North Fayette Valley Community School District

Safe Routes to School Plan

2016

upper explorerland regional planning commission

Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission

North Fayette Valley Community School District

Safe Routes to School Plan

2016

Prepared for:
North Fayette Valley Community School District

Prepared by:

Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission
325 Washington Street, Suite A
Decorah, IA 52101
Phone: (563)-382-6171
Fax: (563)-382-6311
www.uerpc.org

Acknowledgements

Iowa Department of Transportation
North Fayette Valley Community School District Administration and Staff
North Fayette Valley Safe Routes to School Community Coalition
Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative

School Information

North Fayette Valley Community School District

The North Fayette Valley Community School District is located in Fayette County with school buildings in rural Elgin, Fayette and West Union. The school is dedicated to providing instructional service to over 1200 students from early childhood through twelfth grade.

Mission Statement

Work cooperatively to create a safe learning environment that fosters in all students a sense of self-discipline, positive self-esteem, accountability, responsibility, and respect. The result will encourage life-long learning skills, so that students may become positive contributors in a global society.

Vision Statement

Each student will be treated as a unique individual and be expected to be an active participant in the learning process.

The district will provide the finest staff and facilities to ensure a safe learning environment for all students to meet their emotional, mental, physical and social developmental needs. This will prepare our students to become positive contributors in a global society.

All stakeholders will work together to implement the essential concepts and skills as mandated by the Iowa Core to support an aligned system of content, instruction, assessment and professional development.

The district will partner with parents and community to fulfill the objectives, purposes and goals of this school district.

Contact Information

North Fayette Valley Community School District
600 North Pine
West Union, IA 52175
Phone: 1-563-422-3851 Ext. 2
Fax: 1-563-422-3854
www.nfvschools.com

School Administration

Duane Willhite, Superintendent
Todd Wolverton, High School Principal
Micah Gearhart, Valley PK-8 Principal
Travis Elliott, West Union & Fayette Elementary Principal

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary **1**
Section I: Introduction **3**
What is Safe Routes to School? 3
Why Safe Routes to School (SRTS)? 3
Benefits of Safe Routes to School Program 4
Planning Process 4
Section II: Education **6**
Existing Conditions 6
Recommended Projects 6
Section III: Evaluation **8**
Existing Conditions 8
Parent and Student Surveys 8
Student Tally Forms 14
Walkability Assessment 18
Section IV: Engineering **20**
Existing Conditions 20
Infrastructure Recommendations 22
Aerial Maps 24
Section V: Enforcement **29**
Existing Conditions 29
Recommended Projects 29
Section VI: Encouragement **31**
Existing Conditions 32
Recommendations 32
Section VII: Implementation Strategy **34**
Appendix **37**

Executive Summary

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is promoted throughout the world to help children bike and walk to school safely. There are numerous benefits for students, schools and communities that participate in the SRTS Program. These benefits include reduced traffic in the vicinity of schools, improved pedestrian/bicycle access and safety, increased physical activity among students, as well as contributions to healthy lifestyles. By incorporating each of the five "E's" – Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering and Evaluation – SRTS addresses a wide variety of topics relevant to travel to and from school within a municipality or school district.

The SRTS movement started in Denmark in the 1970s and has since spread worldwide, reaching the United States in 1997. Since then, federal funds have been distributed to each state based on school enrollment. These funds have been used by communities and school districts to implement recommendations through infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Projects that are located within two miles of an elementary or middle school (Pre K–8) are eligible for infrastructure grant funding. Other projects which support SRTS in other ways besides infrastructure projects are eligible for non-infrastructure grant funding. Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission (UERPC) received a non-infrastructure planning grant through the Iowa Department of Transportation to develop SRTS plans for the elementary and middle schools within UERPC's five county region (Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek).

Development of this SRTS Plan involved working with a wide variety of individuals representing the city, school district, law enforcement, school administration, teachers, parents, children and elected officials. This study aimed to propose recommendations that will improve safety and help educate students regarding bicycle and pedestrian laws.

The North Fayette Valley Community School District was analyzed in this SRTS study. The study's goal was to pinpoint safe and adequate routes leading to school buildings so that more students are able to walk or bike to school safely. When possible, students and parents from the district were surveyed to identify safety issues around the school facilities. Recommendations throughout the community were proposed to improve safety.

The North Fayette Valley Community School SRTS Plan is the first step in creating safer, more accessible routes throughout the community. The next steps for the school and community are to:

1. Continue building support for and involvement in SRTS programs.
2. Take action by making the recommended changes within the community.

Coordination assistance and funding opportunities for local SRTS projects may be available; contact Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission at 563-382-6171 to learn more.

Section I: Introduction

What is Safe Routes to School?

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an international movement to enable and encourage students to safely walk and bike to school and in daily life. The movement refers to a variety of multi-disciplinary programs aimed at increasing the number of students walking and bicycling to and from school. Such programs and projects improve student health, traffic safety and air quality around schools through education, encouragement, law enforcement and engineering measures. SRTS programs typically involve partnerships among municipalities, school districts, community members, parent volunteers and law enforcement agencies. Comprehensive SRTS programs are developed using five complementary strategies commonly referred to as the "Five E's":

1. **Engineering:** Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic and establish safer, more accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways.
2. **Education:** Teaching children and parents about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.
3. **Enforcement:** Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure traffic laws are obeyed within the vicinity of schools (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crossings and proper walking and bicycling behaviors) and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs.
4. **Encouragement:** Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.
5. **Evaluation:** Monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data.

Although each element can stand alone, the most successful SRTS programs have integrated elements from all approaches.

Why Safe Routes to School (SRTS)?

Although most students in the United States walked or biked to school prior to the 1980's, the number of students walking or bicycling to school has sharply declined. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 42% of students between five and 18 years of age walked or bicycled to school in 1969 (with 87% living within a mile of school). In 2008, less than 16% of students walked or bicycled any distance to get to school.[1] This decline is due to a number of factors, including urban growth

[1]U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Kids Walk-to-School: Then and Now—Barrier and Solutions. Available: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/then_and_now.htm Accessed: January 17, 2006.

patterns and school siting requirements that encourage school development in outlying areas, increased traffic and parental concerns about safety among others. The situation is self-perpetuating: as more parents drive their children to school, there is increased traffic at the school site, resulting in more parents becoming concerned about traffic and driving their children to school.

A comprehensive SRTS program addresses the reasons for reductions in walking and biking through a multi-pronged approach. Such an approach uses education, encouragement, engineering and enforcement efforts to develop attitudes, behaviors and physical infrastructure that improve the walking and biking environment.

Benefits of Safe Routes to School Program

SRTS programs directly benefit students, parents and teachers by creating a safer travel environment near schools and reducing motor vehicle congestion at school drop-off and pick-up zones. Students who choose to walk or bike to school are rewarded with the health benefits of a more active lifestyle, as well as the responsibility and independence that come from being in charge of the way they travel. Students learn at an early age that walking and biking can be safe, enjoyable and good for the environment. SRTS programs offer additional benefits to neighborhoods by helping slow traffic and by providing infrastructure improvements that facilitate walking and biking for everyone. Identifying and improving routes for students to safely walk and bicycle to school are two of the most cost-effective means of reducing weekday morning traffic congestion and can help reduce auto-related pollution.

In addition to safety and traffic improvements, a SRTS program helps integrate physical activity into the everyday routine of school children. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, the number of children who are overweight in the United States has more than tripled since the 1970s.[2] Health concerns related to inactive lifestyles have become the focus of regional, statewide and national efforts to reduce health risks associated with being overweight. Children who walk or bike to school have an overall higher activity level than those who receive rides to school.

Planning Process

Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission (UERPC) received a planning grant to develop regional Safe Routes to School Plans for school districts [K-8 schools] in the five county region. The focus of the plans is to identify existing conditions regarding adequacies and deficiencies for walking and bicycling to school, receive feedback from parents and school administration, develop solutions with cost estimates and provide

[2]National Center for Health Statistics Image source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. Prevalence of Overweight Among Children and Adolescents: United States, 1999-2002. Available: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/overwght99.htm#Table%201. Accessed: January 31, 2006.

information for education and public involvement. This plan includes background information, survey results, current conditions surrounding the facilities and community and recommendations for the North Fayette Valley Community School District. Recommendations include physical improvements as well as public outreach and education through awareness campaigns targeted at students and parents.

Section II: Education

Education is another key component of a SRTS Plan. A variety of educational components can be included in a plan. This refers not just to the education of students through curriculum changes and extracurricular activities, but the education of all parties involved in making the SRTS plan work. Students walking and biking to school must know how to act responsibly as users of the public right-of-way. Parents can also be educated about school and other polices regarding student safety. Student bicyclists need to know appropriate bicycling skills. Parents, teachers and law enforcement officials all must thoroughly understand this information since they will be responsible for teaching it to students and reinforcing appropriate student behavior. Nationally, the following education programs have been identified as positive contributors to SRTS goals:

- Walk or Bike Across America
- Classroom Activities
- Guest Speakers
- Campus Walks
- Walking Education Programs
- Auto Emissions Exercises
- Walkability/Bikeability Audits

Existing Conditions

Below is a list of the current education activities that are in place in the North Fayette Valley Community School District:

- Walkability Assessment in Fayette and Hawkeye
- Bike Rodeo at Valley Elementary and West Union Elementary
- SRTS Community Coalition

Recommended Projects

After reviewing the current conditions for the education program within the North Fayette Valley Community School District, the following list of educational activities should be considered for implementation:

- Educate students and families on where safe routes and Walking School Bus routes are located
    - Disperse created maps of identified safe routes to school during school registration each year. These maps are based on many conditions including sidewalk conditions, crosswalks, traffic levels, signage and more.

It would be a good idea to share where Walking School Bus routes are located.

- Assemblies and Guest Speakers
  - Bring in guest speakers to discuss bicycle and pedestrian safety, stranger danger or living healthy lifestyles. This could include local law enforcement, community advocates or groups, nurses, doctors or national experts on these topics.
- Increase Parent Education on bicycle, pedestrian and driving safety
  - Incorporate parent educational activities into school registration, parent teach conferences, newsletters, school website or other activities done throughout the year.
- Continue to host an annual Bike Rodeo
  - Hosting an annual Bike Rodeo will reinforce the importance of knowing how to be a smart, safe bike rider.

Section III: Evaluation

Evaluation is necessary to assess progress in implementing the plan, progress towards the completion of each element and progress in the achievement of the overall goals and objectives. This includes the development of a monitoring schedule as well as identifying who is responsible for carrying out the monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring and evaluation process can be the basis for establishing new goals and objectives and revising or updating existing ones. The first step involves collecting baseline data in the forms of travel mode surveys, attitudinal surveys, bicycle counts, walkability/bikeability audits and any other measurement tasks. Each of the selected tasks should be performed regularly to track the progress of the SRTS program as a whole.

Existing Conditions

Below is a list of the existing evaluation activities that are in place in the North Fayette Valley Community School District:

- Parent Surveys
    - A survey about their child(s) walking and/or biking to school
- Student Tally Forms
    - A tally sheet teachers use to document student arrival and departure method
- Walkability Audits
    - Volunteers assess the walking environment around the school and community
- SRTS Community Coalition

Parent and Student Surveys

One of the main objectives of the planning process was to gather input from the parents of students at the North Fayette Valley Community School District. A survey was conducted to obtain a baseline for measuring student travel behaviors and parental attitudes. The results of the survey indicated the need for specific projects located within close proximity of the schools to provide a safer travel environment.

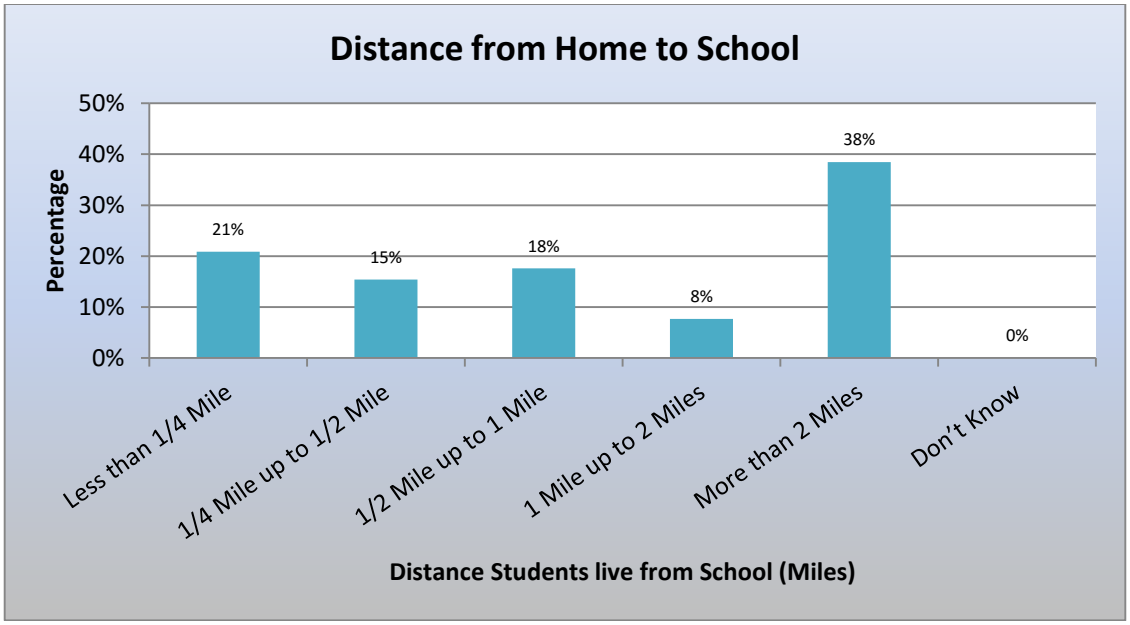
The survey asked by what means children traveled to and from school and also asked questions regarding parental attitudes and children's safety en-route. Hard copies or online versions of the survey were sent home with students or emailed to parents along with a letter for the parents. Copies of the letter and the survey are included as Appendixes II and III.

The initial questions gathered general information about the respondent. This included the number of children in the home in grades K-8, the school(s) that the children attended and the general location of the residence. The remaining questions gathered information about travel mode and distance, general perceptions and attitudes and factors that influence parental decisions on travel mode.

107 households responded to the survey. The following pages contain graphs depicting this information.

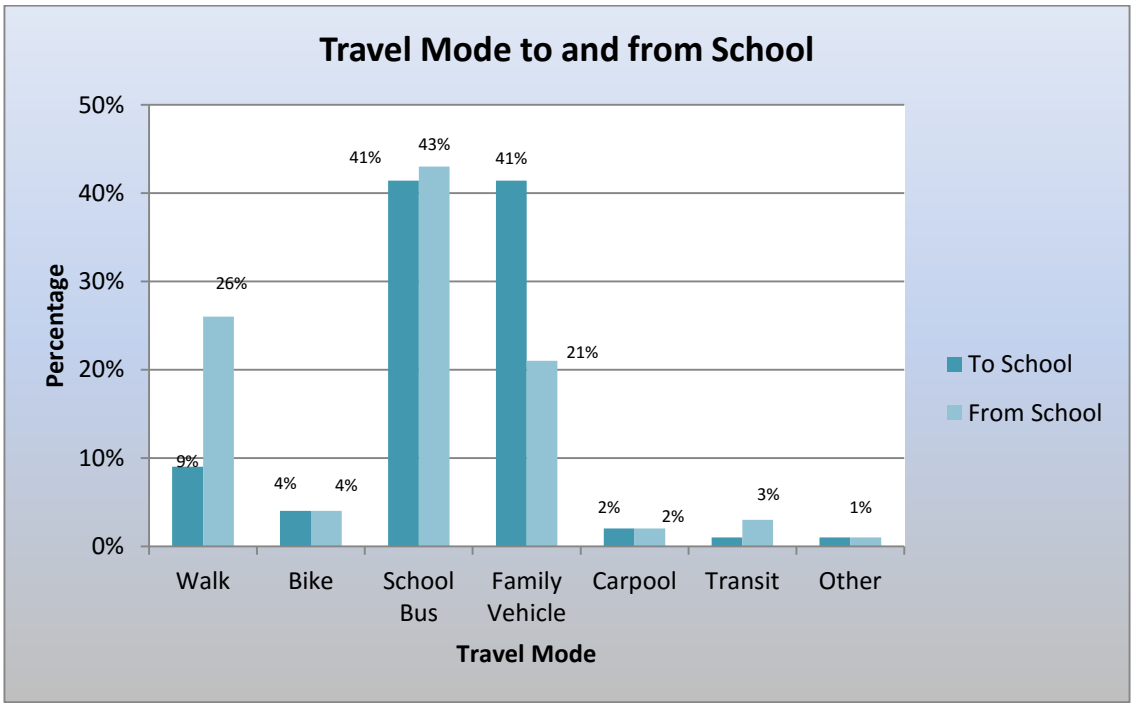
Distance to School

Figure 1: Comparison of Distance from Home to School



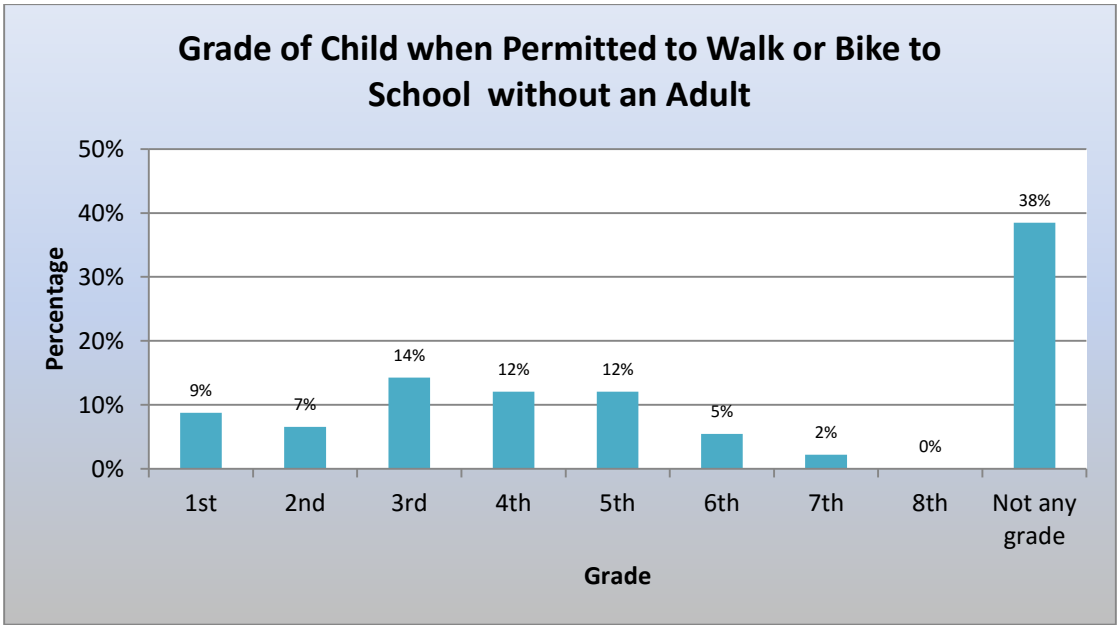
Travel Modes to and from School

Figure 2: Travel Modes used by Students to and from School



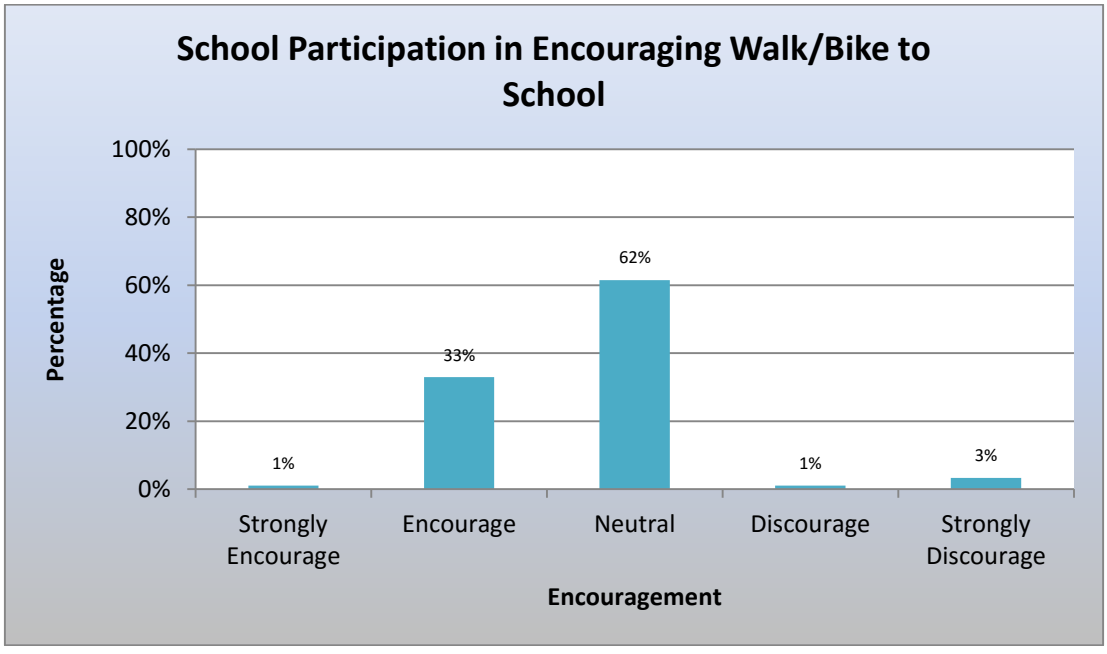
Perceptions and Attitudes

Figure 3: Age at which Parents would allow their Grade K-8 Children to Walk or Bike to School



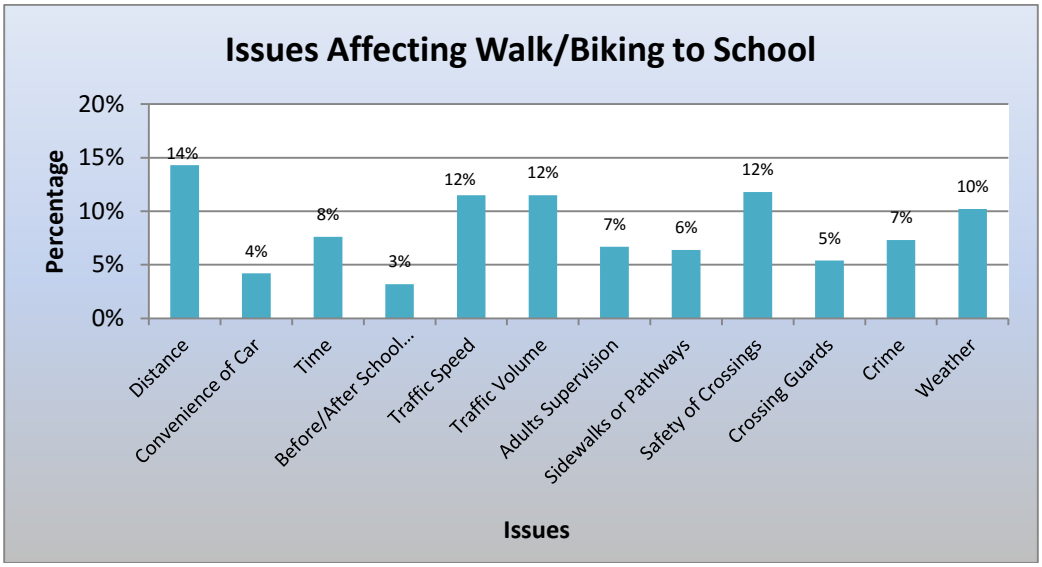
Encouragement to Walk or Bike by Schools

Figure 4: Parent's View of School's Participation in Encouraging or Discouraging Walking or Biking to School



Parental Decisions on Transportation Choice

Figure 5: Issues that Affect Decision to Allow or not Allow Walking or Biking to School



Parent Survey Comments

The following are additional comments from parents who participated in the SRTS survey. These comments illustrate thoughts and concerns that parents have for their children walking or biking to school. The results from the survey were tabulated and names will remain completely anonymous.

1. *The school is actually about 10 miles away, but the bus stop is about ½ a mile away (at the middle school in Fayette, all the kids get on the bus.)*
2. *I bring my kid to school in the morning as I drive to West Union to work but they walk to the babysitter's house after school with a 3rd grader. I wouldn't allow her to walk without an older friend.*
3. *I am aware of the walking school bus, but beyond that, I haven't seen much emphasis on a regular basis of how great it is to walk or bike.*
4. *I answered all the questions based on where her school is. She rides the bus, but the bus stop is nearly .4 miles from home. I'll let her walk or ride her bike to the bus stop when she is in 3rd grade.*
5. *My child only walks or rides bike if he is going to a friend's house.*
6. *Child is only in Kindergarten. If he was older I would let him ride bike, but not alone though.*

7. *There should be more monitoring up by the high school area. Lots of careless driving in this area. This is one of the key reasons that I don't allow my child to walk.*
8. *15 years ago I walked to school in West Union. There's no way ever anymore with all the texting, iPod playing and a correctional facility in town that I'd ever let my kids walk to school in this town.*
9. *Even if I lived in town, I wouldn't let him because the "West Union Halfway House" the residents walk freely!*
10. *Our school encourages biking/walking to school but only for students in a close range from the school. Our route includes a main highway and is across town from the school.*
11. *We do not live in West Union. We live 10 miles from school. It is not feasible for walking or biking to school.*
12. *Since my children live 4 miles out of town, I don't for see them walking to school, but it is a great way to keep them fit and active!*
13. *My children do either walk or ride transit to the daycare after school.*
14. *Most of these are just the bus stop he goes to school 8 miles away. But the bus stop is only 2 blocks away.*
15. *The community bus stop is about a ½ mile away (which he would walk) the bus route is about 10 miles.*
16. *Traffic does not stop at crosswalks without a crossing guard. Traffic drives too fast and I worry about the halfway house for criminals close to my house. Our youngest son was struck by a car leaving the high school! Two of my kids do not like to walk because of it. There are NO crossing guards by the high school.*
17. *We live in the country on a gravel road.*
18. *The new sidewalk all the way to school is a much safer route and although we haven't utilized it or the "walking school bus" on Wednesday mornings (children are 2nd grade and Kindergarten – too young yet we feel) they are great ideas and will strongly consider them in the future years.*

Student Tally Forms

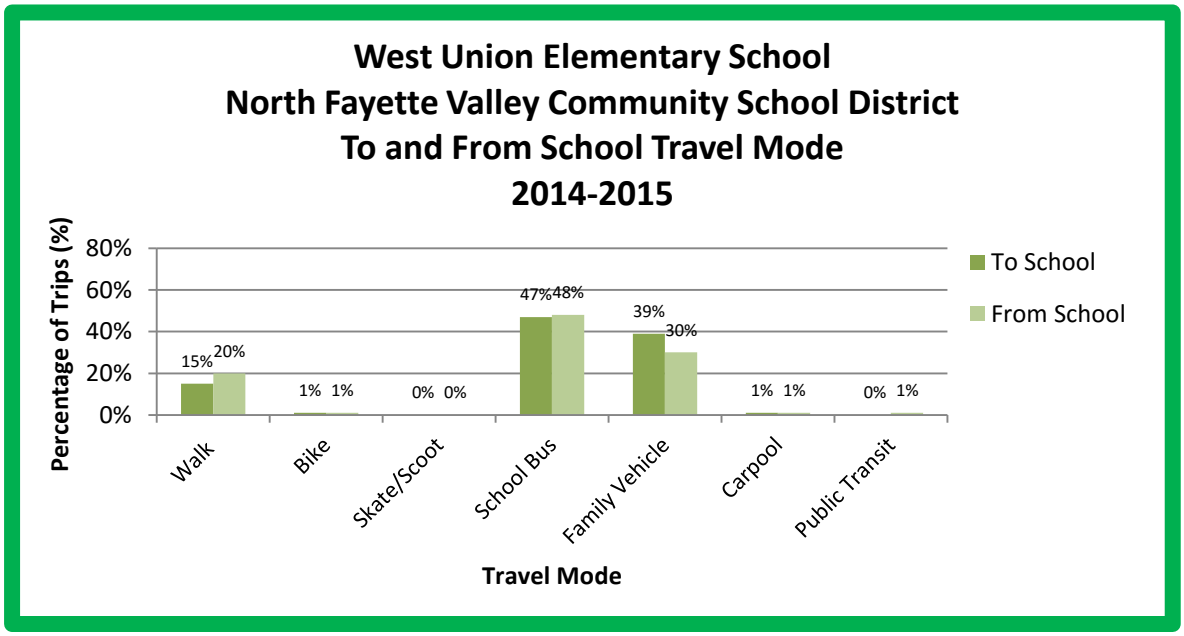
Another key step to figuring out student arrival and departure patterns is by having teachers complete a tally form during the fall or spring. The tally form is to be completed on three consecutive days in the spring and possibly the fall.

The tally form asked by what means children traveled to and from school. Student travel tallies were conducted in grades K-8. A copy of the travel tally form is included in the Appendix.

Results from the tally forms will help the school see a shift over time in the number of students walking or biking to school as a result of SRTS efforts. The tally only offers a one-time, three-day snap shot of school travel, which is meant to represent the entire school year. While this is not ideal, it is currently the best evaluation method available through SRTS.

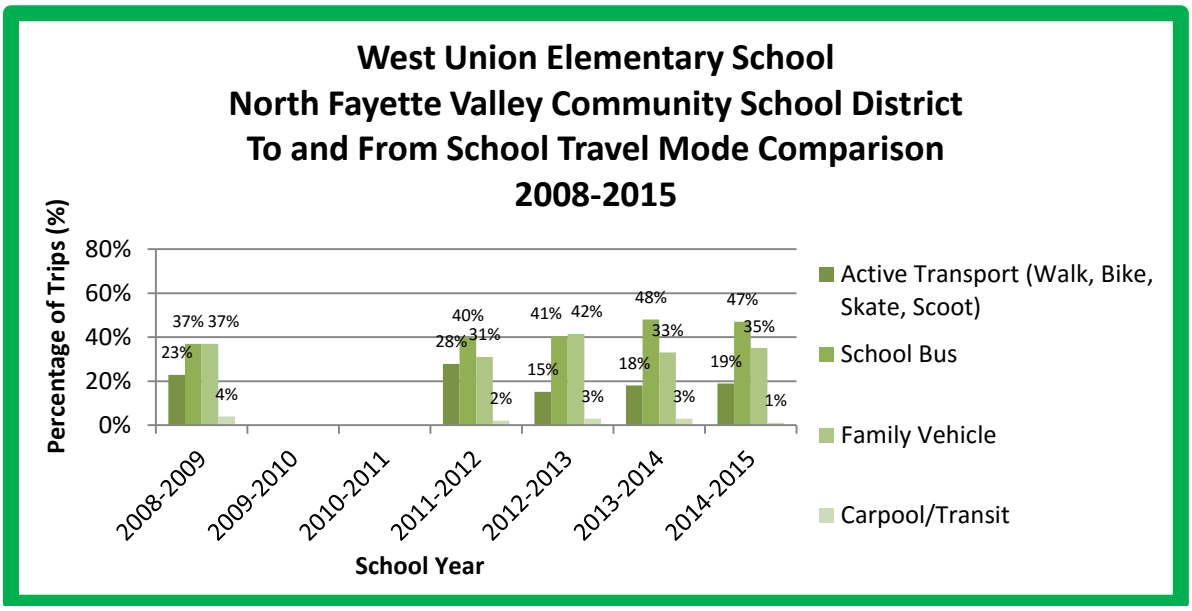
Student's Travel Mode To and From School

Figure 6: Transportation Modes Used by Students To and From the West Union Elementary School



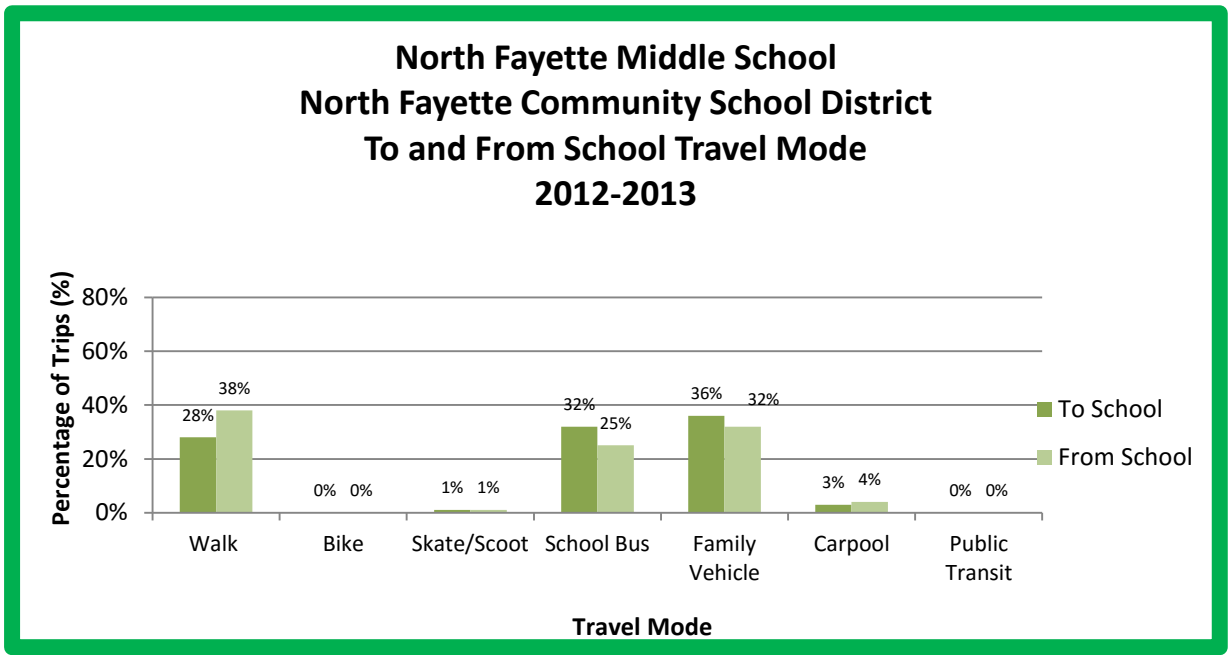
Student's Travel Mode Comparison

Figure 7: Travel Mode Comparison To and From the West Union Elementary School between 2008 and 2015



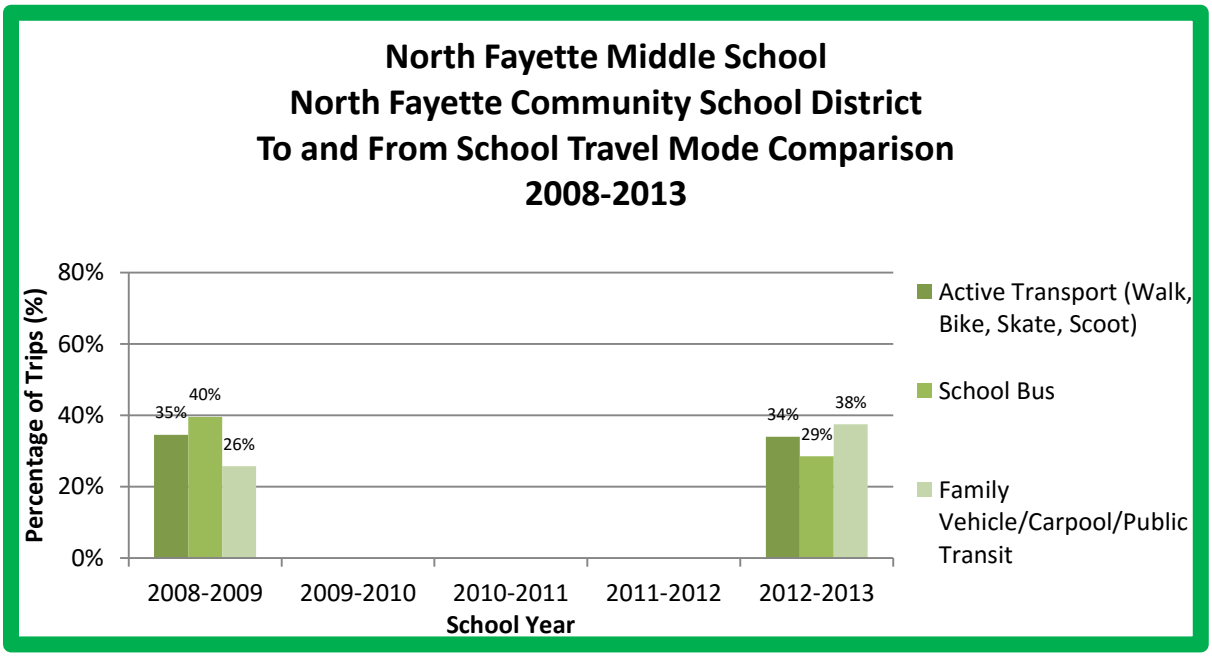
Student's Travel Mode To and From School

Figure 8: Transportation Modes Used by Students To and From the North Fayette Middle School



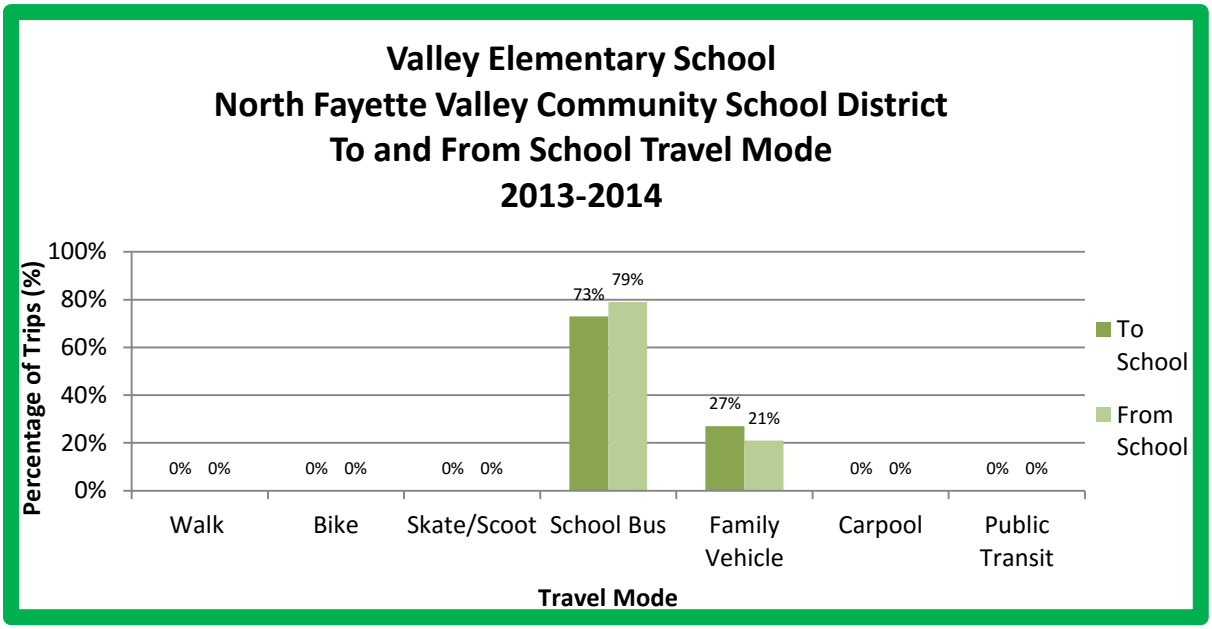
Student's Travel Mode Comparison

Figure 9: Travel Mode Comparison To and From North Fayette Middle School between 2008 and 2014



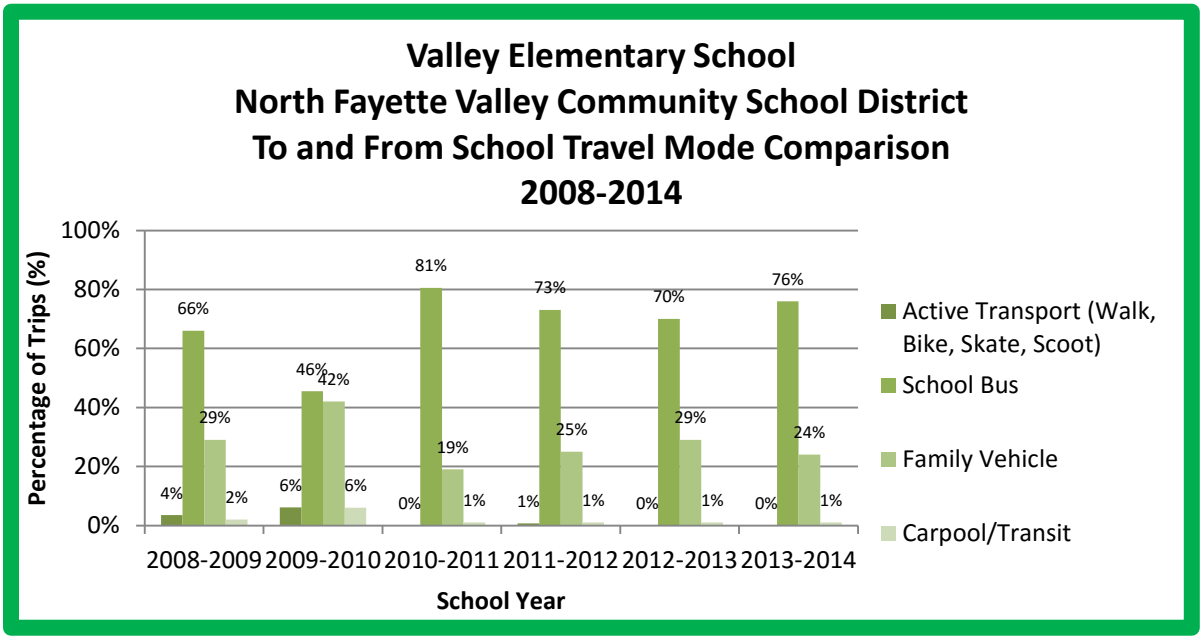
Student's Travel Mode To and From School

Figure 10: Transportation Modes Used by Students To and From the Valley Elementary School



Student's Travel Mode Comparison

Figure 11: Travel Mode Comparison To and From Valley Elementary School between 2008 and 2014



Walkability Assessment

Results from the Fayette and Hawkeye Walkability Assessments, carried out by the North Fayette Community School District Walking School Bus Coalition (now the NFV SRTS Community Coalition) in May of 2013 can be found below.

Name of group using "Walking with a Purpose" tool: North Fayette Community School District Walking School Bus Coalition	
Town or city where assessment was completed: Hawkeye, IA and Fayette, IA	
Describe the area where the assessment was completed. (i.e. 4 block radius around the elementary school, 2 blocks surrounding and including downtown corridor, etc.) Potential Walking School Bus Routes throughout each town	
Date (s) of assessment: May 1, 2013 (Hawkeye) and May 8, 2013 (Fayette)	
Photos taken (please attach) See below	
Participants (Check all that apply and indicate number participating)	**Estimated number of participants**
☐ Students	
☐ Parents	
☐ City/county officials	
X☐ School personnel	1
X☐ Older adults	1
X☐ Other adults	2
Was the media invited and what coverage did you receive? Yes; an article appeared in the paper prior to the events.	
What was the group's level of engagement (1 low to 5 high)? 5	
Who showed the most engagement throughout the assessment? Why? All those participating showed a high level of engagement because everyone is dedicated to increasing the health of students through increased physical activity.	
What did the students think of the assessment? NA	
What was the response of the parents? NA	
What did city officials think of the assessment? NA	
What other organizations were represented? Palmer Community Health, Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission, Department of Natural Resources, AmeriCorps, Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative	
Were there other groups that should have been represented? Describe how you will share the experience with them. Parents and students should have been represented. We will share the experience with them by encouraging them to participate in Walking School Buses during future school years.	
Details about the walk	
Describe assets and concerns noted:	
1. Do you have room to walk? Hawkeye (H): Sidewalks lack ramps at certain spots; lack sidewalks in certain areas; sidewalks only on one side in certain areas; some cracks, but sidewalks in good condition overall. Fayette (F): Great sidewalks; wide enough; sidewalks on both sides in most areas; sidewalks lacking	

in subdivision; curb cuts are present.
2. Is it easy to cross the streets? H: School markings and signage lacking; controlled intersections; stop signs are present at most intersections; narrow streets; no crosswalks F: Controlled intersections; a lot of yield signs vs. stop signs; no crosswalks; Hwy 150 marked with Pedestrian Crossing Signage; no visual obstacles; wide road along Main Street; no 4-way stops; no traffic signals; angle parking
3. Do drivers behave safely? H: Drive too fast on Rose Rd; stopped at stop signs; low speed limit through town helps F: Moved over for walkers; not much traffic during assessment; stopped at stop signs
4. Do walkers/drivers behave safely? H: Some kids are walking in streets, others use sidewalks; didn't see many walkers; not using the crosswalks to cross streets F: Not many pedestrians; walkers did obey stop signs
5. Is the route pleasant to walk/bike? H: Scary dogs; landscape pleasant; good separation between sidewalk and road; clean areas F: good separation between sidewalk and road; nice landscape; some college apartments along way could be scary; lighting could be a concern; giant puddle on corner of Franklin and Vine; dogs on leashes; litter on ground throughout one block
6. Do the sidewalks let you walk to places you want to go? H: Parks and trails, city offices, sports complex, churches, library; yes, but sidewalks not always on both sides F: Some parts yes, other parts no; school, library, sports complex, churches, post office, city offices
Overall rating of the route (1 unacceptable, 10 fantastic): H: 7; F: 9
Next steps
What do you plan to do with the results? (i.e. present the recommendations to the city council, meet with the public works department to discuss next steps, etc.): Share results with School Wellness Team and Walking School Bus Coalition to begin Walking School Bus route planning.
Describe any proposed policy or environmental changes: Develop Walking School Bus routes in communities for future school years.
Feedback on Walking with a Purpose
Overall rating of the assessment process (1 didn't like it, 10 loved it): 8
Suggestions for improving the tool: Although we didn't need it for our assessments, developing a version to use with younger children would be beneficial for Safe Routes to School efforts (ex: Walking School Buses).
Comments
Other comments:

Section IV: Engineering

Engineering elements include physical improvements to the transportation infrastructure in the vicinity of the school or on school property. Improvements are intended to enhance access and safety for travel by walking and bicycling and minimize conflicts with motorized traffic. They are typically designed to address specific problems or needs that have been identified and can range from simple sidewalk replacement/repair to more complex traffic calming devices, such as roundabouts or speed bumps. The following engineering treatments have been identified as positive contributors to SRTS goals:

- Sidewalks
- Bike Lanes
- Bike Racks
- Crosswalks
- Advance Warning Signage
- Traffic Calming Measures
    - Curb Extensions
    - Speed Bumps
    - Raised Intersections

After reviewing the existing infrastructure conditions, and community input a list of recommended infrastructure projects was developed.

Existing Conditions

The following section provides an overview of the current conditions around schools in regards to engineering for the North Fayette Valley Community School District.

- Sidewalks
    - Clermont: The Turkey River Recreation Corridor trail connects Clermont to the school. The trail is in great condition.
    - Elgin: The Turkey River Recreation Corridor trail connects Elgin to the school. The trail is in great condition.
    - Fayette: Fayette has a great sidewalk network throughout town, except the area located on the west side of Highway 150.
    - West Union: Overall, West Union has a good network of sidewalks. Sidewalks are narrow in neighborhood areas, but wide near the downtown and the school. Sidewalks are lacking on most streets in neighborhoods north of Highway 18, along Highway 150 and on the west side of Highway 150. Sidewalks on the east side of Plum Street to downtown are in poor

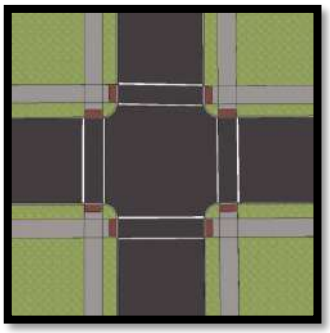
condition. Sidewalks also exist in poor condition on Cherry Street, Elm Street and Linden Street. Sidewalks are needed on Jefferson Street, Pine Street, Highway 150, north side of Hall Street, north side of Vine Street, SE 4th Street, Fleet Street, Otter Street and East Street.

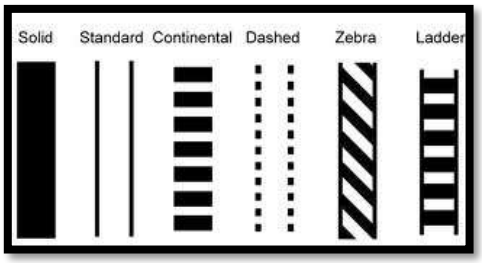
- Signage
  - Clermont: Signage does not exist along the trail to alert drivers of foot and bike traffic. Pedestrian signage alerting drivers turning into the school drive does not exist.
  - Elgin: Signage does not exist along the trail to alert drivers of foot and bike traffic.
  - Fayette: Signage is located near highway.
  - West Union: Signage is present along Highway 18 and near the school. Speed limit signage is needed on County Road W42.
- Crosswalks
  - Clermont: A crosswalk exists near the school along the trail.
  - Elgin: A crosswalk exists near the school along the trail.
  - Fayette: No crosswalks exist.
  - West Union: Crosswalks are present at most street crossings with high amounts of foot traffic near the school. Crosswalks are needed on Pine Street, Jefferson Street, North Vine Street, Highway 150 and Highway 18.
- Bike racks
  - Clermont: Bike rack located at school.
  - Elgin: Bike rack located at school.
  - Fayette: Bike rack located at school.
  - West Union: Bike racks located at school.

Infrastructure Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Replace all existing crosswalks with high visibility crosswalks and paint new crosswalks where needed.

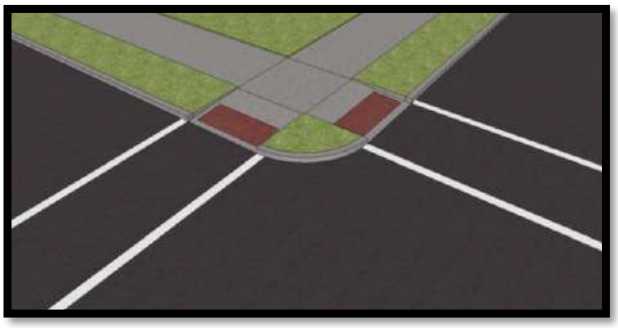
- It is recommended that all existing crosswalks be repainted to draw attention to places where children may be crossing. Crosswalks should also be painted with diagonal or longitudinal markings to further increase visibility. Samples of crosswalks can be found below.
- Existing crosswalks are currently only located in and around the schools and in the downtown of West Union, Fayette, Clermont and Elgin. New crosswalks should be painted along designated primary safe routes to school routes and along with other areas where students may be crossing.





Recommendation #2: Replace existing sidewalk ramps and stairs with ADA accessible ramps.

- The sidewalk assessment identified several corner intersections which lack sidewalk access from the street. Some intersections are missing sections or have deteriorated sidewalk sections. It is recommended that ADA accessible ramps be installed throughout the community. An example of ADA accessible ramps is located below.

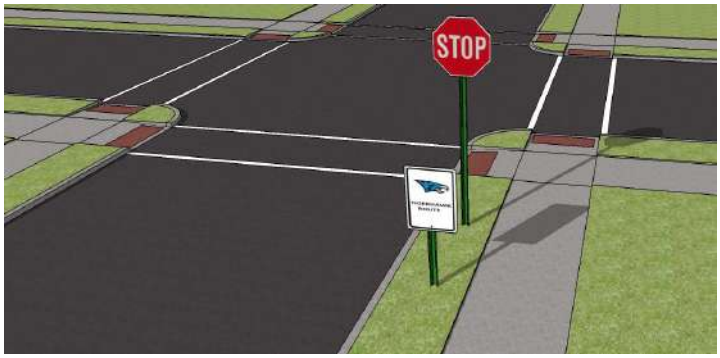


Recommendation #3: Replace sidewalks around the school facility and throughout the community.

- Deteriorating sidewalks should be replaced. Conduct an annual sidewalk assessment to determine areas of high need.

Recommendation #4: Designate primary routes throughout the community.

- Designate the heavily traveled routes as official safe routes to school.
- Paint the school logo on sidewalks and/or post customized signs to designate the official routes. Examples are located below.



Recommendation #5: Install new sidewalks in areas of need along primary routes.

- The trail connecting Clermont and Elgin to the Valley School is in great condition. Coming from Elgin, the trail has an extension that leads students safely to the school. However, coming from Clermont, the trail does not have an extension so students must walk along the driveway. It would be worthwhile to pave a sidewalk along the south side of the driveway to separate walkers from traffic on the driveway and in the parking lot.
- Additionally, the Elgin trailhead does not connect the trail to Elgin, but instead ends in a ditch about a half block from town. Installing a sidewalk to connect the trail to town would be of great benefit to users, especially children.
- Sidewalks are needed in most of the neighborhoods located on the north side of West Union. One Walking School Bus route does not have a sidewalk to walk on until they are within two blocks of the school.

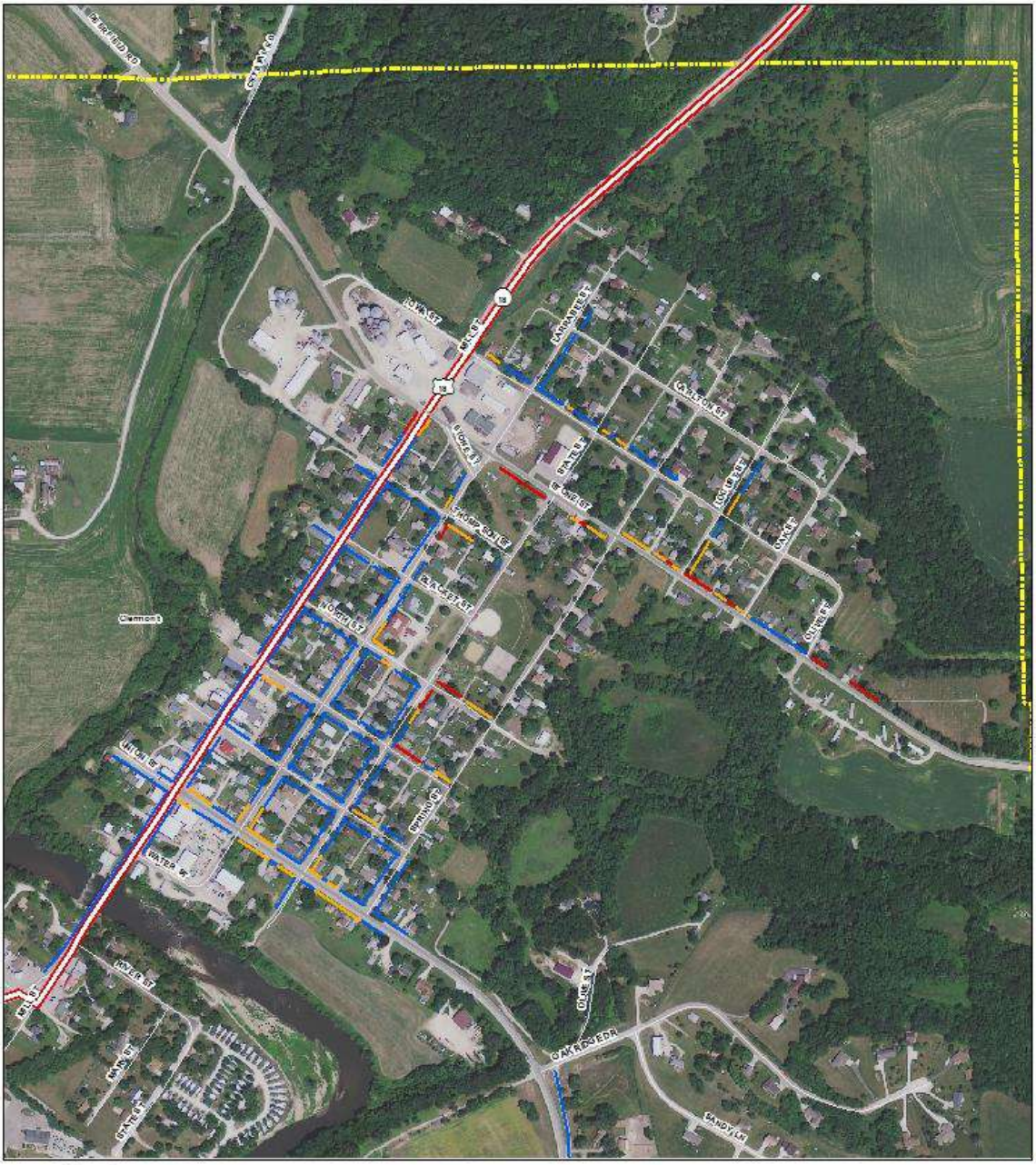
Aerial Maps

Current aerial photography was used to accurately place the sidewalks on the maps of sidewalk assessment included on the following pages. Sidewalk assessment were completed using the chart below. Please contact the Upper Explorerland office to discuss specific sidewalk assessments at 563-382-6171.

Good Sidewalk	Fair Sidewalk	Poor Sidewalk
Free from cracking, buckling, gravel or other debris that would obstruct pedestrian traffic.	Passable, but may contain surface cracks, negligible vegetative overgrowth or debris.	Deep cracking or buckling, significant vegetative overgrowth and/or debris such that pedestrian traffic would be obstructed.

City of Clermont

Sidewalk Assessment Map



Legend

Good
Fair
Poor
Private
Public
US Highway
State Highway
County Highway
County Road
Roads
Incorporated Cities
School District Boundaries
Counties

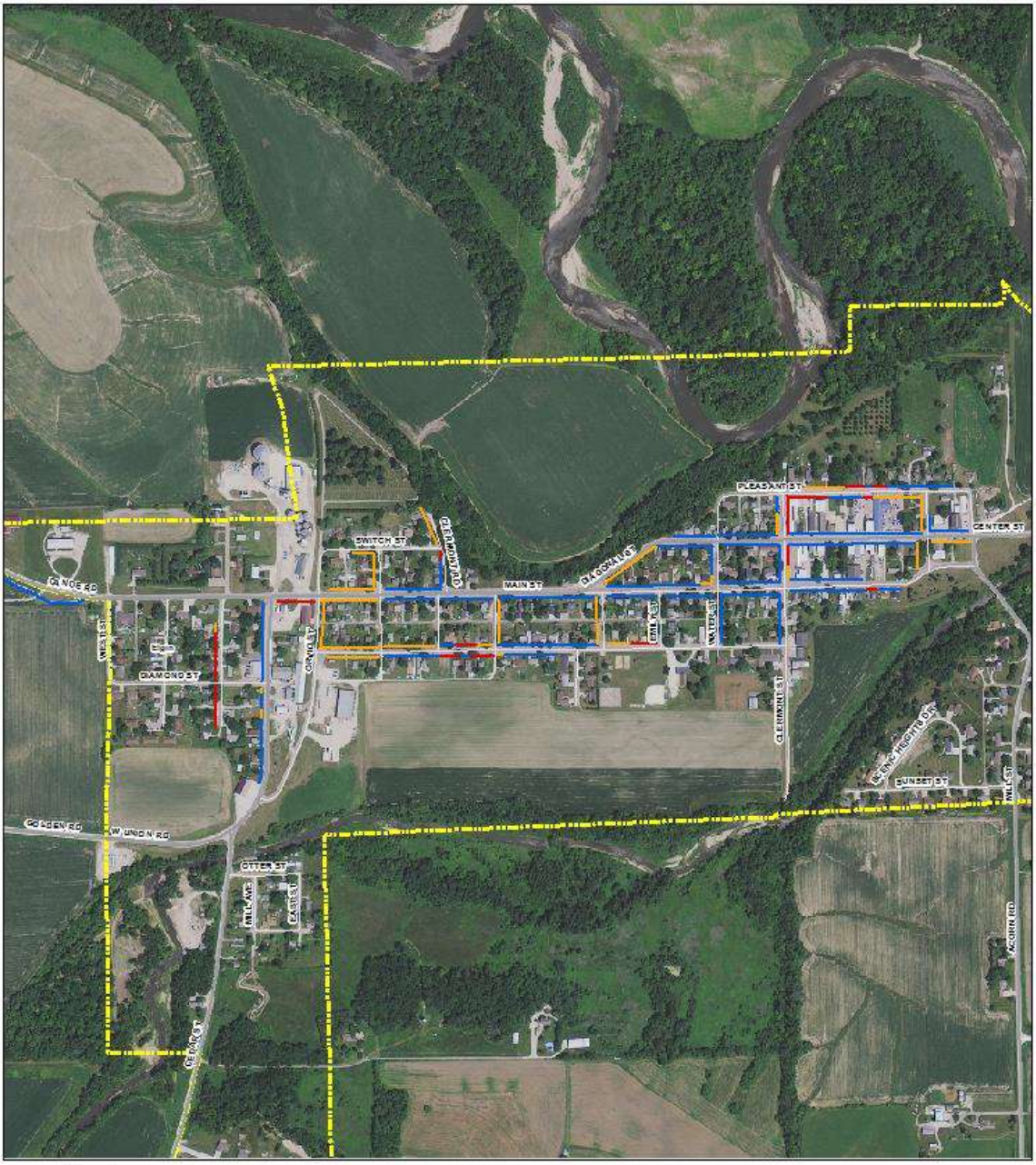
0 0.0475 0.095 0.19 Miles

Disclaimer: This map is for reference only. Data provided is derived from multiple sources with varying levels of accuracy. Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission disclaims all responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the data shown hereon.

upper explorerland

City of Elgin

Sidewalk Assessment Map



Legend

Good
Fair
Poor
Private
Public
US Highway
State Highway
County Highway
County Road
Roads
Incorporated Cities
School District Boundaries
Counties

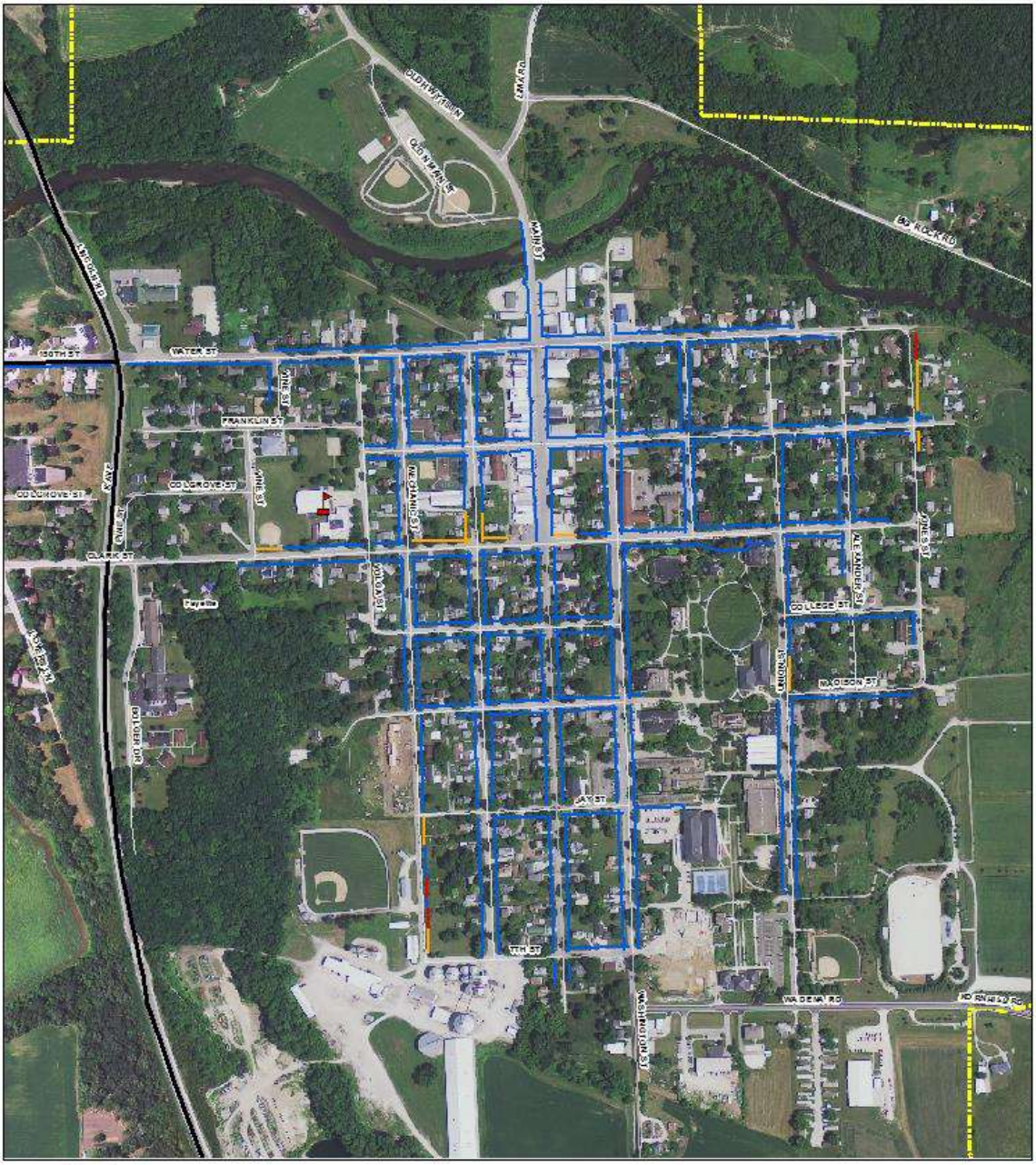
0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles

Disclaimer: This map is for reference only. Data provided is derived from multiple sources with varying levels of accuracy. Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission disclaims all responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the data shown hereon.

upper explorerland

City of Fayette

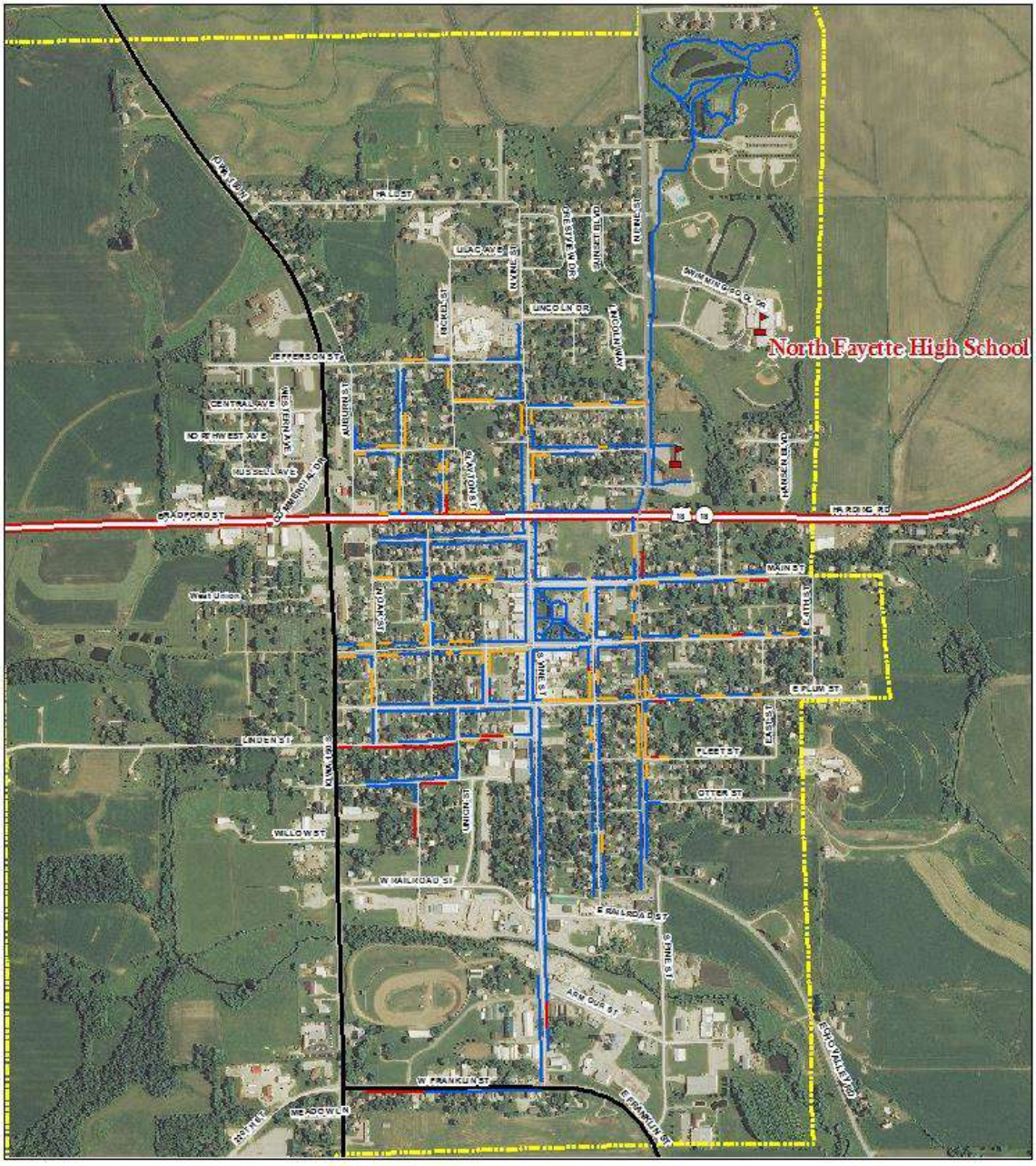
Sidewalk Assessment Map



Disclaimer: This map is for reference only. Data provided is derived from multiple sources with varying levels of accuracy. Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission disclaims all responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the data shown hereon.

City of West Union

Sidewalk Assessment Map



Disclaimer: This map is for reference only. Data provided is derived from multiple sources with varying levels of accuracy. Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission disclaims all responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the data shown hereon.

Section V: Enforcement

Enforcement generally involves three facets: police, community design and local government policies. First, local law enforcement is a valuable resource for both enforcement of the law and data collection. Local law enforcement officials understand travel patterns in the community and have access to crash data, which can be helpful in planning walking routes. Second, quality community design can guide and support desired behaviors in an effort to develop a culture where pedestrians and cyclists are respected and their mobility is given priority. Finally, both school and municipal policies and procedures that pertain to walking, bicycling, busing and parking with picking-up/dropping-off issues need to be supportive of the SRTS plan. Nationwide, the following enforcement programs have been identified as positive contributors to SRTS goals:

- School Safety Zones
- Speed Trailers
- Sidewalk, Building and Property Maintenance Laws
- Neighborhood Watch/Escort Programs
- Law Enforcement Presence
- Keep Kids Alive – Drive 25 (Speed Limit)
- Photo Enforcement (Red Light Camera)

Existing Conditions

Below is a list of the existing enforcement activities that are currently in place within the North Fayette Valley Community School District:

- Crossing Guards
    - An adult crossing guard is utilized around the school facilities in West Union to help direct the safety of the children around traffic.
- Use of in-street pedestrian crossing signage
    - West Union utilizes in-street pedestrian crossing signage within crosswalks near the school.

Recommended Projects

After reviewing the existing conditions of enforcement activities in the North Fayette Valley Community School District, the following list of enforcement activities should be considered:

- Use speed indicators around the school campuses

    - Speed indicators can help slow down traffic in and around each of the schools. This is a great method to enforce the speed limit to drivers near the schools.
- Increase the school zone enforcement
    - School Zone Enforcement is a huge asset not only to the school, but also to the safety of the children. It will acknowledge where parents can and cannot pick up their children and will provide parents the sense of security in allowing their children walk or bike to school.
- Provide incentives to students walking on sidewalks and using designated crosswalks
    - This would help encourage and enforce children to walk on the sidewalks and cross at designated crosswalks instead of walking the streets.
- Start a “Catch’Em in the Act Rewards Program”
    - This program would encompass law enforcement to write out tickets to children for walking or biking in a safe manner to and from school. The tickets could possibly be redeemed for a certain prize as encouragement to continue operating in a safe manner.

Section VI: Encouragement

Throughout the process of developing and implementing a SRTS program, it will be necessary to encourage participation in the SRTS activities. Many media tools can be used to do this, including posters, e-mail, newsletters, flyers, school notices and backpack mail. Existing school and community communication resources may include:

- School Newsletters
- Local Newspaper
- Community Newsletter
- Public Service Announcements
- School Public Relations Officer

A variety of contests, which have encouragement aspects to them, can be incorporated into a SRTS program. Many of these contests are based on students tallying their miles for walking and biking to school to win points for prizes or recognition, either individually or as a class. Art contests and essay contests are also possibilities for independent or classroom activities. In northeast Iowa, the following SRTS activities help to increase physical activity among students and safety within our communities:

- Walking School Bus
    - A Walking School Bus is a group of students walking to/from school with responsible supervisors. It can take place daily, weekly or monthly.
- Remote Drop-off
    - This is a variation of a Walking School Bus. Students who live far from the school can be dropped off at a location away from school grounds to walk the remaining trip to school.
- Bike Rodeo
    - A Bike Rodeo is a popular and fun event teaching children how to properly and safely ride a bike.
- Mileage Club
    - Students earn rewards by walking a certain number of laps around a track, gym or school hallway. It could take place during gym class, recess or an after-school club.
- Active Classroom Learning
    - Sneak physical activity into classroom learning. One example is Stories in Motion, where students act out stories as they are read aloud.
- Walk on Wednesday (W.O.W.)
    - Every Wednesday of the school year, students have the opportunity to get involved by walking or biking to school.
- Punch Card Contest

- Motivate children throughout the school district with the punch card contest. Each day a student walks or bikes to and from school, he or she will receive a punch on their card. Once the punch card is full, he or she would then be eligible to receive some sort of prize designated by the school/wellness committee.

Existing Conditions

Below is a list of existing encouragement activities that are in place in the North Fayette Community School District:

- Walking School Buses in Clermont, Elgin and West Union
- International Walk to School Day/Governor's Healthiest State Walk/Fall Fitness Day
- National Bike to School Day at Valley Elementary
- Walkability Assessment in Fayette and Hawkeye
- Bike Rodeo at Valley Elementary and West Union Elementary
- SRTS Community Coalition
- Mileage Club at West Union Elementary

Recommendations

After reviewing the existing conditions of the encouragement program in the North Fayette Valley Community School District, the following list of future projects to implement for safe routes to school encouragement activities should be considered:

- Expand the Walking School Bus program
  - Continually work to engage more families and community volunteers in the Walking School Buses. Parent letters, newspaper articles and flyers around town are great ways to get the word out. Slowly try to add more days to the schedule and more routes through town when possible.
- Start a Mileage Club at each elementary school
  - This is where students earn foot tokens for walking a certain number of laps around the track, gym or school hallway. A Mileage Club can take place before/after school or during recess or PE. Valley Elementary used to have a Mileage Club, but it has not operated in recent years.
- Continue to host an annual Bike Rodeo
  - Hosting an annual Bike Rodeo will reinforce the importance of knowing how to be a smart, safe bike rider.
- Increase awareness of safety throughout the community
  - Provide more awareness to parents/guardians about the program through PTO's, school newsletters, mailings, and parent/teacher conferences.

    - Notify parents of the wide range of safety topics included in the safe routes to school program.
- Start the Walk on Wednesday (W.O.W.) program
    - Every student can walk or bike to school each Wednesday of the school year.
    - W.O.W. will give students the opportunity to partake in a Walking School Bus.
    - Designated locations will be assigned throughout the community.
- Start the Walk N' Roll Punch Card Contest
    - Each day a student walks or rides their bike to and from school; their punch card will be punched. Once the punch card is full, the student will be awarded a small prize. Students who ride the bus or are not able to walk to school will be given the chance to walk during recess or the bus could drop off the students three to four blocks from the school to form a Walking School Bus to campus.

Section VII: Implementation Strategy

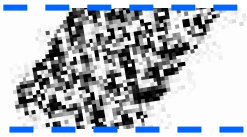
The following implementation strategy is an approach that the North Fayette Valley Community School District can follow to implement education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation techniques. This strategy can be used each year and updated as the safety needs of the school and students change.

AUGUST

- School Registration
  - Distribute SRTS maps
  - Promote Walking School Buses
- Fall Walking School Buses begin
- SRTS Community Coalition Meeting

SEPTEMBER

- Continue to Encourage Students with Educational Programs
- Have a guest speaker talk about SRTS
- Begin Walk N' Roll Punch Cards and Walk on Wednesday Programs
- Conduct fall Student Travel Tally
- Walking School Buses continue
- Set date for spring Bike Rodeo



OCTOBER

- Participate in International Walk to School Day
- Continue Walk N' Roll Punch cards and Walk on Wednesday Program
- Provide SRTS information at Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Walking School Buses continue

NOVEMBER

- Continue Walk N' Roll Punch Cards and Walk on Wednesday Program
- Encourage Walking School Buses to continue when weather allows
- SRTS Community Coalition Meeting

DECEMBER

- Continue Walk N' Roll Punch Cards and Walk on Wednesday Program
- Encourage Walking School Buses to continue when weather allows

JANUARY

- Continue Walk N' Roll Punch Cards and Walk on Wednesday Program
- Continue contest for students to receive incentives
- Have a nurse or other professional visit classes to talk about healthy eating and exercising

FEBRUARY

- Continue Walk N' Roll Punch Cards and Walk on Wednesday Program
- Encourage Walking School Buses to continue when weather allows

MARCH

- Provide SRTS information at Parent-Teacher conferences
- Continue Walk N' Roll Punch Cards and Walk on Wednesday Program
- Encourage Walking School Buses to continue when weather allows
- Bring in local law enforcement to talk to students about walking/biking safety
- SRTS Community Coalition Meeting
- Begin planning for spring Bike Rodeo

APRIL

- Continue Walk N' Roll Punch Cards and Walk on Wednesday Program
- Conduct annual sidewalk inspections
- Spring Walking School Buses begin
- Continue spring Bike Rodeo planning/Host spring Bike Rodeo

MAY

- Continue Walk N' Roll Punch Cards and Walk on Wednesday Program
- Spring Walking School Buses continue
- Collect Walk N' Roll Punch Cards last week of school and award prizes to students
- Host spring Bike Rodeo
- Participate in National Bike to School Day/Week/Month
- Conduct Student Travel Tally

JUNE

- Evaluate SRTS Program from previous year
- Evaluate infrastructure around school facilities
  - Make a list of improvements that needs addressed
- SRTS Community Coalition Meeting
- Send thank you notes to Walking School Bus and Bike Rodeo volunteers

JULY

- Plan SRTS activities for coming school year
- Promote and organize Walking School Buses

Appendix

Appendix I: Survey Letter to Parents

Appendix II: Parent Survey

Appendix III: Student Travel Tally

Appendix I: Survey Letter to Parents

upper explorerland regional planning commission

Serving Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek Counties
325 Washington Street, Suite A, Decorah, IA 52101
PHONE: 563/382-6171, ext 214, FAX: 563/382-6311
cmai@uerpc.org
www.uerpc.org

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission (UERPC) recently received a planning grant to provide Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) plans for all schools (K-8) in the five county region and is in the process of establishing an order for these plans to be completed.

As you probably know, the SRTS Program is an opportunity to make safe routes to school for kids of all ages, whether they're walking or biking. National trends and statistics indicate that fewer children are walking and bicycling to school. At the same time, childhood health has declined, more children die in automobile crashes than by any other means, air quality has deteriorated, and land use practices have centered on automobile reliance. Completing a SRTS plan is the first step in receiving funding for needed infrastructure improvements.

These plans need cooperation from the parents in gathering your input on how your child/children go to and from school. There are two options for taking this survey, (1) Fill out the hard copy enclosed with this letter and return completed survey to the schools office, (2) Go to **http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/srts-uerpc**. The results will be tabulated and recorded into the plan and your names will remain completely anonymous. The SRTS plans will not cost the School, City, or Citizens anything, just time and cooperation. Once a plan is in place, the schools will be eligible to apply for grants in assisting school administrators in creating safer routes for walking and bicycling.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions at all or would like to help participate in the Safe Routes to School Program please contact me at (563)-382-6171 Ext. 212 or by email at cmai@uerpc.org.

Sincerely,

Casey J. Mai,

Regional Planner

Appendix II: Parent Survey

Parent Survey About Walking and Biking to School

Dear Parent or Caregiver,

Your child's school wants to learn your thoughts about children walking and biking to school. This survey will take about 5 - 10 minutes to complete. We ask that each family complete only one survey per school your children attend. If more than one child from a school brings a survey home, please fill out the survey for the child with the next birthday from today's date.

After you have completed this survey, send it back to the school with your child or give it to the teacher. Your responses will be kept confidential and neither your name nor your child's name will be associated with any results.

Thank you for participating in this survey!

CAPITAL LETTERS ONLY – BLUE OR BLACK INK ONLY

School Name:

1. What is the grade of the child who brought home this survey? ☐☐ Grade (PK,K,1,2,3...)

2. Is the child who brought home this survey male or female? ☐ Male ☐ Female

3. How many children do you have in Kindergarten through 8th grade? ☐☐

4. What is the street intersection nearest your home? (Provide the names of two intersecting streets)

and

Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box.

5. How far does your child live from school?

- ☐ Less than ¼ mile
- ☐ ¼ mile up to ½ mile
- ☐ ½ mile up to 1 mile
- ☐ 1 mile up to 2 miles
- ☐ More than 2 miles
- ☐ Don't know

Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box.

6. On most days, how does your child arrive and leave for school? (Select one choice per column, mark box with X)

Arrive at school	Leave from school
☐ Walk	☐ Walk
☐ Bike	☐ Bike
☐ School Bus	☐ School Bus
☐ Family vehicle (only children in your family)	☐ Family vehicle (only children in your family)
☐ Carpool (Children from other families)	☐ Carpool (Children from other families)
☐ Transit (city bus, subway, etc.)	☐ Transit (city bus, subway, etc.)
☐ Other (skateboard, scooter, inline skates, etc.)	☐ Other (skateboard, scooter, inline skates, etc.)

Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box

7. How long does it normally take your child to get to/from school? (Select one choice per column, mark box with X)

Travel time to school	Travel time from school
☐ Less than 5 minutes	☐ Less than 5 minutes
☐ 5 – 10 minutes	☐ 5 – 10 minutes
☐ 11 – 20 minutes	☐ 11 – 20 minutes
☐ More than 20 minutes	☐ More than 20 minutes
☐ Don't know / Not sure	☐ Don't know / Not sure

8. Has your child asked you for permission to walk or bike to/from school in the last year? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. At what grade would you allow your child to walk or bike to/from school without an adult?

(Select a grade between PK,K,1,2,3..) ☐☐ grade **(or)** ☐ I would not feel comfortable at any grade

Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box

10. What of the following issues affected your decision to allow, or not allow, your child to walk or bike to/from school? (Select ALL that apply)

11. Would you probably let your child walk or bike to/from school if this problem were changed or improved? (Select one choice per line, mark box with X)

	☐ My child already walks or bikes to/from school		
☐ Distance	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Convenience of driving	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Time	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Child's before or after-school activities	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Speed of traffic along route	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Amount of traffic along route	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Adults to walk or bike with	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Sidewalks or pathways	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Safety of intersections and crossings	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Crossing guards	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Violence or crime	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
☐ Weather or climate	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box

12. In your opinion, how much does your child's school encourage or discourage walking and biking to/from school?

☐ Strongly Encourages ☐ Encourages ☐ Neither ☐ Discourages ☐ Strongly Discourages

13. How much fun is walking or biking to/from school for your child?

☐ Very Fun ☐ Fun ☐ Neutral ☐ Boring ☐ Very Boring

14. How healthy is walking or biking to/from school for your child?

☐ Very Healthy ☐ Healthy ☐ Neutral ☐ Unhealthy ☐ Very Unhealthy

Place a clear 'X' inside box. If you make a mistake, fill the entire box, and then mark the correct box

15. What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?

☐ Grades 1 through 8 (Elementary)
☐ Grades 9 through 11 (Some high school)
☐ Grade 12 or GED (High school graduate)
☐ College 1 to 3 years (Some college or technical school)
☐ College 4 years or more (College graduate)
☐ Prefer not to answer

16. Please provide any additional comments below.

Appendix III: Student Travel Tally

Safe Routes to School Students Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet

+ CAPITAL LETTERS ONLY – BLUE OR BLACK INK ONLY +

School Name: | Teacher's First Name: | Teacher's Last Name:

Grade: (PK,K,1,2,3...) 0 2 | Monday's Date (Week count was conducted) M M D D Y Y Y Y | Number of Students Enrolled in Class: 1 5

- Please conduct these counts **on two of the following three days Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. (Three days would provide better data if counted)**
- **Please do not conduct these counts on Mondays or Fridays.**
- Before asking your students to raise their hands, please read through all possible answer choices so they will know their choices. Each Student may only answer once.
- Ask your students as a group the question **"How did you arrive at school today?"**
- Then, reread each answer choice and record the number of students that raised their hands for each. **Place just one character or number in each box.**
- Follow the same procedure for the question **"How do you plan to leave for home after school?"**
- You can conduct the counts once per day but during the count please ask students both the school arrival and departure questions.
- Please conduct this count regardless of weather conditions (i.e., ask these questions on rainy days, too).

Step 1. Fill in the weather conditions and number of students in each class

Step 2. **AM** – **"How did you arrive at school today?"** Record the number of hands for each answer.. **PM** – **"How do you plan to leave for home after school?"** Record the number of hands for each answer.

Key	Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
	S= sunny R= rainy O=overcast SN=snow	Number in class when count made	-	-	-	Only with Children from your family	Riding with children from other families	City bus, subway, etc.	Skate-board, scooter, etc.
Sample AM	S N	2 0	2	3	8	3		3	1
Sample PM	R	1 9	3	3	8	1	2	2	
Tues. AM									
Tues. PM									
Wed. AM									
Wed. PM									
Thurs. AM									
Thurs. PM									

Please list any disruptions to these counts or any unusual travel conditions to/from the school on the days of the tally.

+ +