

# Puyallup – Wildwood Park Drive Walking Audit – March 4, 2006



Area Audited

**Summary:**

Puyallup’s Wildwood Park Elementary School, Ferrucci Junior High School, and neighborhoods adjacent to Wildwood Park Drive are residential, almost park-like settings. Many children are already walking and bicycling to school, but residents expressed significant concerns about their safety and comfort walking and bicycling. On March 4<sup>th</sup> 2006, David Levinger from Feet First led a group of nearly twenty residents on a walking audit to identify problems and develop suggestions for improvement.

**Participants:**

Puyallup residents, planners, public health professionals, and a reporter from The News Tribune walked with Feet First.



The audit team at Ferrucci Junior High School

**Top Observations:**

1. Residents of this neighborhood would like to regularly walk, run, and bicycle in and around their neighborhood, but they are concerned about their safety. Despite a lowered speed limit of 25 mph on Wildwood Park Drive and the residential nature of the area, driving behavior is discouraging people from being more active (i.e., walking or bicycling).
2. Local parks and vacant parcels may provide opportunities for the development of trails or other physical activity promoting amenities.
3. The three schools in this area provide opportunities to promote walking and bicycling to school.
4. Community residents appear to have strong leadership and the City of Puyallup appears to be supportive of enhancing walkability and bikeability.

**Top Recommendations:**

1. Establish a plan to add pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and bicycle storage facilities) and safety improvements, such as additional crosswalks, to Wildwood Park Drive.
2. Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing parks and other neighborhood opportunities for physical activity.
3. Develop and implement a Safe Routes to School program. Specifically address school drop-off and pick-up problems at schools including vehicle idling, and use of nearby cul-de-sac streets for drop off and pick-up.
4. Establish and implement a traffic-calming program for the Wildwood Park Drive neighborhood to address speeding, failing to yield to pedestrians and other driver behavior issues.

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**Organizers:** Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (Beth Glynn)

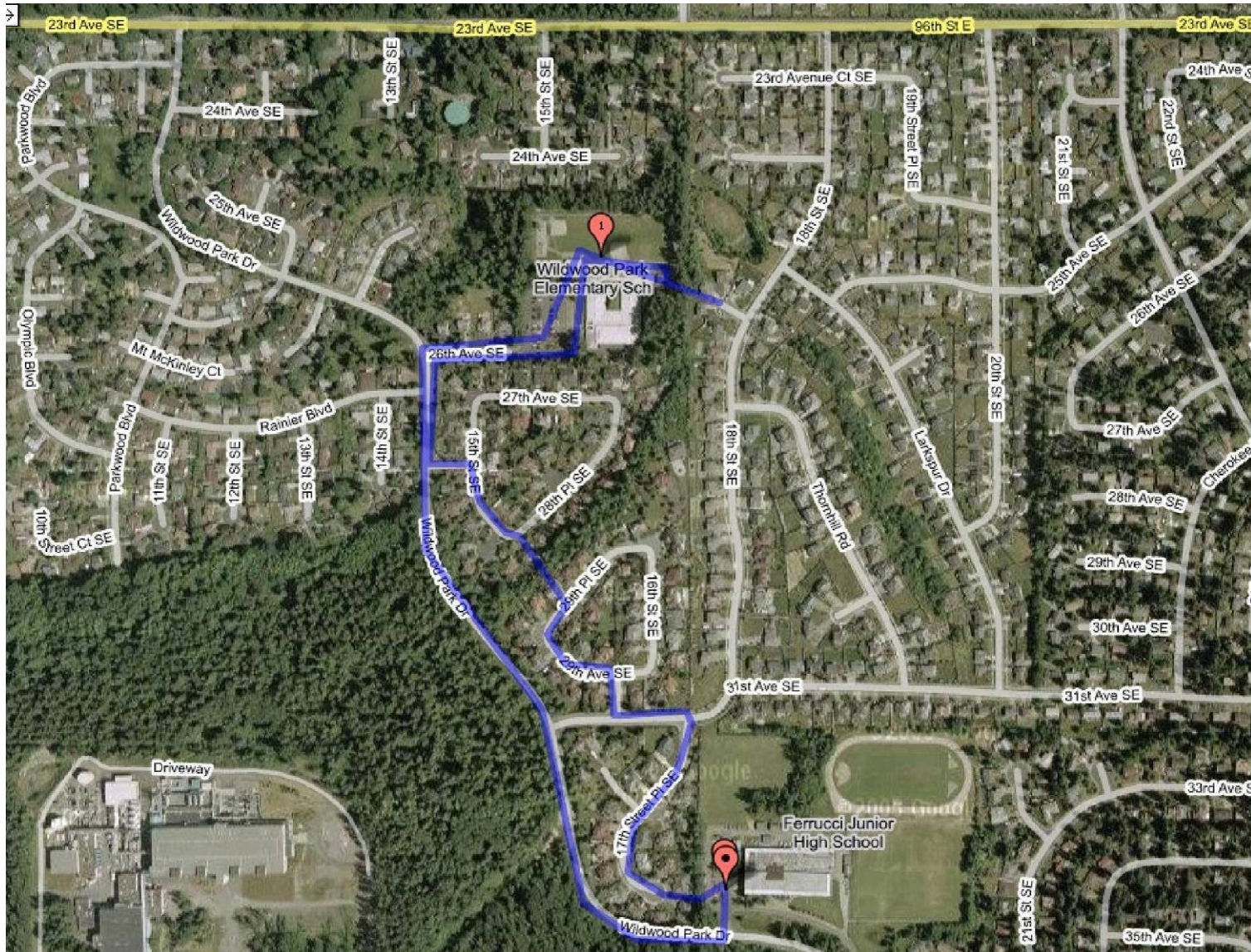
**Audit leader:** Feet First (David Levinger, PhD, PE)

**Partners:** City of Puyallup, Planning Division (Nancy Eklund, AICP) and Traffic Engineering Section

**Sponsor:** Washington State Department of Health

**Photo Credits:** Juliann Trumm, Jody Wilson, David Levinger

Aerial Photo of Audited Route Walked: 1.75 miles through residential and school areas







**Item Key**






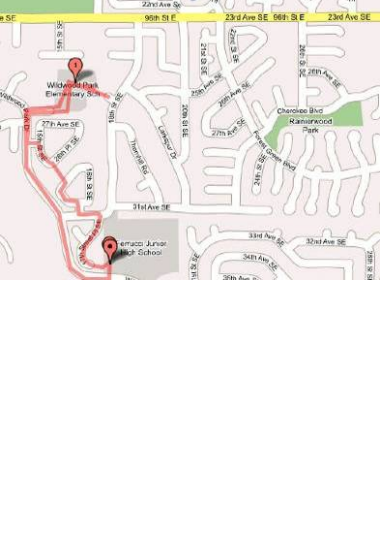



Issues and action items are labeled with four color-coded icons that identify what action is recommended to make improvements. Additionally, as most of the action recommended is in the public domain, each item includes a specification for the category area that can facilitate coordination with or by the appropriate local or state agency.






- ✳ - Citizen or business initiative could solve this problem
- ☎ - Existing programs can be tapped to make improvements
- 📄 - Policy change or new funding may be required to implement changes
- ⌘ - Informational item, action may not be necessary, but opportunities for cultural emphasis or public information may exist





**Issues and Action Items**





Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
1 ☎	Ferrucci Junior High School parking lot	<p><b>Parking lot is a hazardous walking environment.</b> There is no clear and easily accessible pedestrian crossing through the parking lot between 17<sup>th</sup> Place SE and Ferrucci Junior High School.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> (a) Stripe parking lot with a painted pedestrian pathway that connects 17<sup>th</sup> Place SE with the school to improve visibility and promote driver awareness. (b) Construct a paved pedestrian pathway through the existing median to channel walkers to the correct crossing location.</p>	Parking lot	
2 ✳ ☎	Pedestrian Pathway between Ferrucci Junior High School and 17 <sup>th</sup> Place SE	<p><b>Pathway bollards prevent access by wheelchairs, strollers, and bicycles.</b> The bollards placed along the pathway between the Ferrucci Junior High School parking lot and 17<sup>th</sup> Place SE are too narrow to allow wheelchair, stroller or bicycle access. One audit participant pushing a stroller had to use Wildwood Park Drive (a road with no designated pedestrian facilities) to access the school. A child's bicycle could only pass through with the handlebars turned sideways.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Neighborhood leaders and the Puyallup School District facilities department should collaborate to modify or remove the bollards after ensuring a safe crossing for children on foot and bicycles exists at the parking lot.</p>	Accessibility	











Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
3 	Ferrucci Junior High School Parking lot adjacent to pedestrian pathway	<p><b>Parking space limits sight distance.</b> A vehicle parked in this space would obstruct a driver’s view of children coming into the school parking lot via the pathway.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Eliminate the parking space immediately adjacent to pedestrian pathway. Paint cross-hatching in this space and post a “No Parking” sign.</p>	<p>Parking lot</p> <p>(Photo marked with yellow to indicate area recommended for cross-hatching and “No Parking” signage.)</p>	
4   	17 <sup>th</sup> Place SE (near Ferrucci Junior High School) and Daisy Court (near Wildwood Park Elementary School) cul-de-sacs	<p><b>High traffic volumes on cul-de-sac streets.</b> According to residents, parents utilize the 17<sup>th</sup> Place SE cul-de-sac and the Daisy Court cul-de-sac to drop off and pick up students. Controlling traffic around the school at student pick-up and drop-off times is important for student pedestrian safety.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Changing driver behavior should be a joint neighborhood, City, and School District project and might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Development of specific pick-up and drop-off procedures by the school in cooperation with City of Puyallup Traffic Engineering Division, and dissemination of the information to parents;</li> <li>(b) Encouraging parents to pick-up and drop-off students only in designated areas; and/or</li> <li>(c) Painting curbs adjacent to pathways and/or installation of “No Parking” signs in the cul-de-sacs of concern to restrict parking.</li> </ul>	<p>Use of cul-de-sacs</p>	
5  	Neighborhood connector pathway between 29 <sup>th</sup> Place SE and 28 <sup>th</sup> Place SE	<p><b>Concern about pathway liability.</b> Audit participants expressed concern about liability on neighborhood connecting pathways. Residents indicated that they are currently paying increased liability insurance to cover any problems that occur on these pathways.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Investigate opportunities to deed neighborhood connector pathways to the City or establish pathways as part of a land trust to exempt the community from liability.</p>	<p>Liability Concerns</p>	

Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
6  	Various	<p><b>Lack of accessible sidewalks.</b>                      Observed parked cars blocking the sidewalk and lack of curb ramps in some locations (no curb cuts were present at corners of 17<sup>th</sup> Place SE and 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue SE.)</p> <p>Trees branches and shrubs were observed to be obstructing sidewalks and the pathway connecting 29<sup>th</sup> Place SE to 28<sup>th</sup> Place SE.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Discuss problems such as lack of curb ramps and sidewalk accessibility with the City of Puyallup Traffic Engineering Division and request assistance in resolving these issues; Contact the traffic hotline at <b>253/770-3363</b>.</li> <li>(b) Work with the homeowners association or the property owner to educate residents about the importance of keeping sidewalks accessible and free of obstructions.</li> <li>(c) Leave notices on problem cars asking owners not to park blocking the sidewalk.</li> <li>(d) Work with private property owner to trim trees or shrubs that block access to sidewalks. If vegetation is interfering with sign visibility, contact the City of Puyallup at <b>253/841-5471</b>. If a property owner notifies the City that they plan to prune vegetation that is interfering with sign visibility or sidewalk access, the branches can be left on the ground (in an area where they do not obstruct the sidewalk or street) and the City will remove the material.</li> </ul>	Accessibility	
7 	31 <sup>st</sup> Avenue SE	<p><b>Excessive vehicle speeds on residential roads.</b>                      The large road width, limited sight distances and excessive speeds on 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue SE (especially near Thornhill Rd) create a dangerous pedestrian environment.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b>                      Contact the City of Puyallup Traffic Engineering Division about their Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program at <b>253/770-3363</b> or visit their website by going to: <a href="http://www.cityofpuyallup.org/">http://www.cityofpuyallup.org/</a> (Traffic Engineering Section)</p>	Traffic Calming	






Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
8 	27 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SE & Wildwood Park Drive	<p><b>Impromptu traffic calming.</b> Citizens can help to slow traffic without City intervention. The pile of gravel shown in the picture caused drivers to slow down.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <p>(a) Undertake a neighborhood public education campaign to discourage speeding using short-term reminders, such as banners or yard signs telling drivers to slow down, can change the social acceptability of speeding. Remember that most speeders are neighbors and friends, not people from somewhere else.</p> <p>(b) Encourage on-street parking. Cars parked on the street reduce the width of the road, often slowing traffic. However, on street parking creates a visual barrier between motor vehicle traffic and crossing pedestrians, especially children and people using wheelchairs. It is therefore important to ensure that cars are not parked close to crosswalks and intersections.</p>	Traffic calming	
9 	27 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SE & Wildwood Park Drive	<p><b>Limited sight distance at stop sign and excessive speed around corner.</b> The stop sign on 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE is set back from the corner reducing visibility of approaching traffic.</p> <p>Additionally, the turning radius is very large. A wide turning radius typically results in high-speed turning movements by motorists and can result in one of the most common pedestrian crash types involving a pedestrian who is struck by a right-turning vehicle at an intersection.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <p>(a) Coordinate with City Traffic Engineering to reevaluate the location of the stop sign at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and Wildwood Park Drive to determine if it can be closer to the corner.</p> <p>(b) Evaluate feasibility of reducing the turning radius by painting the roadway to indicate traffic lane location.</p>	Limited sight distance	







Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
10 	Wildwood Park Drive	<p><b>Shoulder along Wildwood Park Drive had been recently cleaned.</b> Clean shoulders increase walkability and bikeability by making the fog line more visible and increasing the comfort and safety of pedestrians and cyclists sharing the road.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Continue to ensure routine street sweeping, especially along roads where the shoulder is the only space for pedestrians and bicyclists.</p>	Road maintenance	
11 	Wildwood Park Drive	<p><b>Lack of pedestrian infrastructure.</b> Between 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue SE and 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, pedestrian facilities exist only on the east side of the road. No pedestrian facilities exist between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE (Wildwood Park Elementary School entrance) and 112<sup>th</sup> Street E. According to audit participants, the lack of pedestrian facilities was by design to maintain a “rural feel” along Wildwood Park Drive. However, most audit participants indicated that their preference was to have sidewalks and bicycle lanes.</p> <p>Wildwood Park Drive is walking and bicycling route for three local schools and the road is used regularly by at least two local running clubs. Designated pedestrian and bicycle facilities are even more essential on the higher-speed and higher volume roads than they are on low-volume residential streets.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Install dedicated pedestrian infrastructure (6 foot minimum pathway width with a buffer area) on the west side of Wildwood Park Drive between 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue SE and 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and on both sides of the road between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE (Wildwood Park Elementary School entrance) and 112<sup>th</sup> Street E.</p> <p><i>(Note that this recommendation would require a change to the City’s Comprehensive Plan.)</i></p>	Pedestrian infrastructure	






Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
12  	Wildwood Park Drive	<p><b>Lack of bicycle infrastructure and facilities.</b>                      One audit participant indicated that he regularly uses the bicycle lanes on 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue SE. However, audit participants observed that no dedicated bicycle infrastructure exists on Wildwood Park Drive. Further, many local destinations that bicyclist would like to ride to (Top Food and GI Joe's were specifically mentioned) do not have bicycle storage facilities.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) When pedestrian facilities are added, install dedicated bicycle lanes on both sides of Wildwood Park Drive between 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue SE and 112<sup>th</sup> Street E.</li> <li>(b) Encourage existing area retail stores to add with bicycle storage facilities.</li> <li>(c) Require new businesses to provide bicycle storage facilities to encourage bicycling to work or use of bicycles as a viable alternative for short trips.</li> <li>(d) Where insufficient roadway width exists, consider use of a “sharrow” marking placed in the travel lane. A “sharrow” is marking has been developed for use in special circumstances to indicate motorists that the travel lane is shared by cyclists.</li> </ul> <p><i>(Note that use of the sharrow marking would require a change to current City policy or ordinances.)</i></p>	Bicycle infrastructure 	
13 	Wildwood Park Drive	<p><b>Add sidewalks to new roads.</b>                      Audit participants expressed concern about an increase in traffic volume and speeds if a proposed road connecting Pierce College to Wildwood Park Drive is built. Participants also expressed concern that this project may proceed without including pedestrian and bicycle facilities.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b>                      As new roads are built, require that designated pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is provided concurrently, as defined by the Nonmotorized Plan in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.</p>	Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure	(No photo)





Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
14  	26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SE & Wildwood Park Drive intersection	<p><b>Low visibility crosswalk at the entrance to Wildwood Park Elementary School.</b></p> <p>The crosswalk at entrance to Wildwood Park Elementary School is on a curve and difficult to see. Several audit team members indicated that drivers frequently fail to yield to pedestrians crossing the street.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <p>Increase the visibility of the crosswalk located at Wildwood Park Drive and 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Providing adult crossing guards;</li> <li>(b) Coordinating with City Traffic Engineering to evaluate additional opportunities to mark crosswalks with advance notification for drivers (e.g., painting the word “school” on the street or providing signage before the crosswalk).</li> <li>(c) Coordinating with City Traffic Engineering to determine if use of a raised sidewalk is appropriate or feasible; and/or</li> <li>(d) Installing in pavement lights signaling the crosswalk.</li> </ul>	Street crossing	






Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
15  	Wildwood Park Drive, especially near Wildwood Park Elementary School and Ferrucci Junior High School	<p><b>Lack of enforcement of 25 mile per hour and school zone speed limits.</b>                      Audit participants expressed concern about vehicular speed and cut through traffic of drivers attempting to avoid Meridian East (SR 161). In 2002, there was a pedestrian fatality on Wildwood Park Drive. The City of Puyallup subsequently installed radar speed reader signs for vehicles traveling in both directions. However, resident concerns about vehicular speed continue.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <p>(a) <i>Police enforcement</i> - The City of Puyallup could provide additional police enforcement to monitor speeds or other unsafe driver behavior and issue citations. This method can be targeted to specific time periods that are deemed to be most problematic and target violators without affecting normal traffic.</p> <p>(b) <i>Photo radar enforcement</i> – In 2005, the Washington State legislature authorized the use of automated traffic safety cameras for stoplight, railroad crossing or school speed zone violations. The City of Puyallup could install photo radar enforcement cameras (i.e., speed cameras) to increase compliance with the speed limit, especially during times that the school speed zone is in effect.</p>	Enforcement	 <p>(Note that the driver was 11 mph over the speed limit since the picture was taken during hours when children were leaving school.)</p>
16 	Wildwood Park Elementary School	<p><b>Parent safety concerns.</b>                      Parents expressed safety concerns (such as possible abduction) that influence their decision to allow children to walk or bicycle to school, particularly for elementary school students.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b>                      Work with the PTA to implement a walking school bus program, which consists of a group of students who walk together to and from school. Walking school buses for children in elementary schools should be parent supervised. The program is most useful for students who live relatively close to school and have access to a route safe for walking.</p> <p>Walking school bus programs reduce traffic congestion and air pollution around school and increase pedestrian and personal safety by walking in groups. Contact Feet First for more information on starting a walking school bus program, <b>206/652-2310</b></p>	Programs	 <p>(Photo from another program.)</p>

Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
17  	Along 26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SE at Wildwood Park Elementary School	<p><b>Vehicle idling near schools and walking routes.</b>                      Audit participants indicated that buses and vehicles routinely idle directly next to the sidewalk along 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE while waiting to pick up students.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <p>(a) Contact the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department Environmental Health Program to request information about their anti-idling program, <b>253/798-7369</b>.</p> <p>(b) Air Watch Northwest has downloadable materials to promote no-idling zones around schools. Go to: <a href="http://www.airwatchnorthwest.org/">http://www.airwatchnorthwest.org/</a></p>	Driver Education	
18  	Pathway between the back of Wildwood Park Elementary School and Daisy Court.	<p><b>Fence at gate prevents access by wheelchairs, strollers and bicycles.</b>                      The fence placed along the pathway between the back of Wildwood Park Elementary School and Daisy Court makes the pathway too narrow to allow wheelchair, stroller or bicycle access.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b>                      Remove the fence and replace the existing gate with a larger gate to allow access between the neighborhood and the school while still ensuring that the school grounds can be secured when necessary.</p>	Accessibility	

Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
19  	Wildwood Park Drive	<p><b>Lack of street lighting.</b> There are no existing streetlights along Wildwood Park Drive. Without sufficient overhead lighting, motorists may not be able to see pedestrians in time to stop. Lighting is particularly important at pedestrian crosswalks. Audit participants indicated that installing streetlights would improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety during the winter and evening school related events.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> (a) The City of Puyallup does not currently have an adopted policy for placing streetlights in existing neighborhoods (a draft policy has been prepared). Contact the Puyallup City Council to share your concerns about the lack of street lighting and request that a plan for street light installation be created to improve pedestrian and neighborhood safety. The City has an online suggestion box at: <a href="http://www.cityofpuyallup.org/page.php?id=459">http://www.cityofpuyallup.org/page.php?id=459</a></p> <p>(b) Distribute reflectors to schoolchildren to increase visibility of pedestrians especially in inclement weather or when it is dark.</p>	Pedestrian visibility	
20 	Wildwood Park Drive near Ferrucci Junior High School	<p><b>Lack of pedestrian and bicycle pathways in and around nearby parks and lack of signage to identify existing trails.</b> Several residents stated that they moved to the area to be closer to City parks and that providing safe pedestrian and bicycle access to nearby parks, the construction of pathways connecting Wildwood Park to Bradley Lake, the construction of trails within the park, and providing signage identifying the trailheads would increase their use of these amenities.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> (a) Construct additional pathways or trails in and around existing parks. (b) Install signage identifying trailheads.</p>	Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure	 <p>(Trailhead to Bradley Lake Park as seen from Wildwood Park Drive.)</p>

Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
21 	Wildwood Park Drive near Ferrucci Junior High School	<p><b>Lack of a safe pedestrian/ bicyclist crossing from neighborhoods to Bradley Lake Park.</b></p> <p>Audit participants indicated that there is currently no safe, designated crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists between the residential neighborhoods (east of Wildwood Park Drive) and the trail to Bradley Lake Park (west of Wildwood Park Drive).</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Coordinate with City Traffic Engineering to evaluate the best locations for a designated crossing for Wildwood Park Drive near the trailhead.</p>	Street crossing	
22 	Ferrucci Junior High	<p><b>Junior high school students may frequently bicycle to school.</b></p> <p>This photo, taken on a school-day, demonstrates that there is a significant demand for bicycle parking at Ferrucci Junior High School.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Upgrading and increasing the number of bicycle storage facilities and providing with overhead coverage to protect bicycles from rain could encourage additional bicycling to school.</p>	Behavior	

<p>23  </p>	<p>South Hill</p>	<p><b>Reduce auto use and increase transit use for short trips.</b>                  Transit service is currently provided along 39th Avenue (Route # 411) and along 23rd Avenue SE (Route #413). However, no public transit routes currently utilize Wildwood Park Drive. Expanding transit opportunities could encourage new transit use among residents and serve as a viable transportation option for youth, seniors and other residents who have limited access to automobiles. It is also important to note that all Pierce Transit buses are equipped with bicycle racks.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <p>(a) Work with Pierce Transit and the City of Puyallup to identify opportunities and incentives to encourage additional transit routes and ridership, including exploring the feasibility of providing a suburban transit line (e.g., Bus PLUS) through South Hill residential neighborhoods to deliver riders to the South Hill Transit Center or the downtown Sounder Station.</p> <p>(b) Install dedicated bicycle lanes on roads that lead to local bus stops and encourage area residents to commute by bicycle to bus stops along 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue SE.</p>	<p>Transit service and bicycle infrastructure</p>	 <p>(South Hill Transit station)</p>
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**Next Steps and Priorities**

At the end of the audit, citizen participants stated that they would like to follow up with the following actions:

- Request that funding be allocated to improvement pedestrian and bicyclist environments.
- Make a personal commitment to walk and bicycle more.
- Increase awareness of driver behavior that negatively impacts walking and bicycling to local residents.
- Ask elected officials to make walkability and bikeability a priority.

Additional recommended next steps:

- Prioritize action items and keep track of accomplishments at the neighborhood-level and within City Departments.
- Identify and engage stakeholders interested in promoting safe walking and bicycling environments such as parent champions at local elementary and middle schools.
- Organize a Safe Routes to School training and Walk to School Day events.
- Establish a formal active living task force to expand these walking audit opportunities to other neighborhoods.

## Contacts & Project Information

### **For more information about this report or Feet First, please contact:**

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For information about pedestrian advocacy resources for communities outside of Washington State, we recommend that you contact the national coalition of pedestrian advocacy organizations, **America Walks** at:  
Web: [www.americawalks.org](http://www.americawalks.org)  
Email: [info@americawalks.org](mailto:info@americawalks.org)  
Phone: 617 367.1170 (Boston, MA)

Feet First is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It is our mission to promote the rights and interests of pedestrians and to encourage people to enjoy the pleasures of walking. Feet First works to build walkable communities across Washington State.

### **Active Living Task Force Contacts:**

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This event was made possible through Feet First's contract with Washington State Department of Health in support of the Active Community Environments ACEs project. The ACEs Project is a part of the Washington State "Steps to a Healthier US" program funded by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

