



Morningside Elementary
Safe Routes to School 2008

Morningside

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Safe Routes to School Plan



SUBMITTED TO
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SUBMITTED BY



NOVEMBER 2008



Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008

Introduction

Morningside Elementary School is located in Fulton County at 1053 E. Rock Springs Rd. The school currently serves the neighborhoods of Morningside, Virginia-Highland, Lenox Park, Piedmont Heights, Ansley Park, Sherwood Forrest and Midtown. The school is located in the heart of the Morningside community and has approximately 950 students enrolled. Surrounded by homes, a number of Morningside students walk to school. Morningside adopted the idea of walking to school after being recruited by PEDS' KidsWalk program in 2002. Numerous children walk to school on a daily basis, and more than 1/3 participate in walk-to-school-day events.

Morningside's Safe Routes to School Team

Ash Parker	KidsWalk Chair, 2008-2009
Larissa Bradburn	KidsWalk Past Chair
Rebecca Pruitt	School Principal
Susie Lazega	PTA president 2007 – 2008
Blaine Schreiner	PTA president 2007 – 2008
Janet Kishbaugh	PTA president 2006 - 2007
Sue Payne	PTA Liason, Past PTA president and Wellness Committee Co-Chair
Cecily Harsch-Kinanne	Atlanta School Board Representative
Lorn Whitticker	Atlanta city planning engineer
Michael Fleming	Atlanta city planning engineer
Bob Silvia	Morningside/Lenox Park Association Representative
Diane O'Lansky	Morningside/Lenox Park Association Traffic Committee Representative and PEDS representative
Terri Dumas	PEDS representative
Sally Flock	PEDS representative
Aly Nussear	School PE Teacher

Safe Routes to School Visioning Workshop Attendees

Alice Spetseris	Atlanta Police Department employee, Crossing Guard
Duggan Lansing	PTA president 2006-2007
Gena Skelton	Parent Representative
Christa Martin	Parent Representative
Gigi Schwartz	Parent Representative
Sharon Bray	Parent Representative
Ellen Bagnato	Parent Representative
Lynette Slovensky	Parent Representative



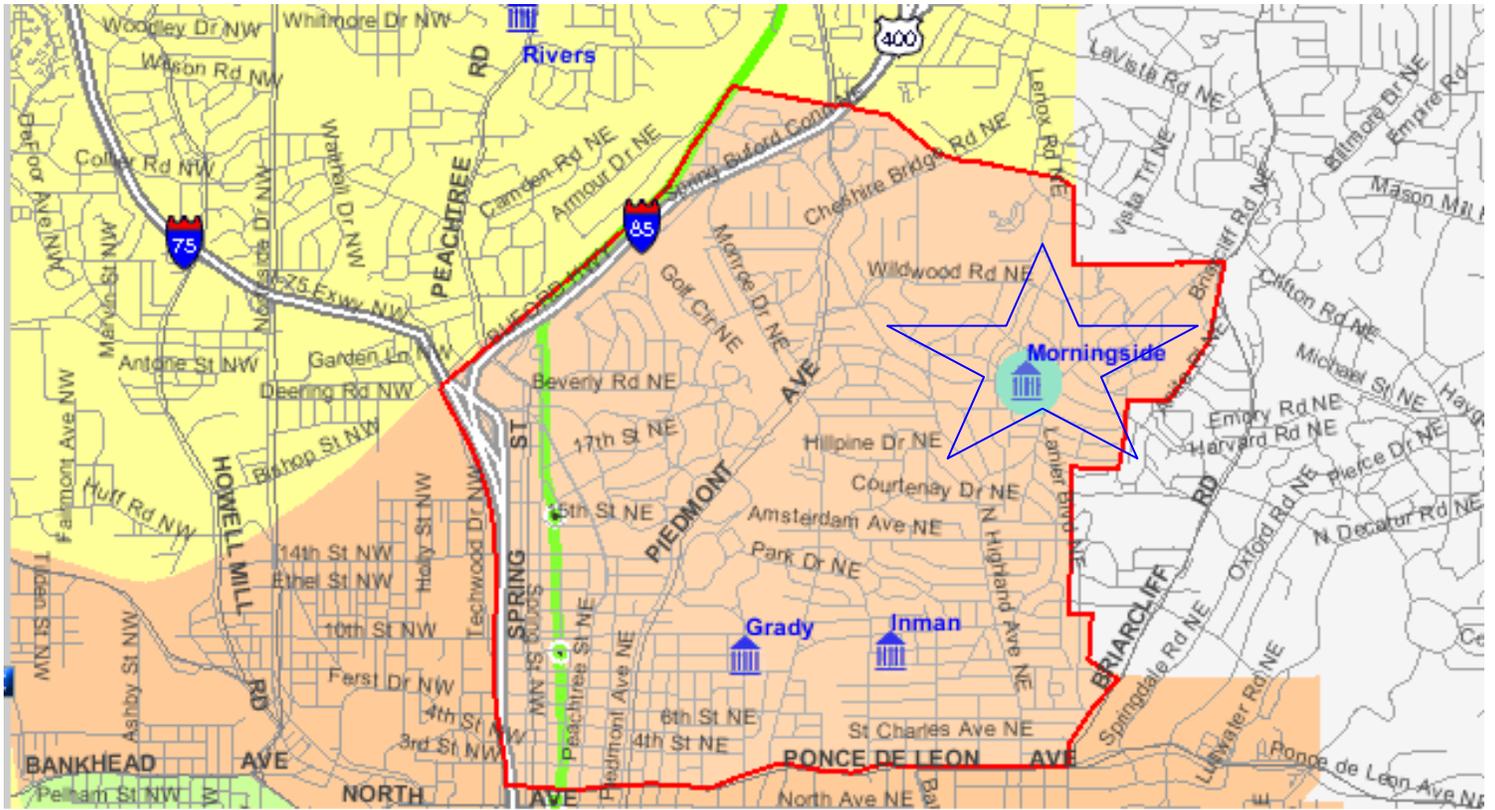
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Jackie Sears

Parent Representative

School District Map

Figure 1.





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Morningside's Site Plan



Figure 3.



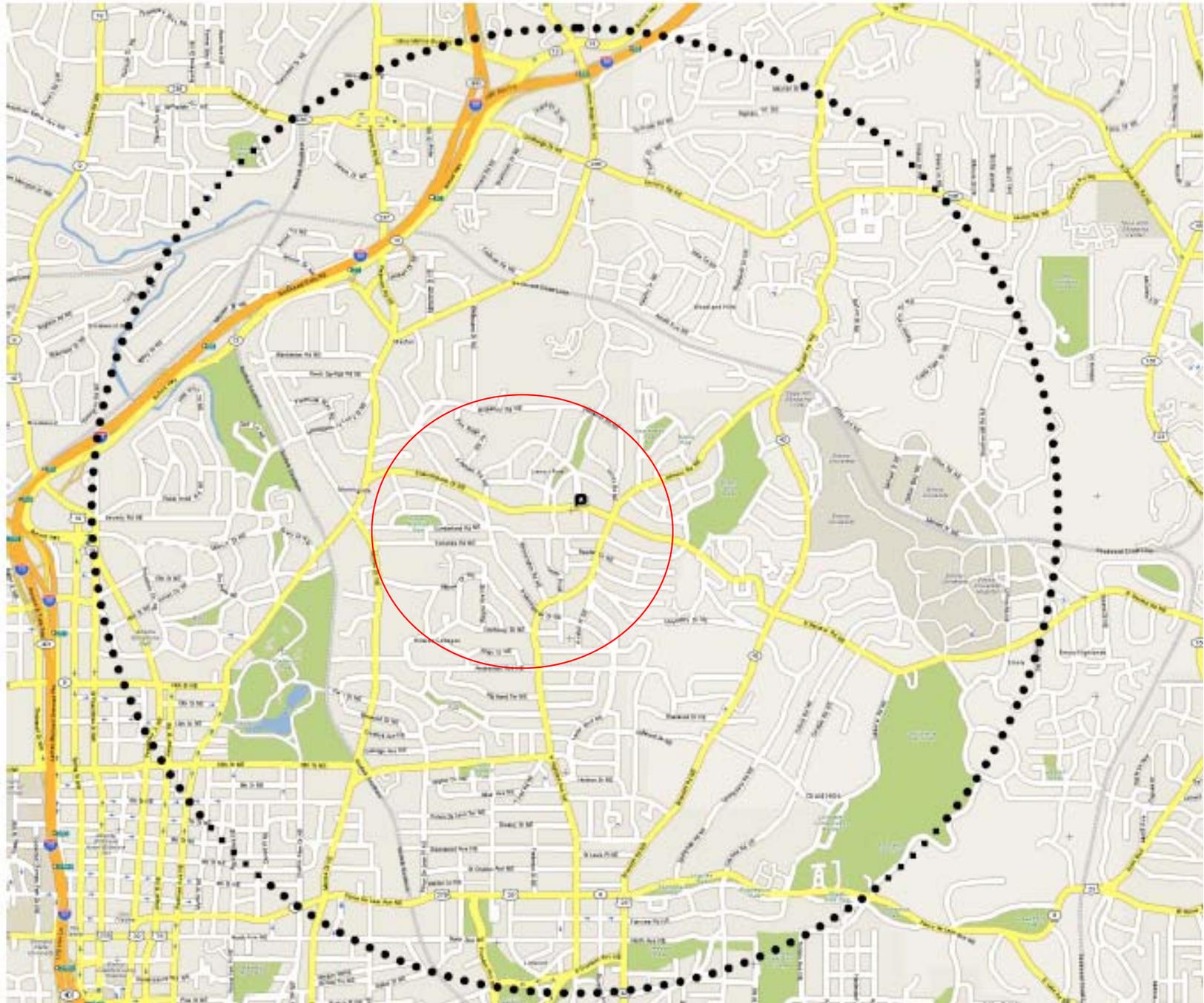


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Maps

Figure 4.

2 Mile Radius Map



 = Walk to school routes: E. Rock Springs Rd., E./W. Sussex, N. Highland, N. Morningside, and Cumberland
* School-Aged Children/Potential and Existing Routes



Morningside Elementary Safe Routes to School 2008

Figure 7.

Color	Grade
	Kindergarten
	1st
	2nd
	3rd
	4th
	5th

1000 Students

1.5 Miles

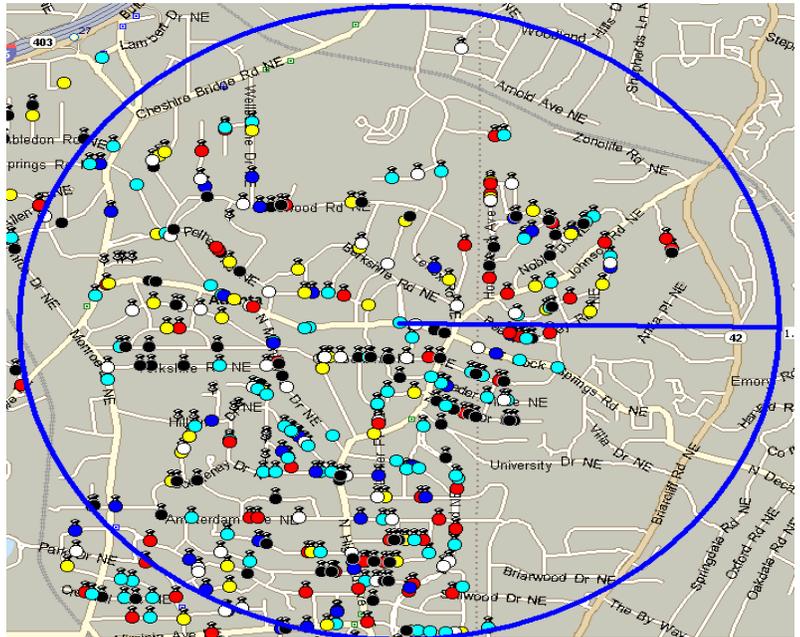
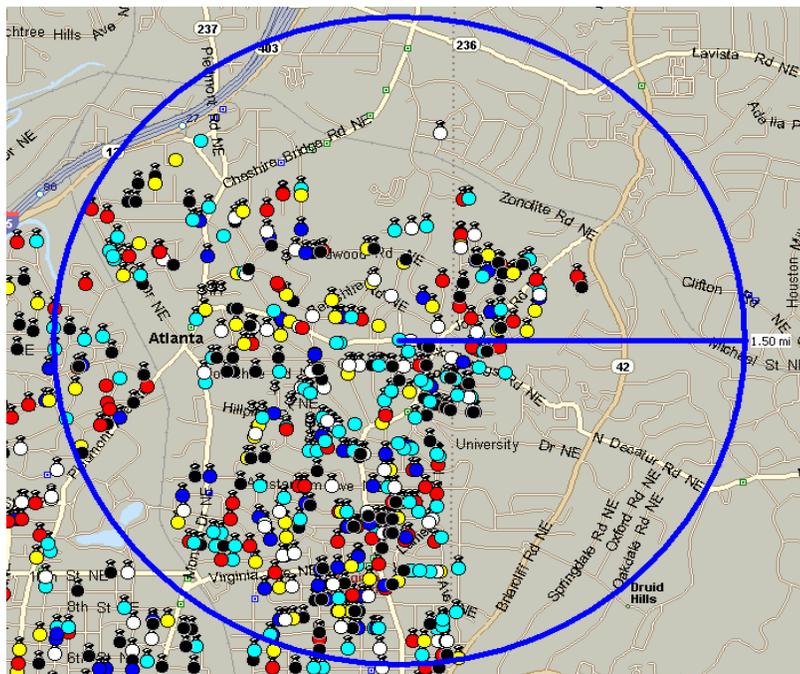


Figure 8.

Color	Grade
	Kindergarten
	1st
	2nd
	3rd
	4th
	5th

1347 Students

2 Miles



*All data for map points were derived from Atlanta Public Schools SASI database.



Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008

Existing Conditions

E. Rock Springs

E. Rock Springs Rd. runs directly in front of Morningside Elementary. The road runs for about a half mile in the immediate area of the school and has an Annual Average Daily Traffic count of 10,780 at the intersection of E. Sussex and E. Rock Springs (GDOT, 2005). The speed limit on this road is 25 mph at all times, not just during school zone hours. It intersects with Piedmont Ave. to the west of the school and N. Highland Ave. to the east of the school. E. Rock Springs Rd. becomes E. Morningside Dr. traveling west of the school.

An overhead flashing beacon is located on E. Rock Springs at the corner of E. Sussex. Sidewalks exist on both sides of E. Rock Springs and are in good condition. The sidewalk measures approximately 4 feet wide in front of the school with the exception of the area that runs along the bus lane, which narrows to about 3 feet. This narrow area of sidewalk is located between the bus lane and a retaining wall without a buffer to protect children from being pushed out into the street. Although the bus lane is marked as a “no drop” zone, parents also use this bus lane to drop off their kids in the morning. The limited sidewalk space and the busy bus lane pose a threat to kids who are walking. The retaining wall located in front of the school currently prohibits any extension of the sidewalk. Although a no parking sign exists, parents still use this lane as a drop off lane. A lead pedestrian indicator and push button signal exist directly across the street from the school. However, vehicles often stop in the crosswalks, leaving children with little space to cross safely.





Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008

E. Rock Springs Rd. & E. Sussex Rd./W. Sussex Rd.

E. Rock Springs Rd. intersects with Sussex Rd. E. Sussex and W. Sussex run along the same street on opposite sides. A three-legged, high-visibility crosswalk is located at this intersection. An in-street crossing sign and school crossing sign accompany the crosswalk. A two-way stop exists at this intersection. However, many parents and children fear crossing at this intersection because of the speed of traffic and the lack of a signal. A Marta bus stop is located just before the crosswalk but does not seem to interfere with the children's ability to safely cross the street.



The majority of traffic coming from W. Sussex can be contributed to the church located next door to Morningside Elementary. Its facilities, including its parking lot, take up the majority of W. Sussex. Crosswalks located on W. Sussex lead pedestrians safely from a church parking lot to the side entrance of the school. The school has an agreement with the church to use its parking lot during the week and for special school events. E. Sussex leads to the entrance to a subdivision directly across the street from the church. No crosswalk has been painted at this entrance to prevent children from crossing in front of a busy entrance.



Another major concern along Sussex is parents parking along both sides of the street to drop off or pick up their children. The traffic exiting the parking lot and buses traveling down Sussex's narrow lanes poses an added threat to walkers on a daily basis. Parents also park along Sussex next to Sunken Garden Park, located on the opposite side of the street from Morningside. This makes it very difficult to cross E. Rock Springs at Sussex, which is also used by students who walk from the Sunken Garden Park neighborhood. Most cars don't stop at this crosswalk or speed through it.



Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008

N. Highland & Rock Springs Rd.

N. Highland is located to the east of E. Rock Springs Rd. The speed limit on N. Highland is 30 mph. A signal and four-legged crosswalk are located at this intersection. Sidewalks and curb ramps also exist on all four sides of this intersection. A small, triangular pedestrian island is located to the west of this intersection to assist people crossing from north to south. However, the island and connecting crosswalk are not aligned properly, making the pedestrians less visible to drivers. The turning radii at the corners of this intersection are too big and encourage speeding through the crosswalks. Furthermore, right turns are being made without much caution or awareness of the pedestrians in the crosswalk.



N. Morningside & N. Highland

N. Highland intersects with N. Morningside, which is located south of E. Rock Springs Rd. and Cumberland Rd. The speed limit on N. Morningside is 25 mph. The Annual Average Daily traffic count on N. Highland is 16,370 (GDOT, 2005). Sidewalks and curb ramps exist on all four sides of this signalized intersection. However, the huge turning radii pose a threat to children who cross at the intersection on their route to school. The width of the radii encourages drivers to speed through the crosswalks without any regard to pedestrians. Furthermore, children who cross at this intersection don't have ample time to make it across before vehicles get the green light.



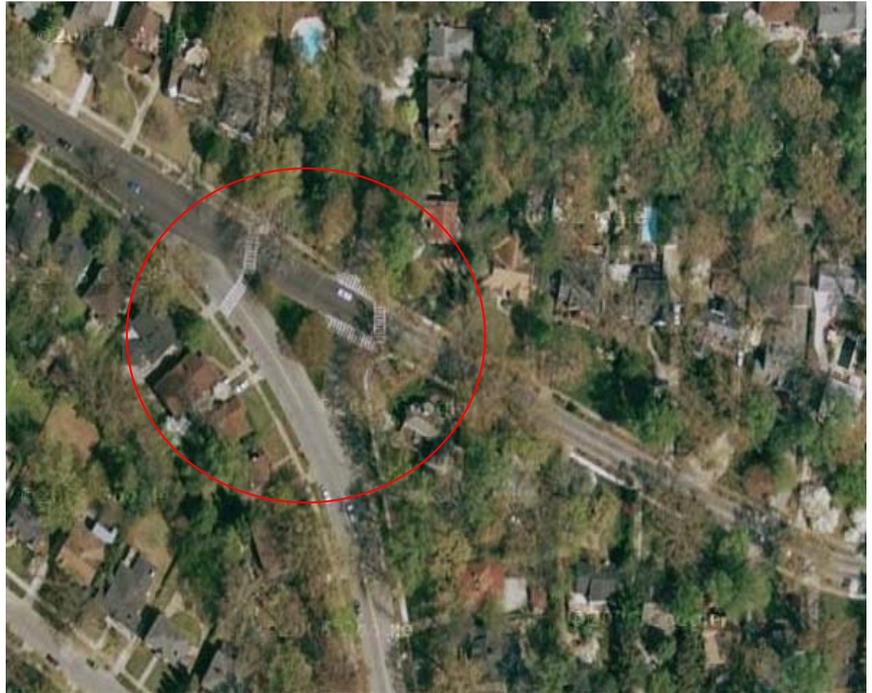


Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008

N. Morningside & E. Rock Springs Rd.

N. Morningside intersects with E. Rock Springs Rd. just before E. Morningside Dr. becomes E. Rock Springs Rd. The speed limit is 25 mph on both E. Rock Springs Rd. and N. Morningside. This intersection is unique in that it is not a traditional 2-way or 4-way intersection. A slip lane makes this intersection appear to be triangular shaped with homes in between N. Morningside Dr. (to the west) and E. Rock Springs Rd. (to the east). No signal exists at this intersection, making it one of the most dangerous intersections for children who have to cross onto E. Rock Springs from Morningside. Sidewalks exist on both N. Morningside and E. Rock Springs. However, the sidewalk that connects E. Rock Springs to N. Morningside disconnects for about 200 ft. Two crosswalks are located on E. Rock Springs: one on E. Rock Springs Rd., and one that crosses the slip lane, leading from E. Rock Springs onto N. Morningside. The slip lane has 2 lanes, one in each direction. The width of these lanes encourages speeding through residential area off of N. Highland, where children are walking to school.



Cumberland & N. Morningside

The intersection of Cumberland and N. Morningside is located west of the school, just one block away. Both Cumberland Rd. and N. Morningside Rd. are two-way streets. This intersection has a 3-legged crosswalk: one leg runs north to south on N. Morningside, a second leg runs east to west on Cumberland Rd., and a third leg runs southwest from Cumberland Rd. onto N. Morningside. No signal exists at this intersection but a two-way stop is present. A split occurs between Cumberland Rd. and Sherwood Rd. which is defined by a small island. Both roads are also very wide and have no lines to distinguish lanes. For this reason, speeding has been a growing concern for parents whose children must cross this intersection on their route to school.



Morningside Elementary Safe Routes to School 2008



Data Collection and Analysis

Most kids arrive to school by car or walking. From 2001 to 2004, the percentage of walkers more than doubled from 11% to 23.5%. The number of walkers remained between 17% and 20% during the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. A parent survey done in 2004 revealed that of 127 parents, 14.2% allowed their children to walk to school 5 days a week while 21.3% of parents allowed their kids to walk to school at least once a week.

2008-2009 has seen another increase in walkers, and is estimated to be approximately 25% of the student body. The school promotes walking through their weekly Walk-To-School Wednesdays, and provides prizes sponsored by local businesses for the walkers.



Morningside Elementary Safe Routes to School 2008

Figure 9.

Percentage Change in Mode Share from Sample School Weeks of 2001 to 2005 at Morningside

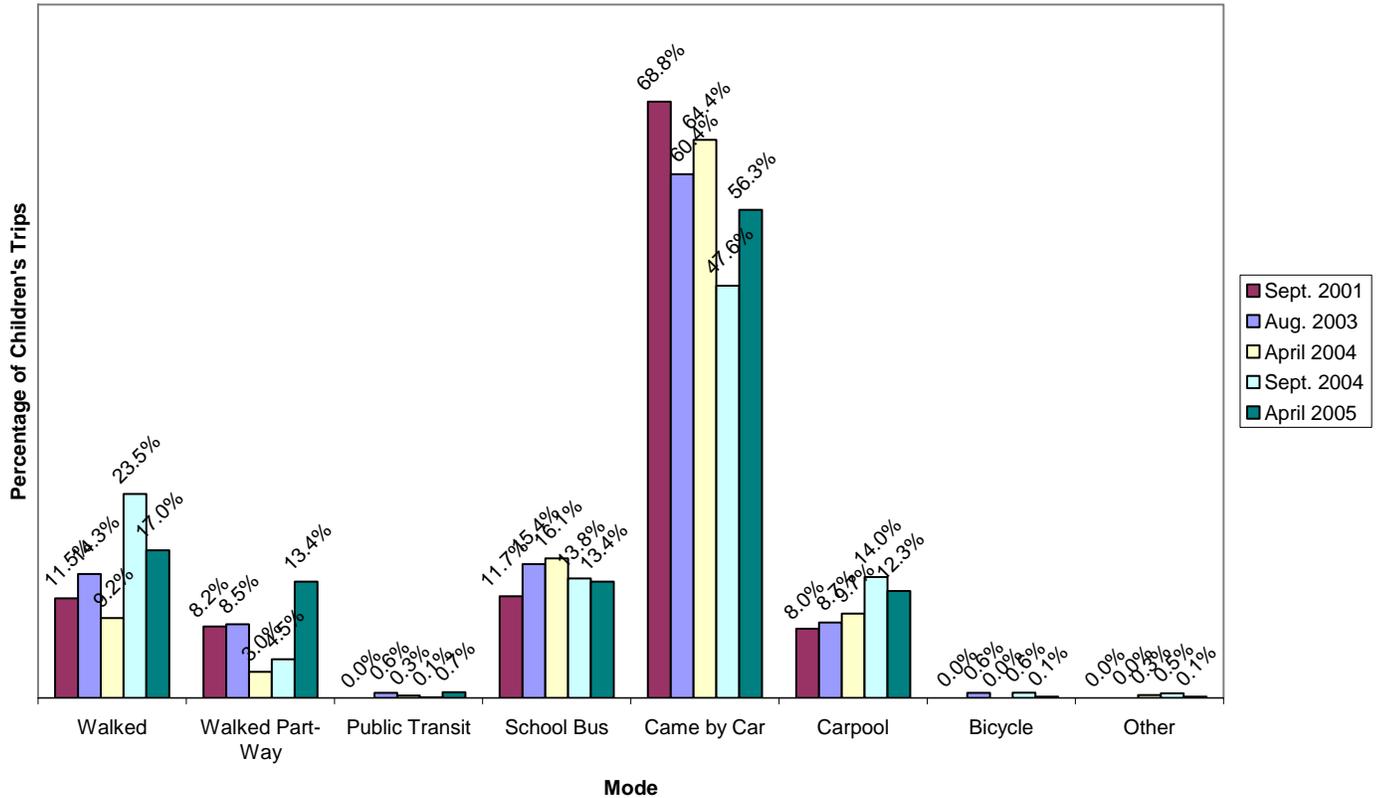
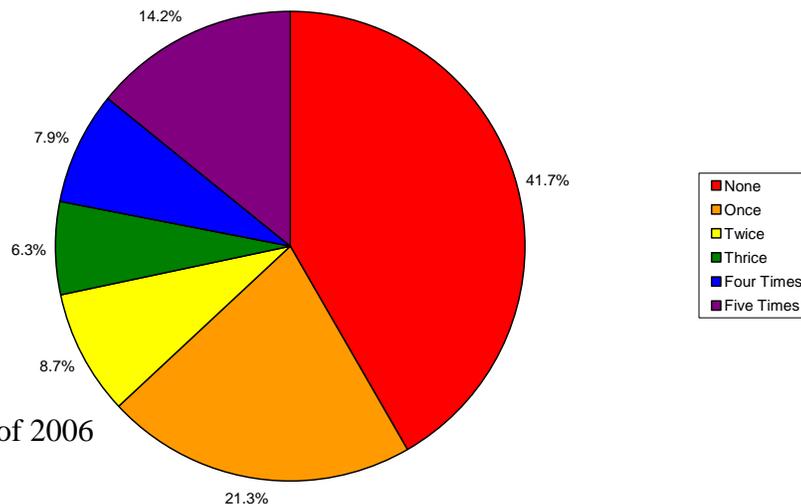


Figure 10.

Morningside Elementary School
Survey of May 14, 2004
Responses to Question 1, "How many times did your child walk to school per week?" (127)



A parent survey conducted in the Fall of 2006



Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008

revealed that parents were most concerned about weather (30%), speed of traffic (20%), and safety (20%) regarding obstacles to walking. Speed of traffic prevailed as the number one concern according to the 2007 parent survey results with an increase of about 5%, followed by distance (20%) and strangers (12%).

Figure 11.

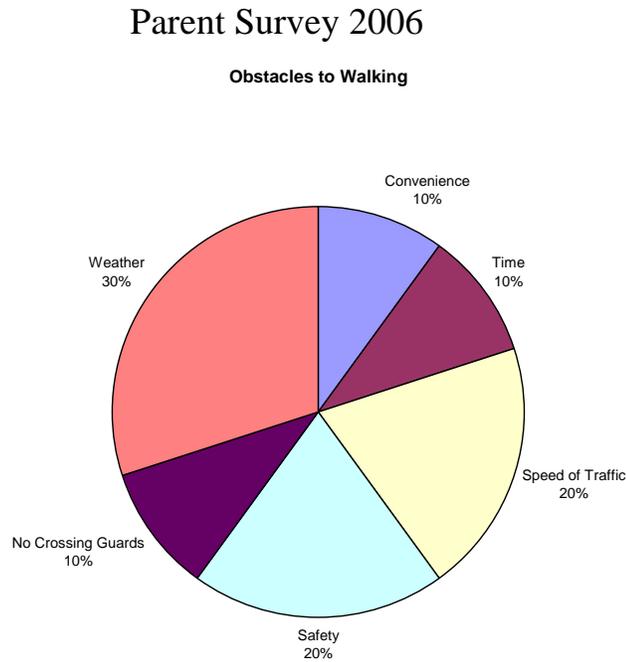
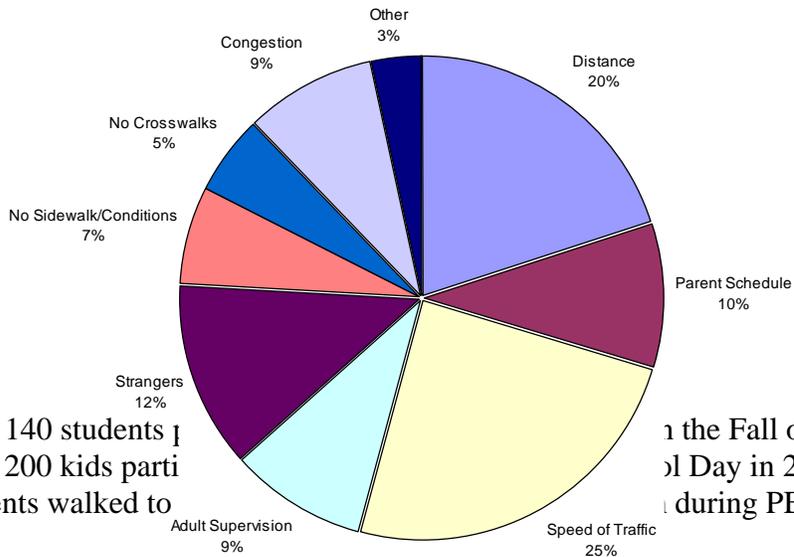


Figure 12.

Parent Concerns 2007: Morningside K - 5



Approximately 140 students
 Approximately 200 kids parti
 some 200 students walked to

in the Fall of 2006.
 on Day in 2006. Also,
 during PEDS'



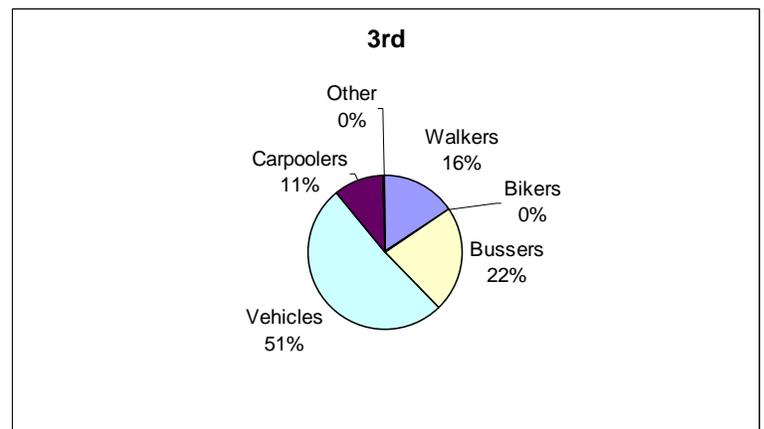
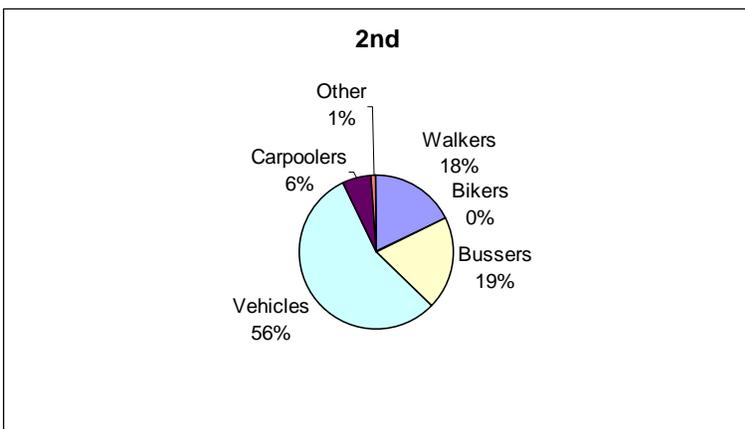
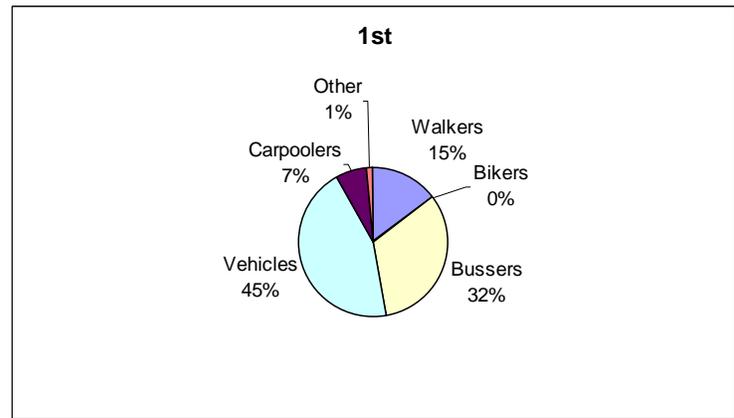
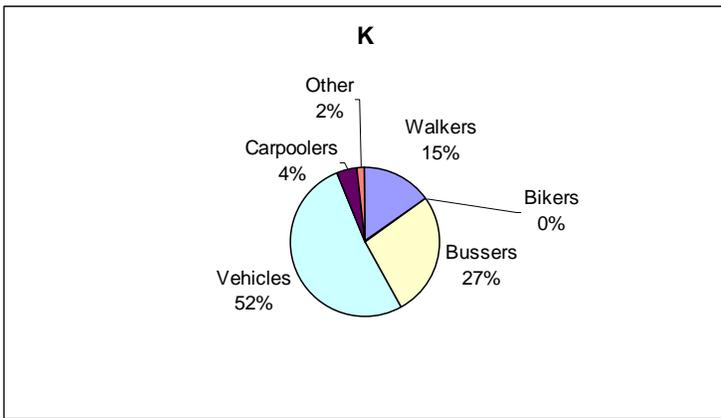
Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008

Walking School Drivers event in November, helping to raise approximately 2,000 tons of food for the Atlanta Food Bank. A show of hands student travel mode survey conducted in the Spring of 2007 indicated that approximately 14-18 % of students in each grade walk to school on a daily basis.

Figure 13.

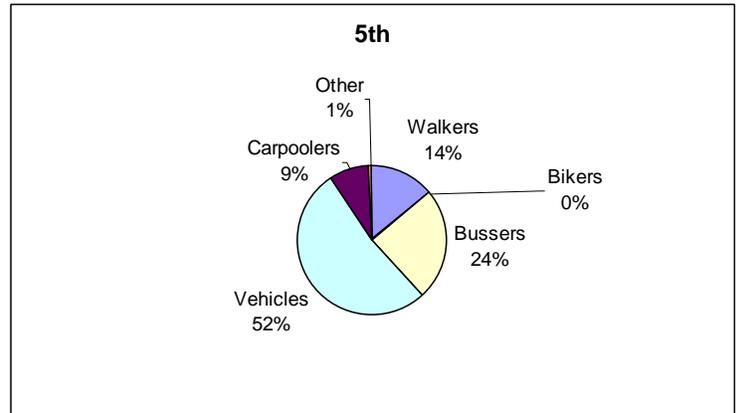
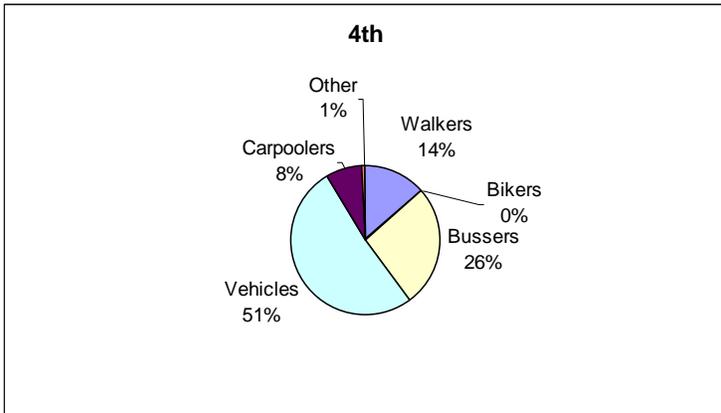
Show of Hands Survey: Spring 2006





Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008



School Traffic Counts

The Annual Average Daily Traffic count on E Rock Springs is 10, 780 (GDOT, 2005). This count was done at the intersection of E. Rock Springs and E. Sussex Rd. In March of 2007, two traffic counts were performed during the morning school zone hours (7:30am-8:05am). The first traffic count resulted in 169 vehicles. Four days later, the second traffic count resulted in 152 vehicles. Approximately 80 cars were counted during afternoon school zone hours. We concluded that Morningside experienced an average of 160 vehicles traveling through the carpool area during morning school zone hours in the spring of 2007.

During the first week of the 2007 school year, two parent volunteers conducted traffic counts on within the school zone on E. Rock Springs between 10:00am and 10:30am using a speed radar gun. The speed of 102 cars were recorded traveling in the direction of Morningside Dr., and ranged from 24-50 mph with an overall average speed of 35.68 mph. In the direction of Piedmont Rd., 86 cars were counted with speed ranging from 27-45 mph and an overall average speed of 33.38 mph. These speeds are alarming considering that they were observed on a neighborhood Rd., which has a speed limit of 25 mph.

Policies and Plans

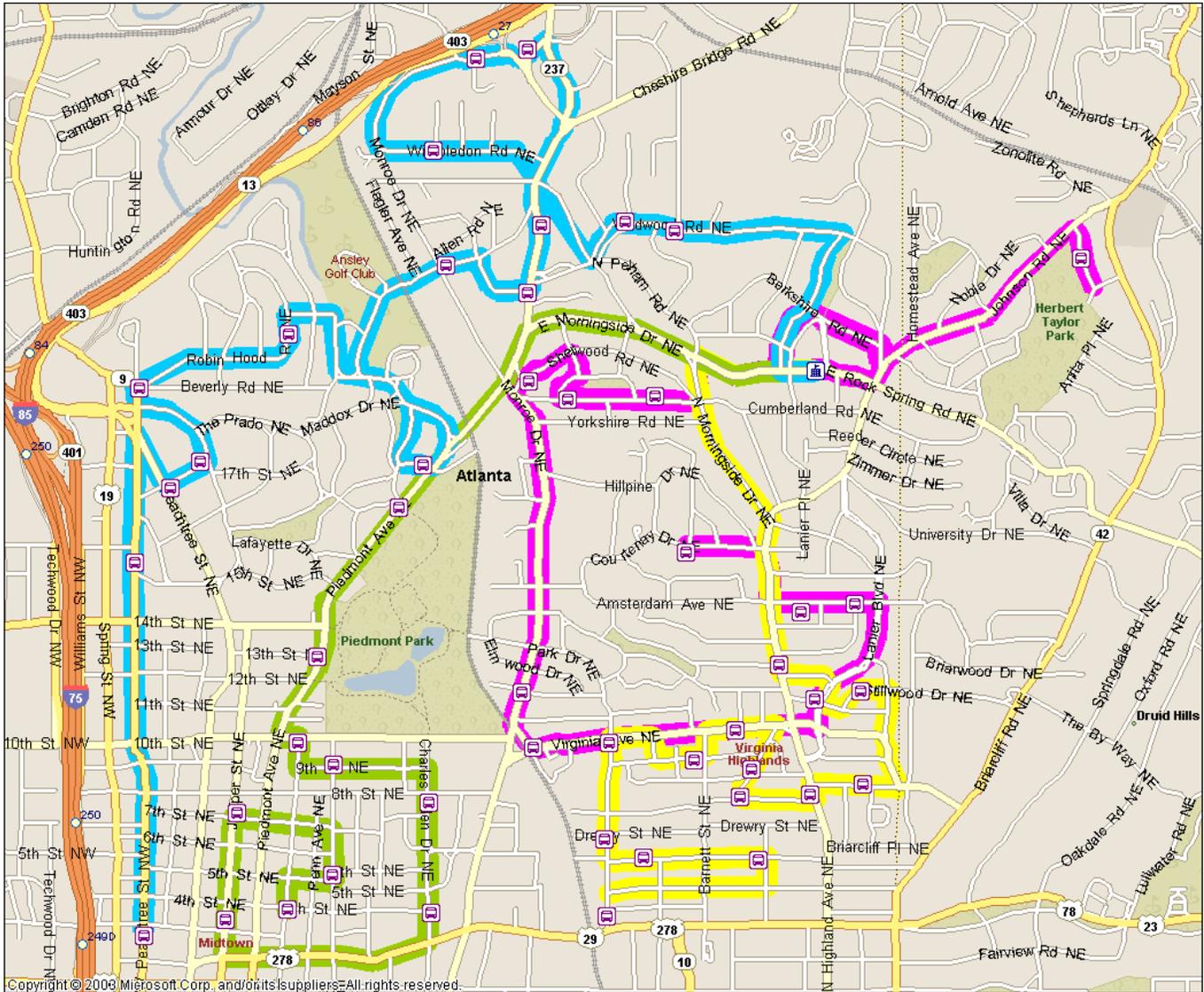
Morningside does not prohibit biking or walking to school. The city of Atlanta requires that sidewalks be included in new subdivision projects. The installation of sidewalk is required by City of Atlanta under code section 138. There is a pedestrian/bicycle project underway by the City for N. Highland, beginning at Freedom Parkway and ending just short of Cumberland Rd. (reference AT-AR-BP302).

Busing Policies



Morningside Elementary Safe Routes to School 2008

Morningside Elementary is serviced by four public school buses shown in the bus route map below.



Pink= 825
Blue= Bus 826;
Yellow= Bus 827;
Green =Bus 831

Bus Routes

Goals and Objectives



Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008

Purpose of Program: Create and maintain an environment for children in the Morningside Elementary School district to safely get to school.

Specific goals for the Morningside Elementary Safe Routes to School Program:

- Reduce traffic congestion around the school by 10% every year;
- Create safer streets and sidewalks in the neighborhood through enforcement and engineering;
- Increase number of students walking and biking to school by 15% each year;
- Increase physical activity for children by at least 10% each year;
- Improve air quality and environment;
- Provide an opportunity to work together as a community to make our neighborhood safer for pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Increase driver awareness regarding traffic laws and pedestrian safety.

Goal	Percentage per school year
Congestion reduction	10%
Safer streets and sidewalks	15%
Increased number of walkers	15%
Improve air quality	10%
Community collaboration	15%
Increase driver awareness	15%

Action Steps

Education



Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008

Morningside has been a participant of KidsWalk, PEDS' Safe Routes to School program for the metro Atlanta region, since 2002. The KidsWalk program has provided a variety of tools and resources in the areas of education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering, and evaluation. Students will continue to participate in KidsWalk's various educational activities throughout the school year, including safety crossword puzzles, creating maps of travel routes, and participating in the Slow Down Campaign to increase pedestrian awareness in the Morningside community and surrounding areas.

Morningside will utilize its physical education program, as well as a variety of activities inside and outside of the classroom to educate its students on bicycle and pedestrian safety. Morningside will host a back to school bike rodeo in October of each school year for children grades K-5 to equip them with bicycle safety skills for the remainder of the year. The bike rodeo will cover basic traffic safety rules such as helmet safety, looking left and right, stopping, crossing, and traffic signal rules. The rodeo will be held as an after school event in the teacher's parking area which will be closed off for the evening. Volunteers from PEDS and the East Atlanta Kids Club will provide props and necessary material, as well as assist in the implementation of the rodeo. Rodeo stations will vary in intensity according to each grade level.

Morningside will also implement educational programs through our annual Family Science Night which takes place in February. This event enables students and parents to participate in various science-based presentations that address issues such as the environment and the impact of automobile pollution on air quality. Students will also be given taken-home activities to further educate them on vehicles' impact on the environment and the benefits of walking and biking to school.

The school Wellness Committee sponsors Spring into Health Day, a popular walk to school day event, in April. The Wellness Committee will also be working on other educational promotions such as "Walk Across America".

Encouragement

Students will participate in PEDS' walking logs which enables them to receive various incentives (i.e. reflective wrist bands, reflective vests, watches, and stickers) accordingly to the number of days they walk to school. Morningside will also host three walk-to-school day events per school year, including International Walk to School Day and the Walking Food Drivers event in the fall, and Spring into Health Day in the spring. International Walk to School Day encourages students, parents, teachers, community members and leaders to join together to celebrate the health benefits of walking and to increase pedestrian awareness in the Morningside community. This event also motivates non-walkers and cyclists to adopt walking and biking to school as a part of their lifestyle. Spring into Health Day keeps kids motivated to continue to walk throughout the spring and reminds drivers that Morningside is a walking community. The Walking Food Drivers event encourages kids to walk to school with a nonperishable food item that is donated to the food bank of the school's choice. In the fall of 2006, Morningside



Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008

contributed to the 2,000 tons of food donated to the Atlanta Food Bank as a result of PEDS' Walking Food Drivers event. Kids will be encouraged to create their own safety signs for each event, as well as draft letters and create Safe Routes to School post cards to recruit sponsors for each event. Students will also participate in various contests sponsored by PEDS' Safe Routes to School program throughout the school year, including the Draw Your Route to School contest and Walking Food Drivers Event.

Enforcement

Morningside will rely on speed radar signs to enforce the speed limit on E. Rock Springs. Police officers of zone 6 will also randomly issue tickets for speeding and parking violations throughout the school year. Morningside will also participate in a law enforcement charrette in which the school community can address concerns related to enforcement (i.e. ticketing, police presence, crossing guards, traffic relief, etc.) with their local enforcement officers.

Evaluation

Morningside Elementary will evaluate the success of its Safe Routes to School program by implementing a the Student Travel Tally Sheet, a "show of hands survey" developed by the Safe Routes to School National Clearinghouse, three times a year: September, January, and April. The surveys will be conducted among grades K-6 and will allow the school to assess students' modes of transportation. It will allow the school to observe compare travel modes according to grade level, as well as enable the school to observe any change in behavior or measure any shifts. Morningside also plans to utilize PEDS' Walking Logs which enables kids to record the number of days they walk, along with the number of miles and minutes they spend walking. Students will participate in the Student Travel Tally Sheets and Walking logs simultaneously so that comparisons can be made between both tools in the areas of walking and bicycling. The Walking Logs will also help evaluate the frequency of walkers and bicyclist, and the average time students spend walking and bicycling to and from school.

Walk-to-School Day events will be used to evaluate participation from both students and the greater Morningside community. A head count and/or count of the number of material and props distributed will be taken at each event in order to track the number of participants. Evaluating these events will enable the school to measure changes in student participation, as well as involvement from the Morningside community. Students will be asked to turn in a comment card, also known as an index card, after each walk-to-school day event, as well as other activities of encouragement and educational activities. Students will indicate the activity at the top of each card and write suggestions about their likes and dislikes. This will give students the opportunity to express their thoughts in an open-ended manner, and will also provide the Safe Routes to School Team with insight on the types of activities that motivate the students to participate in the Safe Routes to School program.



Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008

Parent surveys will be conducted at the start of each school year to evaluate changes in attitude regarding children walking to school. Morningside will use the version of the Parent Survey that was created by by GDOT's SRTS Coordinator. Survey questions will help identify school proximity and motivators and hindrances to walking to school. These surveys will be issued through the school's newsletter, which has a high response rate from Morningside parents.

Enforcement and engineering will be evaluated by comparing crash analysis data from the local police department and the department of transportation yearly. Parent surveys will also help to indicate whether or not the school's approach to enforcement is effective.

Engineering

Existing conditions, data analysis, and studies conducted by the City of Atlanta indicate that the following infrastructural changes are needed in order to make walking and biking safer for students at Morningside Elementary:

Morningside Elementary SRTS Plan



Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008

	Infrastructure	City	SRTS
E. Rock Springs Rd.	Install 2 radar signs (one in each direction)		\$10,000
	Remove retaining wall		\$18,000
	Install bollards from the start of the retaining wall to the bus lane (approx. 75 feet)		\$15,000
E. Rock Springs and E. Sussex	Install Hawk signal		\$30,000
N. Highland and Rock Springs Rd.	Realign crosswalk/intersection, reposition/elongate island w/cut-through		\$40,000
	Install lead pedestrian indicator/push button		\$10,000
	Turning cars stop for pedestrian sign	\$200	
	Tighten turning radius using concrete at NE corner of E. Rock Springs		\$15,000
N. Morningside & N. Highland	Turning cars stop for pedestrian sign	\$200	
	Install lead pedestrian indicator on all four sides of intersection		\$10,000
	Tighten turning radius on all four corners of intersection with bulbouts		\$40,000
Morningside & Rock Springs Rd.	Install signal		\$85,000
	Signage	\$200	
	Close slip lane; reconfigure intersection for 90 degree angle (rendering provided) and connect 200 feet of sidewalk from the slip lane to the four-legged intersection		\$100,000
Cumberland & Morningside	Install 4-way stop sign	\$300	
	Extend island with concrete and install bulbouts at all corners of intersection		\$40,000
	TOTAL COST	\$900	\$448,000



Morningside Elementary

Safe Routes to School 2008

Morningside Elementary Safe Routes to School Action Plan Timeline

	January	February	March	April	August	September	October	November
Education	Take Home Activity	Family Science Night	Walk Across America: Wellness Committee	Take Home Safety Activity		Bike Rodeo		
Encouragement	Walk to School Day events (i.e. International Walk to School Day, Spring into Health Day, Walking Food Drivers event, etc.)							
Enforcement and Engineering	Speed checks using radar guns and radar signs							
	Police Ticketing							
	Parent Charrette							
	Follow-up audits on status of infrastructure							
Evaluation				Student Show of Hands Survey	Crash Analysis Data Comparison	Student Show of Hands Survey		
				Walking Logs		Walking Logs		
						Parent Surveys		