

# ***What Moves Everett Schools***

## **Final Report**

Green Streets Initiative  
Spring 2023



**CITY OF  
EVERETT**

# What Moves Everett Schools: Final Report

Spring 2023

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## **Executive Summary**

*What Moves Everett Schools*, conducted by Green Streets Initiative for the City of Everett Planning Department, aimed to understand the transportation patterns and preferences of the Everett Public Schools community and identify ways for the City of Everett to enable their ideal commute.

The project consisted of a district-wide transportation survey and in-depth conversations with 19 students, faculty, and staff.

## **Key Findings from the Survey and Conversations**

- **Active Modes of Transportation:** Participants expressed a desire to use active modes of transportation, such as cycling and rolling (skateboard, rollerblades, or scooter), to get to and from school. However, concerns about cars, infrastructure, finances, lack of equipment, and parent permission were identified as barriers to adopting these modes.
- **Problematic Roads and Intersections:** Participants highlighted specific areas in Everett, including Santilli Circle, Broadway, and Ferry Street, as problematic for transportation because of concerns related to car traffic, potholes, walkability, sidewalk design, and bike lanes.
- **Importance of Public Transportation:** Public transportation, specifically the MBTA bus, was cited as essential for many participants' commutes. Concerns about the frequency of bus arrival times and limited bus routes were raised.
- **Parental Factors:** Safety concerns, young age, and distance were identified as factors leading parents to drive their students to school.

## **Key Conclusions from Survey and Conversations**

- **Infrastructure Improvements:** Addressing infrastructure concerns, such as improving road conditions, walkability, and bike lanes, is crucial to promoting active transportation in the Everett community.
- **Public Transportation Enhancements:** Improving the frequency, reliability, and range of bus services can encourage more students, faculty, and staff to utilize public transportation.
- **Education and Safety Measures:** Providing education and safety training on active transportation can help alleviate concerns and increase active mode uptake.
- **Parental Engagement:** Engaging parents and addressing their concerns regarding safety and distance can contribute to reducing reliance on private vehicles for school transportation.



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Overall, the project uncovers community members' transportation-related challenges and insights, including the need for infrastructure improvements, enhanced public transportation services, and targeted education and safety measures to promote active transportation. In these ways, decision-makers and the community can create a more sustainable and accessible transportation system in Everett.

## **Methodology Summary**

The *What Moves Everett Schools* project aimed to assess the transportation preferences and barriers faced by students, faculty, and staff in the Everett School District.

- This project plays a crucial role in showcasing the voices of the Everett Schools community. It is an essential first step in promoting active transportation and improving the overall transportation experience for students, faculty, and staff.
- The survey methodology involved collecting diverse and detailed responses from students in grades 6-12, which were then analyzed and categorized.
- Key survey findings highlighted the various reasons that hindered middle and high school students from using their desired active modes of transportation, including financial constraints, safety concerns, lack of bike lanes, parent permission, and inadequate equipment.
- The report identified over 40 categories of responses as to what stops students from using their desired active modes, showcasing the diversity and depth of student perspectives.
- Appendices A, B, C, D, and E provide comprehensive charts and sample survey and conversation responses.
- Based on participant responses, the project recommended several measures to enhance transportation for the district, including active transportation education and safety training, improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure, enhanced road maintenance, subsidized or free T passes and Blue Bike passes for students and staff, priority parking for carpoolers, and utilization of shuttle buses and water taxis offered by Encore Boston Harbor.
- The project concluded that implementing these recommendations would contribute to a safer, more accessible, and sustainable transportation system for students and staff in the Everett School District.



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## **Introduction**

### **Summary of *What Moves Everett Schools***

In March of 2023, the City of Everett Planning Department hired Green Streets Initiative to develop a *What Moves Everett Schools* project, in order to better understand how the Everett Schools community currently travels to and from school, what ways they would like to commute and travel more generally in Everett, and what the city can do to help. Additionally, the project aimed to encourage the community to explore using active modes of transportation, and share the voices of Everett schools community members who already use active modes.

There are two main parts to this project:

- A district-wide transportation survey.
- 20 in-depth transportation conversations with students, faculty, and staff, from which snippets of these interviews are excerpted and posted on a webpage.

Green Streets staff administered a transportation survey to the Everett school district the week of April 10th, 2023. An estimated 4,000 to 4,500 students participated in the survey. This survey provided information on how students get around and what other modes of transportation students would like to try.

Green Streets staff then hosted in-depth video transportation conversations with 19 individual Everett students, parents/guardians, faculty, and staff. Central to these conversations were discussions of how the participants travel to and from school, challenges they face, insights they have, and improvements they would like to see. Green Streets staff then included snippets of these conversations on a [webpage](#) on the Green Streets website to inspire other community members to explore active transportation modes and showcase those who are already using active modes.

This report details the findings of the survey and findings of the transportation conversations.

### **Green Streets Initiative**

[Green Streets Initiative](#) is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization committed to cultivating the active transportation movement by inspiring travelers of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to explore and embrace active transportation modes.

*What Moves Everett Schools* is part of Green Streets' larger [What Moves Us](#) campaign, which helps municipalities and organizations inspire their community to embrace active transportation.



**Green Streets Initiative**  
Improving our health, communities, and environment, one commute at a time



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The Green Streets project team:

- [Janie Katz-Christy](#): Project Lead
- [Shannon Sullivan](#): Project Manager
- [Harry Hull](#): Spring 2023 Intern
- [Zakkai Mares-Van Praag](#): Summer 2023 Intern

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## **Section 1: Survey**

### Survey Methodology

Green Streets distributed a transportation survey through Google Forms to all students in the Everett School District over the course of one week. The survey was available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. The survey was adjusted for different grade levels and age appropriateness:

- Grades K-5
- Grades 6-10
- Grades 11-12

In this report, “student” means only the students who participated in the survey. It is used interchangeably with “respondent.”

The questions were multiple choice, unless indicated otherwise, and were as follows:

- How does the student usually get to school;
- How does the student usually leave school;
- How did the student get to school on the day they took the survey (grades 6-12 only);
- Where does the student travel after school;
- Active transportation modes students would like to try;
- And what stops the student from using the mode they would like to use (a write-in, open-ended question for grades 6-12 only).

Students had the following transportation modes to choose from:

- Drive alone (with an adult or someone in the student’s household)
- Carpool (with someone not in the student’s household)
- Walk
- Bicycle
- Train
- Bus or Van
- Roll (Skateboard, Rollerblades, Scooter, Ripstik)
- Wheelchair



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- Drive myself (Grades 11-12 only)

Students had the following after-school destinations to choose from:

- Home
- A friend or other grown-up's house
- Work (grades 6-12 only)
- After-school program
- Other

Green Streets defined certain transportation modes to ensure accurate results. Thus, driving options are defined by traveling with people in or out of the household:

- Drive alone: "An adult drives just me, or me and people I live with"
- Carpool: "Carpooling with another student who I do not live with"
- Drive myself: Student drives themselves to school
- While "skateboard," "rollerblades," and "scooter" were separate categories for grades 6-12, in this report these modes together are "rolling."

The survey differed among the three age groups in four ways, for age appropriateness:

- Students in grades K-5 participated by raising their hands, and teachers submitted the counts of hands raised. Students in grades 6-12 filled out the form themselves.
- Grades K-5 were not asked what stops them from trying new active modes.
- Grades K-5 and 6-10 were not given "I drive myself" as a transportation mode, whereas grades 11-12 were given that option.
- Students in grades K-5 were not asked how they got to school on the day of the survey.

131 elementary (K-5) classrooms participated in the survey, and 1,943 middle and high school students participated. The data from the elementary classrooms is based on the count of hands raised. Similarly, data for grades 6-12 is based on a count of students who selected the given option. Students in all grades could select multiple options in the survey. Therefore, the estimation of 4,000 to 4,500 participants comes from:

- Total participants in grades 6-12: 1,943
- Total participants in grades K-5:
  - 131 classrooms x estimated 17 students per room = 2,227 students
  - 131 classrooms x estimated 20 students per room = 2,620 students
- Low end estimation:  $2,227 + 1,943 = 4,170$  respondents
- High end estimation:  $2,620 + 1,943 = 4,563$  respondents

Green Streets staff analyzed the data in the following ways:

- Grades K-5:
  - By school
  - By grade





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- Grades 6-12:
  - Grades 6-10
  - Grades 11-12
  - Grades 6-8
  - Grades 9-12
- Grades K-12 all together.

See Appendices A, B, and C for all graphs and tables.

## Grades 6-12 Student Write-In Question Note

As to what stops them from using their desired active mode of transportation, respondents provided diverse and detailed answers – from finances, safety, and bike lanes, to bus passes and equipment. Green Streets staff analyzed and categorized these responses, took the counts of the responses in each category, and put them into graphs and tables. Student responses were classified into over 40 different categories, highlighting the diversity and depth of responses. Some respondents used this write-in section to list any feelings they had about traveling around Everett, which is why some categories do not relate to the survey question. Appendix A contains charts listing all the different reasons students mentioned. Moreover, Appendix D contains a sample of written responses directly from the survey.

## Key Survey Findings

Below is a summary of the key findings from the survey. The graphs and tables mentioned in this report are in Appendix A. Graphs and tables not mentioned in this report are in Appendix B.

- Students indicated they use a large diversity of modes; many are multimodal.
- The two most commonly-used modes are walking and driving alone, with over half of all respondents selecting walking as a mode they use to get to and from school.
- Students from some schools used certain modes more than those in others (for instance, some schools have more walkers and fewer drivers, and vice versa).
- As student age increases, the diversity of modes used slightly increases, meaning that students might try different active modes as they get older. However, walking is consistently the most common mode.





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## Findings: Whole District

Figure 1 breaks down how respondents across the district commute to school, while Figure 2 shows how the district-wide respondents commute from school. The majority of students indicated that they walk to and from school as either all or part of their commute: 51 percent of K-12 respondents get to school by walking, and 55 percent of respondents walk from school. The next most common transportation mode is driving alone; 36.5 percent of respondents indicated they drive alone with an adult to school, compared to 29 percent leaving school. Less than 10 percent of respondents indicated that they use other active modes, such as cycling, rolling, riding the bus or van, train, and wheelchair, as part of or all of their commute.

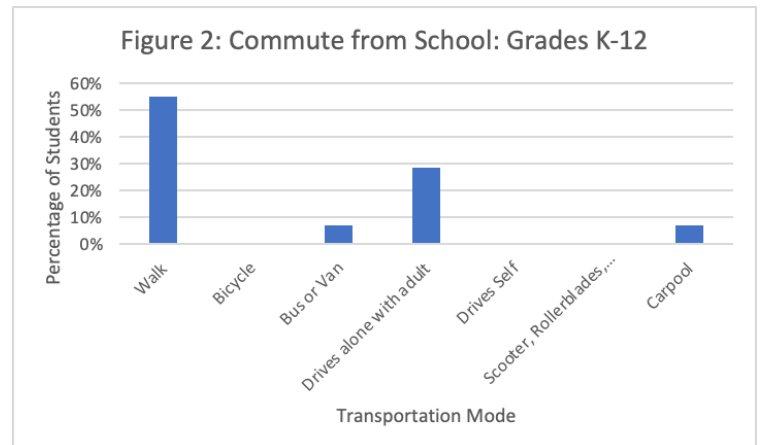
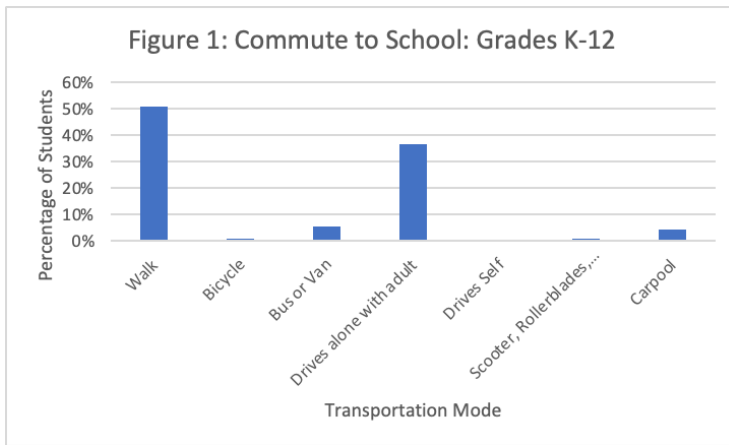
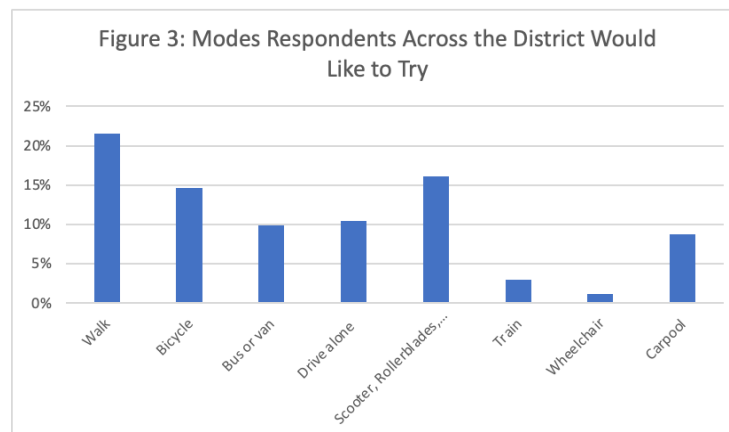
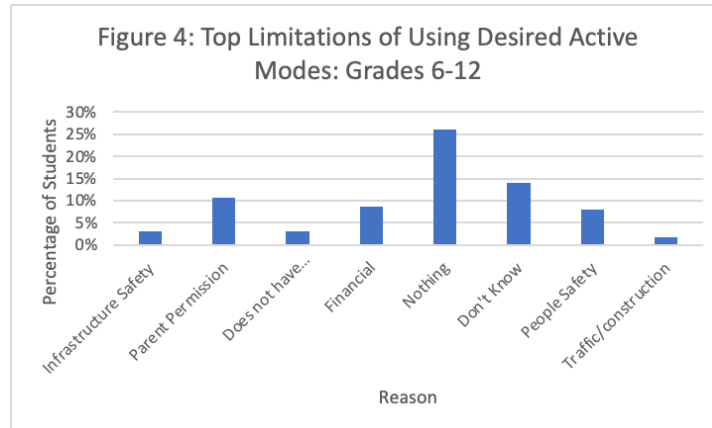


Figure 3 shows the modes that respondents across the district would like to try. These responses are more evenly spread out: 16 percent are interested in rolling, 14 percent would like to try cycling, and 21 percent would like to walk. Nearly 15 percent of respondents indicated that they are not interested in trying a new mode (see Appendix A).



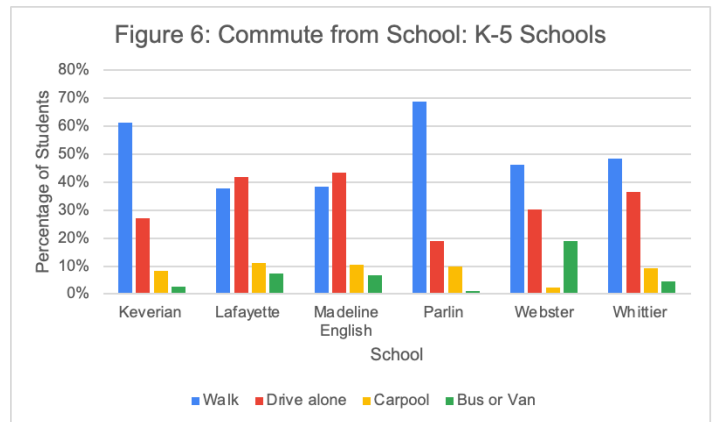
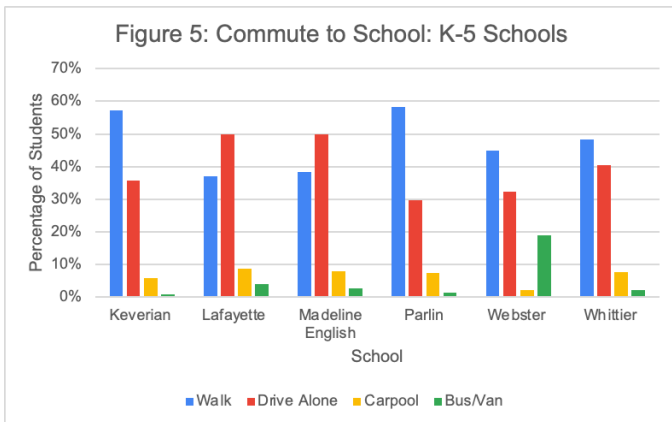
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Figure 4 shows the top reasons for what stops students in grades 6 through 12 from trying a new mode. Over a quarter of respondents said that nothing stops them from trying a new mode (partially because 15 percent are content with their current mode). Many of these responses came from students who walk to school, with some mentioning they do not need a new mode because they live so close to the school in the write-in section. The next largest group said they didn't know what stops them. Significantly, the next highest numbers were those who cited safety and parental permission as obstacles.



## Findings: Grades K-5 by School

Figure 5 depicts K-5 respondents' commutes to school, while figure 6 shows their commutes from school. Some schools have more students who walk, whereas others have more students who drive: Nearly 60 percent of Keverian students walk to and from school (35 percent from Keverian drive to school and 27 percent drive from school), whereas about 37 percent of Lafayette students walk to and from school (50 percent from Lafayette drive to school and 40 percent drive from school). Additionally, 38 percent of Madeline English students walk to school (compared to 50 percent who drive), and 58 percent of Parlin students walk (compared to only 30 percent who drive).



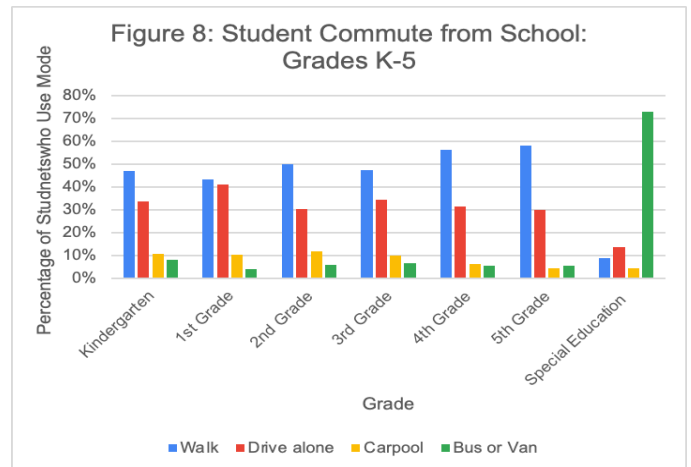
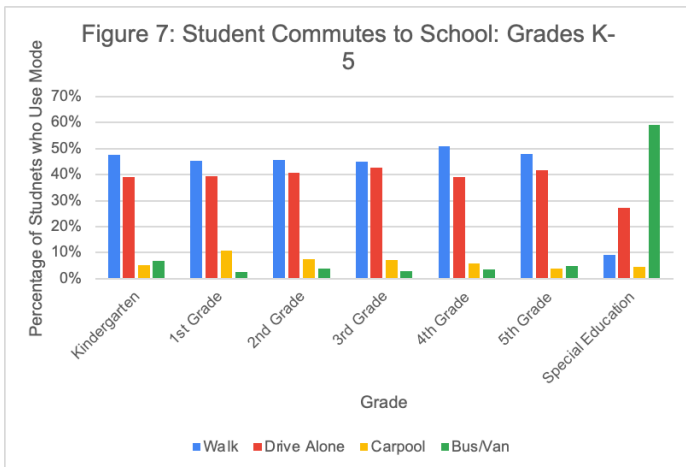
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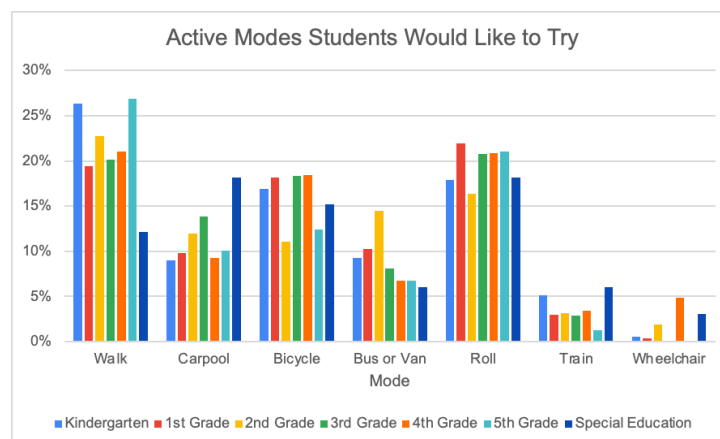
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## Findings: Grades K-5 by Grade

Walking and driving to school are mostly consistent across grades, with the exception of special education. Walking hovers around 45 percent of K-5 respondents, and driving alone hovers around 40 percent. Nearly 60 percent of special education respondents ride the bus to school, and nearly 70 percent ride the bus home. Interestingly, while walking and driving are consistently the most common modes, the percentages are different when leaving school (about 50 percent for walking and between 30 and 40 percent for driving).



Elementary school students indicated that they would like to try a variety of different active transportation modes. Rolling (skateboard, scooter, or rollerblades) is a popular mode among younger students. Students also indicated that they would like to either try walking or continue walking (many students selected the active mode that they already use in this section).



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## Findings: Grades 6-8

Figures 8 and 9 illustrate how middle school respondents usually get to and from school, respectively. The majority of middle school respondents walk to and from school, at 56 percent and 68 percent respectively. Driving alone is the next most common mode, at 35 percent and 24 percent respectively.

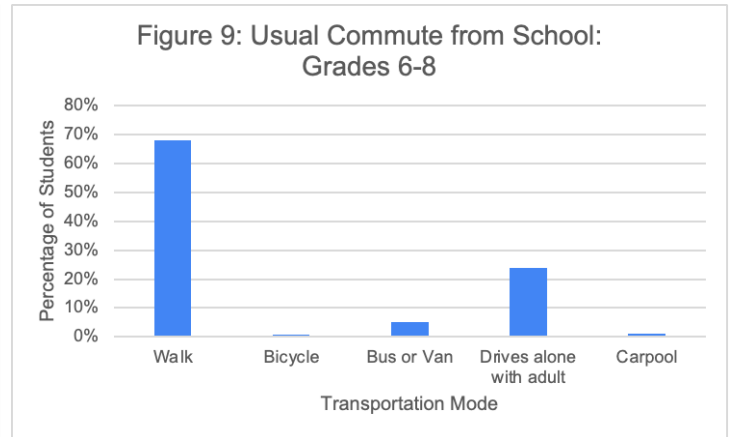
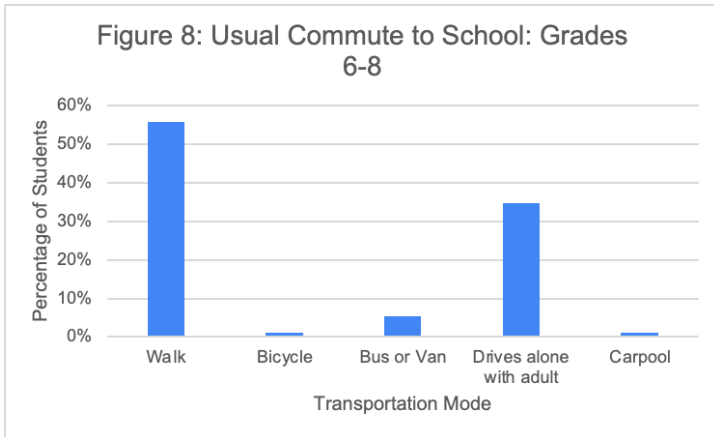
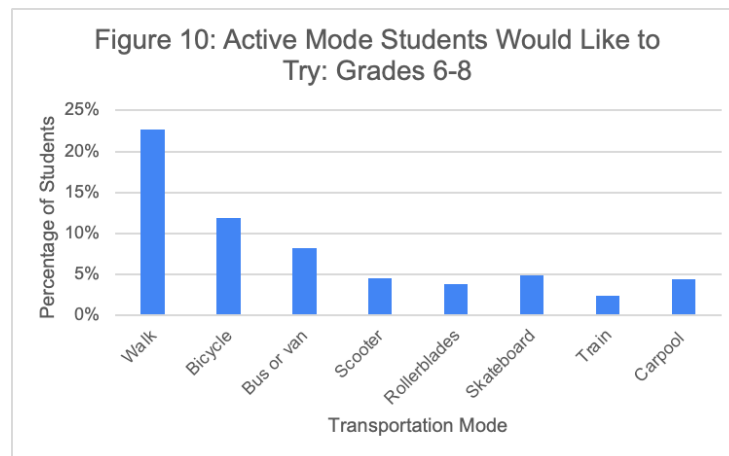


Figure 10 shows middle school respondents' interest in trying an active mode. While most middle school respondents are not interested (37 percent—see Appendix A), 23 percent said they would like to walk (some students selected walking, even if they already do walk), 12 percent said they would like to ride a bike, and 8 percent said they would like to ride the bus.



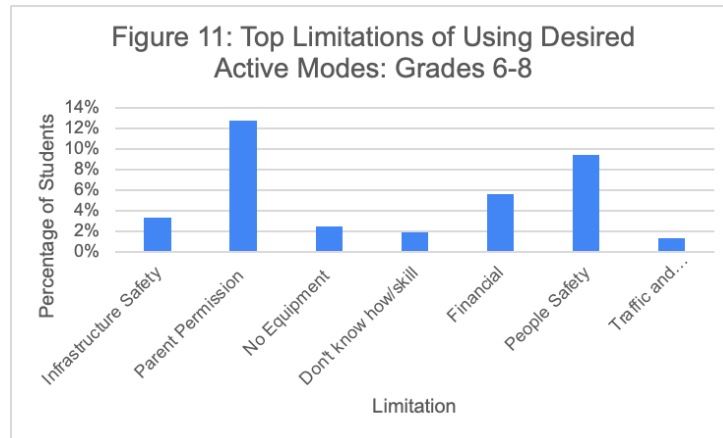
The top responses for what stops students from using the mode they would like is parent permission, people-related safety (e.g. risk of kidnapping), and financial circumstances (see Figure 11).



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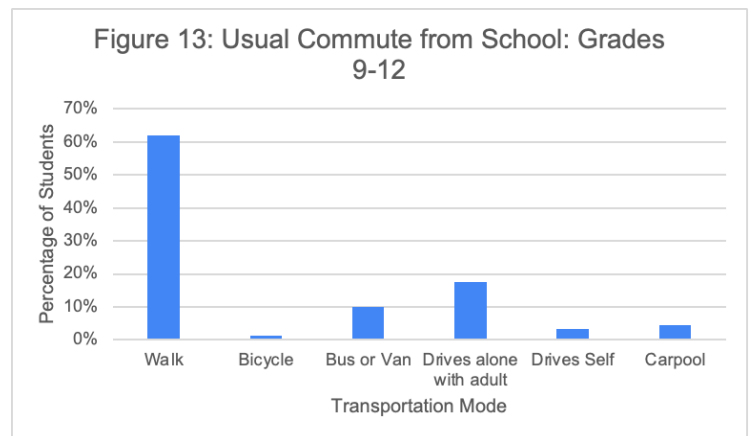
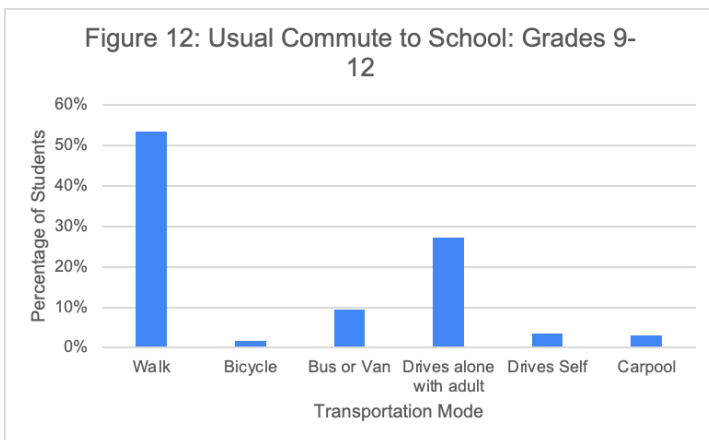
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## Findings: Grades 9-12

Figure 12 shows that the majority of respondents in grades 9 through 12 – 54 percent – walk to school. 27 percent drive alone with an adult.



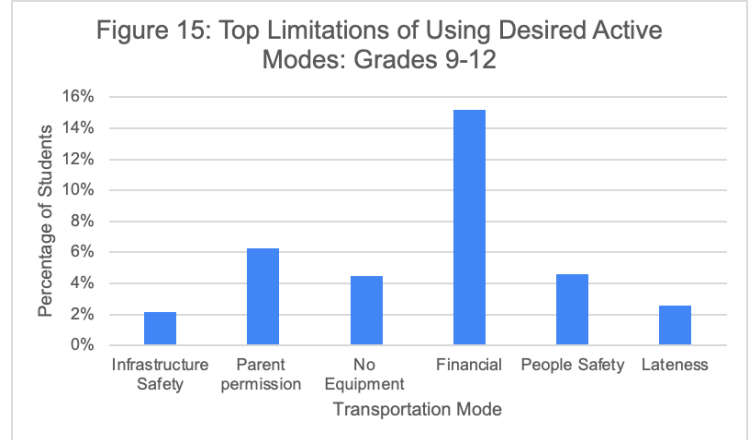
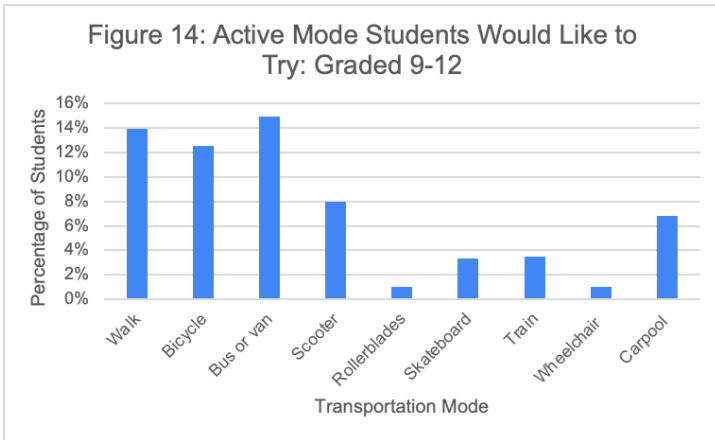
Most respondents were not interested in trying a new mode. However, of those who wanted to try a new mode, 14 percent want to walk, 13 percent want to ride a bicycle, and 15 percent want to ride the bus (see Figure 14). Finances was the top limitation of using desired active modes, followed by safety, parent permission, and lack of equipment (see Figure 15).



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## Closing Thoughts: Survey

The survey data indicates that walking and driving are the two most common modes students use to get to school. Many students, however, are interested in trying different active modes, such as rolling, cycling, and riding the bus. Participants went into more detail about modes they would like to try and the limitations they face in both the survey write-in section and the Transportation Conversations.

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## Section 2: Transportation Conversations

### Transportation Conversation Methodology

Green Streets staff conducted video transportation conversations with 5 faculty and staff, 12 students, and 2 parents/guardians for a total of 19 participants. The conversations were 15-20 minutes each and took place on Zoom, and were recorded with the respondent's permission if they were 18 years old or older, or with the permission of a parent or guardian if they were younger than 18. Green Streets' staff ensured that participants were representative of the Everett Schools community by inviting participants of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities to participate, reaching out to them in multiple languages and through various channels. The webpage consists of 30 second to 1 minute snippets of the longer videos. All the below quotes are directly from the video conversations; they are only edited for length, clarity, and grammar. Appendix E contains a larger sample of conversation quotes.

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## Key Conversation Findings

Below is a summary of key findings from the video conversations:

- Participants mentioned that they think cycling and rolling are fun and would like to do it more.
- A key limitation of using active modes, such as cycling, is concerns about cars and infrastructure, finances, lack of available equipment, and parent permission.
- Santilli Circle, Broadway, Ferry Street, and Sullivan Square are problematic areas according to participants.
- Participants shared infrastructure concerns related to potholes, walkability, sidewalk design, and bike lanes.
- Participants cited public transportation as essential for their commutes; frequency of bus arrival times and limited bus routes were concerns mentioned.
- Safety concerns, young age, and distance are potential factors in leading parents to drive their students to school.

## Findings: Parents of Grades K-5 Students and and Students in Grades K-8

Green Streets spoke with 7 students in grades K through 8 and 2 parents and guardians. Below are some quotes highlighting their insights.

Multiple participants discussed traffic and road issues:

- “Sometimes the roads are rocky because the construction workers are starting to work.”
- “Traffic [stops me from biking more], because sometimes the sidewalks are too skinny.”

A few participants discussed the benefits of MBTA buses and improvements they’d like to see:

- “Something that I enjoy about them [MBTA buses] is that they’re very good with their way of getting to places like it’s never really a long time to get to places unless there’s like traffic.”
- “They could have something for the kids to know where to go, like each stop [on MBTA buses].”

One student mentioned spreading awareness about active modes:

- “The situation can be more fun if people are more experienced with [different modes]. For example, they could try to use a bike or scooter or like rollerblades. They can try to do tricks along the way.”





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## Findings: Grades 9-12

Green Streets spoke with 5 high school students. Below are quotes verbatim from participants related to infrastructure and financial challenges related to trying new modes, particularly cycling:

- “Maybe like having more bike lanes to different areas. And yeah, I also, there's the financial obstacle to buying a bike.”
- “I think I would like to see sidewalks salted in the winter, because that's actually a big obstacle. A lot of times, people trip on their way to school, and it really disrupts their learning for the entire day.”
- “Maybe knowing the lanes of when of where I can bike in, because I feel like I overthink about where I should go with the bike.”
- “I would like to try biking. My concern with biking is just that, like, I don't know how to, like, I know how to bike but like, I don't know, like the specific paths and like, with cars it's pretty dangerous.”
- “Not every road is being taken care of properly. And it could be due to aging cement or just like it's not weatherproof enough. And that could make the roads difficult. For bikes and cars. So I guess investing in our roads and infrastructure.”

Students also mentioned the challenges they face with both the routes and frequency of the T and obtaining MBTA passes:

- “Help with paying for the MBTA. Because a lot of us also work. So it'd be helpful to get some support.”
- “I feel like the school should give us money for the T because, like, I spent, like, more than \$60 this year on transport.”
- “Maybe more buses, but not in the same direction. We work, we do some stuff after school, and we need to get to certain places on time and that can be helpful. And I think that's one of the reasons as well that people don't really use public transportation, because they have to wait a long time.”

Two participants discussed the complications of transportation near the school, specifically in regards to Broadway & Ferry Street:

- “I feel like they should add more [street lights] around the school because there's usually a lot of traffic due to the student's parents driving them to school and back home. So I feel like it would be really good for the ones that walk to feel more safe. Especially on Broadway & Ferry Street. I feel like I sometimes don't feel that safe because of how cars just cross so I feel like the streetlights would make a difference.”
- “I feel like they should add more of those [crosswalks] around the school because there's usually a lot of traffic due to the student's parents driving them home.”



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- “Here in Everett, it’s a little bit complicated because we only have two or three [buses] that go from Broadway & Ferry Street, just the 104 and 109 to Sullivan and Malden and Linden Square. So we really don’t have that much transportation.”

One participant explained their experience with navigating getting to school from the other side of town:

- “So for our residents that live kind of far. I would suggest that it [a school bus] is like a viable means of transportation because a lot of kids cannot get to school that way [the MBTA bus].”

## Findings: Faculty and Staff

Green Streets spoke with five faculty and staff participants. One participant mentioned bus frequency:

- “There is one bus, the 109, that stops by Everett High School at 2:35. I highly recommend that we make the change to 2:40 so that some students can ride the 109.”

Additionally, participants pointed out particularly problematic areas, such as Santilli Circle. They mentioned infrastructure challenges and changes they would like to see in these areas:

- “I feel like Broadway should be big enough that they can have protected bike lanes, but I don't think it's there in all the places that they need to be.”
- In reference to Santilli Circle: “I would like it if you could do something like an overpass for bicycles or someplace that's protected.”
- “[Santilli Circle] can be a big pain especially because there's this bus lane, which is really great for public buses so they can cut through without being stuck in the traffic but what happens a lot of the time is normal cars use the bus lane.”

Possible employee benefits are key to faculty and staff considering using active modes to get to school:

- “So if someone could reimburse me for the bus pass. . .it would just take a little bit of the pressure off and I would use it more.”
- “I don't know if they offer any [benefits]. I don't think so. But what about Blue Bikes? What about a pass?”
- “Health insurance. . .like you can sometimes get reimbursed for gym memberships. Like what if you were reimbursed to buy a bike?”

One participant highlighted the benefits of a bicycle safety campaign in Everett because they feel there is a lack of awareness about cyclists among non-cyclists:



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- “An [cycling] awareness safety campaign with just drivers paying attention to that, especially if there's kids on the street.”

## Closing Thoughts: Transportation Conversations

Snippets of these video conversations can be found [here](#). More sample quotes are in Appendix E.

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## Section 3: Green Streets Recommendations and Resources Based on Survey and Conversation Findings

- Active transportation (including bike commuting) education and safety training for staff, for students at a variety of ages, and for parents/guardians
- Improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure
- Improved road maintenance
- Subsidized or free T passes and Blue Bike passes for all students and staff
- Priority parking for carpoolers
- Utilization of [Encore Boston Harbor's offer of shuttle buses and water taxis](#) to help students get to key locations after school (eg. Sullivan Square), supplementing the MBTA schedule.
- Benefits offered by [Lower Mystic TMA](#) for faculty and staff

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## Section 4: Closing Thoughts from Green Streets Staff

Green Streets Staff would like to thank the Everett Planning Department and the Everett Public Schools staff for their support on this project. This work would not have been possible without their guidance and support.

Green Streets would also like to thank the Everett Public Schools Community for supporting this project, and most importantly, for sharing their transportation-related experiences and challenges with us. They are incredibly valuable.

Green Streets Initiative will continue to support this project in the coming weeks and months through marketing efforts and check-ins with the Everett team.

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## **Appendix A**

- [Appendix A](#) includes K-5, 6-9, 9-12, and K-12 graphs and tables.

## **Appendix B**

- [Appendix B](#) includes all other graphs and tables excluding those in Appendices A and C.

## **Appendix C**

- [Appendix C](#) includes all graphs and tables pertaining to the After-School Destination survey question. This is kept separate from the rest of the data.

## **Appendix D**

- [Appendix D](#) contains a sample of quotes taken directly from the survey. They are only edited for length, clarity, and grammar.

## **Appendix E**

- [Appendix E](#) contains a sample of quotes taken directly from Transportation Conversations. They are only edited for length, clarity, and grammar.