



Stepping to School:

2014 SCHOOL AREA AUDIT UPDATE

INTRODUCTION

In New Orleans (NOLA), many sidewalks and streets around public schools have improved these past few years thanks to government investment. However, schools and their students still face unsafe walking conditions. KidsWalk Coalition, a network of public health professionals, transportation planners, government officials, and community advocates, conducted walkability audits around public schools in 2010 and 2013. Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, many schools have moved, new schools have opened, and others have closed. By comparing data from 2010 and 2013, KidsWalk found that while walkability improvements were accomplished, increased coordination of sidewalk and street construction is needed so students, teachers, parents and residents can walk to and from schools and neighborhood destinations with greater ease.

Between 2010 and 2013 there was an increase in the number of schools with “Good” walkability scores, from 1% in 2010 to 8% in 2013, although fewer schools were audited [KidsWalk audited 77 schools (63 school areas) in 2010 and 50 schools (45 school areas) in 2013.] This increase in “Good” overall walkability scores indicates the investments made by the City of New Orleans may be leading to improved pedestrian conditions. Louisiana had the 6th highest rate of pedestrian deaths in the country in 2011, an improvement over 2nd highest rate in 2009. However, more needs to be done to improve active living opportunities for NOLA residents. Continued investments in active living infrastructure fosters an environment that encourages walking and bicycling, furthering our goal to create a safer, healthier NOLA.

PURPOSE FOR UPDATE

Increasing physical activity opportunities for children and adults is a major policy focus for the City of New Orleans, where rates of obesity in high school students is higher than the national average. KidsWalk Coalition, led by the Tulane Prevention Research Center (PRC), and Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI) have partnered with the New Orleans Department of Public Works (DPW) for over four years to identify and leverage opportunities to create a more walkable and bikeable city. In 2011, NOLA adopted Louisiana’s first Complete Streets law. Like other similar policies across the country, this law requires all new roads and some repairs to consider every form of transportation when designing and constructing routes. That means allowing pedestrians and bicyclists equitable road and sidewalk access. Since then, NOLA has created a growing network of bike lanes, accessible sidewalks, high visibility crosswalks, and safe school zones. These on-street changes are making NOLA a safer and healthier place. This 2013 update is intended to assist DPW

in tracking its progress around schools and to make recommendations for future success.

This update provides a current picture of street safety and walkability around NOLA public schools where road investments have been made. Schools were selected to be audited per the following criteria:

- Schools that moved locations after 2010 audit
- New schools
- School zone boundary was part of a major road construction

The 2013 update includes high schools that share a building with a K-8 school. A total of 45 school areas (covering 50 different schools) were assessed (pages 5 – 6). All schools were located in Orleans Parish and conditions were representative of overall walkability in typical NOLA neighborhoods.

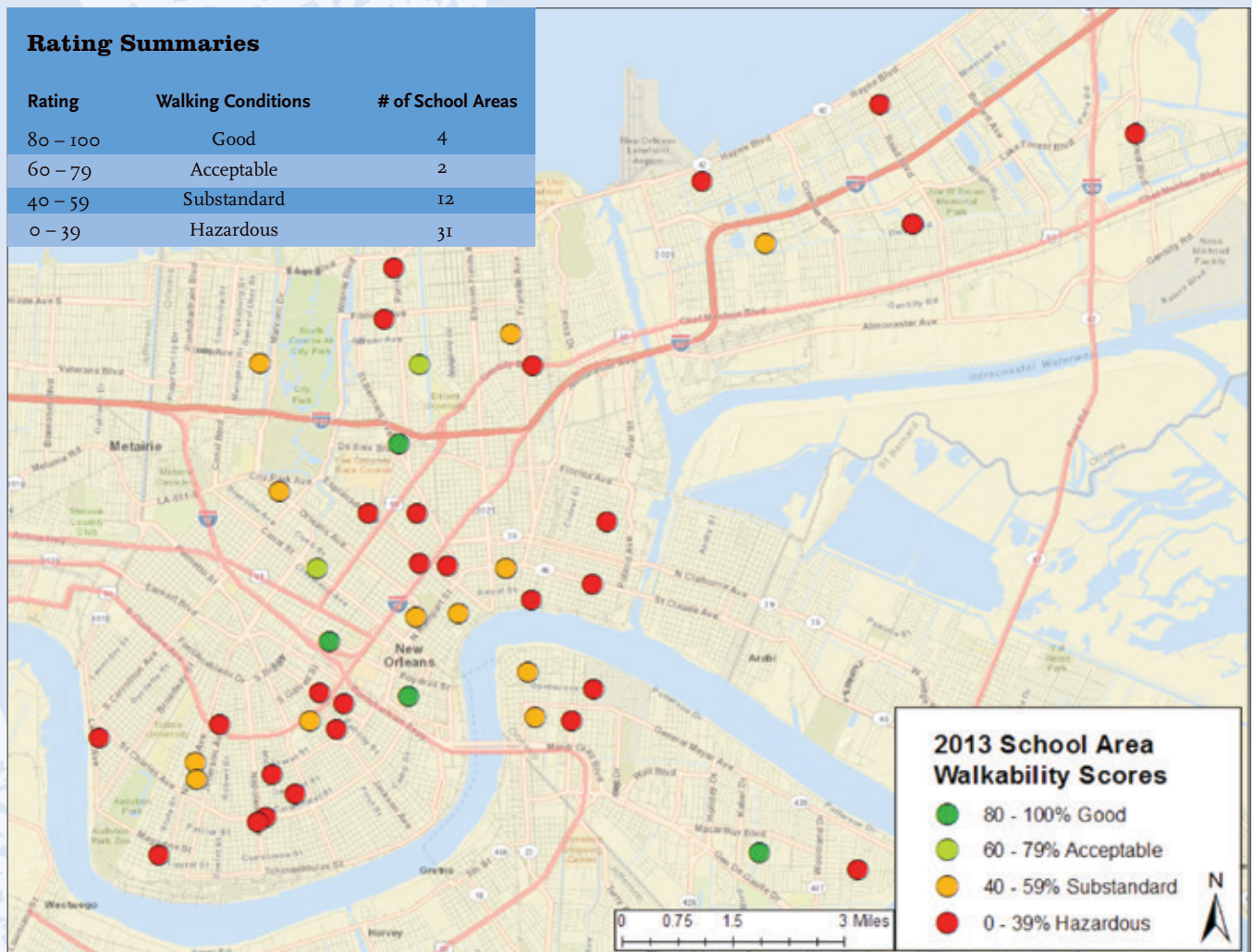


FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

Walkability audits around schools were conducted July – October 2013 by replicating methods from the 2010 audit. In the 2013 update, four schools received a “Good” rating, one school received an “Acceptable” rating, 13 schools received a “Substandard” rating, and 31 schools received a “Hazardous” rating. Nearly a third (32%) of sidewalks were rated as “poor” or “missing”; more than half (58%) of curb ramps were “poor” or “missing.” The average school zone signage score for elementary and middle schools was 59%. More than two-thirds (69%) of crosswalks were rated as “good” while 29% were rated as “poor.”



2013 School Area Walkability Scores



2010 and 2013 School Area Audit Data Comparison

Of the 77 schools (63 school areas) audited in 2010, 21 were re-audited in 2013. New schools and high schools comprised the remaining 29 schools. Of the 21 re-audited schools, nine were chosen because they had moved locations and 12 were chosen because they were close to major road construction projects. A third of the schools that moved received improved scores for sidewalks, curb ramps, and school zone signs. Half of schools located near major road projects received better scores; three of these school scores increased by 10% or more since the last report. While these few areas saw improved scores, the lack of overall significant improvement to most schools audited may be due to the type of road construction projects that took place. The road construction did not necessarily improve walkability scores as measured by the audit tool. For example, the tool does not include asphalt pavement repairs, replacing street lights, and adding bike lane signs and striping. Additionally, not all construction addressed every

aspect of walkability surrounding schools. Furthermore, three schools had projects that were not yet complete when the audit was conducted.

Data Limitations

There are several limitations in the 2013 findings. While a training manual and data collection methodology was developed in 2010 to standardize the process, the audit tool relies on subjective judgments by surveyors. The audit tool itself presents certain data limitations, such as the exclusion of lighting needs and an inventory of blighted and vacant properties. Nighttime visibility and blight present significant barriers to safety and walkability and should be included in future reports. Another data limitation was that the major road improvement list obtained from the DPW only included projects within its purview. Road projects undertaken by other agencies within the city or state were not considered when developing the school audit list.



RECOMMENDATIONS

KidsWalk Coalition has several recommendations for continued enhancement of the built environment around schools, as well as suggested enhancements of the audit tool. KidsWalk recommends DPW coordinate with BlightSTAT, NOLA's blight abatement program — to address road and sidewalk conditions in blighted areas. Future versions of walkability audits should include additional indicators of walkability, such as safety, personal visibility, street lights and tree cover; these factors can also support walking and bicycling to and from school.

KidsWalk Coalition proposes DPW coordinate its efforts with the New Orleans Recreation Development Commission (NORD-C) to improve project implementation and communication between two city government agencies working to enhance the built environment. We also advise DPW to coordinate with school officials in the oversight of the School Facilities Master Plan (SFMP) to better systematize school zone installation, creation of high visibility crosswalks, and development of other school area upgrades ahead of a school's opening or reopening, rather than relying upon the schools themselves to make those requests.

SFMP reports show federally funded school construction and improvement projects by phase of implementation, and the Recovery School District features "current" projects on their website. However, upcoming projects or projected dates for completion is not often updated or readily available online. We recommend greater interagency coordination and communication occur and be shared online so all stakeholders of school area improvements have easy access to the same, up-to-date information.

KidsWalk recommends DPW allocate funding toward designated staff time to track the city's road improvement progress around schools and other pedestrian and bicycle-user generators like parks, senior centers, transit hubs, and commercial corridors, in addition to addressing public inquiries regarding road safety in school areas. This process may help incorporate public input in the prioritization of projects and decision making for future road projects. The return on investment for the City of New Orleans will be increased safety and health for children and families engaging in active transportation to and from school.



School Campus	Sidewalks poor or missing	Curb Ramps poor or missing	Crosswalk Rating	School Zone Signage Rating	Total Score
AKILI ACADEMY OF N.O. 3811 N. Galvez St.	91.42%	62.5%	-1.33	33%	-5%
ALGIERS TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY* 6501 Berkley Dr.	31.86%	81.1%	-0.33	N/A	8%
ARISE ACADEMY** 3820 St. Claude Ave.	11.29%	57.1%	0.33	43%	33%
ARTHUR ASHE CHARTER 1456 Gardena Dr.	17.32%	50.8%	2.33	16%	33%
BENJAMIN BANNEKER ELEM* 421 Burdette St.	59.72%	54.7%	1.00	25%	5%
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HIGH 2001 Leon C. Simon Dr.	54.94%	11.8%	0.67	100%	31%
BRICOLAGE ACADEMY 4238 St Charles Ave.	44.75%	86.5%	0.00	55%	10%
COHEN COLLEGE PREP MIDDLE & HIGH 3520 Dryades St.	65.63%	68.0%	-1.33	9%	-5%
EDGAR P. HARNEY SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE ACADEMY 2503 Willow St.	19.94%	50.0%	0.00	67%	48%
EDNA KARR HIGH* 3332 Huntlee Dr.	9.97%	22.2%	2.33	N/A	85%
EDWARD HYNES CHARTER 990 Harrison Ave.	31.87%	22.0%	-0.33	88%	43%
ENCORE ACADEMY 2301 Marengo St.	60.77%	68.8%	-0.67	20%	-5%
GENTILLY TERRACE CHARTER 4720 Painters St.	20.60%	65.0%	0.67	88%	52%
GEORGE W. CARVER COLLEGIATE* 5552 Read Blvd.	51.96%	25.0%	1.00	N/A	23%
GEORGE W. CARVER PREP 5552 Read Blvd.	51.96%	25.0%	1.00	N/A	23%
HOMER A. PLESSY COMMUNITY 3820 St. Claude Ave. (sharing space with ARISE)	11.29%	57.1%	0.33	43%	33%
INTERNATIONAL HIGH* 727 Carondelet St.	0.43%	29.0%	4.00	N/A	85%
INTL SCHL OF LOUISIANA 502 Olivier St.	1.10%	60.0%	0.00	61%	57%
JOHN DIBERT COMMUNITY 4217 Orleans Ave.	3.63%	33.3%	2.67	33%	48%
JOSEPH S. CLARK PREP HIGH* 1301 North Derbigny St.	81.09%	68.3%	1.00	N/A	8%
KIPP BELIEVE PRIMARY 1700 Pratt Dr., Building EKIPP	31.49%	17.9%	3.00	100%	67%
KIPP CENTRAL CITY PRIMARY 2625 Thalia St.	21.43%	65.8%	-0.33	50%	24%
KIPP McDONOGH 15 SCHOOL FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS 721 St. Philip St.	82.87%	62.5%	0.33	100%	43%
KIPP N.O. LEADERSHIP ACADEMY 2300 St. Claude Ave.	9.94%	48.8%	-0.67	64%	52%
KIPP N.O. LEADERSHIP PRIMARY 2300 St. Claude Ave.	9.94%	48.8%	-0.67	64%	52%
KIPP RENAISSANCE HIGH* 5316 Michoud Blvd.	34.74%	100.0%	0.00	N/A	15%
LAGNIAPPE ACADEMIES OF N.O. 1501 St. Louis St.	55.36%	100.0%	0.67	100%	43%
LAKE AREA NEW TECH EARLY COLLEGE HIGH* 6026 Paris Ave.	20.27%	60.3%	2.00	N/A	38%
LANDRY WALKER COLLEGE AND CAREER PREP HIGH* 1200 L.B. Landry Ave.	59.27%	50.9%	1.33	N/A	8%
LUSHER CHARTER MIDDLE & HIGH 5624 Freret St.	27.70%	74.1%	0.67	79%	43%

School Campus	Sidewalks poor or missing	Curb Ramps poor or missing	Crosswalk Rating	School Zone Signage Rating	Total Score
LYCEE FRANCAIS DE LA NOUVELLE ORLEANS (PK2) 5951 Patton St.	76.79%	59.0%	0.67	86%	33%
LYCEE FRANCAIS DE LA NOUVELLE ORLEANS (PK3) 5401 S. Claiborne Ave.	72.38%	64.7%	1.00	40%	5%
MAHALIA JACKSON ELEMENTARY 2405 Jackson Ave.	26.60%	94.0%	-0.67	62%	33%
McDONOUGH 32 LITERACY 800 De Armas St.	21.90%	76.9%	-1.00	100%	52%
McDONOUGH 35 COLLEGE PREP HIGH SCHOOL* 1331 Kerlerec St.	82.74%	91.5%	1.33	N/A	8%
McDONOUGH 42 ELEM CHARTER 4300 Almonaster Ave.	70.04%	58.3%	0.00	33%	0%
McDONOUGH CITY PARK ACADEMY 2733 Esplanade Ave.	47.42%	45.0%	2.00	50%	14%
MEDARD H. NELSON CHARTER 3121 St. Bernard Ave.	18.55%	26.1%	1.00	100%	81%
MILDRED OSBORNE ELEM 6701 Curran Blvd.	25.89%	47.8%	-1.00	38%	14%
MILLER-McCOY ACADEMY FOR MATH & BUSINESS 7301 Dwyer Rd.	34.03%	14.3%	0.00	75%	43%
MORRIS JEFF COMMUNITY 3368 Esplanade Ave.	0.00%	0.0%	1.00	100%	100%
N.O. CENTER FOR CREATIVE ARTS* 2800 Chartres St.	89.55%	77.3%	0.00	N/A	0%
N.O. CHARTER SCI & MATH HIGH* 5625 Loyola Ave.	13.75%	83.0%	0.67	N/A	54%
N.O. MILITARY/MARITIME ACADEMY* 2000 Opelousas Ave., Building H-100	30.24%	25.7%	2.00	N/A	38%
RENEW REED ELEMENTARY @ DELORES T. AARON ELEMENTARY 10200 Curran Blvd.	34.93%	64.6%	0.33	67%	33%
ROBERT RUSSA MOTON CHARTER 3774 Gentilly Blvd.	15.88%	86.1%	0.67	19%	33%
SCI ACADEMY* 5552 Read Blvd.	51.96%	25.0%	1.00	N/A	23%
SOPHIE B. WRIGHT CHARTER 1426 Napoleon Ave.	35.47%	94.8%	0.33	50%	24%
SYLVANIE WILLIAMS COLLEGE PREP ELEMENTARY 3127 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.	51.96%	33.7%	3.67	54%	19%
WARREN EASTON HIGH* 3019 Canal St.	16.76%	22.4%	0.00	N/A	62%

*Schools grades 9-12 **Safe Routes to School program sites
Please see page 4 for a description of the scoring methodology used in this evaluation.

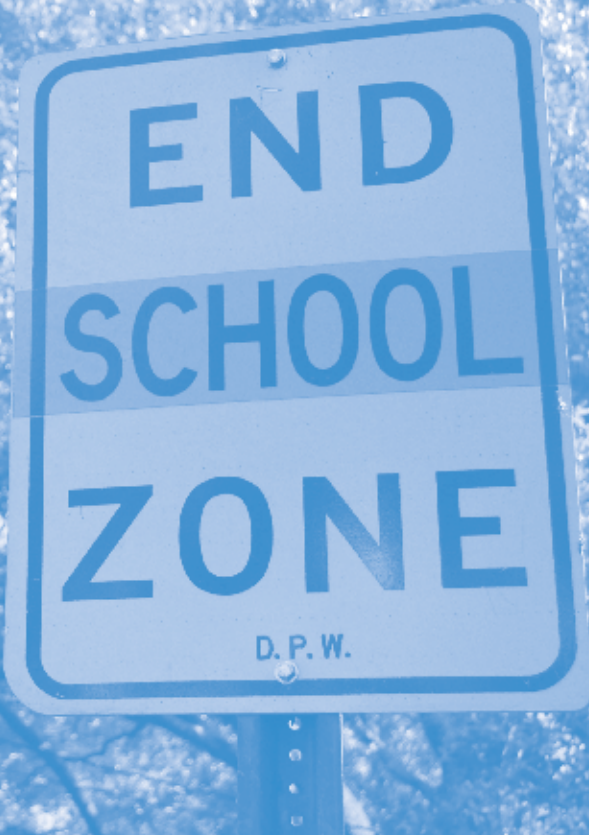
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