

TAHOMA SCHOOL DISTRICT

**SAFE-WALKING ROUTES TO SCHOOL
CONSULTANT REVIEW**

DECEMBER 2018

INTRODUCTION

Safe-Walking Routes to School

Tahoma School District contacted Transportation Consultant Jo Porter to conduct an evaluative study and review of the district's Safe-Walking Routes to Glacier Park Elementary, Lake Wilderness Elementary, Rock Creek Elementary and Tahoma High School.

Documents Review

The evaluative process included reviewing documents that Tahoma School District used when reviewing and developing their Safe-Walking Routes to School. These documents provide guidelines, mandates, requirements and insight regarding how Washington State public school districts establish Safe-Walking Routes to School. The following documents are deemed important resources when implementing Safe-Walking Routes:

- School Walk and Bike Routes: A guide for Planning and Improving Walk and Bike to School Options for Students, published by Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington Traffic Safety Commission, and State of Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Student Transportation Allocation Report System (STARS), Walk Area Development, State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Washington Administrative Code 392-141-340 Determination of the Walk Area
- Tahoma School District Board Policies and Procedures 6005 Student Safety Walking and Biking to School, Safety Advisory Committee pursuant to Washington Administrative Code 392-151-017
- Walking Evaluation Criteria, Tahoma School District Transportation Department
- Tahoma School District Transportation Department Safe-Walking Routes to School illustrated on district maps

WHAT IS REQUIRED BY LAW WHEN DEVELOPING SAFE-WALKING ROUTES

School districts are required by Washington State regulations to have suggested walk route plans for every elementary school where children walk to school. The plan must cover a one-mile radius from the school and the suggested route to school. Washington Administrative Code 392-141-340: (1) Each district or charter school shall determine the walk area for each school building or learning center where students are enrolled, attend class and transportation is provided. The district or charter school is required to use a process to determine the walk area that involves as many of the following groups as possible: Parents, school administrators, law enforcement representatives, traffic engineers, public health or walking advocates and other interested parties. Hazardous conditions requiring transportation service will be documented and will include all roadways, environmental and social conditions included in the evaluation process. The process will be consistent with the one described in *School Walk and Bike Routes: A Guide for Planning and Improving Walk and Bike to School Options for Students* published by the Washington State Department of Transportation.

Process and Planning

In analyzing the review process and methodology that the Tahoma School District used to determine and implement the suggested walk areas for elementary, middle and high school, it is documented that they followed WAC 392-141-340.

Tahoma School District has worked together with community jurisdictions to improve safe- walk routes to school. School administrators and staff, law enforcement, city public works engineers, parents, city leaders, community members, and transportation staff have collaboratively evaluated the suggested safe-walking routes and addressed some safety concerns.

EVALUATING THE DISTRICTS FINAL SAFE-WALKING ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

Onsite Observation

The evaluation process included driving through the neighborhoods that currently have students walking to Lake Wilderness Elementary, Glacier Park Elementary, Rock Creek Elementary and Tahoma High School. The walking evaluation criteria included traffic volume, sidewalks shoulders/pathways, shoulder width, crossing width, crossing controls, street lights, and length of walk. During the observation and review, each safe-walking route to school was in compliance with Washington Administrative Code listed by Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Even though the schools mentioned above complied with OSPI mandates, there was a further review of the safe-walk route to Rock Creek Elementary that focused on 238th Ave SE between SE 251st ST and SE 253rd PL which has an area with a curving hill. The analysis phase involved an onsite observation which was conducted on December 12, 2018. There were eleven student walkers, seven student bike riders, and six adult's walking with students during the AM walk to school and twelve student walkers, eight student bike riders, and three adult's walking with students during the PM walk home. Traffic volume was light to moderate with the majority of vehicles turning left from 238th Ave SE to SE 253rd PL in the morning and turning right from SE 253rd PI onto 238th Ave SE in the afternoon, appearing to be traveling at a legal rate of speed. In the AM, students were observed to be safely walking/biking along the left shoulder of the street within the fog line as they came up the hill in the AM and down the same path in the PM. The street has a shoulder width 6-8 feet, painted fog lines for separation from the street and rumble strips along the portion of the hill.

SUMMARY

The summary below is intended to provide an indication of the major points covered in the main report. The review was requested to have an outside assessment of the Tahoma School District's Suggested Safe-Walking Routes to Glacier Park Elementary, Lake Wilderness Elementary, Rock Creek Elementary and Tahoma High School.

Conclusive Review

The Tahoma School District was thorough in their process and implementation for creating safe-walking routes to schools. They followed Washington State rules, regulations and guidelines. As a consultant who evaluated the process, and outcome, I am in agreement that the suggested safe-walking routes made public for the Tahoma School District students and parents are deemed to be in compliance with the standards required for school districts in the State of Washington. The current suggested safe-walking routes mirror walking routes in other school districts who follow OSPI regulations.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Tahoma School District submit a request to the City of Maple Valley Public Works Department, requesting standing marker delineation strips along the east corner at the top of the hill on SE 253rd PI @ 238th Ave SE to provide more street separation and awareness for the students walking and biking in this location.

Jo Porter, Transportation Consultant
December 19, 20018

Jo Porter, Transportation Consultant Experience

Transportation Consultant, Federal Way Public Schools 2017-2018

Transportation Consultant, Riverview School District 2016

Issaquah School District Director of Transportation 2002-2014

Issaquah School District Assistant Director of Transportation 1990-2002

Issaquah School District Driver Trainer and Transportation Specialist 1987-1990

Issaquah School District Bus Driver 1977-1987

Served on the Washington State Association of Pupil Transportation Board for three years

Completed Central Washington University Pupil Transportation

Management Training Four Year Program

BA degree from Seattle Pacific University