

**SUMMARY REPORT:**

Pulaski 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 Pulaski Elementary School (PES). 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 Pulaski 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 PES meeting, community engagement/school, bike 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	Bike Infrastructure	Traffic Control/Calming
Parent Involvement	Bike Lanes on Middleground Rd and HAAF Perimeter	Car volume on Tibet
Get resources from Safe Kids Savannah		One more crossing guard
Visit from Savannah Bicycle Campaign to help with bikes/helmets		Road diet on Middleground Road/Enforce Speed Zone
		Curb extensions at Middleground and Tibet
		School Zone Signs and Signals
		Speed and security on Middleground
		Need flashing lights and signage for school zone
		Clearer pavement markers at the bend on Tibet

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

# MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | PES MAP

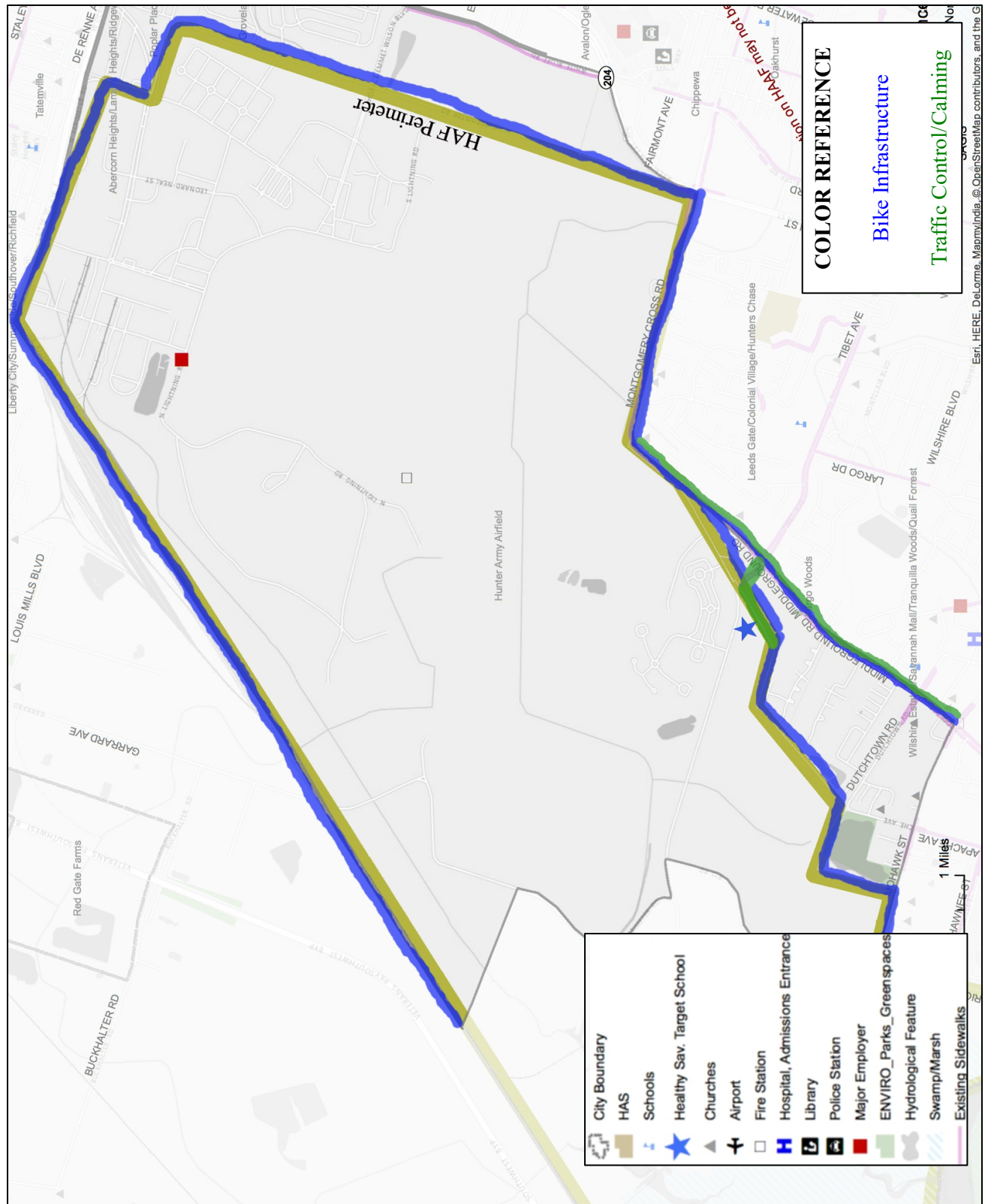


Figure 1 maps out a majority of the PES community’s concerns and proposed solutions.

## **MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/SCHOOL**

For community engagement, attendees called for increased parent involvement, resources from Safe Kids Savannah, and a visit from Savannah Bicycle Campaign to help with bikes and helmets (**Table 1**). The community believes that improvements in these areas will lend itself to increased activity amongst PES 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 | BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE**

In regards to bike infrastructure, the only improvement the PES community noted was the addition of bike Lanes on Middleground Rd and the HAAF Perimeter. This would help streamline the trek to and from school for students who ride bikes, and perhaps influence other students to begin to ride. For these changes to take place, we look towards City of Savannah Traffic Engineering, City of Savannah Parking and Mobility, and Savannah Bicycle Campaign.

## **MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | TRAFFIC CONTROL/CALMING**

The last of PES top three issues was traffic Control/Calming. Despite this, community meeting attendees pinpointed several issues and improvements that could be made. Things that were mentioned included addressing car volume on Tibet, the addition of one more crossing guard, a road diet, security, and speed enforcement on Middleground Road, curb extensions at the intersection of Middleground and Tibet, school zone signs and signals, and clearer pavement markers at the bend on Tibet Avenue. At Healthy Savannah, we believe City of Savannah Traffic Engineering and Savannah-Chatham Metro Police Department can help facilitate the changes that need to be made in order to improve the current situation of these issues.

## **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.

The first of these barriers were the high speeds on Montgomery Crossroads and sidewalks too close to traffic. A small barrier between the sidewalks and oncoming traffic isn't available until the Dutchtown Campus Apartments. Other sidewalk issues ensue on Tibet Avenue, as they are narrow. Leading up to the school, sidewalks are only on one side of the street, and they discontinue at the front. Along with this, there are no crosswalks at the entrance. Despite these areas of improvement, the existing traffic circle is a great way to slow traffic, there are bike racks at the front of the school, and the lighting appears to be decent.

## **CONCLUSION**

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

- Pulling resources from parents and local organizations for pedestrian/biking safety
- Bike lanes on Middleground and around HAAF
- Controlling speed on Middleground via flashing lights, school zone signs, enforcement, and a road diet
- Another crossing guard
- Curb extensions for crosswalk safety on Middleground and Tibet

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**

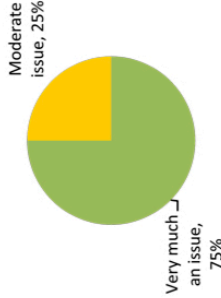
<b>Position</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Principal		Antonio Byrd	<a href="mailto:antonio.byrd@sccpss.com">antonio.byrd@sccpss.com</a>	912.395.6466
PTA President/ Contact				912.395.6466
Alderman	At Large	Brian Foster	<a href="mailto:bfoster@savannahga.gov">bfoster@savannahga.gov</a>	912.247.2586
County Commissioner	5	Yusuf K. Shabazz	<a href="mailto:ykshabazz@chathamcounty.org">ykshabazz@chathamcounty.org</a>	912.652.7953
Captain	Southside	Terry Shoop		912.898.3252
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



# 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.<sup>1</sup>

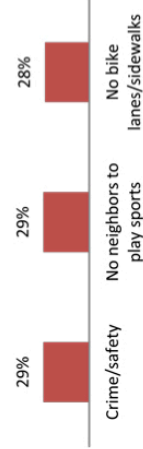


How can Healthy Savannah help address healthy children in Savannah?<sup>1</sup>

**School Zone Signs and Signals**

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.<sup>2</sup>

### Barriers to Activity

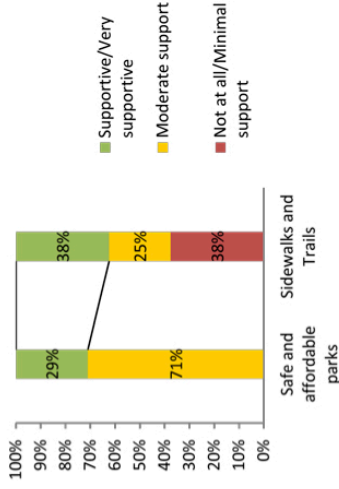


## Truman Linear Park Trail

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 38% did not know about the Truman Linear Park Trail, 14% 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>



## 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>



Consistent with the perceived importance of sidewalks and bike lanes, 14% think that most or all roads are NOT bike or pedestrian friendly<sup>2</sup> and 71% said that bike lanes are EXTREMELY important for getting to school.<sup>2</sup>



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



A majority think that a complete streets ordinance is important or extremely important for Savannah.<sup>1</sup>

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 8 community surveys<sup>1</sup> and 7 audience response<sup>2</sup> 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.

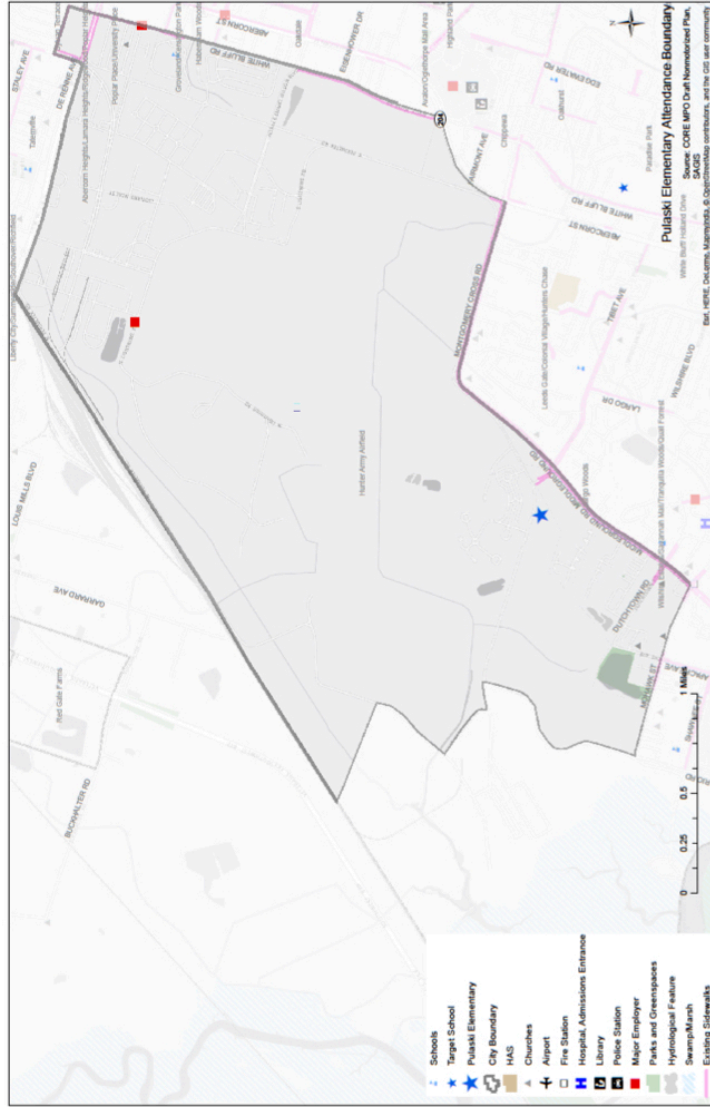
## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION | HEALTHY COMMUNITY KIDS CAMPAIGN

There were 9 attendees signed in at the community meeting at Pulaski Elementary. The attendees at the community meeting were asked to discuss and rank the challenges that they faced in being more active in their community. In terms of importance (ranked 1 to 3), the most important issue was community engagement. There were 37 responses from 13 cards completed by attendees. Each card provided rankings of the challenges. The average rank shows the perceived level of importance. The higher the rank the more important the theme was to participants.

Items included in each of the categories include the following:

- **Community engagement** - neighborhood activities, walking school bus
- **Bike infrastructure** – Bike racks and facilities
- **Traffic/calming** – Traffic, speed bumps, traffic control
- **Pedestrian infrastructure** – sidewalks, safe walking areas
- **Crime/safety** – unsafe roads, crime, police presence
- **Physical activity access** – open playgrounds, more public playgrounds

THEMES	#	%	Avg. Rank
Community engagement	3	8%	2.7
Bike infrastructure	4	11%	2.3
Traffic/calming	25	68%	2.1
Pedestrian infrastructure	3	8%	1.7
Police/crime safety	1	3%	1.0
Physical activity access	1	3%	1.0



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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION | THREE MAIN ISSUES BREAKDOWN**

<b>TOP THREE ISSUES + CONCERNS/SOLUTIONS</b>		
[1]	[2]	[3]
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<b>LEGEND</b>		
<b>Response Card * Maps * Discussion</b>		