

WALK TO SCHOOL PROGRAM



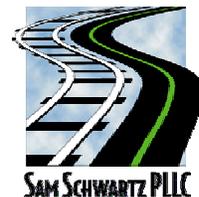
FINAL PROGRESS REPORT

Prepared for
New York City Department of Transportation

Prepared by
Sam Schwartz PLLC

In association with
Nelson\Nygaard Associates
Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment

Project X501.24
Contract No. 84102MBTR507
PIN 84120040003256
April 2006



Walk To School Program
Project X501.24
Contract No. 84102MBTR507
PIN 84120040003256
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program

The preparation of this document has been financed in part through funds from the US Department of Transportation under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, Title 23, USC as amended. This document has been disseminated under the sponsorship of the New York City Department of Transportation in the interest of information exchange. The content of this report reflects the views of the author who is responsible for the accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the State of New York, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, or the City of New York. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Pilot Schools	3
Parent and Public Outreach	5
Outreach Materials	5
Outreach Activities	11
Program Session Implementation	15
Session Activities	15
Traffic Inventory	20
Next Steps	27
Parent and Public Outreach	27
Program Session Implementation	27
Conclusion	28

Introduction

Over the last decade, Walk to School programs have increased in popularity in the United States and other countries. The program, designed to encourage students to walk, bike, or take transit to school and decrease auto drop-off rates during arrival and dismissal periods, comes at a vital time. While 30 years ago 65% of children walked or biked to school, today only 13% of students in the United States walk on a regular basis. Besides the overall reduction in congestion and auto emissions around schools, there are added health benefits children achieve from walking to school. For example, increased cardiovascular activity can help kids stay active and fit.

In Marin County, California, for example, following the start of a walk to school program car drop off rates fell by 13% over two years, having a significant impact on local traffic congestion. In 2001, a pedestrian advocacy group called WalkBoston started a successful Walk to School initiative in Arlington, Massachusetts. The initiative uses “education-encouragement” and activities to increase habitual walking to and from school both by students and their parents.

The New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT), in the fall of 2004, launched a Walk to School pilot program modeled on programs like these. NYC DOT’s program was implemented at five city schools.

There are three main components of the New York City program and each component’s methodology and status is provided in this Final Progress Report:

- Public outreach and education
- Classroom-based program implementation
- Traffic inventory and analysis

The consultant team chosen by NYC DOT to implement the program is comprised of Sam Schwartz PLLC (SSC), Nelson/Nygaard Associates and the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment (BCUE). SSC was the prime consultant responsible for managing the project and traffic analysis. Nelson/Nygaard provided program outreach and BCUE was responsible for the development and implementation of the program curriculum in each pilot school.

This Final Progress Report is intended to assess the NYC DOT Walk to School Program at the completion of the year 2005, and provide insight into how to best expand the program.

Pilot Schools

The five schools selected to participate in the Walk to School pilot program represent each of the city's boroughs (see Figure 1). Presented below is a summary of travel patterns at each of the pilot schools. Table 1 shows the full modal split results.

BRONX

P.S. 111 (Seton Falls Elementary School)—located in the Edenwald neighborhood at 3740 Baychester Avenue, P.S. 111 has 1,000 students in grade K-6. Currently, 41% of students walk to school, 32% are driven in a private vehicle, and 19% travel via school bus.

QUEENS

P.S. 90 (Horace Mann School)—located at 86-50 109 Street in Richmond Hill, P.S. 90 has 1,100 students in grades K-5. Currently, 62% of students walk to school and 27% are driven in a private vehicle.

BROOKLYN

I.S. 383 (Philippa Schuyler School)—located in the Bushwick neighborhood at 1300 Green Avenue, I.S. 383 is a magnet school with 1,306 students in grades 5-8. Currently, 9% of students walk to school, 66% are driven in a private vehicle, and 23% travel via public transit.

STATEN ISLAND

P.S. 54 (Charles W. Leng School)—located at 1060 Willowbrook Road in Staten Island, P.S. 54 serves 910 students in grades K-5. Currently, 25% of students walk to school, 55% are driven in a private vehicle, and 15% travel via school bus.

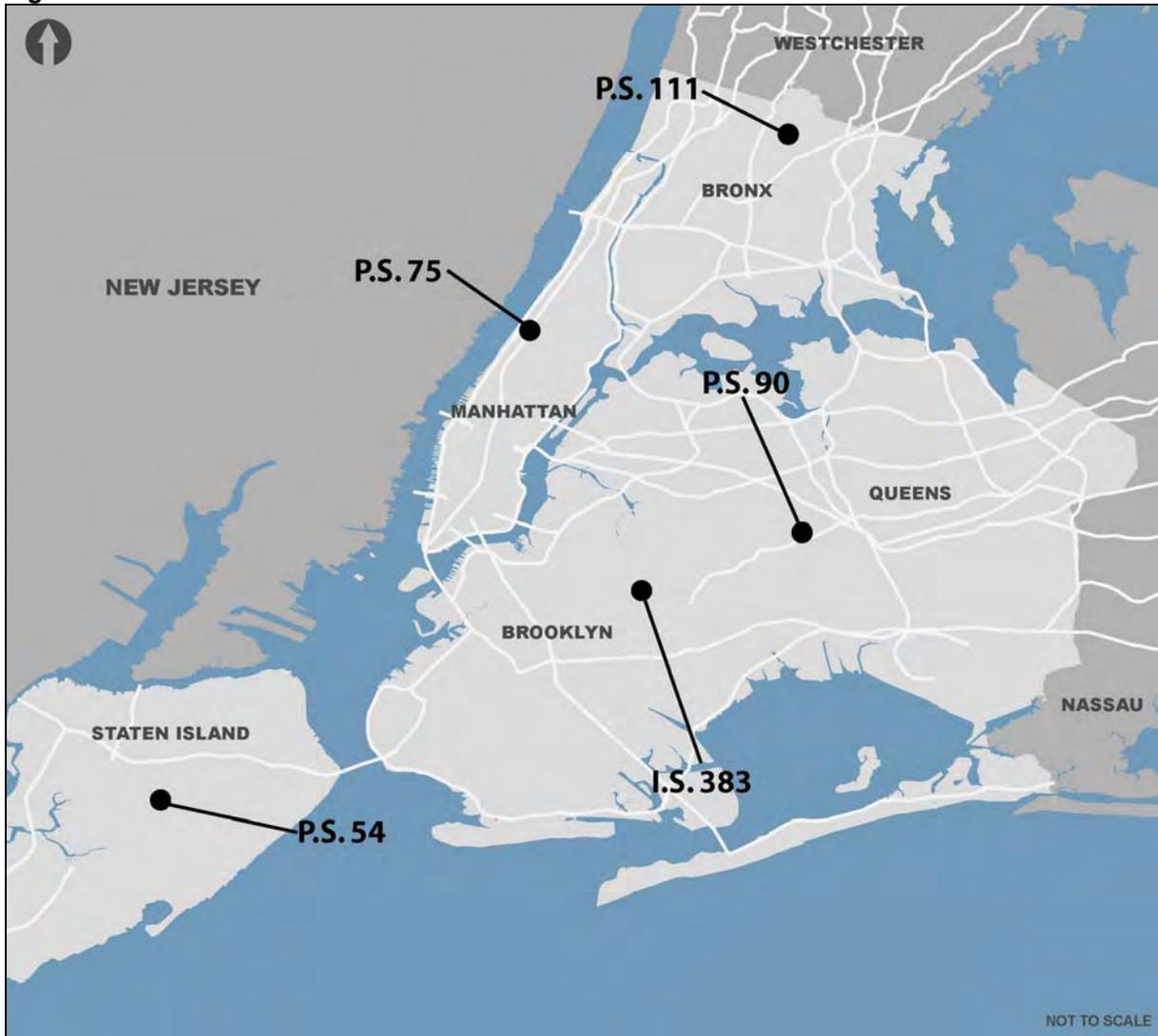
MANHATTAN

P.S. 75 (The Emily Dickinson School)—located at 375 West End Avenue on the Upper West Side, P.S. 75 has 849 students in grades K-5. Currently, 56% of students walk to school, 7% are driven in a private vehicle, and 32% travel via public transit.

Table 1. Pilot School Modal Splits¹

School	Responses	Walk	Auto	Carpool	Subway	City Bus	School Bus
<i>PS 111</i>	53	41%	32%	0%	0%	6%	19%
<i>PS 90</i>	111	62%	27%	3%	0%	8%	2%
<i>IS 383</i>	123	9%	66%	2%	0%	23%	1%
<i>PS 54</i>	228	25%	55%	6%	0%	0%	15%
<i>PS 75</i>	34	56%	7%	1%	19%	13%	0%

Figure 2. Locations of Pilot Schools



¹ Modal splits are based on results of parent surveys. Due to survey/rounding errors, individual school totals do not equal 100%. For an example of the parent survey, see page 6.

Parent and Public Outreach

Outreach to parents, teachers, and community members was a critical aspect of the Walk to School program and was intended to develop a sense of program ownership and promote stewardship of the program that could continue beyond the timeframe of the pilot program.

A “kick-off” meeting was first held with parents and staff at each school. At these meetings, the program’s goals and purpose were introduced, brochures were distributed and contact information from interested parents was collected. Workshops were then held with program stakeholders (e.g., parents, teachers, students, and community leaders) to establish a working group for each school and solicit input on existing travel patterns and issues at each school.

Outreach Materials

As part of the public outreach initiative, the consultant team developed and distributed informational material. These included the following:

Program Brochure

A program brochure was designed by the consultant team to introduce parents, school staff, and the public to the purpose, goals, and activities of the program. The brochure, produced in English and Spanish versions, also contained general contact information for interested parents (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Walk to School Brochure



Surveys

Surveys were developed to collect information from parents on their children’s travel patterns and solicit parents’ traffic or safety concerns (see Figure 3). The survey also served to recruit potentially interested parents in assisting with program activities. Completed surveys contributed to the compilation of background information at each pilot school.

Figure 3. Parent Survey



Walk to School
Parent/Guardian Survey

This survey will provide valuable information for New York City's Walk to School Program. Please take a minute to give us information on your children's travel habits.

1. **In what school is your child enrolled?**
School _____

2. **What grade and class is your child in?** (Or grades if you have more than one child enrolled at this school.)
Grade(s) _____ Class(es) _____

3. **What is the approximate distance from your home to the school?**
 - 1 ¼ mile or less (5 blocks or less).
 - 2 ¼ to ½ mile (5-10 blocks).
 - 3 ½ mile to 1 mile (10 blocks to 20 blocks).
 - 4 Over 1 mile (Over 20 blocks).

4. **What is the closest intersection to your home?** _____

5. **How does your child usually travel to and from school?** (Check the appropriate boxes below)

To school in the morning:

	Every Day	2-3 times a week	Once a week	Occasional
Walk				
Bike				
Driven (Car/Taxi/Van)				
Carpool with other child				
Subway				
City Bus				
Yellow School Bus				

From school in the afternoon:

	Every Day	2-3 times a week	Once a week	Occasional
Walk				
Bike				
Driven (Car/Taxi/Van)				
Carpool with other child				
Subway				
City Bus				
Yellow School Bus				

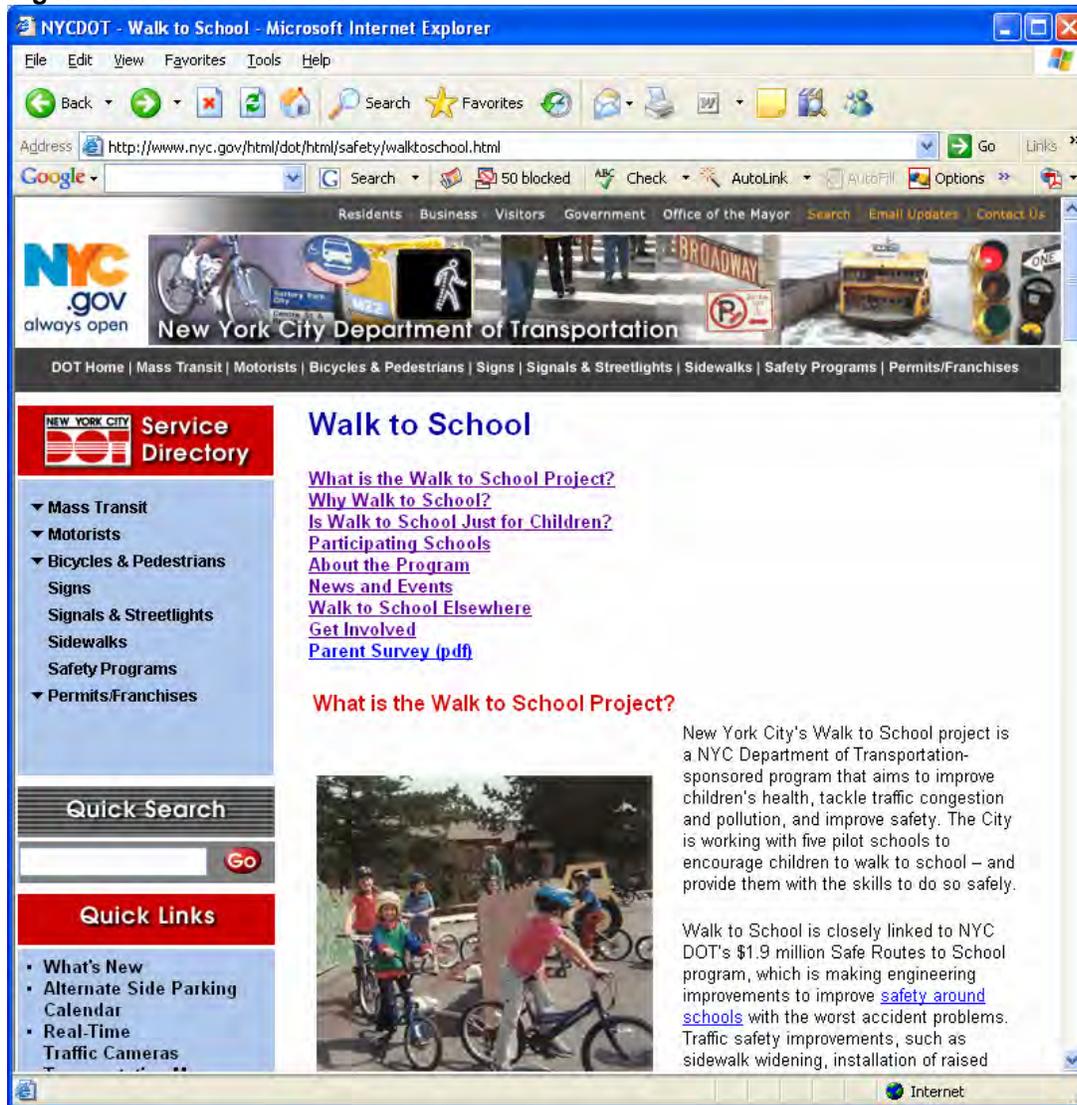


(Over)

Website

A web page, incorporated into the NYC DOT website, was created as a public outreach tool (see Figure 4). The web page provided an overview of the program and included program news and upcoming events at each school. Program materials, such as the parent survey, were available for download from the website and links to other Walk to School web sites were provided.

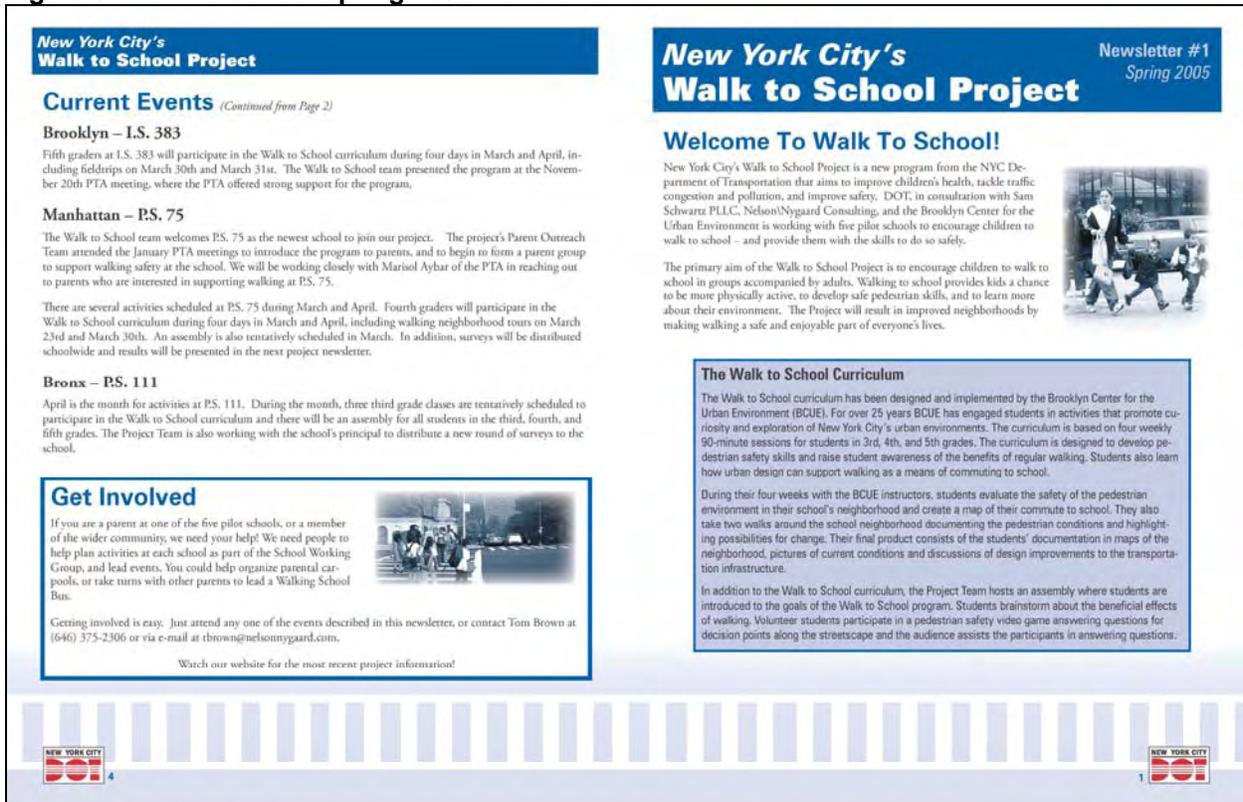
Figure 4. Walk to School Website



Newsletter

Newsletters were produced by the consultant team, detailing completed and upcoming project activities at each school throughout the school year (see Figure 5). Three newsletters were distributed to students and parents over the course of the school year.

Figure 5. Walk to School Spring 2005 Newsletter



Walk to School Week

The 2005 International Walk to School Week (iWALK) was observed at four pilot schools² on Friday, October 7, 2005. In doing so, students at New York City's participating schools joined more than three million other students from around the world.

While maintaining overall coordination and providing supplies, the consultant team relied on the parent volunteers and school administrators that make up each school's Working Group to implement the program at the individual schools. The Working Groups drafted parent volunteers to act as chaperones for walking students.

Students were encouraged to wear their school colors as they walked with parent chaperones carrying iWALK placards. Team representatives decorated walking pathways and school entrances with balloons (in school colors) and iWALK banners (see Figures 6-8). Upon their arrival at school, walking students were handed tickets. The class that accumulated the most tickets at each school was rewarded with a pizza party.

Instead of an organized walk, I.S. 383 participated in iWALK by holding an assembly, led by team representatives. All fifth grade students attended the event, in which they shared the knowledge they had learned in the classroom component and discussed the benefits of walking, as well as pedestrian and traffic safety.

Figure 6. Students participate in iWALK at P.S. 111 in the Bronx.



² Administrators at P.S. 75 declined to participate in iWALK activities.

Figure 7. Staten Island's P.S. 54 holds iWALK activities.



Figure 8. Students at P.S. 90 in Queens arrive at school during iWALK.



Outreach Activities

Over the first program implementation cycle, 15 meetings were held with PTA and parent groups, and over 500 parent surveys were completed and returned to the consultant team. Over 60 parents signed up to help organize Walk to School activities. Below is an overview of the outreach activities that were completed during the first program year:

P.S. 111 (Bronx)

In December 2004, 36 parent surveys were completed, with nine parents expressing an interest in becoming active in the program. The school's Parent Coordinator and participating parents were able to organize a successful iWALK event. A timeline of outreach activities at P.S. 111 is presented below:

2004

- 10.21 Kick-off meeting held with Principal, Parent Coordinator, teachers, and PTA president.
- 10.27 400 parent surveys were provided to third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teachers for class distribution.
- 10.29 Presentation at PTA meeting in order to introduce the program goals and reach out to potential parent volunteers.
- 11.16 Attended a parent-teacher "open house" to find additional parents interested in the program.
- 12.28 36 parent surveys completed. Nine parents expressed interest in becoming active in the Walk to School program.

2005

- 02.10 Additional 400 parent surveys provided for distribution, along with a contest offering a pizza lunch to the homerooms within each grade level that returned the most surveys.
- 04.15 54 parent surveys completed.
- 04.22 Copies of the first Walk to School Newsletter delivered.
- 06.13 Copies of the year-end Walk to School Newsletter delivered.
- 09.20 Meeting held with the school's parent-coordinator and other faculty to plan iWALK.
- 10.07 iWALK held.

P.S. 90 (Queens)

While only 28 parent surveys were completed and returned, nearly half expressed interest in becoming active in the program. School faculty and parents hosted a successful iWALK event on October 7. A timeline of outreach activities at P.S. 90 is presented below:

2004

- 10.20 Program's outreach component was presented to school administrators and teachers.

- 10.28 Program brochures and surveys distributed to parents picking students up in private vehicles at dismissal time.
- 10.23 Kick-off meeting, introducing parents to the program's goals, held in conjunction with monthly PTA meeting.
- 10.28 28 parent surveys completed and returned. Thirteen parents expressed interest in becoming active in the Walk to School program.
- 2005**
- 04.22 Copies of the first Walk to School Newsletter delivered.
- 06.13 Copies of the year-end Walk to School Newsletter delivered.
- 09.26 Meeting held with the school's parent-coordinator and Principal to plan iWALK events.
- 10.07 iWALK held. Bilingual (English-Spanish) team representatives facilitate the events.

I.S. 383 (Brooklyn)

Although the consultant team met with a number of supportive parents throughout the school year, the great majority (approximately 90%) of students live beyond walking distance from school (more than ½ mile), which created a significant barrier to outreach efforts. A timeline of outreach activities at I.S. 383 is presented below:

- 2004**
- 10.18 Kick-off meeting held to introduce the program's outreach objectives to the PTA.
- 10.25 Brochures and program information distributed to parents via "backpack mail."
- 10.28 Approximately 300 parent surveys provided to science teachers for class distribution.
- 11.20 Presentation held at PTA meeting introduced the program to over 100 parents in attendance.
- 12.07 Of 300 surveys distributed to parents, 40 completed and returned. Surveys redistributed via BCUE instructors. These surveys included a letter of support from the school Principal, and a pizza party incentive to the classes with the highest survey-return rates.
- 2005**
- 02.10 Over 80 completed surveys collected. Most parents concerned with personal safety on the route to school and most lived more than ½ mile from the school.
- 04.22 Copies of the first Walk to School Newsletter delivered.
- 05.26 One parent and the Parent Coordinator attend initial school Working Group meeting. Both expressed concern about personal safety on the route to school. Other parents later contacted via phone; they echoed concerns about personal safety.
- 06.13 Copies of the year-end Walk to School Newsletter delivered.

- 10.07 I.S. 383 participated in iWALK by hosting an assembly, led by BCUE representatives and attended by all fifth grade students. The assembly focused on a discussion of the benefits of walking and pedestrian and traffic safety.

P.S. 54 (Staten Island)

Despite some initial opposition from the PTA, P.S. 54 had a supportive administration and an enthusiastic group of core parents. In addition, modal split characteristics and existing traffic problems created the ideal backdrop for mobilizing parents and school officials. By the end of the school year, a Working Group of parents and staff was in place and had successfully planned and executed a Walk to School Wednesday (May 2005). A timeline of outreach activities at P.S. 54 is presented below:

2004

- 10.12 Program's outreach component presented to school administrators, teachers, and the PTA.
- 10.19 Approximately 450 parent surveys provided to third-sixth grade teachers for class distribution.
- 11.30 Presented at a monthly PTA meeting to recruit parent volunteers to the program.

2005

- 01.14 224 parent surveys completed and returned. 31 parents expressed interest in becoming active in the Walk to School program.
- 02.11 Meeting held with several invited parents, the Parent Coordinator, and school crossing guards for the inaugural Working Group meeting. Existing traffic safety issues and solutions discussed.
- 04.08 The Working Group held a follow-up meeting to discuss Walk to School activities for the remainder of the school year.
- 04.22 Copies of the first Walk to School Newsletter delivered.
- 05.25 Walk to School Wednesday held. More than 300 students walked to school accompanied by parent chaperones.
- 06.08 The Working Group held "wrap-up" meeting to review prior activities and discuss the future of the program, including funding and liability issues.
- 06.13 Copies of the year-end Walk to School Newsletter delivered.
- 09.26 Meeting held with school Working Group to plan iWALK events.
- 10.07 iWALK held.

P.S. 75 (Manhattan)

Due to the late start of the Walk to School program at P.S. 75, outreach started in early 2005. Thirteen parents expressed interest in becoming part of the program based on survey responses conducted in June 2005. However, school administrators withdrew from the program before significant outreach activities could begin. A timeline of outreach at P.S. 75 is presented below:

2005

- 02.08 Outreach component presented to school administrators, teachers, and the PTA.
- 02.11 Presentation given at PTA meeting highlighting the program's benefits and the means by which parents could participate and support the program. Program brochures and parent surveys distributed.
- 02.11 400 copies of the parent survey provided to the school's administrative contact for the program.
- 04.22 Copies of the first Walk to School Newsletter delivered.
- 04.28 School visit conducted to follow-up on survey distribution process. Received an agreement from Parent Coordinator to distribute surveys that had been delivered in February.
- 06.13 Copies of the year-end Walk to School Newsletter delivered.
- 06.17 33 completed surveys received. 13 parents expressed interest in becoming active in the Walk to School program.
- 09.23 P.S. 75 declined to participate in further outreach activities, including iWALK.

Program Session Implementation

Class sessions and activities comprised a major component of the program within each of the pilot schools. Each school determined the length and number of program sessions. In consultation with BCUE, school staff and administration were given different programming options: a multi-session program to reach two to four classes of students over a semester or single sessions to reach 20-25 classes at once. In each program option, session activities were similar. The program curriculum was designed to be compatible with teachers' work plans and met NYC Department of Education's science and mathematics standards.

Lesson plans for program sessions contained an average of three to four activities. Typically, a program session was introduced to a class through a series of questions focused on the health benefits derived from increased walking (e.g., less traffic congestion leading to improved air quality and healthier people). Students performed neighborhood walks, studying pedestrian facilities and aspects of the neighborhood that affect walking. Groups of students were given cameras and sketchpads to document the environment. Students drew safe and unsafe walking conditions on worksheets provided by program instructors. Once the class returned to the school, problems were documented and potential solutions were identified. Classes that received multiple sessions typically stretched these activities over two or more sessions and created a more involved plan for improving pedestrian conditions. Final presentations of session activities were made at the end of the program.

Session Activities

P.S. 111 (Bronx)

In the spring 2005 semester, the program was administered to all third grade classes in single, 90-minute sessions. During the sessions, students explored their neighborhoods and created atlases documenting their commute to school, marking safe and unsafe places along the way. Nearly half of all students who completed a written reflection at the end of the program said that they would walk more often and more safely to school.

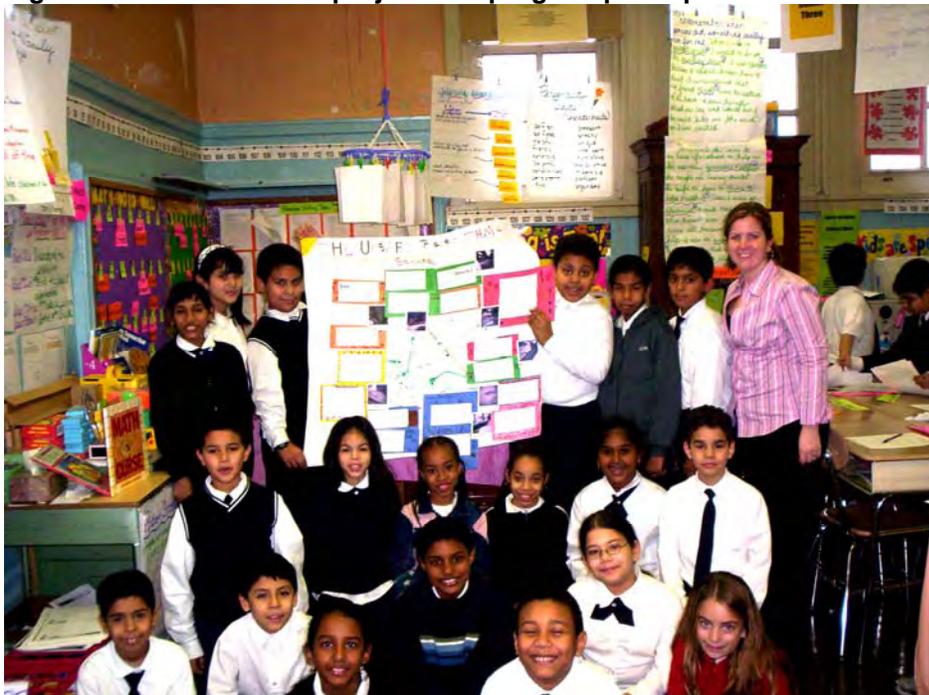
On May 26, 2005, BCUE hosted an assembly with third, fourth, and fifth grade students. The assembly program, designed as a quiz show, involved students answering questions about pedestrian safety and walking procedures.

P.S. 90 (Queens)

In the fall 2004 semester, the program was administered to all fourth grade classes in four, 45-minute sessions. One hundred thirteen students completed written reflections at the end of the program describing what they learned. Nearly all the students that participated in the sessions said they would walk more safely to school because of what they had learned in the program. An assembly with all students in third, fourth, and fifth grades took place on October 23, 2004. At the quiz-show style assembly, BCUE presented program information to over 400 students. At the end of the 2004 fall session, each group presented its work to other classes (see Figure 9).

In the spring 2005 semester, the program was administered to all third grade classes in four, 90-minute sessions. Students explored ways to make their neighborhood safer for walking and created atlases documenting their commute to school. Of the 78 students who completed a written reflection at the end of the program, 66% stated that they would now walk more safely, while 13% stated that they would walk to school more often.

Figure 9. A finished class project with program participants at P.S. 90 in Queens



I.S. 383 (Brooklyn)

School administrators chose to implement multiple program sessions with the Special Education and English Language Learners (ELL) classes in the fall 2004 semester. Students designed a visual inventory of problems and solutions pertaining to the pedestrian environment surrounding the school. In program evaluations, teachers strongly agreed that program objectives were clear and that the program activities were compatible with students' various learning styles. Twenty-one students completed a written reflection at the end of the program. Participating students created posters documenting proposed solutions to safety issues they identified around their school neighborhood (see Figures 10 & 11).

In the spring 2005 semester, the program was expanded to include five fifth grade classes. Students received four, 45-minute sessions in which they created projects depicting problems in the pedestrian infrastructure around the school and proposed solutions. Of the 116 students who completed written reflections at the end of the program sessions, 78% reported that they would walk more safely and 42% reported that they would walk more often after school and on weekends.

Figure 10. An example of class material produced during program activities at I.S. 383

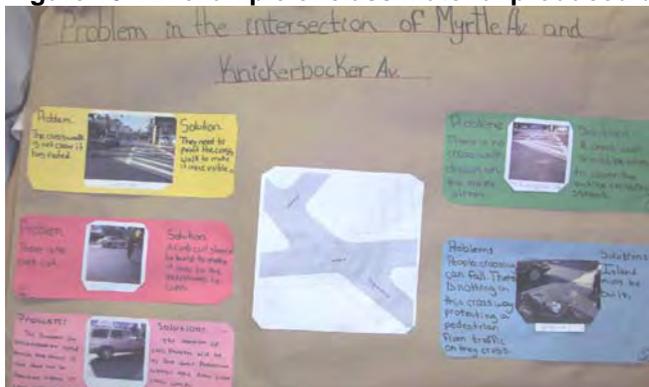


Figure 11. A student at I.S. 383 completes his analysis and materials for a class presentation



P.S. 54 (Staten Island)

In the fall 2004 semester, the administration at P.S. 54 chose to implement multiple program sessions with their third grade classes. All third grade classes received six, 45-minute sessions during the fall. Ninety-eight students completed written reflections at the end of the program. Student and teacher responses to the program were positive. Nearly all of the participating students indicated an increased desire to walk more often. All four third grade teachers indicated that the program was effective in stimulating positive attitudes towards walking and neighborhood safety. School-wide assemblies with all students in third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades were held. Two 30-minute assemblies, designed as an interactive quiz show, presented program information to over 600 students. Figure 12 shows students documenting an uneven sidewalk as a potential pedestrian safety issue.

In the spring 2005 semester, program sessions were implemented in all fourth grade classes. Each received four 45-minute sessions. Twenty students completed written reflections at the end of the program, with more than half reporting that they would walk more safely and walk more often after school and on weekends.

Figure 12. P.S. 54 students completing a neighborhood inventory to identify pedestrian hazards



P.S. 75 (Manhattan)

In the spring 2005 semester, two fourth grade classes received four, 90-minute programming sessions. Students also participated in an assembly program—designed as quiz shows—where they answered questions about safe walking practices (see Figure 13).

An expansion of the project to four classes was planned for the fall 2005 semester; however, school administrators were unwilling to participate in scheduling discussions with BCUE. As a result, program activities were not implemented at P.S. 75 during the fall 2005 semester.

Figure 13. Team representatives lead a school-wide assembly at P.S. 75



Traffic Inventory

The assessment of existing traffic conditions and development of traffic safety recommendations was a critical component of the Walk to School program. The traffic improvement process also invested parents and community members in the program by soliciting their recommendations for resolving safety issues around each school.

The consultant team conducted site visits to inventory and photograph vehicular and pedestrian conditions surrounding each school. Conditions examined include: intersection geometry; location and number of crossing guards; sight distances of vehicles and pedestrians; sidewalk conditions and widths; school crossing signage and pavement markings; location and markings of crosswalks; and crosswalk ramps and wheelchair accessibility. Traffic issues and safety recommendations from school staff and parents were also collected through surveys and meetings and then incorporated into the traffic analyses. A full set of issues and recommendations for each school was included in the Traffic Report submitted to NYC DOT in summer 2005. A summary of traffic issues and recommendations included in that report is presented on the following pages.

P.S. 111 (Bronx)

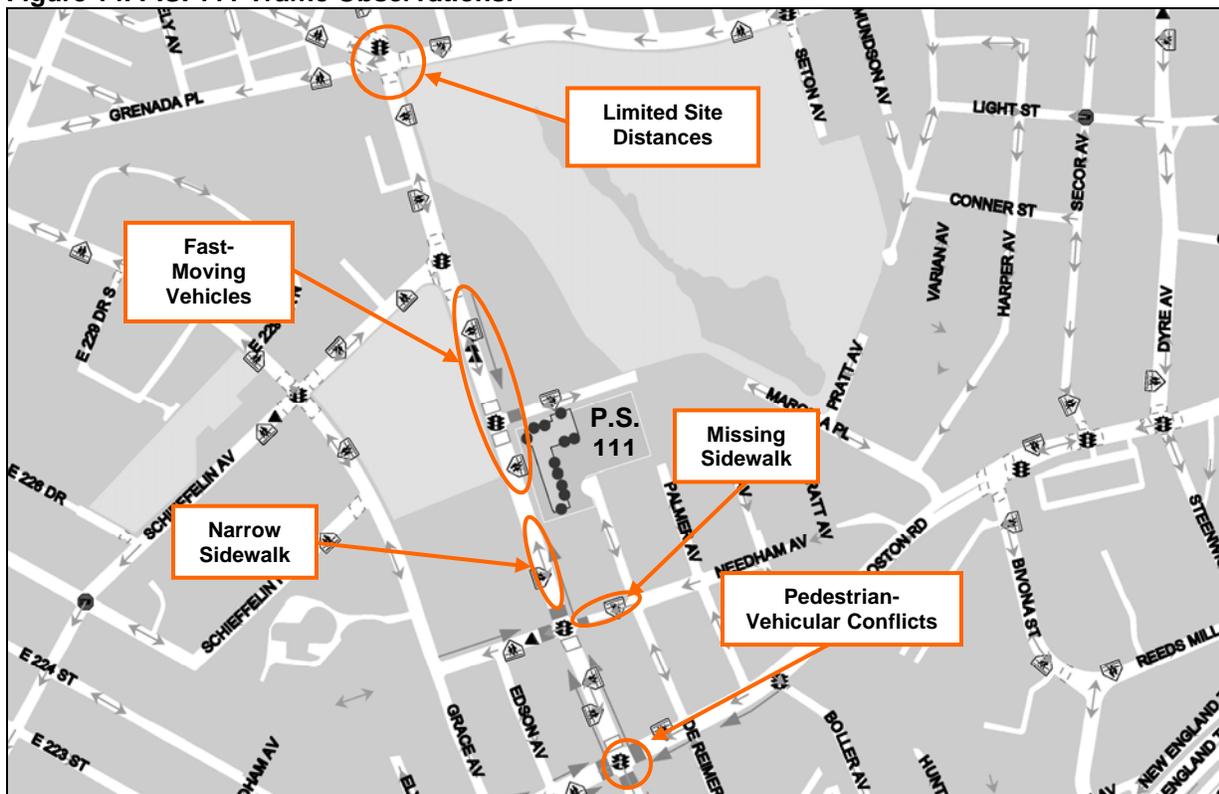
Parents' Concerns

Parent surveys were collected at P.S. 111 in March 2005. Survey respondents characterized the intersection of Baychester Avenue and Boston Road as unsafe due to high traffic volumes during the morning peak hours. Parents also expressed concern with heavy truck traffic along Baychester Avenue, as well as vehicles that disobey the traffic signal at Schieffelin and Baychester Avenues.

Consultant's Observations

The consultant team conducted a site visit on November 15, 2004 and studied intersections along Baychester Avenue, from Grenada Place/East 233rd Street to Boston Road. Figure 14 shows the area immediately surrounding P.S. 111 with problematic areas indicated.

Figure 14. P.S. 111 Traffic Observations.



Recommendations

The following recommendations were proposed to improve pedestrian safety around P.S. 111:

- Increased enforcement of speed limits on Baychester Avenue.³
- Placement of an additional crossing guard at the intersection of Baychester Avenue and Boston Road.
- Placement of a crossing guard at the intersection of Baychester Avenue, East 233rd Street, and Grenada Place.
- Installation of a sidewalk on the north side of Needham Avenue, east of Baychester Avenue.

³ To reduce speeds on Baychester Avenue, NYC DOT has proposed to study the closure of one lane in off-peak directions using overhead lane controls.

P.S. 90 (Queens)

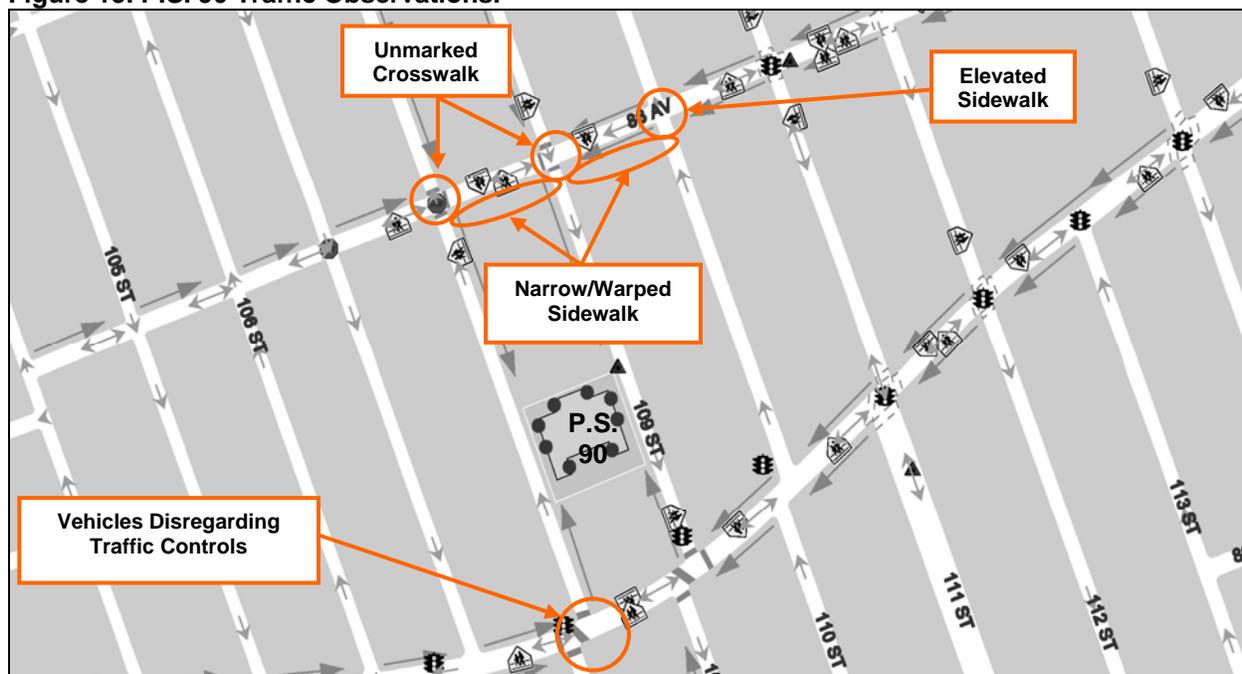
Parents' Concerns

Parent surveys were collected at P.S. 90 in May 2005. Jamaica Avenue, which was described as busy and dangerous, was the most commonly cited challenge to pedestrian safety by parents; many stated that they would like additional crossing guards posted at intersections along the thoroughfare.

Consultant's Observations

The team conducted a site visit on November 29, 2004 and studied conditions on 86th Avenue, Jamaica Avenue, and Atlantic Avenue. Figure 15 illustrates traffic issues at P.S. 90.

Figure 15. P.S. 90 Traffic Observations.



Recommendations

The consultant team recommended the following improvements to enhance pedestrian safety around P.S. 90:

- Increased enforcement or additional crossing guards on Jamaica Avenue at 108th and 109th Streets to increase compliance with traffic controls (e.g. stop signs).
- Repair broken and cracked sidewalks (e.g. 86th Avenue between 109th and 110th Streets).

I.S. 383 (Brooklyn)

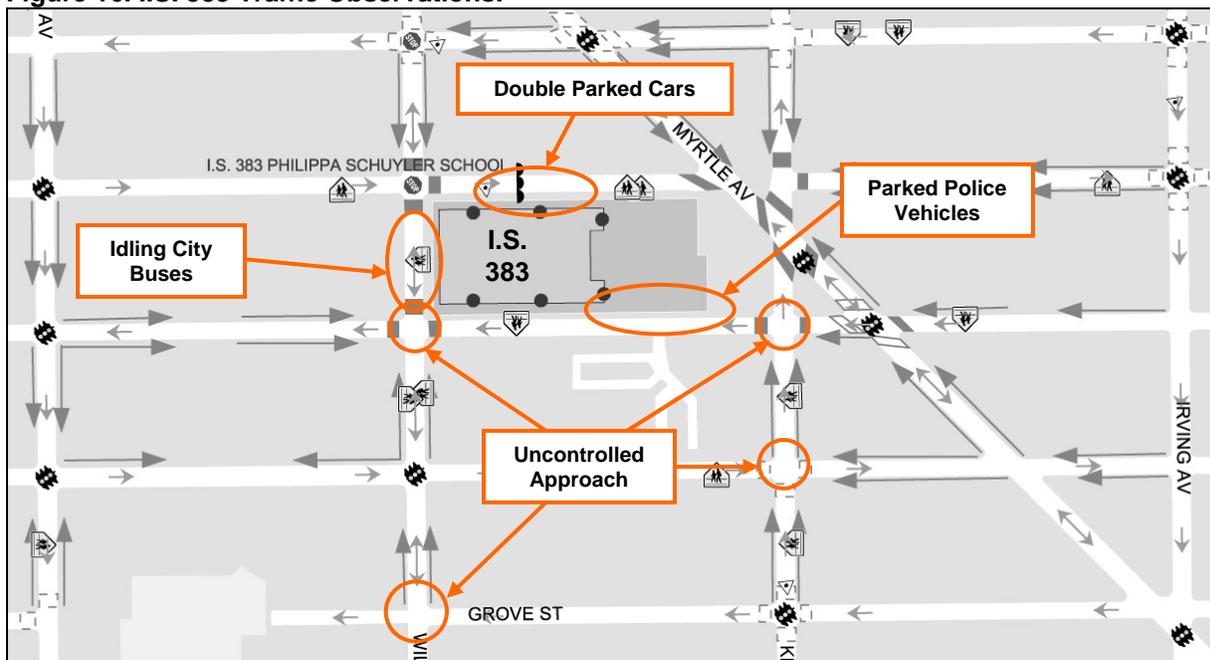
Parents' Concerns

The consultant team collected parent surveys from I.S. 383 during the spring of 2005. The parents of children who walked to school stated that they would like to have crossing guards posted at the intersection of Myrtle Avenue at Greene and Knickerbocker Avenues. Parents who attended the school working group meeting also expressed that concerns of crime and personal safety deterred them from allowing their children to walk to school.

Consultants' Observations

The team conducted a site visit on December 9, 2004 and studied street conditions at dismissal time. Figure 16 illustrates the traffic issues at I.S. 383.

Figure 16. I.S. 383 Traffic Observations.



Recommendations

The consultant recommended the following recommendations to improve pedestrian safety around I.S. 383:

- Increased enforcement of traffic regulations to limit double parking on Greene Avenue.
- Posting of crossing guards to facilitate crossing at uncontrolled intersections.

P.S. 54 (Staten Island)

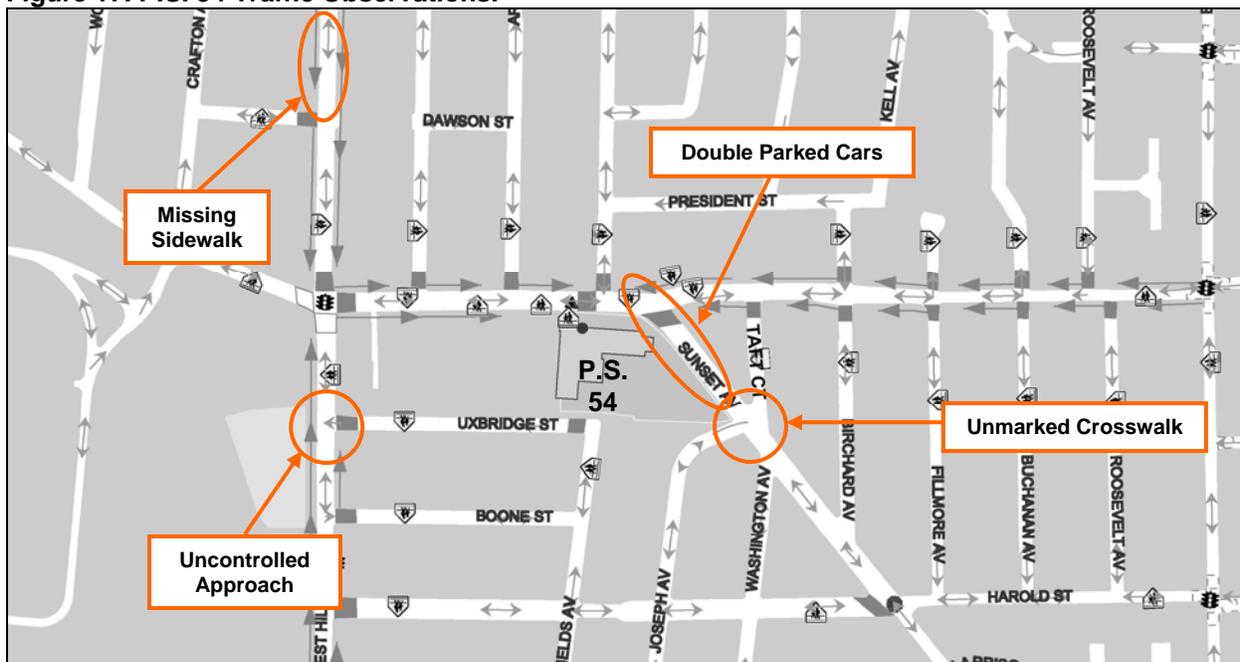
Parents' Concerns

During the fall of 2004, parent surveys were collected at P.S. 54. Parents voiced concerns about auto congestion around the school during arrival and dismissal time. Many parents said they would not allow their child to walk over the Staten Island Expressway on Bradley Avenue because of heavy and fast moving traffic coming from entrance and exit ramps.

Consultants' Observations

The consultant team conducted a site visit on November 18, 2004 and studied conditions on Willowbrook Road, Sunset Avenue, Forest Hill Road, and Gannon Avenue. Figure 17 (below) shows the traffic issues observed at P.S. 54.

Figure 17. P.S. 54 Traffic Observations.



Recommendations

The consultant suggested the following to improve pedestrian safety around P.S. 54:

- Installation of a traffic signal on Forest Hill Road at Uxbridge Street to facilitate pedestrian crossings, if warrants are met.
- Addition of high-visibility crosswalks at the intersection of Sunset Avenue and Joseph Avenue.

P.S. 75 (Manhattan)

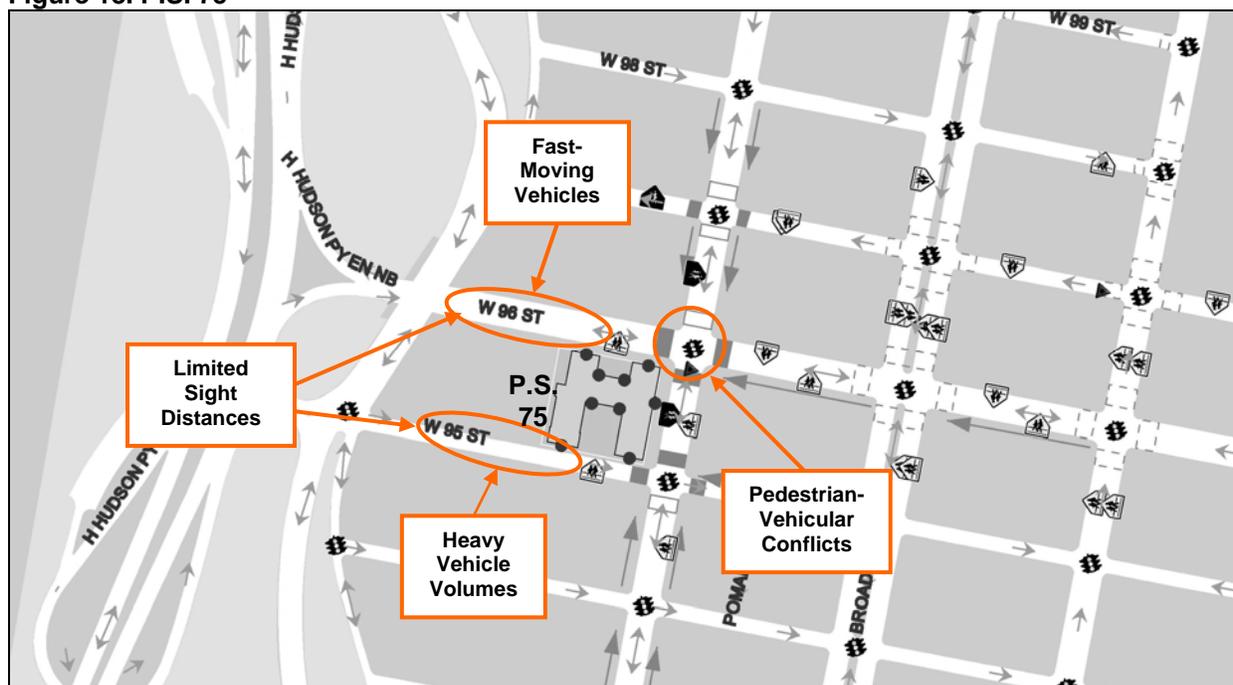
Parents' Concerns

Parent surveys, collected in March 2005, indicated that parents are primarily concerned with the intersection of West 96th Street and West End Avenue, which parents felt was busy and unsafe. Concerns were also expressed about congestion on Broadway and the need for a crossing guard at the intersection of West 95th Street and West End Avenue.

Consultants' Observations

The consultant team conducted a site visit on February 1, 2005 and studied conditions on West End Avenue and Broadway, between West 94th and West 97th Streets. Figure 18 shows the traffic issues around P.S. 75.

Figure 18. P.S. 75



Recommendations

In winter 2005, NYC DOT relocated teacher parking from West End Avenue onto West 95th Street, allowing school buses direct access to the curb. In addition to those changes, the consultant recommended the following measure to improve pedestrian safety:

- Post a crossing guard at the intersection of West End Avenue and West 95th Street, to improve visibility of crossing pedestrians.

Next Steps

Parent and Public Outreach

Based on experiences over the course of the pilot project, the consultant team has found that the support of school administrators is vital to insuring program success. It is critical that support comes from the top. Without a committed principal/vice principal supporting the program, it becomes difficult to prioritize the program with the parent coordinator, teachers and parents. The level of support required should be reviewed and agreed upon by administrators at the onset of program implementation. Outreach materials could initially originate from the school itself so that the program is seen as an integral program of the school. For example, school principals could begin introducing the program at the start of the school year, sending a letter of introduction home with other back to school informational materials.

iWALK and other activities were most effective when a mild competition was incorporated into the program. At several pilot schools this year, classes competed to have the most students walk to school with the winning class rewarded with a pizza party. Similarly, parent attendance at organizing meetings improved when food was provided to create a more social, casual setting.

Overall, the program has been most successful in the less densely populated areas of the city (e.g. Staten Island and Queens). It is recommended that any future program focus its efforts on schools in these more suburban-style neighborhoods, which have higher auto-mode shares and a generally more receptive faculty and parent population. Further, unresponsive and uninterested school administrators should not be pushed into the program unless there is a core group of parents and/or teachers who can sustain the program.

Program Session Implementation

After reviewing the different programming options that were implemented at schools involved in the pilot project, the consultant team has found that the program appears to be best delivered in four 90-minute sessions with students in grades three-five. This allows adequate time for classroom instruction, neighborhood walks, and mapping activities.

In addition, assemblies were a successful extracurricular activity, allowing participating students to utilize their knowledge in quiz-show style games.

Conclusion

The Final Progress Report assessed the NYC DOT Walk to School Program at its completion in fall 2005 and evaluated the level of success in the three main program components: **parent and public outreach; implementation of program sessions; and traffic inventory and recommendations.** The following is a brief synopsis of each pilot school with respect to these components:

P.S. 111 (Bronx)

Efforts at parent outreach were successful in garnering support from several interested parents who have formed a nucleus for the school Working Group. Over 200 students received program sessions and students in the third, fourth, and fifth grades attended a special assembly on traffic and pedestrian safety. Teachers' responses were enthusiastic. Pedestrian and vehicular conditions surrounding the school were inventoried and issues (including speeding vehicles and pedestrian-vehicular conflicts) were identified, as well as possible mitigation measures.

P.S. 90 (Queens)

Parent outreach efforts targeted thirteen parents interested in becoming active in the program and joining the school-working group. All third and fourth grade classes received program sessions and program information was disseminated at a special assembly focused on traffic safety to all students in third, fourth, and fifth grades. Traffic conditions on 86th Avenue, Jamaica Avenue, and Atlantic Avenue were examined and concerns (such as intersection controls and sidewalk conditions) were identified.

I.S. 383 (Brooklyn)

In the spring semester, students in Special Education and English Language Learners classes received program sessions, with 21 students completing a written reflection at the end of the program. The program was expanded to all students in fifth grade in the fall semester. Crosswalk visibility and sidewalk obstacles were identified as major traffic issues on the blocks surrounding the school. Few parents indicated interest in volunteering for the Walk to School program, primarily because most students live beyond walking distance to the school.

P.S. 54 (Staten Island)

P.S. 54's Working Group is now comprised of several parent volunteers and school faculty members and could serve as a model for future Working Groups, as they were able to organize successful Walk to School events in the Spring and Fall semesters. All third and fourth grade classes received program sessions and school-wide assemblies with all students in third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades were held. Double-parking and congestion during school dismissal and awkward intersections were among the vehicular and pedestrian issues affecting the school.

P.S. 75 (Manhattan)

Two fourth grade classes received program sessions in the spring semester. Although initial outreach efforts were successful in identifying several potential parent volunteers, outreach and program implementation ended in the fall semester because of scheduling difficulties with school administrators. Peak hour traffic congestion was identified as the primary issues affecting pedestrians around the school.