

**SUMMARY REPORT:**  
Sarah Mills Hodge 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 Hodge Elementary School (HES). 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 Hodge 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 HES meeting, pedestrian infrastructure, traffic control/calming, and police/crime safety 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]
Pedestrian Infrastructure	Traffic Control/Calming	Police/Crime Safety
Alternate path from W. 52nd St.	More Crossing Guards	SCMPD patrols around Cann Park for safety
Add barrier between traffic and pedestrians	School Zone Signs and Signals	SCMPD present and visible around the school (during dismissal)
Color code safe walk routes and/or provide guided options	Speed bumps leading off of Bulloch St.	SCMPD School Zone enforcement for pedestrian/biking safety
Sidewalk- Clinch, Amaranth, and Cann Park	End of School Zone should include Hodge	Addressing drug dealers at parks
More sidewalks (on both sides of street) and bike paths	Crossing guards at 52nd St and DeRenne	
Need sidewalks leading off of Bulloch St and on W. 47th Ln.		
Sidewalks on Edwin and 53rd		
Sidewalks on Mills B Lane are too narrow/often parked on		
Cars parked on Montgomery St. sidewalks		

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

# MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | HES MAP

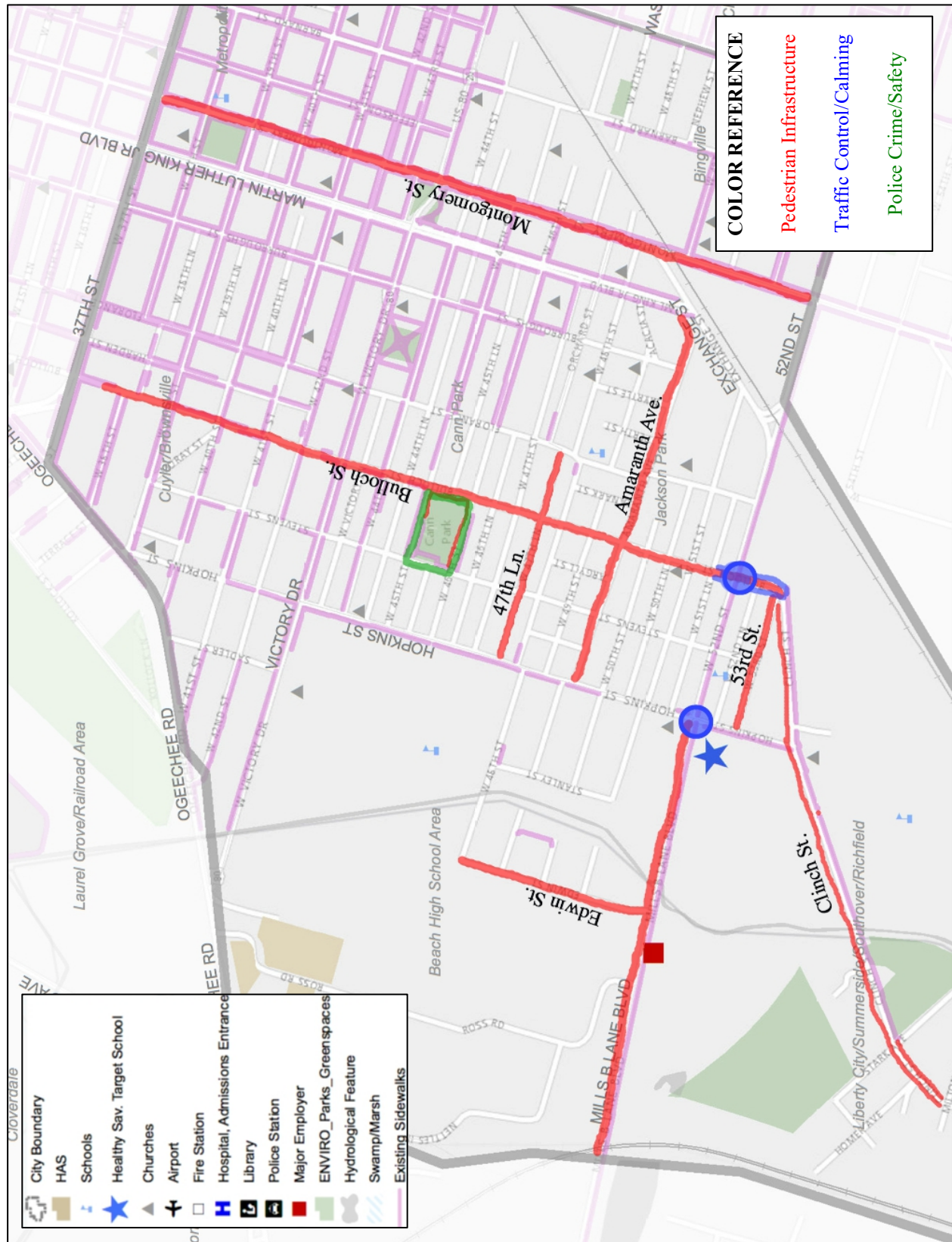


Figure 1 maps out a majority of the HES community’s concerns and proposed solutions.

## MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

According to GIS mapping data, HES has one of the less walkable communities ([Table 2](#)), with 54% of streets within a 1.5-mile radius having no sidewalks on either side.

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	
<b>Hodge</b>	<b>54</b>	For Hodge Elementary, that accessibility is below the 50 % mark, while Brock and Hubert are lower, at 41 and 30, respectively.
Brock	59	
Hubert	70	
Windsor Forest	87	Windsor Forest, Butler and Pulaski are all the most inaccessible, coming in with averages close to 10%.
Butler	88	
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, just over half of the community members’ needs are listed in the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (CORE MPO) Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, while only one is 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?
Hodge	Amaranth St.	1-sided : Hopkins --> MLK	31	
Hodge	Clinch St.	Stark --> Hopkins	38	Y
Hodge	Bulloch St.	1-sided : Clinch --> 45th	96	
Hodge	Cann Park	Perimeter sidewalk continuity	195	
Hodge	W. 47th St.	X	X	
Hodge	Edwin St.	X	X	
Hodge	53rd St.	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, HES-related projects fall to the bottom 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 an alternative path from W. 52<sup>nd</sup> St, a barrier between traffic and pedestrians, and color-coded or guided safe walking routes to and from the school (**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**

As the second highest issue preventing HES children from taking part in physical activity (**Table 1**), traffic control/calming requires a lot of attention. To making changes in this respect, community meeting attendees vocalized support for more crossing guards, school zone signs and signals, speed bumps leading off of Bulloch St., an end school zone that includes HES, and crossing guards at 52<sup>nd</sup> St. and DeRenne Ave. To make positive strides in improving traffic control/calming, we look towards combined efforts with City of Savannah Traffic Engineering and Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department (SCMPD).

## **MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | POLICE CRIME/SAFETY**

For police crime/safety, attendees promoted SCMPD t patrols around Cann Park and the school (during dismissal), addressing drug dealers at parks, and school zone enforcement for the benefit of pedestrian and biking safety (**Table 1**). Assuring safety through these methods has the ability to make progress in the increase of students' physical activity, and at Healthy Savannah we believe that SCCPSS Campus Police and SCMPD can help make that happen.

## **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.

Firstly, leading up to the school, there were only sidewalks on one side of the street. More specifically, this was noted at W. 52<sup>nd</sup> St. In addition, there were no bike lanes or racks. Lastly, sidewalks on Victory Dr. are narrow, in need of maintenance, and very close to oncoming traffic.



## CONCLUSION

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

- Outlined safe paths to school for walkers/bikers
- Sidewalks on surrounding streets while addressing those who park on existing sidewalks
- Signs, signals, and enforcement of speeds and traffic coming into the school
- Crossing guards at busy areas (including 52nd and DeRenne)
- Increased police presence to establish speed and safety around the school and Cann Park

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

<b>Position</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Principal		Yvette Wells	<a href="mailto:yvette.wells@sccpss.com">yvette.wells@sccpss.com</a>	912.395.5200
PTA President/ Contact		Bynikini Fraizer	<a href="mailto:bynikini.fraizer@sccpss.com">bynikini.fraizer@sccpss.com</a>	912.395.5200
Alderman	5	Estella Shabazz	<a href="mailto:eshabazz@savannahga.gov">eshabazz@savannahga.gov</a>	912.213.6444
County Commissioner	5	Yusuf K. Shabazz	<a href="mailto:ykshabazz@chathamcounty.org">ykshabazz@chathamcounty.org</a>	912.652.7963
Captain	Central	Devonn Adams		912.651.6931
SCCPSS Board Member	5	Irene G. Hines	<a href="mailto:irene.hines@sccpss.com">irene.hines@sccpss.com</a>	912.355.2410
Healthy Savannah		Paula Kreissler	<a href="mailto:paula@healthysavannah.org">paula@healthysavannah.org</a>	912.272.9494

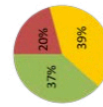
**Complete Streets Ordinance**

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.<sup>1</sup>



Despite the perceived importance of sidewalks and bike lanes, 37% think that most or all roads are NOT bike or pedestrian friendly<sup>2</sup> and 54% said that bike lanes are EXTREMELY important for getting to school<sup>2</sup>



Less than a quarter indicated that Savannah is very supportive of sidewalks and trails that allow for physical activity.<sup>1</sup>

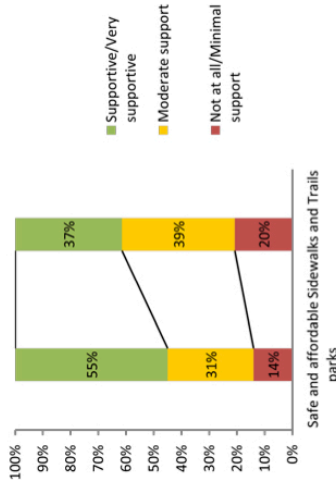


**Truman Linear Park Trail**

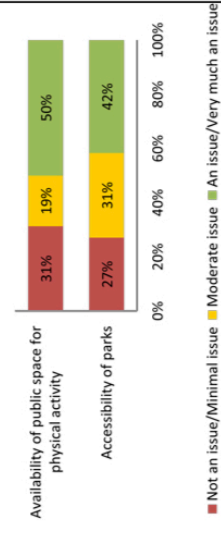
The Truman Linear Park Trail is a transportation project supported by Federal Highway funds to build an approximately 6 miles trail that will connect Daffin Park with Lake Mayer Community Park at Montgomery Cross Road, running parallel to Truman Parkway. The trail will be suitable for biking, walking,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

While 76% did not know about the Truman Linear Park Trail, 53% indicated they would use the Truman Linear Park Trail.<sup>1</sup>

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

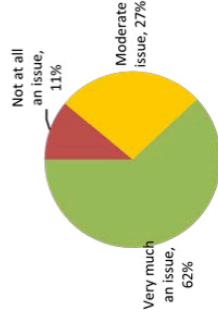


Over half of the community members indicated that accessibility of parks and availability of public space for physical activity is an issue in Savannah.<sup>1</sup>



**Healthy Children/Childhood Obesity**

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

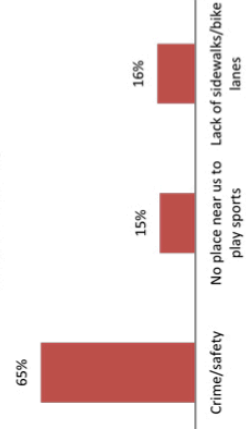


How can Healthy Savannah help address healthy children in Savannah?<sup>1</sup>

To get kids out of the house and active again

Most of the families that Healthy Savannah has 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.<sup>2</sup>

**Barriers to Activity**



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 50 community surveys<sup>1</sup> and 53 audience response<sup>2</sup> from the community meeting on 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**

<b>TOP THREE ISSUES + CONCERNS/SOLUTIONS</b>		
[1]	[2]	[3]
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Sidewalks on Edwin and 53rd		
Sidewalks on Mills B Lane are too narrow/often parked on		
Cars parked on Montgomery St. sidewalks		
<b>LEGEND</b>		
<b>Response Card * Maps * Discussion</b>		