

SUMMARY REPORT:
Shuman 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 Shuman Elementary School (SES). 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 Shuman Elementary community meeting, participants assessed issues they perceive to be hindering their children’s ability to be physically active. Of the themes ranked at the SES Community Meeting, crime/safety, community engagement, and lighting/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]	[2]
Crime/Safety	Community Engagement	Lighting/Safety
Fix fences to avoid more crime	People to watch kids	Lighting of blind spots on Goebel
Police monitor key streets during walk to/from school	Organizations/facilities for recreational activities	Dark on Elgin St.
Safety in general	Parent involvement/walking kids to school	Midline reflectors on Goebel
SCMPD in the morning and at dismissal	Partner with Parent University to provide healthy activities	Lighting improvement at Capital and Pennsylvania
Greater police presence in general	Continued partnership with Health MPowers	Lighting obstruction from tree branches
	Activities at East Side Center for kids	Better lit crosswalks
	Community involvement from YMCA	
	Use recreational space at Savannah High	

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

MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | CRIME/SAFETY

As SES community members’ number one issue, crime/safety was proposed to be addressed with repairing fences to avoid crime, SCMPD monitors on key streets during the walk to/from school at arrival and dismissal, and increased safety and police presence (**Table 1**). By making strides and addressing these calls for action, the community, and its youth may feel more inclined to be more active. To bring about these changes, Healthy Savannah hopes to employ help from SCCPSS Campus Police and the Savannah-Chatham Metro Police Department.

MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | SES MAP

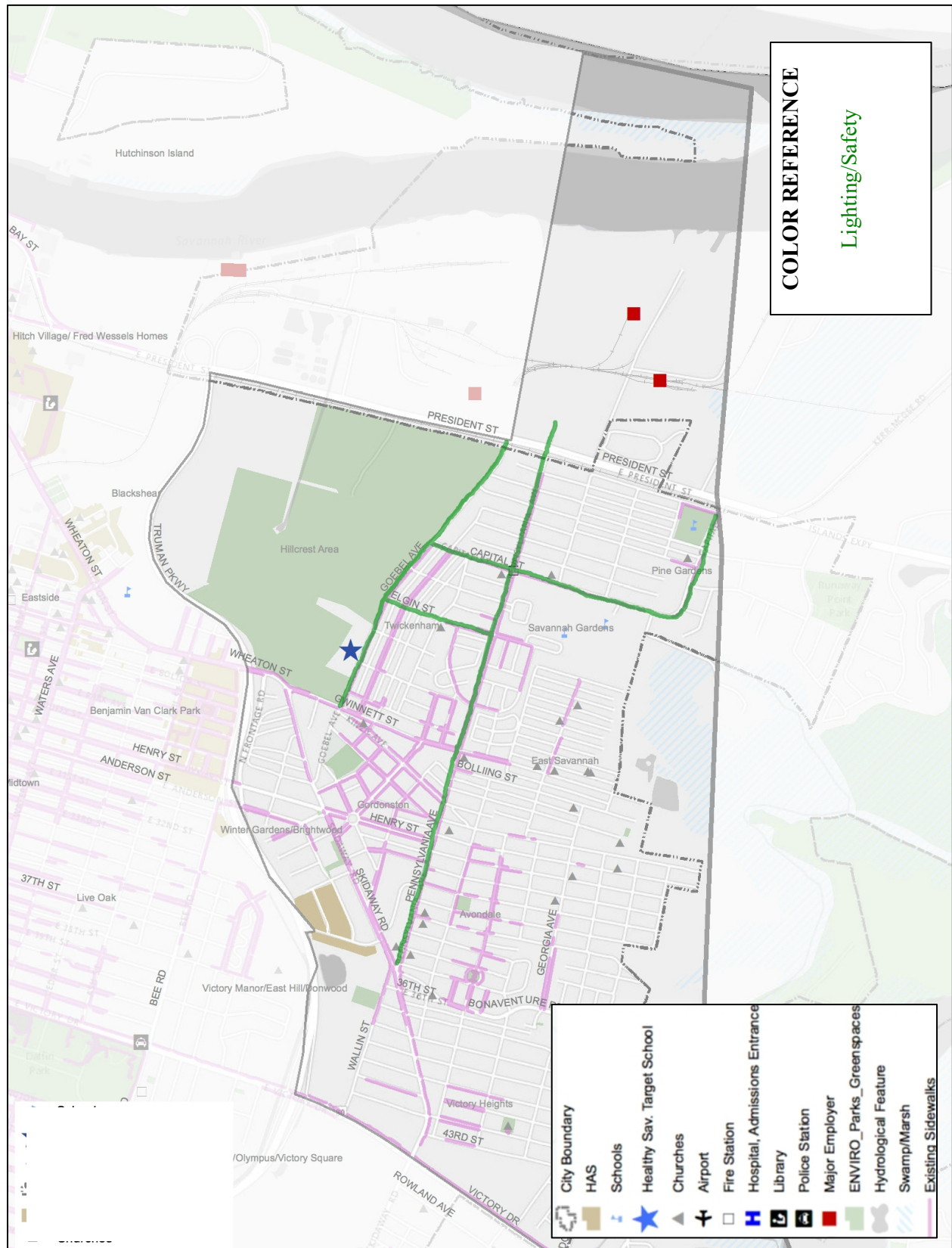


Figure 1 maps out a majority of the SES community’s concerns and proposed solutions.

MAKING IMPROVEMENTS | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

For community engagement, attendees promoted more people and parents to watch and/or walk kids, using organizations, including East Side Center, YMCA and Savannah High, for recreational space and activities, and partnerships with Parent University and Health MPowers (**Table 1**). The community believes that improvements in these areas will lend itself to increased activity amongst SES 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 | LIGHTING/SAFETY

The third of the top three issues facing the SES community and its students is lighting/safety. Those who attended the SES community meeting showed for lighting/safety included improved lighting for blind spots, Elgin St., Capital St., Goebel St., and Pennsylvania Ave., removing tree branches that obstruct light, and midline reflectors on Goebel. To make these changes, we look towards Georgia Power. With their help, we hope that students who currently don't walk or bike to school can feel safe enough to start doing so.

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 observations made include the following: the need for sidewalks on both sides of Gwinnett, sidewalks on only one side of Goebel, decent crosswalks and lighting, a need for new bike racks, and no available bike lanes.

CONCLUSION

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

- Increasing SCMPD presence at the beginning/end of school and on key streets during walks to/from Shuman
- Improving lighting along streets on the way to and from the school
- Adding in sidewalks on major and side streets surrounding the school and around Whitney Complex
- More pedestrian crossing lights and crosswalk signs for increased visibility
- A mapped out trail or possible pedestrian overpass

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

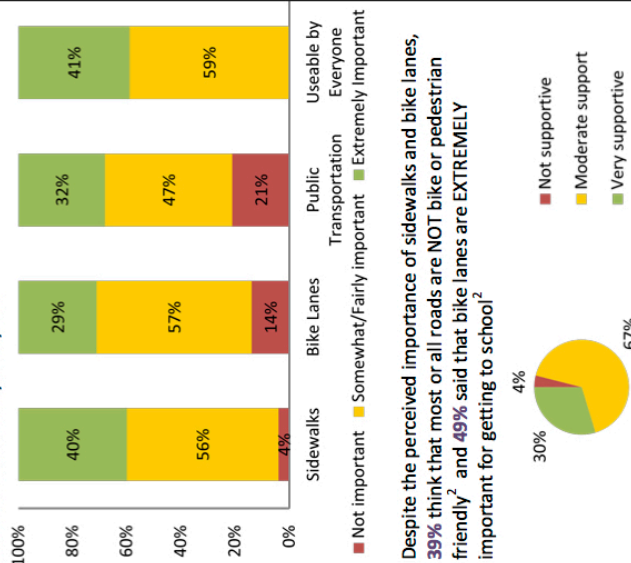
Position	District	Name	Email	Phone
Principal		Slyvia Jenkins	sylvia.jenkins@sccpss.com	912.395.4500
PTA President/ Contact				
Alderman	3	John Hall	jhall@savannahga.gov	912.596.1807
County Commissioner	2	James Holmes	fqasmus@chathamcounty.org	912.238.3796
Captain	5	John Best		912.898.3252
SCCPSS Board Member	2	Dr. Dionne L. Hoskins	dionne.hoskins@sccpss.com	912.484.5437
Healthy Savannah		Paula Kriessler	paula@healthysavannah.org	912.272.9494

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION | HEALTHY COMMUNITY KIDS CAMPAIGN

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, 39% think that most or all roads are NOT bike or pedestrian friendly² and 49% 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



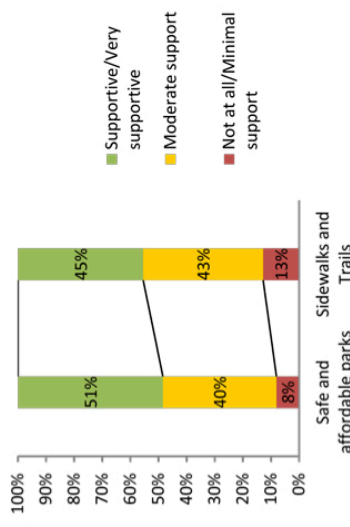
A majority think that a complete streets ordinance is important or extremely important for Savannah.¹

Truman Linear Park Trail

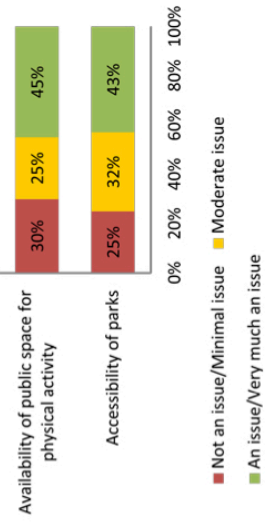
The Truman Linear Park Trail is a transportation project supported by Federal Highway funds to build an approximately 6 miles trail that will connect Daffin Park with Lake Mayer Community Park at Montgomery Cross Road, running parallel to Truman Parkway. The trail will be suitable for biking, walking,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

While 67% did not know about the Truman Linear Park Trail, 45% 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

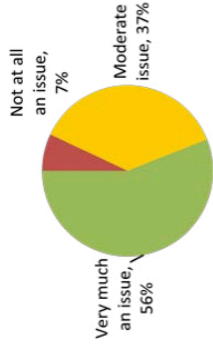


Over half of the community members indicated that accessibility of parks and availability of public space for physical activity is an issue in Savannah.¹



Healthy Children/Childhood Obesity

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

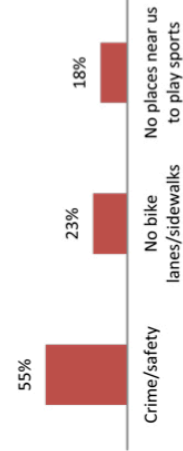


How can Healthy Savannah help address healthy children in Savannah?¹

Teach them and give them the opportunity to participate in activities

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



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 42 community surveys¹ and 44 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		
[1]	[2]	[2]
Crime/Safety	Community Engagement	Lighting/Safety
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LEGEND		
Response Card * Maps * Discussion		