baseline data for student travel patterns.</th>
<th><strong>Continue</strong></th>
<th><strong>Existing</strong></th>
<th><strong>Start New</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administer Parent Surveys to collect information on parents' attitudes towards walking and bicycling and reasons why they may or may not allow their children to walk or bike to school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Travel Tallies and Parent Surveys were last collected in the fall of 2014 at Cora Kelly Elementary School, but had a very limited response rate. The surveys are available in both English and Spanish at saferoutesdata.org. Up to date information is required to monitor program success and apply for federal SRTS funding.*