



Vallecito Elementary School Travel Plan



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1. Purpose

1.1. SR2S Planning, Implementation and Monitoring

The Vallecito Elementary School Travel Plan is the blueprint for identifying and prioritizing Safe Routes to School (SR2S) programs, resources, and capital improvements. The Travel Plan also documents program activities and impacts on school-related travel that can be used to assess the success of the SR2S program over time, and important school-specific transportation policies and operations.

The Travel Plan differs from most plans in that it is not a snapshot in time but a living document; one that is repeatedly updated and modified to reflect school staff, community, and parent input along with technical information and lessons learned. This input is primarily captured by a SR2S task force that meets periodically to identify and address new concerns. For more information on Safe Routes to School partnerships in Marin County, visit www.saferoutestoschools.org

1.2. Marin County Measure A

The Transportation Sales Tax Measure Expenditure Plan approved by voters as Measure A in November 2004 dedicates an estimated \$332 million in local sales tax revenues to transportation needs in Marin County. Approximately \$36.5 million (11%) of the sales tax expenditure has been earmarked to reduce school related congestion and safer access to schools. These funds are allocated to three sub-strategies, or programs:

- Safe Routes to School (SR2S)
- Crossing Guards
- Safe Pathways to School

The Safe Pathways infrastructure program is integral to the success of the overall strategy; it is the capital improvement element of the Safe Routes to School program. As a stated policy in the *Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) Measure A – Transportation Sales Tax Strategic Plan Update (2009)*, all projects eligible for Safe Pathways funding must be identified in Safe Routes plans. The Vallecito Elementary School Travel Plan qualifies as such a plan and identifies potential capital projects eligible for Safe Pathways funding.

2. Vallecito Elementary School Profile

2.1. School Location

50 Nova Albion Way,
San Rafael, CA 94903

2.2. Enrollment and Demographics

Table 1 shows the number of students enrolled in each grade for the 2008/09 school year. **Table 2** shows the racial and ethnic breakdown of the student population

Table 1: Vallecito School Enrollment by Grade, 2008/09

Grade Level	Enrollment
Kindergarten	74
Grade 1	77
Grade 2	57
Grade 3	59
Grade 4	61
Grade 5	58
Total	386
<i>Source: California Department of Education</i>	

Table 2: Vallecito Racial and Ethnic Subgroups, 2008/09

Racial and Ethnic Subgroup	Number of Students	Percent of Students
African American	10	2.6%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2	0.5%
Asian	22	5.7%
Filipino	4	1.0%
Hispanic or Latino	83	21.5%
Pacific Islander	4	1.0%
White (Not Hispanic)	209	54.1%
Multiple or No Response	52	13.5%
<i>Source: California Department of Education</i>		

2.3. Free Lunch Enrollment

Fifty-four children were enrolled in the free lunch program in the 2007-08 school year.

2.4. Existing Conditions

Entrances to School

- **Primary School Entrance:** In front of the school along Nova Albion.
- **Pedestrians & Bicyclists:** Typically enter in the back of the school from St. Marks.
- **ADA Access:** Provided at the school entrance.
- **Cross Streets:** Nova Albion and Arias Street.

- **Crossing Guards funded by TAM:** One guard is located at the crosswalk directly in front of the school that leads to apartments on other side of street. The other crossing guard is located at Nova Albion and Arias.

Transit

- **School Bus Availability:** Two school bus routes serve a portion of students on a fee per ride basis.
- **Public Transit Availability:** Public transit is not available.
- **Special Transit Needs Offered:** One to six buses provide service for special needs students.

Bike Racks

- **Location of Bike Racks:** There is a cage on the south side of school.
- **Number of Bike Spaces:** Racks provide 88 bike spaces, with additional space for bicycles with kickstands.
- **Rack Condition and Security:** Rack condition and security is good. A locked cage is also provided.

2.5. Policies

Pick Up and Drop Off

- **Location:** In front of the school, in a dedicated drop-off/pick-up lane located between faculty parking and bus lane.
- **School Drop Off and Pick Up Policy:** Permits parents to use a drop off/pickup lane specifically for that purpose. Additional parking is provided for parents wishing or needing to go into the school or wait with their child(ren). When dropping off or picking up, parents must pull all the way forward, remain in their car, and have the child enter or leave the car as efficiently as possible. In the morning, parent volunteers assist and after school staff help the children.

Parking

- **Staff Parking** is located in front of the school along Nova Albion. A new staff parking lot on northeast side of school may be constructed in an area that is currently unused.
- **General Public Parking** is located at the northeast end of the Nova Albion frontage. A second, smaller lot at the southwest end of the Nova Albion frontage is for daycare use only.

- **Parking Policy** permits residents of apartment building across street to use the lot during night time hours, but their automobile must be out of the lot by 7:30 am. Signage displays these rules, however enforcement has been difficult.

Bicycle and Skateboarding

- Bicycling is encouraged.
- Skateboarding and scooters are prohibited.

2.6. Classroom Education

Vallecito has participated in the Super Safety and Pedal Power Assemblies. Vallecito currently provides the following educational programs:

- Helmet Safety
- Traffic Safety Game Show
- An after school rodeo was held on International Walk to School Day 2008, with 70 students from K-5 attending. A special course was created to simulate safe cycling on streets along with the regular Safe Routes to Schools rodeo courses.

2.7. Encouragement Programs

Vallecito has participated in the following encouragement programs:

- **School Pool:** The school is currently developing a web-based mechanism for parents who wish to carpool or form walking or biking groups. An implementation method is still being developed.
- **Walk and Roll to School Days:** The school is starting monthly Bike/Walk/Carpool and Bus to school days (first Wednesday of every month). This program will be promoted with on-campus flyers, email notices, and reminders. Student counsel members will pass out stickers to participating students. Participation will be tracked.
- **Contests:** The school conducts year-round walk/bike/bus/carpool contests. Students check the appropriate box on the card that corresponds to their school access mode every day they walk/bike/carpool or bus to school. When ten boxes are checked, they submit the card into a raffle drawn during student assemblies where the prizes are handed out.
- **Special Events:** Bike Rodeos and biking with kids events are mentioned above. The school also participates in International Walk and Roll to School Day.

2.8. Student Surveys

Student surveys have been conducted since the 2003-04 school year in the fall and spring. Students are asked how they travel between home and school. **Table 3** shows the survey results through fall 2010. Blank entries indicate that the data was not collected.

Table 3: How Students Got To School

Fall						
Year	Walk	Bike	Bus/ Transit	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Other
2000-01	18%	6%	15%	44%	17%	
2003-04	25%	4%	10%	47%	14%	
2004-05	30%	3%	8%	46%	12%	
2006-07	33%	2%	5%	49%	11%	
2007-08	25%	5%	9%	49%	12%	
2008-09	31%	11%	7%	36%	14%	
2009-10	29%	5%	6%	50%	11%	1%
2010-11	26%	7%	7%	48%	11%	1%
Spring						
Year	Walk	Bike	Bus/ Transit	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Other
2000-01						
2003-04	27%	5%	10%	42%	17%	
2004-05	28%	5%	11%	35%	21%	
2006-07						
2007-08	28%	7%	6%	44%	15%	1%
2008-09	28%	3%	6%	48%	15%	1%
2009-10	23%	3%	12%	52%	10%	1%
2010-11						

Figure 1 charts the travel information in **Table 3**. Walking and driving in a family vehicle were the most popular mode choices. The percentage of students bicycling has remained relatively stable with the exception of the spring and fall of 2008, when rates approximately doubled.

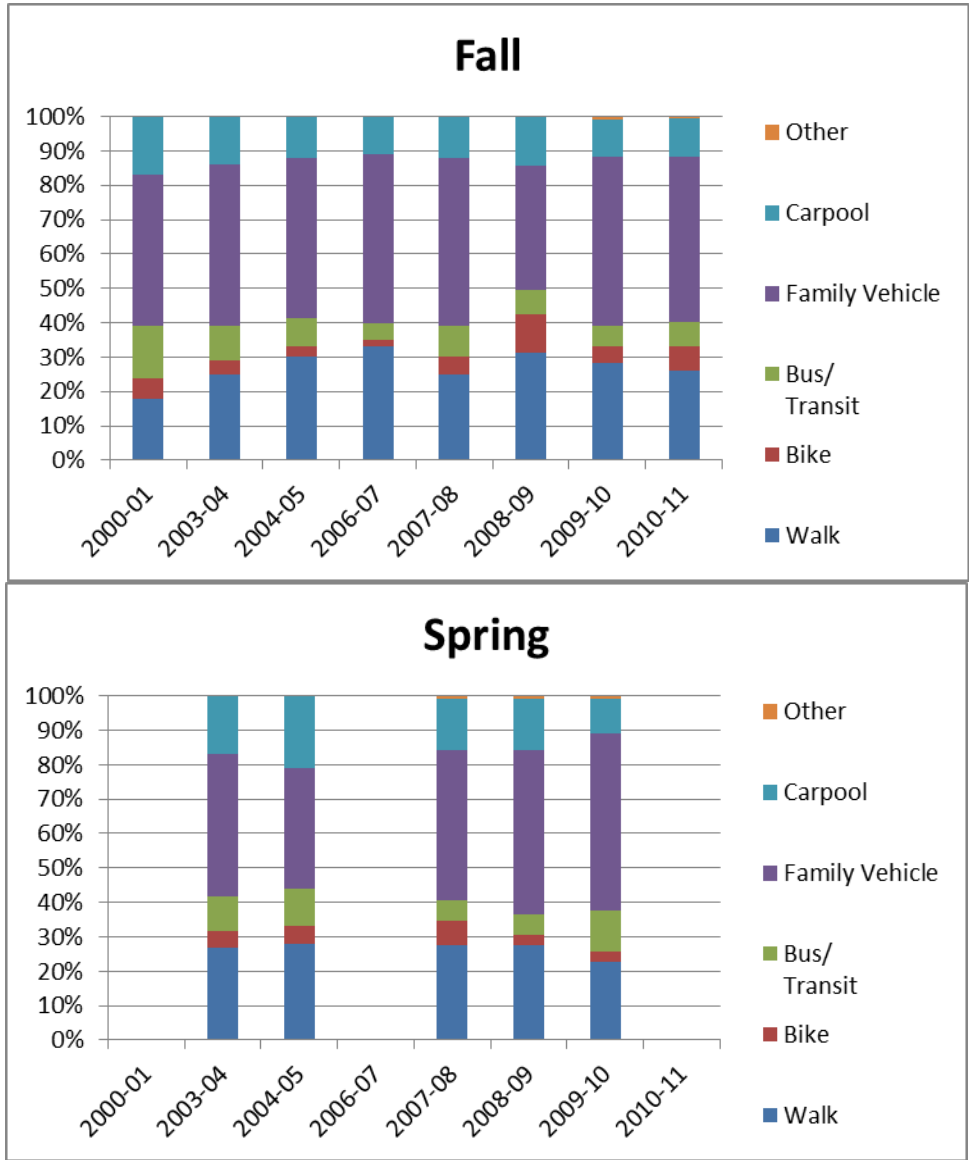


Figure 1: How Children Got To School

3. Barriers and Opportunities

3.1. Parent Survey

Team leaders administered volunteer parent/guardian surveys as part of the 2007-2008 travel plan process. The survey was distributed at school and parents and guardians could either return the completed survey to the school or complete it online through a link on the Transportation Authority of Marin homepage. Vallecito Elementary returned 69 parent surveys.

Travel Behavior

Most parents are most likely to drive their children to school rather than walk, bike or carpool. **Table 4** shows travel mode during morning and afternoon hours.

Table 4: Mode Choice (Parent Survey)

School Access Mode	Morning	Afternoon
Walks	32%	22%
Bikes	29%	24%
Driven	71%	78%
Carpools	25%	21%
Bus	15%	10%
Shuttle	1%	1%

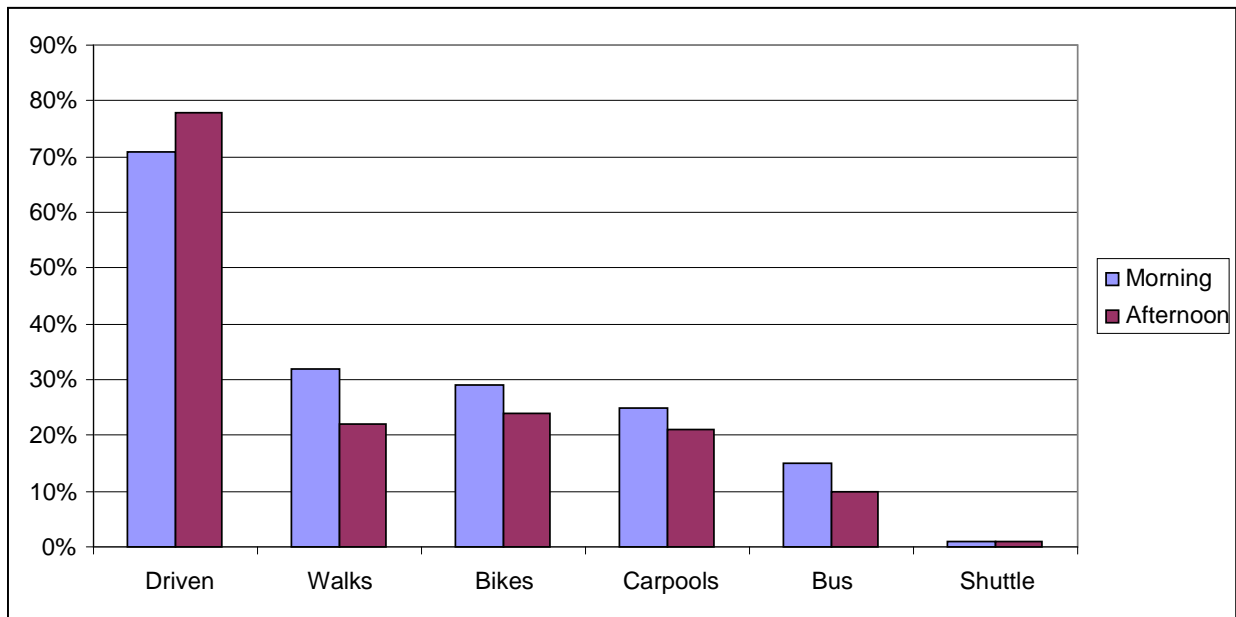


Figure 2: Mode Choice (Parent Survey)

Concerns

When asked “What concerns limit your ability to walk and bike to school?” the top responses from parents were “dangerous intersections” and “speeding cars.” **Table 5** lists the concerns from most to least concerning.

Table 5: Parental Concerns

Concern	Percent
Dangerous intersections	43%
Speeding cars	37%
It's too far	32%

Concern	Percent
Child is too young	32%
Running late/tardiness	29%
Stranger danger	28%
Weather	26%
Unsafe or lack of sidewalks and/or bikeways	26%
On the way to work	25%
Too much to carry	21%
It's too steep	18%
Lack of safe bike parking	4%
Child won't follow safety rules	4%
Scary dogs	1%
Bullies	0%

Benefits

When asked “What benefits do you see in children walking and biking to school?” parents cited “improved health,” “reduces traffic around school,” and “saves money on gas” as top reasons. Notably, only 13% of parents believed that the program gave them more free time. This reflects parents’ write-in answers as to why their children do not walk and bike to school: do not have enough time, have to get to work early, or have students that have to be taken to multiple schools. **Table 6** lists the perceived benefits from most to least beneficial.

Table 6: Parents' Perceived Benefits

Benefit	Percent
Improved health	88%
Reduces traffic around school	87%
Saves money on gas	74%
Child learns responsibility and independence	57%
Child learns traffic rules	53%
Gets me walking and biking	50%
Child more alert at school	49%
Less stressful than driving	40%
We get to know our neighborhood better	34%
Gives me more free time	13%

Potential Opportunities

When asked under what circumstances they would allow their child to walk or bike to school, parents’ top three responses were if the child was “accompanied by other children,” “when he/she is older,” and if “cars slowed down.” Only 3% of parents responded that they would “never allow their child to walk or bike to school.” These responses reflect some of the solutions to the issues described above. **Table 7** lists the potential opportunities.

Table 7: Potential Opportunities to Increase Walking and Bicycle among Children

Opportunities	Percent
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Opportunities	Percent
Accompanied by other parents	58%
When he/she is older	40%
Cars slowed down	33%
Accompanied by other children	31%
Crossing guards at dangerous intersections	31%
Improved sidewalks and paths	30%
Safety training was provided for students	25%
Improved intersections	25%
More police enforcement	15%
Park and walk locations where we could walk part way	12%
Secure bike storage was available	10%
Route maps were provided	7%
I would never allow my child to walk or bike to school	3%

When asked about circumstances under which they would allow their child to ride in a carpool, parents stated that they would “you were more familiar with the driver” and “you could find other parents who lived close by.” Twelve percent would carpool if someone else organized the carpool and 10% already carpool. **Table 8** lists the responses to this question.

Table 8: Potential Opportunities to Increase Car Pooling

Opportunities	Percent
You were familiar with the driver	28%
You could find other parents who lived close by	26%
Someone else organized it	12%
We already carpool	10%

3.2. Walkabout Notes

In 2002, the Vallecito team of parents walked the routes to school and indicated where they saw the problem areas on a map and provided pictures of those areas. Issues identified during the walkabout primarily focused on the parking area and drop-off/pick-up area in front of the school.

4. Programs and Projects

4.1. Engineering Design Concepts

Table 9 lists the short-term improvements, the responsible agency for implementing them and if they have been completed. **Table 10** lists the long-term improvements. **Appendix A** provides illustrations of short- and long-term improvements. As of 2009, these improvements have been completed.

Table 9: Short - Term Improvements

Short-Term Improvements	Responsibility
1. Designate a separated pedestrian pathway north of the new staff	School District

Short-Term Improvements	Responsibility
parking lot.	
2. Install a raised and high-visibility crosswalk across the new parent/visitor parking lot and across the drop-off/pick-up lanes.	School District Partially added, not yet raised x-walk
3. Modify barrier and barrier opening between drop-off/pick-up lanes.	School District
4. Provide dedicated and trained crossing guard(s) at new mid-block crossing of Nova Albion.	TAM
5. Install high-visibility crosswalks at the Nova Albion/Arias intersection.	City of San Rafael
6. Install red paint and/or signage to prohibit parking along the west side of Nova Albion between Arias and the school entry driveway, and between the school's exit driveway and pre-school parking lot.	City of San Rafael
7. Restrict parking between the school's driveways during drop-off and pick-up periods to. Allow parking during all other periods.	City of San Rafael
8. Install a high-visibility mid-block crosswalk.	City of San Rafael

Table 10: Long - Term Improvements

Long-Term Improvements	Responsibility
9. If new mid-block crosswalk is successfully supervised, consider providing further enhancements, including provision of a lighted crosswalk and/or curb extensions.	City of San Rafael <i>Curb extensions completed</i>
10. Install driver speed feedback signs along Nova Albion.	City of San Rafael
11. Work with Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transit District to relocated bus stop and shelter on west side of Nova Albion.	City of San Rafael

Recommended improvements also illustrated in the improvement plan are:

- Construct future overflow parking
- Reconfigure parking stalls in staff parking lot
- Prohibit left turns out of the staff parking lot

In addition, San Rafael Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update recommends widening the sidewalk along Nova Albion Way to accommodate the number of pedestrians present during peak hours.

5. Implementation Matrix

Implementation plans for the Dixie School District are summarized in the District Travel Plan. Please refer to that plan for implementation efforts.

Appendix A: Engineering Design Concepts

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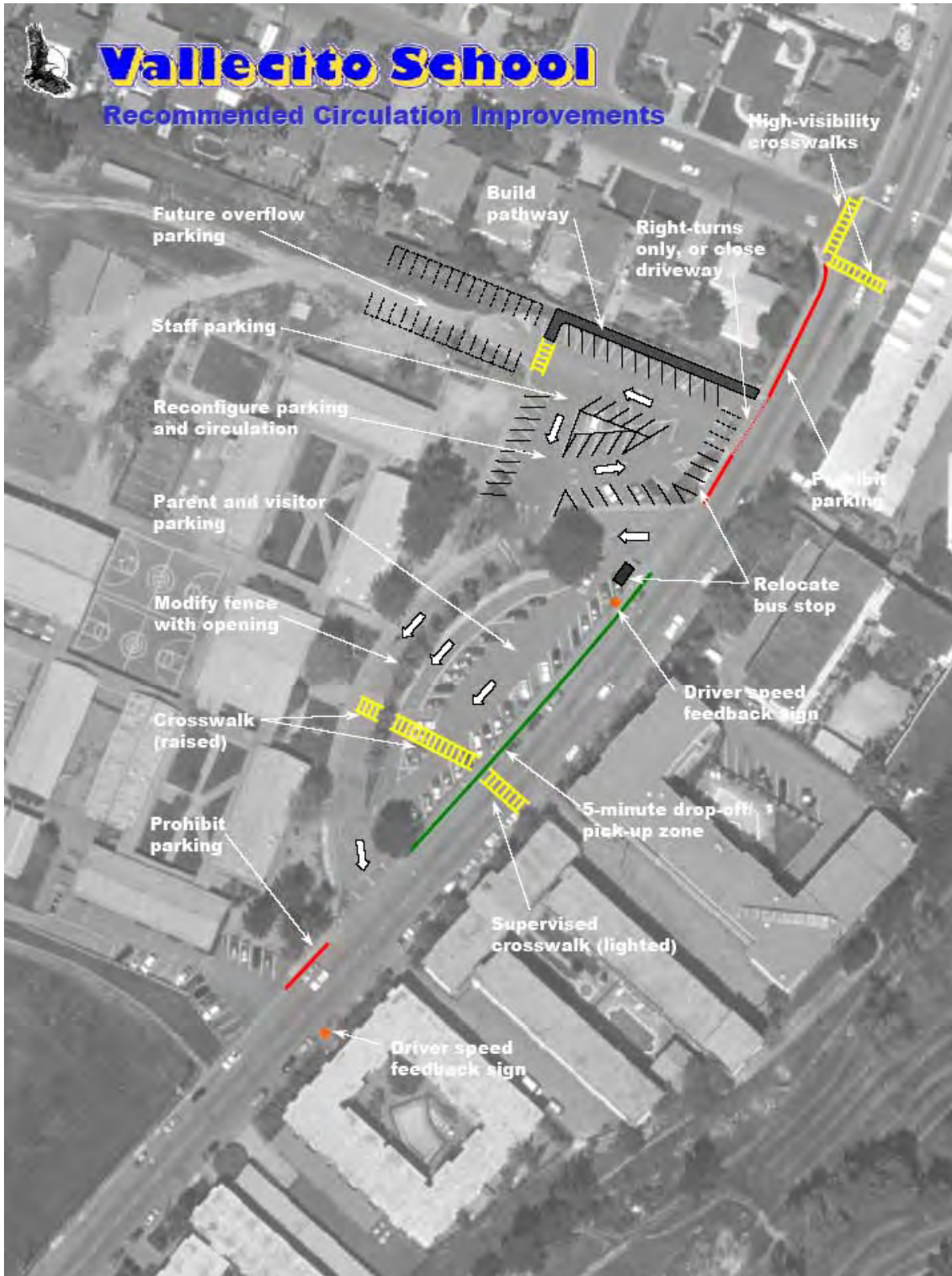


Figure 3: Recommended Circulation Improvements



Vallecito School

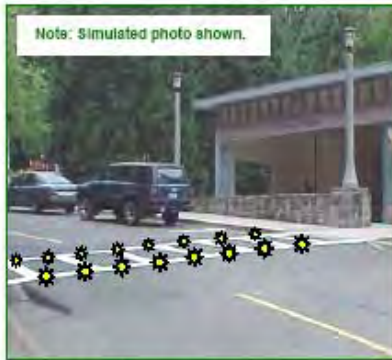
Sample Recommended Improvements



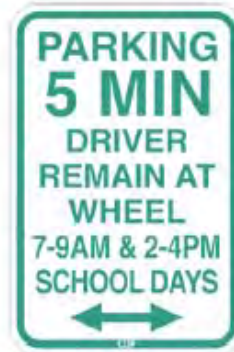
Ladder crosswalk



Raised crosswalk



Lighted crosswalk



Drop-off/pick-up sign



Driver speed feedback sign



Figure 4: Sample Recommended Improvements