Decorah Community School District

Safe Routes to School Plan

2016

upper explorerland regional planning commission

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Decorah Community School District

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Acknowledgements

Iowa Department of Transportation
Decorah Community School District Administration and Staff
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School Information

Decorah Community Schools

The Decorah Community School District is located in Decorah with all school buildings located in Decorah. The school is dedicated to providing instructional service to over 1700 students from early childhood through twelfth grade.

Mission Statement

Decorah Community School District is committed to creating a student-centered environment where individual needs are addressed, cooperation and teamwork are valued, competent professionals lead, community partnerships flourish, a commitment to excellence prevails, and lifelong learning continues. It is the goal of the District to provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum for every student in the Decorah Community Schools.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Decorah Community School District is to create a student-centered environment where:

- Individual needs are addressed
- cooperation and teamwork are valued
- competent professionals lead
- community partnerships flourish
- a commitment to excellence prevails
- life-long learning continues

Contact Information

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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 Decorah 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 Decorah 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 information for education and public involvement. This plan includes background

[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, survey results, current conditions surrounding the facilities and community and recommendations for the Decorah 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
- Walk ability/Bike ability Audits

Existing Condition

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

- Bike Rodeo at Carrie Lee Elementary
- Bike Safety Lessons at John Cline Elementary

Recommended Projects

After reviewing the current conditions for the education program within the Decorah 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 Decorah Community School District:

- Parent Surveys
  - A survey about their child(s) walking and/or biking to school
- Student Tally Forms
  - A tally sheet for students to document their arrival and departure method

Parent and Student Surveys

One of the main objectives of the planning process was to gather input from the parents of students at the Decorah 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.

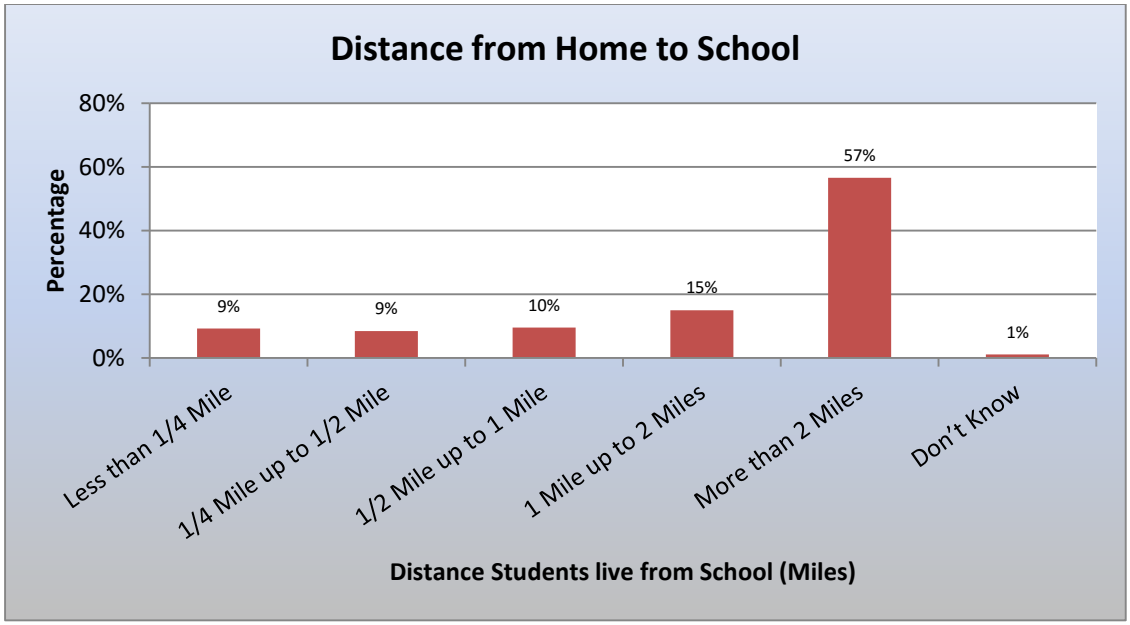
The survey asked by what means children traveled to and from school and also asked questions regarding parental attitudes and children's safety en-route. Hard copies or online versions of the survey were sent home with students or emailed to parents along with a letter for the parents. Copies of the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

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

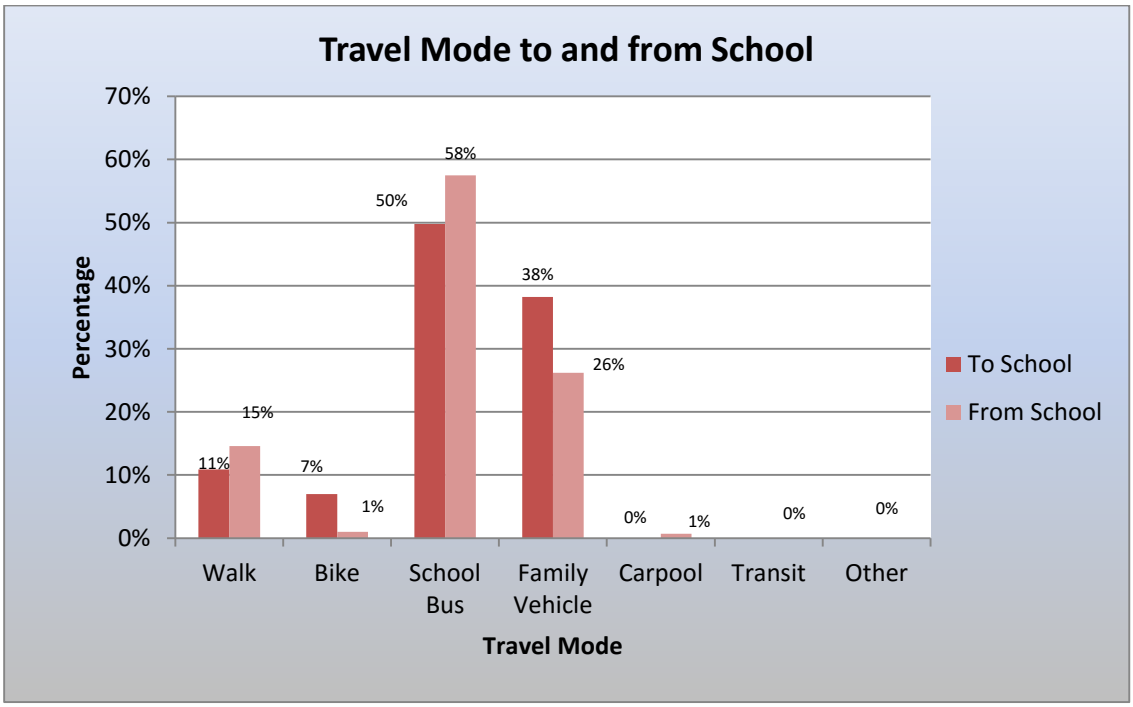
Distance to School

Figure 1: Comparison of Distance from Home to School



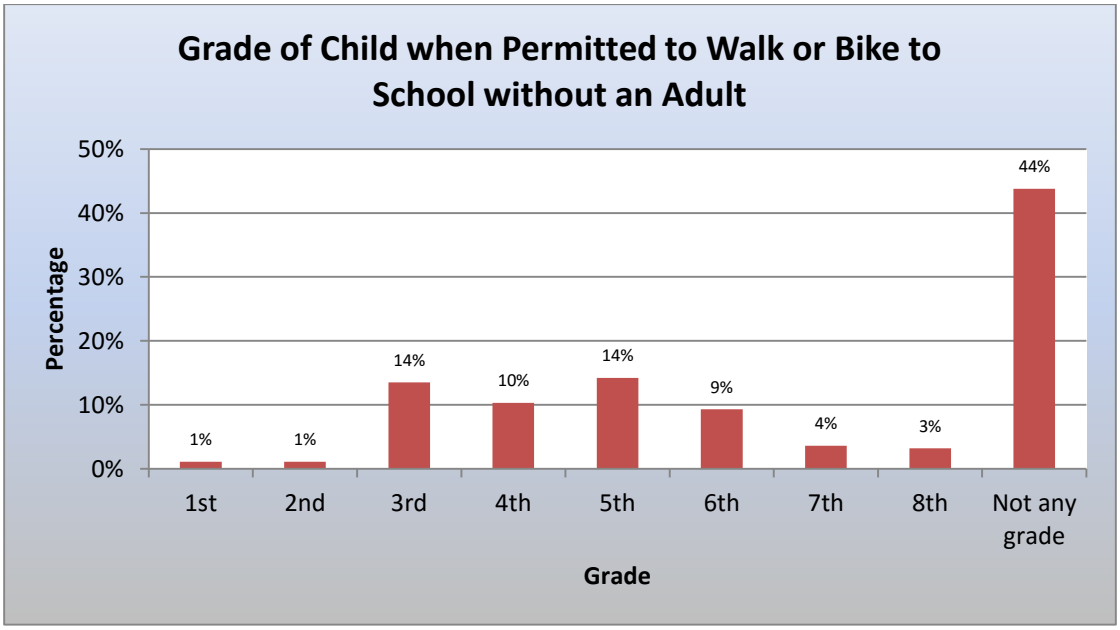
Travel Modes to and from School

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



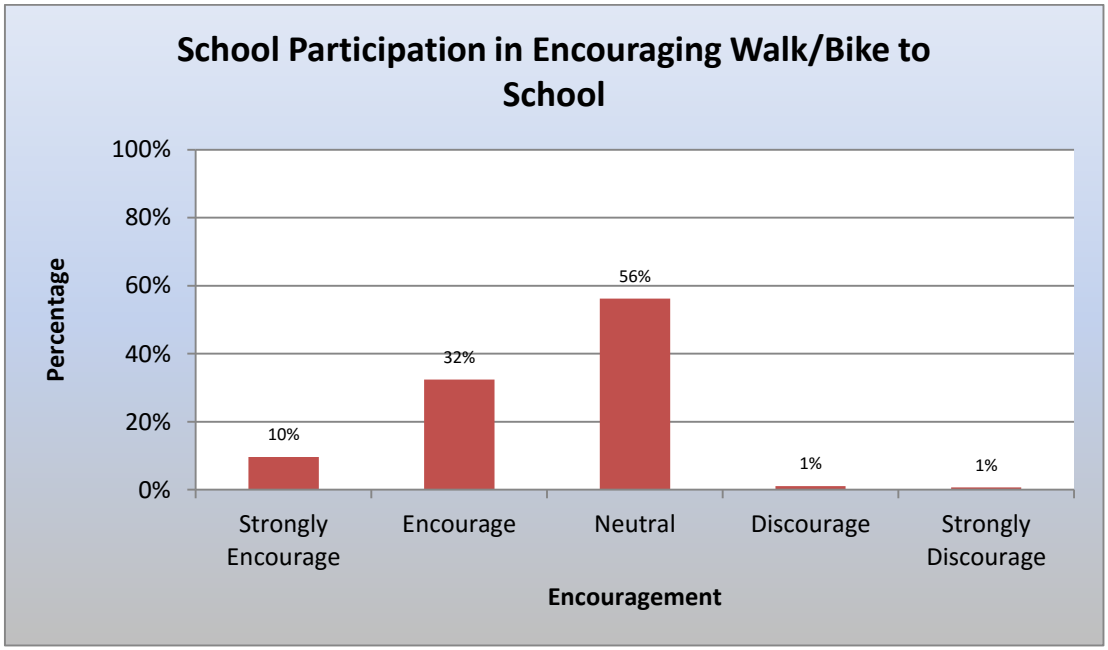
Perceptions and Attitudes

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



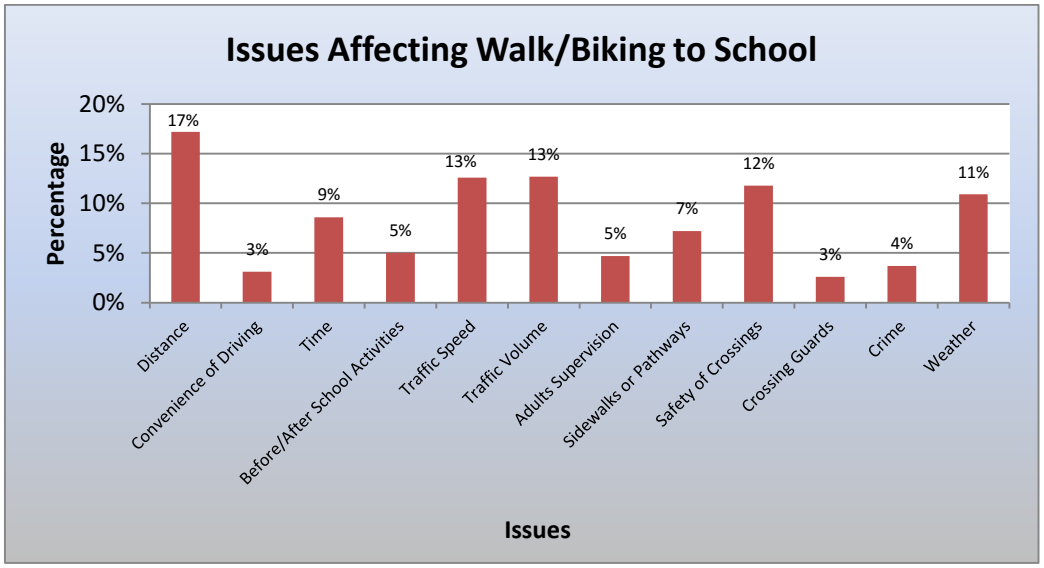
Encouragement to Walk or Bike by Schools

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. *We live too far from school and they would have to bike on highway 9 to get there. If there was another way to get to school, I would consider letting them.*
2. *We don't live close enough to town, so I do not feel comfortable having walk/bike.*
3. *Walks from mom's. Ride's in car from dad's. Answered all questions from mom's. Will begin riding bike from dad's in 5th grade, approximately 1 1/2 miles affected mostly by traffic volume and patterns as well as weather.*
4. *We live over 10 miles from school, so mostly this does not apply. Our kids are not going to walk or bike that far, we don't plan to move, and the traffic patterns aren't likely to change.*
5. *Having a school near downtown where students can walk to church, planed appointments, etc. promote walking and biking.*
6. *We depend on the school bus to transport. We live 8 miles from school, so walking is NOT an option.*

7. *For walk-to-school day, don't run buses within a 2 mile radius of the school. Kind of ridiculous to encourage kids to walk by busing them to a certain spot. We walk all the time and yet we have to drive to drop our kids off for walk-to-school day. It's a great idea in theory, but its missing the mark.*
8. *We live too far for most of these questions to be applicable. We do not have the same schedule after school each day to have a consistent plan.*
9. *We live in the country, so we ride the bus!*
10. *Our kids walk to our work place after school, which is about 2 blocks from us, we can actually see them from 1 block away. We live out-of-town so all drive in to school/work.*
11. *Convenient to take my children back and forth to school, but we live a healthy and active lifestyle, so getting to and from school walking is not as crucial. We do many activities...*
12. *Not really an option for him at this time due to distance.*
13. *We have already been talking about letting our child walk to school. he would like to ride his bike.*
14. *The topography of where we live also affects my decision to allow my children to walk or bike to school (hilly). Band also affects my decision - heavy instrument to carry that for.*
15. *If we didn't live on a busy country road and were closer to the bike trail, I would consider them riding to school.*
16. *Love that you are interest in promoting healthy habits for children and parents.*
17. *We have to cross a busy road and go through the Wal-mart parking lot to get on the bike trail (not safe). People don't see us on the bikes or even when we walk to get to the trail.*
18. *Having younger siblings whose school is the opposite direction and who cannot walk alone to and from school GREATLY impacts our decision.*
19. *We walk our kids to the bus stop at West Side - a 12 mile walk from our home.*
20. *Because of our home location, I don't want my child to walk or bike to school.*
21. *We live 15 minutes in the country. We support healthy living and exercise and support walk and biking in general.*
22. *Time is the major issue in the morning. 2. Would have a long walk in the cold (which has been all year!) and it would be a bit much for young kids. 3. Safety.*
23. *Walks to the high school, rides shuttle bus to Carrie Lee school. I am thankful she did walk with walking school bus, but this year has been walking alone sometimes to the high school.*
24. *The busy intersection is very hard to cross, I've stood there before and after school and a had trouble getting vehicles to stop so I could cross, can't imagine what it's like for children.*
25. *My child is opened enrolled. Does not apply!*
26. *Walking to school with my children is the best way to start the day - we actually fell less rushed than when we drive. We talk more, pray together, and it's just more pleasant.*

27. *Due to traffic at the high school and the speeds I've seen, I am not comfortable with my child walking or biking to school alone; there is also a habit of the high school students to hang out in a few places on our route and the language, smoking, etc. is not something I want my little one exposed to any more than absolutely inescapable. I'd love to see a staggered start so high school is already in when John Cline students arrive. Even 15 minutes would help! Thanks!*
28. *We have loved having consistently loving, caring, adult (Richard Hanson) to shepherd our child. That single fact makes it work. He more than walks them - he mentors them. There have been behavior issues which are hard for the good kids to handle. Simon takes charge lovingly.*
29. *I will always worry about my children walking/biking to/from school. I have heard of absolute tragedies and I would have a hard time giving them independence in this manner.*
30. *We walk our children to the bus stop at West Side - a 12 minute walk from our home.*
31. *We live out of town. I work at a school. The kids meet a walking school bus there and walk to John Cline.*
32. *Basically it boils down to when he's old enough to handle the responsibility and maintain his safety. Weather matters too!*
33. *Wish we lived closer!!*
34. *We live 23 miles away from school so it is not possible to walk or bike.*
35. *I am worried about cars in the mornings, my kids would love to ride their bikes but not a safe route.*
36. *My child is special needs.*
37. *I would let my child walk or bike; however, we live a ways out of town.*
38. *Kids live too far out of town to walk or bike.*
39. *We live in the country!*
40. *Walking and/or riding a bike is NOT an option. We live 8 miles from the school. We rely on the school bus for transportation.*
41. *My child's age is main reason.*
42. *My kids cannot walk to school because we live about 24 miles away.*
43. *We live in North Winneshiek School District - so busing home doesn't exist, but she does ride a bus to her grandparent's house after school. Some info just didn't apply.*
44. *My daughter will be in a different school (Carrie Lee) next year so the distance is longer from home.*
45. *We live over 10 miles from school, so mostly this does not apply. Our kids are not going to walk or bike that far, we don't plan to move, and the traffic patterns are not likely to change.*

46. *We live outside City Limits on a busy highway. Biking or walking for anyone is dangerous and not likely to be changed or improved.*
47. *We walk and bike as a family as much as possible. Living 5 miles from school is far - but with the future new trail to our neighborhood (past Freeport), I hope we can bike in when she is older.*
48. *We support any activities and improvements which help move children to walk! This time in the morning is important to our famiy's relationship and physical health.*
49. *My child is open enrolled.*
50. *If the weather wasn't so extreme and people drove sensibly it wouldn't be a concern.*
51. *Doesn't really apply to kids that live out of city limits.*
52. *We agree with many, that walking and biking to school is a wonderful idea, but will not allow our children to do this due to safety issues. We will try to carpool through the years.*
53. *My daughter is in band and chorus, so she only has a study hall every other day. She regularly brings home 10-20 pounds of books and binders in her backpack, which is too much weight for someone her size. She will walk to school when the school provides electronic textbooks on one device to replace the 2-3 books she normally brings home each night.*
54. *My child does walk to the library occasionally after school, otherwise we live 12 miles from school on Locust Rd, so walking and biking are not an option.*
55. *My child walks to the grandparents after school.*
56. *My daughter is strong, healthy and coordinated; however, she has been found to be impaired in her executive functioning. We worry about her decision making in biking and walking the 2 miles to school.*
57. *His backpack is too heavy to walk or bike.*
58. *We live through Freeport - too far for my child to walk or bike to school.*
59. *Would allow if we didn't live 6-7 miles out in the country...*
60. *We live 10 miles from town, walking and biking is not an option.*
61. *I am very concerned with the 4-way stop at Broadway and river. Many times I have seen and experienced cars not stopping or cutting it close as we cross. Would LOVE to see crossing guards at this intersection.*
62. *The intersection where my kids would cross if I let them walk to school is very busy (no crossing guard or signs). I've even stood there for a while before I'm able to cross.*
63. *Bus drivers driving and parking also affect my decision.*
64. *I have three children, two that walk to school daily, due to my hours at work only the older two walk and my other child rides the bus from there to school.*
65. *We live 4 miles from town, student rides to school with parents, after school depends on activity - either walks to library or gets picked up after practice.*

66. *My answers are rather moot as we live 15 miles out of town. Walking and biking are not options.*
67. *We live 6 miles off of a highway. This is a non-issue for us!*
68. *There are no safe routes for kids riding buses to even consider walking or biking. It is bad enough for a child to be on a bus @ 6:30 am, just to get there!*
69. *Walking or biking to and from school would be great but not practical for country kids.*
70. *Couldn't answer all these questions. Living in the country isn't suitable for our children to walk or bike to school. If lived in town it would be great for them to do so.*
71. *I would consider letting my kids bike once the Freeport Trail is complete. Right now they would have to bike on the street/road which has too much traffic.*
72. *My child used to walk when we lived in town, but we now live 30 miles out.*
73. *Traffic is the biggest issue near the schools. To make it work, students would need a designated route and parking so the possibility of getting hit is eliminated.*
74. *We live in the country, so walk or biking is not an option.*
75. *The biggest challenge walking to school is all the books my son brings to and from his locker, plus his viola, extra shoes, etc. He carries about 50 lbs of stuff every day.*
76. *Locust Rd has too much traffic traveling at high speeds at peak times. No sidewalk/shoulder - Venneheim trail to remote 4 younger kids.*
77. *Walking to the elementary school is close and fairly easy from our house, but since its right next to the high school, there are many teenagers driving there and that scares me. It would be nice to have more crossing guards available to help young walkers. To get to the middle school, my son has to go across down town, which isn't a big deal, but it makes me nervous for him to bike in traffic.*
78. *I would like my "child" to continue to have a P.E. class at school.*
79. *We live outside City Limits and have busy highway traffic.*

Student Tally Forms

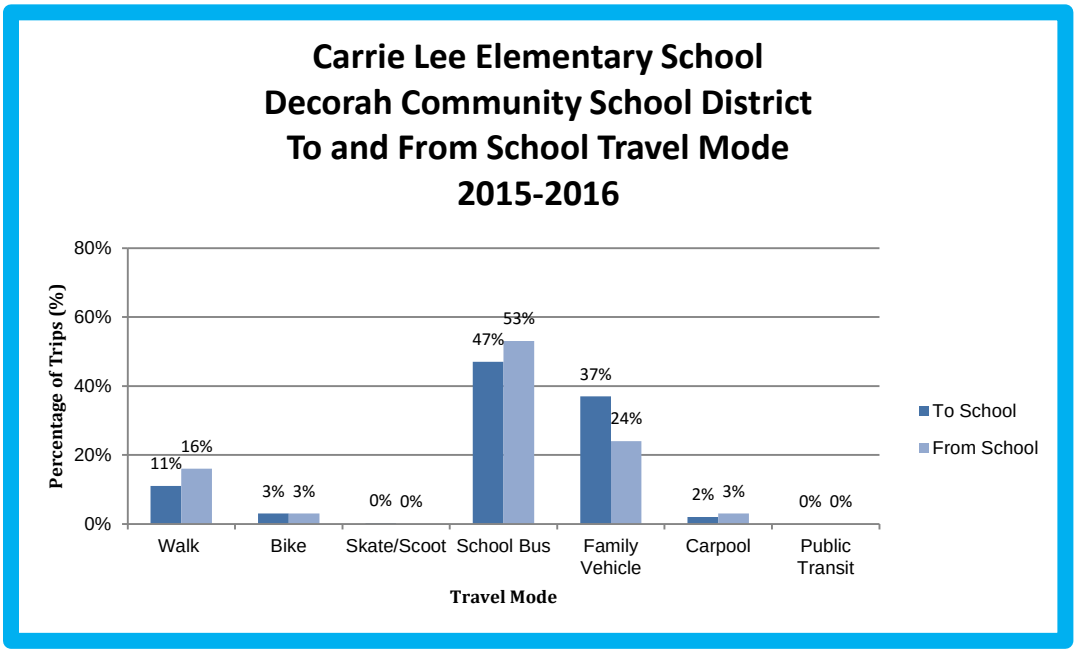
Another key step to figuring out student arrival and departure patterns is by having teachers complete a tally form during the fall or spring. The tally form is to be completed on three consecutive days in the spring and possibly the fall.

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.

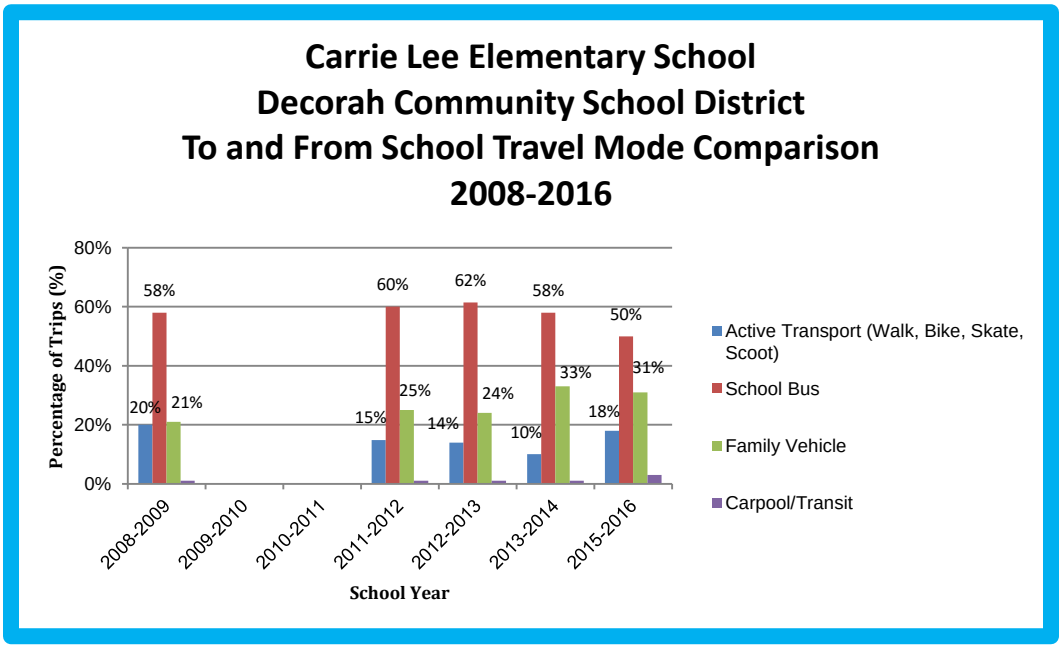
Student's Travel Mode To and From School

Figure 6: Transportation Modes Used by Students To and From Carrie Lee Elementary School



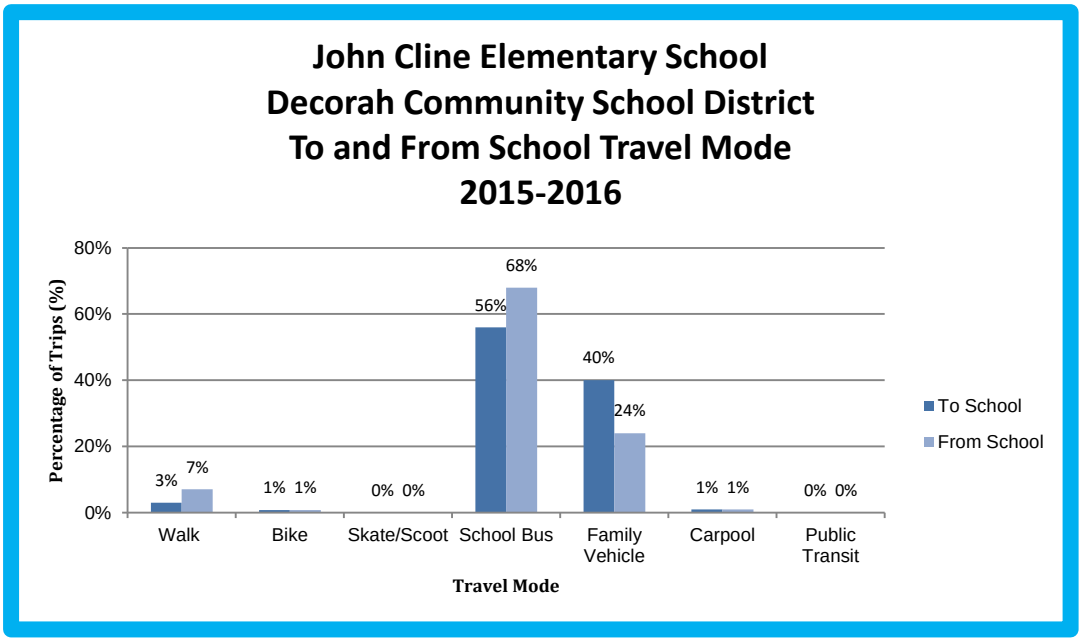
Student's Travel Mode Comparison

Figure 7: Travel Mode Comparison To and From Carrie Lee Elementary School between 2008 and 2016



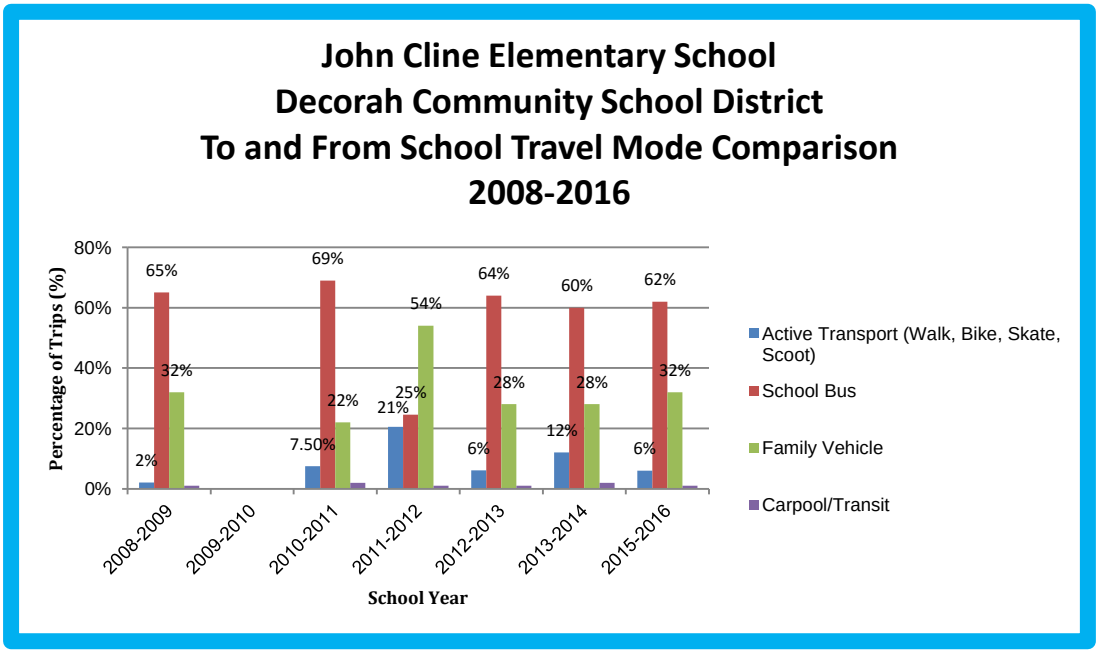
Student's Travel Mode To and From School

Figure 8: Transportation Modes Used by Students To and From John Cline Elementary School



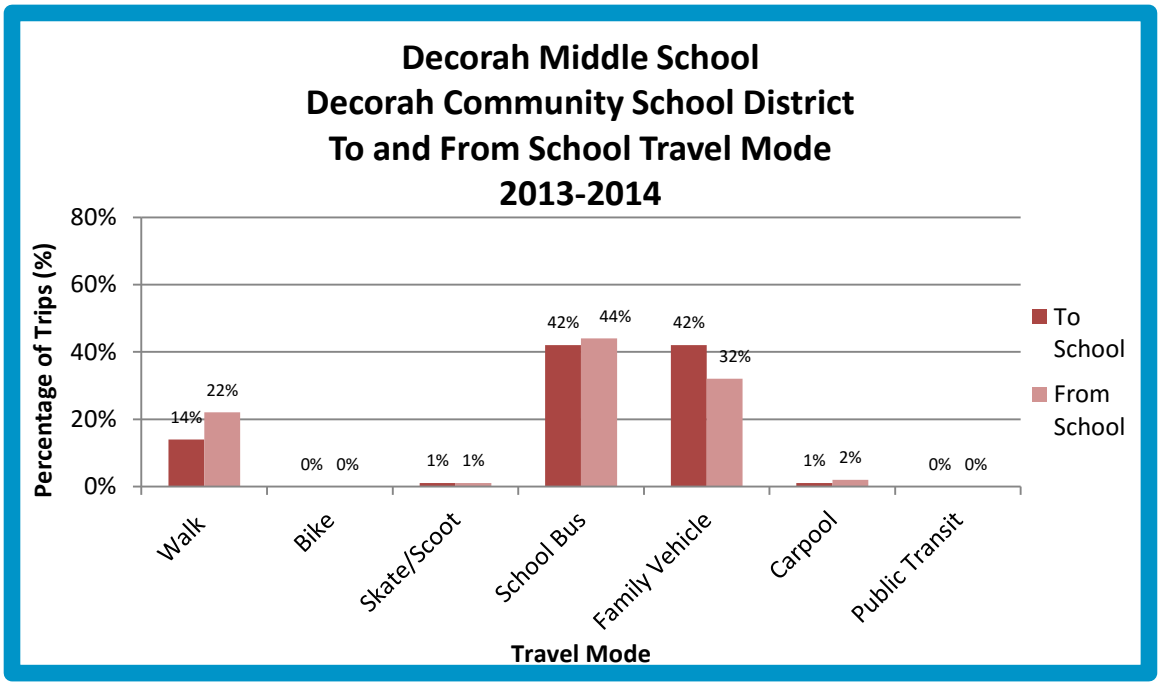
Student's Travel Mode Comparison

Figure 9: Travel Mode Comparison To and From John Cline between 2008 and 2016



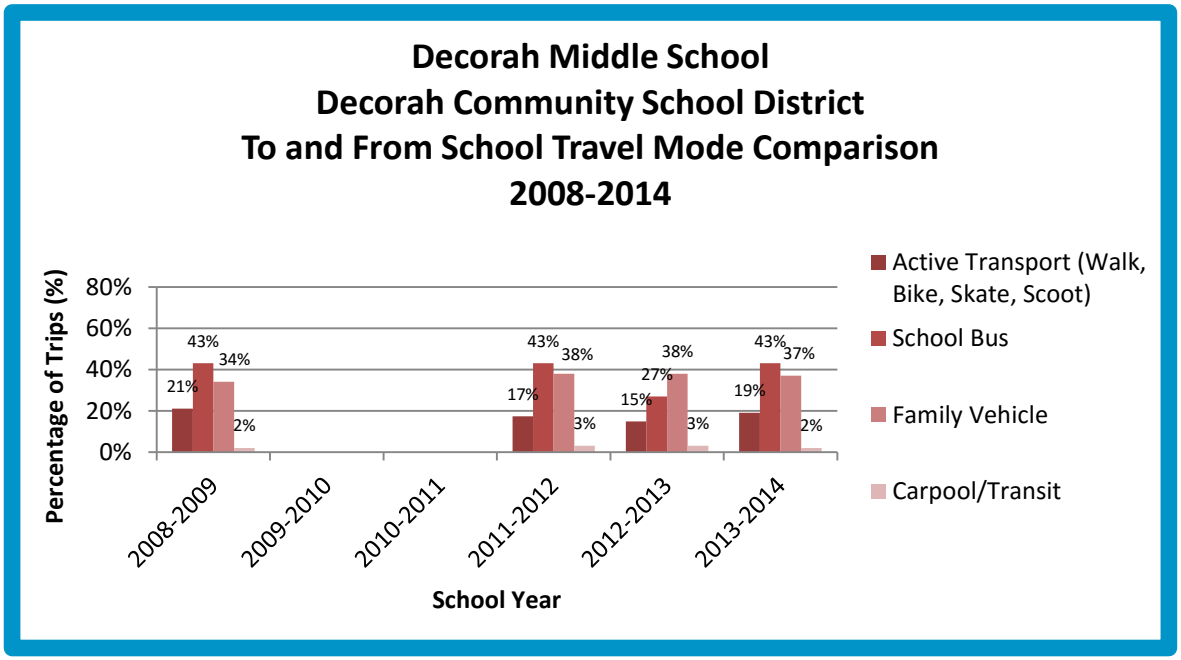
Student's Travel Mode To and From School

Figure 10: Transportation Modes Used by Students To and From the Decorah Middle School



Student's Travel Mode Comparison

Figure 11: Travel Mode Comparison To and From Decorah Middle School between 2008 and 2014



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

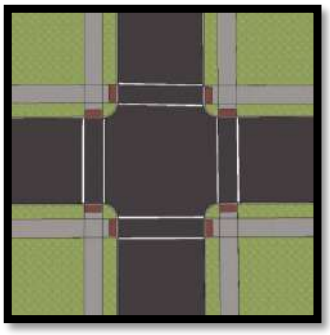
The following section provides an overview of the current conditions around schools in regards to engineering for the Decorah Community School District:

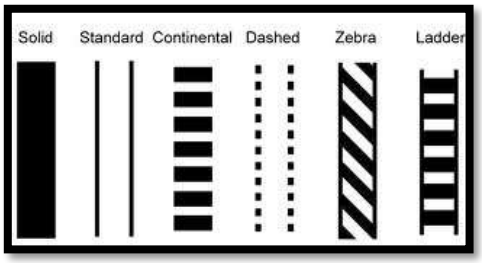
- Sidewalks
    - Sidewalks exist near all schools and in most neighborhoods in town. Overall sidewalks are in good condition.
- Signage
    - Pedestrian crossing signage is very well placed throughout town, especially near schools.
- Crosswalks
    - Crosswalks are located in areas of high foot traffic and are repainted on a regular basis.
- Bike racks
    - Bike racks exists at all schools.

Infrastructure Recommendations

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

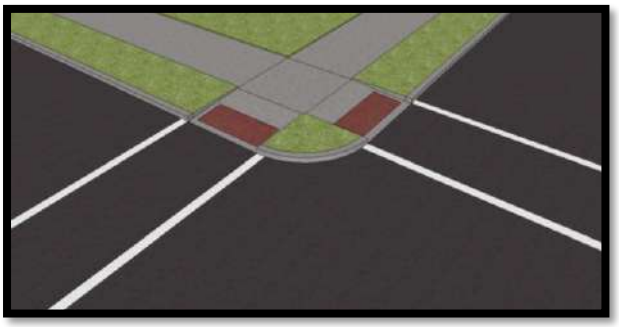
- It is recommended that all existing crosswalks be repainted to draw attention to places where children may be crossing. Crosswalks should also be painted with diagonal or longitudinal markings to further increase visibility. Samples of crosswalks can be found below.
- Existing crosswalks are currently located around the schools and around the community.





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.

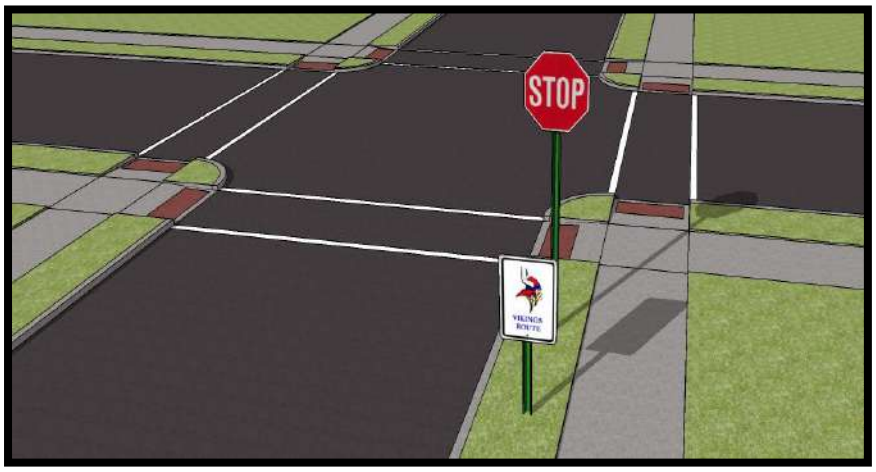


Recommendation #3: Replace sidewalks around the school facility and throughout the community.

- 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.



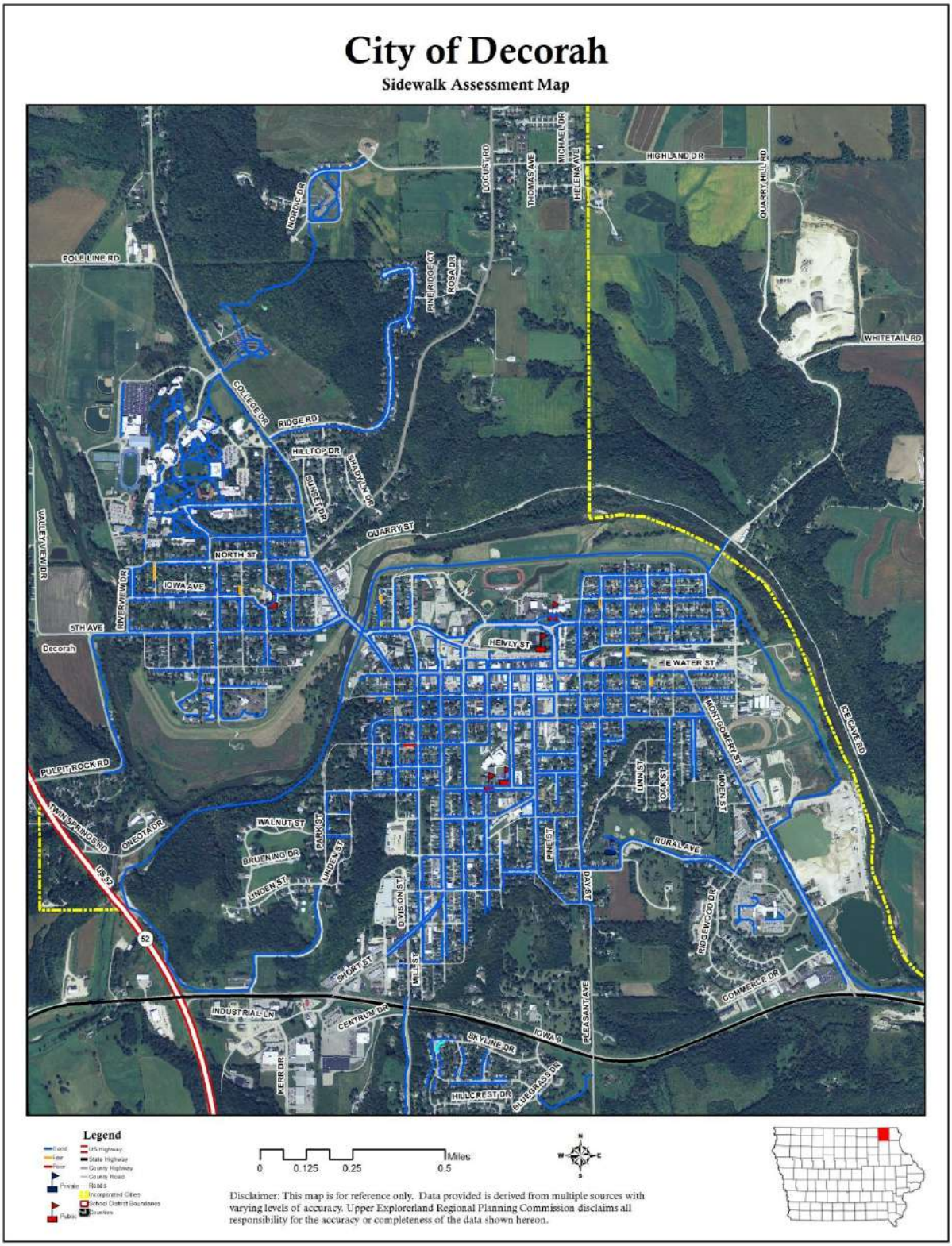
Recommendation #5: Install new sidewalks in areas of need along primary routes.

- Sidewalks exist in most areas of town.

Aerial Maps

Current aerial photography was used to accurately place the sidewalks on the maps of sidewalk assessment included on the following pages. Sidewalk assessments were completed using the cart 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 Decorah
Sidewalk Assessment Map
POLE LINE RD
NORDIC DR
LOCUST RD
THOMAS AVE
MICHAEL DR
HELENA AVE
HIGHLAND DR
QUARRY HILL RD
WHITETAIL RD
PINE RIDGE CT
ROSA DR
COLLEGE DR
RIDGE RD
HILLTOP DR
SUNSET DR
SHADY LN DR
VALLEY VIEW DR
QUARRY ST
NORTH ST
IOWA AVE
RIVERVIEW DR
5TH AVE
Decorah
HEIVLY ST
E WATER ST
MONTGOMERY ST
LUNN ST
OAK ST
ERIE ST
RS CAVE RD
PULPIT ROCK RD
TWIN SPRINGS RD
ONEOTA DR
WALNUT ST
PARK ST
BRUENING DR
LINDEN ST
DIVISION ST
ERIE ST
OAK ST
RURAL AVE
RIDGEWOOD DR
COMMERCE DR
SHORT ST
MILL ST
INDUSTRIAL LN
CENTRUM DR
IOWA 9
SKYLINE DR
PLEASANT AVE
KERR DR
HILLCREST DR
BLUEGRASS DR
52
Legend
Miles
0
0.125
0.25
0.5
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 Decorah Community School District:

- Use of in-street pedestrian crossing signage
- Use of portable stop signs
- One-way traffic flow

Recommended Projects

After reviewing the existing conditions of enforcement activities in the Decorah 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 or have the possibility of starting a walking school bus.
- 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 Decorah Community School District:

- Walking and Biking School Buses
- International Walk to School Day
- National Bike to School Day
- Mileage Club

Recommendations

After reviewing the existing conditions of the encouragement program in the Decorah Community School District, the following list of 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.
- 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.

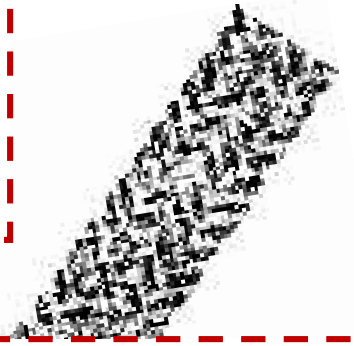
- Start the Walk N' Roll Punch Card Contest
    - Each day a student walks or rides their bike to and from school; their punch card will be punched. Once the punch card is full, the student will be awarded a small prize. Students who ride the bus or are not able to walk to school will be given the chance 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 Decorah 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.

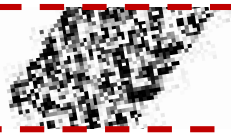
AUGUST

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



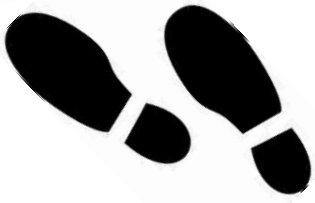
SEPTEMBER

- 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.

+ +