

**Walkable Community Workshops Evaluation:
Safe Routes to School Focus**

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An Evaluation of the Twelve Bridges Elementary School in Placer County, CA Walkable Community Workshop with Safe Routes to School Focus

Introduction:

On February 2, 2006, Wendi Kallins, on behalf of the California Center for Physical Activity, conducted a two hour abridged Walkable Community Workshop for the Twelve Bridges Elementary School and surrounding Lincoln community. The evaluation was designed to measure attitudes towards improving walkability for larger segments of the population as well as for children going to and from school. The workshop format was condensed to accommodate the two hours Parent-Teacher Club meeting, so the walk audit and action plan discussion were omitted. The twenty participants included the school principal, a teacher, health representative, Public Works official from the City of Lincoln, a Youth Services officer, police officer and thirteen parents. Noteworthy about the Twelve Bridges workshop is that at least 63% of the participants were parents, a much higher level of participation by this **influential** group than is usually noted in workshops with a school walkability focus.

Evaluation Outcomes:

- **General Opinion of the Workshop:** The mean score with which Twelve Bridges respondents evaluated their workshop was 4.6, on a 5-point scale, where 5 means Excellent, and 1 means Poor. Twelve Bridges respondents were enthusiastic about the quality of the information they received, and they liked the presenters.
- **Competence:** Twelve Bridges respondents generally indicated that they felt pretty confident in helping create more walkable communities. Respondents feel most competent about *Implement walkable community education and encouragement strategies*.
- **Relationship-building:** When asked whether they had formed new relationships or strengthened existing ones in the workshop, it appears that residents appreciated the opportunity to meet officials and vice versa.
 - “The city and law enforcement now know where our problems lie.” - Parent response
 - *Benefits of workshop:* “Exposure to residents – let them know we’re concerned.” - Department of Public Works Official
- **Readiness to work on a plan:** All but one respondent indicated they were either *Ready* (58%) or *Extremely Ready* (33%) to **personally** work on a plan to increase walking, biking, or the use of public transportation in their community. When asked how ready their **communities** were to work on a plan that will increase walking, biking, or the use of public transportation, the responses were much more varied. The comments show that those who felt their communities were *Not too ready* based their opinions on financial issues.
- **Education and Encouragement Activities:** Overall, the enthusiasm of this group for *Education and Encouragement Activities* is noteworthy, and should be seen as most encouraging to those who seek to make their communities more walkable.

<p>“As a whole I think the workshop is motivational.” - Parent response</p>

- The activity deemed most *Important* was **Educate Neighbors About Safe Routes to Schools** (75%), followed closely by **Educate Parents About Safe Routes to Schools** and **Coordinate Walk to School Events, Walk and Roll Wednesdays, etc.** (67% each). Not far behind these in popularity were **Provide Frequent Walker Cards and Other Incentives for Walkers** and **Provide Safety Training for Children and Drivers** (58% each).
- The activity most often judged *Reasonable & Practical* was **Coordinate Walk to School Events, Walk and Roll Wednesdays, etc.** (58%), followed by **Provide Frequent Walker Cards and Other Incentives for Walkers** (50%). These two activities also were the ones most often marked both *Important* and *Reasonable & Practical*.
- Enforcement or Engineering Changes: The list of changes in enforcement and engineering did not produce the same level of enthusiastic responses. However, three fourths (75%) think **Have a police car present during peak traffic hours is Important** (but only 17% think it is *Reasonable & Practical*). About 67% marked **Provide or add more crossing guards** as *Important*. Over half (58%) feel that **Lower speed limits/increase fines for speeding** is *Important*.
 - While the small number of respondents requires caution when making conclusions about this group's opinions of *Enforcement or Engineering Changes*, it is slightly troubling that **only three or four of the changes have any real support from workshop participants**. Since such changes are known to be integral to making communities more walkable, **increased efforts to make citizens in this area more supportive of them** appear to be necessary.

Workshop Conclusions:

- Participants are not able to speak knowledgeably about their community action plans (limitation due to abridged workshop). Thus, **efforts to publicize these plans within communities and to stimulate comment about them are needed if the plans are to receive wide support from volunteers in those communities**.
- Volunteers **need to know more about ways that walkability projects can be funded** (limitation due to abridged workshop). The rating for which they had the lowest competence rating (2.7) was *Help write a grant to fund a walkable community project*.
- Therefore, **additional discussion or training in the use of strategies will be required** for even the most enthusiastic volunteers who remain committed to this project during the next several months.

Recommendations:

- Contact people should be clearly indicated when additional efforts are made to publicize community action plans.
- **More publicity about community action plans is necessary** if widespread support for walkable communities is to be generated and maintained. Such publicity should include opportunities for discussion—probably best accomplished in small groups—that should produce two clear results:
 1. **A person (or office) to contact for progress reports** and
 2. **Likely sources of funding** for such programs.
- Both these things will **increase credibility and maintain volunteer enthusiasm**, especially when delays and unexpected setbacks occur.

An Evaluation of the Franklin Elementary School, Modesto CA Walkable Community Workshop with Safe Routes to School Focus

Introduction:

On March 15, 2006, the Safe Communities Coalition hosted a Walkable Community Workshop at Franklin Elementary School for residents of Stanislaus County—mostly residing in or near the city of Modesto. California Walkability Expert Paul Zykofofsy led the workshop on behalf of the California Center for Physical Activity. The workshop focused on strategies that volunteers could use to increase walkability throughout the community for all segments of the population, including children going to and from school.

Participants:

The twenty-five participants included ten county public health representatives, three county Public Works staff, two grocery store representatives, a sheriff, a highway patrol officer, trauma nurse, city transportation coordinator and two neighborhood collaborative representatives. Over half of the participants identified themselves as professionals associated with public health, government, or public service agencies. Only three indicated that they were parents, and only one was involved with the school in focus. Additionally, three were from the city of Galt, in Sacramento County. They had heard about this workshop at their city council meeting and were strongly interested in it, so they were invited to attend to see whether they wanted to schedule similar training in their city.

Evaluation Outcomes:

- General Opinion of the Workshop: The mean score with which Franklin respondents evaluated their workshop was 4.8, an unusually high rating. Franklin respondents liked the content (safety issues and onsite photographs) of the workshop.
 - One respondent remarked: *“Need to include more reference materials on how to implement the programs you talked about.”*
- Competence: All respondents indicated their competence increased. Franklin respondents feel most competent (3.8) about ***Coordinate safe routes to school efforts at a school or districtwide***, followed by ***Lead a walk audit, similar to the one conducted at this training, to identify barriers to walking***. Franklin respondents felt less than average confidence about ***Help write a grant to fund a walkable community project***.
- Relationship-building: When asked whether they had formed new relationships or strengthened existing ones in the workshop, the comments suggest that residents appreciated the opportunity to meet city and county officials and vice versa. In regard to **stakeholders** participants thought **should have been involved in the training** with them, **county and city officials were named more often than school officials or parents**.
 - “Talked to community representatives and helped strengthen existing relationships” – Health Services Agency participant
 - “I learned of helpful folks I didn’t know existed, i.e., Trauma person!” – Elected official
- Readiness to work on a plan: All but one respondent said they were ready to work on a plan to increase walking, biking, or the use of public transportation in their community. Franklin respondents were more varied in their opinions of their **community’s** readiness to work on a plan to increase walking, biking, or the use of public transportation. Franklin respondents’ comments show that at least two respondents know of plans currently underway in their communities.
- Education and Encouragement Activities: The overall enthusiasm of the Franklin respondents for *Education and Encouragement Activities* is noteworthy, and should be seen as most encouraging to those who seek to make their communities more walkable. The only comment was about one respondent’s **concerns about drug dealers**.

- The activity thought *Important* by the largest number of respondents was ***Educate Neighbors About Safe Routes to Schools*** (83%), followed closely by ***Educate Parents About Safe Routes to Schools*** (78%). ***Integrate Walking/Bicycling into school curriculum*** was next (72%).
- The only activity marked both *Important* and *Reasonable & Practical* by at least half the Franklin respondents was ***Coordinate Walk to School Events, Walk and Roll Wednesdays***.
- Enforcement or Engineering Changes: Three-quarters listed ***Have a police car present during peak traffic hours*** is *Important*. A similarly high percentage of Franklin respondents (78%) think that it is important to ***Work with animal control services to remove threatening pets/animals***. Other *enforcement or engineering changes* that at least two-thirds of the Franklin respondents think are ***Important*** are: ***Repair or widen existing sidewalks, Add new sidewalks/curb ramps/crosswalks, Improve existing crosswalks, Move automobile pick up and drop off zone away from front of school, Add “Yield to Pedestrians in Crosswalk” signs in the street.***
 - A much smaller percentage of Franklin respondents think enforcement and engineering changes are *Reasonable & Practical*. The only one that at least half (50%) feel that way about is ***Add new bicycle paths/lengthen existing bike paths***.
- Community Action Plans: Of the four strategies identified in a community action plan, *Educational activities (training, additional workshops, etc.)* appears to be most often used (4.0), followed closely by *Encouragement (promotional activities, Walk to School Events, PR campaigns)* (3.9). Enforcement and engineering activities lagged behind with scores of 3.1 and 3.0, respectively, but these are still healthy indicators that community action plans include all four strategy areas emphasized in the training.
 - The large number of non-responses to this question is still a cause for some concern and indicates that **significant numbers of participants are not able to speak knowledgeably about their community action plans**. Thus, efforts to publicize these plans within communities and to stimulate comment about them should be considered for Stanislaus County, just as was recommended for Placer County. Many Franklin respondents (44%) appear to know little about their community action plans.
- Who to contact: All the contacts named were reasonable in that they are people or places likely to know the progress of walkability projects. The large number of non-responses suggests that **contact people should be clearly indicated when additional efforts are made to publicize community action plans**.

Recommendations:

- Volunteers need to be given more information about ways that walkability projects can be funded.
- More publicity about community action plans is necessary if widespread support for walkable communities is to be generated and maintained. Further, we recommend that such publicity include opportunities for discussion—probably best accomplished in small groups—that covers two additional issues in more detail:
 1. Likely sources of funding for such programs, and
 2. A person (or office) to contact for progress reports.
- Such additional publicity, with discussion of these details, will increase credibility and maintain volunteer enthusiasm, especially when delays and unexpected setbacks occur.

Walkable Community Workshops: A Comparison

Date:	February 2, 2006	March 15, 2006
School:	Twelve Bridges Elementary	Franklin Elementary
Location:	Lincoln, CA	Modesto, CA
Coordinator:	Wendi Kallins	Paul Zykofsky
Length:	2 hours	4 hours
Format:	No walk audit	Walk audit
Primary attendees:	Parents	Professionals
Participants:	20	25
Evaluations submitted	12 (60%)	18 (72%)

- Participants: The Franklin workshop had far fewer parents and school employees and many more people who work in the types of agencies usually involved with efforts to increase walkability. Such participants might be expected to be more knowledgeable (than parents and school employees) about problems involved in getting engineering and enforcement changes made, and they might have **more experience—and thus, greater confidence—in using strategies** discussed in the training
- General Opinion of Workshop: The mean score with which Franklin respondents evaluated their workshop was 4.8, an unusually high rating, compared with ratings of the same training in Placer County (4.6)—as well as when compared with ratings for similar workshops in Salinas (4.7), Del Rio (4.7), and Shasta (4.0)s.
- Competency: Franklin respondents described themselves as significantly more confident than the Twelve Bridges respondents did. The basic differences between Franklin respondents and Twelve Bridges respondents is that Franklin people were consistently higher in their estimates of their competence **in Undertaking Walkability Strategies**
 - A major exception was with *Implement walkable community **education and encouragement strategies***, where their reasonable healthy estimate of competence (3.6) was significantly lower than Twelve Bridges estimate of 4.4 (between **High** and **Above Average**) for this strategy.
 - A strategy about which Franklin people feel significantly more confident than Twelve Bridges is *Develop a task force/coalition for a walkable community* (3.6 to 2.9).
 - In another situation where Franklin responses are similar to those at Twelve Bridges, answers about funding sources identified in the workshop, may imply that such information needs to be included in the workshop—or, if it is there, it needs to be emphasized more.
- Stakeholders to involve: Compared to respondents to the Twelve Bridges workshop, the Franklin people name many more types of people, and were much more specific about who they thought should be involved.
- Education and Encouragement Activities: As was the case with the Twelve Bridges respondents, the overall enthusiasm of the Franklin respondents for *Education and Encouragement Activities* is noteworthy, and should be seen as most encouraging to those who seek to make their communities more walkable.

- After both workshops, the activity thought *Important* by the largest number of respondents was *Educate Neighbors About Safe Routes to Schools* (83%, 75%), followed closely by *Educate Parents About Safe Routes to Schools* (78%, 67%).
- At Franklin, *Integrate Walking/Bicycling into school curriculum* was next (72%), while for Twelve Bridges the next activity was *Coordinate Walk to School Events, Walk and Roll Wednesdays, etc.* (67%).
- The activity most often judged *Reasonable & Practical* at both Franklin and Twelve Bridges was *Coordinate Walk to School Events, Walk and Roll Wednesdays, etc.* (50%, 58%).
- Engineering and Enforcement Activities: About the same percentage of them (78%) as Twelve Bridges respondents (75%) think that to *Have a police car present during peak traffic hours* is *Important*, but a much higher percentage of Franklin people (44% vs. 17%) also think it is *Reasonable & Practical*.
 - Unlike participants at Twelve Bridges, a high percentage of Franklin respondents (78%) think that it is important to *Work with animal control services to remove threatening pets/ animals*.
- Community Action Plans: When asked to think about the action plans for their communities and to rate the extent to which the four main types of strategies discussed in the workshop were included in those action plans, Franklin respondents had difficulty responding, but not as much as Twelve Bridges respondents did. **Significant numbers of participants are not able to speak knowledgeably about their community action plans.**
 - Franklin: healthy indicators that community action plans include all four strategy areas emphasized in the training – education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement.
 - The large number of non-responses to this question is still a cause for some concern and indicate that significant numbers of participants are not able to speak knowledgeably about their community action plans. Thus, efforts to publicize these plans within communities and to stimulate comment about them should be considered for Stanislaus County, just as was recommended for Placer County.
- Overall: Implied success of these shorter workshops