



Walkabout Summary

On June 3, 2013, five participants met at Glen Allen Elementary School in Glen Allen, Virginia to take a closer look at the walking and biking network around the school. In addition to the school SRTS champion, participants included representation from the PTA, school staff, Henrico County Schools and the Henrico County engineering department. The group met for one hour which included a 45-minute walk around the school and surrounding streets and a fifteen minute debrief to discuss the findings. Participants walked along Mill Road between Mill Place Rive and Mountain Road and around the school campus. The Virginia SRTS Program LTAC and the school champion also walked along a primary walking route -- Mill Place Drive -- to discuss a possible walking school bus route. The list below summarizes the findings.

Walkabout date: June 3, 2013

Location: Glen Allen Elementary School
Richmond Virginia

Champion: Kristen Powell

LTAC: Katie Mencarini, Central &
Hampton Roads

Possible Walking Routes:

Road Name	Lanes in each direction	Speed limit	Road Width
Mill Road	1	25mph, during school arrival and dismissal hours 45mph all other times	22ft
Mountain Road	1	40mph	24ft
Mill Place Drive	1	25mph	32ft

Existing Conditions

Henrico County Public Schools has designated Glen Allen Elementary School as a "No Walk Zone" which means all students are provided a school bus route. As a result, currently no students walk or bike to school, and the school is reluctant to encourage walking and biking until changes are made. However, the school does participate in International Walk to School Day.

Students arrive at school by both school bus and family vehicle. Ten buses arrive at about the same time to use the school bus driveway during arrival and dismissal hours. Several family vehicles drop off and pick up their children in the staff parking lot, which is separate from the school bus driveway. The majority of students who would likely walk to school live in Mill Place West, located directly across the street from the school site. These students are provided busing because they would need to cross Mill Road.



The team observed morning arrival prior to the walkabout and recorded their findings (see attached). Afternoon dismissal is an orderly process that efficiently connects students with the correct vehicle (family vehicle or school bus). The volume of family vehicles routinely spills out onto Mill Road. The engineer from Henrico County made suggestions for improving the family pick-up and drop-off configuration in the staff parking lot.

During the walk audit the team walked along Mill Road, between Mill Place Drive and Mountain Road. There is a 4ft sidewalk on the east side of Mill Road for the portion of the road immediately in front of the school. There are no shoulders on either side of Mill Road between Mountain Road and the bridge over Interstate 295. The streets in the neighborhood across from the school (Mill Place West) do not have sidewalks on either side of the streets. The team noted that while sidewalks are not present along Mill Place West and pedestrians typically walk in the roadway, the sight lines are good, the traffic volumes are low, and drivers are respectful of pedestrians in the roadway.

Glen Allen Elementary School abuts General Sheppard Crump Memorial Park to the east. While there is no paved trail connecting the two properties now, there may be opportunities to provide an off-road connection between the school and students living east of the school.

Issues/Barriers to Walking and Biking to School:

NOTE: Where issues and barriers are location-specific, location id's (Letter), is provided. These correspond with the enclosed map.

No sidewalks present on Mill Road (A)

The school is sited on Mill Road and every student travels along or across this road as part of their route to school. This is also the main route in and out of the neighborhood and provides direct access to Mountain Road. The walkabout participants noted that during peak morning and afternoon travel times, this road experiences relatively high traffic volumes. There is a segment of sidewalk directly in front of the school, but it only serves students coming from Mill Place Drive.



Sidewalks are only present on Mill Road in front of the school" (looking north)



Shoulders are also not present on either side of the road. To walk along this route, students would need to travel off the road on private property. The posted speed limit on this road is 25mph during school hours (indicated with flashers) and 45mph during all other times. The participants noted that the speed limit is rarely enforced.

Crossing Mill Road is challenging (B)

The single marked crosswalk along the possible walking routes is located on the southern leg of the intersection with Mill Place Drive and Mill Road. The striping pattern is two parallel bars, reducing its visibility to both pedestrians and motorists. There are school crossing signs placed in advance of the marked crosswalk in either direction on Mill Road, but there are no signs located at the crossing to make it more visible to motorists. This crosswalk lines up with the sidewalks on the school property. Neither side of the crossing has curb ramps and therefore do not meet American with Disabilities Act requirements.



Marked crosswalk across Mill Road at Mill Place Drive (looking east)

Additionally, there is no paved queuing space on the west side of Mill Road for pedestrians waiting to cross. Mill Road experiences relatively high traffic volumes during student travel times, with limited spacing for student pedestrians to cross. Walkabout participants also noted that a crossing guard is not present during student travel time to assist with students attempting to cross Mill Road.

Drive behavior does not encourage walking or biking to school

The team observed morning arrival prior to the walkabout and recorded their findings (see attached). Arrival is a challenging time for pedestrians because of the relatively high traffic volumes on Mill Road. Mill Road a common commuter route as it connects neighborhoods to Mountain Road and destinations north of



Flexible bollards were installed on Mill Road to discourage motorists traveling southbound on Mill Road from passing drivers in a parking lane (looking north)



Interstate 295.

Because of the volume of commuters and family vehicles trying to drop off their children in the morning, Mill Road becomes congested. Mill Road is one lane wide in each direction, and parents driving southbound, turning left into the parking lot create a long line of cars waiting to get through to Mountain Road. To discourage motorists from making potentially dangerous maneuvers around other motorists waiting to turn left into the parking lot, Henrico County installed flexible bollards on the southwest corner of Mill Road and Mill Place Drive. During the observation the team noticed (and filmed) drivers darting around cars waiting to make a left turn. This is the same location where students would be crossing the street if they were walking from Mill Place Drive.

Interstate 295 creates a barrier for walking and biking to school (C)

Several students who attend Glen Allen Elementary School live north of Interstate 295, which is approximately 900ft from the school. Mill Road forms an overpass that crossed Interstate 295, but there are no sidewalks along the overpass. The 5ft shoulders located on both sides of the overpass lack either grade-separation or a vertical barrier (e.g., a railing). The lack of pedestrian facilities along Mill Road and across Interstate 295 keeps students from being able to

walk and bike to school.



Mill Road overpass over Interstate 295 (looking north)

Bike Racks are not present on campus

If students were able to bike to school there are no bike racks on campus for the students to use.



Map created with Google Earth



Observations on the Process	
Date: May 31, 2013 Time: 7:00 A to 7:40 A Location:	What process did you observe? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> arrival <input type="checkbox"/> dismissal
Briefly describe the process that you observed: Observation done of the arrival window at GAES, including bus transport, parent vehicle drop off, pedestrian traffic and movement of traffic along Mill Road. Today was warm and sunny. In terms of congestion and the	
Are all students released at once? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>If no, describe how students are dismissed. What is the order and what is the rationale?</i>	Where do students enter/ exit the school campus and the school building and how is each entrance used? (by grade, by mode of travel, etc.) Students enter the main doors of the school whether by bus, walking or car.
Approximately how many students did you observe using each mode of travel? Walking <u> 21 </u> Biking <u> 0 </u> Where do students park their bikes? no bikes today	Approximately how many vehicles did you observe on campus? Family vehicles <u> 135 </u> How many buses? <u> 10 </u>
Where do parents pick up and drop off their children? Is this activity separated from walking/bicycling? Does the queue of cars back up into the street? Parents enter the parking lot from Mill Road. The 'drop off line' queues along the fence on the far right side of the lot. Students disembark from vehicles on the sidewalk, assisted by staff. Cars continue through the parking lot (dodging students walking across the lot) and then have to try to exit through the same line of traffic waiting the enter the drop off line. The line of entering cars extends to Mountain Road and to the 295 overpass.	



On-campus behavior	
<p>Do motorists yield to pedestrians? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Notes: occasionally. This morning, motorists seemed to be aware they were being observed, so more likely to yield. However, when observers crossed the street for another view, 5 cars in a row failed to yield</p>	<p>Do motorists observe rules of the road? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Do they observe parking restrictions? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Notes: New barriers were erected on Mill. However motorists seem to already be finding new ways around them (see video)</p>
<p>Are students walking where it is safe? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No see adjacent</p> <p>Are students walking in a way that is safe and alert? i.e. not horsing around or running between cars? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Notes:</p>	<p>Are students crossing where they are supposed to? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Are they crossing in a way that's safe? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Notes: pedestrian traffic across Mill Road is generally in the area demarcated. Many parents and students were observed walking across a busy</p>
<p>Are bicyclists observing rules of the road?</p> <p>Are bicyclists wearing helmets? Yes (count) _____ No (count) _____</p> <p>Notes:</p>	<p>Are students behaving safely around buses? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Are bus drivers aware of students walking on campus? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Notes: observed 3 buses that failed to yeild to pedestrian traffic</p>
<p>How are students matched with family vehicles?</p>	<p>Did you observe any unsafe behaviors among students in family vehicles/parents/drivers? As the line on the main road gets longer, more drivers attempt to circumnavigate the line, driving on the shoulder and attempting to evade newly erected barriers (see video) Many drivers appeared frustrated or upset.</p>



Safety Issues and Concerns

Do students and/or parents use their own arrival or dismissal rules that create a safety concern?

Parents walking their children across the crowded and congested parking lot are a huge concern.

Did you observe any desire lines or goat trails that indicate where pedestrians have created their own pathways? Did you see anyone using them?

Incomplete sidewalks along the front of the

Are there any visible obstructions that make it difficult for drivers to see pedestrians/bicyclists or vice versa?

The traffic pattern makes it difficult to pull out of the school lot into oncoming traffic. In addition, it is difficult to see pedestrians attempting to come from the subdivision, as they are often hidden behind a line of cars.

Additional Notes:

Quiet until 725. Extremely chaotic between 725 and 740. Observed nearly empty bus coming from Mill Place West transporting children across the