

SUMMARY REPORT:

Otis J. Brock Elementary School

Childhood Obesity Prevention Program

Healthy Savannah – Summer 2016

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INTRODUCTION

One of the leading causes of health disparities in Georgia today is obesity. Although it and resulting consequences, such as diabetes, have typically been associated with adults, its impact has since expanded to children. With such an early onset of health issues, future health problems are more likely to follow. This alarming trend and the future outlook of children's health begs the question, "*How can we reverse this trend?*". Addressing this question means tackling two major contributors to the problem, children's eating habits and physical activity. While we hope to impact eating habits through other Healthy Savannah projects, the scope of our work focuses on how physical activity can be positively impacted by altering the immediate environments in which children live, play, and learn.

As such, these environments include schools and the surrounding attendance zones. More specifically, the Childhood Obesity Prevention Program (COPP) focuses on ten Title I elementary and middle schools, including the following: Brock, Butler, East Broad, Gadsden, Hodge, Hubert, Pulaski, Shuman, White Bluff, and Windsor Forest. At each location, Healthy Savannah utilized GIS mapping, community meetings, and on-site surveying to clarify and pinpoint the barriers keeping children from being actively engaged in their communities. With your help, as well as the community's, we can begin overcoming these barriers and providing safe and accessible spaces for children to engage in physical activity.

In this report, we have compiled information that can help us better understand how we can take on this task for Otis J. Brock Elementary School (BrES). By pairing Healthy Savannah observations and community input with GIS data, we hope to illustrate both the big picture and community-specific issues that are in need of change.

MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | COMMUNITY INPUT

At the Brock Elementary School community meeting, participants assessed issues they perceive to be hindering their children’s ability to be physically active. Of the themes ranked at the BrES meeting, community engagement/school, pedestrian infrastructure and traffic control/calming were ranked as the top three important (**Table 1**). Those who were present completed response cards, and one to two rounds of discussion, during which they mapped out and/or listed proposed solutions to the challenges they face in being more active in their community. **Figure 1**, on the following page, provides a map of the issues that were mentioned.

TOP THREE ISSUES + CONCERNS/SOLUTIONS		
[1]	[2]	[3]
Community Engagement/School	Pedestrian Infrastructure	Traffic Control/Calming
Events for kids outside of school	Crosswalk and light at W. Bay Street	Crossing Guards on time for duty
Open schools for evening activities	Sidewalks on Comer and Millen Street	Speed limit signs
Visit from Farm Truck 912	Sidewalks on Louisville Rd. (from the railroad track beyond I-516 to E. Lathrop Ave.	Crossing Guards at Brittany St and Augusta Ave., McIntyre St. and Augusta Ave.
	Sidewalks on Bay St. (from Brittany St. to E. Lathrop Ave.)	More Crossing Guards on Louisville Rd.
	Walking Trail around Brock	Speed Bumps on Lily and Stratford

Table 1 indicates contributing factors of and/or possible ways to address the top three issues preventing BrES children from being active in their communities.

MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/SCHOOL

For community engagement, attendees promoted events outside of school for the children, open schools for evening activities, and a visit from Farm Truck 912 (**Table 1**). The community believes that improvements in these areas will lend itself to increased activity amongst BrES students, and at Healthy Savannah we believe that City of Savannah Community Development, local businesses, neighborhood associations, and churches can be of great help.

MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | BrES MAP

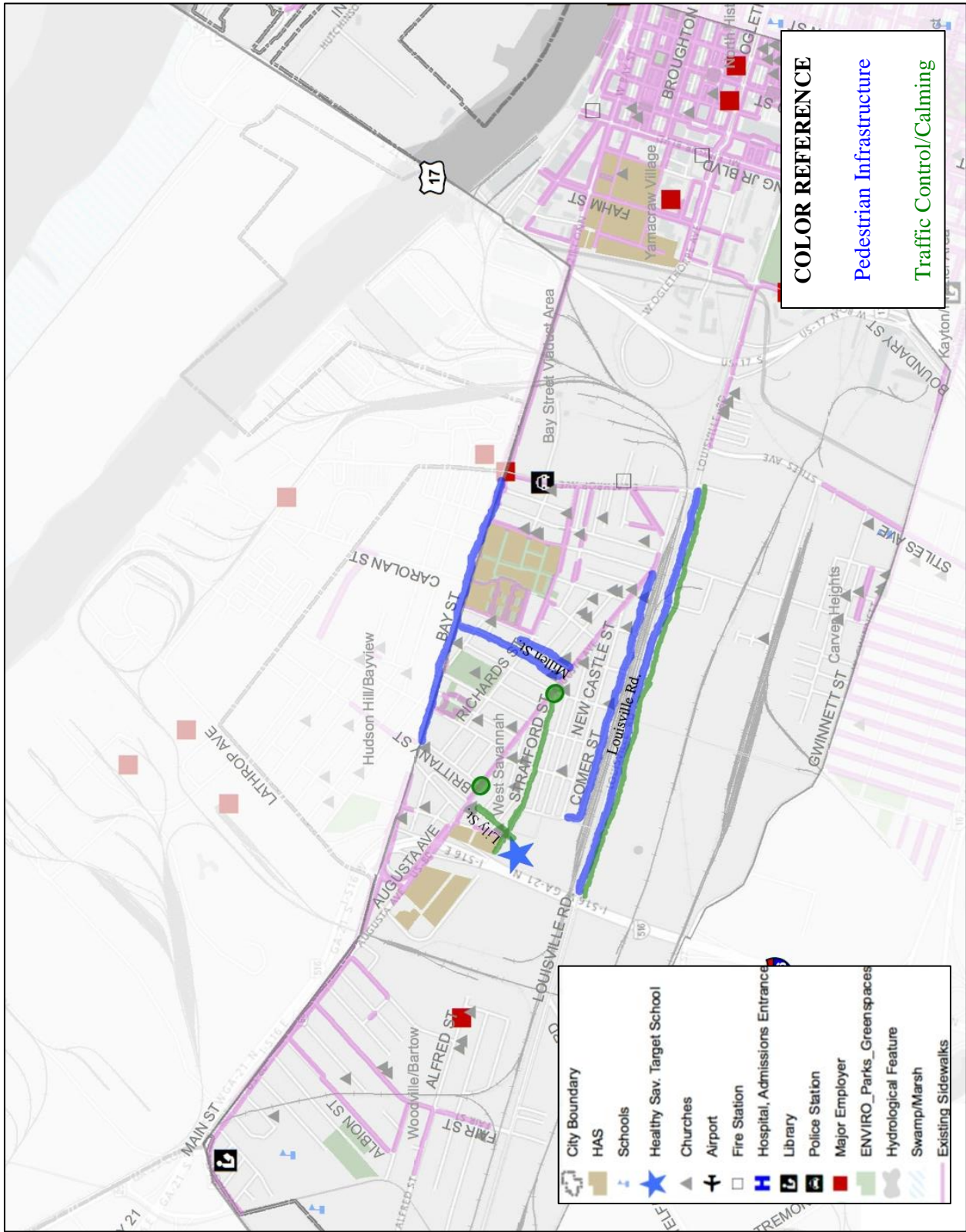


Figure 1 maps out a majority of the BrES community’s concerns and proposed solutions.

MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

According to GIS mapping data, BrES is in need of some improvement in sidewalk connectivity. Within a 1.5-mile radius of BrES, 59% of streets don't have sidewalks on either side ([Table 2](#)).

School	Sidewalks with gaps (%)	Summary
East Broad	12	The schools that are most accessible based on the criterion of sidewalks on either sides of the street are East Broad, Shuman and Gadsden. These elementary schools have an average of more than 65% of convenient, walkable roads for most people.
Shuman	28	
Gadsden	35	
Hodge	54	
Brock	59	For Hodge Elementary, that accessibility is below the 50 % mark, while Brock and Hubert are lower, at 41 and 30, respectively.
Hubert	70	
Windsor Forest	87	
Butler	88	Windsor Forest, Butler and Pulaski are all the most inaccessible, coming in with averages close to 10%.
Pulaski	90	
White Bluff	NA	

[Table 2](#) ranks the ten Title I schools from best to worst, in regards to sidewalk availability within a 1.5 mi. radius.

Despite the need for sidewalks, less than half of the community members' needs are listed in the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (CORE MPO) Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, while none are listed as City of Savannah sidewalk priorities ([Table 3](#)). More than that, pedestrian projects that are listed in the CORE MPO Non-Motorized Transportation Plan fall low on the list ([Table 4](#)) for all Title I school- related projects.

School	Community Needs	CORE Priorities	#	COS Priority?
Brock	Bay St. (Brittany --> E. Lathrop)	I-516 --> Viaduct	37	
Brock	Comer St.	1-sided : Abbott --> Augusta	65	
Brock	Millen St.	X	X	
Brock	Louisville Rd. (RR tracks --> E. Lathrop)	X	X	

[Table 3](#) compares community assessed sidewalk needs with existing priorities from the CORE MPO Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and the City of Savannah.

School	Community Needs	CORE Priorities	#	COS Priority?
Butler	Ogeechee Rd.	2-sided : I-516 --> Victory Dr.	17	
Hodge	Amaranth St.	1-sided : Hopkins --> MLK	31	
Brock	Bay St. (Brittany --> E. Lathrop)	I-516 --> Viaduct	37	
Hodge	Clinch St.	Stark --> Hopkins	38	Y
Butler	Liberty Pkwy.	1/2-sided : I-516 --> Ogeechee	42	
E. Broad	Gwinnett St.	Upgrade : E. Broad --> Atlantic Ave	55	Y
Butler	Ogeechee Rd.	2-sided : Chatham Pkwy. --> N of I-516	57	
Butler	Ogeechee Rd.	2-sided : Salt Creek Rd. --> Chatham Pkwy.	58	
Brock	Comer St.	1-sided : Abbott --> Augusta	65	
Hubert	Goebel St.	Skidaway --> Kinzie	66	Y
Butler	Stiles Ave.	Westside : Ogeechee --> Bel Air	72	Y
Hubert	E. 37th St.	Continuity : Cedar --> Fulmer	81	
Hodge	Bulloch St.	1-sided : Clinch --> 45th	96	
Butler	Claremont Cir.	Cynthia St --> Bel Air Dr.	115	
E. Broad	Gwinnett St.	Long Ave. --> Dead end	118	Y
Windsor	Woodley Rd.	1-sided : Mercy --> Deerfield	122	
Windsor	Coffee Bluff	Back Rd. --> Windsor Rd.	130	
Hubert	Grant St.	1-sided : 110 ft W --> Burton	145	
Butler	Cloverdale	Eleanor St. --> Stiles Ave.	156	Y
Hubert	Goebel Ave.	1-sided continuity : Capital --> President	161	
Shuman	Goebel Ave.	1-sided continuity : Capital --> President	161	
Windsor	Windsor Rd	1-sided : Stillwood --> Largo	166	
Hodge	Cann Park	Perimeter sidewalk continuity	195	
Windsor	Stillwood Dr.	1-sided : Stillwood Ct. --> Cedar Grove	197	

Table 4 clearly shows that, of the 26 CORE sidewalk projects that align with Title I School community needs, BrES- related projects are in the top half of the list.

With such strong support for and focus on updating and adding sidewalks, the efforts being made to do so are lacking. Considering the community’s additional call for more pedestrian crossing signs/lighting, a crosswalk/sidewalk on Windsor Rd, and better-maintained sidewalks (**Table 1**), the need for change is great. And with the help of City of Savannah Traffic Engineering and SCCPSS Facilities Maintenance, we believe we can make it happen.

MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | TRAFFIC CONTROL/CALMING

The third of BrES's barriers to physical activity was shown to be traffic control/calming. To make changes in this respect, community meeting attendees suggested having on time crossing guards, speed limit signs, speed bumps on Lily St. and Stratford St., and crossing guards at the following locations: Louisville Rd., the intersection of Brittany St. and Augusta Ave., and the intersection of McIntyre St. and Augusta Ave. To improve upon these issues, and better the walking and biking conditions for BrES students, we hope to garner the support and expertise of City of Savannah Traffic Engineering and Savannah-Chatham Metro Police Department.

ON-SITE OBSERVATIONS

In addition to the compiled sidewalk data, Healthy Savannah conducted on-site surveys for each Title I School. These were limited to the school property and the surrounding major and minor streets. By looking for indicators of pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure and provision for appropriate traffic control, we were able to better understand the situation at each school. The goal was to take note of potential barriers to children walking and/or biking to and from school.

In the surrounding area of the school, it was apparent that there weren't bike lanes or racks and sidewalks weren't as well kept or consistent as they should be. More specifically, there were no sidewalks at the front of the school, or on Brittany St. On Lily St., the sidewalks were narrow, overgrown, and in need of maintenance. For Stratford St., there were sidewalks, but only along one side of the street. All along Comer St., there is a set of railroad tracks, but no sidewalk to serve as a walking path away from the dangers of passing trains

We hope that making improvements in the provision of sidewalk and biking infrastructure around the BrES campus could serve as a positive influence for students to both walk and bike to school.

CONCLUSION

All things considered, the ways in which the BrES community believes we can help alleviate some of the issues preventing their students' from consistent physical activity are the following:

- More community events and afterschool activities for kids
- Sidewalks and crosswalks on major streets leading to and from the school to address walking barriers
- Possible Walking trail surrounding the school
- More and accountable crossing guards located on key streets in the surrounding area
- Controlling driver speeds via speed bumps and increased signage

Because the community has taken note of the barriers preventing their children from utilizing safe and accessible places to walk, bike, and play, ensuring that those barriers can be surmounted is of utmost importance. The current status of childhood health and nutrition in Savannah is in need of change and we can be proponents of it by being present and contributing to the communities that need it most. In making strides towards noticeable change, the future of Savannah's youth can be altered and the community at large will experience the benefits of such a structural and cultural change.

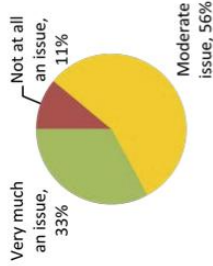
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION | CONTACTS

Position	District	Name	Email	Phone
Principal		Maggie Walker-Zeigler	maggie.walker@sccpss.com	912.395.5300
PTA President/ Contact		Sharon Heidt	sharon.heidt@sccpss.com	912.395.5300
Mayor	1	Eddie Deloach	edealoch@savannahga.gov	912.651.6444
County Commissioner	8	Priscilla D. Thomas	p.thomas10@comcast.net	912.236.0459
Captain	Downtown	Ben Herron		912.651.6000
SCCPSS Board Member	8	Ruby D. Jones	ruby.jones@sccpss.com	912.232.5998
Healthy Savannah		Paula Kreissler	paula@healthysavannah.org	912.272.9494

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION | HEALTHY COMMUNITY KIDS CAMPAIGN

Healthy Children/Childhood Obesity

Almost all community members feel that childhood obesity is an issue in the Savannah community.¹

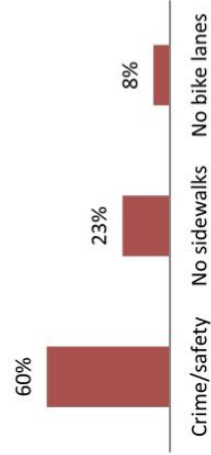


How can Healthy Savannah help address healthy children in Savannah?¹

Provide families w/cooking classes involving fresh produce, meats and dairy. Teach them how to choose wisely when eating and how to eat balanced meals. Teach them to drink water constantly!

Most of the families that Healthy Savannah talked to want to become more active, however crime and safety concerns as well as a lack of sidewalks and bike lanes are barriers to this activity.²

Barriers to Activity

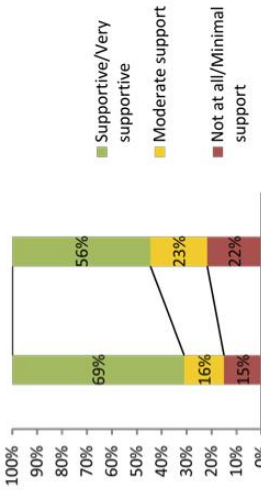


Truman Linear Park Trail

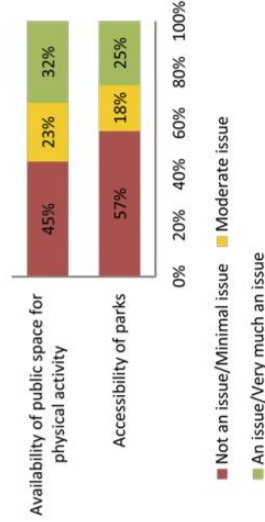
The Truman Linear Park Trail is a transportation project supported by Federal Highway funds to build an approximately 6 miles trail that will connect Daffin Park with Lake Mayer Community Park at Montgomery Cross Road, running parallel to Truman Parkway. The trail will be suitable for biking, walking, and running.

While 69% did not know about the Truman Linear Park Trail, 43% indicated they would use the Truman Linear Park Trail.¹

Community members feel that the city is generally supportive of parks and sidewalks/trails.¹



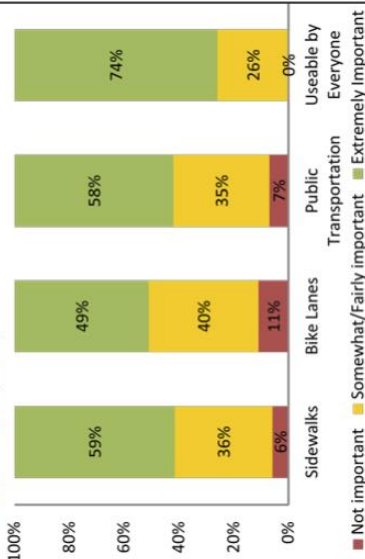
Over half of the community members indicated that accessibility of parks and availability of public space for physical activity is an issue in Savannah.¹



Complete Streets Ordinance

Complete Streets ordinances are a way for communities to make sure that the street network is useful for all drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. These ordinances make sure that roads and streets are safe and useful for people of all ages and abilities (school children through senior citizens).

Participants indicated that it is important to have sidewalks, bike lanes, and public transportation and that these options should be useable by everyone.¹



Despite the perceived importance of sidewalks and bike lanes, 42% think that most or all roads are NOT bike or pedestrian friendly² but 31% said that bike lanes are EXTREMELY important for getting to school²



More than 30% indicated that Savannah is very supportive of sidewalks and trails that allow for physical activity.¹



The majority think that a complete streets ordinance is important or extremely important for Savannah.¹

The information presented in this summary was developed, collected, and are reported as part of the evaluation for the Healthcare Georgia Foundation Grant that Healthy Savannah received in 2014. Data is drawn from over 57 community surveys¹ and 69 audience response² from community meetings from March 2015. For more information about the grant, the evaluation, or Healthy Savannah please contact Paula Kreissler at paula@healthysavannah.org.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION | THREE MAIN ISSUES BREAKDOWN

TOP THREE ISSUES + CONCERNS/SOLUTIONS		
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	Walking Trail around Brock	Speed Bumps on Lily and Stratford
LEGEND		
Response Card * Maps * Discussion		