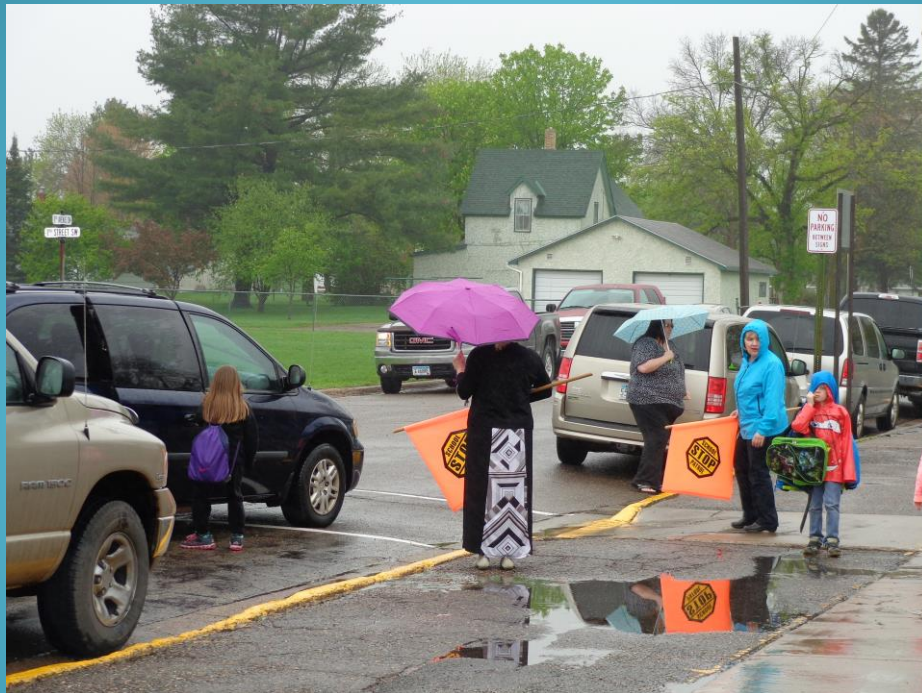


# LITTLE FALLS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN



The Little Falls Safe Routes to School Plan is intended to provide a framework on which to continue building a community in which more students have the opportunity to safely walk or bike to and from school.

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By providing the opportunity for more students to walk and bike to and from school, it is anticipated that this planning effort will result in several benefits including first and foremost a safer active transportation environment, improved physical and mental health, improved student concentration and study skills, a reduction in negative behavioral issues, as well as improvements to the local sidewalk and trail networks.

This document is a continuation of the ongoing planning process for Little Falls. It was formally adopted by the City of Little Falls in October of 2015 and both the Little Falls School Board and by the Mary of Lourdes School Board in November of 2015.

Little Falls has used this planning process as an opportunity to evaluate and reinforce the existing transportation policies and to evaluate previous planning efforts in order to update and reinforce past decisions that remain relevant.

A major premise of this plan is to support other existing local planning mechanisms and to lay out a logical straightforward plan to successfully implement the policies and projects identified herein.

The Little Falls Safe Routes to School Plan is intended to provide a framework on which to continue building a community in which more students have the opportunity to safely walk or bike to and from school

By providing the opportunity for more students to walk and bike to as improvements to the local sidewalk and trail networks.

# Little Falls Safe Routes to School

Connecting the trip to school . . .

With Safety, Health, Community, and Choice.



Published by the  
Region Five Development Commission  
for the City of Little Falls  
(2015)

### ***What is Safe Routes to School Planning?***

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs are sustained efforts by parents, schools, community leaders and local, state, and federal governments to improve the health and well-being of children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school when and where it is safe to do so.

### ***What Does Safe Routes to School Planning Do?***

SRTS programs examine conditions around schools and conduct projects and activities that work to improve safety and accessibility, and reduce traffic and air pollution in the vicinity of schools. As a result, these programs help make bicycling and walking to school safer and more appealing transportation choices thus encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age.

### ***How Does Region Five Assist with Safe Routes to School Planning?***

The Region Five Development Commission has successfully developed numerous Safe Routes to School plans for communities throughout the region. The Region Five Development Commission assists local units of governments or schools in all aspects of Safe Routes to School planning including developing a planning team, facilitating public informational meetings, facilitating planning team work sessions, administering both student and parent surveys, conducting local walk-audits, drafting the planning document and assisting in the adoption process.

# Safe Routes to School Planning Team 2015

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By providing the opportunity for more students to walk and bike to and from school, it is anticipated that this planning effort will result in several benefits including first and foremost a safer active transportation environment, improved physical and mental health, improved student concentration and study skills, a reduction in negative behavioral issues, as well as improvements to the local sidewalk and trail networks.

“Children today are simply not getting enough physical activity”

## . . . Safe Routes to School projects make it safer for more children to walk and bicycle to school

This document is a continuation of the ongoing planning process for Little Falls. It was created by the Little Falls School Board and by the Mary of Lourdes School Board on October 2015 and 2016.

Little Falls has used this planning process as an opportunity to evaluate and reinforce the existing transportation policies and to evaluate previous planning efforts in order to update and reinforce past decisions that remain relevant.

“Today, **fewer than 15%** of children and adolescents use active modes of transportation to access school”

A major premise of this plan is to support other existing local planning mechanisms and to lay out a logical straightforward plan to successfully implement the policies and projects identified herein.

The Little Falls Safe Routes to School Plan is intended to provide a framework on which to continue building a community in which more students have the opportunity to safely walk or bike to and from school

By providing the opportunity for more students to walk and bike to as improvements to the local sidewalk and trail networks.

# Overview

Safe Routes to School (SRTS), generally, refers to programs that promote walking and biking to school to achieve a wide range of benefits for students, schools and communities. These benefits include reduced traffic in the vicinity of schools, improved pedestrian/bicycle access, safety, and increased physical activity among students, contributing to healthy lifestyles. By incorporating each of five "E's" – Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering and Evaluation – SRTS addresses a wide variety of topics relevant to journeys to and from school within a municipality, district or school.

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## History of Safe Routes to School

SRTS began as a European phenomenon thirty years ago and caught on in Canada and then New York City in 1997. In the 1970s, Denmark had Europe's highest child pedestrian accident rate. Implementing the first Safe Routes to School program, planners in Denmark identified specific road dangers around the country's schools and took steps to remedy the hazards. Since 1970, the child pedestrian crash rate has dropped by 80% in Denmark.

Inspired by such success and faced with rising childhood obesity and crash rates, the Bronx neighborhood in New York tested their own SRTS program. In 1998, Congress funded two pilot SRTS programs through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). NHTSA issued \$50,000 each for Safe Routes to School pilot programs in Marin County, California, and Arlington, Massachusetts. Within a year after launching these pilot programs, grassroots SRTS efforts were launched in other parts of the country.

After the initial success of Safe Routes to School pilot programs in the United States, subsequent federal funding facilitated SRTS's expansion nationwide. The 2005 passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) institutionalized Safe Routes to School by allocating \$612 million among the fifty states.

These funds are distributed to states based on student enrollment, with no state receiving less than \$1 million per year. SRTS funds can be used for both infrastructure projects and non-infrastructure activities.



In 2012 funding changed under the new Federal Transportation Bill Moving Ahead Progress in the 21st Century (MAP21) and combined Safe Routes to School funding with other programs into what is now called the Transportation Alternatives category. This made funding more challenging, however; commitments have been able to continue funding the SRTS program. Communities are using this funding to construct new bike lanes, pathways, and sidewalks, as well as to launch Safe



Routes to School education, promotion and enforcement campaigns in K-8 schools. Safe Routes to School programs are built on collaborative partnerships among many stakeholders that include educators, parents, students, elected officials, engineers, city planners, business and community leaders, health officials, and bicycle and pedestrian advocates.

## National Trends

In 1969, approximately half of all U.S. schoolchildren walked or bicycled to or from school and 87 percent of those living within one mile of school walked or bicycled. Parents report the primary barriers to their children aged 5-18 years walking to or from school as distance to school and traffic-related danger. While distance to school is the most commonly reported barrier to walking and bicycling, private vehicles still account for half of school trips between 1/4 and 1/2 mile- a distance easily covered on foot or bike.

To address these issues, comprehensive Safe Routes to School (SRTS) initiatives focus on strategies to improve behavioral issues, strategies to improve environmental issues and policy strategies in an effort to increase the percentage of children who walk and bike to school. The U.S. began researching children walking and bicycling to school in the 1970's which resulted in the 1975 report "School Trip Safety and Urban Play Areas."

---

## Health

Children today are simply not getting enough physical activity, contributing to growing rates of obesity and obesity-related health problems, such as diabetes. Safe Routes to School projects make it safer for more children to walk and bicycle to school, which will help address this obesity crisis among children by creating increases in physical activity.

Over the past 40 years, rates of obesity have soared among children of all ages in the United States, and approximately 25 million children and adolescents (more than 33%) are now overweight or obese or at risk of becoming so.



- Kids are less active today, and 23% of children get no free time physical activity at all.
- The prevalence of obesity is so great that today's generation of children may be the first in over 200 years to live less healthy and have a shorter lifespan than their parents.
- Today, approximately one-quarter of health care costs in United States are attributable to obesity, and health care costs just for childhood obesity are estimated at approximately \$14 billion per year.
- People living in auto-oriented suburbs drive more, walk less and are more obese than people living in walkable communities. For each hour of driving per day, obesity increases by 6%, but walking for transportation reduces the risk of obesity.

- Walking one mile to and from school each day is two-thirds the recommended sixty minutes of physical activity a day. Children who walk to school have higher levels of physical activity throughout the day.
- 

### *Safety*

Safe Routes to School projects focus on infrastructure improvements, student traffic education, and driver enforcement that improve safety for children, many of whom already walk or bicycle in unsafe conditions.

- Pedestrians are more than twice as likely to be struck by a vehicle in locations without sidewalks.
  - In 2009, approximately 23,000 children ages 5-15 were injured and more than 250 killed while walking or bicycling in the United States.
  - From 2000-2006, 30% of traffic deaths for children ages 5-15 occurred while walking or bicycling.
  - The medical cost for treating children's bicycle and pedestrian fatalities cost \$839 million in 2009 and another \$2.2 billion in lifetime lost wage costs.
  - A safety analysis by the California Department of Transportation estimated that the safety benefit of the SRTS was up to a 49% decrease in the childhood bicycle and pedestrian collision rates.
- 



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## *Environment*

Not only has childhood health and safety suffered as a consequence of increased driving, but the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports that transportation is the fastest-growing source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the United States. Greenhouse gases are components of the atmosphere that contribute to the greenhouse effect and global warming. Passenger vehicles account for approximately half of all U.S. transportation sector's greenhouse gas emissions.

In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), transportation energy use is expected to increase 48 percent between 2003 and 2025, despite modest improvements in the efficiency of vehicle engines. This projected rise in energy consumption closely mirrors the expected growth in transportation GHG emissions and bodes poorly for future environmental integrity.



Unfortunately, children are particularly vulnerable to air pollution because they breathe faster than adults and inhale more air per pound of body weight. Outside of almost any elementary school at arrival and dismissal time one is likely to witness parents and caregivers converging in their vehicles around the school.

According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA):

“Mobile sources, both on-road vehicles and off-road vehicles and equipment, are significant contributors to air pollution in Minnesota. EPA’s 2008 emissions inventory shows that **on- and off-road mobile sources account for approximately half of the total amount of NOX, SO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and VOCs emitted in Minnesota**, and contribute significantly to the formation of ground-level ozone. Transportation accounts for roughly 25% of greenhouse gas emissions in Minnesota.”

Reducing the incidence of parents driving their kids to school and increasing the number of students walking, bicycling, or using other active modes of transportation not only improves childhood physical health, but is a relatively simple way to improve the air quality surrounding schools and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

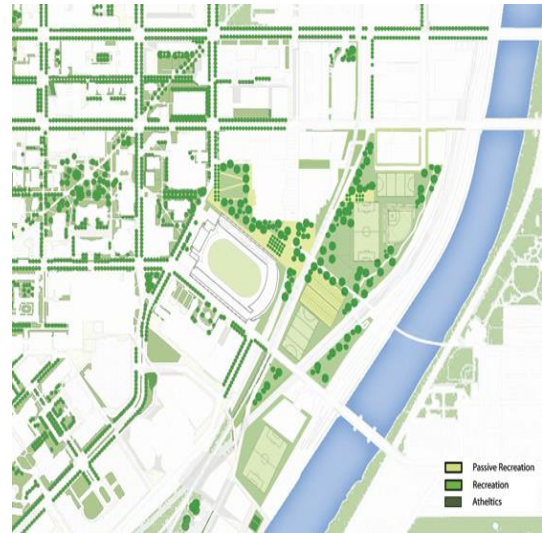
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## *Land Use Patterns*

Parents who drive their children to school are reacting, in part, to decades of auto-oriented land use planning that has neglected pedestrians and bicyclists as users of the transportation system. In many areas, auto-oriented development has hindered the creation of walkable communities. These new developments lack sidewalks or bicycle facilities and are located too far from popular destinations to make bicycling or walking practical.

Through the 1960's many schools were located in the center of communities, and this close proximity to residential areas contributed to high rates of walking and bicycling to school. Beginning in the 1970's, rather than renovating existing schools or building schools within existing residential communities, most new schools were built on the edges of communities where the land costs were lower. Peripheral schools mean fewer kids live close enough to realistically walk or bicycle to school.

In addition, the recent trend in school construction and management has been to build and operate a large school instead of several small schools, according to a report by the Center for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



These patterns have led to numerous school closings and consolidations. Between 1940 and 2003, the number of public school districts decreased from 117,108 to 14,465, and the number of public and private elementary and secondary schools went from over 226,000 to approximately 95,000 in 2003. On the other hand, during this time due to overall population growth, the number of students attending elementary and secondary schools grew from 28 million to 54.5 million, according to the U.S. Department of Education (DOE).

Not surprisingly, the average number of students per elementary and secondary school has increased over five-fold, again according to the U.S. DOE. The result is that modern schools often accommodate many more students than in the past and in effect have become "mega schools". Larger schools translate into more students traveling to the same place at the same time- and mostly by automobile. As a result, school-site automobile congestion and accompanying poor air quality surrounding schools have become major concerns in communities not just in Minnesota, but nationwide. This congestion has made it increasingly difficult for children who do live close to school to walk or bike to school safely.

Not only are schools larger and more congested, but fewer schools, located farther away from where students live, combined with larger enrollment populations, translate into school attendance areas that are geographically larger than in the past. These expanded catchment areas require students to travel farther making it difficult, if not impossible, for children to walk or bicycle to school. In fact, over sixty-one percent of parents do not allow their children to walk or bicycle to school because of distance.

Greater distances to school also translate into higher busing costs. In 2005, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, bus transportation was frequently the second largest budget item for school districts after salaries. With land use practices that discourage children from walking and bicycling to school, it is not surprising that in the last thirty years the proportion of children walking and bicycling to school has dropped dramatically.

### *Transportation Costs*

Schools often make cutbacks in bus routes to save money, meaning that more children will be walking and bicycling in potentially unsafe conditions, or more parents will drive their children, which increases traffic congestion and air quality concerns.

- Approximately 55% of children are bused, and we spend \$21.5 billion nationally each year on school bus transportation, an average of \$854 per child transported per year.
- Eliminating one bus route, based on average per-pupil expenditure and average number of pupils per bus, would save a school district approximately \$45,000 per year.
- Nationwide, approximately 22% of made busing reductions during the 2010-2011 school year were due to fuel price increases.





# The Five “E” Approach

## *Engineering*

Safer and more attractive to walk and bicycle to school. Engaging planners and engineers is crucial to successfully implementing safety improvements. It's also important to reach out to the community to educate neighbors about the benefits and importance of any

*Engineering* *Enforcement*

## *Education*

*Encouragement* *Evaluation*

Proposed improvements. Example of engineering strategies may include:

- SRTS maps that show suggested routes to walk and bicycle to school.
- School bicycle rodeo that teaches safe bicycling skills.
- Curriculum focused on the benefits of walking and bicycling.
- Seminars or events that educate parents about
- Public education for safety improvements.



# The Five “E” Approach

The Safe Routes to School planning approach to pedestrian and bicycle safety is effective because it is done comprehensively and covers five key areas, referred to as the "5-E's": Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Encouragement and Evaluation. Following is a summary of each approach as it is incorporated into a SRTS planning process.

---

## Engineering

Engineering strategies including planning and implementing physical improvements that make it safer and more attractive to walk and bicycle to school. Engaging planners and engineers is crucial to successfully implementing safety improvements. It's also important to reach out to the community to educate neighbors about the benefits and importance of any proposed improvements. Example of engineering strategies may include:

- Adding traffic calming crosswalks, sidewalks, bicycle lanes or other infrastructure that improves safety for walking and bicycling.
- Installing bike racks at schools.
- Completing a school walking and bicycling audit and a school travel plan.



## Education

Education about SRTS helps build support among kids, parents, teachers and community members. To craft education messages, first identify your goals and audiences. Do people need to know more about the benefits of walking or bicycling? Would maps of routes to the school help more people walk or bicycle? Would walking or bicycling safety information get kids and parents more excited about walking and bicycling? Example Education strategies may include:

- SRTS maps that show suggested routes to walk and bicycle to school.
- School bicycle rodeo that teaches safe bicycling skills.
- Curriculum focused on the benefits of walking and bicycling.
- Seminars or events that educate parents about the benefits of walking and bicycling.
- Traffic safety education.
- Public education for safety improvements.



## Encouragement

Encouragement is closely tied to education strategies, but is more focused on getting people to try walking and bicycling to school and celebrating and rewarding people for their efforts. Encouragement activities are more effective if the physical environment works for walking and bicycling to school. Example Encouragement strategies may include:

- Organizing events such as “Walk and Bike to School Day” to encourage families to try walking & bicycling to school.
- Creating walking school buses that allow kids to walk together with adult volunteers.
- Utilizing contests or incentives to encourage walking and bicycling to school.



---

## Enforcement

Enforcement strategies help reduce unsafe behaviors by drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists and encourage all road users to obey traffic laws and share the road safely. Enforcement can be expensive, so it is best used strategically in conjunction with the other strategies. Example Enforcement strategies may include:

- Partnership with law enforcement to target problem intersections for enforcement.
- Educational “stings” to teach motorists about laws regarding yielding to pedestrians.
- Installation of digital speed signs that display travel speed of passing vehicles.



---

## Evaluation

Evaluation is very important to a successful SRTS initiative and should be considered from the very beginning of planning. Ask yourself, how do we define success for our efforts and how can we measure or document our progress? Evaluation will likely include a combination of quantitative information, such as counts of how many children are walking and bicycling, and more qualitative information, such as success stories from families who have chosen to walk and bicycle more. Example Evaluation strategies may include:

- A school walking and bicycling audit and a school travel plan that includes specific goals.

- Bicycle and pedestrian counts that show bicycling and walking rates over time.
- Data about vehicle crashes near the school, traffic speeds or traffic volumes.



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“The planning team was designed to articulate **the needs of the community**

and develop strategies going forward”

This document is a continuation of the ongoing planning process for Little Falls. It was formally adopted by both the Little Falls School Board and by the Mary of Lourdes School Board on October 2015.

“The planning team was comprised of several **key stakeholders** with diverse

backgrounds and areas of expertise”

A major premise of this plan is to support other existing local planning efforts and to lay out a logical straightforward plan to successfully implement the policies and projects identified herein.

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# Planning Process

The Region Five Development Commission working in cooperation with the City of Little Falls, the Little Falls School District and Mary of Lourdes School staff developed this Safe Routes to School plan by collecting and analyzing information, identifying community needs and priorities, and developing recommendations to set forth and accomplish these goals.

---

## Methodology

The charge of the planning team was to provide oversight of the overall planning process as well as to provide vital input regarding issues and barriers to safety of students walking or bicycling to and from school; to identify areas of concern as well as to set forth a vision that will guide future transportation planning related to Safe Routes to School.

---

## Planning Team

After being awarded the Technical Assistance grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) in 2014, the Little Falls City Council, in conjunction with Little Falls School District 482, Mary of Lourdes Schools and the Region Five Development Commission began developing a planning team that would represent a diverse cross section of the community.

The planning team was designed to both articulate the needs of the community as they relate to Safe Routes to School as well as develop strategies and recommendations going forward.

The planning team was comprised of several key stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise including elected officials, educators, members of law enforcement, as well local transportation planners.

Planning Team Members met a total of 10 times throughout 2014 and 2015 and participated on several conference calls. Planning Team members also oversaw the administration of both the parent and student surveys. Additionally, the Planning Team conducted walk-audits at each of the school sites to identify areas in need of improvement. The Planning Team reviewed the final draft of this plan and recommended it for approval to the Little Falls City Council, School District 482 Board and the Mary of Lourdes School board in October 2015.

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## *Meetings*

After developing the Little Falls Safe Routes to School Planning Team, and hosting the public informational kickoff meeting, the Planning Team held a series of working sessions to determine issues and barriers as they related to Safe Routes to Schools.

- Meeting #1 Core Team Planning Meeting	March, 2014
- Meeting #2 Core Team Planning Meeting	March, 2014
- Follow up Conference Calls	July, 2014
- Follow up Conference Calls	August, 2014
- Kickoff Meeting (Middle School)	October, 2014
- Kickoff Meeting (Lindbergh Elementary)	October, 2014
- Kickoff Meeting (Mary of Lourdes Elementary)	October, 2014
- Kickoff Meeting (Mary of Lourdes Middle School)	October, 2014
- Kickoff Meeting (Lincoln Elementary School)	October, 2014
- Work Session #1 (Middle School/Lindbergh Walk Audit)	November 2014
- Work Session #2 (MOL Elementary Walk Audit)	May 2015
- Work Session #3 (Lincoln and MOLM Walk Audit)	May 2015

---

## *Parent and Student Survey*

Concurrently with the work sessions the Planning Team oversaw the administration of both the parent and student surveys in order to gain additional input into the planning process. The surveys that were used were designed by the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

The student survey was conducted in class over a series of three concurrent school days and had a near 100% response rate from students. The parent survey which was conducted online also yielded a high response rate. The input from both of these surveys provided crucial information regarding issues and barriers to walking and biking to and from school.

---

## *Community Walking Audit*

The planning team conduct a walking audits around each of the five school sites to further determine issues and barriers as well as to begin thinking about potential solutions to improve student's ability to safely walk or bike to and from school.

The input from the walk audit proved invaluable to the planning team in determining where issues and barriers exist and also in determining potential solutions.



## *Assessment of Issues and Barriers*

Based on the expertise of the members of the Planning Team, input from both the parent and student surveys, the walking audit, as well as numerous discussions held both at the public informational meetings and the working sessions, the Planning Team conducted an assessment of issues and

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barriers. The assessment of issues and barriers was meant to inform the decision making process by bringing together all the information gathered from the surveys, walking audit and public meetings and working sessions.



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### *Observations and Recommendations*

After assessing the issues and barriers the Planning Team developed a list of observations and recommendations intended to address the Safe Routes to School needs present in Little Falls. The observations and recommendations were developed according to the nationally recognized Five “E’s” approach.



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“Little Falls schools, serve a  
community which is rich in  
history, **abundant in**  
**resources** and blessed  
with natural beauty”

This document is a continuation of the ongoing planning process for Little Falls. It was prepared jointly with the Little Falls School Board and by the Mary of Lourdes School Board on October 2015 and is intended to be a living document.

Little Falls has used this planning process as an opportunity to evaluate and reinforce the existing transportation policies and to evaluate previous planning efforts in order to update and reinforce past decisions that remain relevant.

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By providing the opportunity for more students to walk and bike to as improvements to the local sidewalk and trail networks

# Community Overview

The Region Five Development Commission working in cooperation with the City of Little Falls, School District 482 and the Mary of Lourdes School Board developed this Safe Routes to School plan by collecting and analyzing information, identifying community needs and priorities, and developing recommendations.

---

## *City of Little Falls*

Little Falls is located in Morrison County in Central Minnesota and on the banks of the Mississippi River. A community of approximately 8,500 residents; Little Falls has small-town charm with numerous opportunities to visit, shop and dine. Many of our attractions are within walking or biking distance. Visit the Historic Downtown and stop in at the Great River Arts Center and view the many extraordinary talents of local artists.

Activities and amenities include a walk around the grounds of the Linden Hill Conference and Retreat Center, Lindbergh State Park and visit the childhood home of local hero Charles A. Lindbergh. Other sites of interest, rich with local history, are the Minnesota Fishing Museum, and the Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Museum. A short drive to the north takes you to Camp Ripley where you can spend time at the Minnesota Military Museum or the Camp Ripley Environmental Education Center.



Just to the east of Camp Ripley you have the opportunity to honor veterans with a visit to the breathtaking Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery. Relax and play 18 holes of golf at the scenic Little Falls Country Club along the Mississippi River or take the family on a tour of the wildly populated Pine Grove Zoo.

---

## *School District 482*

Little Falls is no ordinary place, and the Little Falls Community Schools is no ordinary school district. We believe that the 2,800 school-aged children of our community are part of a unique educational environment. Our district is larger than about 75% of all Minnesota school districts, and we offer "big-district" programs, activities and opportunities for students. At the same





time, though, our students attend school in a safe, caring, personalized "community" environment that reflects the strengths and values of the Little Falls-Randall area.

---

### *Mary of Lourdes Schools*

Mary of Lourdes offers a strong faith-filled environment with high academic standards and small class sizes. It is also a Preschool-Gr.8 accredited school. Our mission statement notes, "Mary of Lourdes School is dedicated to excellence in education by focusing on the whole person; integrating learning with faith and faith with daily life." It is our goal at MOLS is to educate the whole child (the cognitive, emotional, physical and, equally important, the spiritual growth) and engage each student in the classroom in his or her uniqueness.

---



### *Morrison County*

Our county is centrally located in Minnesota and has a population of 32,872. We occupy 1,125.06 square miles ranking us the 17th largest county in the State. Excellent educational, retail, and business opportunities await individuals and families. In addition, our area boasts of an abundance of wildlife, lakes, streams, snowmobiling and cross country ski trails.

Morrison County was established February 25, 1856. It is located in the center of Minnesota and has a population of 33,198. Morrison County is the gateway to the northern Minnesota vacationland.

The cities in Morrison County operate under the Mayor-Council form of government. St. Gabriel's Hospital provides medical service to the area. There are also three nursing homes in the county and several apartment complexes that serve the needs of the low income elderly. Morrison County's economy is based on agriculture with significant contributions from the manufacturing and retail income industries. It has a tax capacity estimated at \$31,145,338.00 as of January of 2009. ‘



Businesses located in the County include Larson Boats, Morey's Seafest, Falls Fabricating, Redwood Industries, Bednarek Trucking and IWCO. Camp Ripley is located on 54,000 acres nine miles north of Little Falls and is a year-round training facility used by the National Guard, United States Reserve

and active military units from the entire United States and Norway. Camp Ripley's winter training facilities are regarded as the best in the nation.

The area offers an abundance of wildlife, lakes, streams, snowmobiling and cross country ski trails. Morrison County has twenty parks including Lindbergh State Park. Cultural attractions include the Heartland Symphony, Stroia Ballet Co. Community Theater, Travelogues, St. Francis Music Center, Great River Arts Association and events such as the Dam Festival, and the Sidewalk Arts and Crafts Fair which is one of the largest in the upper Midwest.

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### ***State Health Improvement Program (SHIP)***

SHIP was developed in response to the 2007 Minnesota State Legislature's request to create a plan for statewide health improvement to address the burden of chronic diseases and the rising cost of health care in the state.

SHIP centers on sustainable, population-focused, evidence-based changes to policies, systems and environments that exist in schools, communities, work sites and health care systems. These changes make it easier for people to incorporate healthy behaviors into their daily lives.

The Statewide Health Improvement Program covers 51 counties, four cities and one tribal government. Morrison, Todd, Wadena and Cass Counties SHIP received a grant of \$343,603 for fiscal years 2012-13.



### ***Working with Schools***

Healthy eating in schools: SHIP is working with schools to offer healthy snacks and healthy food at celebrations and fundraisers. For example, in 2012, Little Falls' Mary of Lourdes lunch programs utilizes a farm to school to offer fresh vegetables in their lunch programs on a regular basis. More physical activity for kids: SHIP works to integrate more physical activity into their students' day through Active Classrooms programs, Active Recess programs and physical education.

Decreased exposure to second-hand smoke at colleges: SHIP teams up with colleges interested in a tobacco-free policy for staff and visitors on school grounds, in student housing and at school sponsored events. For example, in 2012, SHIP received commitments from both post-secondary campuses to begin work on going smoke-free.

### ***Healthier Communities***

Increased access to healthy food: SHIP works to improve access to nutritious foods by increasing availability and affordability in grocery and corner stores, concession facilities and other food vendors. SHIP facilitates the development of new farmers markets and promotes their use.

Decreased exposure to second-hand smoke at home: SHIP works with apartment building owners who wish to develop smoke-free housing policies.

### ***Prevention in Health Care***

Working with health care providers: With SHIP, more health care providers are screening and documenting Body Mass Index and tobacco use and exposure and providing community resources to their patients to help make healthy living easier.

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The Little Falls Safe Routes to School Plan is intended to provide a framework on which to continue building a community in which more students have the opportunity to safely walk or bike to and from school.

By providing the opportunity for more students to walk and bike to and from school, it is anticipated that this planning effort will result in several benefits including first and foremost a safer active transportation environment, improved physical and mental health, improved student concentration and a reduction in negative behavioral issues, as well as improvements to the local sidewalk and trail networks.

# Observation Student Survey Parent Survey Community Walk Results Audit Community In School Zone Infrastructure

This document is a compilation of the ongoing planning process for Little Falls. It was formally adopted by the Little Falls School Board and by the Mary of Lourdes School Board on \_\_\_\_\_ 2015 and October 2015 respectively.

Little Falls has used this planning process as an opportunity to evaluate and reinforce the existing transportation policies and to evaluate previous planning efforts in order to update and reinforce past decisions that remain relevant.

A major premise of this plan is to support other existing local planning mechanisms and to lay out a logical straightforward plan to successfully implement the policies and projects identified herein. The Little Falls Safe Routes to School Plan is intended to provide a framework on which to continue building a community in which more students have the opportunity to safely walk or bike to and from school.

By providing the opportunity for more students to walk and bike to and from school, it is anticipated that this planning effort will result in several benefits including first and foremost a safer active transportation environment, improved physical and mental health, improved student concentration and a reduction in negative behavioral issues, as well as improvements to the local sidewalk and trail networks.

# Observations

The Planning Team utilized a number of input mechanisms to gather information on which to base their observations. This section discusses each of the input mechanisms used. These input mechanisms include, Student Survey, Parent Survey, Community Walk Audit, Infrastructure Assessment, and Brainstorming sessions at Planning Team and public meetings.

## Student Survey Results

The National Center for Safe Routes to School has developed a national survey to determine a baseline of information relating to the modes of transportation that students take to and from school. The Student Survey is a survey designed to be administered by educators in class on three consecutive days of a given school week (ideally on a Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday) in order to avoid Mondays and Fridays which often have statistical anomalies associated with their records.

Lincoln Elementary School									
	Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Tues. AM	O	325	5	6	177	130	4	0	3
Tues. PM	R	325	5	6	177	130	4	0	3
Wed. AM	O	338	6	7	176	146	3	0	0
Wed. PM	O	332	11	8	185	124	1	0	3
Thurs. AM	O	337	3	8	180	141	3	0	2
Thurs. PM	R	339	8	6	195	129	1	0	0

Mary of Lourdes Elementary and Middle School									
	Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Tues. AM	O	211	8	0	88	112	2	0	1
Tues. PM	R	211	9	1	124	73	0	0	4
Wed. AM	O	229	8	1	89	127	3	0	1
Wed. PM	O	229	10	1	119	95	2	0	2
Thurs. AM	O	238	8	0	87	142	1	0	0
Thurs. PM	R	220	11	3	112	94	0	0	18

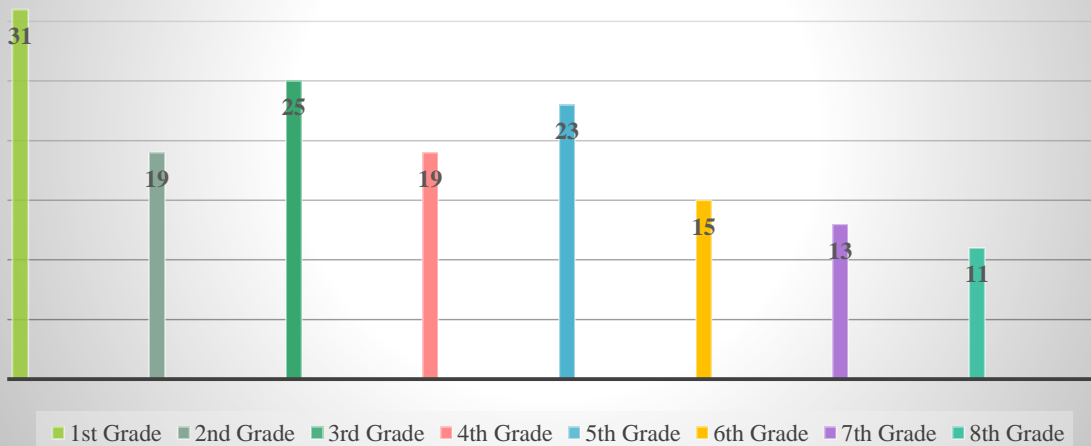
Community Middle School									
	Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Tues. AM	O	465	24	2	260	170	3	0	6
Tues. PM	R	464	25	1	226	196	6	0	10
Wed. AM	O	450	18	5	232	180	4	0	11
Wed. PM	O	440	27	4	216	171	5	0	17
Thurs. AM	O	368	12	3	210	131	3	0	9
Thurs. PM	R	365	21	2	179	150	8	0	5

Lindbergh Elementary School									
	Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Tues. AM	O	580	17	3	331	220	9	0	0
Tues. PM	R	576	17	3	343	206	6	0	1
Wed. AM	O	572	16	7	322	219	8	0	0
Wed. PM	O	572	23	6	322	205	7	0	9
Thurs. AM	O	579	19	4	332	217	7	0	0
Thurs. PM	R	568	22	4	332	202	7	0	1

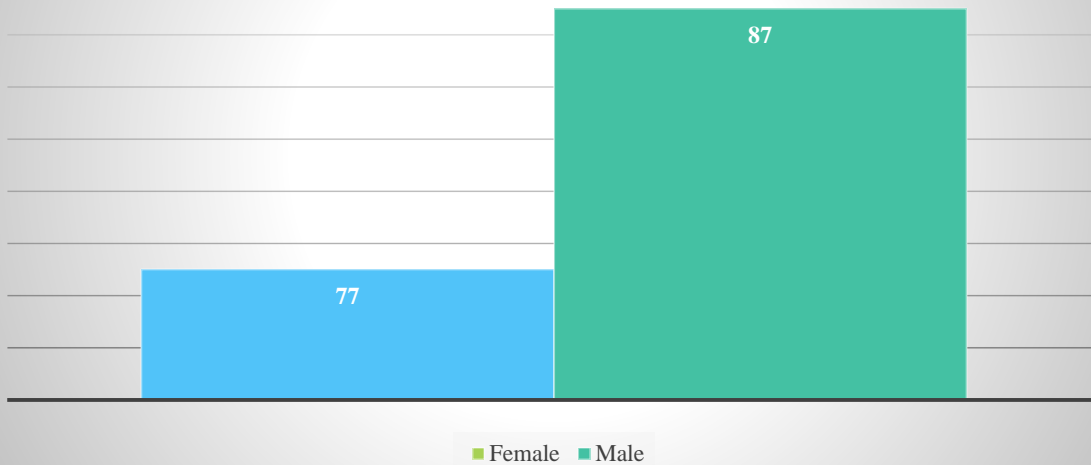
### ***Parent Survey Results***

In addition to the Student Survey, the National Center for Safe Routes to School has also developed a Parent Survey designed to determine the main reasons why students are not walking or biking to school. The parent survey is comprised of 16 questions to determine the many factors that come to bear upon the decisions that go into walking and biking or not walking and biking to school. In administering the Parent Survey the Little Falls SRTS Planning Team with assistance from school staff of both District 482 and Mary of Lourdes Schools administered the survey which was completed by their parents. The results of each of the questions in the Parent Survey are below:

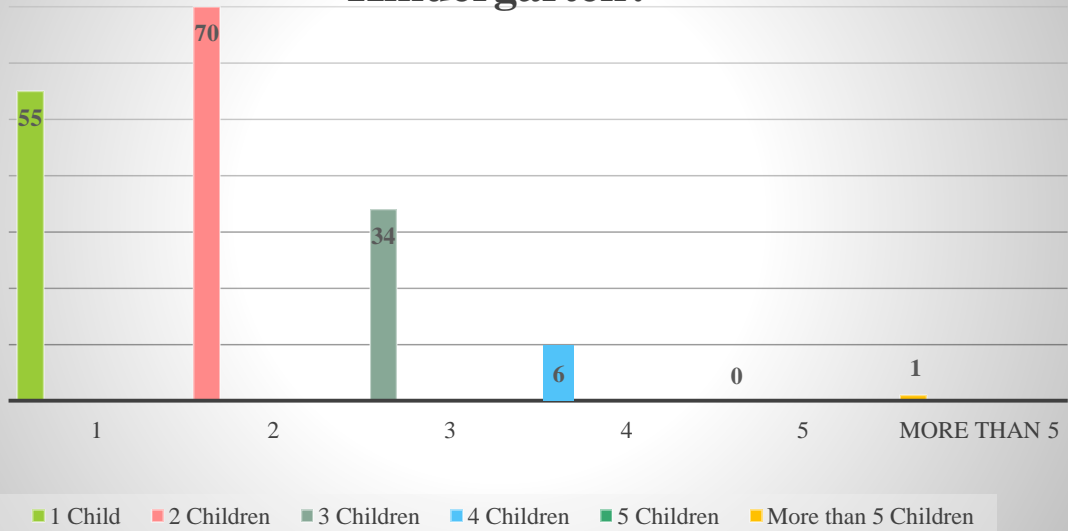
### What is the grade of the child who brought home this survey?



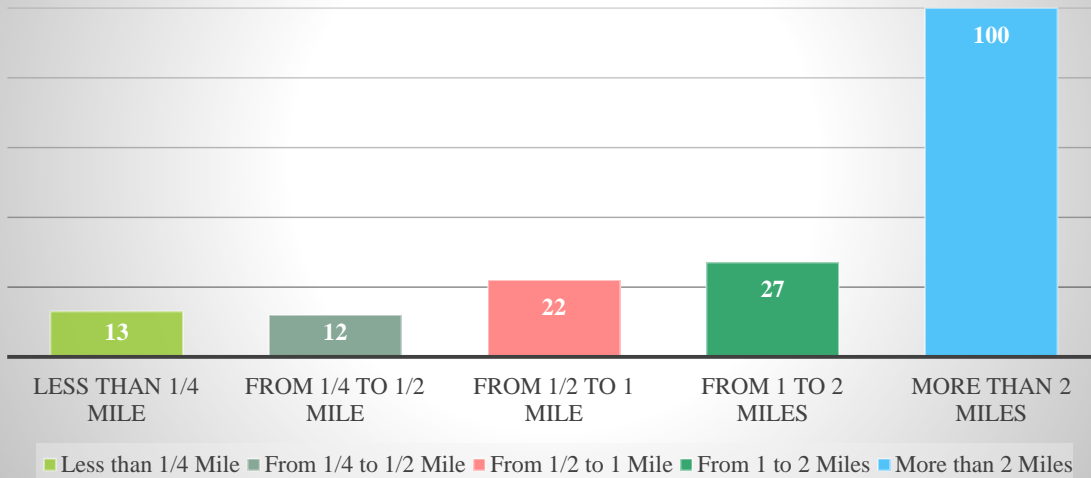
### Is the child who brought home this survey Male or Female?



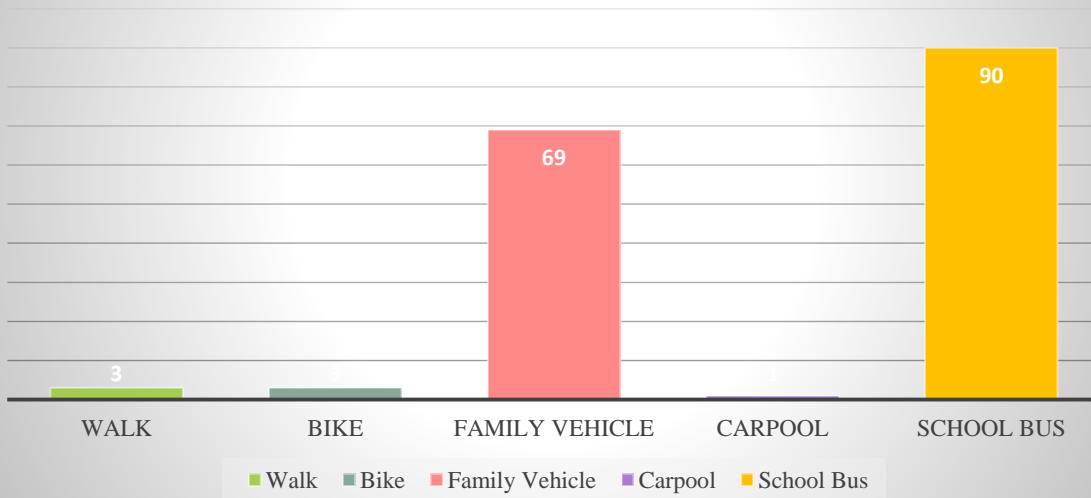
## How many children do you have in Kindergarten?



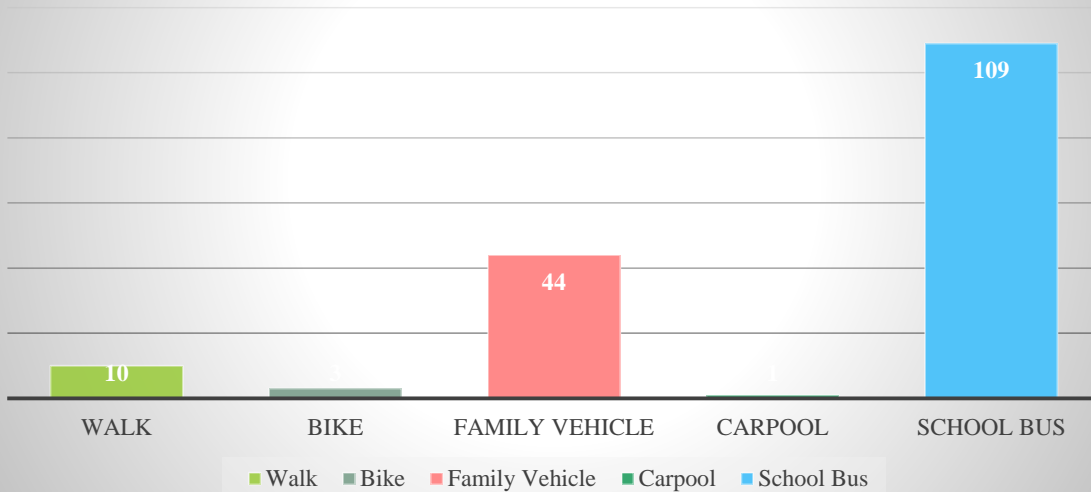
## How far does your child live from school?



## On most days, how does your child arrive to school?

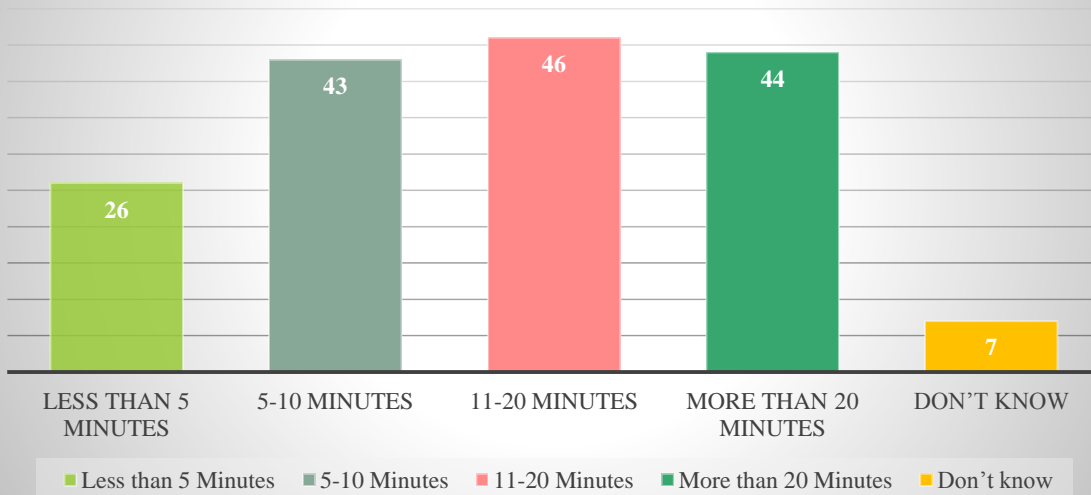


## On most days, how does your child leave from school?

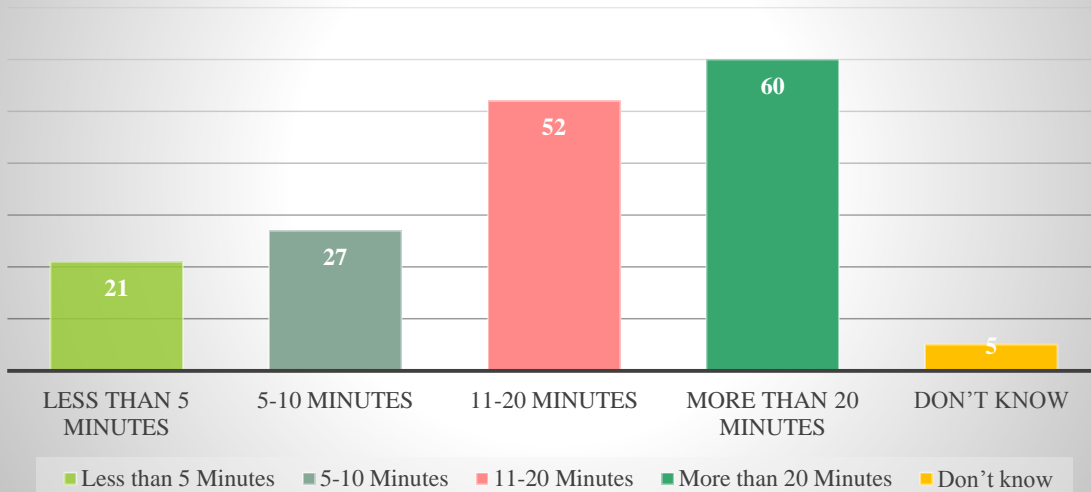




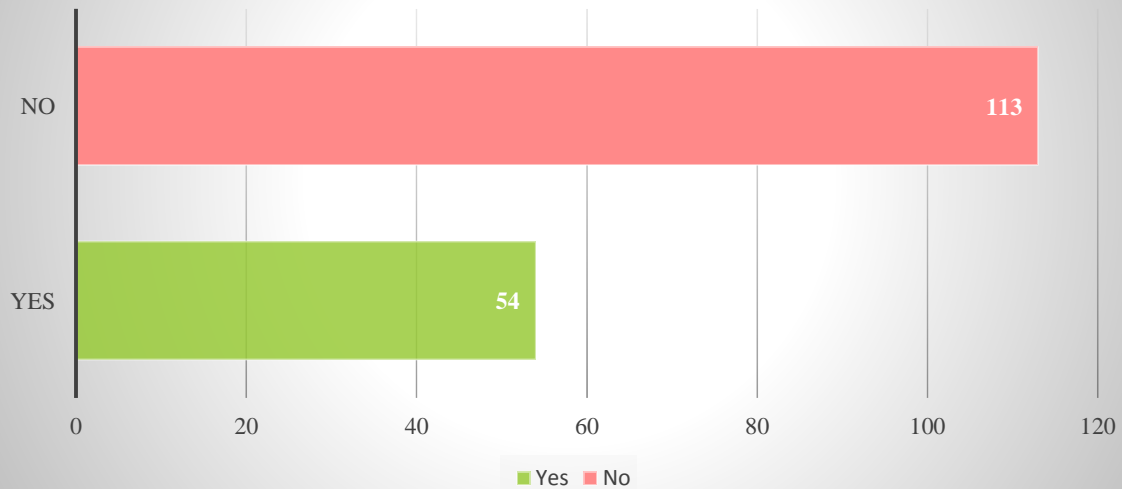
## How long does it normally take your child to get to school?



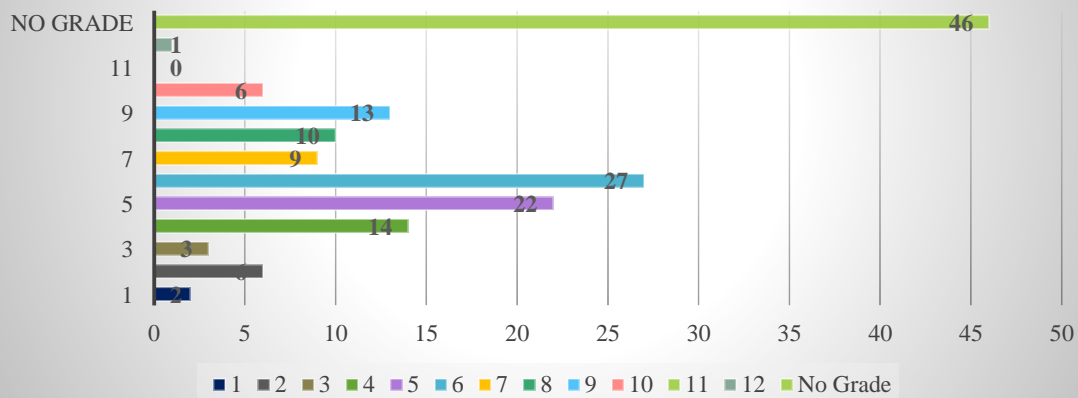
## How long does it normally take your child to get home from school?



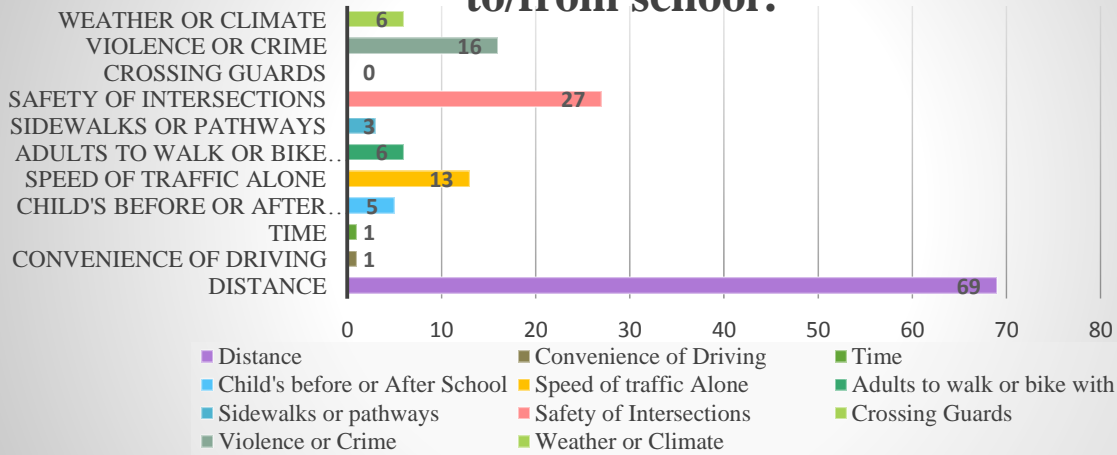
## Has your child asked you for permission to walk or bike to/from school?



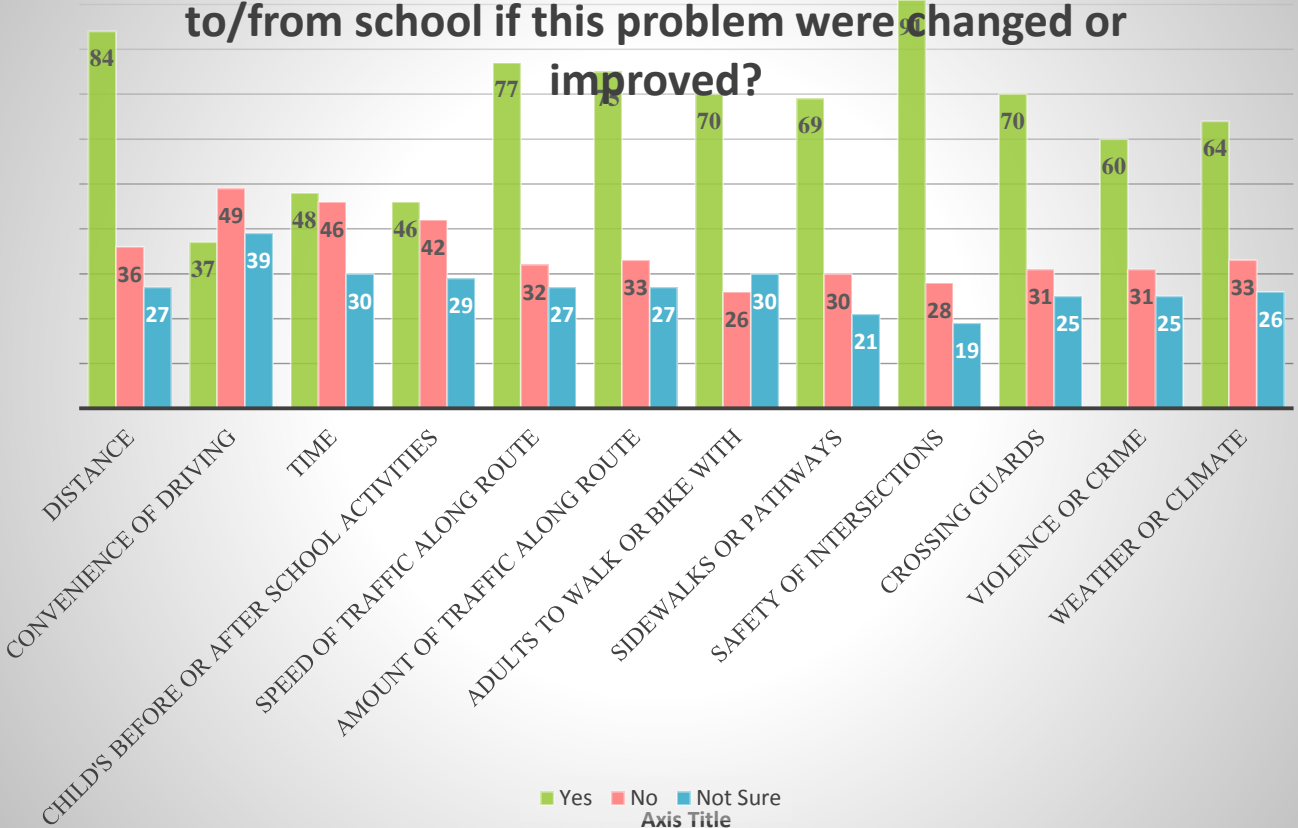
## At what grade would you feel comfortable allowing your child to walk to and/or from school?



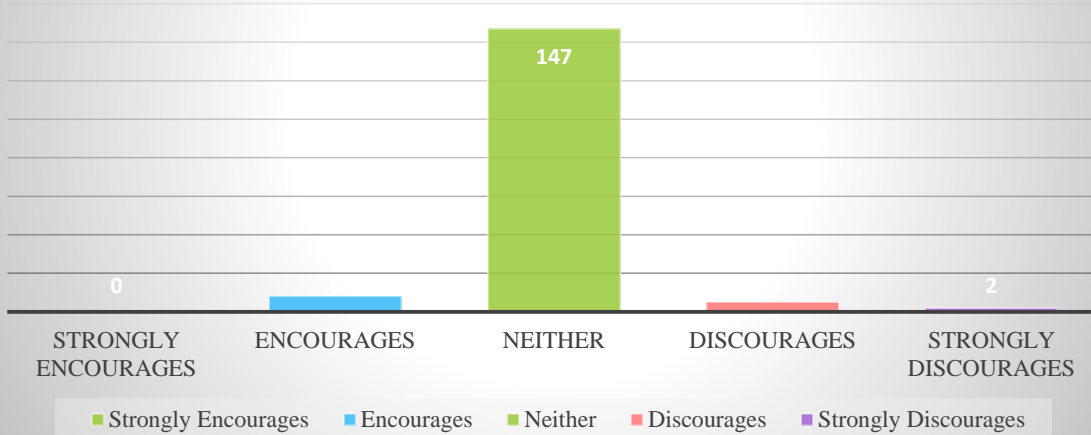
## What of the following issues affected your decision to allow, or not allow, your child to walk or bike to/from school?



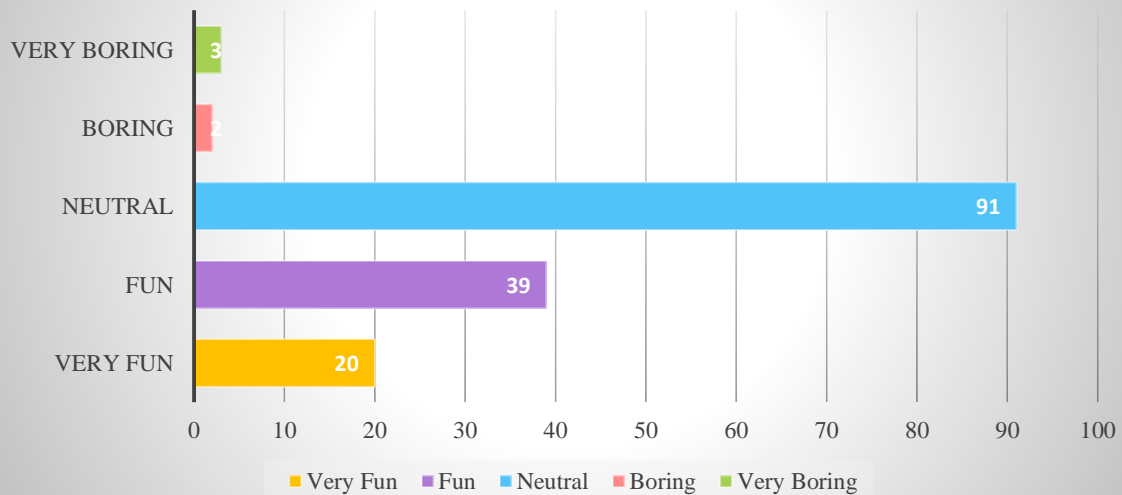
## Would you probably let your child walk or bike to/from school if this problem were changed or improved?



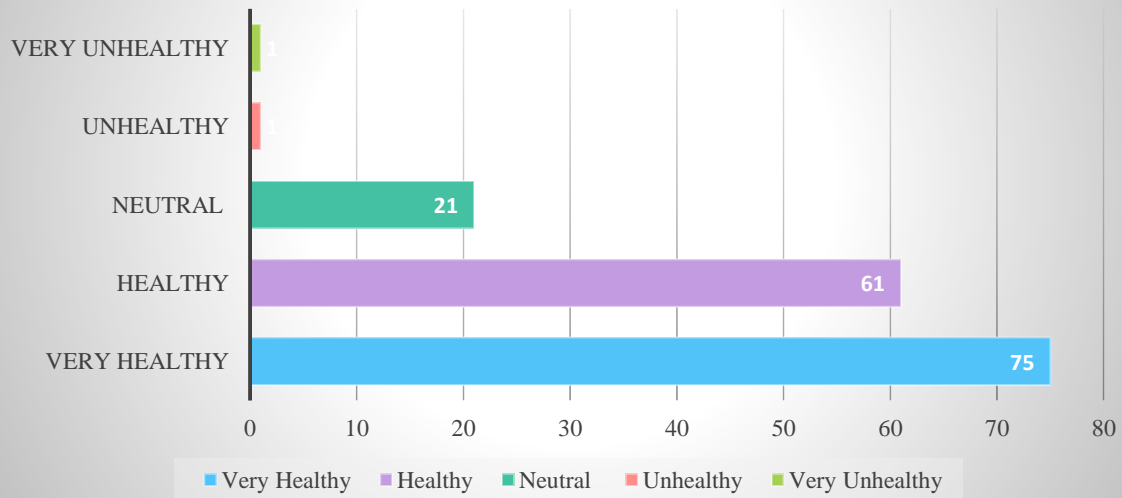
## In your opinion, how much does your child's school encourage or discourage walking and biking to/from school?



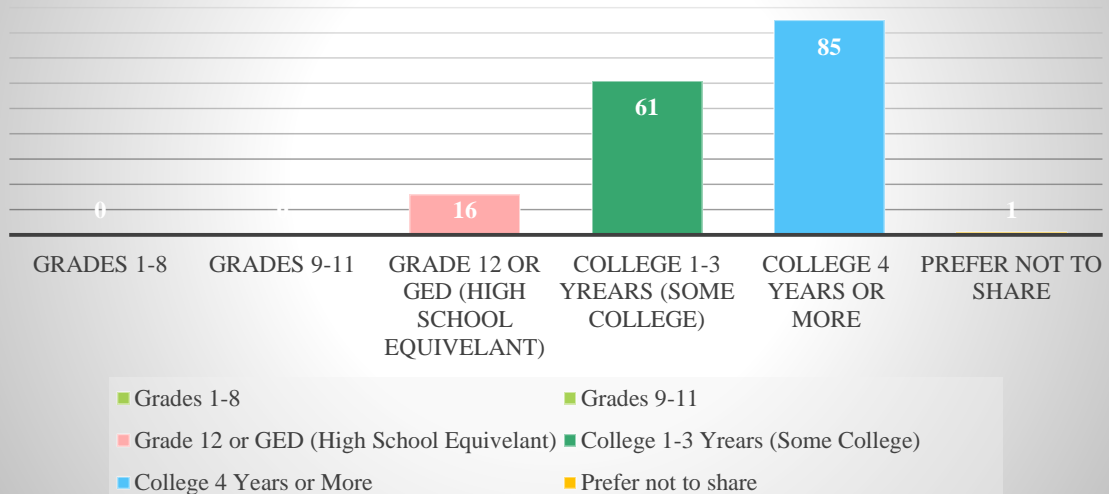
## How much fun is walking or biking to school for your child?



## How Healthy is walking or biking to/from school for your child?



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





### *Community Walk Audit Results*

Another means used by the Planning Team to determine issues and barriers regarding Safe Routes to School is the community walk audit. Walk audits can be particularly useful to determine where issues and barriers exist. An audit is an unbiased examination/evaluation of the walking and biking environment. The general purpose of an audit is to identify concerns for pedestrians and bicyclists related to the safety, access, comfort, and convenience of the environment. In addition to identifying problem areas, an audit can be used to identify potential alternatives or solutions (such as engineering treatments, policy changes, or education and enforcement measures). Audits can be performed before, during, or after the construction of a project.

Audits involve a review of all the data for a location or travel corridor analyzed by a multi-disciplinary team independent of the site or project being audited. Informal audits can be performed by any individual or community group. A multi-disciplinary team will often allow a fresh look at traffic conditions at a location or along a corridor.

It should be noted that the planning team thought it important to conduct at least one walk audit at one of the school sites during extremely cold and adverse weather in order to accurately simulate the issues and barriers facing students walking or biking to school. It should also be noted that this plan does not recommend or encourage students to walk or bike to school during severe winter weather such as extreme cold but rather encourages more students to walk or bike to school when it is safe.

Furthermore the walk audits are a way of determining if and or where issues and barriers to safe routes to school exist. It is the purpose of this plan to address these issues and remove these barriers where they exist.

Members of the planning team were provided walk audit checklist form which was developed in coordination between the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS). The checklist which is included at the end of this plan as Appendix A, has spaces for planning members to record their observations in several categories including:



1. Do you have room to walk?
  - a. Sidewalks broken, cracked or blocked.
  - b. No sidewalks, paths or shoulders.
  - c. Snow, gravel or leaves, cover the walking route.
2. Is it easy to cross streets?
  - a. Traffic signals do not allow enough time to cross.
  - b. Crosswalks/traffic signals needed.
  - c. View of traffic blocked by parked cars, trees, plants, or snowbanks.
3. Do drivers behave safely?
  - a. Back-up without looking.
  - b. Drive too fast.
  - c. Speed up to make traffic lights, or drive through red lights.
4. Do pedestrians behave safely?
  - a. Do not cross at cross walks or with traffic signal.
  - b. Do not look both ways before crossing.
  - c. Do not walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic.
5. Is the route pleasant?
  - a. Needs grass, flowers trees.
  - b. Scary dogs.
  - c. Not well lit.
  - d. Littered or dirty.



In addition to these categories planning team members were encouraged to also consider each route through different lenses such as the perspective of a small child, who may or may not be able to see over parked cars. Another lens through which the planning team considered each route was the perspective of someone with disabilities or wheelchair bound. For example are sidewalks compliant with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)? Do sidewalks slope laterally in order to accommodate the slope of a driveway when the sidewalk should remain flat and the driveway apron should begin beyond the sidewalk?

With limited time and resources the planning team understands that they will not be able to address all concerns on all the roadways on which students wish to walk or bike, however by addressing logical termini through a systematized process designed to address as many needs as possible, the planning team sought to identify as many issues and barriers to walking and biking as possible.

One final caveat before delving into the Walk Audit Observations, is the issue of limited resources.

In a perfect world, each street would be newly paved with state of the art electronic signage, all motorists would obey all traffic laws and all pedestrians would have as many route options as could be imagined with sidewalks on every street. All the sidewalks would be self-heating and snow and ice would melt away on its own making shoveling a thing of the past.

Of course this does not accurately reflect the current reality in which transportation construction and materials costs are rising alongside the level of traffic and congestion. To further complicate matters other stressors such as Federal Transportation funding constraints limit the ability of local units of government to maintain their transportation systems much less expand them to meet the increased needs of their residents. Rising transportation costs, ever increasing transportation needs and less funding available is a scenario that is playing out in communities all across the nation.

It is important to remember that even within the world of transportation, several user groups view transportation needs in many different ways and planners and local officials are faced with very difficult tradeoffs regarding how to prioritize the growing list of needs. Therefore, plans such as this help to inform decision makers on areas of greatest priority. There are several routes that the planning team reviewed that do not warrant any physical improvement due to low volume of traffic, condition or width of roadway etc. It is not practical or even a wise use of public funds to recommend sidewalks on all roads.

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## **Community Middle School**

### **Walk Audit Observations**

**Date: Tuesday November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014.**

**Weather Conditions: Freezing cold, overcast. 7-8" of snow cover.**

### **Routes 1:**

An approximately 1 mile route north of the Community Middle School was selected that would simulate a logical route that a student might take when traveling to and/or from school. The route is divided into three segments:

1. From SE corner of the intersection of 11th St. NE and Trunk Highway 27 to 3rd Ave NE.
2. From 3rd Ave NE to 9th St. NE.
3. From 9th St. NE back to school property at corner of 9th St. NE and Trunk

This route was selected for several reasons:

1. It provides the only access for students walking or biking to and/or from school from the NE quadrant of Little Falls.
2. There are a high volume of residential properties in the NE quadrant of Little Falls ranging from single family to multifamily.

3. Both intersections are logical crossings where students would naturally gravitate to in order to cross Trunk Highway 27.



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## Observations:

### Route 1, Segment 1 (11th St. NE from Trunk Highway 27 to 3rd Ave NE)

The first and most obvious observation was that not many students walked from school on this particularly cold, cloudy day. In addition, several streets were extensively covered with hard packed slippery ice sheets.

Several members of the planning team noted that the signalized crossing at 11<sup>th</sup> St. NE and Trunk Highway 27 is an appropriate option for older students, but commented that younger students should have a staff or volunteer crossing guards present to assist students during the half hour directly before arrival, and after dismissal.



The condition of the sidewalk going north along 11<sup>th</sup> St. NE was noted by several planning team members to be in great condition. In addition to being in great condition, it is wide and was, free of debris, snow and ice with the exception of the sidewalk aprons which were blocked by snow from the snowplows as is shown in the picture to the right.



### **Route 1, Segment 2 (3rd Ave NE to 9th St. NE)**

No sidewalks exist along 3rd Ave NE between 11th St. NE and 9th St. NE so the group walked on the left hand side of the road. The street was very icy and made walking not only difficult but dangerous. Several planning team members nearly slipped. Although traffic volume was low as was traffic speeds due to the narrower roadway.



### **Route 1, Segment 3 (9th St. NE back to school property on corner of 9th St. NE and Trunk Highway 27.)**

This segment was very similar to the last segment having no sidewalks and having lots of icy patches. The road condition was somewhat worse with lots of cracking and low spots which contributed to the difficulty of navigating on ice. Several planning team members noted that the roadway might be able to be redesigned to accommodate a sidewalk along one side of the street. It was also noted that a sidewalk there would provide a walking route from the school grounds to Legion Park, and the majority of the residential family area including several high density housing such as Chi Rho and the units along 3rd Ave NE.



The Intersection of 9<sup>th</sup> St. NE and Trunk Highway 27 is high volume traffic intersection and is less controlled than the intersection of 11<sup>th</sup> St. NE and Trunk Highway 27. However school crossing guards are present at the 9<sup>th</sup> St. NE intersection before and after school.

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## **Lindbergh Elementary School**

### **Walk Audit Observations**

**Date:** Tuesday November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

**Weather Conditions:** Freezing cold, overcast. 7-8" of snow cover.

### **Routes 2:**

An approximately 1 mile route west of the Lindbergh Elementary School was selected that would simulate a logical route that a student might take when traveling to and/or from school. This route is divided into four segments:



1. Segment 1: 9th St, NE from Trunk Highway 27 to Broadway East.
2. East Broadway, from Lindbergh Elementary school (west doors), to 7th St. NE.
3. Segment 2: 7th St. SE from Broadway East to 2nd Ave SE.
4. Segment 3: 2nd Ave SE, from 7th St. SE to 9th St. SE.
5. Segment 4: 9th St. SE from 2nd Ave SE to East Broadway/Lindbergh Elementary School (West doors).

This route was selected for several reasons:

1. It is one of the only routes for students walking or biking to and/or from school from the SE quadrant of Little Falls.
2. There are a high volume of residential properties in the SE quadrant of Little Falls ranging from single family to multifamily.



## **Observations:**

### **Route 2, Segment 1: 9<sup>th</sup> St, NE from Trunk Highway 27 to Broadway East.**

A sidewalk running north/south runs along the entirety of the east side of this segment. The sidewalk is wide and in very good condition. Traffic volumes and traffic speeds are low throughout the entirety of this segment with the exception of high traffic volumes before and after school.

Of particular note along this segment is the parent drop off and pick up loop at the Lindbergh Elementary School. While this loop does get quite full during peak times this feature provides very nice separation from road traffic as parents drop off and pick up students at peak traffic times. It also moves the sidewalk further from the road and thus provides separation from higher speed traffic.



### **Route 2, Segment 2: East Broadway, from Lindbergh Elementary school (west doors), to 7th St. NE.**

A narrow sidewalk exists along the entirety of this route on the North side of the street. However the sidewalk along this segment is showing signs of deterioration with lots of Spaulding. In addition there was some shrubbery that extended well into the walking path in some areas. This is a key route connecting students in the SE neighborhoods directly to the West doors of Lindbergh Elementary School. There is also a marked crosswalk connecting the sidewalk in this segment to the sidewalk adjacent to the Elementary school.

Beginning at Broadway East and 8<sup>th</sup> St. NE there is a very nice, wide grassy boulevard which provides separation from vehicular traffic and pedestrians. It was also noted that the sidewalk aprons at the intersection of Broadway E and 7<sup>th</sup> St. NE are angled in towards the center of the intersection which is no longer ADA compliant. However, this is due to changing ADA requirements, as the sidewalk aprons were compliant at the time of installation. This is a common occurrence in many communities.

### **Route 2, Segment 3 Segment 3: Segment 2: 7th St. SE from Broadway East to 2nd Ave SE.**

Nice sidewalks exist on both sides of this segment. Furthermore the sidewalks both enjoy a 6-8ft boulevard which greatly increases the pedestrian experience, and perception of safety. The roadway itself is narrow which helps keep traffic speeds low. Traffic volume was quite low as well. Sidewalk conditions along this segment were good with the exception of some minor Spalling and cracking.

### **Route 2, Segment 4: Segment 3: 2nd Ave SE, from 7th St. SE to 9th St. SE.**

No sidewalks exist along either side of this segment. In addition, the road is somewhat wider promoting higher traffic speeds. Still this is a pleasant route and there was very little traffic as the group walked this route. It was noted that traffic volumes and speeds are likely to increase during the

periods before and after school. This segment terminates at a “T” when it connects to 9<sup>th</sup> St. SE. It was noted by the planning team that there appears to be the possibility of enough easement on the south side of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SE for a sidewalk that could run from 9<sup>th</sup> St. SE to 6<sup>th</sup> St. SE whereupon it would connect to already existing sidewalks. The intersection of 1st Ave and 9<sup>th</sup> St. SE is just below the crest of a hill, and therefore when approaching the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SE from the south it becomes a blind intersection, if this sidewalk were to become a reality, it is strongly recommended to install a crosswalk and flashing traffic calming devices on 9<sup>th</sup> St. SE due to visibility issues of traffic coming from the south along 9<sup>th</sup> St. SE.



### **Route 2 Segment 5: 9th St. SE from 2nd Ave SE to East Broadway/Lindbergh Elementary School (West doors).**

A very nice, wide sidewalk exists along the entire of this segment and runs from TH 27 to 5th Ave SE. The roadway along this segment is wider and both traffic volumes and speeds increase, particularly immediately before and after school.

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## **Community Middle School**

### **Observations during Student Arrival and Dismissal:**

#### *Pedestrians and Bicyclists*

- Several walkers
- Few Bikers
- Most pedestrians crossed TH 27 at the controlled intersection 11th St. SE or with the assistance of crossing guards at the crosswalk at 9<sup>th</sup> St. NE.
- Several vehicles and pedestrians in same space.
- Some pedestrians interfering with traffic, running or walking between parked buses.
- Some Students chose to not use crosswalk or crossing guards and crossed TH 27 in the middle of the roadway.
- Several grade school students would run across the driving lane where buses were entering to line up.



### *Bus System*

- Very Organized
- The group observed several parent pickup/bus conflicts during school release in the upper parking lot.
- Younger students follow teacher
- Quickly cleared up
- Bus circulation is on outer perimeter of parking lot, private vehicle traffic and parking on the interior of parking lot.
- Most students line up with teacher supervision
- Seems straightforward and not very congested
- Older children find their buses without supervision
- Separate from cars, mostly.



### *Crossing Guards/Patrols*

- Crossing Guard is present at intersection of TH 27 and 9<sup>th</sup> ST NE, and accommodating lots of student pedestrians.

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## **Lindbergh Elementary School: Observations during Student Arrival and Dismissal:**

### *Pedestrians and Bicyclists*

- Several walkers
- Few Bikers
- Several pedestrians along narrow roadway with no shoulders
- Several vehicles and pedestrians in same space
- Pedestrians interfering with traffic





### *Bus System*

- Very Organized
- Busses in numbered order
- Younger students follow teacher
- Quickly cleared up
- Bus circulation is entirely separate from car pickup/drop-off
- Students line up with teacher supervision
- Seems straightforward and not very congested
- Teachers walk students to separate buses
- Older children find their buses without supervision
- Separate from cars
- Handicap Bus in designated loading space
- Separated loop



### *Car Loop/Parking Lot*

- One way in/out, but once in family vehicles and buses separate into their own loops
- Parents park in the parking spaces – some students walk through parking lot



### *Crossing Guards/Patrols*

- Crossing Guard is present at intersection of TH 27 and 9<sup>th</sup> ST NE, and accommodating lots of student pedestrians.

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## **Mary of Lourdes Elementary School**

### **Walk Audit Observations**

**Date:** Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> 2015.

**Weather Conditions:** Warm, Clear.

### **Route:**

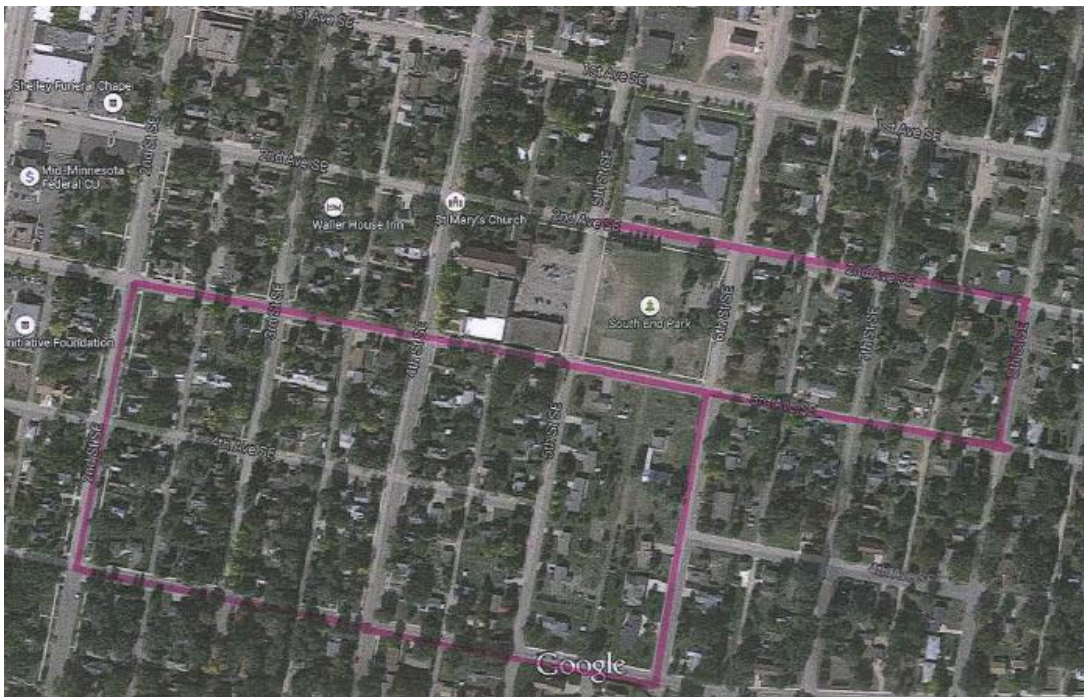
An approximately 1 mile route south west and east of the Mary of Lourdes Elementary school was selected that would simulate logical routes that students might take when traveling to and/or from school. The route is divided into six segments:



1. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SE from 7<sup>th</sup> St. SE to 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SE.
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> St SE. from 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SE to 5<sup>th</sup> Ave SE.
3. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave SE from 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SE to 6<sup>th</sup> St. SE
4. 6<sup>th</sup> St. SE from 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE to 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SE.
5. 7<sup>th</sup> St. SE from 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. SE to 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. SE
6. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave SE from 8<sup>th</sup> St. SE to 5<sup>th</sup> St. SE

This route was selected for several reasons.

1. It covers some of the only routes for students walking or biking to and/or from school from the SE quadrant of Little Falls.
2. There are a high volume of residential properties in the SE quadrant of Little Falls ranging from single family to multifamily.
3. The selected route intentionally covered both segments with and without sidewalks to better understand issues and barriers facing students walking and biking to school.



## Observations:

### Route 1, Segment 1: 3rd Ave SE from 7th St. SE to 2nd St. SE.

Sidewalks do not exist along 3rd Ave SE from 8th St SE to 6th St SE. At 6th St. SE a sidewalk begins on the north side of 3rd Ave SE. This sidewalk continues on 3rd Ave past school grounds and all the way to 1st St. SE. Additionally at 4th St. SE a sidewalk segment begins on the south side of 3rd Ave SE and continues on to 1st St. SE. All the sidewalks along 3rd Ave SE are in reasonably good condition.



3rd Ave is very narrow which promotes lower traffic speeds and lower traffic volumes. The route is quite pleasant, calm and peaceful. Occasionally some shrubbery extends onto the walking space and there are some dogs that barked, but all were tethered or leashed appropriately.

### Route 1, Segment 2: 2nd St SE. from 3rd Ave SE to 5th Ave SE.

This segment of the route enjoys tree lined boulevards with sidewalks on both sides of the relatively narrow street. With the exception of non ADA compliant sidewalk aprons on the intersections of 2nd Ave SE and 3rd Ave. SE (aprons that angle towards the center of the intersection rather than at 90° degree angles), sidewalks along this segment are some of the best in the city.



As was the case with the sidewalk aprons at the intersection of Broadway E and 7<sup>th</sup> St. NE, these aprons were ADA compliant at the time of installation, but due to changed ADA requirements are grandfathered in.

During our walk along 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SE, it was noted that on the adjacent 3<sup>rd</sup> St. SE the tree lined boulevard with sidewalks on both sides of the road continues along 3<sup>rd</sup> St. SE until 6<sup>th</sup> Ave SE whereupon the eastern sidewalk stops. The west side of 3<sup>rd</sup> St. SE maintains its sidewalk, complete with tree lined boulevard as far as 7<sup>th</sup> Ave SE where it nearly connects to sidewalks adjacent to the St. Gabriel's Hospital campus.

### Route 1, Segment 3: 5<sup>th</sup> Ave SE from 3<sup>rd</sup> St. SE to 6<sup>th</sup> St. SE.

This segment, along 5th Ave SE has a larger design speed and is wider and therefore promotes higher traffic volumes and higher traffic speeds. Fortunately a sidewalk exists along the entire north side of the segment and even extends from 1st St. SE all the way to the High School, curving into 11th St SE and connecting to TH 27.

With the exception of a few areas where trees and shrubs extend onto the walking area, this sidewalk segment is in very good condition Sidewalk connections extending north from 5<sup>th</sup> Ave SE exist at the intersections of 1<sup>st</sup> St. SE, 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SE, 3<sup>rd</sup> St. SE, 4<sup>th</sup> St. SE, 9<sup>th</sup> St. SE and 11<sup>th</sup> St. SE.

### **Route 1, Segment 4: 6<sup>th</sup> St. SE from 5<sup>th</sup> Ave SE to 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SE**

This segment is perhaps the least safe for pedestrian or bike traffic because there are no sidewalks along this segment and wider roadway design on 6th St. SE promotes higher traffic speeds and higher traffic volumes. Sidewalks do begin on the west side of 6<sup>th</sup> St SE extending north before terminating at 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SE.

Given that 6th St. SE is meant to be a collector between 5th Ave. SE and TH 27 to the north it is understandable that there are only two stop signs on 6th St. SE between TH 27 and 5th Ave SE. However this is a concern, particularly between 3rd and 4th St. SE where Columbia Park which is adjacent to Mary of Lourdes Elementary School is host to many children at play especially immediately after school. Columbia Park does have sufficient sidewalks on all four sides.

### **Route 1, Segment 5: 7th St. SE from 3rd Ave. SE to 2nd Ave. SE**

No sidewalks exist along this segment with the exception of one block along the east side of 7th St SE between 3rd Ave SE and 2nd Ave SE. 7th St. SE is quite narrow promoting slow traffic speeds and low traffic volumes, and the one block of sidewalk, while narrow is quite pleasant with a sizable 6-8 foot tree lined boulevard.

There is also a very unique portion of this segment, where a private property owner has installed their own sidewalk for approx. 160ft along the west side of 7<sup>th</sup> St. SE. While this small portion of private sidewalk provides no direct connection to the public sidewalk network it is a very nice wide sidewalk serving these two properties.

### **Route 1, Segment 6: 2nd Ave SE from 7th St. SE to 5th St. SE**

The only sidewalks along this segment is along 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave SE between 5<sup>th</sup> St. SE and 6<sup>th</sup> St. SE at Columbia Park. While the other segments of this route do not have sidewalks, they are probably not warranted due to the narrow roadway, lower traffic speeds and lower traffic volumes.

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## **Lincoln Elementary**

### **Walk Audit Observations**

**Date:** May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015

**Weather Conditions:** Warm, overcast, rainy.

### **Route:**

An approximately 1 mile route east and west of Lincoln Elementary School was selected that would simulate logical routes that students might take when traveling to and/or from school. The route is divided into five segments:

1. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW from 9<sup>th</sup> St. SW to 4<sup>th</sup> St. SW.
2. 4<sup>th</sup> St. SW from 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, SW to 5<sup>th</sup> Ave SW.
3. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave SW from 4<sup>th</sup> St. SW to 6<sup>th</sup> St. SW.
4. 6<sup>th</sup> St. SW from 5<sup>th</sup> St. SW to 4<sup>th</sup> Ave SW.
5. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave 6<sup>th</sup> St. SW to 9<sup>th</sup> St. SW.



6. 9<sup>th</sup> St. SW from 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW to 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. SW.

This route was selected for several reasons:

1. It covers some of the only routes for students walking or biking to and/or from school from the SW quadrant of Little Falls.
2. There are a high volume of residential properties in the SW quadrant of Little Falls ranging from single family to multifamily.
3. The selected route intentionally covered segments both with and without sidewalks to better understand issues and barriers facing students walking and biking to school.



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## Observations:

### **Route 1, Segment 1: 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW from 9<sup>th</sup> St. SW to 4<sup>th</sup> St. SW.**

There are no sidewalks along 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. SW. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave enjoys very low traffic volumes and low traffic speeds. This is in part due to the very narrow width of 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. From 4<sup>th</sup> St. SW to 5<sup>th</sup> St SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW is a very narrow asphalt roadway. From 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW to 6<sup>th</sup> St. SW, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave is a gravel road. Pavement begins again on 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. SW at the 6<sup>th</sup> St. SW and remains paved until 9<sup>th</sup> St. SW.

7<sup>th</sup> St. SW comes to a “T” at 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. SW right where Lincoln Elementary school is. Therefore 7<sup>th</sup> St. SW is closed each school day during peak hours before and after school.

Another interesting element of this segment is the right angle corner that 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave takes between 8<sup>th</sup> St. SW 9<sup>th</sup> St. SW. Beginning at 8<sup>th</sup> St. SW 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave is host to Lindbergh Lions Recreational Area and ballfields. At 9<sup>th</sup> St. SW, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave terminates due to Lindbergh Lions Recreational Area and ballfields on its north and west.



### **Route 1, Segment 2: 4h St. SW from 3rd Ave, SW to 5th Ave SW.**

This segment of roadway is quite narrow, and similar to 3rd St. SW promotes lower traffic speeds and traffic volumes. Unlike 3rd Ave. SW, 4th St. SW enjoys a very nice sidewalk and tree lined boulevard throughout the entire segment.



### **Route 1, Segment 3: 5th Ave SW from 4th St. SW to 6th St. SW.**

5th Ave. SW, also County Road 223, is meant to be a collector road and as such has a higher speed limit, and design speed which increases both traffic speed and volume. While there are no sidewalks along the segment on 5th Ave SW, the roadway does have very nice wide shoulders that provide a space for pedestrians.



### **Route 1, Segment 4: 6th St. SW from 5th St. SW to 4th Ave SW.**

This segment is the smallest segment consisting of only one block. 6th St. SW is fairly narrow and has no sidewalks. With some multifamily housing on this block, there is also a higher level of on street parking which narrows the walking space and view shed of pedestrians significantly.



### Route 1, Segment 5: 4th Ave 6th St. SW to 9th St. SW.

This segment spans three blocks along 4th Ave. SW and runs from 6th St. SW to 9th St. SW where it leads to Jaycee Park. This segment has a very nice sidewalk and Grass Boulevard from 6<sup>th</sup> St. SW to 8<sup>th</sup> St. SW, but between 8<sup>th</sup> St. SW and 9<sup>th</sup> St. SW there exists no sidewalk.



### Route 1, Segment 6: 9th St. SW from 4th Ave. SW to 3rd Ave. SW.

The final segment of the walk audit is a very narrow portion of 9<sup>th</sup> St. SW which leads from 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW to 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW. While there are a few private residences along this segment on the east side of the road. On the west side of the roadway is the Jaycee park ballfield.

With the exception of evenings when softball games are being played this segment has very low traffic speeds and volumes.

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## Lincoln Elementary School:

### Observations during Student Arrival and Dismissal

#### *Pedestrians and Bicyclists*

- Lots of students walking (likely walking along 7<sup>th</sup> St. SW for parent pickup).
- Not too many students on bikes.
- A few students ran out in between parent vehicle traffic.
- Several pedestrians interfering with traffic
- Some students crossed street midblock in order to get to playground.
- Most students crossed street at crosswalk.



#### *Bus System*

- Very Organized
- Busses in numbered order line up along north and east side of school.
- Bus circulation is entirely separate from parent vehicle traffic.
- Students line up with teacher supervision
- Seems straightforward and not very congested



#### *Car Loop*

- Three roadways converge at a “T” at the crosswalk where most students exit.
- Several parents stopping in roadway to let students in.
- Several parents double parking in roadway.
- Quite congested for a short time.

#### *Crossing Guards/Patrols*

- Crossing Guards present and very active taking students across street.
- Crossing guards used blaze orange flags to take students across street.



## **Mary of Lourdes Middle School Walk Audit**

### **Walk Audit Observations**

**Date:** May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015

**Weather Conditions:** Warm, overcast, rainy.

### **Route:**

An approximately 1 mile route extending north and south of Mary of Lourdes Middle School was selected that would simulate logical routes that students might take when traveling to and/or from school. The route is divided into four segments:

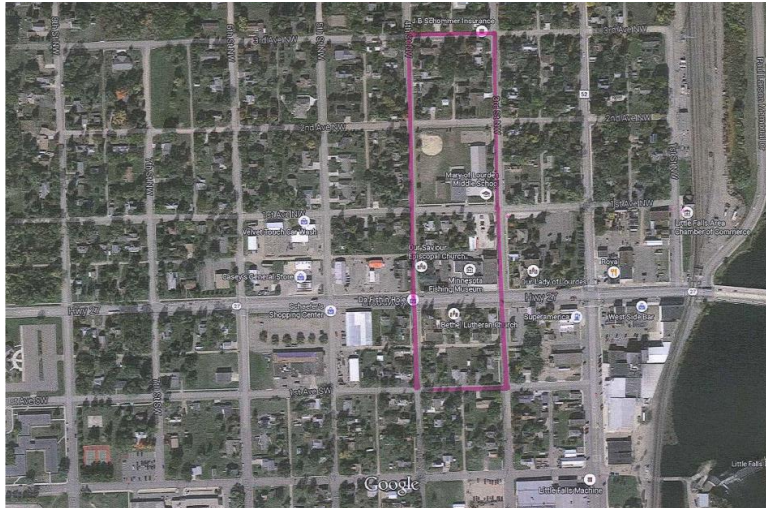
1. 3<sup>rd</sup> St. from 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SW to 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave NW.
2. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave NW from 3<sup>rd</sup> St. NW to 4<sup>th</sup> St. NW.
3. 4<sup>th</sup> St. from 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave NW to 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SW.
4. 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SW from 4<sup>th</sup> St. SW to 3<sup>rd</sup> St. SW.

This route was selected for several reasons:

1. It provides the only access for students walking or biking to and/or from school from the

SW/NW quadrants of Little Falls.

2. There are a high volumes of residential properties in both the SW/NW quadrants of Little Falls ranging from single family to multifamily.
3. The route intentionally had crossings at two locations along TH 27 in order to understand the issues and barriers posed by crossing such a busy roadway.



---

## Observations:

### **Route 1, Segment 1, 3rd St. from 1st Ave SW to 3rd Ave NW.**

3rd St. SW boasts a very nice wide sidewalk with an accompanying boulevard on the first half of the west side of the street beginning at 1st Ave SW. Halfway through the block a sidewalk continues on both sides of the street leading up to TH 27 where there are crosswalks on both sides of 3rd St. as one crosses TH 27.

Once on the other side of TH 27, 3<sup>rd</sup> St. NW has wide sidewalks on both sides of the street until one reaches 1<sup>st</sup> Ave NW whereupon the sidewalk on the east side terminates. The remaining sidewalk on the west side of 3<sup>rd</sup> St. NW is adjacent to Mary of Lourdes Middle School and the curb is striped yellow to discourage public parking. Furthermore a 2<sup>nd</sup> yellow stripe has been painted on the sidewalk itself for students to line up on as they wait for their busses.

Sidewalks are terminated at 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. NW for the remainder of this segment. While 3<sup>rd</sup> St. is fairly wide, traffic speeds and traffic volume remain low.

### **Route 1, Segment 2, 3rd Ave NW from 3rd St. NW to 4th St. NW.**

Heading west on 3rd Ave NW, no sidewalks exist. 3rd Ave is considerably narrower than 3rd St. NW and therefore promotes lower traffic speeds and lower traffic volumes. While the roadway itself is showing signs of deterioration, the route is very pleasant with well-kept lawns.

### **Route 1, Segment 3, 4th St. from 3rd Ave NW to 1st Ave SW.**

4th St. NW is a bit wider between 3rd Ave. NW and 1st Ave NW. whereupon it narrows considerably. Furthermore it does not have sidewalks on either side of the roadway until one crosses

over to the South side of TH 27. After crossing over TH 27 sidewalks begin on both sides of the road for only a half a block mirroring the layout of 3rd St. SW. For the remainder of the segment a sidewalk with a wide boulevard exists on the west side of 4th St. SW.

#### **Route 1, Segment 4, 1st Ave SW from 4th St. SW to 3rd St. SW.**

1<sup>st</sup> Ave SW is a very narrow roadway having no sidewalks on either side of the roadway. Similar to 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave NW, 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SW enjoys low traffic speeds and low traffic volumes. The roadway is fairly new and in good condition and the route is pleasant.

---

# The Five “E” Approach

## *Engineering*

Safer and more attractive to walk and bicycle to school. Engaging planners and engineers is crucial to successfully implementing safety improvements.

It's

## **Recommendations**

also important to **Recommendations** unity to educate neighborhood about the benefits and importance of any proposed improvements. Example of engineering strategies may include:

- SRTS maps that show suggested routes to walk and bicycle to school.
- School bicycle rodeo that teaches safe bicycling skills.
- Curriculum focused on the benefits of walking and bicycling.
- Seminars or events that educate parents about
- Public education for safety improvements.



# Recommendations

Based upon the input mechanisms discussed in the previous section on Observations, the Planning Team developed a series of recommendations that coalesced around each of the five “E’s”.

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## *Engineering*

Engineering strategies including planning and implementing physical improvements that make it safer and more attractive to walk and bicycle to school. Engaging planners and engineers is crucial to successfully implementing safety improvements. It’s also important to reach out to the community to educate neighbors about the benefits and importance of any proposed improvements.

- Consider constructing pedestrian facilities i.e. Sidewalks, along strategic routes in each school area to improve walking and biking routes on or near the school site:
  - Along 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SE from 6<sup>th</sup> St. to 9<sup>th</sup> St.
  - Along 9<sup>th</sup> St. NE from 1<sup>st</sup> Ave NE to 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave NE.
  - Along 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave NE from 7<sup>th</sup> St. NE to 11<sup>th</sup> St. NE.
  - 6<sup>th</sup> St. SW between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave SW.
  - 5<sup>th</sup> St. between Broadway and 1<sup>st</sup> AVE SW.
- Install more visible and accessible bike racks.
- Consider installing more speed devices, such as active driver feedback signs that flash or display messages to the driver such as current speed or “slow down” in high traffic volume areas.
- Striping improvements to encourage biking and increase safety such as bike lanes, sharrows etc.
- Consider identifying logical placement of “bump-outs” to slow traffic and increase visibility and safety of pedestrians at crosswalks.
- Improved school crossing signs to replace the ones at Lincoln Elementary school and Lindbergh Elementary school.
- Improve the school crossing lights at 9th Street E/TH 27.
- Improve the school crossing lights at 6th Street W /TH 27.
- Consider making 9th Street SE a one way.
- Lights for pedestrian crossing at 3rd St W/TH27

- Consider making 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW a one way.
  - Consider reconstructing Blacktop Boulevard along 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW to accommodate diagonal parking for buses.
  - Consider installing a gate or other traffic calming devices to prevent traffic along portions of 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW during school arrival and release.
- 

## Education

Providing education about SRTS helps build support among kids, parents, teachers, and community members. To craft education messages, first the community should identify their goals and audiences. Some questions to ask might include: Do people need to know more about the benefits of walking and bicycling? Would maps of the routes to the school help more people walk or bicycle? Would walking or bicycling safety information get kids and parents more excited about walking and bicycling?

- Incorporate “Walk!-Bike!-Fun!” curriculum into current classrooms P.E. curriculum in order to educate students about the benefits of walking or biking to school.
  - Continue partnering with the Minnesota Bicycle Alliance to provide educational workshops or other education programs on an annual basis such as League Cycling Instructor (LCI) training or Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) or Business (BFB) applications/designations.
  - Inquire to Minnesota Bicycle Alliance about hosting a bike safety 101 course (short term).
  - Collaborate with Morrison County SHIP Health4Life to promote and participate in bike/walk to school day and week in the spring and fall.
  - Partner with local bicycle clubs and other local partners to hold an annual Bike Rodeo.
  - Teach safe walking and biking to kids at a level appropriate for their age.
  - Teach pedestrian and bicycle safety at driver’s education courses. Consider including education programs in Drivers education association.
  - Continue to be appraised of Safe Routes to School Infrastructure solicitations (annually).
- 

## Encouragement

Encouragement strategies are closely tied to education strategies, but are more focused on getting people to try walking and bicycling to school, and celebrating and rewarding people for their efforts. Encouragement activities are more effective if the physical environment works for walking and bicycling to school.

- Established bus pick up locations vs. picking every child up.
- Develop on site management plans that include designated drop-off/pick-up locations (zones), adult monitors, and student safety patrols. Reevaluate these plans annually for effectiveness and relevancy. Businesses, volunteers, city, school, background checks.
- Hold a Walk to School Day event annually.
- Organize and promote a community bike ride.
- Hold a Little Falls Safe Routes to School logo contest in conjunction with local arts community and students.
- Develop a punch card incentive/prize program for kids who walk or bike to school.
- Have a remote drop-off one day a month for all students.
- Introduce “Walking Wednesdays (short term) and on every Wednesday, children have a special activity focused around walking.
- Organize a before or after school walking/biking/running club.
- Establish bus pick up areas in the city limits. This will allow the transportation of students to be more efficient, cause less wear and tear on buses, aid in less fuel being used, and will encourage children to walk to a bus stop or to school.
- Seek to develop a task force to make recommendations to the Little Falls City Council regarding active transportation (this could be a spin-off or continuations of the current SRTS task force/planning team).

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## **Enforcement**

Enforcement strategies help reduce unsafe behaviors by drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists and encourage all road users to obey traffic laws and share the road safely. Enforcement can be expensive, so it is best used strategically in conjunction with the other strategies.

- Consider increased enforcement in regards to yielding to pedestrians.

- Consider a special enforcement campaign for traffic violations particularly as they relate to pedestrian and bicycle safety (Pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorized vehicles).
  - Continue to have increased law enforcement patrols near schools for at least 30 minutes before and after school.
  - Consider utilizing a parent pickup model where parents remain in the vehicle, informing a staff person who they are picking up. The staff person calls on a radio to the office and the office lets the teacher know to release the child from class.
- 

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation planning is very important to a successful SRTS initiative and should be considered from the very beginning of the planning process. Questions for the community to consider would include: how do we define success for our efforts and how can we measure or document our progress?

Evaluation will likely include a combination of quantitative information, such as success stories from families who have chosen to walk and bicycle more. It is suggested that a specific group be tasked with reviewing and implementing these strategies for maximum effectiveness.

- Complete student tally forms for grades K-8 annually at each school.
- Complete parent survey forms for grades K-8 every other year at each school.
- Review and make annual updates as necessary to the Little Falls Safe Routes to School Plan.
- Continue to meet as a Safe Routes to School task force regularly i.e. quarterly or bi-annually.
- Consider working with Morrison County SHIP Health4Life and the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) in addition to other local partners and agencies to implement recommendations under each of the five “E’s”.

The Little Falls Safe Routes to School Plan is intended to provide a framework on which to continue building a community in which more students have the opportunity to safely walk or bike to and from school.

By providing the opportunity for more students to walk and bike to and from school, it is anticipated that this planning effort will result in several benefits including first and foremost a safer active transportation environment, improved physical and mental health, improved student concentration and study skills, a reduction in negative behavioral issues, as well as improvements to the local sidewalk and trail networks.

This document is a continuation of the ongoing planning process for Little Falls. It was formally adopted by both the Little Falls School Board and by the Mary of Lourdes School Board on October 2015.

Little Falls has used this planning process as an opportunity to evaluate and reinforce the existing transportation policies and to evaluate previous planning efforts in order to update and reinforce past decisions that remain relevant.

A major premise of this plan is to support other existing local planning mechanisms and to lay out a logical straightforward plan to successfully implement the policies and projects identified herein.

The Little Falls Safe Routes to School Plan is intended to provide a framework on which to continue building a community in which more students have the opportunity to safely walk or bike to and from school.

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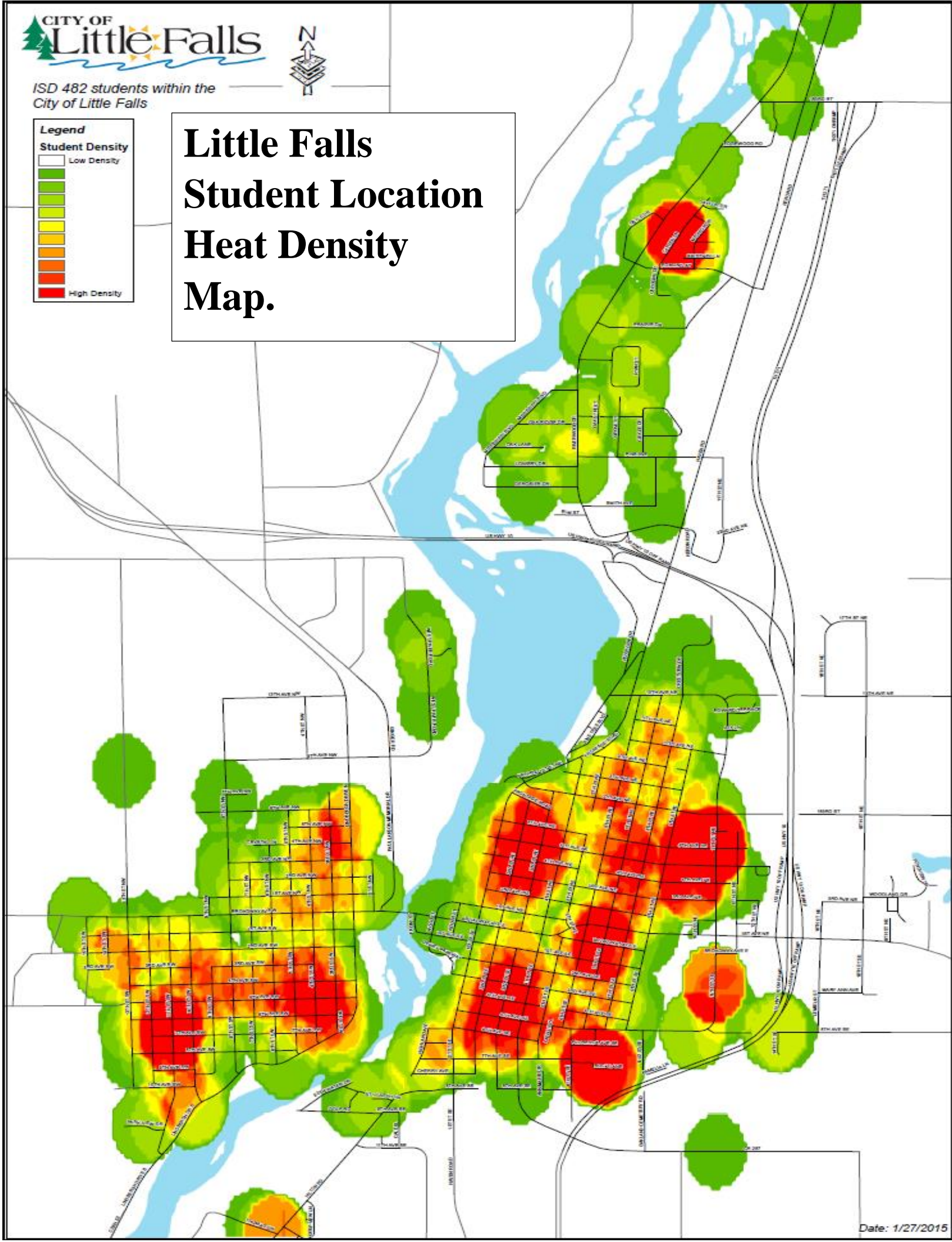
# Maps

The following are a series of maps that were instrumental to the Planning Team as they developed both their Observations and Recommendations for this plan. The first is the City of Little Falls.

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# Little Falls Student Location Heat Density Map.



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Resources

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By providing the opportunity for more students to walk and bike to as improvements to the local sidewalk and trail networks.

# Resources

This plan is intended to be a starting point; a framework on which the community can use to guide future planning and ultimately implementation. The following is a list of resources to support future work regarding Safe Routes to School including partners from the Federal level to the local level as well as several non-profit partners as well.

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Minnesota Department of Transportation

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/>



National Center for Safe Routes to School

<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>



Safe Routes to School National Partnership

<http://saferoutespartnership.org/>



Federal Highway Administration

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/>



National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/>



International iWalk to School

<http://www.iwalktoschool.org/>



Center for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/>



Minnesota Department of Health

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/>



State Health Improvement Program (SHIP)

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/ship/>



Region Five Development Commission

<http://www.regionfive.org/>



Resilient Region| The Central Minnesota Sustainable Development Plan

<http://www.resilientregion.org/>





# Overview

## *Environment*

Not only has childhood health and safety suffered as a consequence of increased driving, but the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports that transportation is the fastest-growing source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the United

In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), transportation energy use is expected to increase 48 percent between 2003 and 2025, despite modest improvements in the efficiency of vehicle engines. This projected rise in energy consumption closely mirrors the expected growth in transportation GHG emissions and bodes poorly for future environmental integrity.

## National Trends

In 1969, approximately half of all U.S. schoolchildren walked or bicycled to or from school and 87 percent of those living within one mile of school walked or bicycled.

# City of Little Falls Resolution

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City of Little Falls

## RESOLUTION 2015-85

### RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE LITTLE FALLS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Little Falls supports policies and programs that focus on health and wellness and healthier community environments; and

WHEREAS, the health and safety of our children are of highest concern to the citizens of Little Falls; and

WHEREAS, walking and biking can help enhance the health and overall physical activity of children, improve air quality and the environment, and reduce traffic congestion and speed in and around school zones; and

WHEREAS, Safe Routes to School is a national and international movement to create safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to walk and bike to school; and

WHEREAS, Safe Routes to School efforts help remove barriers to walking and biking to school through improvements of infrastructure and facilities and the creation of education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement, and evaluation programs; and

WHEREAS, having safer routes to and from schools can decrease pedestrian and bicycling related injuries, not just for students, but for the entire community; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the City Council of the City of Little Falls recognize the importance of making walking and biking to school a safe activity.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Little Falls will participate in and support the recommendations identified in the Little Falls Safe Routes to School Plan as presented on October 19, 2015, and dated October 2015 in order to gain the benefits mentioned above and strengthen the quality of life for children, families and neighborhoods within the City of Little Falls.


Passed this 19<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2015.


ATTEST:

  
Jon Radermacher  
City Administrator

Approved this 19<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2015.

(SEAL)

  
Jeremy Hanfler  
Council President

  
Gregory J. Zylka  
Mayor

# School District 482 Adoption

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## PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO. 110915

### RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION FOR LITTLE FALLS SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN

**WHEREAS**, the Little Falls Community Schools, Independent School District 482 Board supports policies and programs that focus on health and wellness and healthier community environments; and

**WHEREAS**, the health and safety of students is of highest concern to the Little Falls Community Schools, Independent School District 482 Board; and

**WHEREAS**, walking and biking can help enhance the health and overall physical activity of children, improve air quality and the environment, and reduce traffic congestion and speed in and around school zones; and

**WHEREAS**, Safe Routes to School is a national and international movement to create safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to walk and bike to school; and

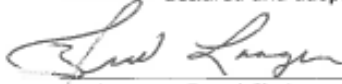
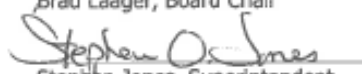
**WHEREAS**, Safe Routes to School efforts help remove barriers to walking and biking to school through improvement of infrastructure and facilities and the creation of education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement, and evaluation programs; and

**WHEREAS**, having safer routes to and from schools can decrease pedestrian and bicycling related injuries, not just for students, but for the entire community; and

**WHEREAS**, it is fitting that the Little Falls Community Schools, Independent School District 482 Board recognize the importance of making walking and biking to school a safe activity.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Little Falls Community Schools, Independent School District 482 Board will participate in and support the recommendations identified in the Little Falls Safe Routes to School plan in order to gain the benefits mentioned above and strengthen the quality of life for students, families, and neighborhoods within the City of Little Falls Minnesota.

Resolution declared and adopted on November 9<sup>th</sup> 2015.

  
Brad Laager, Board Chair  
  
Stephen Jones, Superintendent

  
Mike LeMieir, Board Clerk

# Mary of Lourdes School Board Adoption

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# List of Appendices

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Appendix A – Walk Audit Checklist

Appendix B – Parent Survey Form

Appendix C – Student Survey Form





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(2015)

The Little Falls Safe Routes to School Plan is intended to provide a framework on which to continue building a community in which more students have the opportunity to safely walk or bike to and from school.

By providing the opportunity for more students to walk and bike to and from school, this planning effort will result in several benefits including first and foremost a safer active

transportation environment. By providing the opportunity for more students to walk and bike to and from school, it is anticipated that this planning effort will result in several benefits including first and foremost a safer active transportation environment, improved physical and mental health, improved student concentration and study skills, a reduction in negative behavioral issues, as well as improvements to the local sidewalk and trail networks.

This document is a continuation of the ongoing planning process for Little Falls as well as for School District 482 and Mary of Lourdes Schools. It was formally adopted by the Little Falls City Council in October 2015 and by the Little Falls Community School District 482 and Mary of Lourdes School Board respectively in November 2015.

Little Falls has used this planning process as an opportunity to evaluate and reinforce the existing transportation policies and to evaluate previous planning efforts in order to update and reinforce past decisions that remain relevant.