



School Safety Assessment Technical Memorandum

Sankofa United Elementary School

581 61st St, Oakland, CA 94609

Oakland Unified School District

October 2021



The Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program is a program of the Alameda County Transportation Commission (alamedactc.org) and is funded with Alameda County's local sales tax Measure B, regional, state and federal funds.

Sankofa United Elementary School


A school safety assessment was conducted at Sankofa United Elementary School in Oakland during the morning arrival on Tuesday, August 24, 2021. The assessment was attended by representatives from the City of Oakland, Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools staff, and Sankofa Elementary staff and parents.

Participants included:

- Lucas Woodward, Engineer, OakDOT
- Dennis Guikema, Principal Sankofa Elementary School
- Sheila Islam, School Site Coordinator, Alameda County SR2S team
- Ben Frazier, Planner, Alameda County SR2S team
- Samah Itani, Planner, Alameda County SR2S team
- Allison Woodworth, Engineer Alameda County SR2S team
- Mario Valdez, School Site Coordinator, Alameda County SR2S team
- Sheila Islam, School Site Coordinator, Alameda County SR2S team
- Four Sankofa Elementary School parents

School Information



Location & Enrollment



	Address:	581 61st St, Oakland, CA 94609
	Morning Bell(s):	8:30 AM
	Afternoon Bell(s):	2:45 PM
	Grade Levels:	TK-5 th Grade
	Enrollment:	192
	School Type (neighborhood/ magnet/charter):	Neighborhood School

Student Travel Data

Student Travel Mode Info:	Recent SR2S Hand Tally Data: Spring 2019
	Walking: 23%
	Biking: 3%
	School bus: 2%
	Transit: 1%
	Carpool: 16%
	Family Vehicle: 55%

Bikes, Buses, Transit, and Drop-off/Pick-up

<p>Does the school have bike racks? What is the capacity? Is it secure bike parking?</p> <p>On a typical day, what percentage of racks are used?</p>		<p>The school has bike racks located directly inside the gated staff parking lot on the east side of the school and in front of the school office along 61st Street near Shattuck Avenue.</p> <p>School staff and parents indicated the bike racks are always used at full capacity.</p>
<p>How do school buses interact with the school?</p>		<p>The school buses drop-off/pick-up students near the school office at the school frontage.</p>

<p>Is the school served by local transit agencies? Are there stops within ¼ mile?</p>		<p>There is an AC Transit stop located at the intersection of Shattuck Avenue and 61st Street and across the street on the west side of Shattuck Avenue. Route 18 serves this stop.</p>
<p>Does the school have special pick-up/drop-off policies/procedures?</p>		<p>Kindergarteners must be picked up by parents/guardians from behind the fence near the baseball field at the drop-off loop.</p> <p>Drop off activity occurs at two primary locations: at the school's main frontage entrance on 61st Street and at the drop-off loop on 61st Street on the east side of the school.</p>

Street Characteristics

Street Name	Width	Lanes	Posted Speed Limit	Traffic Volumes	Notes
Shattuck Avenue	45 feet	2 lanes	25 mph	Not available	Class II bicycle lanes
61 st Street	35 feet	2 lanes	15 mph	Not available	
Racine Street	40 feet	2 lanes	15 mph	Not available	

Pedestrian- and Bicycle-Involved Collision Summary 2016-2020

The collision summary table shows all bicycle- and pedestrian-involved collisions within one-half mile of the school. These collisions may or may not be related to school travel.

Radius from School	Total Collisions	Fatal Collisions	Severe Injury Collisions	Visible Injury Collisions	Complaint of Pain Collisions	Pedestrian Collisions	Bicycle Collisions
< ¼ mi	11	0	0	4	7	5	6
¼ mi – ½ mi	64	0	12	25	27	37	27
Total	75	0	12	29	34	42	33

Source: UC Berkeley – Transportation Injury Mapping System, Safe Transportation Research and Education Center, University of California, Berkeley, 2021

Community Health and Demographics (Data from the census tract of school site)

Percent of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Priced Meals ('20-'21 school year)	MTC Equity Priority Community Designation (2018)	Healthy Places Index Score (2021)	CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Percentile (2021)
68.8%	N/A	83.3 Percentile	30 Percentile

Sources: California Department of Education, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Public Health Alliance of Southern California, and California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

Existing Conditions

Overview

Sankofa Elementary School is located on 61st Street between Shattuck Avenue and Racine Street in the Bushrod neighborhood in Oakland, California. The campus has direct frontage along 61st Street and Shattuck Avenue and is surrounded by a residential neighborhood. The school has a drop-off/pick-up loop in the parking lot off of 61st Street on the east side of the campus. Private vehicles enter the parking lot and parents drop-off/pick-up students while being greeted by school staff. Vehicles exit from the same driveway they came in from. Drop-off also occurs at the curb near the school's main frontage on 61st Street.

The peak morning drop-off period lasts from 8:15 AM – 8:35 AM.

Shattuck Avenue and Racine Street are the most used car access routes for students arriving to Sankofa Elementary. Most families arriving to school on their bikes use the Class II bike route along Shattuck Avenue.

Between 2016 and 2020, 33 bicycle and 42 pedestrian collisions occurred within a half mile of the school. These collisions have mostly occurred on Shattuck Avenue, Stanford Avenue, and Adeline Street.

Observations

Participants observed or reported the following conditions during the school safety assessment (SSA).

1. Shattuck Avenue/61st Street *(Corresponds to #1 on improvement map)*

- ◆ On the day of the assessment, the high-visibility crosswalk at Shattuck and 61st was not marked due to recent road work. The high-visibility crosswalk was replaced soon after the assessment.
- ◆ Pedestrians are hard to see on the west side of Shattuck at the crosswalk due to vehicles parked along the curb leading to the crosswalk.
- ◆ When the crossing guard stopped traffic to help families cross the street on Shattuck Avenue, a long queue of drivers was waiting to resume their drive.
- ◆ Due to the heavy volumes of northbound traffic on Shattuck Avenue, there is a long queue of southbound drivers who get delayed behind vehicles attempting to make a southbound left turn onto 61st Street to get to the school.
 - Participants stated that it is hard for people biking to make the left turn onto 61st Street
 - Multiple drivers cut into the bike lane to go around the queue of waiting drivers. Some drivers speed away at higher rates of speed.
- ◆ 61st Street, west of Shattuck Avenue, is a popular bike route for families coming from the west.
 - Many families will ride the short distance on the western sidewalk between the two 61st Street intersections.
- ◆ During the observation, multiple drivers encroached onto the crosswalk, even with the crossing guard present.
- ◆ Drivers from both directions on Shattuck Avenue stopped too close to the crosswalk when approaching the intersection.
- ◆ Participants noted that the bike lanes on Shattuck Avenue have a lot of potholes and other obstructions. Moving north, Shattuck's bike lanes drop in some segments.
- ◆ During the observation, an AC Transit bus at the Shattuck Avenue and 61st bus stop did not pull to the curb but instead stopped in the vehicle lane to pick up riders.



Left: Shattuck Avenue at 61st Street, school crossing guard stopping traffic assist families in crossing the street.



Right: Looking south at Shattuck Avenue, vehicle traffic is very heavy during the morning drop-off.



Above: Shattuck Avenue at 61st Street looking north. Outline of the planned crosswalk on the road with new RRFB.

The following infrastructure recommendations are proposed to improve the existing conditions described above:

- *Refreshing these existing items: high-visibility crosswalks, red curb (refresh and extend).*
- *Install new: high-visibility crosswalks.*
- *Install a concrete curb extension at the northwest corner.*
- *Install updated signage specifying yield for pedestrians here*
- *Extend the red curb at the intersection of Shattuck and 61st to daylight intersections and improve driver's visibility.*

2. 61st Street (Corresponds to #2 and #4 on improvement map)

- ◆ The main entrance into Sankofa Elementary is on 61st Street at the northwest corner of the school campus.
- ◆ Some drivers double-parked to drop off their kids during the observed drop-off time. In some instances, this occurred even when there were parking spaces near where these drivers double parked.
- ◆ During drop-off, several drivers performed U-turns along 61st Street. Due to the limited space available, most U-turns were multi-point turns, which created a queue of drivers waiting to pass in both directions.
- ◆ Further east on 61st Street, where the parking lot is located, is the school's main drop-off/pick-up loop.
 - This parking lot is fenced in, and drivers queued to enter in both directions of 61st Street.
 - The only driveway is not wide enough for more than one car to drive through at once.
 - A school employee did traffic control during morning drop-off to guide drivers in and out of the parking lot to reduce any conflict between drivers entering and leaving.
 - The bike racks at the southeast side of the parking lot were all fully utilized, with some bikes and scooters not locked to any structure.
 - Currently, students biking to the on-campus parking must use the same driveway as motorists to access the bike parking near the loop. There is a pedestrian gate at the edge of the lot, but there is no easy way for students biking to reach that.
- ◆ Parents shared that there isn't enough visibility of pedestrians at the northeast corner of 61st Street, crossing Shattuck Avenue when drivers need to make a right turn onto Shattuck Avenue. The limited visibility is due to overgrown landscaping along the sidewalk curb and vehicles parked too close to the stop sign along the curb.



Above: Narrow driveway at the Drop-off/Pick-up loop on 61st Street.



Left: School frontage on 61st Street.



Right: Fenced-in drop-off/pick-up loop location, inside the staff parking lot.



Above: 61st Street towards Shattuck Avenue near the school entrance. Drivers double-parked during the drop-off period and blocked oncoming traffic.



Above: At the school office entrance at 61st Street, looking towards Shattuck Avenue.

The following infrastructure recommendations are proposed to improve the existing conditions described above:

- *Updating these existing items: install additional bike racks, and update drop-off area signage.*
- *Installing/Constructing new: curb striping/management changes, widening driveway into the parking lot, and consider constructing a separate curb cut for people biking and other access accommodations into the parking lot. Construct a curb extension at the northeast corner.*
- *Trimming vegetation: School stakeholders should create a 311 request to trim vegetation obstructing the line of sight for vehicles at the northeast corner of 61st Street*

3. 61st Street/Racine Street (Corresponds to #3 on improvement map)

- ◆ The northwest and southwest corners of 61st Street at Racine Street do not have curb ramps.
- ◆ Most families that accessed 61st Street via Racine Street by car and made left turns to drop off students at the drop-off/pick-up loop.



Left: Newly painted crosswalk on the West side of Racine Street at 61st Street.

Right: Racine Street looking south, Sankofa Elementary to the right.

The following infrastructure recommendations are proposed to improve the existing conditions described above:

- *Installing/Constructing new: installation of curb ramps*

Participant Comments

School staff and parents who attended the assessment were primarily concerned with the heavy traffic and pedestrian crossing conditions on Shattuck Avenue at 61st Street. They stated that the crossing guard has to do the bulk of the work to manage traffic, and there is very poor visibility of pedestrians when approaching the crosswalk to get across Shattuck Avenue to reach the school. Attendees' second

main concern was the drop-off/pick-up loop at the staff parking lot. There isn't a good flow of traffic coming in and out of the parking lot due to the narrow driveway to get into the parking lot and the lack of directional signage to properly control the drop-off/pick-up behavior.

Recommendations

Engineering Recommendations

Recommendations to improve infrastructure or operations surrounding Sankofa Elementary School can be seen on the conceptual improvement plan found following this memo.

Policy & Program Recommendations

In addition to engineering improvements, the Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program has many encouragement and educational activities that can benefit students and the campus community at Sankofa Elementary School.

The School Site Coordinator for Sankofa Elementary School is Mario Valdez. The Site Coordinator can help schedule, organize, and promote many of the program offerings of Alameda County SR2S. The contact information for the Site Coordinator is below:

Mario Valdez, mvaldez@alamedacountysr2s.org

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Site Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns, or if you wish to move forward with additional programming activities.

Programs

The following improvements are recommendations for policy and program implementation at Sankofa Elementary School to increase safety and active commutes to school.

- ◆ Develop Walk and Bicycle Route Maps
 - The SR2S Program can create recommended Walk and Bicycle Route Maps. These maps illustrate preferred routes to school for walking and biking. Maps also provide safety tips to encourage better travel behavior.
 - These maps can also be used as a part of Walking School Buses (WSBs), Bicycle Trains (BTs), or other Walk and Roll to School activities. Park and Walk, WSB, and BT meeting locations are also shown on these maps where appropriate.
- ◆ Encourage and Help Facilitate Carpooling
 - The SR2S Program can assist schools in working with parents to connect them with other families who live nearby to increase the

number of students carpooling. This can reduce congestion by reducing the number of vehicles coming to campus.

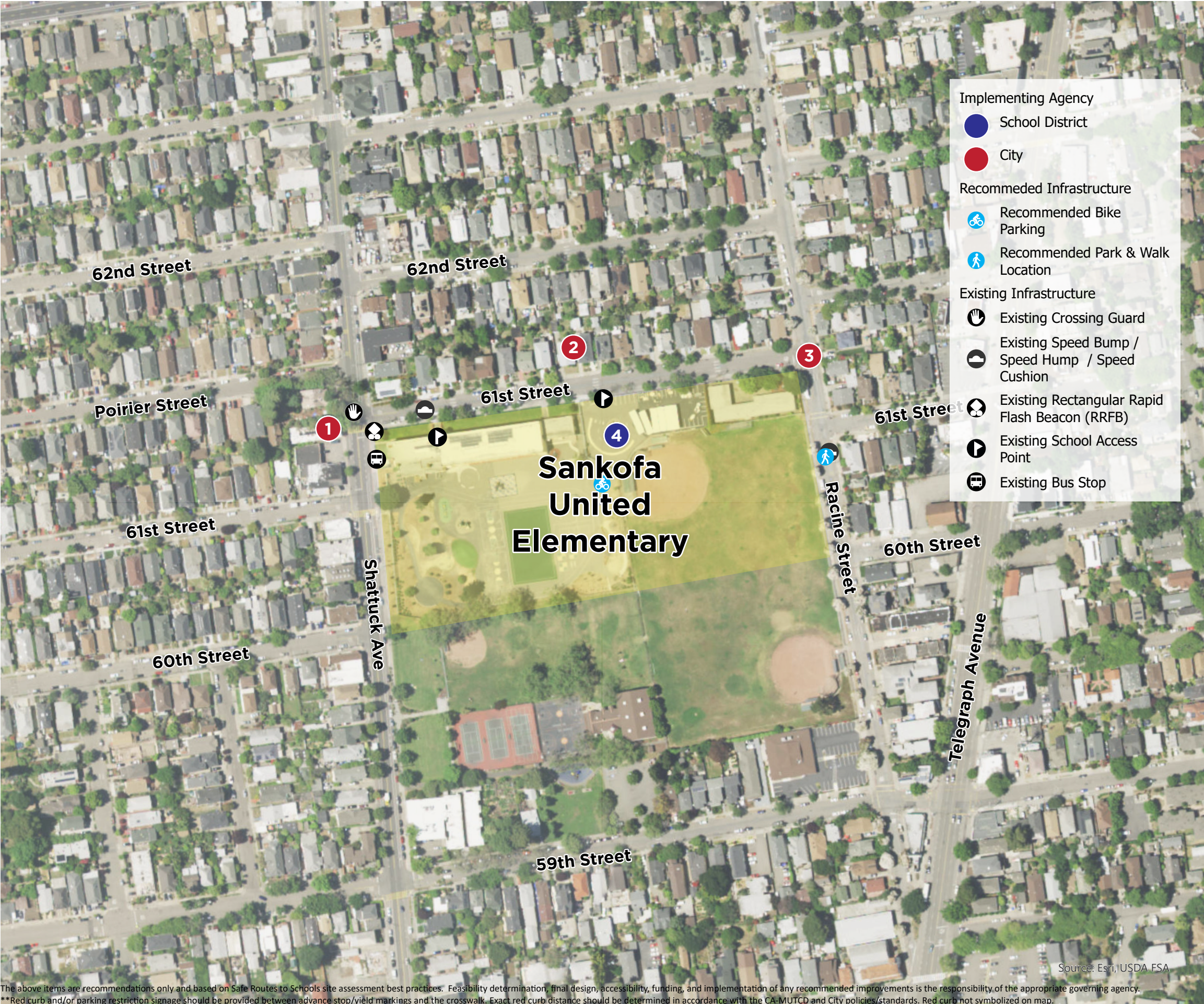
- ◆ Encourage Parents to Park and Walk from Designated Locations
 - Potential park and walk locations have been identified on the Improvement Plan Map.
 - West side of Racine Street near the baseball field.
 - The school should encourage parents to utilize these locations to reduce congestion in and near existing drop-off/pick-up locations.
- ◆ Facilitate Walking School Buses and Bicycle Trains
 - Walking School Buses (WSBs) and Bicycle Trains (BTs) are groups of students, led by parent/adult chaperone(s), that meet at designated locations and times to gather and walk and/or bike to school together. WSBs and BTs can be regular events, occurring daily, weekly, or monthly or occur in coordination with other events like International Walk and Roll to School Day or the Golden Sneaker Contest. SR2S staff can assist schools with the planning, coordination, and execution of the WSBs and BTs. Walking and biking in groups with parental supervision can not only increase the visibility of these road users, but can reduce barriers to walking or biking for some families while making it fun and exciting for the students.
- ◆ Schedule Pedestrian Rodeos and Bicycle Rodeos
 - These interactive rodeos are great educational opportunities to teach and refresh safe walking and bicycling behavior. These workshops cover a wide range of relevant topics from understanding traffic signals and signs, to bicycle hand signals, to how to safely cross the street. Pedestrian Safety Rodeos and Bicycle Safety Rodeos are geared towards elementary school students.
- ◆ Participate in International Walk and Roll to School Day (IRW2SD), the Golden Sneaker Contest (GSC) and Bike to School Day (B2SD)
 - These are the three main countywide encouragement events that occur throughout the academic year. All schools can participate in International Walk and Roll to School Day, held in October every year. The Golden Sneaker Contest, held in spring, is for elementary and middle schools and is a two-week contest both within schools and across the county challenging classrooms to travel to/from school using active and shared modes. All schools can also participate in Bike to School Day, held in tandem with Bike to Work Day, which encourages schools to sponsor Energizer Stations and students and families to bike to school.

Safe Routes to Schools Improvement Plan
Sankofa United Elementary
Oakland

School Safety Assessment held August 2021

Improvement Detail

- 1a At the northwest and northeast corners of Shattuck Avenue and 61st Street, install concrete curb extensions.
- 1b Extend red curb an additional 10 feet at the northeast curb along 61st Street. School stakeholders should file a 311 request to trim overgrown plants blocking intersection visibility.
- 2a Install 15-minute parking only sign
- 2b Install 20 feet of red curb on both sides of drop-off/pick-up loop driveway
- 3a Install two curb ramps (curb ramps must meet current ADA standards) at northwest and southwest corner
- 3b Use Racine Street south of 61st Street as an alternative park-and-walk location. Install green curb with 20 minute parking restriction; limit parking restriction to school hours.
- 4a Install additional bike racks at drop-off/pick loop
- 4b Install drop-off/pick-up area signange along fence
- 4c Recommend widening the parking lot driveway to accomodate two vehicles at the same time
- 4d Consider constructing a separate curb cut for people biking, and providing other access accommodations (coordinate with City)



The above items are recommendations only and based on Safe Routes to Schools site assessment best practices. Feasibility determination, final design, accessibility, funding, and implementation of any recommended improvements is the responsibility of the appropriate governing agency.
**Red curb and/or parking restriction signage should be provided between advance stop/yield markings and the crosswalk. Exact red curb distance should be determined in accordance with the CA-MUTCD and City policies/standards. Red curb not symbolized on map.
This figure is intended only for reference, conceptual planning, and informational purposes. This figure should not be used to establish boundaries, property lines, location of objects, or to provide any other information typically needed for final design, construction or any other purpose when engineered plans are required.

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Improvements not to scale

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