

SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

Braefoot Elementary



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The 2016/2017 Active & Safe Routes to School Program is part of People Power, the Active Transportation and Healthy Communities Program, which aims to motivate, support and encourage residents to walk, roll and cycle more often. People Power has been made possible through the generosity of our funding partners.



The Capital Regional District (hereinafter: CRD) is the regional government for 13 municipalities and three electoral areas on southern Vancouver Island and the nearby Gulf Islands, serving more than 377,000 citizens.



The District of Saanich, with a population of 114,000 people, is a sustainable community where providing opportunities for balanced, active and diverse healthy lifestyles is recognized as paramount for ensuring social well-being and economic vibrancy, for current and future generations.



The Real Estate Foundation is a philanthropic organization based in British Columbia. Its mission is to transform land use attitudes and practices through innovation, stewardship, and learning.



The Traffic Safety Commission's purpose is to review traffic safety problems in the capital region and make recommendations for reducing or eliminating them.



The Victoria Foundation is a community foundation that connects visionary donors with causes that truly matter. Its goal is to invest in people, projects, and non-profit organizations that make communities stronger – now and in the long-term.

Capital Regional District

www.crd.bc.ca/project/region-al-transportation/active-safe-routes-to-school

District of Saanich

www.saanich.ca/EN/main/co-mmunity/getting-around/walking/safe-routes-to-school.html

HASTe BC

www.hastebc.org

National Active & Safe Routes to School

www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning

Summary

The purpose of this School Travel Plan is to provide a summary of the 18-month School Travel Planning process at Braefoot Elementary School (hereinafter: Braefoot). The School Travel Plan is a living document belonging to the school that should be revisited regularly in order to update the status of the School Travel Action Plan and to incorporate future evaluation findings. The School Travel Plan identifies and prioritizes engineering, encouragement, and enforcement actions aimed at creating a safer and more comfortable environment for students and their families to walk, bike, and roll to school.

This document consists of information compiled since the CRD's Active and Safe Routes to School (hereinafter: ASRTS) program began at Braefoot in the fall of 2016. Results of the School Travel Planning process indicate an increase in active school travel mode share, with recommendations that support facilitating active options for families to travel to and from school.

Background

In 2016, the CRD contracted the Hub for Active School Travel (hereinafter: HASTe) to implement the School Travel Planning process as part of the CRD's ASRTS program. School districts and municipalities were solicited to identify schools that would benefit from School Travel Planning. Through this process, a total of 20 schools across 10 municipalities and one electoral area were recruited to participate in the program. This report focuses on Braefoot, located in the District of Saanich (hereinafter: Saanich).

School Travel Planning

School Travel Planning (hereinafter: STP) is a community-based planning process that has been used with success to date in communities across Canada to increase the number of families choosing active transportation modes to get to and from school. School Travel Planning uses a collaborative approach, working to involve all relevant stakeholders and enable communities to tackle the root causes of their schools' transportation challenges.

Key benefits of School Travel Planning are:

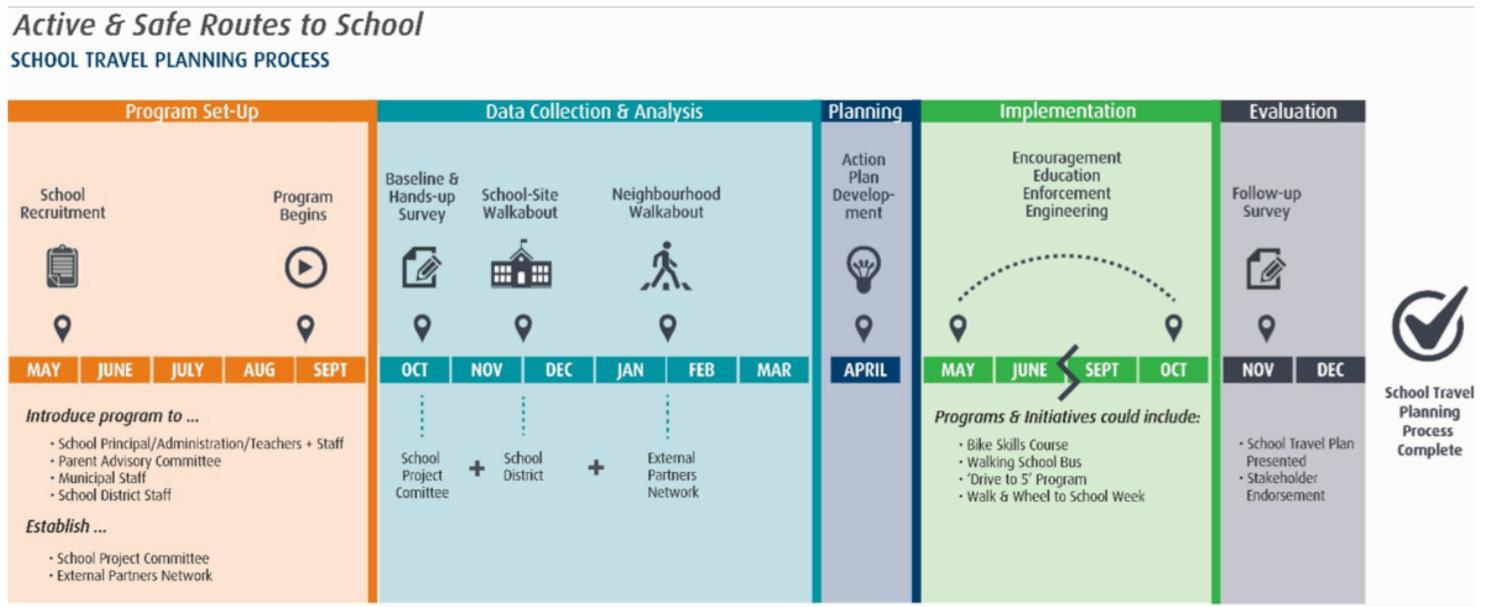
- Improved health and fitness of students
- Improved traffic safety
- Reduction in pollution
- Improved air quality

STP involves a network of representatives of key school-transportation stakeholder groups who make up a Stakeholder Committee and inform and support the STP process. Organizations and individuals that contributed to Braefoot’s STP process included administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and students from the school as well as staff from Saanich, the Greater Victoria School District, Saanich Police, Island Health, and other community partners.

At individual schools, the STP process is led by an STP Facilitator, who convenes a School Committee, comprised of staff, parents, and administration, to outline specific active school travel barriers and solutions, developing the foundation and specifics for each school’s Travel Plan.

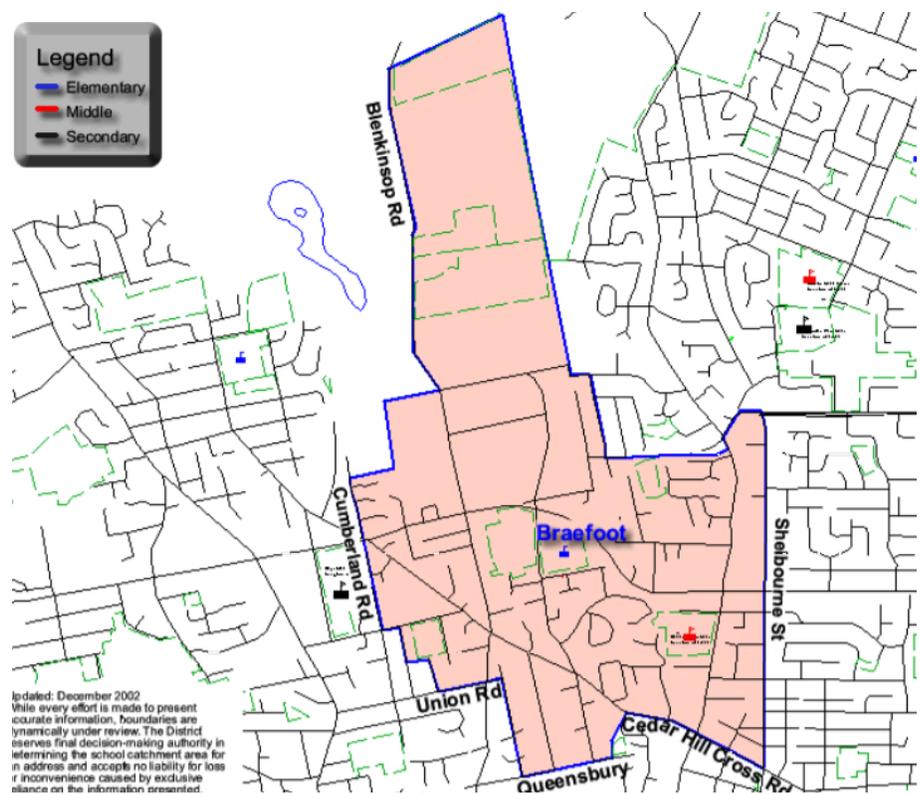
The School Travel Planning Process

There are five phases of the 18-month STP process.



Braefoot Elementary is part of the Greater Victoria School District and is located at 1440 Harrop Rd., steadily enrolling over 230 students from Kindergarten to grade 5 from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. As of July 2017, the building was in the development stage of being seismically upgraded.

Braefoot offers a number of sports teams as well as choir and drama programs for students to join. The school hosts school walks/runs on Friday afternoons at 12:45 p.m. and promotes Walk on Wednesdays. Braefoot participates in the Red Cedar Book Club, which encourages students to read from a selection of fiction and non-fiction books and vote for their favourites. Braefoot is also an ongoing participant in the SITE (School Integrated Teacher Education) project, focusing on physical education and language arts.



▲ Braefoot Catchment Map. Source: SD61 website

Neighbourhood Overview

Braefoot is located within the Cedar Hill neighbourhood of Saanich, adjacent to the semi-rural Blenkinsop Valley. Cedar Hill is a largely residential area comprised predominantly of detached single-family homes. The area received a Walk Score of 48/100 and a Transit Score of 48/100. Walk Score is a measure of neighbourhood walking and transit accessibility, and is often an indicator of community health and well-being (www.walkscore.com). The school property is adjacent to Braefoot Park and the Braefoot Community Association; is just over 2 km from 53.4-hectare Cedar Hill Park; and is 3 km from both the Gordon Head Recreation Centre and Cedar Hill Recreation Centre.

Transportation Overview

Braefoot is bordered to the north by McKenzie Ave., is two blocks east of Blenkinsop Rd., and is a few blocks north of Cedar Hill Cross Rd., all of which are major roads with existing on-road commuter bikeways and sidewalks, and are major transit routes as well as truck routes. According to Statistics Canada's 2011 National Household Survey, 11% of employed Saanich residents over the age of 15 report using active transportation modes to get to work.

“More than anything else, we want our child’s journey to and from school to be safe...It is about balancing our time, his education, and our work.”

- Braefoot Parent

Methodology and Results

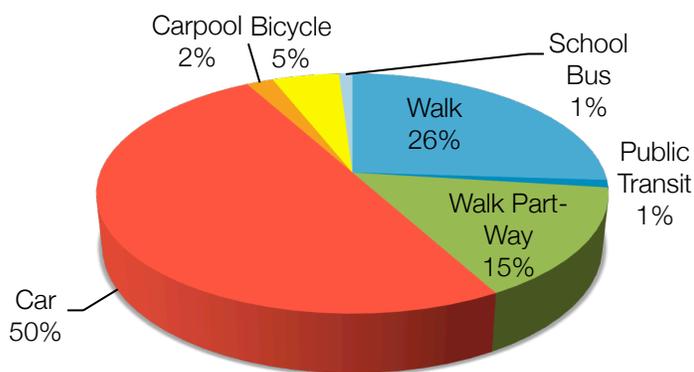
Baseline school travel data was collected through a variety of methods, including student hands-up surveys, family take-home surveys, a school site visit and walkabout, and meetings with the school community.

Baseline hands-up surveys and family take-home surveys were completed in October 2016.

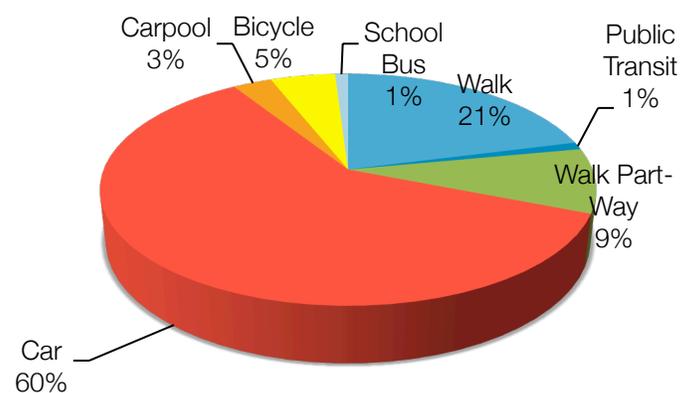
The school site walkabout at Braefoot took place on November 21, 2016, and the neighbourhood walkabout took place on February 20, 2017 in the afternoon. The walkabouts were attended by staff, administrators, parents, and students, who observed the afterschool travel patterns and toured the area to investigate and examine concerns. The walkabout informed the Travel Challenges section of this report, the Best Routes to School Map (Appendix B), and the School Travel Action Plan (Appendix A).

Hands-Up Baseline Data

Eleven out of thirteen divisions of students from K-5 participated in hands-up surveys in October 2016. Teachers asked students to raise their hands when identifying their method of travel to and from school, and recorded responses daily over the course of one week. Results from this survey are presented below.



▲ Travel Mode to School



▲ Travel Mode from School

“We walk part-way as much as possible, and are working up to doing the whole thing eventually.”

- Braefoot Parent

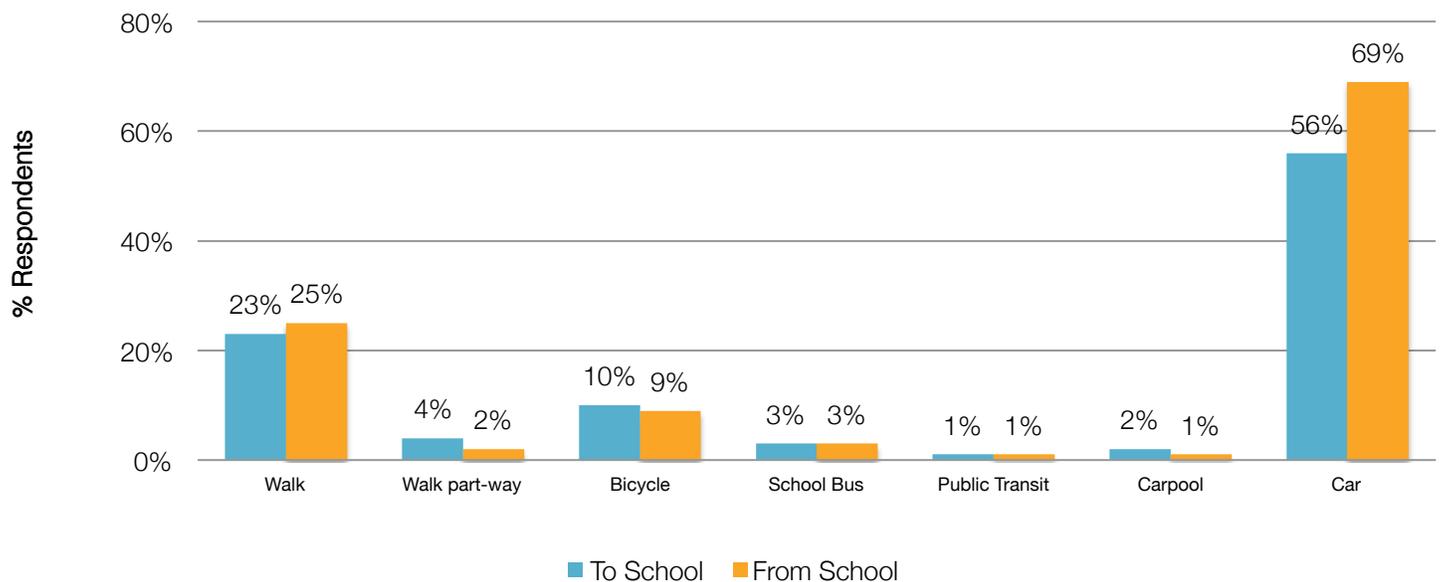
A copy of the baseline hands-up survey is attached to this document as Appendix C.

Family Survey Baseline Data

Baseline family surveys were sent home with each student in October 2016. Families were asked to complete the survey and return it to the school within one week. Families were asked about their child(ren)’s travel choices to and from school, factors that influenced transportation decisions, and local transportation concerns. A copy of the baseline family take-home survey is attached to this document as Appendix D.

128 families completed the survey at Braefoot. The findings from this survey are presented below.

▼ How does your child(ren) usually get to and from school?

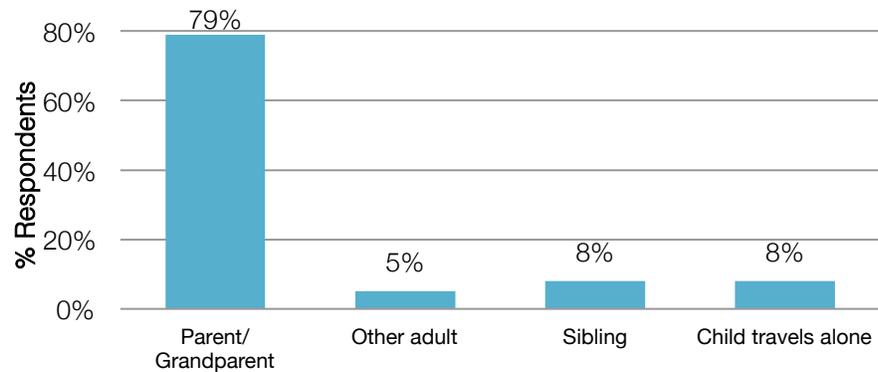


Parents and guardians reported lower rates of walking part-way, slightly lower rates of biking, and slightly higher rates of using the school bus than in the hands-up survey, but overall mode share percentages were fairly similar.

“I think given the distance that we live that walking and cycling is quite a challenge to do constantly. It is likely more realistic to use transit as an alternative.”

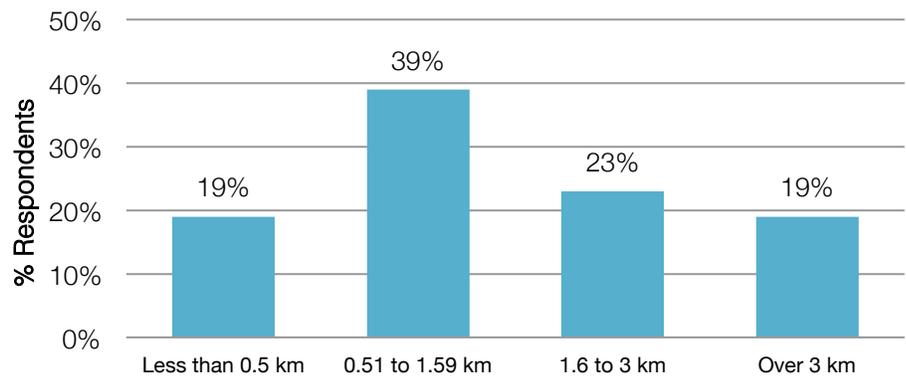
- Braefoot Parent

▼ **Who usually accompanies your child on the way to school?**



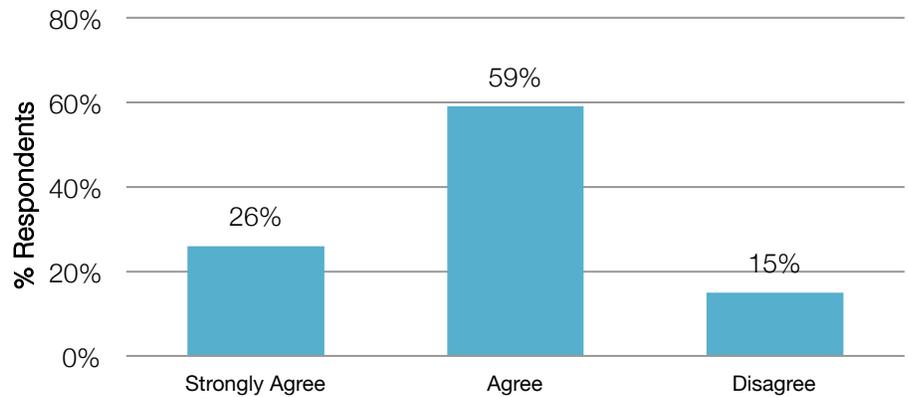
The majority (84%) of students travel to and/or from school with an adult, while 8% travel with a sibling and 8% travel alone.

▼ **How far away from school do you live?**



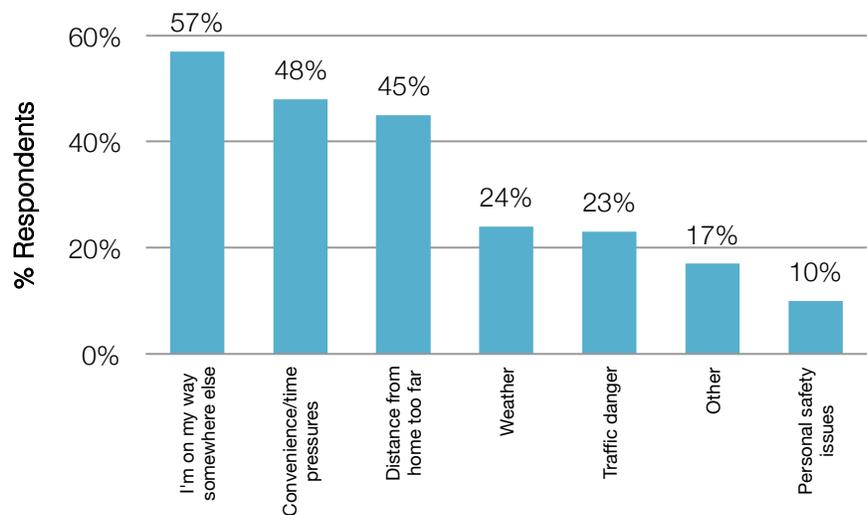
Of families surveyed, the largest segment (39%) live between .5 and 1.59 km of the school, with 41% of these students walking or biking to school and 52% being driven. Of the 19% of families that live within 0.5 km of the school, 66% of their children walk or bike to school; however, this still leaves 30% – almost 1 in 3 – that are driven to school even though it is a 6-7-minute walk or a 2-minute bike ride away.

▼ **Our neighbourhood is safe for children to walk to school**



The majority (85%) of families believe their neighbourhood is safe, with no one strongly disagreeing with this statement.

▼ **What are the main reasons your child(ren) is/are usually driven to/from school?**



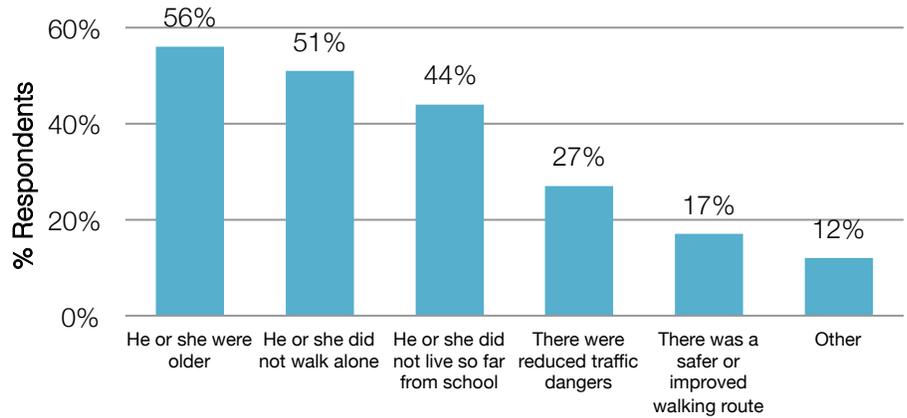
Parents cited being on the way to somewhere else (57%), convenience (48%), and distance (45%) as the most common reasons for driving their child to and/or from school. "Other" responses related to children having special needs; time

“When we walk to school we have more time to talk and prepare for the day or talk about how it went. It is important because they get more [of my] attention.”

- Braefoot Parent

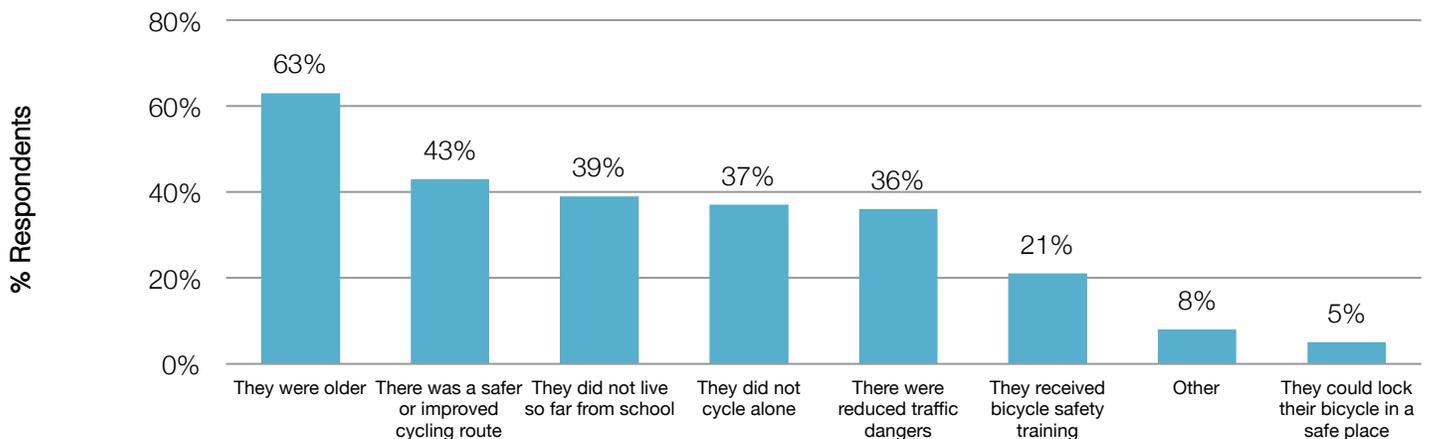
constraints; the child’s age, maturity and mood; and logistics with other children going to different places.

▼ **I would allow my child(ren) to walk to school if...**



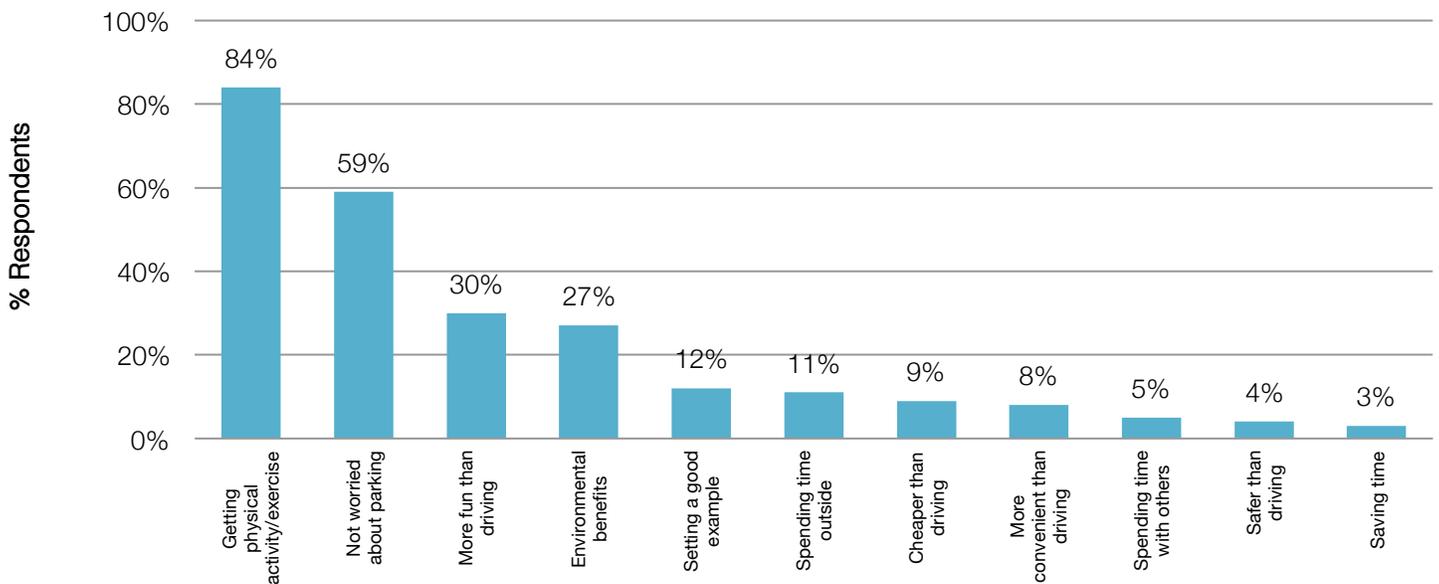
Of the 84 families that reported driving their child(ren) to and/or from school, the most common conditions under which parents indicated they would allow their child to walk to and/or from school were if their child was older (56%), they were not alone (51%), and if they lived closer to the school (44%). Notable “Other” responses generally related to children not having out-of-school commitments, parents having time to walk with their child, and infrastructure improvements to make walking easier and safer.

▼ **I would allow my child(ren) to cycle to school if...**



Parents indicated that they would allow their child to bike to and/or from school if the child was older (63%), if there were safer routes (43%), if they lived closer (39%), if the child was not alone (37%), and if there was reduced traffic (36%). Notable “Other” responses related to time constraints, the child’s ability to ride a bike, and the logistical demands of going different places before and after school.

▼ **When you walk or cycle as a family, what motivates you?**



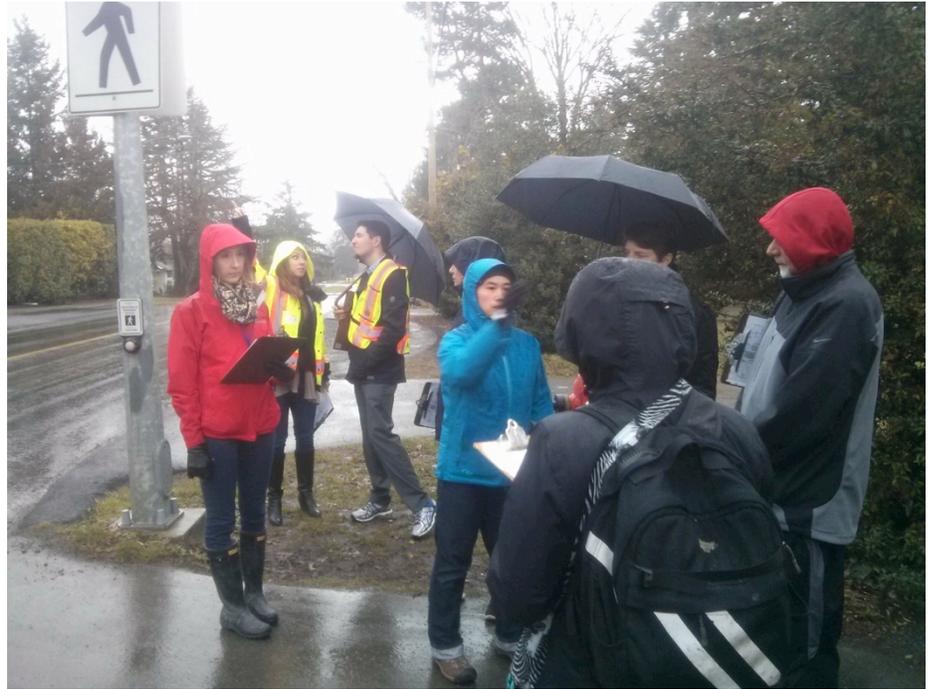
When asked what motivates families to walk or cycle together, the most common reason was for exercise (84%), followed by the benefit of not needing to worry about parking (59%). Also fairly common was the belief that walking or biking is more fun than driving (30%) and provides environmental benefits (27%).

Transportation Walkabout

Two walkabouts were held at Braefoot to explore transportation challenges facing the school, and begin developing strategies to help the school community overcome them.

A school site walkabout, attended by members of the school community, was held on November 31, 2016 to explore issues pertaining to the school site and campus.

A community walkabout, attended by members of both the school community and the external partner network, was held on February 20, 2017 to explore traffic safety issues and potential walking and cycling routes around the school.



▲ Participants at the Braefoot community walkabout

Both walkabouts were followed by meetings at which participants debriefed and discussed their experiences, and began brainstorming solutions to the challenges they had observed. The walkabouts and subsequent discussions informed the School Travel Action Plan developed for Braefoot (Appendix A).

School travel challenges are the barriers to active travel faced by students, families and staff at Braefoot. These challenges were identified through the take-home surveys where students identified on a map the areas of their highest concern, through focus groups with student leaders; and through conversations with the school administrators and other members of the school community.

This section, along with Braefoot's School Travel Action Plan (Appendix A), identifies some of the challenges and presents recommended solutions, drawn from stakeholders and best practices in the field of ASRTS, to overcome the barriers to active travel at Braefoot.

1.

Pedestrian safety in the school zone

Braefoot's front entrance faces south towards Harrop Rd., a two-way residential road. There are no-stopping signs on the north (i.e. school) side of the road, meaning vehicles cannot park or stop on that side of the road; however, on-street parking is allowed on the south side. The school's parking lot and pick-up/drop-off loop both enter off of and exit onto Harrop Rd.

There is a sidewalk on the north (i.e. school) side of Harrop Rd., between Braefoot Rd. to the west and the school's parking lot. An opening in the school fence just west of the parking lot leads to a pedestrian pathway, which in turn leads around the parking lot; this provides walking families with dedicated access to the school and playground.

Pedestrian safety in the school zone was the most common concern voiced by parents through the take-home survey. Parents reported that they frequently observed irresponsible driver behaviour on Harrop Rd., in the school's pick-up/drop-off loop, and on residential roads around the school.



▲ The school zone at Braefoot in the morning



▲ The sidewalk on the north side of Harrop Rd.

Most of the vehicles present in the school zone before and after school are dropping off or picking up Braefoot students. Harrop Rd is a one block-long residential road, with only about 25 households on or accessing it. On the other hand, with around 60% of Braefoot students being regularly driven to and from school, the school draws up to 180 vehicles during the periods before and after school.

Reducing the number of vehicle trips to and from Braefoot would reduce congestion and improve safety in the school zone. Only 35% of Braefoot students who live within 1.6 km of the school, generally considered a walkable distance for primary students, currently walk to school. Just less than two-thirds (57%) of families at Braefoot live within 1.6 km of the school, and 85% of families surveyed agreed that the neighbourhood was safe for children to walk in. These figures suggest that there is a lot of discretionary driving at Braefoot; such behaviour can often be effectively addressed through school-led efforts to promote and support walking and cycling to school, such as the Drive to Five locations and Walk on Wednesdays.



- ▲ **The footpath on school property allows walking students to avoid the parking lot and pick-up/drop-off loop**

2.

Pedestrian pathways at the school

According to route data gathered through the baseline family survey, most walking students and families access Braefoot through the front entrance off Harrop Rd. Though a dedicated pedestrian pathway allows pedestrians approaching the school from the west to avoid the school's driveway and parking lot, comments made in the baseline family survey and observations during the walkabout suggest that many ignore the pathway in favour of walking through the driveway and parking lot. This puts walking students in potential conflict with drivers approaching or departing Braefoot, especially during the periods before and after school.



- ▲ **Braefoot's earthquake container**

During the walkabout, participating parents mentioned that Braefoot's earthquake container a large white shipping container located on the walking path between the playground and the school, constitutes a physical and psychological barrier to students. Participants on the walkabout suggested that the appearance and location of the container may be encouraging students to cut through the parking lot rather than use the pedestrian pathway when walking home from school.

Walkabout participants had several suggestions about how to make the pedestrian pathway more

obvious and attractive, including highlighting the pathway with bright and fun street art, such as painted footprints leading from the sidewalk on Harrop Rd. to the school; installing a fence along the south side of the staff parking lot to prevent pedestrians from cutting through it on their way to and from school; and facilitating a student art project to beautify the earthquake container with a mural encouraging active transportation.

3. Pedestrian crossings on Blenkinsop Rd.

Blenkinsop Rd. is a major collector road that runs north-south through the Braefoot catchment, a few blocks west of the school. Though it is on the west side of the catchment and, according to route data gathered through the baseline family survey, not crossed by many walking families, it drew more comments and concerns through the baseline family survey than any other roadway.



▲ The “Heat” map of walking routes for Braefoot families shows few trips originating west of Blenkinsop Rd.

One consistent source of concern voiced by parents through the baseline family survey was the volume



▲ The intersection of Blenkinsop Rd. and Cedar Hill Cross Rd.

and speed of motor vehicle traffic on Blenkinsop Rd. In particular, parents expressed that traffic made it difficult and dangerous for families and students to cross Blenkinsop Rd. on their way to school. This may explain why so few Braefoot families provided walking routes through the baseline family survey that included this crossing: traffic on Blenkinsop Rd. may be a barrier that is depressing rates of active travel at Braefoot.



▲ **The slip lane at the intersection of Blenkinsop Rd. and Cedar Hill Cross Rd.**

Parents mentioned specific crossing points on Blenkinsop Rd. that they felt warranted attention. They expressed concerns about pedestrian safety at the irregular intersection of Cedar Hill Cross Rd. and Blenkinsop Rd. Specifically, parents mentioned poor sightlines and reduced visibility created by the right-turn slip lane in the northwest quadrant of the intersection. They also reported concerns about the safety of pedestrian crossings in the main intersection: the intersection's irregular orientation increases the distances and time pedestrians spend in the roadway, and the combination of turning lanes and odd angles produces conflicts between motor vehicles and pedestrians who are in the intersection or waiting to cross.



▲ **The mid-block crosswalk to Braefoot Park**

North of Cedar Hill Cross Rd., parents mentioned through the baseline family survey that cars do not always stop at the mid-block crosswalk across Blenkinsop Rd. that leads to Braefoot Park. Though the crosswalk is enhanced with pedestrian activated flashing beacons, parents mentioned that parked cars sometimes obscure the beacons and the pedestrians waiting to cross, and that the zebra stripes on the road are in need of repainting.



▲ **Blenkinsop Rd. near Judge Pl.**

South of this area, there are no pedestrian crossing facilities across Blenkinsop Rd. within the Braefoot catchment. Through the baseline family survey and during the walkabout, parents mentioned that the lack of crosswalks, along with the traffic on, curves in, and width and grade of, Blenkinsop Rd. south of

Cedar Hill Cross Rd. make it especially challenging for families to cross safely at Union Rd. and Judge Pl.



▲ **Wende Rd., is narrow and has no sidewalks**

4.

Pedestrian safety south of the school

Braefoot is located on the north side of a quiet residential neighbourhood. The neighbourhood is hemmed in on all four sides by busy collector roads – Cedar Hill Cross Rd. to the south, Blenkinsop Rd. to the west, McKenzie Ave. to the north, and Cedar Hill Rd. to the east – but its narrow roads and few access points keep through-traffic low. The only real generator off motor vehicle traffic in the neighbourhood is Braefoot itself and the nearby middle school, Cedar Hill Middle.

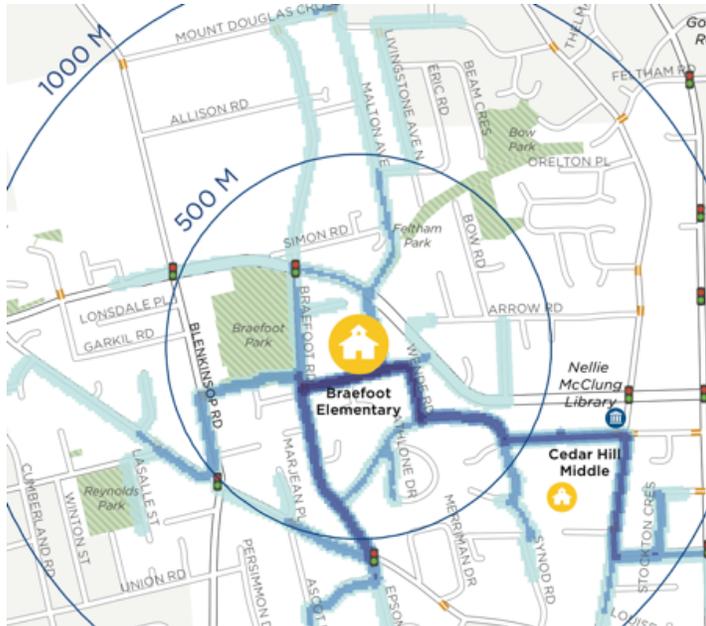
Wende Rd., Harrop Rd., and Shorncliffe Rd. are narrow, one-lane roads that permit two-way travel but are often not wide enough to allow vehicles to pass one another without slowing down or pulling over. Through the baseline family survey, walking parents voiced concerns about the safety of their children walking on these roads during the periods before and after school, when pick-up and drop-off traffic is highest.

Increased levels of walking and cycling, especially among families who live within 1.5 km of the school, and use of Drive to Five locations and opportunities, would reduce the amount of vehicle traffic using the narrow roads around Braefoot. Infrastructure and traffic calming measures that encourage drivers to use roads in the neighbourhood that have sidewalks, such as Braefoot Rd. and Harrop Rd., would also reduce the number of potential on-street interactions between walking students and motor vehicles.

5.

Access to the north side of the overpass

Though half of Braefoot’s catchment area lies on the north side of McKenzie Ave., according to route data from the baseline family survey very few walking trips originate north of the school.



▲ The “Heat” map of walking routes for Braefoot families shows few trips originating north of McKenzie Ave.

The at-grade pedestrian crossing facility across McKenzie Ave. closest to Braefoot is the pedestrian activated traffic signal at the intersection of Braefoot Rd. and McKenzie Ave., which one parent described as “horrendously dangerous” in the baseline family survey.

A pedestrian overpass across McKenzie Ave. connects Feltham Park to the fields north of the school, and is accessible from the north side of McKenzie Ave. Braefoot makes use of the overpass and the park in its regular physical activity programs



▲ The overpass provides pedestrians with a safe way to cross McKenzie Ave.

for students. However, through the baseline family survey, parents expressed concerns about the overpass and Feltham Park that might be limiting their use as walking routes to and from school.



▲ Walking paths in Feltham Park

Parents expressed concerns about the lack of lighting on the Bow Park Path, and blind spots on the trail created by the winding path it takes through Feltham Park.



▲ Access to the north side of the overpass from McKenzie Rd.

Parents also mentioned that non-park access to the overpass from the north requires families to walk along McKenzie Rd., a busy major road, that they don't feel is safe or comfortable for walking children.

Over the course of the STP process at Braefoot, a number of interventions were undertaken to address barriers to active school travel and encourage walking and cycling trips to school. Education and Engagement interventions inform members of the school community about active transportation; Encouragement interventions encourage students and families to travel actively; Enforcement interventions compel awareness and compliance with traffic laws and bylaws; and Engineering interventions are physical changes that make walking and cycling safer, more comfortable and more convenient.

Interventions undertaken during the STP process at Braefoot are detailed in the section below. Interventions identified that have yet to be undertaken can be found in Braefoot's School Travel Action Plan (Appendix A).

Education and Engagement

Cycling Education Program

As part of the CRD's ASRTS program, instructors from the Greater Victoria Bike to Work Society delivered a bicycle skills and safety course for students in grades 3-5 at Braefoot. Students participated in two 1.5 hour-long after-school sessions during the spring of 2017. The course taught students the essential bike handling and safety skills necessary to develop safe cycling behaviour, knowledge, and attitudes.

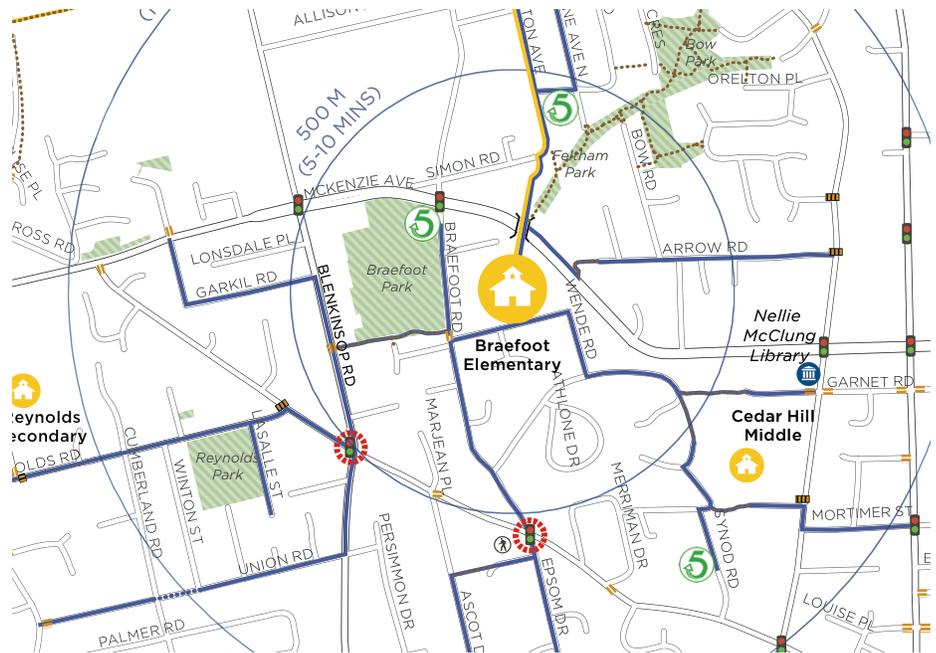
Walk and Wheel to School Week

Walk and Wheel to School Week was a week-long campaign hosted by the CRD, celebrating and encouraging students and their families to choose active travel for all or part of their journey to school. During the Walk and Wheel to School Week, the administration and members of the PAC promoted the Drive to Five locations by hosting a celebration station, there and at the school, for active travel options like cycling, bussing, or walking.

Best Routes Map

The Best Routes to School map features the best walking and cycling routes that connect all areas of the catchment to the school. Routes are selected based on information provided by the take-home survey and during the neighbourhood walkabout, as well as from consultation with the PAC and comparison with

current District of Saanich recommended routes. The routes selected feature pedestrian and cyclist supports such as sidewalks, bike lanes where applicable, and supported crossings. A copy of Braefoot’s Best Routes to School map is attached to this document as Appendix B.



▲ Cut-out of Braefoot’s Best Route to School Map

The school also received a poster-sized printout of the Best Routes to School map, which is now displayed prominently in the school's main entrance for parents, staff, and students to review.

Drive to Five

A Drive to Five program encourages parents to drop their children off at designated locations that are within a safe and comfortable five-minute walk to school. Parents can either park and walk with their kids or drop them off and let them walk alone.

To celebrate the Walk and Wheel campaign and encourage families to use the Drive to Five locations, the principal handed out snacks at each of them.

Encouragement

Walk on Wednesday

Prior to beginning the STP process in the fall of 2016, Braefoot had a pre-existing Walk on Wednesday program. Encouraging active lifestyles in students has been a high priority for the Braefoot for some time. Through the STP process, the school's Walk on Wednesday program was reinvigorated and new ideas were introduced. Walking students are now routinely surprised with treats throughout the year to keep interest and participation high, and the program promotes Braefoot's newly designated Drive to Five locations to make it accessible to families who live beyond a walkable distance from the school.

Walk On Wednesday:

As you know, we try and encourage as many students as possible to walk cycle or carpool to school on Wednesdays. Anything that reduces vehicle traffic in and around our school grounds is a plus for us and our environment. With the improving weather and the daily patrols, there is no reason why our students cannot walk up the hill from Braefoot Road. This week, Division 7 had 16 out of the 18 students participate in Walk On Wednesday. Way to go, Division 7. Wouldn't it be great if our whole school could achieve the same percentage of student participation. Our goal remains to have a vehicle free school grounds and for Walk on Wednesdays to extend to other days of the week.

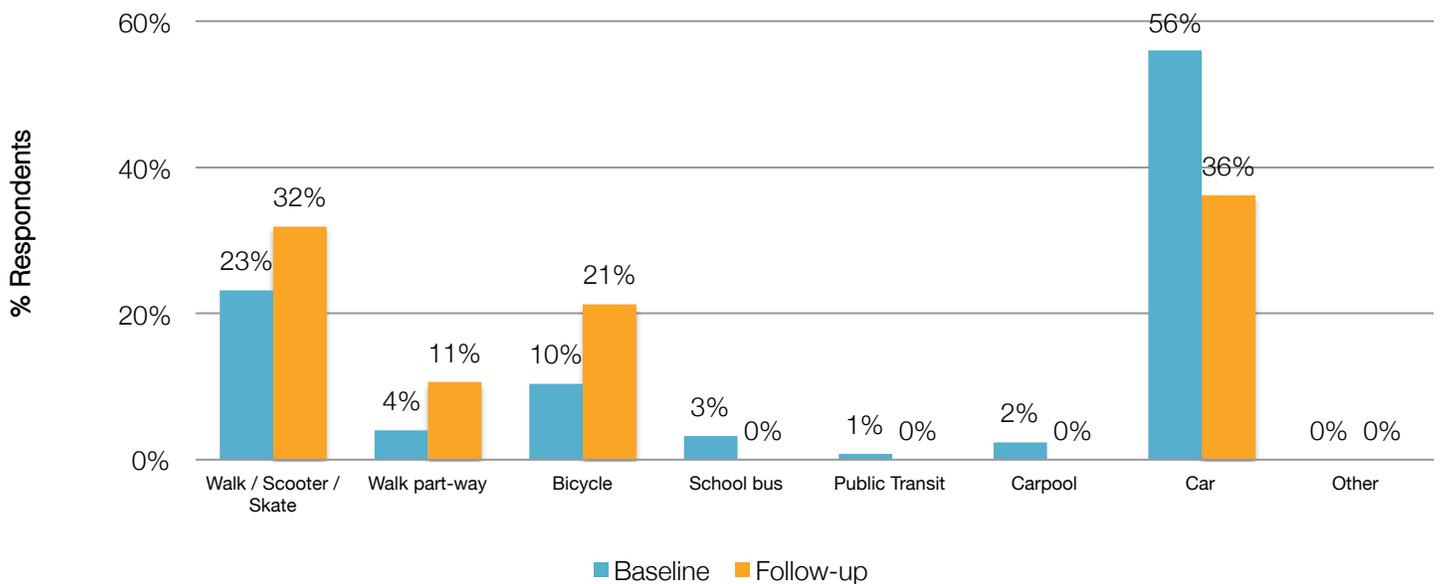
▲ Walk on Wednesday reminder notice in Braefoot's May 2017 newsletter

Methodology and Results

Online surveys were completed during October and November 2017, a year after baseline data was collected. A total of 41 families completed the follow-up survey.

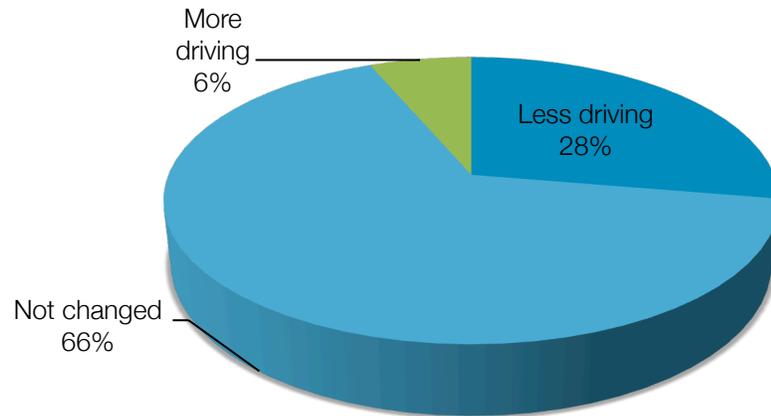
The follow-up survey collected information from parents about how their child(ren) travel to and from school, the distance that they live from the school, reasons they drive them to school (if applicable), whether families had changed their school travel habits, and which interventions had been most effective for their families.

▼ How does your child usually get to school?



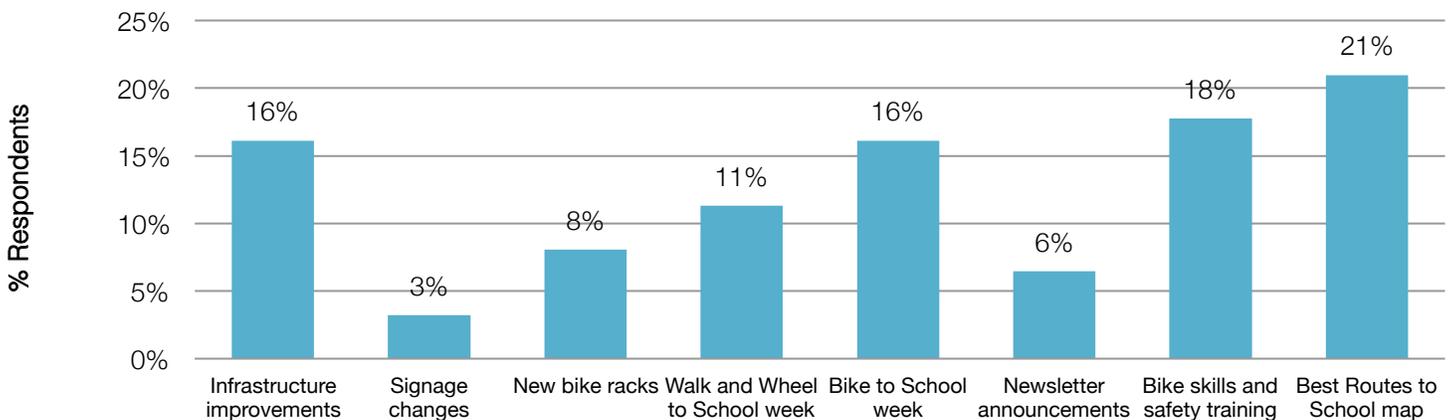
In the baseline survey conducted in the fall of 2016, 56% of families reported driving to school, 10% report cycling to school, and another 23% reported walking. In the follow-up survey, 35% of families reported driving to school, 21% reported cycling to school, and 32% reported walking. Overall, the rate of walking increased by almost a third, the rate of cycling more than doubled, and the rate of driving decreased by more than a third.

▼ **In what ways have your family's school travel habits changed, since the School Travel Planning process began in 2016?**



In the follow-up survey, 28% of families reported that they were driving less to school, 6% that they were driving more to school, and 66% that their travel habits were unchanged.

▼ **Which School Travel Planning activities do you feel have been most effective for your family?**



Parents who completed the survey felt that the Best Routes to School maps, bike skills and safety training, Bike to School Week and infrastructure improvements were the most effective activities implemented during the STP process.

Appendix A: School Travel Action Plan

Appendix B: Best Routes to School Map

Appendix C: Student Hands-up Survey

Appendix D: Family Take-home Survey

Appendix E: ASRTS Announcement

Appendix F: School Travel Planning Membership

Appendix G: Base Map

Appendix H: Heat Map