May 6 2026 DRAFT

MADISON
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL
STRATEGIC PLAN

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Acronyms

BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, People of Color
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
DCYA	Dane County Youth Assessment
MMSD	Madison Metropolitan School District
MSCR	Madison School & Community Recreation
MPD	Madison Police Department
RRFB	Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon
SHAPE	Society of Health and Physical Educators
SRTS	Safe Routes to School
TE	City of Madison Traffic Engineering Department
TAP	Transportation Alternative Program
UHT	Unusually Hazardous Transportation
WisDOT	Wisconsin Department of Transportation
WSB	Walking School Bus

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“We should encourage walking and biking because it’s quicker, more independent, more fun and you get to hang out with your friends which encourages community and active play outside.”

—MMSD student

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Introduction

Chapter 1: Introduction

What is Safe Routes to School?

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an international movement that uses programs and infrastructure to encourage children to walk and bike to and from school. SRTS programs seek to improve safety conditions near schools and encourage more active travel when it is safe to do so.

Nationally, walking and bicycling to school has declined dramatically. Nearly 50% of K-8th grade students walked or biked to school in the 1960s. For the past decade, that number has hovered around 11%.[1] SRTS programs seek to reverse this decline by promoting walking and bicycling through projects and programs which have traditionally been grouped under the "Es": engagement, equity, engineering, encouragement, education, and evaluation.[2]

In Madison, there has been a SRTS program in some form since 2010, when the Wisconsin Bike Fed raised funding from private donors and federal grants to support a full-time SRTS planner embedded in the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD). Later, the Healthy Kids Collaborative at UW-Health provided SRTS coordination and programs. As of 2026, Safe Routes to School in Madison is primarily run by the Wisconsin Bike Fed, which collaborates with MMSD, the City of Madison Traffic Engineering division, and other school districts and municipalities in Dane County to provide education, encouragement, and engagement programs at for K-12 students.

At the City of Madison, the Traffic Engineering Division partners with the Bike Fed to support their work, promotes safety and collaboration with the School Traffic Safety Team, and manages the City's crossing guard program. The Madison SRTS website includes more information on City initiatives.

Walking, Biking, and Taking the Bus

SRTS initiatives have not traditionally focused on encouraging busing, but the Madison program includes programs and infrastructure that encourage children to take the bus to school.

Like walking and biking, taking the bus is good for children's health and well-being. Students cultivate friendships with others on their bus route. Using the bus promotes sustainability and traffic safety by reducing the amount of vehicle traffic going to and from schools during arrival and dismissal. In middle and high school, taking the bus also promotes independence and can make it easier for students to get to and from jobs or similar opportunities.

There are occasionally safety incidents on both yellow school buses and Madison Metro buses as children ride the bus to school. This can give "riding the bus" negative connotations. **Madison's SRTS program aims to increase bus ridership by encouraging students to take the bus, emphasizing that it is good for students' mental and emotional health, and studying how to address safety incidents.**

1 Bruno, Greg (2022). Young children who walk or bike to school are more likely to continue the habit as they age. Rutgers Today. (Link accessed 3/3/2026).

2 Notably, in 2020, the Safe Routes Partnership removed Enforcement as one of the 6 Es and added Engagement, as explained in this announcement.

Benefits of Safe Routes to School

SRTS programs focus on improving the safety of and increasing the numbers of students that walk, bike, or take the bus to school. However, a robust SRTS program can result in a suite of benefits for students and their families:

Reduce Traffic Crashes and Increase Safety

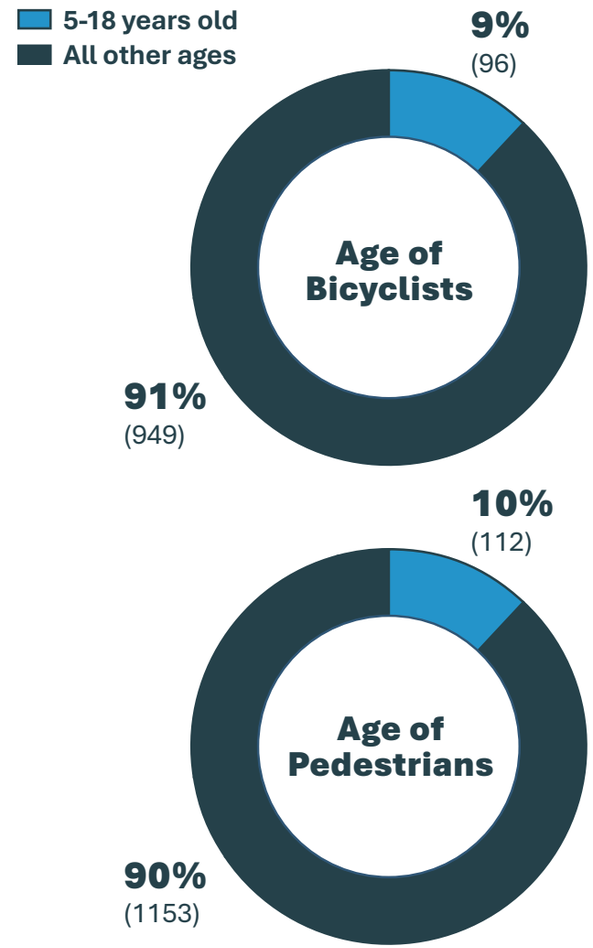
Between 2017 and 2023, a total of 208 crashes were reported for school-aged children in Madison: 96 were bicyclists, and 112 were pedestrians Two children died. SRTS safety-related projects and education can increase safe outcomes and behaviors, which make streets safer for all people traveling, whether by foot, bike, bus, or car, even when they are traveling outside of traditional school travel times.

Improve Physical and Mental Health

Walking and biking to school is a way for students to get physical activity as part of their daily life, and research indicates that active travel to school can increase overall activity in children and adolescents.[3] The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children and teens ages 6-17 get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. According to the 2024 Dane County Youth Assessment, 45% of middle and high school students reported being physically active for at least 60 minutes on 5 or more days per week.[4] This means that less than half of students in both groups are getting recommended levels of physical activity.

In addition to directly improving physical health, walking, biking and taking the bus also give students an opportunity to practice independence and connect with friends. These experiences contribute to improved mental health by strengthening friendships and building school community.

FIGURE 1.1 Reported bicyclist and pedestrian crashes in City of Madison, 2017-2023.



3 Laourche, R., et al. "Associations between Active School Transportation and Physical Activity, Body Composition, and Cardiovascular Fitness: A Systematic Review of 68 Studies." *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, Vol. 11, No. 1, Jan 2014, pp. 206-227

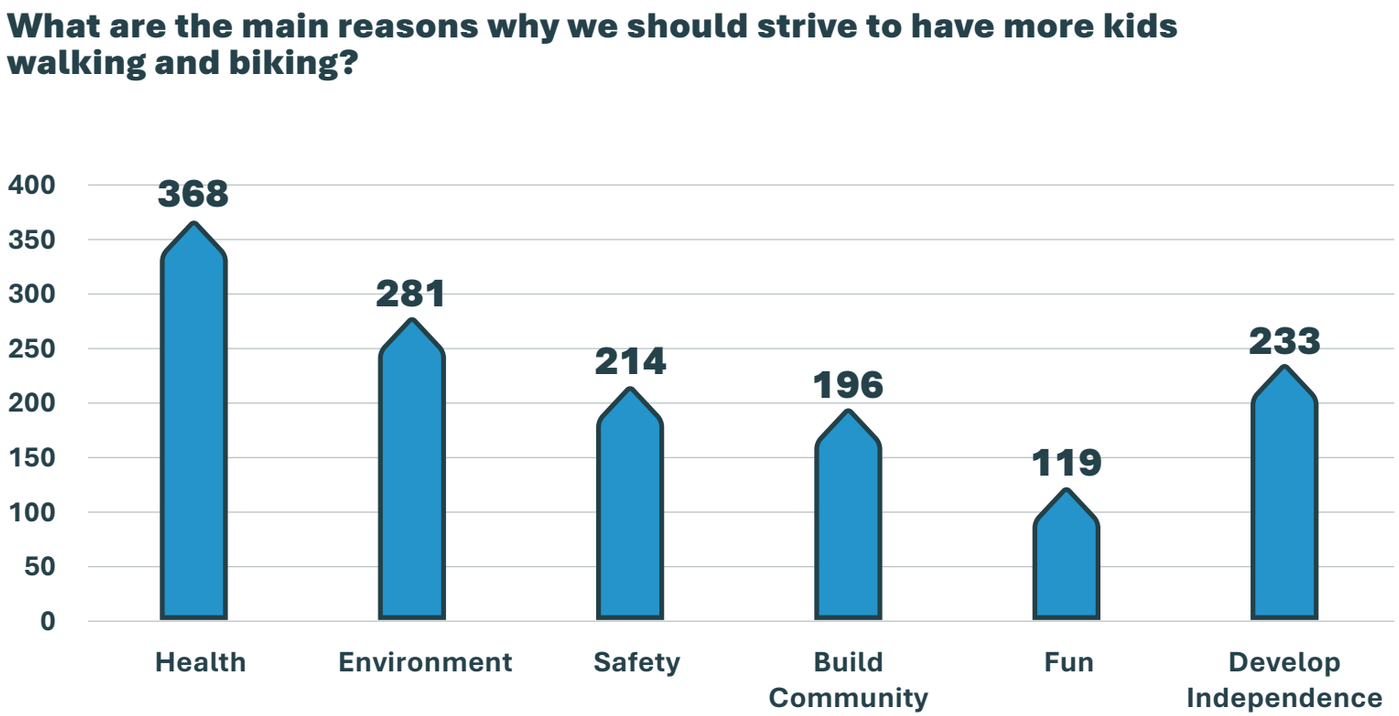
4 Dane County Department of Human Services. 2024 Youth Assessment. Dane County Department of Human Services, 25. 2024.

Align Transportation Habits with Community Values

Madison parents, caregivers, and neighbors think walking, biking and taking the bus to school is a good thing. The project team surveyed approximately 600 community members; 87% of respondents thought Madison should strive to have more kids walking and biking to school (Figure 1.3). When asked the reasons why Madison should strive to have more kids walking and biking, survey respondents were most likely to list reasons related to health, environment, and developing children's independence (Figure 1.2).

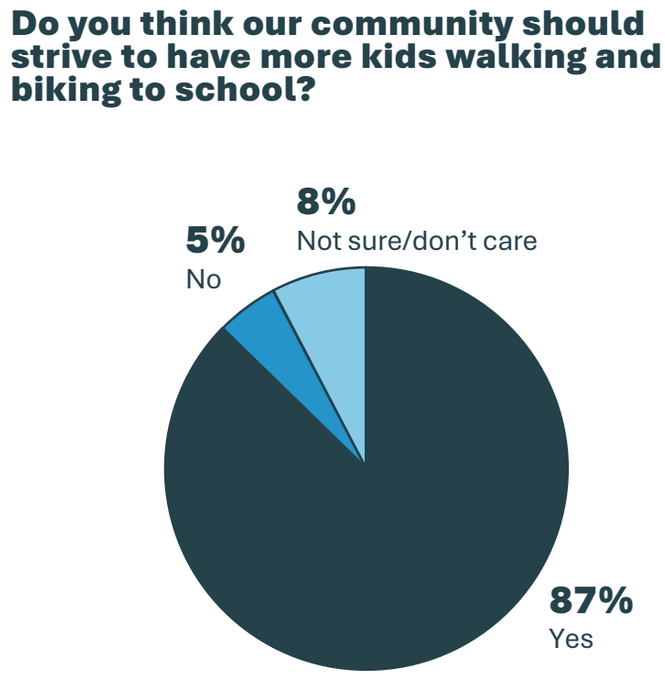
Refer to Appendix A for a full description of community engagement for this project and how it influenced this Plan.

FIGURE 1.2 Community survey responses.



Many responses to the question referenced more than one theme. Hence, the total number of responses exceeds the number of people who took the survey.

FIGURE 1.3 Reported support for SRTS from community survey.



Increase Academic Attendance and Performance

Students who can walk, bike, or take the bus have a reliable way to get to school, which increases attendance. Attendance at Lake View Elementary increased by three percent after volunteers and staff began walking children with the school's Walking School Bus (see definition). Physical activity before school can increase students' focus and concentration in the classroom. Mild exercise such as walking to and from school has been shown to improve concentration in students.[5] Figure 1.4 shows the composite neural activity of 20 students taking the same test following sitting and walking for 20 minutes.[6] The color blue represents lower neural activity, while the color red denotes higher brain activity.[7]

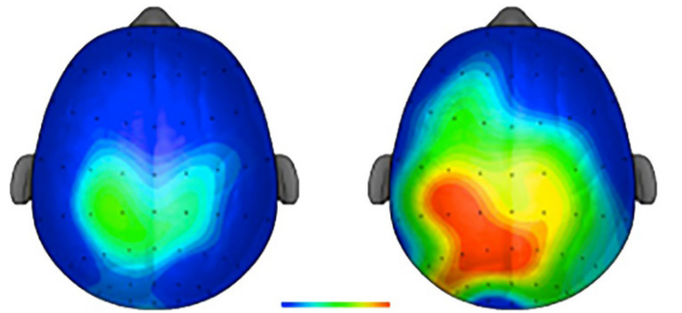
Promote Equitable Transportation Policies

This SRTS plan identifies ways to apply transportation policies and programs equitably and fairly across the city and school district. Promoting policies that specifically take equity into consideration can improve student attendance, improve health and safety outcomes, and enhance educational access for the students in Madison that need it most. For example, as part of this planning process, the project team worked with Madison Metropolitan School District's (MMSD) Transportation department to develop a set of draft criteria for determining where to provide school bus transportation due to hazardous circumstances such as busy street crossings, reports of crime or harassment, or lack of sidewalks. These criteria are measurable, transparent, and based on published safety research.

Make Proactive Investments

City and school district budgets and staff time are finite resources. When a principal calls an Alder to request a crossing guard, a parent writes the superintendent to ask for bus transportation, or a student is involved in a crash—these incidents demand staff time and require thoughtful response. This SRTS plan is designed to help the City, MMSD, and partner agencies establish protocols for responding to traffic safety concerns near schools and prioritize their investments in a strategic and efficient way.

FIGURE 1.4 Neural activity of students' brains with and without exposure to physical activity.



After 20 minutes of sitting quietly | After 20 minutes of walking

WALKING SCHOOL BUS (WSB):

A walking school bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. It can be as informal as two families taking turns walking their children to school, or as structured as having a rotating schedule of paid staff or volunteers and an official timetable and "stops".

5 Larouche, R., et al. "Associations between Active School Transportation and Physical Activity, Body Composition, and Cardiovascular Fitness: A Systematic Review of 68 Studies." Journal of Physical Activity and Health, 2014 11(1) pp. 206-227

6 Hillman CH, Pontifex MB, Raine LB, Castelli DM, Hall EE, Kramer AF. "The effect of acute treadmill walking on cognitive control and academic achievement in preadolescent children." Neuroscience. 2009;159(3) pp. 1044-1054.

7 Image courtesy of Charles Hillman, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaigne

Purpose of This Document

The Madison SRTS Plan was collaboratively created by City staff and program partners and implementors such as MMSD and the Wisconsin Bike Fed, with feedback and contributions from students and families from throughout the city. The planning process included documenting current policies, programs, and initiatives and identifying future efforts that would help the SRTS program better meet its vision and goals. This plan will guide the Madison SRTS program over the next **10 years** and be a resource for the following partners and stakeholders:

- **City of Madison Staff.** The City of Madison has staff that are directly involved with facilitating SRTS activities, as well as staff whose work tangentially impacts the program, such as traffic signals or street operations. These staff are primarily in Traffic Engineering, although staff in other divisions work on issues that impact SRTS. This plan will serve as a resource for City staff when identifying and prioritizing projects, as well as a documentation of current programs and needs.
- **MMSD Staff and Administrators.** MMSD's team serves the children and families of the Madison community. As the second largest school district in Wisconsin, MMSD provides educational opportunities to more than 25,000 students. This plan serves as a guide to create and implement a robust SRTS program, which can help our students arrive at their schools using multiple modes of transportation.
- **Wisconsin Bike Fed (Bike Fed).** The Bike Fed is a major contributor to the SRTS program, providing in-class education and out-of-class opportunities for students and their families to learn more about walking, biking, and taking the bus to school and throughout the community. For the Bike Fed, this plan clarifies their role in the program, helps support applications for grants and funding, and details how their continued contribution to the program works in tandem with other community partners to create a successful, sustainable, and equitable SRTS program.
- **Families, Caregivers, and Advocates.** Families, caregivers, and advocates should use this plan for informational purposes to understand what the Madison SRTS Program is, does, and wants to do in the future. This plan also serves as a resource for these community members to use when advocating for opportunities that increase the safety and numbers of students walking, biking, and taking the bus to school.

Vision and Framework

Madison SRTS Vision: More Madison students and their families will walk, bike, and take the bus to school safely, comfortably, and enjoyably.

As stated in the vision, the goal of the Madison SRTS Program is to get more students walking, biking and taking the bus to school. In order to meet this vision, the program's framework consists of five elements: the backbone of a Sustainable and Equitable Program, as well as four guiding directions: Safe Streets, Safe Campuses, Safe Behaviors, and Supportive Culture. Each one of these elements represents a goal of the program, and each of the remaining chapters in this plan is organized around one of the elements.

FIGURE 1.5 Five elements of Madison SRTS program.

Sustainable and Equitable Program

This is the guidepost upon which the entire program is built, and the lens or filter through which all the other program recommendations are applied. A sustainable program is one that matches the strengths of each partner agency to the actions that are assigned to them, and assigns actions that they can afford to implement. A sustainable program also institutionalizes and builds appreciation for the program from year to year by supporting school and district staff. An equitable program takes proactive steps to reach out to and benefit students who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), students with disabilities, students who come from households with lower incomes, and other disadvantaged groups in the community.

Safe Streets

Efforts to improve the physical infrastructure of streets near schools so they are safe for children walking and biking are the most important part of SRTS programs. Safer streets can be accomplished by reducing motor vehicle speeds, encouraging driver yielding at pedestrian crossing locations, providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities that can be used by children of all abilities, and improving lighting to improve traffic safety and personal security.

Safe Campuses

This element is one that school districts and schools can largely control. It includes arrival and dismissal procedures that support safe walking and bicycling and providing on-campus amenities that make walking and biking to school feasible, such as bicycle parking.

Safe Behaviors

Actions to educate students and their families on how to walk, bike, and use the bus safely are included in this element. Enforcement is also a proven strategy to deter speeding and reckless driving behavior.

Supportive Culture

The final element includes actions to build a culture around walking, biking, and taking the bus to school, such as supporting walking school buses or involving students and youth in promoting SRTS.

“It’s challenging to just fold [SRTS initiatives] into my existing responsibilities. I have many ideas for my community that I don’t have time or resources to provide.”

—MMSD staff person

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Sustainable and Equitable Program

Chapter 2. Sustainable and Equitable Program

A successful SRTS program includes activities aimed at evaluating, institutionalizing, and building support for the program so it can continue from year to year. It also includes efforts to ensure that the program centers BIPOC students and families, students with disabilities, students who come from households with lower incomes, and other historically under-served groups in the community. Investments in programming and infrastructure should not perpetuate inequalities in how resources are distributed.

Existing Program Partners and Funding

Program Partners

SRTS is a collaborative, holistic effort. Many departments and organizations will be involved, making it essential to clearly define the expectations and roles for each department and organization. There are three organizations that are largely responsible for implementing SRTS efforts in Madison.

City of Madison Traffic Engineering

Traffic Engineering is housed within the Department of Transportation. The Traffic Engineering Division includes several areas relevant to SRTS: Signing and Pavement Marking, Signals and Street Lighting, Pedestrian and Bicycle Services, and Planning and Data Support. Of these, Pedestrian and Bicycle Services is the area most involved with SRTS efforts, although there is ongoing coordination with other areas and with other divisions. Pedestrian and Bicycle Services oversees the School Traffic Safety Team (STST), which is described in the text box on this page. Pedestrian and Bicycle Services includes the City's Adult School Crossing Guards and the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Outreach Specialist, who works with many schools on education, encouragement, and walking school buses.

Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD)

MMSD serves over 25,000 students across all of Madison, Maple Bluff, and Shorewood Hills, and parts of Fitchburg and the towns of Blooming Grove and Burke. In MMSD, SRTS initiatives are implemented across several departments, including Safety & Security, Curriculum & Instruction, Building Services, Transportation, and MSCR. Principals often reach out to the Safety & Security when they have traffic-related concerns about their schools. Curriculum & Instruction supports SRTS by providing bicycle safety in Physical Education classes and manages upkeep of two bike fleets. Building Services manages school campuses and delivers the bike fleets to and from schools. Transportation oversees contracted yellow school bus and specialized transportation, and distributes Metro bus passes. MSCR embeds bike education into their summer programming and supports servicing the bike fleets.

School Traffic Safety Team

Madison has a collaborative School Traffic Safety Team (STST) that has worked on safety issues around schools since the early 2000s. The STST a multi-agency group that meets every two weeks. Agencies and staff currently represented in the STST include City Traffic Engineers, the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Administrator, Adult School Crossing Guard Supervisors, Parking Enforcement, Madison Police Department (MPD), MMSD Safety & Security, MMSD Transportation, MMSD Curriculum and Instruction, and the Wisconsin Bike Fed. The STST provided input into the SRTS planning process and will help implement the recommendations in this plan.

Wisconsin Bike Fed

The Wisconsin Bike Fed (Bike Fed) is a non-profit organization devoted to fostering and uniting active communities to advance bicycling and walking in Wisconsin through education, legislation, and infrastructure. The Bike Fed has led or assisted with the bicycle education component of SRTS programs across Wisconsin, with a focus on programs in Milwaukee and Madison. The organization employs three youth educators who provide bicycle, pedestrian, and transit education in Dane County. Bike Fed youth educators collaborate with the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Outreach Specialist and provide education at some MMSD schools, including Bicycle Driver's Education, Walking Wisdom pedestrian safety classes, transportation planning classes, bicycle and pedestrian safety classes in driver's education, summer bike camps, walk and bike to school encouragement campaigns, and assisting with the setup of local school-based bike clubs.

Figure 2.1 shows the three partner organizations and where their work overlaps with the goals of the SRTS program.

FIGURE 2.1 Each program partner has influence over multiple SRTS goals, but MMSD has influence over the most goals.

Program Funding

The Madison SRTS Program is funded through a variety of sources.

- City operating budget funds pay the adult school crossing guards and the work done by other staff in Traffic Engineering.
- The City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Outreach Specialist position is largely funded by a TAP grant from WisDOT, with the City providing a local match.
- The Wisconsin Bike Fed has applied for Federal Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grants to fund their education and encouragement efforts in Dane County. The Bike Fed raises funds independently to provide the local match for the TAP grant.
- MMSD operating budget pays for staff time, repairs to bicycles in the bike fleets, and transportation for eligible students. A small portion of bus transportation costs are reimbursed by the State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

The City and the Wisconsin Bike Fed work collaboratively to assist schools with starting and maintaining walking school buses.

How Are SRTS Programs Funded Elsewhere?

Many SRTS programs across the country depend on dedicated local revenue streams to ensure their financial viability as federal and state investment in SRTS declines or becomes less predictable. A few notable examples of funding include:

Minneapolis, MN: The school district receives a Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) grant for Minneapolis Public Schools' SRTS program, which supports universal bike education. Minneapolis also uses SRTS funds distributed by the Minnesota Department of Transportation for street projects.

Portland, OR: Portland has a 10-cent city gas tax which generates about $18 million annually for street projects. Of that, about $1.5 million per year is allocated for SRTS projects and programs.

Fort Collins, CO: The SRTS program is funded through the City's General fund. The City also has a 0.25-cent sales tax that funds pedestrian and bicycle projects. The SRTS program also receives annual grants from a local bicycle race organizer.

Boulder, CO: The City of Boulder uses SRTS funds distributed by the Colorado Department of Transportation for street projects. The Boulder Valley School District also employs a SRTS Coordinator in the Transportation Department, who helps implement bicycle education.

Equity Considerations for Encouraging Students to Walk, Bike, and Take the Bus to School

SRTS programs are often designed around a set of assumptions about time, flexibility, and perceptions of safety that do not reflect the realities faced by many low-income and BIPOC families. During engagement for this project (described in Appendix A), caregivers from these communities described thinking about risk, safety, and control in ways that differ from the framework typically embedded in SRTS programs. Many families have limited time or control over their daily schedules due to work demands, childcare logistics, or other responsibilities. For these families, driving their children to school can offer greater predictability and efficiency, allowing them to manage tight schedules and maintain a sense of control over their child's safety.

In contrast, SRTS initiatives often align more closely with the needs and capacities of families with more time or higher incomes, where barriers to walking or biking to school are more likely to be framed as infrastructure or traffic safety issues that fit neatly within the program's solutions. As a result, SRTS programs can end up primarily serving families or schools who already have the flexibility and conditions needed to participate, without adequately addressing the deeper social and cultural barriers that limit participation for others.

School bus transportation can be a fraught topic for Black families due to the historical legacy of desegregation-era busing policies. In Madison, it is also a sensitive issue for BIPOC families overall, with current school attendance boundaries that require some children to travel long distances from their neighborhoods to support school integration or balance enrollment. For example, students who live in the Cahill Main neighborhood attend Chavez Elementary, even though Leopold Elementary is much closer. As a result, there is an ongoing tension between ensuring that families—especially those in diverse and low-income neighborhoods—have access to nearby schools, and the district's goal of preventing racially segregated schools. MMSD is currently navigating this challenge as it reviews its attendance area boundaries as part of its *Building for the Future* plan. SRTS programs and principles can help mitigate some of these impacts, and these considerations are reflected in the Plan's recommendations for a Sustainable and Equitable Program (this chapter), but are also applied to the Safe Streets, Safe Campuses, Safe Behaviors, and Supportive Communities chapters that follow.

How the Madison SRTS Program Partners Incorporate Equity

The primary program partners for the Madison SRTS Program – the City, MMSD, and the Wisconsin Bike Fed – strive to deliver their services equitably and use equity as part of their core mission.

City of Madison: Establishing racial equity and social justice is a core principle in all decisions, policies, and functions of the City of Madison. Specifically, when working on SRTS planning efforts, education opportunities, and project locations, the SRTS team uses equity indicators – race and ethnicity, income, and ability – to prioritize and ensure that neighborhoods and schools that have historically been under-served are being positively impacted by and benefiting from City investments.

MMSD is committed to fostering inclusive, welcoming learning communities where every student has the opportunity to be college, career, and community ready. MMSD actively investigates and confronts systemic inequities, taking collective responsibility to disrupt them. By honoring the unique identities and strengths of every student, the district builds systems dedicated to achieving just, measurable outcomes.

Bike Fed: The Bike Fed uses an equity-based tier system to prioritize and grow school-based walking and biking activities for children and families at the highest risk of adverse health, safety, and environmental outcomes. Prioritized schools are offered a menu of services and varying levels of direct support with education, encouragement and engagement-related activities. Students involved with Bike Fed middle school and high school programs are active participants in decision making.

Existing Bus Transportation Eligibility and Programs

MMSD spent a total of about **$15.2 million** in the 2024-25 school year on student transportation, including contracted yellow bus service, specialized transportation, and transit passes. The district has different eligibility guidelines for bus transportation depending on school level:

- **Elementary school students** are eligible for yellow school bus service if they live more than 1.5 miles from their assigned school or if they live in an area that has been identified as having unusually hazardous transportation (UHT) in the district's UHT plan. In practice, most elementary students who live more than a mile from school are eligible for bus service because they live in a UHT area. As part of this strategic plan, draft criteria for UHT were developed that will help ensure consistent standards.
- **Middle school students** are typically eligible for yellow school bus service if they live more than 1.5 miles from their attendance area middle school. Because Middle School students were previously transported by the City of Madison's Metro Transit, walk areas had not been evaluated for hazards. The draft criteria for UHT will likely result in more areas being identified.
- **High school students** generally rely on other modes of transportation than riding a yellow school bus. For those who do ride the bus, a cooperative effort between MMSD and the City of Madison makes bus transportation available through Metro Transit. Students who are eligible receive Metro bus passes at no cost. If no public transportation routes are available in a high school student's neighborhood, supplemental yellow school bus transportation is provided. The City and MMSD have also partnered to offer all students in grades 6 through 12 discounted summer bus passes for Metro Transit since 2021.

There have been concerns raised about the need to provide transportation or Metro Transit bus passes for more high school students, notably for students needing transportation to after-school activities at different sites. For example, students that go to East High School might have a sports practice at La Follette High School.

The school district's ability to expand eligibility for school bus transportation and transit passes is hampered by the low levels of state aid for student transportation, especially for regular bus transportation. In the 2024-25 school year, MMSD spent about $7.5 million on regular bus transportation, and was reimbursed only $203,000. Under State Statute § 121.58 the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) reimburses school districts a total of $35 per student per school year for students that are transported between 2 and 5 miles away from school. The amount for students living between 5 and 8 miles away from school is $55 per pupil per year. MMSD does not get any reimbursement for transporting students that live closer than 2 miles, unless they live in a UHT area. DPI reimburses school districts a total of $12 per student per school year for UHT transportation. **These reimbursement rates have not changed since the 2005-06 school year.**

Sustainable and Equitable Program Recommendations

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (OR ACTIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE NEW FUNDING OR STAFF)	LONG-TERM ACTIONS (MAY REQUIRE NEW FUNDING AND/OR STAFF)	PARTNERS
Coordinate and pursue funding for both SRTS infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects.		
Coordinate SRTS-related grants and initiatives among SRTS partner agencies, as part of School Traffic Safety Team meetings. **(Traffic Engineering)**	Explore the possibility of using federal TAP funds to reimburse MMSD staff for walking school bus duties and high school student bus passes. **(MMSD Transportation)**	Engineering, MMSD Safety & Security, Bike Fed, STST
Pursue funding for this plan's infrastructure recommendations, including from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and the Federal Safe Streets for All (SS4A) program. **(Traffic Engineering)**	–	Engineering
Pursue funding for this plan's non-infrastructure recommendations from TAP, local foundations and funders, or physical education and recreation grants. **(Bike Fed, MMSD Transportation, MMSD Curriculum and Instruction, MSCR)**	Develop long-term relationships with local foundations and funders to sustain and grow school-based youth education programs. **(Bike Fed, MMSD Curriculum and Instruction)**	Traffic Engineering
Coordinate SRTS-related initiatives within MMSD.		
Coordinate with other related committees and divisions such as the Wellness Advisory Committee, Office of Student Services, and physical education teacher leaders. **(MMSD Transportation)** Share the costs of maintaining the MMSD bike fleets among the organizations that use them. **(MMSD Curriculum and Instruction, MSCR)**	☆ Hire a full- or part-time SRTS coordinator position in MMSD Transportation to develop and preserve institutional knowledge and coordinate efforts within MMSD. **(MMSD Transportation)**	MMSD Safety & Security

☆ *Indicates an action is a priority.*

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (OR ACTIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE NEW FUNDING OR STAFF)	LONG-TERM ACTIONS (MAY REQUIRE NEW FUNDING AND/OR STAFF)	PARTNERS
Support and promote programs that provide adult chaperones for students walking and biking to school, such as walking school buses (cross-listed under Supportive Culture)		
Encourage all schools to establish walking school buses but prioritize support and coordination to schools that are using walking school buses to address attendance issues. **(MMSD Transportation, MMSD District Attendance Team, MMSD Student & Staff Support)**	In areas where an unusually hazardous transportation designation is removed, replace busing with walking school buses. **(MMSD Transportation, MMSD District Attendance Team, MMSD Student & Staff Support)**	Traffic Engineering
Create a toolkit for schools to use to promote walking school buses, including tip sheets, Frequently Asked Questions, and example forms. **(MMSD District Attendance Team, MMSD Student & Staff Support, Traffic Engineering)**	☆ Pay MMSD staff or local community center staff to lead walking school buses **(MMSD District Attendance Team, MMSD Student & Staff Support)**	Traffic Engineering
Update bus transportation processes and programs.		
☆ Update UHT plan by applying the draft UHT criteria (developed as part of this Plan) to all elementary and middle school attendance areas. **(MMSD Transportation)**	Conduct an annual review of UHT areas to proactively support student safety. As safety infrastructure is built and areas no longer qualify as UHT, develop and implement communication plans for families and students. **(MMSD Transportation)**	–
Evaluate cost/benefit to different strategies to address fights between students on buses (applies to both yellow school buses and Madison Metro buses). **(MMSD Transportation, MMSD Safety & Security)**	Implement strategies to address fights between students on buses. **(MMSD Transportation)**	Madison Metro
Support efforts for legislation to increase state aid for pupil transportation. **(City of Madison, MMSD, Bike Fed)**	☆ If or when state aid for pupil transportation is increased, expand eligibility for MMSD middle and high school students to receive free Metro bus passes **(MMSD Transportation)**	–

☆ *Indicates an action is a priority.*

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (OR ACTIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE NEW FUNDING OR STAFF)	LONG-TERM ACTIONS (MAY REQUIRE NEW FUNDING AND/OR STAFF)	PARTNERS
Draw attendance areas that maintain neighborhood schools and limit time spent on buses.		
Prioritize neighborhood-schools by maximizing proximity to the school in the *Building for the Future* attendance area plan currently under development. Avoid attendance boundaries that force students who live in "pockets" of neighborhoods to attend schools far from their homes. **(MMSD Strategy and Innovation, MMSD Transportation)**	–	–
☆ **Regularly evaluate the program.**		
Evaluate efforts to increase the number of children safely walking and bicycling to school at regular intervals/ biannually. Suggested performance measures are on the following page. **(MMSD Transportation, Traffic Engineering, Bike Fed)**	Conduct regular, recurring student travel tallies to understand how students travel to school at each school **(MMSD Transportation)**	–

☆ *Indicates an action is a priority.*

Performance Measures and Outcomes for Madison SRTS

The success of implementing this plan depends on ongoing evaluation, accountability, and coordination across partners. Nine measures were selected due to the availability of data, the importance of the measure, and how they relate to the plan goals.

MEASURES	TARGET	BASELINE (2026, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)
Existence of a SRTS Coordinator	Hire SRTS Coordinator	None
Chronic absenteeism rate for all students[8]	10%	31%
Number of children 5-18 years old involved in serious or fatal crashes while walking or biking annually[9]	Zero	4.6
Number of projects in public right of way where City has made safety improvements identified in school infrastructure plans	100% (of XX projects)	0
Number of projects on school campuses where District has made safety improvements identified in school infrastructure plans	100% (of XX projects)	0
Number of MMSD schools with bicycle, pedestrian, or transit education or encouragement programs	Increasing	26 schools (2025-26 school year)
Number of children reached with bicycle, pedestrian, or transit education or encouragement programs offered in the City of Madison (including summer camps)	Increasing	2,850 (2025 calendar year)
Number of MMSD schools with regular walking school buses	Increasing	6 schools (2025-2026 school year)
Percent of MMSD students walking, biking, or taking the bus to and from school	Increasing	Elementary: 14% walk or bike, 36% bus Middle: 21% walk or bike, 51% bus High: 17% walk or bike, 25% bus

TARGET DATE

It is the goal of MMSD, the City, and the Bike Fed to achieve the targets on this page by 2036 (in 10 years).

8 Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) defines chronic absenteeism as students who missed more than 10% of school days. The rates shown here are from the 2023-24 school year, as reported on DPI's 2024-25 MMSD District report card

9 Wisconsin DT4000 Crash Data (2017-2023) reports 32 fatal or serious crashes in Madison for pedestrians or bicyclists between the ages of 5 and 18 for the 7-year period. This number includes all crashes, not just school-related crashes.

“The more kids that bike or walk to school, the safer it becomes for everyone. Drivers get used to seeing kids on foot or bike, and fewer parents rushing to drop off reduces risky behavior.”

—Madison resident

3

Safe Streets

Chapter 3: Safe Streets

Providing infrastructure that allows people to walk and bicycle to school safely is an essential first step in SRTS efforts. The actions under this goal focus on improving the physical infrastructure of streets, sidewalks, and paths within 1-2 miles of schools, so there are safer places to walk and bike to school. Efforts often focus on reducing motor vehicle speeds, encouraging driver yielding at pedestrian crossing locations, providing separated pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and improving lighting to improve traffic safety and/or personal security.

Existing Programs for Safer Streets

School Traffic Safety Team

As previously mentioned, the STST includes representatives from Traffic Engineering, Parking Enforcement, Madison Police Department (MPD), MMSD, and the Bike Fed. The STST discusses traffic safety concerns around schools and works in a holistic way to address them.

Safe Streets Madison

This funding program works to ensure that Madison streets are comfortable and accessible for everyone by focusing on small- to medium-sized projects that improve traffic safety and fill gaps in the walking and biking network. The City selects projects twice a year using a ranking system that includes crash history, project impact, equity, and cost. Some Safe Streets projects are incorporated into planned City street construction projects. The City also makes pedestrian safety improvements proactively as part of all street reconstruction projects. In 2026, the City added SRTS infrastructure projects as a prioritized project type to the Safe Streets Madison program.

Adult School Crossing Guards

The City hires, trains, and manages crossing guards who help at locations near MMSD elementary schools. Requests for crossing guards received from principals are evaluated for student use and the hazards faced at that location including vehicle gap availability, traffic speed, sight distance, safety history, intersection design, and turning traffic volume.

An adult crossing guard at Lindbergh Elementary School assists students crossing the street.

Vision Zero

Vision Zero is both a commitment and a data-driven initiative that seeks to eliminate traffic deaths and severe injuries for all street, sidewalk, and bikeway users. As part of Vision Zero, the City recently completed its “20 is Plenty” campaign which reduced the speed limit on nearly all neighborhood residential streets from 25 mph to 20 mph.

Signing, Pavement Marking and Traffic Signals

Traffic Engineering maintains signs, pavement markings, and traffic signals across Madison. The City uses two standard crosswalk types, standard (transverse) and continental (high visibility), to help draw attention to areas that pedestrians and bicyclists cross streets. Traffic Engineering selects crossings with high pedestrian and bicyclist activity for the higher visibility crosswalks. The City performs routine crosswalk maintenance on these crosswalks and ensures that deficient markings are refreshed by August before school starts. The Signing and Pavement Marking program oversees installation and replacement of signs that are relevant to school traffic safety, such as School Speed Limit sign assemblies, school crossing signs, driver speed feedback boards, and parking restriction signs. Traffic signal design and timing can also adjusted to help pedestrian crossings where appropriate.

School Infrastructure Planning

School infrastructure plans were developed for over half of the MMSD schools as part of this planning effort. A methodology was developed to prioritize schools that included four measures that align with this project's goals: the number of MMSD students living near each school, the location of busy streets near each school, whether each school is in or near a City of Madison Equity Priority Area (EPA), and the percentage of each school's enrollment that is economically disadvantaged and non-white (Figure 3.1). All 50 MMSD schools were scored and ranked according to the sum of the scores for all four criteria.

FIGURE 3.1 School Prioritization Criteria

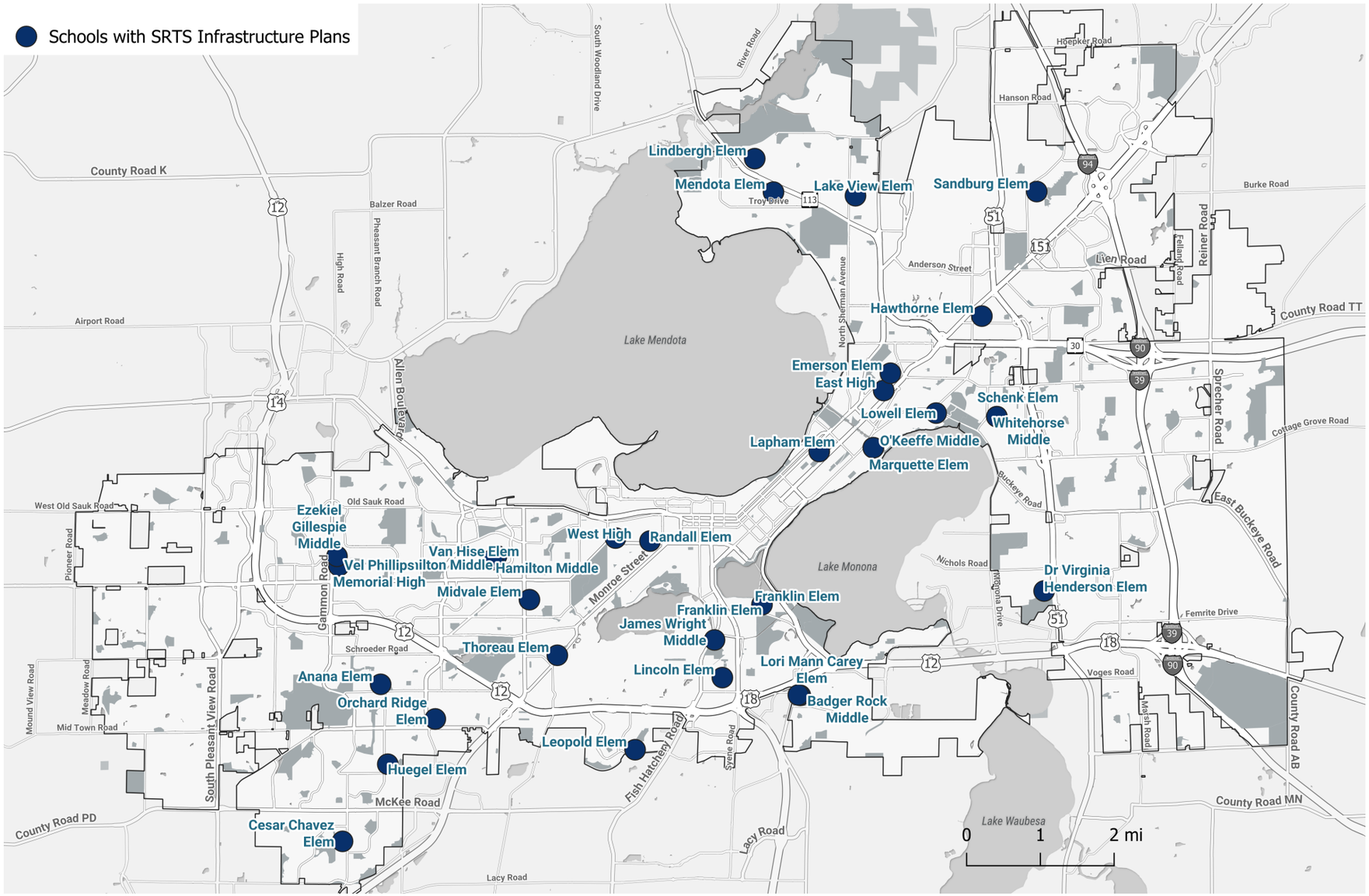
PROJECT GOAL	MEASURE
Supportive Culture	Number of MMSD students in census blocks that are within ¼ mile of school. Score is 0-10, grouped into three classes of student density.
Safe Streets	Number of collector and arterial streets within ¼ mile of school. Points for the number of streets are cumulative, with a theoretical maximum of 15 points.
Equitable Program	School is in or near an Equity Priority Area. Score is 0-10, with schools in equity priority areas getting the highest score.
Equitable Program	School with higher percentage of economically disadvantaged & non-white students. Score is 1-10, directly derived from an index value that combines these two percentages.

Infrastructure plans were developed for 23 schools as part of this project and Traffic Engineering is separately developing nine additional plans, resulting in infrastructure plans for 32 schools. Traffic Engineering staff will continue to develop infrastructure plans for the remaining schools as time and funding allows. Two deliverables were developed for each school infrastructure plan:

- A Traffic Safety Brochure, showing the recommended arrival and dismissal process for parents and caregivers. The Traffic Safety Brochures are meant to help schools communicate desired expectations for caregiver behavior during drop off and pick up for all modes of travel.
- A school SRTS infrastructure plan, which sets forth the primary safety concerns around each school and the recommended infrastructure to address those concerns. The recommended infrastructure includes both on-campus infrastructure such as sidewalks and bike racks, as well as recommendations within the public right-of-way such as changes to parking restrictions, street signs, or crosswalk safety improvements.

The traffic safety brochures and school infrastructure plans are standalone documents and are not included in this plan, although an example brochure and plan is included in Appendices B and C. The schools for which infrastructure plans were developed are shown in Figure 3.2.

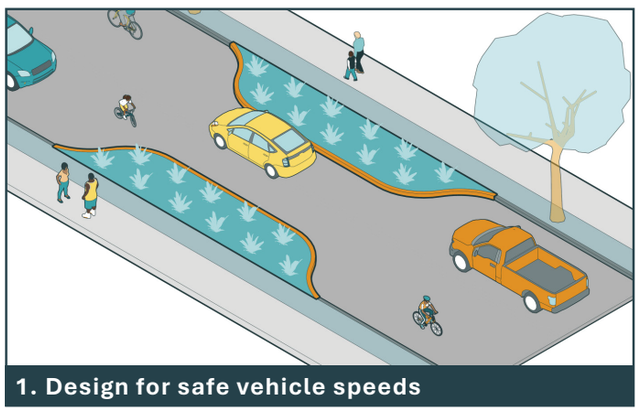
FIGURE 3.2 Schools where infrastructure plans were developed under this project.



Design Principles for Children's Travel

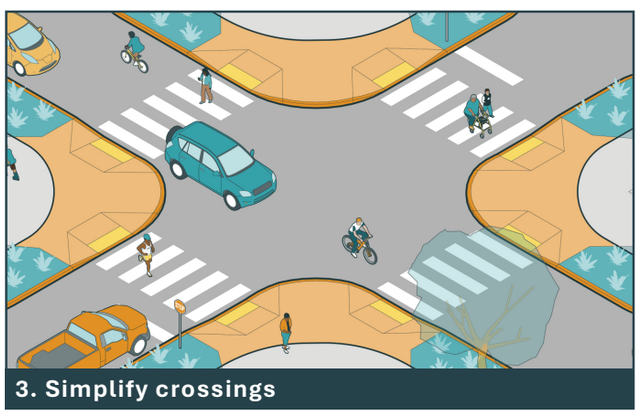
Children are not just small adults—they have different physical and cognitive capabilities. The four design principles described here are based on both previous research on children and the most common crash types involving children. These principles should be considered when designing streets and intersections where children are expected.

FIGURE 3.3 The four design principles for making streets and intersections safer for children.

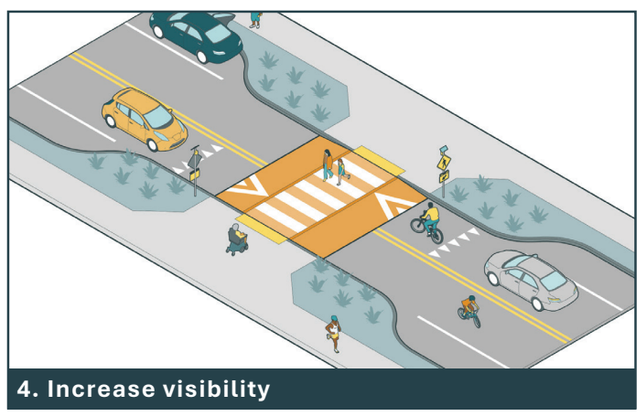


1. Design for safe vehicle speeds

2. Provide dedicated space for walking/biking



3. Simplify crossings



4. Increase visibility

Design for safe vehicle speeds

Due to their size, children are more likely to sustain severe and fatal injuries than adults, and their growing and developing bodies also make them more susceptible to impacts from all types of injuries.[10] Children are also more vulnerable to SUVs and trucks, which make up a growing portion of vehicles on U.S. streets. SUVs and trucks are heavier and have a higher profile, which makes it more likely that a child will get hit in their vital organs.[11] To design for safe speeds, narrow travel lanes, coordinate signal timing, and include traffic calming features.

Provide dedicated space for walking/biking

Younger children do not have good impulse control, and require space separated from traffic, with enough separation where a mistake would not put a child in the path of vehicles. Providing sidewalks and paths helps by identifying a safe space for them to use. At intersections, a median island gives children space to wait to cross.

10 Lambert, D., Pullen-Seufert, N. & Peters, O. (2024). Creating Accessible, Equitable, Safe, and Complete Networks for Young Pedestrians. Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center. Accessed 4/3/2026.

11 Mickey Edwards, Daniel Leonard, Effects of Large Vehicles on Pedestrian and Pedal-Cyclist Injury Severity, Journal of Safety Research, Volume 82, 2022, Pages 275-282, ISSN 0022-4375

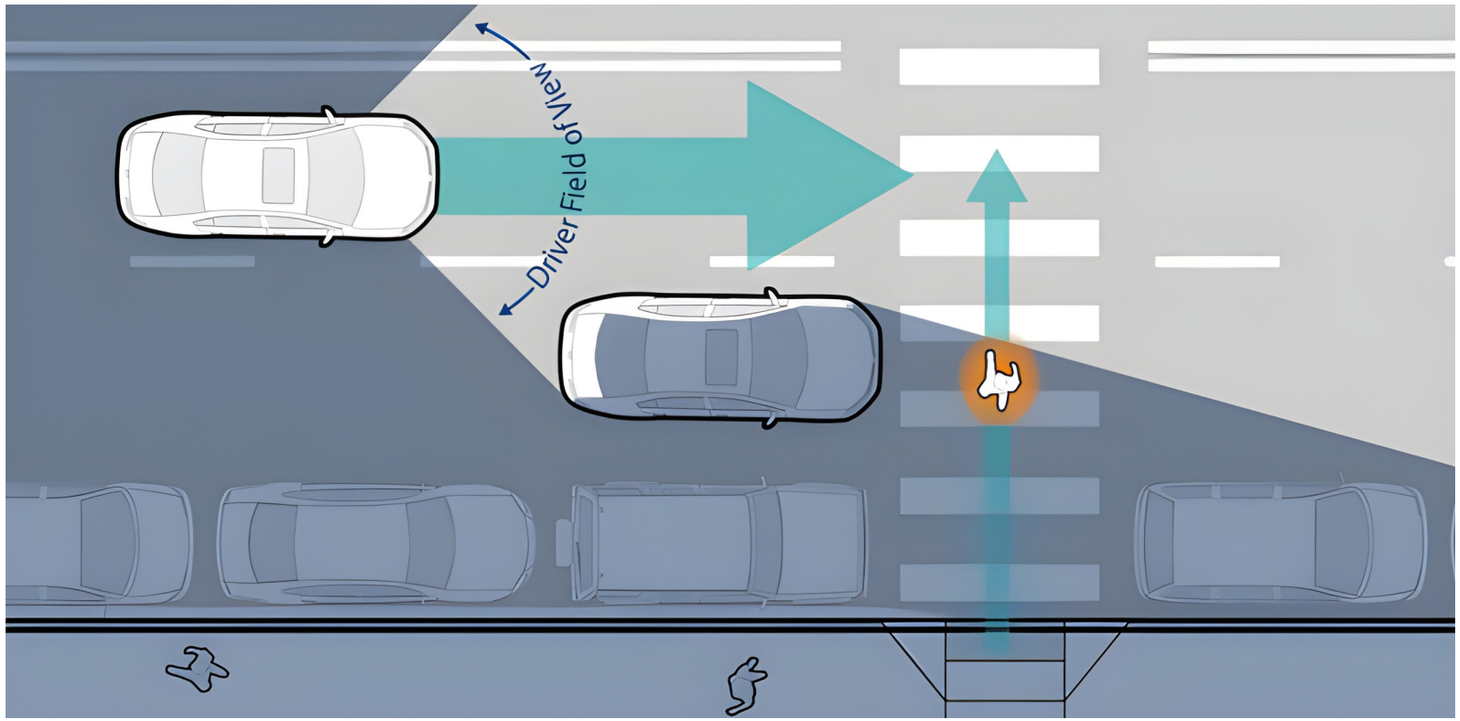
Simplify Crossings

Children under 10 have difficulty judging gaps in traffic and the speed and distance of motor vehicles; once they do decide to cross; they take longer to act. They also have difficulty juggling cognitive and motor skills simultaneously. Children also have less experience, and often defer to adults, which makes them uniquely vulnerable to a "multiple threat" crash (see Figure 3.4) in which an adult driver may yield or even wave them across an intersection when it is unsafe for them to cross. To simplify crossings, reduce the number of lanes that children are expected to cross or provide pedestrian median islands that allow them to make two-stage crossings.

Increase visibility

Children are physically smaller, which means they are harder to see behind visual obstructions like parked cars or a hilly street. Design features such as curb extensions, raised crosswalks, restricting parking near crosswalks, or pedestrian median islands increase visibility.

FIGURE 3.4 An illustration of the multiple threat crash type



Safe Streets Recommendations

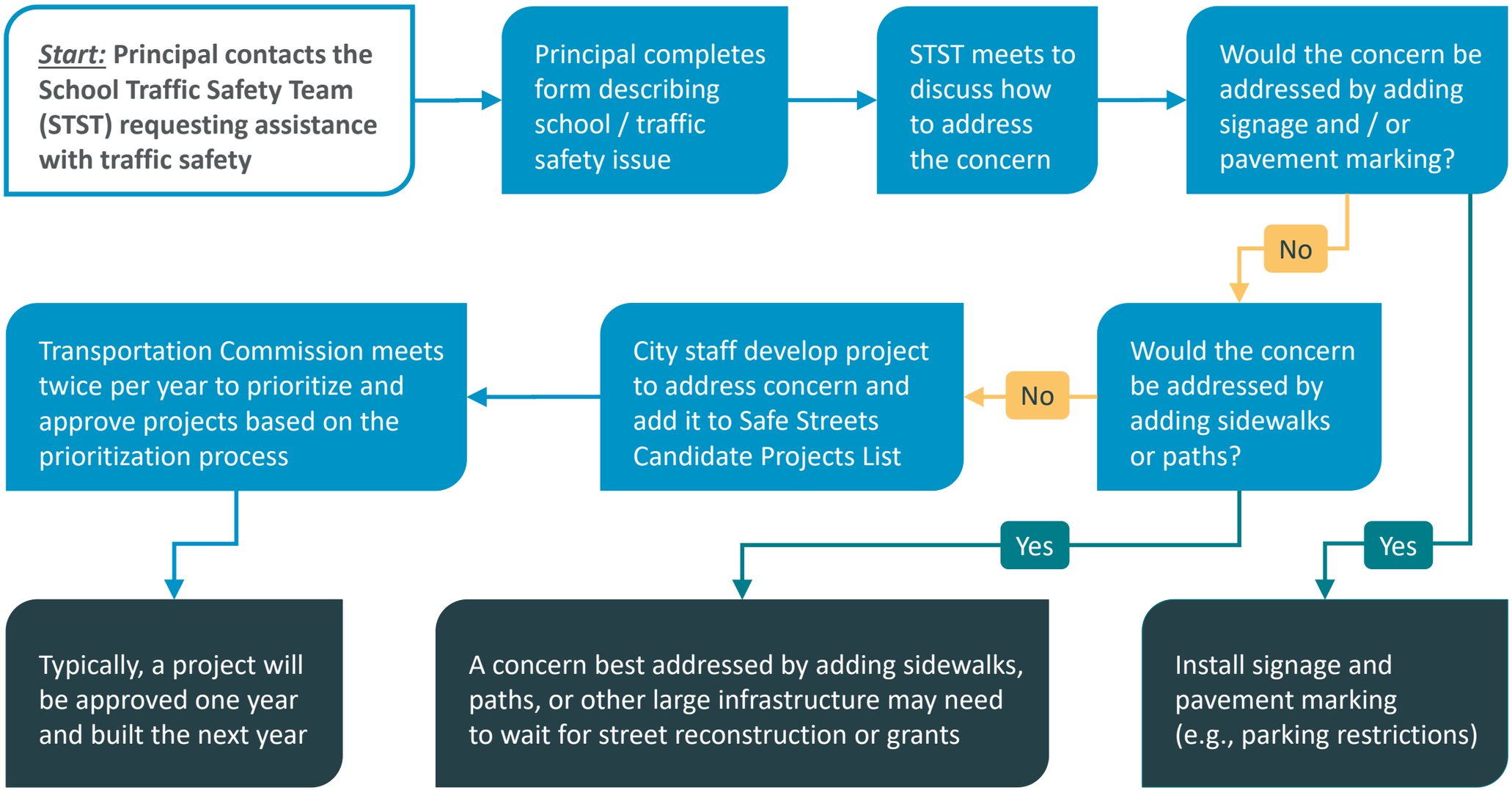
SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (OR ACTIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE NEW FUNDING OR STAFF)	LONG-TERM ACTIONS (MAY REQUIRE NEW FUNDING AND/OR STAFF)	PARTNERS
Complete safety improvements near schools.		
☆ Complete SRTS infrastructure plans for each MMSD school. **(Traffic Engineering)**	☆ Implement the infrastructure recommendations included in school travel plans. **(Traffic Engineering, MMSD Building and Grounds)**	MMSD Safety & Security, STST, Engineering
Develop an internal form and clear process that principals can use to request new safety improvements near schools. A suggested process is shown in Figure 3.5. **(Traffic Engineering)**	☆ Work with Dane County and WisDOT to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety along and across their facilities where they present obstacles to safety near schools. **(Traffic Engineering)**	MMSD Safety & Security, STST, Dane County, WisDOT
Continue to prioritize safety during street repaving and reconstruction projects.		
Continue to engage the school community during the project development process and ensure that the process includes an evaluation of school safety concerns. **(Engineering, Traffic Engineering)**	–	MMSD Safety & Security, MMSD Transportation, STST, Bike Fed
Continue to plan for safety improvements to be made as part of street reconstruction projects near schools. **(Engineering, Traffic Engineering)**	–	Traffic Engineering, MMSD Building Services, STST

☆ *Indicates an action is a priority.*

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (OR ACTIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE NEW FUNDING OR STAFF)	LONG-TERM ACTIONS (MAY REQUIRE NEW FUNDING AND/OR STAFF)	PARTNERS
Develop consistent citywide guidance around signings, markings, and street design near schools.		
Develop a citywide process for assigning school zone speed limits, using the default speed limit of 15mph. **(Traffic Engineering)**	Consider upgrading school zone speed limit signs to use flashing beacons that activate during arrival and dismissal time periods. **(Traffic Engineering)**	–
Develop clear selection criteria for upgrading crosswalk markings and installing curb extensions, median islands, RRFBs, yield signs and markings, and other enhancements near schools. **(Traffic Engineering)**	☆ Minimize the risk of multiple threat crashes near schools by reducing traffic lanes, installing traffic signals, and/or adding raised intersections or crosswalks to slow speeds. **(Traffic Engineering)**	Engineering
Paint curbs yellow near schools where caregivers should not park, where sight distance or safety concerns warrant it. **(Traffic Engineering)**	–	STST
Conduct regular checks on signs and markings on streets near schools.		
Continue to perform routine crosswalk maintenance and ensure that deficient markings are refreshed annually before school starts. **(Traffic Engineering)**	–	–
Ensure all Adult School Crossing Guard locations are within a reduced school speed limit zone and have high visibility markings. **(Traffic Engineering)**	–	–
Conduct regular evaluations of crossing guard locations.		
Continue to use the Elementary School Crossing Protection Criteria (Adopted 2025) to evaluate requests for new Adult Student Crossing Guard locations and existing guard locations. **(Traffic Engineering)**	–	–

☆ *Indicates an action is a priority.*

FIGURE 3.5 This plan recommends that Traffic Engineering develop an internal form that principals can use to request safety improvements near schools. The figure below suggests a process.



“Bikes are much smaller than cars. East has limited space for parking and bikes allow for better use of space.”

—MMSD student

4

Safe Campuses

Chapter 4: Safe Campuses

Ensuring that each school campus is accessible is a goal that MMSD and individual schools largely control. Arrival and dismissal procedures support safe walking and bicycling, and the school site is designed to be safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and students arriving by bus or car. Adequate and secure bicycle parking is also essential to accessible campuses.

Existing Strategies to Make School Campuses Safer

Developing safe campuses is a responsibility shared between school leadership and the MMSD **Safety & Security** and **Building Services** departments. All paths, driveways, and sidewalks on school campuses need to be safe and accessible for students during arrival and dismissal. The following are three opportunities to achieve more accessible school campuses through communications, design changes, and arrival/dismissal procedures.

School Traffic Safety Brochures

Clear communication with caregivers and parents about arrival and dismissal behaviors is essential for everybody's safety and operational efficiency. Many MMSD elementary schools have traffic safety brochures or similar documents they share with families and caregivers to communicate arrival and dismissal procedures and traffic safety tips. For example, Sandburg Elementary has a detailed process in which different grade levels enter and leave specific doors. However, many school brochures were out of date prior to this SRTS planning effort. As part of SRTS school infrastructure plans, the project team and City staff developed new school traffic safety brochures for the 32 schools shown in Figure 3.2. An example traffic safety brochure is shown in the Appendix.

School Renovations and Changes to Campuses

Several MMSD schools have recently undergone major renovations and, thanks to the recent facilities referendum, an additional 10 schools across seven sites are currently being planned for renovation or full reconstruction. This work presents an opportunity to prioritize the safety of children walking and bicycling to school. Many of the planned sites are proposed to be rebuilt with driveway drop off loops, which make it safer and more convenient for students who are driven to school but can impact the convenience and safety for students who walk. Site plan reviews for future school renovations and reconstructions should closely consider improved pedestrian and bicycle circulation and bicycle parking, when applicable.

Safety and MMSD

MMSD strives to make its buildings and campus spaces where all students feel and are safe, to allow them to strive as scholars and individuals. Two MMSD departments are involved in overseeing the Safe Campus recommended actions in this plan.

Safety & Security creates safety plans, emergency procedures, reporting methods, and communication strategies for all MMSD schools. While much of the Office of School Safety's work revolves around in-school safety, they do serve as a key stakeholder to the Madison SRTS Program, because they are often the first place that a principal will turn when safety concerns arise. The Safety & Security website has more information about the program.

Building Services manages, maintains, and upgrades the buildings and grounds of MMSD school sites. They are involved in overseeing changes to campuses to improve safety. The director of Building Services also oversees the Transportation & Logistics department, making them an important champion of the Madison SRTS program. The Building Services website has more information.

Both departments are represented on the School Traffic Safety Team.

Best Practices for Arrival and Dismissal Operations

Simple changes such as releasing different grade levels through different doors can result in smoother and safer operations during arrival and dismissal. Based on observations of arrival and dismissal traffic at Madison schools, following these general principles can lead to safer outcomes:

School entrances should be more convenient for walkers than for drivers. The distance between the street sidewalk and the school entrance should be shorter than the distance from the caregiver drop off area.

Separate pedestrians, bicycles, caregiver vehicles, and buses. Pedestrians should not have to cross driveways that will be used by caregiver vehicles or taxis. Bicyclists should not share sidewalk space with pedestrians.

Distribute traffic around the school. Many MMSD schools do this, either by assigning certain doors to certain grade levels, or by having buses at one entrance, and caregiver vehicles at a different entrance. This may not be possible when the school is on a busy or high-speed street.

A little traffic congestion is okay. Having vehicles parked or stopped in front of the school during arrival and dismissal leads to slower traffic for all vehicles, including people who are not dropping off or picking up. As long as drivers are behaving safely, there may not be an issue.

Drop off and pick up on the school side of the street. Encourage caregivers to drop off and pick up on the school side of the street or parking lot, or to park and walk at designated crosswalks. The City of Madison can change street parking restrictions to be more compatible with what school leadership wants caregivers to do during dismissal.

Be careful about relying on drop off loops for caregiver vehicles. A variety of safety concerns are observed at Madison schools that utilize drop off loops or parking lots for student drop off. These include long queues into or out of drop off loop or parking lot; risk of crashes between students walking on the sidewalk and drivers entering or exiting the lot; risk of crashes between students walking in the parking lot and drivers in the parking lot; and risk of crashes between drivers turning out of the parking lot and drivers on the street.

Older students are more independent. At middle and high schools, school leadership should encourage families to have their middle or high school student walk, bike, or take the bus home when possible. At a minimum, older students can be expected to walk a block or two from the school during dismissal to meet a family member or caregiver.

The bike racks at East High School are heavily used.

Safe Campus Recommendations

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (OR ACTIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE NEW FUNDING OR STAFF)	LONG-TERM ACTIONS (MAY REQUIRE NEW FUNDING AND/OR STAFF)	PARTNERS
Plan and design new school sites to make it convenient and safe to walk and bike to school.		
When school sites are reconstructed or redeveloped, collaborate with City of Madison on street projects adjacent to the site that improve safety. **(MMSD)**	Collaborate between MMSD and the City of Madison to plan for elementary schools located in newly-planned or platted neighborhoods to maximize student access. **(MMSD)**	Planning, Traffic Engineering, Engineering
Ensure that on-campus pedestrian and bicyclist circulation is required for new campuses and retrofitted for existing campuses whenever driveways or parking lots are repaved or reconstructed. **(MMSD Building Services)**	–	MMSD Safety & Security
Update the city parking lot site plan approval packet to consider pedestrian circulation. **(Community Development)**	–	Traffic Engineering, STST
Invest in walking and biking infrastructure on existing campuses.		
When paths on school grounds are re-paved, widen them to current bicycle design standards (minimum of 12 feet where bicycles and pedestrians are anticipated to mix). **(MMSD Building Services)**	☆ Improve the safety and visibility of crosswalks in school parking lots by adding high-visibility markings, building raised crosswalks, or adding signs or parking restrictions. **(MMSD Building Services)**	–
Conduct a bike parking inventory to identify schools that do not have enough bike parking or concrete pads for bike parking. **(MMSD Building Services)**	Proactively install bike racks affixed to concrete at all schools. Select bicycle racks that meet the criteria set forth in the Bike Parking Guidelines published by the Association of Pedestrian & Bicycle Professionals. Bike parking areas should be connected by paved walkways to primary doors. **(MMSD Building Services)**	Bike Fed

☆ *Indicates an action is a priority.*

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (OR ACTIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE NEW FUNDING OR STAFF)	LONG-TERM ACTIONS (MAY REQUIRE NEW FUNDING AND/OR STAFF)	PARTNERS
Regularly update and maintain signs and markings in school parking lots and driveways.		
Ensure that pedestrian crossings are clearly marked with supplementary signs, if necessary. **(MMSD Building Services)**	Develop standard signs and markings to regulate parking and caregiver vehicle and bus circulation on school grounds. Consider using positive language, e.g. "drop off here" instead of "no parking". **(MMSD Building Services)**	STST
Refresh crosswalk and other pavement markings in school parking lots on a rotating schedule. **(MMSD Building Services)**	Inventory school parking lot signs and replace or remove obsolete, faded, or broken signs. **(MMSD Building Services)**	–
Promote consistent arrival and dismissal procedures.		
Contact all schools in August to remind them to update traffic safety brochures and send them to caregivers before the start of school. **(MMSD Transportation)**	☆ Continue to develop school traffic safety brochures for all MMSD schools. **(Traffic Engineering)**	Bike Fed, MMSD Safety & Security
Follow best practices for student and caregiver arrival and dismissal for walking, biking, busing, alternative transportation, and private cars. **(STST, MMSD Safety & Security)**	–	MMSD Transportation, Traffic Engineering, Bike Fed

☆ *Indicates an action is a priority.*

“Children who have independence and autonomy develop accountability and exercise. They are also likely to grow into adults who walk and bike.”

—MMSD parent

5

Safe Behaviors

Chapter 5: Safe Behaviors

Getting people to safely drive, bike, and walk requires a combination of education and enforcement initiatives for students, caregivers, and the general public. This plan includes recommendations for driver safety education; pedestrian, bicycle and transit training; and other context-appropriate programs to encourage safe behaviors, such as progressive ticketing[12] for certain offenses (for example, parking violations).

Existing Efforts to Encourage Safe Behavior

Educational and enforcement efforts to promote safe behavior are provided by a mix of MMSD, City, and Bike Fed initiatives:

Driver's Education

Driver safety education is no longer offered consistently in schools in Madison, nor across the state. The State of Wisconsin stopped funding the program in 2004, resulting in many districts (including MMSD) reducing or ending drivers education programs in schools. MSCR does currently provide a free summer driver's education course for income-eligible high school students in MMSD.

Parking and Traffic Enforcement

The City's Parking Enforcement Division has officers routinely rotate through school areas during arrival and dismissal to observe traffic behavior and enforce parking regulations designed to promote traffic safety around schools. The City's Traffic Enforcement and Safety Team (TEST) conducts traffic enforcement throughout the city, including near schools during arrival and dismissal periods. Both teams may make more frequent visits to schools as requested by the School Traffic Safety Team. Depending on the offense, enforcement efforts often begin by providing educational materials to drivers before progressing to ticketing.

MMSD Physical Education

The MMSD Curriculum & Instruction - Health and Physical Education team owns two bike fleets – one for middle school students and one for elementary school students. Physical Education teachers at schools can request that the bike fleet be delivered to their school. Three middle schools currently use the middle school bike fleet, and eight elementary schools use the elementary bike fleet.

The district holds annual professional development for teachers interested in teaching bicycle safety education in partnership with the Bike Fed. In recent years, professional learning has been offered individually based on teacher need or when they request to use the bikes. Some schools also own their own bike fleets, which they use for both bike safety education and field trips.

The Curriculum & Instruction bike fleets are also used for bicycle safety education in MSCR after school programs at middle schools, and during summer camp programs offered by MSCR.

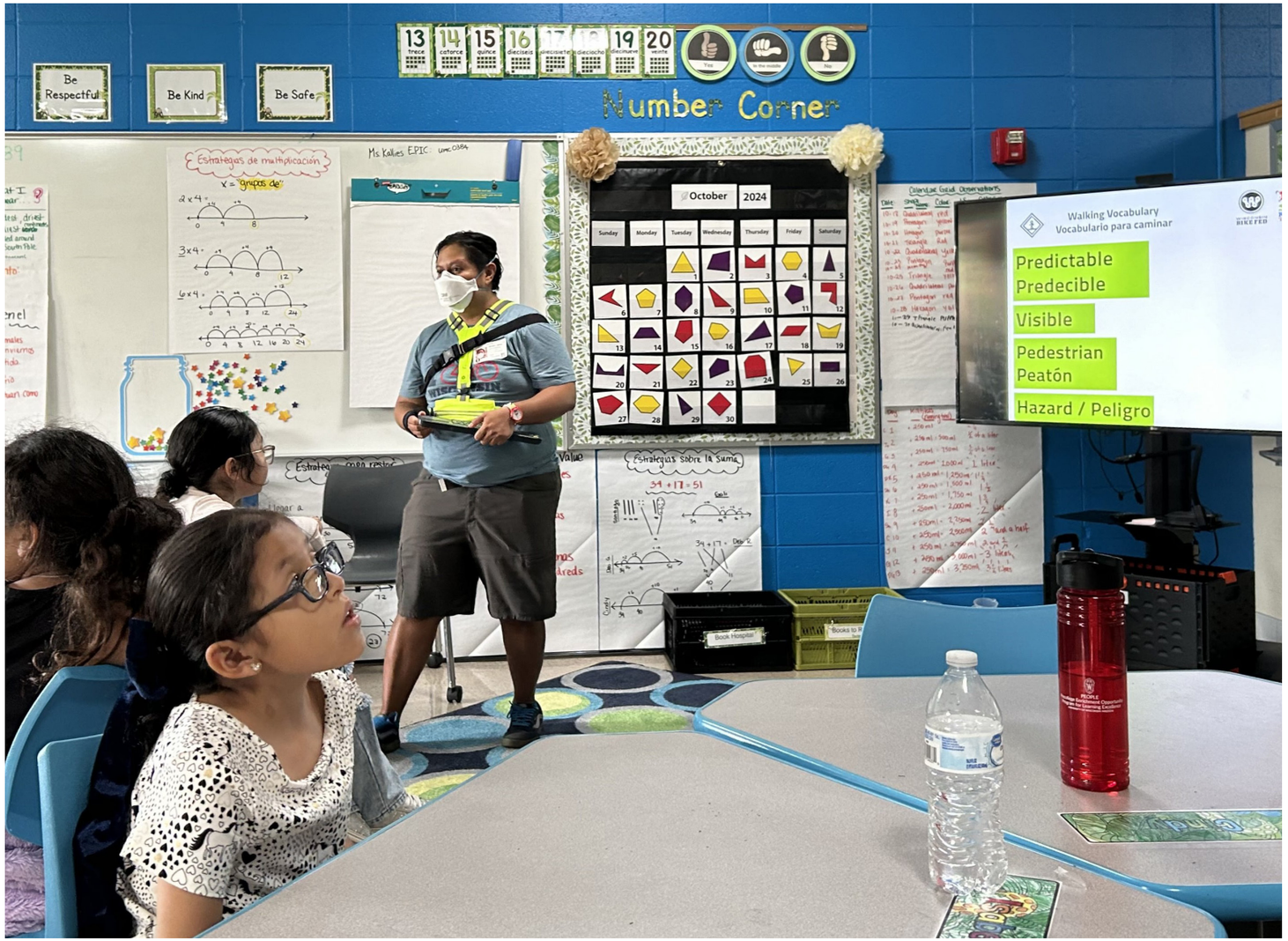
12 Progressive ticketing is a multiple-stage enforcement strategy that seeks to inform before giving a ticket. The stages often include education as the first effort (through flyers or verbal conversations), then a warning, and lastly, a ticket.

Bike Fed Safety Education Programs

The Bike Fed employs three youth educators, two full-time and one part-time, who provide bicycle, pedestrian, and transit education in Dane County. Bike Fed youth educators collaborate with the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Outreach Specialist and MMSD Department of Curriculum and Instruction to offer a variety of educational programs. The safe behavior education programs designed by the Bike Fed and taught in MMSD schools include:

- *Walking Wisdom,* a two-hour course taught over two days, focuses on safety while walking, typically taught to 1-3rd graders. This course is offered in approximately three schools each year.
- *Bike Driver's Ed,* a bicycle safety course which takes place over 6-10 lessons. It is designed for use for 4th and 5th grades but used with other elementary and middle school grades. This is offered in about four schools each year.

Walking Wisdom and *Bike Driver's Ed* and are excellent programs, but they are not implemented in a systematic way at all Madison schools. The Bike Fed educators also incorporate *Bike Drivers' Ed* lessons and skills during summer bike camps offered through MSCR, Centro Hispano, Wright Middle School, and other partners.



A Bike Fed instructor teaching the classroom component of the Walking Wisdom course.

Managing a Bike Fleet

Managing a bike fleet for a school takes a mix of planning, organization, and clear responsibility to ensure that bikes are safe, available when needed, and treated as shared resource. The following steps can lead to successful management of shared fleets:

- Assign a fleet manager to oversee scheduling, rules, and daily oversight. Ideally, the fleet manager can take care of basic maintenance such as fixing flat tires and adjusting brakes.
- Create clear check-out and return procedures for staff to communicate when bicycles need maintenance. For example, staff can identify bikes with issues by turning their seats backwards.
- Organizations or agencies that share bike fleets should share the cost of maintenance.
- Teachers and staff must set expectations for student bike care and responsible riding behavior.

Ongoing maintenance and record-keeping are just as important as daily operations. With consistent upkeep and student involvement, a school bike fleet can remain reliable and cost-effective year after year. The bike fleet manager should:

- Schedule basic check-ups regularly when the bike fleet is in heavy use during warmer months.
- Explore using a mobile bicycle mechanic service for scheduled repairs to simplify the process.
- Schedule a more thorough tune-up for all bikes in the bike fleet annually.
- Budget annually for replacement parts, upgrades, and new bikes.

Best Practices for Walking and Biking Education Programs in Madison

Walking and biking education programs are essential to ensuring that students understand how to navigate their streets safely while on foot or bike, but also introduce them to walking and biking as legitimate forms of transportation to and from school. Many bicycle and pedestrian educational programs across the country, including in Madison, are implemented on an at-request basis. This can mean that the schools that have the most resources are the ones that have the bandwidth to request additional programming such as bike clubs or bike camps, which is not an equitable approach. **When implementing walking and biking education programs, MMSD and partners should remember the goals of this plan:**

- **Sustainable and Equitable Program.** For the program to be sustainable, it needs to provide paid professional development to staff doing pedestrian and bicycle training so they have the preparation and resources they need to be successful. For the program to be equitable, it should focus attention on helping under-served communities get access to bicycles and bicycle safety education. For example, O'Keeffe's Middle School's MSCR bike club is organized around helping students who live in the Truax apartments (a low-income housing area) get to and from school.
- **Safe Streets.** Focus pedestrian and bicycle safety efforts on showing students how to safely walk or bike near their school using the crossings, RRFBs, and traffic signals near their school.
- **Safe Campuses.** Bring students attention to common safety issues on their own campus and how to stay safe. Students in older grades can participate in planning and implementing safety strategies for their arrival and dismissal process.
- **Safe Behaviors.** Pedestrian and bicycle education should be organized around the most common causes of crashes for each age group, and teach students the skills they need to avoid those crashes.
- **Supportive Culture.** Once the bike unit is over, ensure students have access to bicycles, helmets, and locks so they can continue biking if they want.

In addition, the walking and biking education programs should aim for the following:

- **A sequential approach, building on skills learned in younger grades.** For example, students could learn how to balance a bike in kindergarten using a balance bike. Students in 1st or 2nd grade learn how to start, maneuver, and stop a bike with pedals and brakes. Older elementary students learn how to enter the street safely, look over their left shoulder to scan for traffic, and how to ride safely on sidewalks.
- **Universal education.** Having programs at all schools ensures that no one misses out, and students that move between schools will have the same skills.
- **Leverage the unique strengths of MMSD, MSCR, the City, and the Bike Fed.** Bicycling and pedestrian education should be designed to fund programs that promote meaningful collaboration and bring together partners' expertise to strengthen programs for students. MMSD Physical Education teachers are best at educating and engaging students as skilled, professional educators. The Bike Fed are experts at bike and pedestrian safety education, bike logistics and maintenance, and applying for grants. MSCR has staff at most elementary and middle schools who can engage students outside of school time. The City can help coordinate efforts among partners.

Safe Behavior Recommendations

☆ *Indicates an action is a priority.*

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (OR ACTIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE NEW FUNDING OR STAFF)	LONG-TERM ACTIONS (MAY REQUIRE NEW FUNDING AND/OR STAFF)	PARTNERS
Provide pedestrian safety education to all elementary students.		
☆ Incorporate pedestrian safety education learning standards into MMSD physical education or other spaces as approved. **(MMSD Curriculum & Instruction)**	☆ Ensure all students receive pedestrian education by 2nd grade. **(MMSD Curriculum & Instruction)**	Bike Fed, Traffic Engineering
Promote collaboration between school staff to share tips and resources for pedestrian safety education across campuses. **(MMSD Curriculum & Instruction)**	Provide professional development to PE teachers about teaching pedestrian safety to K-2 grades during contracted time, or compensate with extended employment if outside of contracted time. **(MMSD Curriculum & Instruction)**	Bike Fed, Traffic Engineering
Provide bicycle safety education at all elementary and middle schools. (High school bicycle programming recommendations are listed under Supportive Community)		
Strengthen partnerships and procedures to handle bike fleet maintenance, repair, and transportation. **(MMSD Curriculum & Instruction, MSCR)**	☆ Develop bicycle safety education curriculum that aligns to MMSD physical education scopes and SHAPE America standards for across grade levels (K-12). **(MMSD Curriculum & Instruction)**	Bike Fed
Support schools interested in purchasing, storing, and maintaining educational bicycle fleets on their own campuses. **(MMSD Curriculum & Instruction, Bike Fed)**	Provide professional learning to PE teachers on teaching bicycle safety during contracted time, or compensate with extended employment if outside of contracted time. **(MMSD Curriculum & Instruction, Bike Fed)**	–
Obtain a fleet of balance bikes for some elementary schools to test out in 4k and kindergarten classes. **(MMSD Curriculum & Instruction)**	Pending results of the pilots, purchase additional fleets of balance bikes so more schools with 4K/K students can use them. **(MMSD Curriculum & Instruction)**	

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (OR ACTIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE NEW FUNDING OR STAFF)	LONG-TERM ACTIONS (MAY REQUIRE NEW FUNDING AND/OR STAFF)	PARTNERS
Continue to conduct parking and traffic enforcement around Madison schools.		
Consider prioritizing schools for parking and traffic enforcement based on safety metrics and violations observed. **(MPD, Traffic Enforcement)**	Add a second Traffic Enforcement and Safety Team (TEST) to enforce speeding and unsafe driving laws. **(MPD, Traffic Enforcement)**	Traffic Engineering
Educate drivers about safe behaviors.		
Leverage the Vision Zero program to build a culture of safety and encourage safe driving near schools through a branded multi-media campaign. **(Traffic Engineering)**	Work with local driver education programs to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle safety topics. **(Bike Fed)**	MMSD Safety & Security, MMSD Communications
Support efforts for legislation to fund driver's education in high schools. **(City of Madison, MMSD, Bike Fed)**	–	–
Make traffic enforcement equitable and relevant to safety.		
Continue to pursue legislation authorizing automated enforcement for red light running and speeding in school zones. **(City of Madison)**	Build a coalition to advocate for state authorization for automated enforcement and build public acceptance of the program. **(Bike Fed, STST)**	MMSD Safety & Security

☆ *Indicates an action is a priority.*

“Seeing neighbors going to and from a community center like a school builds trust and familiarity. It makes us feel safer and more able to integrate as a community. ”

—MMSD parent

6

Supportive Culture

Chapter 6: Supportive Culture

The final goal focuses on creating a school and community culture where walking, biking, and taking the bus are the "norm." Creating this culture includes efforts to reduce the amount of vehicle traffic around schools through regular communication with caregivers and programs that encourage students to walk, bicycle, and take the bus more frequently to school, including walking school buses, and mobility education for middle and high school students. This category also includes efforts to institutionalize the culture in school district policy.

Existing Programs to Create a Walking, Biking, and Transit-Taking Culture

The City and MMSD have the following programs and policies that aim to reduce the number of caregiver vehicles near schools and increase the number of students walking, biking, and taking the bus.

Elementary Programming

Some elementary schools in MMSD offer walking school buses to improve attendance from areas that are a bit farther from the school and have had chronic attendance issues. Lake View Elementary School's walking school bus is a model for the district, regularly attracting 30-50 students and resulting in improved attendance (see Figure 6.1). The City of Madison Bicycle and Pedestrian Outreach Specialist volunteers to support the Lake View walking school bus. Many schools across the district have an interest in walking school buses (especially to improve attendance from low-attendance areas); however, implementation is challenging due to several factors, including:

- Lack of school budget to pay for someone to bring students to and from school every day.
- Lack of time or interest by staff at the school.
- Hesitancy around liability concerns.

FIGURE 6.1 Lake View's walking school bus attracts 30-50 students every day.

Programs for Middle and High Schools

Many middle and high schools in MMSD have programs led by staff at those schools to encourage biking and taking the bus. For example:

- Whitehorse Middle has an annual bike ride around Lake Monona.
- Gillespie Middle and Whitehorse Middle have Urban Adventure Transit programs that provide their students with an opportunity to learn how to get around on the bus and explore the city.
- Badger Rock Middle has its own fleet of bikes for field trips to places like Lake Farm Park.
- MSCR staff use Curriculum & Instruction's fleet of larger bikes to offer bike clubs during their after school programs at some middle schools.

Bike Fed youth educators provide substantial support for those initiatives. In addition, they run several enrichment programs of their own:

- Bike repair clubs offered at the four comprehensive high schools.
- A project-based transportation planning unit at Shabazz High School.
- The High School Transportation Ambassadors internship, a yearlong program in which four high school students receive training on bicycle and pedestrian safety, learn about local transportation systems, identify barriers to multi-modal transportation near their schools, and work with Bike Fed staff and partners to come up with solutions to those challenges at their schools.

Youth-Led Organizations

Many existing organizations in Madison center youth voices and could serve as partners to champion the needs of the district and help advocate for financial or legislative support. By Youth For Youth, Dane County Youth Commission, and school clubs focused on environmental advocacy are potential organizations that MMSD, Bike Fed, and the City could partner with to create awareness, collaborate and work forward on advocacy.

FIGURE 6.2 Students in East High School's bike repair club work on a bike.

MMSD District Policy on Biking

MMSD Board Policy 4233 includes language saying that students must be in at least 4th grade to ride their bicycle to school without being accompanied by an adult, and that the principal may approve individual written requests by a parent/guardian of a younger student. Based on the observations of arrival and dismissal and communications with principals, most elementary schools seem to allow children younger than 4th grade to ride bicycles to school. Moreover, this policy conflicts with MMSD Board Policy 4610 (the Wellness Policy) that states that the District will support and promote walking, bicycling, and other forms of active transportation to and from school.

Supportive Culture Recommendations

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS	LONG-TERM ACTIONS THAT MAY REQUIRE NEW FUNDING AND/OR STAFF	PARTNERS
Support and promote programs that provide adult chaperones for students walking and biking to school, such as walking school buses and bike clubs (cross-listed under Sustainable and Equitable Program).		
Encourage all schools to establish walking school buses but prioritize support and coordination to schools that are using walking school buses to address attendance issues. **(MMSD Transportation, MMSD District Attendance Team, MMSD Student & Staff Support)**	In areas where an unusually hazardous transportation designation is removed, replace busing with walking school buses. **(MMSD Transportation, MMSD District Attendance Team, MMSD Student & Staff Support)**	MMSD Safety & Security
Create a toolkit for schools to use to promote walking school buses, including tip sheets, Frequently Asked Questions, and example forms. **(MMSD District Attendance Team, MMSD Student & Staff Support, Traffic Engineering)**	☆ Pay MMSD staff or local community center staff to lead walking school buses **(MMSD District Attendance Team, MMSD Student & Staff Support)**	Traffic Engineering
Promote expansion of MSCR-funded bike clubs in which school or MSCR staff accompany students biking to and from school, such as the bike club at O'Keeffe Middle School. **(MSCR)**	–	–
Provide mobility education and programs for middle and high school students.		
Develop an online module or video on riding Metro Transit that could supplement field practice. **(Bike Fed)**	Work with middle schools to borrow or adapt the Whitehorse and Gillespie Urban Adventure Programs. **(Bike Fed)**	MMSD Summer Programs
Offer project-based learning resources around bicycle, pedestrian, and multimodal transportation planning and design to high schools. **(Bike Fed, MMSD High Schools)**	Expand bike clubs to all middle and high schools. **(MSCR, Bike Fed, MMSD High Schools)**	MMSD College, Career, and Community Readiness

☆ *Indicates an action is a priority.*

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS	LONG-TERM ACTIONS THAT MAY REQUIRE NEW FUNDING AND/OR STAFF	PARTNERS
Assess space capacity, interest, and needs for bike fleets at middle and high schools, and develop a plan for purchasing, storing, and maintaining them. (MMSD Curriculum and Instruction, Bike Fed)	Purchase bike fleets for all middle and high schools for field trips, bike clubs, and physical education classes. **(MMSD Curriculm and Instruction, Bike Fed)**	MMSD Department of Curriculum & Instruction, MSCR, MMSD Building Services
Implement an encouragement campaign to help parents and caregivers feel more comfortable with students riding the bus (both yellow school buses and Madison Metro).		
Have students make a video about riding the bus and share it with parents and caregivers regularly. **(Bike Fed Student Transportation Ambassadors)**	–	MMSD Transportation, MMSD Summer Programs, MMSD Communication
Use SRTS communication toolkit (developed as part of this Plan) to promote walking, biking, and riding the bus. **(Traffic Engineering)**	–	MMSD Transportation, MMSD Safety & Security
Revise MMSD Board Policy 4233 to remove reference to specific grade levels or ages.		
Consider removing the procedure language saying students must be in at least 4th grade. Alternatively, revise the policy to allow principal discretion while still encouraging the safe use of bicycles to get to and from school. **(MMSD Safety & Security, MMSD Legal)**	–	–

☆ *Indicates an action is a priority.*

Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of Engagement
Appendix B: Example School Traffic Safety Brochure
Appendix C: Example School Infrastructure Plan

Appendix A

Appendix A: Summary of Engagement

This appendix summarizes the engagement that informed the development of the recommendations and actions in this SRTS Strategic Plan, as well as the main themes and takeaways. The engagement focused on understanding current conditions, challenges, and opportunities around walking, biking, and taking the bus to school as described by community members, school staff, families, and students. The intent of this summary is to provide grounded, descriptive explanation of the feedback that led to certain recommendations and actions in the SRTS plan.

Engagement Overview

There were two main components of the Madison SRTS Planning effort, as described in Chapter 3 – Safe Streets. First, the development of this SRTS Strategic Plan, a high-level document with recommendations and actions to implement on a city-wide and district-wide basis. Second, 23 school-specific infrastructure plans were prepared, speaking with families and school staff as part of those plans. In addition, City of Madison staff also prepared 9 additional school infrastructure plans as part of a separate project. The observations, conversations, and engagement from the school-specific infrastructure plans informed the recommendations, actions, and processes recommended in this SRTS Strategic Plan. The engagement across both the strategic planning effort and the school-specific plans is summarized below:

Madison SRTS Engagement Activities Included:

- Community wide survey (630 responses)
- Student survey for students in grades 6-12 (2,017 responses)
- MMSD staff survey (59 responses)
- 4 schools where in-person family engagement took place (Leopold Elementary, Lori Mann Carey Elementary, Marquette Elementary, and O'Keefe Middle School.
- 2 in-person sessions at community centers (Lussier Community Education Center and East Madison Community Center)
- 3 virtual engagements with parent groups
- 23 individual conversations with school principals (individual school plans)
- 23 school site visits (individual school plans)
- 2 student input sessions at East High School and Vel Phillips Memorial High School
- 2 conversations with City of Madison Crossing Guard Supervisors
- 1 virtual workshop with MMSD and City staff to get feedback on draft recommendations and actions
- 2 presentations to MMSD senior leadership.
- [To be Completed] Questionnaire and virtual public meeting on Draft SRTS Strategic Plan

Main Takeaways from All Engagement

1. Safety is the top priority

Safety was the most consistent theme across interviews, focus groups, surveys, and school conversations. Families and staff described specific locations such as street crossings, driveways, shared-use paths, and other public spaces that can feel unsafe for students walking, biking, or rolling independently to school. Key concerns include:

- **Traffic safety during arrival and dismissal:** Congestion, limited parking, and unsafe driving and pedestrian behaviors were frequently noted.
- **Streets with high speeds and high traffic volumes:** In the community wide survey and in the student survey, respondents observed that walking or biking to school may not be safe due to unsafe conditions crossing and along busier streets, even if conditions feel safe by the school.

This feedback informed recommendations related to street design and pavement markings in the Safe Streets chapter.

Personal safety and concerns about students walking to school where they may feel unsafe due to crime were cited by some parents and caregivers. This input led to crime and harassment being a consideration in the district's draft Unusually Hazardous Transportation criteria, developed as part of this planning effort.

2. Some school campuses have site design issues and infrastructure needs

Engagement with families and principals raised concerns about location-specific infrastructure needs. Parents and caregivers also pointed to circulation and site design issues that create conflict points between vehicles and students. For example, engagement with families at Lori Mann Carey Elementary and students at Memorial High school both noted concerns about lack of sidewalks along driveways where students may be dropped off. Caregivers and families at Leopold Elementary had concerns about the school's current arrival dismissal procedures. This feedback informed recommendations related to school site design in the Safe Campuses chapter.

3. Some specific student populations have transportation barriers

Concerns related to equitable access to safe and reliable transportation appeared across multiple schools. Barriers were noted for low-income families, students experiencing homelessness, families that do not speak English, and students receiving specialized transportation. For example, emergency support sometimes includes taxi service arranged by the school; however, taxis were described as frequently late, which can disrupt morning routines when caregivers also need to get to work. Language barriers can make it harder to coordinate rides or resolve missed pickups. Some schools also had issues establishing safe, accessible places for students receiving specialized transportation to unload and load into vehicles. This input informed recommendations in the **Sustainable and Equitable Program**, **Safe Campuses**, and **Supportive Culture** chapters.

4. Concerns about walking distance and yellow school bus eligibility for students

Many parents and caregivers of elementary students expressed that MMSD should reduce the distance for elementary students to be eligible for yellow school bus service. Currently, elementary students are only eligible if they live more than 1.5 miles away or if they live in an area that has been identified as having unusually hazardous transportation (UHT) in the district's UHT plan. Family members at in-person sessions shared that walking more than one mile is not reasonable given age, weather, time constraints, and perceived route safety. Principals shared that students living farther who are not eligible for bus transportation are more likely to have attendance issues. This feedback informed recommendations related to bus eligibility in the **Sustainable and Equitable Program** chapter.

5. Walking school bus programs are beneficial but struggle due to interest, inconsistency, and staffing constraints

Walking school bus programs were discussed with several elementary school principals and came up as an important topic in the MMSD staff survey. The Lake View Elementary walking school bus is seen as a success that other schools want to emulate. However, experiences with walking school buses vary widely. Some schools struggle to recruit and retain volunteers or staff, even when principals have offered to pay staff. Some schools have interested staff but are hesitant to implement walking school buses due to concerns about liability or union rules for working extended hours. This theme informed recommendations to strengthen walking school bus support (listed in both the **Sustainable and Equitable Program** and the **Supportive Culture** chapter).

6. Encouraging more students to walk, bike, and take the bus to school is important to the Madison community

While there were concerns about safety, the surveys, interviews, and other forms of engagement mostly agreed that the goals of SRTS were something the City and the District should strive to achieve. Families, staff, and students recognized the many benefits that SRTS programs provide by building community, strengthening friendships, benefiting the environment, and improving physical health.

Highlights from Specific Engagement Methods

Community-Wide Survey

School principals were asked to share the community-wide survey prior to the site visits for school infrastructure plans. A total of about 630 people completed the survey. The survey helped identify specific locations near schools for observation as part of the school-specific infrastructure plans. Traffic safety concerns around schools were the strongest and most consistent theme in the survey. In addition, comments about the importance of walking, biking, and taking the bus to school were reflective of the themes in this plan: the need to take equity concerns into consideration; the benefit of reducing congestion around schools during arrival and dismissal; the benefits of active transportation for student wellness and mental focus; and using SRTS programs as a way to strengthen neighborhood connections and community ownership of schools. Respondents viewed walking school buses positively but noted that they need better organization and more staffing.

Student Survey

The student survey was shared via emails from Physical Education teachers and principals at about half of middle and high schools in MMSD. A total of over 2,000 middle and high school students filled out the survey. Safety concerns were cited as the biggest barrier for students walking and biking to school, including traffic, lack of bicycle infrastructure, unsafe intersections near schools, and fear of strangers, bullying, or crime. Most students connected walking and biking with exercise, fresh air, and health. Many also brought up environmental reasons for walking, biking, and taking the bus, such as fewer cars around schools and cleaner air. Students noted that they were motivated by programs that make walking and biking social, fun, and community oriented, as opposed to boring or instructional.

Staff Survey

A survey of MMSD school staff that have a role in SRTS initiatives such as pedestrian education, bicycle education, walking school buses, and encouraging walking or biking to school was also conducted. A total of 59 people filled out the survey. The staff survey asked about challenges and opportunities for SRTS programs in Madison and was shared early in the project to allow the results to guide development of plan goals. Respondents noted that it was hard to find enough volunteers for activities like walking school buses and bicycle safety education. They also noted that bicycles in the MMSD bike fleets sometimes arrive in disrepair. K-5 teachers thought that pedestrian safety and “learn to ride a bike” unit for younger grades using balance bikes could be easily incorporated into elementary grades.

In-person engagement at the Lussier Center, East Madison Community Center, and Virtual Focus Groups

Equity emerged as a consistent concern during engagement in neighborhoods with lower incomes and higher percentage of Black and Latino residents. Participants described how SRTS programs and bus transportation eligibility and bus transportation times are not consistent across schools and neighborhoods, contributing to different day-to-day travel experiences based on neighborhood demographics and household resources. The impacts described were both practical (who has access to a safe, reliable option) and cumulative (how repeated barriers affect attendance, independence, and family stress). The feedback informed recommendations in the Plan or other deliverables, such as the development of a set of objective criteria for unusually hazardous transportation criteria for yellow school bus eligibility. Key themes from this engagement included:

- **Desire for Walking School Buses (WSB):** Families liked the idea of chaperoned groups of children walking to school, but expressed frustration about inconsistent program availability, leadership, and day-to-day implementation.
- **Metro bus pass accessibility and eligibility:** Families reported confusion about access and limitations that can make use of Madison Metro out of reach for some high school students.
- **Inconsistent application of unusual hazardous transportation plan areas.** Families living in the Truax apartments expressed frustration that their students were not eligible for yellow school bus transportation, due to the presence of a tunnel under East Washington Avenue, while other neighborhoods were eligible for hazardous busing under similar conditions.
- **Socioeconomic barriers:** Families with fewer resources may have less flexibility to drive, supervise walking, or adjust work schedules. If their child's transportation to school is disrupted (e.g. a taxi is late, a walking school bus volunteer misses a day, or a solo caregiver is ill) they don't have a back up option to get their children to school.
- **Unsafe street crossings and high-stress routes:** Families described avoidance of specific corridors or intersections due to traffic speeds and volumes and lack of safe crossings.
- **Homelessness and transportation needs:** Students experiencing homelessness face unique constraints that can make consistent travel options difficult.
- **Specialized transportation:** Participants raised concerns about whether specialized transportation consistently meets the needs of students who rely on it, particularly when circumstances change during the school year.

Interviews with Crossing Guard Supervisors

The Crossing Guard Supervisors were interviewed to learn more about their needs and challenges in providing safe and accessible routes for schools. Most needs are related to the difficulty of finding enough people to work as crossing guards and the nature of the role, since the hours fit only specific schedules. The position is not full-time, which makes it less attractive for many people. The supervisors noted that crossing guards enjoy locations that serve walking school buses and locations with many students crossing, because it boosts morale to serve many students. Supervisors stressed the need for safer infrastructure around schools, improving the safety of crossings where crossing guards are posted, and for placing crossing guards where need is greatest.

Input on Draft SRTS Strategic Plan

The Draft SRTS Strategic Plan is currently posted for public input. There is a questionnaire to solicit input, and there be a virtual public meeting on May 21, 2026. A summary of input and feedback from the questionnaire and the public meeting will be summarized here in the final version of this plan.

Appendix B

Orchard Ridge Elementary

Traffic Safety Brochure

2025-26 Bell Times: 8:25 am-3:20 pm (Mon 2 pm early release)

We want to get ensure that all our students get to and from school safely, no matter how they travel. Look at the map below to see where drop-off and pick-up locations are located for everybody!

MADISON SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Crossing guards.* Crossing guards at Whitney Way and Raymond Road are posted at these times:

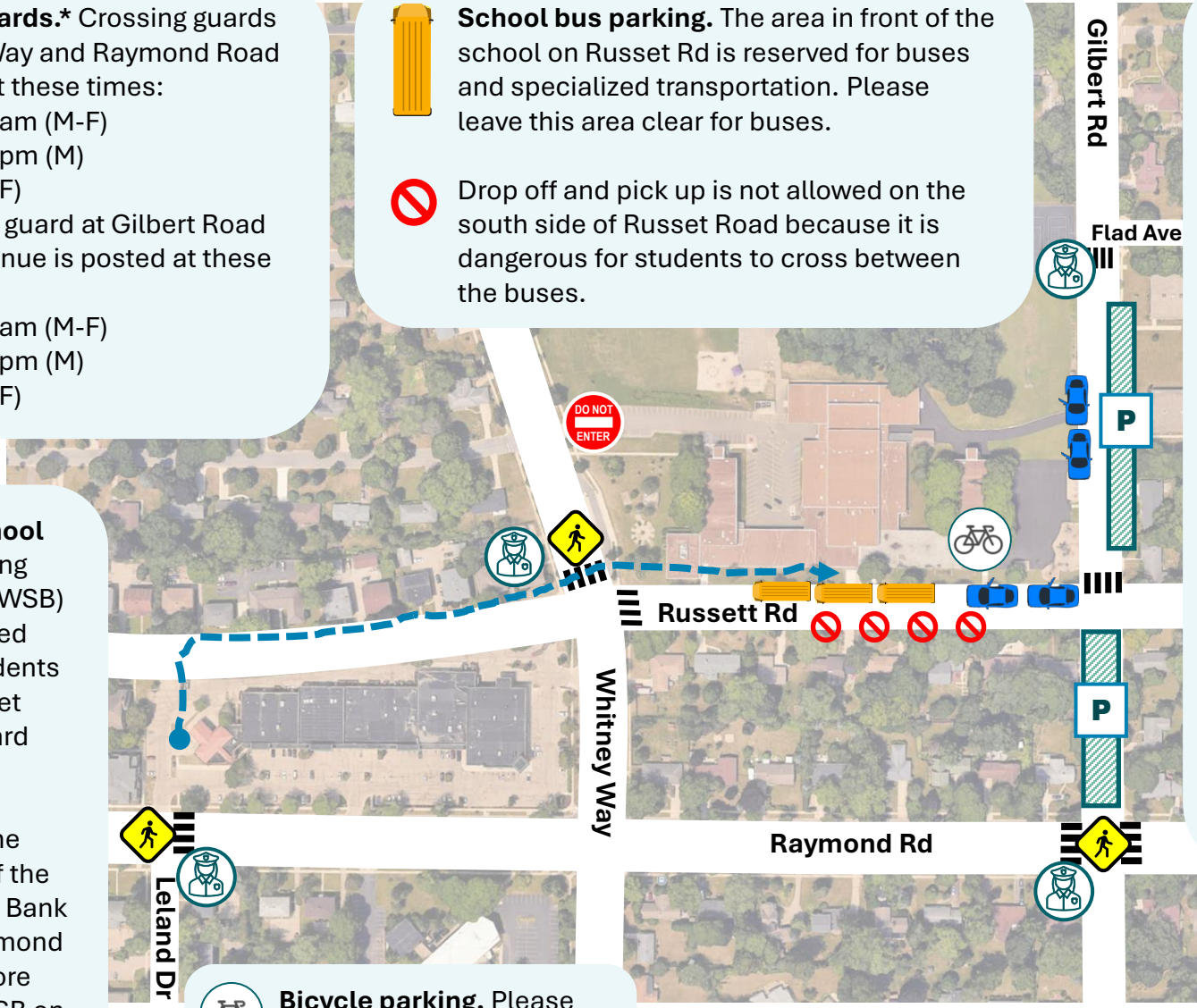
- 7:35-8:35 am (M-F)
- 1:35-2:35 pm (M)
- 3-4 pm (T-F)

The crossing guard at Gilbert Road and Flad Avenue is posted at these times:

- 7:30-8:30 am (M-F)
- 1:35-2:35 pm (M)
- 3-4 pm (T-F)

School bus parking. The area in front of the school on Russet Rd is reserved for buses and specialized transportation. Please leave this area clear for buses.

Drop off and pick up is not allowed on the south side of Russet Road because it is dangerous for students to cross between the buses.



Vehicle drop-off / pick-up. The areas signed "No Parking" (shown as cars with open passenger doors) is for dropping off and picking up while remaining in your car. Do not drop off in the bus loading zone on Russet Rd.

P Longer term parking is allowed on Gilbert Rd and Flad Ave. If you choose to park in these areas, obey the time limits and walk with your student across the street. Model safe behavior, and cross at marked crosswalks.

Walking School Bus. A Walking School Bus (WSB) is a supervised group of students that walk a set route. Orchard Ridge's WSB meets every morning in the parking lot of the Old National Bank north of Raymond Rd. Learn more about the WSB on the other side!

Bicycle parking. Please use the racks near the entrance. Wear a helmet and bring a lock!

Turn the page to learn more!

*Crossing guard times may have changed. Refer to the City of Madison Crossing Guard map for the most up to date crossing guard times.

Walking & Biking

When your child walks or bikes, they enjoy exercise and fresh air. Walking is good for their mind and body. It also reduces the number of vehicles outside the school!

We encourage students to join the Walking School Bus! Meet us at 8am at the entrance of Old National Bank (Raymond Road and Leland Drive). Orchard Ridge staff members and community partners safely walk a large group of students to school each day. The WSB departs at 8:10.

Remember that pedestrians do not have the right of way when crossing mid-block. If you need to cross Raymond Road, Russett Road, or Whitney Way, cross with the crossing guard!

Caregivers, help your students bike safely by reviewing safety rules, checking bike gear, practicing the route, and setting a good example. Bikers should:

- Follow the rules of the road and obey traffic signs and signals.
- Wear a helmet that fits their head.

Riding the Bus

MMSD provides yellow school bus transportation to students who live more than 1.5 miles from school, and those who cannot walk due to unusually hazardous transportation conditions.

Bus Routes, Stops and Times

The times and the bus stops are available on the Transportation department's website and in your student's Infinite Campus profile.

School Bus Safety

- Wait for the bus on the sidewalk and stay out of the street.
- Enter the bus in a single file.
- Never reach under the bus to get something, ask the driver for help.
- Cross the street at least 10 feet in front of the bus after getting an "ok" sign from the bus driver.

Scan or go to this link to more about walking and biking efforts in Madison.

www.cityofmadison.com/traffic-engineering/biking-walking

Driving & Parking

You may drop off (starting at 8:10) and pick up (at 3:30) in the designated student drop off area on Gilbert Road and Russet Road. If you are pulling over to drop off your student, you must drop off on the same side of the road as the school. We also encourage you to park on neighborhood streets (pay attention to time restrictions!) and walk, or to drop off at Old National Bank and have your child use the walking school bus! This reduces congestion, helps everybody get some steps in, and gives you a chance to catch up with other caregivers!

Observe All Street Signs and Laws

"No Parking" means **you cannot leave your car unattended**. "No Stopping, Standing or Parking" means just that. **You cannot stop your car at these locations, even during drop-off and pick-up**.

Motorists must yield the right of way to pedestrians crossing a street at any **marked or unmarked crosswalk**.

It is illegal to double-park to drop off/pick up your child, even if you remain in the car. This disrupts traffic and is not safe.

It is illegal to make a U-turn on the street in front of the school.

Appendix C

Lincoln Elementary Safe Routes to School Plan (March 2026)

About the School	
Number of Students[a]	385
% Economically Disadvantaged	47%
% Non-white	59%
Arrival / Dismissal Times	7:35 AM / 1:10 PM (Mon) 7:35 AM / 2:30 PM (Tue-Fri)

[a]*Student data source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction*

Major Streets and Highways	Annual Weekday Traffic (AWT)[a]
W Badger Road	9,000
S Park Street	24,050
Fish Hatchery Road	28,000

[a]*Source: City of Madison Street Centerlines*

Safety Concerns at Lincoln

What we heard from the Principal (or Designee)

- Drop-off and pick-up mostly work well.
- However, some caregivers make U-turns on Sequoia Trail and Hackberry Lane. Some caregivers wait for their students on the far side of Hackberry Lane, and students cross the street between stopped vehicles.
- Many years ago, a student died as a result of running across Cypress Way during pick-up or drop-off. Since then, the school discourages caregivers from stopping at this entrance.
- Attendance rates for students living east of Park Street is significantly lower than the rest of the school.

What we learned from the crossing guard

- Drivers routinely speed on W Badger Road. Existing curb extensions help the crossing guard do their job, but she observes buses struggling to turn.

Hazardous Transportation Busing

According to the UHT plan, all students west of Fish Hatchery Road or east of Park Street are bussed due to hazardous crossings.

What we learned from surveys and other caregiver feedback

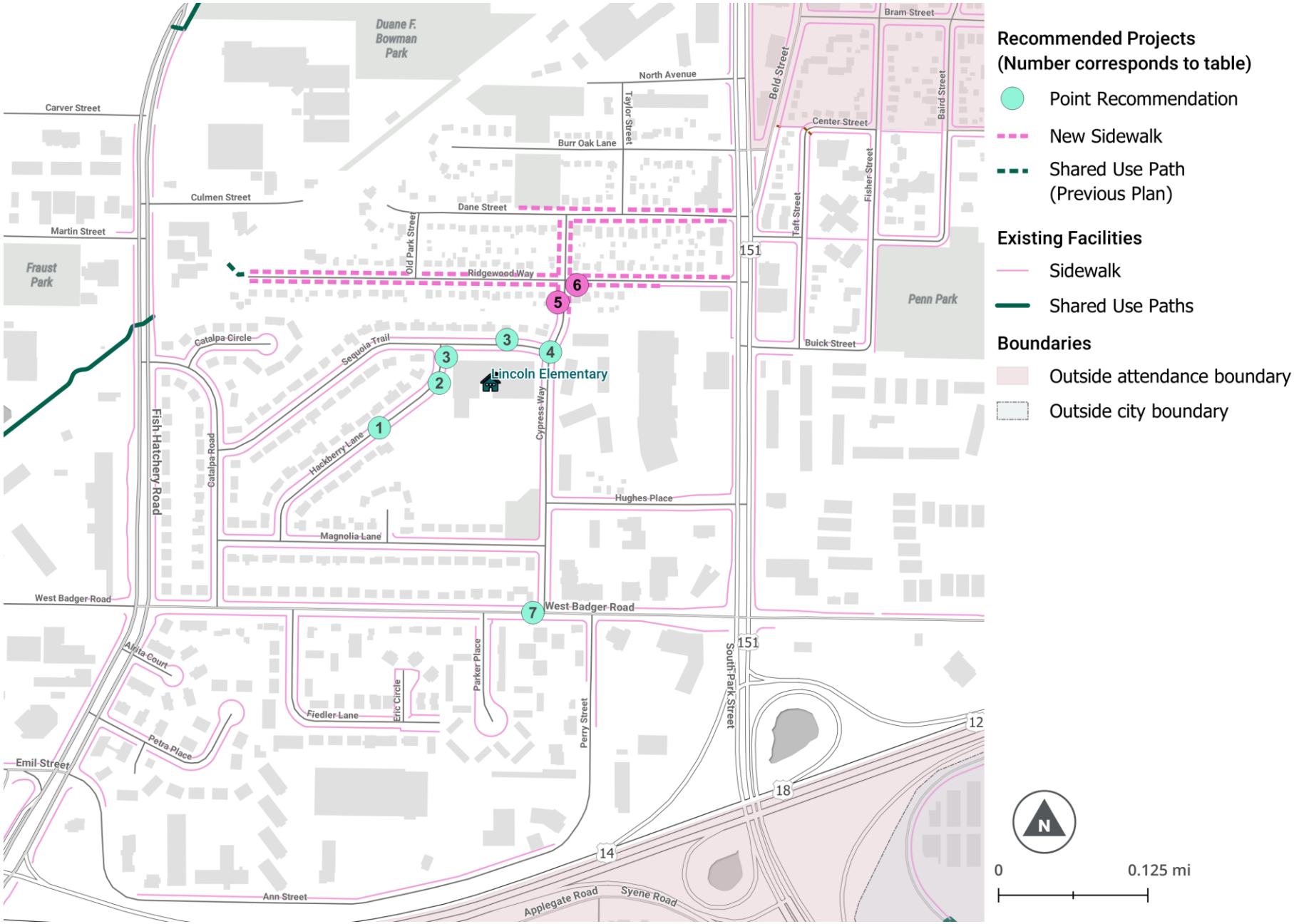
- Survey respondents for Lincoln thought that the most common way students got to school was by bus.
- Survey respondents for Lincoln thought that students were mostly driven due to concerns about bullying, violence, crime, concern of traffic safety, and lack of safe crossings.
- Some survey respondents mentioned that active transportation allows for growth in independence and overall development.
- The intersection of Fish Hatchery Road and Carver Street is busy, and drivers often speed through the crosswalk and disregard the flashing school zone beacon.
- At the crosswalk on Fish Hatchery Road near the Cannonball Path north of Catalpa Road, drivers often disregard the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) and speed through the shared use path crosswalk.

Existing Conditions (and Previously-Planned Bikeways and Paths

Arrival and Dismissal Observations

Observation Details	
Observation Date	• The consultant team observed dismissal on Thursday, May 8.
School Buses	• School buses enter the staff parking lot and bus loop off Hackberry Lane.
Specialized Transportation	• Aftercare and specialized transportation vehicles pick up students in the staff parking lot and bus loop off Hackberry Lane.
Caregiver Vehicles	• At dismissal, some caregivers of K-5 students waited in vehicles in the drop off/pick up area on the school side of Hackberry Lane. Once that space was full, other caregivers waited in vehicles on the far side of the street. • Very few of the caregivers on the far side of Hackberry Lane left their vehicles to meet their students on school property, resulting in several students crossing with no crosswalk and moving in between stopped caregiver vehicles. Several caregivers were observed making U-turns at the intersection of Sequoia Trail and Hackberry Lane, and a few were observed stopping in the designated “no stopping or standing” zone marked with signs and cones. • Caregivers of 4K students wait in vehicles on Sequoia Trail adjacent to Door 1.
School Staff Roles	• School staff loaded students onto the correct buses at dismissal. • Staff members monitor the crosswalks at Sequoia Trail and Hackberry Lane, and at Sequoia Trail and Cypress Way, and escort students across. • Another staff member monitored the driveway exit from the staff parking lot and bus loop. 4K staff helped their students into caregiver vehicles on Sequoia Trail. Other staff members were stationed throughout school grounds.
Adult Crossing Guards	• A crossing guard is posted at Cypress Way and W Badger Road.
Bike Rack Locations and Use	• There are two areas with bike racks around the school – one on the north side by Door 1 and another on the south side in the lower playground. • There were only a few bicycles parked on the bike racks on the day of observation.
Students Walking and Biking	• Many students were observed walking and biking home to school. • Some students were observed walking along Cypress Way, predominantly south towards the crossing guard. • Some students either stayed at the playground or left and returned to the playground.

Priority Recommendations at Lincoln Elementary



The numbered issues and recommendations in the table correspond to the points in the Recommendations Map (shown on previous page).

Recommendations for School Leadership or MMSD Building Services

#	Location	Issues or Observations	Recommendations
1	Hackberry Lane at the entrance to the staff lot/bus loop	• Many caregivers wait on the far side of Hackberry Lane and their students cross midblock between caregiver-occupied vehicles. • Some caregivers make U-turns midblock on Hackberry Lane south of the entrance to the staff parking lot/bus loop. • The existing school reduced speed zone ends immediately southwest of the entrance to the staff parking lot/bus loop.	*Immediate Priority:* • Communicate expectations by sharing the school's Traffic Safety Plan, which should discourage caregivers from stopping/standing on the far side of Hackberry Lane unless they cross the street to drop off/pick up their students.
2	Hackberry Lane just south of Sequoia Trail	• Caregivers sometimes wait or stop in a "no stopping, standing, or parking" zone between the staff parking lot/bus loop exit and the intersection with Sequoia Trail.	*Immediate Priority:* • Place "no pick-up/drop-off" sandwich boards during arrival and dismissal hours.

Recommendations for City of Madison

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3	Sequoia Trail and Hackberry Lane	• Caregivers sometimes make U-turns on Sequoia Trail and Hackberry Lane.	*Immediate Priority:* • Install No U-turn (R3-2) signs northbound on Hackberry Lane and eastbound on Sequoia Trail.
4	Cypress Way adjacent to the school	• Many years ago, a student died as a result of running across Cypress Way during pick-up or drop-off. Since then the school discourages caregivers from stopping at this entrance. • The existing school reduced speed zone ends immediately north of the intersection with Sequoia Trail. • Curb ramps at Cypress Way and Sequoia Trail are not aligned with crosswalks, and do not have detectable warning surface of contrasting color.	*Immediate Priority:* • Add No Stopping, Standing or Parking signs adjacent to median traffic calming. • Extend the reduced school speed zone so that it includes more of the street north of Sequoia Lane. *Medium Term:* • Reconstruct curb ramps to align with crossing.
5	Cypress Way north of Sequoia Lane	• Cypress Lane lacks sidewalks north of Sequoia Lane. Missing sidewalks present a barrier to walking and bicycling to school.	*Medium Term:* • Construct sidewalks where there are gaps on Cypress Way.
6	Ridgewood Way	• Ridgewood Way lacks sidewalks for most of its length, including at its proposed connection to a future extension of the Cannonball Path. Missing sidewalks present a barrier to walking and bicycling to school.	*Medium Term:* • Construct sidewalks where there are gaps on Ridgewood Way.

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7	W Badger Road at Cypress Way	• This street carries a relatively large amount of traffic and connects the two most-used streets in the attendance area, Fish Hatchery Road and S Park Street. • Badger Road is on the City's High Injury Network. • Many students cross the street at this intersection. • The crossing guard expressed concern about drivers appearing to exceed the posted speed limit during school arrival and dismissal times.	*Immediate Priority:* • Install driver speed feedback signs facing both approaches to the intersection on W Badger Road. • Use FINES HIGHER (R2-6P) plaques on school speed limit assemblies. *Medium Term:* • Add flashing beacons programmed for school arrival/dismissal times and use SCHOOL SPEED LIMIT WHEN FLASHING (S5-1) assembly. • Consider other traffic calming measures such as a raised pedestrian crossing or intersection at this location.