

**Quitman Elementary School
Brooks County Middle School
Brooks County, GA**

**Safe Routes to School Walk Audit
Monday, March 7, 2016
2:30pm – 4:00pm**

The following report includes a list of advantages, disadvantages, and recommendations based on a community assessment of traffic patterns, pedestrian concerns and potential barriers that inhibit the area from being a walkable community. It is not intended to be a list of complete recommendations and is in no way exhaustive. No set of recommendations can absolutely prevent crashes, injuries or even death from occurring, but we believe that the list of recommendations will help create a safer place for children while traveling to and from school. Please be sure to consult with GA Department of Transportation, school transportation officials, Brooks County, Southern Georgia Regional Commission, and/or staff regarding the transportation issues and recommendations outlined below.

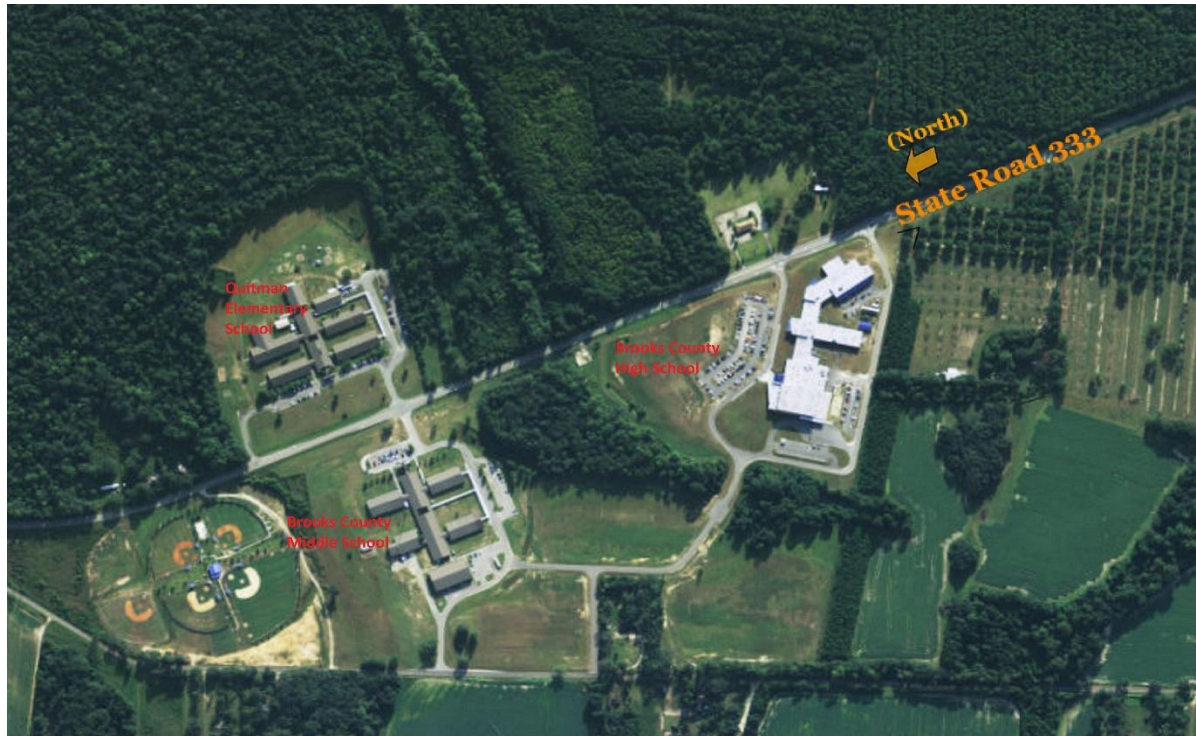
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Walk Audit Team:

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Areas of Concern:

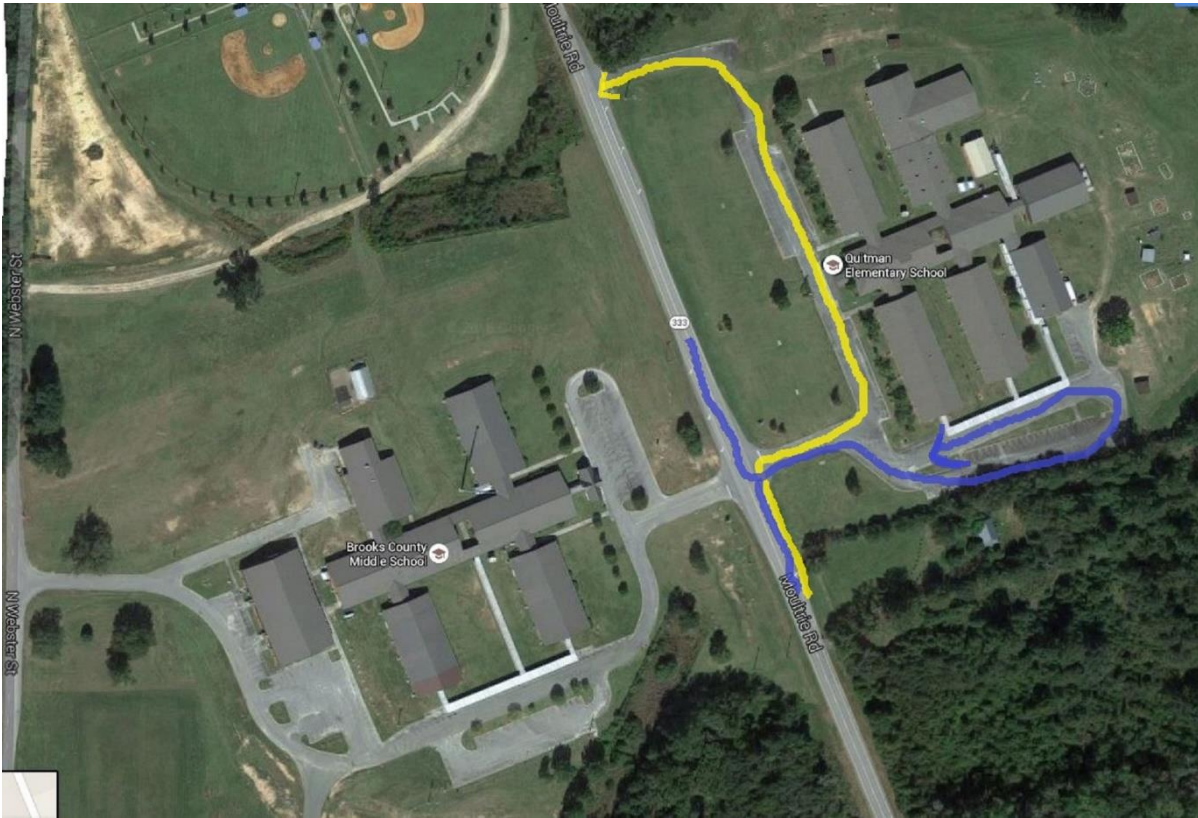
The diagram below shows Brooks County Middle, Elementary, and High schools. All three schools are located off of Moultrie Hwy/State Road 333 so there is a lack of students who walk and/or bike to school. There is concern about the lack of appropriate turning lanes and turning lane space on State Road 333. There is also concern with the amount of traffic that backs up during arrival/ dismissal and speed of vehicles on State Road 333. The observations listed below from the walk audit include suggestions for signage and possible changes in entering/exiting procedures that should be helpful in reducing traffic speed and traffic congestion on State Road 333 during peak times of possible child pedestrians and bike riders.



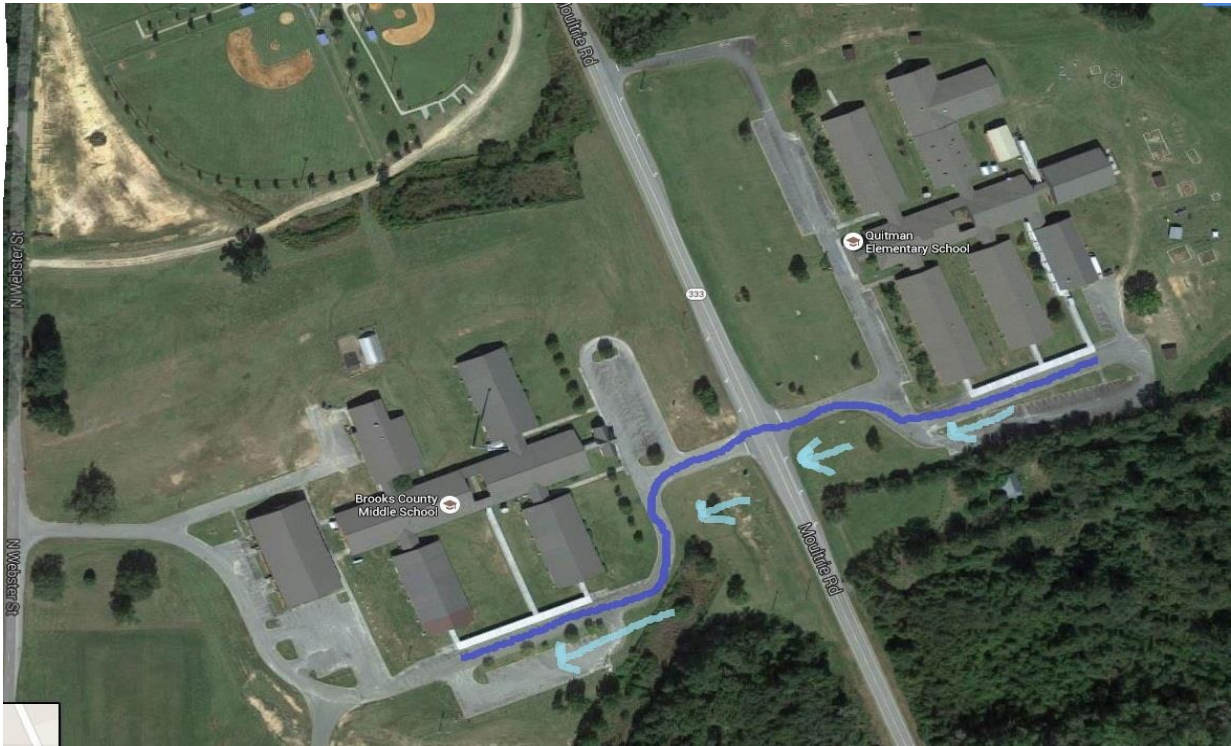
(Aerial View of Brooks County Elementary, Middle, and High Schools)

Entering/ Exiting Procedures and Behaviors:

Brooks County Elementary school has approximately 735 students, about 10% of those students are car riders and the remaining 90% are bus riders. Car riders use the parking lot loop for entering and exiting vehicles. Car riders are escorted outside and wait to be picked up from under the covered area in the front of the school. Bus riders exit side doors to get to the buses, which are parked on the side of the school. Brooks County Middle school has approximately 525 students, about 5% of those students are car riders and the remaining 95% are bus riders. Car riders use the parking lot loop for entering and exiting vehicles. Car riders are escorted outside and wait to be picked up from under the covered area in the front of the school. Bus riders exit the side doors to the buses, which are parked on the side of the school.



The yellow line represents the path of cars and the indigo line represents the bus path during drop-off and pick-up procedures. Buses were observed coming for the north and south on SR 333.



Once the buses have picked up bus riders from the elementary school, they exit through the elementary school entry to pick up bus riders from the middle school.

Observations from the Walk Audit Team:

Each member of the Walk Audit Team was given a Walk Audit Observation Tool that included six areas to assess during the Audit. The following suggestions are compiled from their observation forms.

1. Physical Environment

Average Rating: EXCELLENT

Look at the physical environment and how it affects the behavior of children and adults, such as overgrown landscape, abandoned areas, dark corners, etc.

Comments: *Many team members noted that the area is open and neatly landscaped. However, many team members also agreed that the area is not walk-friendly due to the schools being located on SR 333 and the lack of walking infrastructure such as sidewalks.*



Elementary and Middle school entrances.



Neatly landscaped areas in front of both schools.

2. Behaviors

Average Rating: GOOD

Pay attention to the behaviors of Motorists, Pedestrians, Bicyclists and Safety Personnel (including Law Enforcement, crossing guards, etc.)

Comments: *While most motorists followed the speed limit, there were a few that seemed to be traveling speeds higher than the posted limit when flashing. The team agreed that the resource officer seemed very comfortable managing the traffic.*



Crossing guard directing traffic on Moultrie Hwy/ SR 333 between the elementary and middle schools.

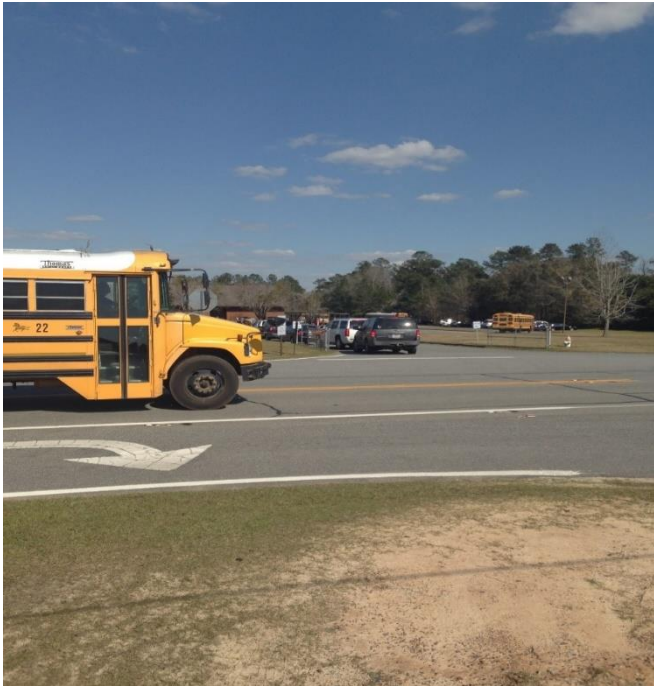
3. Barriers

Average Rating: FAIR

Look at barriers such as limited sight for drivers and pedestrians, blind spots, hidden entrances, etc.

Comments: *While most team members said that there were very few barriers, the group agreed that the buses and cars using the same entrance to pick up students is a barrier and can be confusing. The team also noted the resource officer must stop traffic to let buses making left hand turns to enter the campus. The resource officer also stops traffic to allow the buses to exit*

the entrance in order to get to the middle school across the street. The team also agreed that there was concern for the safety of the resource officer.



Bus waiting to make a left hand turn into the elementary school.



Buses and cars using same entrance to pick up students.



Crossing guard stopping cars to let the bus make a left hand turn into the elementary school.



Crossing guard stopping north and south bound traffic to allow buses to cross over to middle school.

4. Markings and Infrastructures

Average Rating: POOR

Look at sidewalks, street crossings, speed signs that need improvement or to be added.

Comments: *The team noted that there is a lack of school safety signs when approaching the schools and the signs that are posted could be closer to the schools. The team agreed that there is a need for more “School Zone” and “Reduced Speed” signs on SR 333 to warn drivers that schools are close by and to inform visitors that they are approaching the schools. The team also agreed on the need to place these signs closer to the each of the three schools located on SR 333. There are no sidewalks or crosswalks for the schools on SR 333.*



Crossing sign when driving north towards Brooks County High, Middle, and Elementary schools.



Reduced speed sign when driving south towards Brooks County Elementary, Middle, and High schools. This sign is approximately 1/2 mile before reaching the schools and is the only sign in this direction for all three schools.



Reduced speed ahead sign when driving north towards Brooks County High, Middle, and Elementary schools. This is the only sign for all three schools.

5. Safety

Average Rating: FAIR

How safe does the walking area look? Does it look like a safe place for students and other pedestrians to walk or bike to school?

Comments: *The majority of the team considered the area to be safe overall; however, not walkable/ bike able due to the lack of pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks and crosswalks.*



There is not a crosswalk between the elementary and middle school.



There are no sidewalks on SR 333.

6. Goals

Based on your observations, what would you like to see happen in this community?

Comments: *The team agreed that they would like to continue working together to come up with the best possible solutions to keep the children safe. Continue working with GDOT and Brooks County to address signage improvements and crosswalks. Encourage Brooks County schools to become Safe Routes to School partners. Work with Safe Routes to School Coordinator to apply for grant funding that may be able to help alleviate costs of needed changes. Work with the SRTS*

Resource Center and the SGRC staff to implement education programs and SRTS initiatives that will teach and encourage students in safe walking and biking habits as well as bus safety.

Opportunities for Improvement:

Some recommendations for improvement:

1. Consider becoming a Safe Routes to School Partner.
2. Continue working with SGRC staff for information and services about other school safety and improvement programs.
3. Consider implementing a new pick-up process for car riders that will keep traffic flowing smoothly and efficiently. Example: Have parents place student identification tags in cars to speed up student pickup process.
4. Work with GDOT to apply for a permit to create a second entrance to the school from SR 333, this will allow for buses and cars to have separate entrances/exits during drop off and pickup.
5. Work with GDOT to have turning lanes extended or gain permission from GDOT to create another loop on campus in order to keep traffic from backing up on the shoulder of SR 333.
6. Raise awareness about child pedestrian and bike safety through Safe Routes to School activities and events through becoming a Safe Routes to School Partner. Contact SRTS Coordinator Chelsea Carter (chelsea@saferoutesga.org).