



Walkabout Findings Summary

On May 29, 2013, seven participants met at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School to take a closer look at the walking and biking network around the school. The school is location on the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) campus in Fishersville, Virginia. Participants included a representation from Augusta County Planning Department, Augusta County Engineering, August Public Schools, as well as Safety and Risk Management, The Foundation¹ and Police of the WWRC. The team met for just over one hour which included a 60 minute walk around the school and surrounding area followed by a debriefing session to discuss the findings. The team walked along Woodrow Wilson Avenue, between US 250 and Hornet Road. The team also drove along unpaved service roads to investigate possible trail and other off-road pedestrian improvements throughout the campus. The list below summarizes the findings.

Walkabout date: May 29, 2013

Location: Woodrow Wilson Elementary School
Fishersville, Virginia

Champion: Rebecca Lamb

LTAC: Katie Mencarini,
Central & Hampton Roads

Possible Walking Routes:

Road Name	Lanes in each direction	Speed limit	Road Width
Woodrow Wilson Ave; within the school zone and north of Hornet Road	1	25mph	30ft
Woodrow Wilson Ave; outside the school zone and south of Hornet Road	1	25mph	30ft
US 250	2, with center turn lane	45mph	60ft
Off Road trails both east and west of the campus	N/A	N/A	N/A

Existing Conditions

During the walkabout the team traveled along Woodrow Wilson Avenue, Hornet Road, Andrew Russell Lane, the Star Trail network and several unpaved service roads on the campus. The team observed sidewalks along a portion of Woodrow Wilson Avenue and elsewhere on the north portion of campus.

¹ The Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center Foundation is a non-profit with a mission to raise funds and secure resources to support vocational rehabilitation at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center, leading to employment and independence for Virginians with disabilities.



Sidewalks connect most of the schools² located north of Hornet Road. However, sidewalks are not present on Woodrow Wilson Avenue leading to or in front of the elementary school and the south portion of the campus.

The school is surrounded by residential and commercial properties that front US250. While there is no off-road connection between campus and students living in the apartments west of the campus or the manufactured homes east of the campus, walkabout participants observed opportunities for connecting the school and the adjacent neighborhoods by improving the existing service roads.

Development is underway for residential neighborhoods directly across the campus (across US250). Students who will live in these homes will be districted to attend Woodrow Wilson Elementary school and the other schools on the campus.

Issues/Barriers to Walking and Biking to School

NOTE: Where issues and barriers are location-specific, location id's (Letter), is provided. These correspond with the enclosed map.

No sidewalks on Woodrow Wilson Avenue between US250 and Woodrow Wilson Elementary School (A) Woodrow Wilson Avenue fronts the school and every student walking or bicycling to school would need to travel along or across it to access the school building. Currently all students are dropped off at the school building by either a school bus or family vehicle. This is also the main route in and out of the campus and provides direct access to US250. The walkabout participants noted that during peak morning and evening travel hours, this road experiences relatively high traffic volumes. There are no sidewalks or paved shoulder on either side of the road. Drainage swales are present on both sides of the street. To walk along this route, students would need to walk on private property between the property side and the drainage swales.



Woodrow Wilson Avenue during afternoon dismissal (looking north)

² In addition to Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, the campus is occupied by three other public schools which include Wilson Middle School, Wilson Memorial High School and Valley Vocational School.



US250 creates a barrier for walking and biking to school (B)

Nearly all students would have to walk along or across US 250 to access the campus. The arterial has two lanes in each direction in addition to a center turn lane. There are no sidewalks on either side of the street; a 3ft striped shoulder on either side is the only likely pedestrian facility. The posted speed limit is 45mph, and motorists appear to be traveling at that speed or higher throughout the day. US250 is the main road in and out of Fishersville and Staunton, and carries a high volume of traffic. Finding a break in traffic to cross the road comfortably is challenging, especially at the

intersection of US250 and the campus. No pedestrian crossing facilities are present at this intersection.

While students living on the campus side of US 250 live within walking distance, parents and the school will not encourage students to walk or bike along US 250 to access the campus. The team noted that existing unpaved service roads could be improved to provide connections to the adjacent neighborhoods and would further improve internal connections throughout the campus.

Posted speed limits on Woodrow Wilson Ave can be confusing for drivers (C)

When drivers turn onto Woodrow Wilson Avenue the speed limit is 40mph, which seems relatively high for a small campus. Within the school zone (approximately 1,000 ft from the campus entrance), the speed limit is 25mph. Once cars reach VO Tech Road, the speed limit on the rest of the roads on campus is 25mph. The changing speed limit can be confusing for drivers, and it appears to encourage drivers to accelerate when leaving the campus. High



US250 intersection with Woodrow Wilson Avenue (looking west)



Pavement markings and signage on Woodrow Wilson Avenue (looking south)



traffic volumes and speed are a concern for parents and school administrators when considering encouraging walking and biking to school.

Drive behavior does not encourage walking or biking to school

During the walkabout it appeared that drivers were not aware that pedestrians would be in the area attempting to walk along or across Woodrow Wilson Avenue. Motorists were observed driving at relatively high speeds and did not appear to slow down as the participants walked along and across Woodrow Wilson Avenue. This is likely because there are no sidewalks present on either side of the road, and few students have ever been observed walking home from school.

Bike Racks are not present on campus

If students chose to bike to school, there is not a secure, designated space to park their bikes. At this time biking is not an encouraged mode of travel for students.

Opportunities to Improve Walking and Biking Conditions

Where opportunities are location-specific, location id's (Letter), is provided. These correspond with the enclosed map.

The Star Trail could serve an off-road connection (D)

The Star Trail loop covers a significant portion of the campus. The trail loop is located between the apartment buildings west of the campus and the elementary school. Although the elementary school is visible from the trail, there are no pedestrian crossing treatments on Woodrow Wilson Avenue where the trail lines up with the school.



Star Trail Loop

New Development Proposed South of US250 (E)

Residential development has been approved directly adjacent to the campus, south of US250. When built, students living in this development will be districted to attend Woodrow Wilson Elementary School and the other schools on campus. An asphalt sidepath has been proposed on one side of the street of the development. If the sidepath was built and connected to other pedestrian facilities between the development and the school, walking and biking would likely be encouraged.



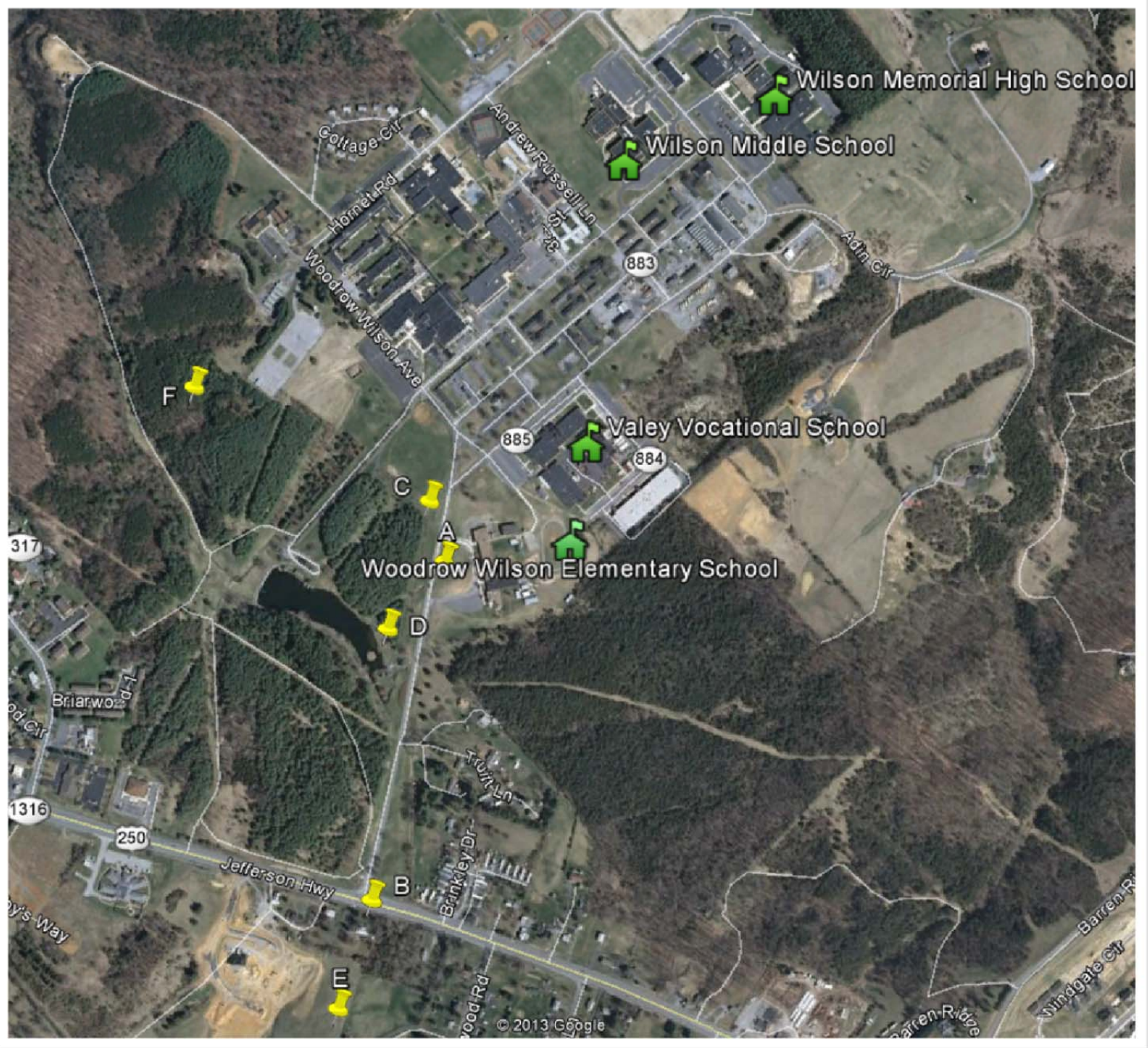
Service Roads could be improved to create off-road connections to the campus (F)

Several unpaved service roads are used and maintained on the campus. The team observed that many of these roads are close to the apartment buildings west of the campus and the Star Trail. If improved, they could provide an accessible, alternate walking route to US250. Additionally the team noted that emergency vehicle access to and from the campus is limited to Woodrow Wilson Avenue, which is not ideal. If the service roads could support emergency vehicles, the pathways could provide an additional benefit to improving walking and biking to schools on campus.



View of service road from Star Trail (looking west)

A fence enclosing the perimeter of the campus has been proposed. If a fence is installed, strategically placed gates will be needed for students to access the future improved trails.



Map created with Google Earth