WALKER-HACKENSACK-AKELEY SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN

Connecting the trip to school...
with safety, health, community and choice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following key people and entities participated in the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plan efforts for this Safe Routes to School Policy Plan. Their creativity, energy, and commitment were critical to the success of this effort for the cities of Walker, Hackensack and Akeley.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Walker-Hackensack-Akeley (WHA) Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan is intended to provide a framework that the community can use to provide more opportunities for students to walk and bike to school when and where it is safe to do so.

Through this planning effort, it is anticipated that several benefits would emerge, including, first and foremost, a safer active transportation environment for both students and other users, 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.

The WHA School District has primarily used this planning process as an opportunity to evaluate existing transportation policies, practices, and existing conditions. Additionally, it has been used to evaluate previous planning efforts, and in some cases to update and reinforces past decisions that remain relevant.

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

This document is a continuation of the ongoing planning process for the Walker-Hackensack-Akeley (WHA) school district.

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 near schools. Thus, 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 R5DC ASSIST WITH SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLANNING?

The Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) has successfully developed numerous Safe Routes to School Plans for communities throughout the region, over many years. 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 itself, assisting in the adoption process, and much more.

R5DC REGION FIVE Development Commission

01 INTRODUCTION

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 near schools, improved pedestrian/bicycle access, safety, and increased physical activity among students, contributing to healthy lifestyles. By incorporating each of the Six "E's" – Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering, Evaluation, and Equity- SRTS plans address a wide variety of topics relevant to trips to and from school within a municipality, school district, or both.

HISTORY

SRTS began as a European phenomenon thirty years ago and caught on in Canada, and then New York City in 1997. In the 1970's, 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 SRTS 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 the SRTS 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 for 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 SRTS education, promotion and enforcement campaigns in K-8 schools. SRTS programs are built on collaborative partnerships among may stakeholders that include educators, parents, students, elected officials, engineers, city planners, business and community leaders, health officials, and bicycle and pedestrian advocates.

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. No. 114-94) into law—the first federal law in over a decade to provide long-term funding certainty for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment. The FAST Act authorizes $305 billion over fiscal years 2016 through 2020 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs. The FAST Act maintains our focus on safety, keeps intact the established structure of the various highway-related programs we manage, continues efforts to streamline project delivery and, for the first time, provides a dedicated source of federal dollars for freight projects. With the enactment of the FAST Act, states and local governments are now moving forward with critical transportation projects with the confidence that they will have a federal partner over the long term. Through a series of re-authorization bills, the FAST ACT remains the current Transportation bill by which Transportation is federally funded as of publication of this plan.

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 private vehicles still account for half of school trips between ¼ and ½ mile- a distance easily covered on foot or bike.

To put this in perspective, in 1969, 48% of children 5-14 years of age usually walked or bicycled to school. Contrast this with a 2009 National Center for Safe Routes to School survey that showed that only 13% of children 5-14 years of age usually walked or bicycled to school

There are many reasons for this decline in students walking or bicycling to school over the past 40-50 years including the rise of the automobile as the primary mode of transportation, the increasing trend of schools to locate on the periphery of communities where land is less expensive and more abundant, as well as traffic-related danger, crime danger, weather, and sometimes opposing school policies.

HEALTH

Children today are simply not getting enough physical activity, contributing to growing rates of obesity and obesity-related health problems, such as diabetes and childhood asthma. SRTS 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.

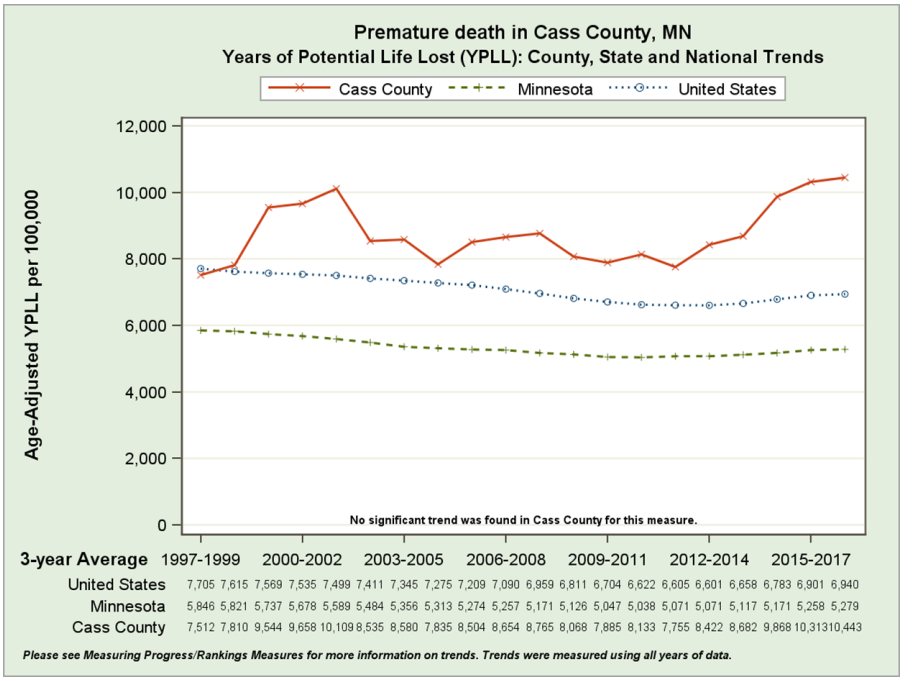
Over the past 40 years, rates of obesity have soared among children of all ages in the United States, and approximately 25 million children and adolescents (more than 33% are now overweight or obese or at risk of becoming so.

1. Kids are less active today, and 23% of children get no free time physical activity at all.
2. 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.
3. Today, approximately one-quarter of health care costs in the United States are attributable to obesity, and health care costs just for childhood obesity are estimated at approximately $14 billion per year.
4. 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.
5. 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.

According to County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Program, a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, Cass County ranks 86th out of Minnesota's 87 Counties for Health Outcomes.

One of the major contributors to this ranking is the above average rate of premature deaths recorded in Cass County. While the State of Minnesota recorded approximately 5,300 premature deaths between 2015-2017, (Premature Mortality includes all deaths among people under age 75), the national figure stood at approximately 6,900. Cass County on the other hand, nearly doubled the State of Minnesota rate by recording approximately 10,400 during the same time period as shown in the chart below. Source: **https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/minnesota/2020/rankings/cass/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot**

PREMATURE DEATH IN US, MN & CASS COUNTY



SOURCE:
https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/minnesota/2020/rankings/cass/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot

SAFETY

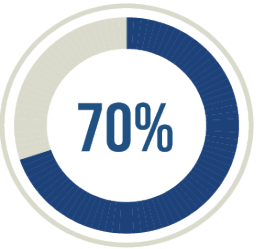
Noting a 3% rise in pedestrians killed in traffic crashes in 2018, and the most pedestrian deaths since 1990, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) points out that "at some point in the day, everyone is a pedestrian". Source: **https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/pedestrian-safety.**

Recognizing the need for increased bicycle and pedestrian safety, Safe Routes To School (SRTS) focuses on infrastructure improvements, student traffic education, and driver enforcement that improve safety for children, many of whom already walk or bicycle in unsafe conditions. The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) estimates 7,680 pedestrians died in traffic or non-traffic incidents in 2018. Source: **https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/road-users/pedestrians/**. Furthermore, the latest data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that in 2018 6,283 pedestrians died in traffic crashes occurring on public roads.

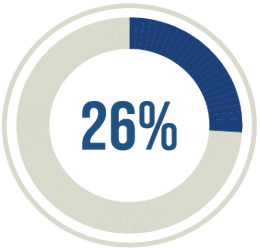
It is to reduce statistics like these above, that the WHA School District has come alongside the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to support, plan and implement initiatives such as Minnesota Walks, the Statewide Pedestrian System Plan, and MnDOT's Safe Routes To School Program. The school has taken measured, and targeted steps towards reducing bicycle and pedestrian safety hazards and incidents, and by proactively seeking to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety through education, and infrastructure recommendations.

6,283

Pedestrians killed in traffic crashes in 2018



of pedestrians killed in traffic crashes were male in 2017



highest percentage of pedestrian fatalities occurs between 6:00 pm and 8:59 pm

88

On average, a pedestrian was killed every 88 minutes in traffic crashes in 2017

Statistics provided above are based nation-wide data.

ENVIRONMENT

Not only has childhood health and safety suffered because 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 2005, 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 breath 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, SO2, PM2.5 and VOC's 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.

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 fare from popular destinations to make bicycling or walking practical.

Through the 1960's many schools were in the center of communities, and this 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 buildings 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. Source: **https://curs.unc.edu/files/2013/05/Salvesen-Z.-Smith-final-school-report.pdf**

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). Source: **https://www.ed.gov/**

Not surprisingly, the average number of students per elementary and secondary school has increased over five-fold, and 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. Thus, 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 congestions and air quality concerns.

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. Nationwide, approximately 22% of busing reductions during the 2010-2011 school year were due to fuel price increases.

02 | VISION

The vision identified by the SRTS planning team is to increase opportunity for all students to walk or bike to and from school safely by identifying and addressing the issues and barriers that currently exist. Therefore, the local planning team hopes to accomplish three main goals through the SRTS planning process:

CURRENT

Determine the current environment surrounding walking and biking to school i.e. how many students district-wide are walking and biking to school?

1

ASSESSMENT

Conduct an assessment of issues and barriers to walking and biking to school.

2

STRATEGIES

Develop strategies that lead to an environment more conducive to safe walking and biking to school.

3

THE SIX "E" APPROACH

Flourishing Safe Routes to School projects see remarkable changes in the way students and parents choose to travel to and from school. These projects succeed by including each of the "Six E's" of Safe Routes to School to ensure that their project is a well-rounded, multi-prong and time-tested approach to getting students safely walking and bicycling. The Six E's of Safe Routes to School are:

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:

1. Adding traffic calming crosswalks, sidewalks, bicycle lanes or other infrastructure that improves safety for walking and bicycling.
2. Installing bike racks at schools.
3. 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?

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

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:

1. Partnership with law enforcement to target problem intersections for enforcement.
2. Education to teach motorists about laws regarding yielding to pedestrians.
3. Installation of digital speed signs that display travel speed of passing vehicles.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Using events and activities to promote walking, bicycling, public transportation, and physical activity. Encouragement activities can include new partnerships with faith-based groups, civil rights and neighborhood coalitions, and tenants' organizations, as they build activities like walking school buses, walk to school events, bicycling incentives, and art and active transportation events. Addressing equity in encouragement means ensuring that encouragement activities are available to low-income students and students of color, as well as designing them to overcome the variety of obstacles to walking and bicycling that different kids experience. Encouragement activities should effectively influence children from different backgrounds to embrace walking and bicycling.

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:

1. A school walking and bicycling audit and a school travel plan that includes specific goals.
2. Bicycle and pedestrian counts that show bicycling and walking rates over time.
3. Data about vehicle crashes near the school, traffic speeds or traffic volumes.

EQUITY

Work to support safe, active, and healthy opportunities for children and adults in low-income communities, communities of color, and beyond. Incorporate equity concerns throughout the other E's to understand and address obstacles, create access, and ensure safe and equitable outcomes.

03 PLANNING PROCESS

The Region Five Development Commission, working in cooperation with the Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Independent School District (ISD) 113, have developed this SRTS plan through the efforts of an ad-hoc community group of volunteers, school staff, State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) coordinator, and professional planning consultants. This local planning team collected and analyzed information, identified issues, barriers, community needs and priorities, and developed recommendations designed to increase bicycle and pedestrian safety for students.

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 SRTS.

PLANNING TEAM

After being awarded the Technical Assistance grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) in 2019, the WHA ISD (113) staff in coordination with the Region Five Development Commission began developing a local planning team (LPT) 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 SRTS 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, tribal transportation planners, educators, engineers, members of law enforcement, local transportation planners, parents, community members as well as local transportation planners.

The Local Planning Team (LPT) communicated via email and met a total of 7 times throughout 2019 and 2020. LPT members also oversaw the administration of both the parent survey and the in -class student tally. Additionally, the LPT conducted a walk-audit 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 WHA Independent School District (ISD) 113.

WALK'er promotes healthy living and fitness.

MEETINGS

After developing the SRTS planning team, and a neighborhood meeting, the planning team held a series of working sessions that were open to the public to determine issues and barriers as they relate to SRTS.

July 2019	Grants and Contract Awarded
August 2019	Initial Contact with Community
September 2019	Development of the Local Planning Team (LPT)
October 23rd, 2019	Neighborhood meeting/Public Informational kick off
November 13th, 2019	LPT Meeting
December 19th, 2019	LPT Meeting
January 2020	LPT Meeting and Walk Audit
February 2020	LTP Suspended due to COVID
March 2020	LPT Meeting Suspended due to COVID
April 2020	LPT Meeting Suspended due to COVID
May 25th, 2020	LPT Meeting
June 2020	Launch Parent Survey
July 28th, 2020	LPT Meeting
August 11th, 2020	LPT Meeting
September 2020	Review Plan, Submit Plan, Final LPT Meeting

IN-CLASS STUDENT TALLY

The planning team oversaw the administration of the in-class student tally which is intended to provide the LPT with baseline data regarding how many students are currently walking or bicycling to school.

The in-class student tally is a form distributed to educators that is intended to be administered in class by tallying students via a raised hand. The Tally directs educators to ask students how they arrived at and departed school i.e. which mode of transportation they utilized for both trips. The tally is intended to be administered over a three consecutive day period in order to eliminate variability and obtain an accurate average count. Additionally, the LPT determined that the tally should be administered on a Tuesday, Wednesday and a Thursday to further avoid variability associated with students' schedules on Mondays and Fridays.

The results of the WHA in-class student tally are presented and covered in greater detail in section five of this plan.

PARENT SURVEY

Additionally, the planning team oversaw the administration of the parent survey which is intended to provide insight into why parents allow or don't allow their students to walk or bike to or from school, which barriers prevent them, and to identify other opportunities to improve walking and bicycling. The surveys that were used were designed by the National Center for SRTS and asked respondents to answer 16 questions.

The parent survey, which was conducted mostly online, but hardcopies were also made available at public locations throughout the community and yielded a good response rate. The input from the parent survey provided crucial information regarding issues and barriers to walking and biking to and from school.

The responses of the WHA parent survey are presented and covered in greater detail in section five of this plan.

COMMUNITY WALKING AUDIT

The planning team conducted 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 in determining potential solutions.
The observations from both the community walking audit and the local planning team site assessment are presented and covered in greater detail in section five of this plan.

ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES

Building on the information gathered from the in-class student tally, the parent survey, the walk audit and their observations from school drop off and pick up, the local planning team discussed, and assessed the issues and barriers that emerged and were identified. There is a great quote from Albert Einstein that goes: "If I had an hour to solve a problem, I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and five minutes thinking about solutions." With this aphorism in mind the local planning team spent a considerable amount of time assessing the issues and barriers in order to appropriately identify solutions to the challenges that they identified throughout the planning process.

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.

The outcomes from the local planning team's assessment of issues and barriers are presented and covered in greater detail in section five of this plan.

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

After collecting as much information as possible throughout the in-class student tally, the parent survey, the walk audit and their observations from school drop off and pick up; and after spending considerable time assessing the issues and barriers, the local planning team developed a list of observations and recommendations intended to address the issues identified as well as to capitalize on some of the opportunities that were discovered along the way. The observations and recommendations were then arranged and organized accordingly within the nationally recognized six "E" approach.

The local planning teams' observations and recommendations are presented and covered in greater detail in section six of this plan.

04 COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

This plan is the result of a high level of cooperation between a highly diverse group of individuals, organizations, entities, and government jurisdictions ranging from school districts to the State of Minnesota through the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.

Driven locally, by school staff, residents, parents, local transportation officials and representatives from Leech Lake Tribal Roads Division, the plan sought input and support from the three cities within the school district including Walker, Hackensack, and Akeley. To further emphasize the level of integration, that this planning process involved, Cass County was represented on the local planning team by the County highway engineer and other county highway staff. Furthermore, the State Health Improvement (SHIP) Coordinator was involved in the planning process from start to finish.

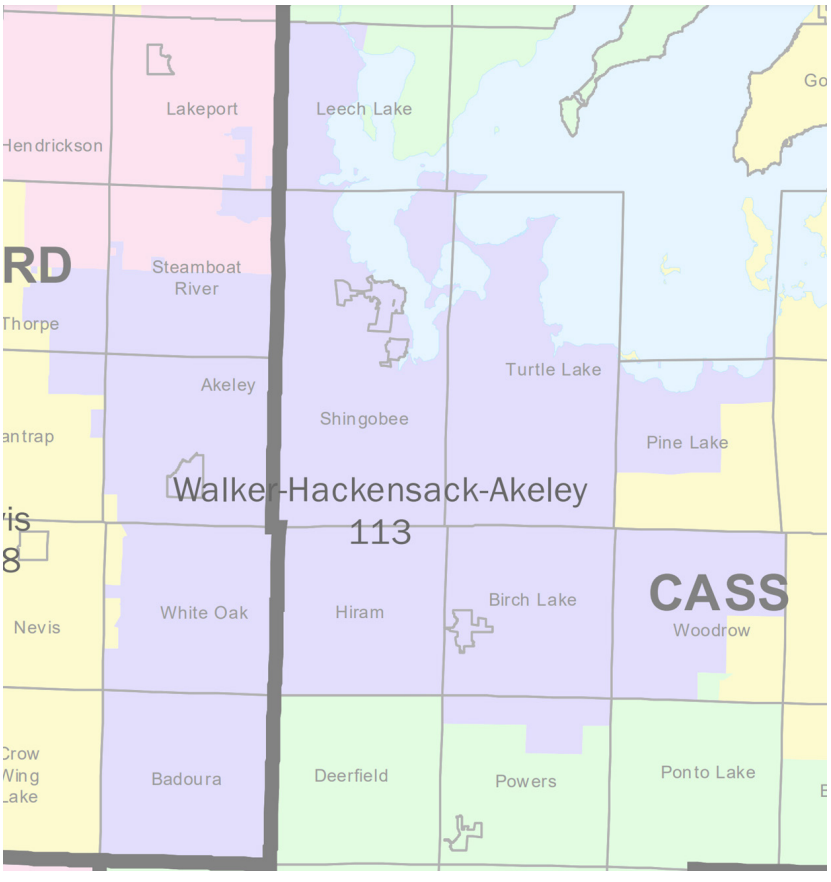
This section of the plan is intended to provide an overview of the community by which and for which this plan was developed. The elements within this section will focus on some basic background information of each of the organizations, entities or jurisdictions that participated in this planning process and who contributed to the plan's success.

Photo credit: University of St. Thomas

WALKER-HACKENSACK-AKELEY (WHA) INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (ISD) 113

The WHA School district is located in North-Central Minnesota and falls exclusively into portions of Hubbard and Cass Counties. The three largest cities within the district are Walker, Hackensack, and Akeley, and are the communities by which the district derives its name. Additionally, the district includes areas within the following townships:

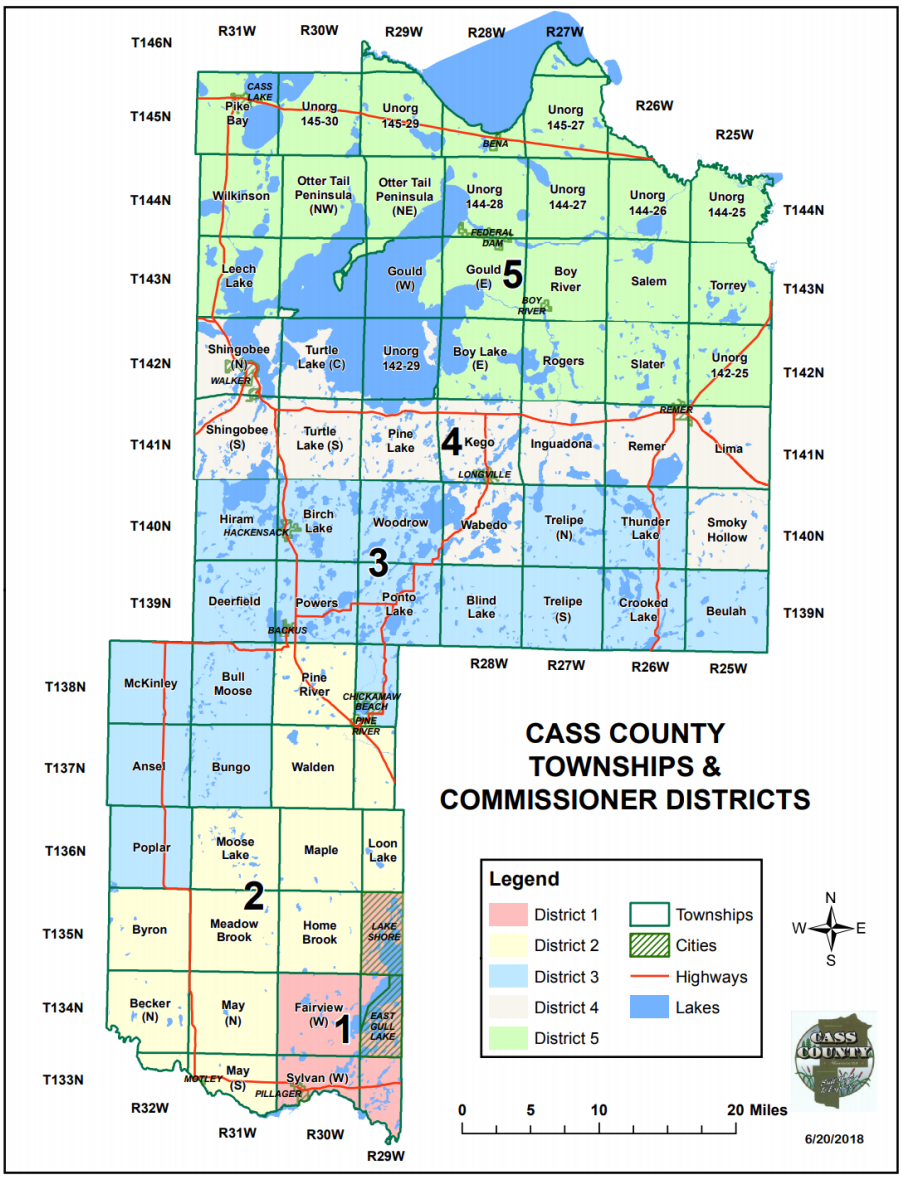
Jurisdictions represented within the WHA ISD 113					
Tribal Nations					
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe					
Counties					
Cass County	Hubbard County				
Municipalities					
Akeley	Hackensack	Walker			
Townships					
Akeley	Badoura	Birch Lake	Hiram	Leech Lake	Steamboat River
Thorpe	Turtle Lake	White Oak	Woodrow	Mantrap	Pine Lake
Powers	Shingobee				



CASS COUNTY

Cass County is a county in the central part of the U.S. state of Minnesota. According to the American Community Survey's 2018 5-year estimate profile, Cass County has a population of 29,022. The county seat is the City of Walker. It is important to recognize that a substantial part of the Leech Lake Indian Reservation is located Cass county and approximately 12% (3,364) of the total county population is American Indian.

Cass county is governed by a five-member board of commissioners. A county administrator, several department heads and execute the operations of the county government. The Cass County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement throughout the County.



LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE

The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe is committed to the responsible operation of government, preservation of our heritage, promotion of our sovereignty, and the protection of natural resources for our elders and future generations, while enhancing the health, economic well-being, education, and our inherent right to live as Ojibwe People. As of 2015 the Leech Lake Reservation Enrollment was 9,509.

The Leech Lake Tribe holds the smallest percentage of its reservation of any of the state's tribes. County, state, and federal governments owned well over half of the original land. Of the 864,158 original acres, nearly 300,000 acres are surface area of the three big lakes. The National Chippewa Forest has the largest portion of the land. Seventy-five percent of the National Forest is within the reservation. This leaves less than 5% of land owned by the Band.

Health services are provided at the IHS hospital and clinic in Cass Lake and clinics in the other communities. If care that is more extensive is needed, the hospitals in neighboring cities are used.
Source: **http://www.llojibwe.org/aboutUs/demographics.html**

CITY OF WALKER

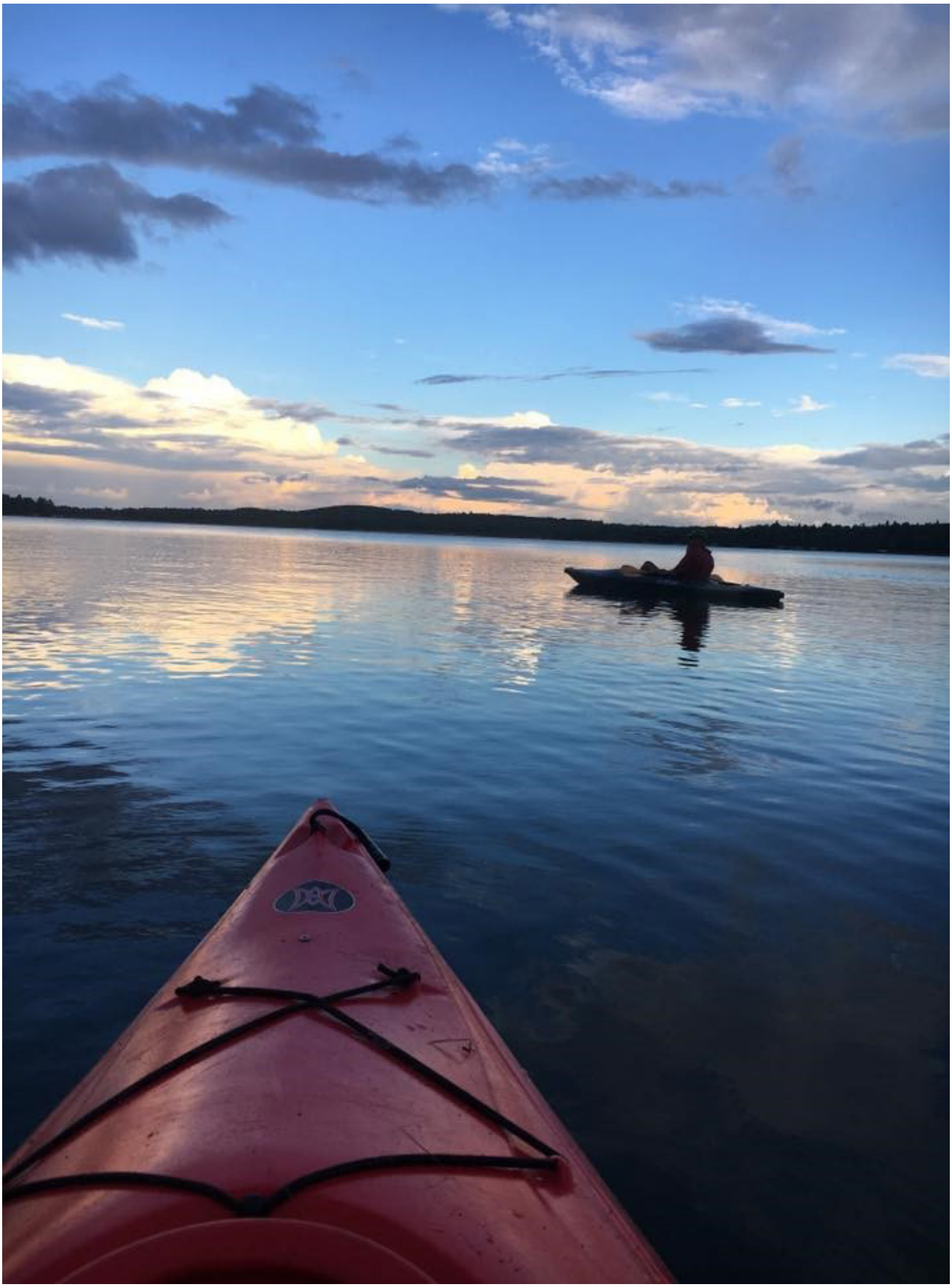
High bluffs, lakes, and pines form a beautiful physical setting for the City of Walker, a community of over 1,000 people in northern Cass County. Situated on the shores of Leech Lake, Walker is the main tourist center for much of the Chippewa National Forest, northern Cass County, and adjacent Hubbard County.

Walker has something for everyone. Leech Lake is the third largest lake in Minnesota with over 600 miles of shoreline. Fishermen can catch anything from Eelpout to Muskies. Go water-skiing, swimming, or have a picnic and sunbathe. There are boat launching facilities, and docks to park your boat while you shop.

Fall is beautiful. The trees turn and the colors are gorgeous. Bring your camera. Fall fishing is a must. Then, winter sets in... Snowmobiling, ice fishing, ice skating, skiing, and hanging around the hearth drinking hot cocoa and roasting marshmallows. Whatever you want to do, you can do it in Walker!
Source: **https://www.ci.walker.mn.us/visitors/about_walker.php**

STATE HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (SHIP) - LIVEHEALTHY CASS COUNTY

LiveHealthy Cass County in coordination with the State Health Improvement Program (SHIP) is working to create healthier communities across Minnesota by expanding opportunities for active living, healthy eating and tobacco-free living. Good health is created where we live, work, learn and play. Schools, businesses, apartment owners/managers, farmers, community groups, senior organizations, hospitals, clinics, planning entities, Chambers of Commerce, faith communities, and many more partners are creating better health together through SHIP across Minnesota.
Source: **http://www.co.cass.mn.us/livehealthy/**



05 EXISTING CONDITIONS & ISSUE IDENTIFICATIONS

Based on the In-Class Student Tally, the Parent Survey, Observation of Student Pick up and Drop off, the Community Walk Audit, and based on local knowledge of the Local Planning Team (LPT) members, the LPT identified several issues when conducting a review of existing conditions, including:

- Distance
- Speed of traffic along route
- Safety of intersection crossings
- Amount of traffic along route
- Sidewalks or bike paths
- Violence or crime
- Weather or climate
- Time
- Convenience of driving
- Children's activities outside of school

WHA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The National Center for SRTS 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) to avoid Mondays and Fridays which often have statistical anomalies associated with their records.

SRTS student arrival and departure tally results: The week of November 18th, 2019.

	Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Public Transit	Other
Tuesday AM	Overcast	269	13	1	183	85	1	0	0
Tuesday PM	Overcast	389	28	0	201	201	6	0	0
Wednesday AM	Sunny	289	15	1	206	63	3	0	0
Wednesday PM	Partly Cloudy	364	33	0	205	123	3	0	0
Thursday AM	OVERCAST	299	12	0	196	90	2	0	0
Thursday PM	OVERCAST	299	19	0	223	53	5	0	0

OBSERVATION OF DROP OFF/PICK UP

The local planning team, equipped with florescent yellow vests, clipboards pens, and papers split up between several different locations on school property to observe student drop off and Pick up. Their mission was to observe pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorist behavior during these peak times, and record their observations. While It is understandable, that students leaving school will be full of energy and excitement at the thought of getting out of school for the day, it is important to try to minimize risks associated with excited students exiting school property on foot or by bicycle. This is particularly true, when one considers that parents driving their own personal vehicles and school buses are simultaneously converging on the same areas where students are excitedly exiting. Therefore the local planning team embarked on their observation of drop off and pick up, in order to identify any problem areas, risks, and ultimately to make recommendations regarding improving drop off and/or pick up.

Local Planning Team Observations

- Busses come in 2 waves had a lot of cars mixed in with busses and crosswalks
- Bus blocks the walkway – crossway main entry way to island. Crossing guard? Both sides of island? – students exiting/enter busses are not protected from other vehicles.
- Students go around busses – parents and employees.
- East sidewalks need repair.
- Traffic does not move smoothly or efficiently – lots of blind spots
- Busses stacked up in parking spots at angle\\\\ blocking view of entrances
- Students don't use sidewalks
- Students must walk between vehicles.
- Students not protected from other vehicles when entering/exiting busses.
- High traffic areas in front of school.
- Cars can impede vision of walkers and bikers.
- South 5th street bike rack should be closer to door.
- Kids that use the stop lights to cross have an audible signal as well.
- Cars drive fast on 5th – not everyone willing to wait to let people cross.
- 5th Street cars backed up while kids walk across to pine.
- Sidewalk on one side of pine (one-way street)
- Observed woman slam on brakes for person walking
- South campus use crossing guards between BHS and south campus – police presence at location as well.
- Could be more strategic in dismissal time of EA; s – have those who leave at different times park in certain areas as not to add to congestion of departures of kids/cars/busses
- Senior lot-busses do not use space.
- Nice sidewalks on north side, but no designated bike lanes
- Flow of traffic exiting the parking lot seems manageable
- Plenty of lighting in lot.
- PIT Parking lot – kids walk wherever.

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

In addition to the student survey, the National Center for SRTS has also developed a parent survey designed to determine the main reasons why students are not walking r biking to school. The parent survey comprised of 16 questions to determine the many factors that come to bear upon the decisions that walking and biking or not walking and biking to school. In administering the parent survey, the SRTS planning team with assistance from school staff administered the survey which was completed by their parents.

A total of 44 parent surveys were completed and received. A brief synopsis of the results is below:

In keeping with national trends, the typical mode of arrival and departure from school from respondents showed that the family vehicle is the primary mode, followed closely by riding the school bus. Factors that attribute to this trend for Walker – Hackensack – Akeley Schools revolves around the distance students have to travel to school. The City of Hackensack is located 13 miles South of Walker and the City of Akeley is located 11 miles Southwest of Walker. These distances make for long bus rides which can attribute to more family vehicles picking up and dropping off their kids.

When asked to report on issues that affect the decision to not allow a child to walk or bike to/from school, parents responded that distance was the primary concern. Distance was followed by the speed of traffic along the route. Additional issues included the safety of intersections and crossings, as well as weather or climate. The WHA area faces extremely cold temperatures in the winter months as well as large amounts of snow which can make for difficult walking and biking conditions as well as driving conditions.

COMMUNITY WALK AUDIT & SITE ASSESSMENT

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 its walk audit during the winter months 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, it encourages more students to walk or bike to school when and where it is safe to do so.

Furthermore, the walk audits are a way of determining if and where issues and barriers to walking or biking to schools exist. It is the purpose of this plan to address these issues and remove these barriers where they exist.

In addition, 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 tall enough to see over parked cars. Another lens through which the planning team considered each route was the perspective of someone with physical disabilities. For example, are sidewalks compliant with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)? Do sidewalks slope laterally to accommodate the slope of a driveway or does the sidewalk remain flat and the driveway apron begin to slope beyond the sidewalk as it should?

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 throughout 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 an obsolete activity.

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 and State 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 system demands, and falling levels of transportation funding is a scenario that is playing out in communities across the nation.

It is important to remember that even within the world of transportation, several user groups view transportation needs in many 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 greater priority. There are several routes that the planning team reviewed that do not warrant any physical improvement due to low volume of traffic condition r width of roadway etc. It is not practical or even a wise use of public funds to recommend sidewalks on all streets.

WALK AUDIT OBSERVATIONS

- Sidewalks on at least one side of the street allows students room to walk.
- Room to walk by the High School but heavy traffic after school impacts crosswalk use
- Improvement of crosswalks could help improve street crossings for students.
- Needs better speed control out of the ball fields down to school, no sidewalks.
- High traffic speed downhill from the uphill neighborhood.
- Multiple rolling stops at stop signs with little to no care about the people observing with clipboards.
- Bus line seemed chaotic
- Look at putting the special needs vans or buses in front
- Consider flashing lights capable of turning red when buses leave school at the crosswalk on 2nd street and Highland.
- Maintain the high snowbanks better so they do not obstruct vision of drivers and walkers.
- Lots of rolling stops
- School walkers seemed to be using sidewalks and crossings safely
- Some sidewalk conditions were poor and high snowbanks can obstruct vision for both drivers and walkers, 4th street and Michigan specifically.
- Good sidewalks throughout the area but intersections could use better crosswalks with blinking signs.
- In the winter certain sidewalks become filled with snow such as the 4th street sidewalk
- Street striping - all streets and look at putting S/W on the back of curb to alleviate snow maintenance concerns.

06 STRATEGIES

Based upon the input mechanisms discussed in the previous section on Observations, the planning team developed a series of strategies and actions steps using the SMART goals approach.

SMART goal setting brings structure and trackability into your goals and objectives. Instead of vague resolutions, SMART goal setting creates verifiable trajectories towards a certain objective, with clear milestones and an estimation of the goal's attainability. Every goal or objective, from intermediary step to overarching objective, can be made S.M.A.R.T. and as such, brought closer to reality. This ensures goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time based.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Additionally, the local planning team developed these recommendations in response to the issues identified earlier in the process. Therefore, the SRTS recommendations are listed beneath each of the individual issues.

1. Speed of Traffic

a. Consider increasing law enforcement presence as deterrent for traffic violations **ENFORCEMENT (ST)**
b. Consider opportunities to improve signage **ENGINEERING (LT)**
c. Consider opportunities to incorporate speed bumps to reduce speed violations **ENGINEERING (LT)**
d. Consider increasing the presence and usage of crossing guards to reduce traffic violations and increase pedestrian safety. **ENCOURAGEMENT (ST)**
e. Consider restricting certain routes during peak seasons or times in order to increase pedestrian safety **ENCOURAGEMENT (ST)**
f. Increase the number of school speed zones **ENFORCEMENT (ST)**
g. Consider installing rapid flashing beacon at certain intersections or crossings **ENGINEERING (ST)**
    i. Ne 2nd Street and Highland Elementary students **(ST)**
h. Consider installing raised crosswalks at certain intersections or crossings **ENGINEERING (LT)**
    i. 4th Street bid block crossing in front of school **(LT)**

2. Safety of Intersection Crossing

a. Continue to prioritize snow removal and maintenance in order to ensure pedestrian safety **ENGINEERING (O)**
b. Continue to consistently repaint and re-stripe crosswalks, and pavement markings **ENGINEERING (O)**
c. Consider improvements to the crosswalk over 4th Street and Highway 371 in front of Benson's **ENGINEERING (LT)**
    i. Rapid flashing beacon **(LT)**
d. Continue to consistently improve lighting at intersections and roadways **ENGINEERING (O)**
e. Due to the high number of students that have after school actives at the Boys and Girls Club and other programs at the Walker Area Community Center (WACC), ensure that sidewalks and crossings from the school to the WACC are improved and/or adequately maintained **ENGINEERING (ST)**

3. Amount of Traffic

a. Consider funneling parent vehicular traffic to certain areas **ENCOURAGEMENT (ST)**
b. Consider restricting Highland Road during drop off and pick up **ENCOURAGEMENT (ST)**
c. Consider the increased need for School Resource Officers **ENFORCEMENT (ST)**
d. Consider the need for additional suitable parking in certain areas including the following:
    i. 4th Street **ENGINEERING (ST)**
    ii. 5th Street **ENGINEERING (ST)**
    iii. Church overflow **ENGINEERING (ST)**
    iv. Road by football field - Birchwood Avenue **ENGINEERING (ST)**

4. Weather and Climate

a. Continue to improve maintaining icy sidewalks during winter months **ENGINEERING (O)**
b. Provide education on winter walking safety **EDUCATION (ST)**
c. Provide general education pedestrian safety rules of the road **EDUCATION (ST)**
d. Provide general bike safety rules of the road **EDUCATION (ST)**
e. Continue providing walk/bike/fun training for educators (Currently 7-8 trained teachers). **EDUCATION (O)**

LT = LONG TERM ST = SHORT TERM O = ONGOING

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Sidewalks and Bike Paths

a. Continue to pursue underpass at intersection of Shingobee Trail and Highway 371 **ENGINEERING (LT)**
b. Continue to maintain and improve existing bike lane on 2nd Street leading up to school **ENGINEERING (O)**
c. Consider completing the important bicycle/pedestrian gap that currently exists between Michigan and Highland **ENGINEERING (LT)**
d. Continue to maintain and improve the bicycle/pedestrian route between 2nd Street and Tower Road which handles a lot of traffic to/from the Boys and Girls Club **ENGINEERING (O)**
e. Complete student tally forms for grades K-8 annually **EVALUATION (ST)**
f. Complete parent survey forms for K-12 annually **EVALUATION (ST)**
g. Review and make annual updates as necessary to the Safe Routes to School Plan **EVALUATION (ST)**
h. Continue to meet as a Safe Routes to School task force regularly i.e. quarterly **EVALUATION (ST)**

6. Violence Crime Safety

a. Provide education for pedestrians & dog owners about the risks of dangerous dogs **EDUCATION (ST)**
b. Continue to address risks associated with dangerous dogs **ENFORCEMENT (O)**
c. Provide education on the risks of abduction, sexual predators & human trafficking **EDUCATION (ST)**
    i. Educating children on safety **EDUCATION (O)**
        1. Community programs to adopt (like "see something, say something")
        2. Community education class
        3. Wetterling Foundation
d. Continue to address risks associated with abduction, sexual predators, and human trafficking **ENFORCEMENT (O)**
e. Consider increased law enforcement presence, as a deterrent for traffic violations and other crimes. **ENFORCEMENT (ST)**

7. Convenience of Driving

a. Create a culture of bicycle/pedestrian friendly community **ENCOURAGEMENT (ST)**
b. Consider ways to increase the number of bike racks throughout town **ENCOURAGEMENT (LT)**
c. Consider ways to promote deals and discounts for bikers and pedestrians at local businesses **ENCOURAGEMENT (ST)**
d. Consider ways to capitalize on and utilize the SHIP Bike fleet **ENCOURAGEMENT (ST)**
e. Consider ways to capitalize on and utilize the Kinship program **EQUITY (ST)**
f. Organize a before or after school walking/biking/running club **EQUITY (ST)**
g. Consider ways to increase wellness incentive **ENCOURAGEMENT (ST)**
h. Continue to hold, improve and enhance the Spring bike fling **ENCOURAGEMENT (O)**
i. Strategically promote bicycling and pedestrian activity during the months of September October, April and May when the weather is nice enough to walk but folks might be more likely to drive. ENCOURAGEMENT **(ST)**
j. Consider ways to promote and increase the use of walking school buses **ENCOURAGEMENT (ST)**
k. Create a translation toolkit of common SRTS terms schools can use in messaging sent home to familymembers with low English proficiency **EQUITY (ST)**

LT = LONG TERM ST = SHORT TERM O = ONGOING

06 EVALUATION PLAN

The SRTS planning team will consider reviewing the strategies and action plan annually to determine each strategy's continued relevance for changing conditions within the community. In addition, the planning team should also consider reviewing state and federal policies and best practices to ensure they are addressing current and expected conditions. Finally, the planning team should also review the issues and barriers to identify any new hindrances to students walking and biking to and from school.

Continued public involvement is critical to the successful implementation of the strategies identified in this plan. The planning team should consider promoting their annual review meeting to the public/community and seek as much community input as possible.

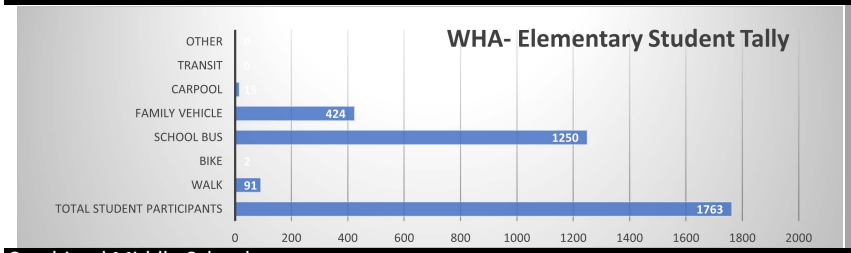
One way to successfully engage the public would be to couple the SRTS plan review meeting with an event such as walk to school day, a bike rodeo, or some other fun event. By doing this, the planning team would provide a fun event to promote walking and biking and garner valuable input from parents, students, community members and planners alike.

A LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A, Student Tally Results
Appendix B, Parent Survey Results
Appendix C, Visual Executive Summary

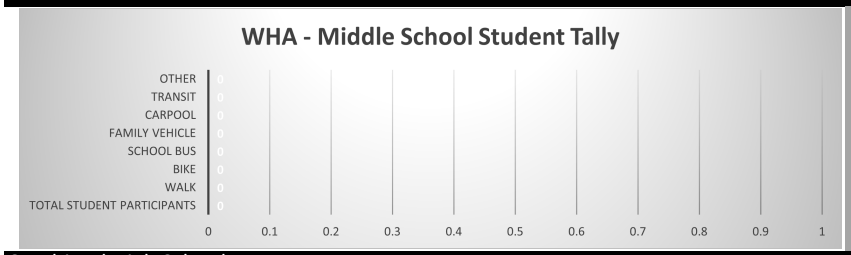
Grade	School Name	Teachers First Name	Teachers Last Name	Mondays Date	Number of Students Enrolled in Class		Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Pre Kindergarten															
	WHA Elemen	Luanne	Sycks	10/7/2019	15	Tuesday AM	Overcast	13	0	0	7	6	0	0	0
						Tuesday PM	Sunny	13	0	0	6	7	0	0	0
						Wednesday AM	Sunny	13	0	0	7	6	0	0	0
						WednesdayPM	Sunny	13	0	0	8	5	0	0	0
						Thursday AM	Overcast	13	0	0	7	6	0	0	0
						Thursday PM		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kindergarten															
	WHA Element	Chelsey	Zaffke	10/7/2019	17		Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
	WHA Element	Janelle	Johnson	10/7/2019	17	Tuesday AM	Overcast	47	3	0	34	10	0	0	0
	WHA Element	Natalie	Asell	10/7/2019	17	Tuesday PM	Sunny	48	3	0	40	5	0	0	0
						Wednesday AM	Sunny	49	3	0	37	8	1	0	0
						WednesdayPM	Sunny	52	3	0	42	7	0	0	0
						Thursday AM	Overcast	51	4	0	38	9	0	0	0
						Thursday PM	Rainy	51	4	0	41	6	0	0	0
1st															
	WHA Element	Cathy	Ebinger	10/3/2019	18		Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
	WHA Element	Kevin	Skaja	10/3/2019	20	Tuesday AM	Sunny	30	2	0	19	9	0	0	0
						Tuesday PM	Sunny	32	2	0	21	9	0	0	0
						Wednesday AM	Overcast	28	2	0	16	10	0	0	0
						WednesdayPM	Overcast	31	2	0	23	6	2	0	0
						Thursday AM	Sunny	35	2	0	23	10	1	0	0
						Thursday PM	Sunny	35	2	0	23	10	1	0	0
2nd															
	WHA Element	Cindy	Alto	10/7/2019	22		Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
	WHA Element	Hope	Johnson	10/7/2019	23	Tuesday AM	Overcast	58	3	1	37	18	1	0	0
		Kate	Reich	10/7/2019	24	Tuesday PM	Sunny	61	2	1	39	17	2	0	0
						Wednesday AM	Overcast	61	2	0	37	21	1	0	0
						WednesdayPM	Sunny	60	5	0	41	12	1	0	0
						Thursday AM	Sunny	63	3	0	35	24	1	0	0
						Thursday PM	Sunny	64	4	0	46	13	1	0	0
3rd															
	WHA Element	Kara	Widman	10/7/2019	20		Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
	WHA Element	Kristen	Bockovich	10/7/2019	20	Tuesday AM	Overcast	53	2	0	36	15	0	0	0
	WHA Element	Patty	Hendericks	10/7/2019	19	Tuesday PM	Sunny	55	2	0	40	13	0	0	0
						Wednesday AM	Overcast	55	1	0	39	16	0	0	0
						WednesdayPM	Overcast	55	1	0	46	7	1	0	0
						Thursday AM	Sunny	53	1	0	45	15	0	0	0
						Thursday PM	Sunny	53	0	0	42	9	0	0	0
4th															
	WHA Element	Tyna	Richter	10/8/2019	18		Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
	WHA Element	Peter	Naugle	10/7/2019	18	Tuesday AM	Overcast	51	2	0	33	16	0	0	0
	WHA Element	Dean	Olstad	10/10/2019	18	Tuesday PM	Sunny	50	4	0	40	5	1	0	0
						Wednesday AM	Overcast	49	1	0	31	17	0	0	0
						WednesdayPM	Sunny	45	4	0	35	6	0	0	0
						Thursday AM	Overcast	52	1	0	41	6	0	0	0
						Thursday PM	Sunny	51	3	0	41	7	0	0	0
5th															
	WHA Element	Debbie	Fisher	10/7/2019	16		Weather	Student Tally	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
	WHA Element	Kathy	Weiderin	10/7/2019	17	Tuesday AM	Sunny	17	1	0	17	11	0	0	0
	WHA Element	Kellie	Morehouse	10/7/2019	17	Tuesday PM	Sunny	30	2	0	20	7	0	0	0
						Wednesday AM	Overcast	44	3	0	29	12	0	0	0
						WednesdayPM	Overcast	43	4	0	28	10	1	0	0
						Thursday AM	Sunny	43	3	0	29	11	0	0	0
						Thursday PM	Sunny	43	5	0	31	7	0	0	0

Combined Elementary



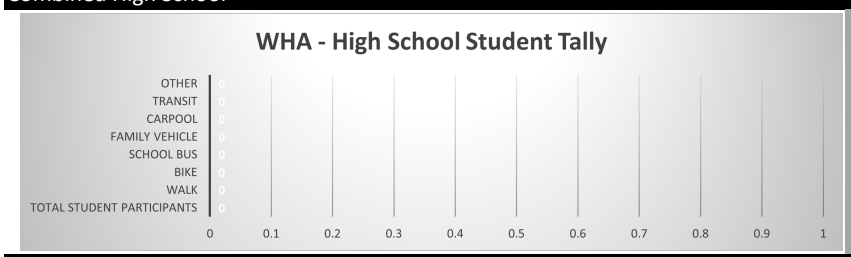
	Total Student Participants	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Tuesday AM	269	13	1	183	85	1	0	0
Tuesday PM	289	15	1	206	63	3	0	0
Wednesday AM	299	12	0	196	90	2	0	0
WednesdayPM	299	19	0	223	53	5	0	0
Thursday AM	310	14	0	218	81	2	0	0
Thursday PM	297	18	0	224	52	2	0	0
	1763	91	2	1250	424	15	0	0
	100.00%	**5.16%**	**0.11%**	**70.90%**	**24.05%**	**0.85%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**

Combined Middle School



	Total Student Participants	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Tuesday AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tuesday PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wednesday AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WednesdayPM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thursday AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thursday PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	#DIV/0!	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**

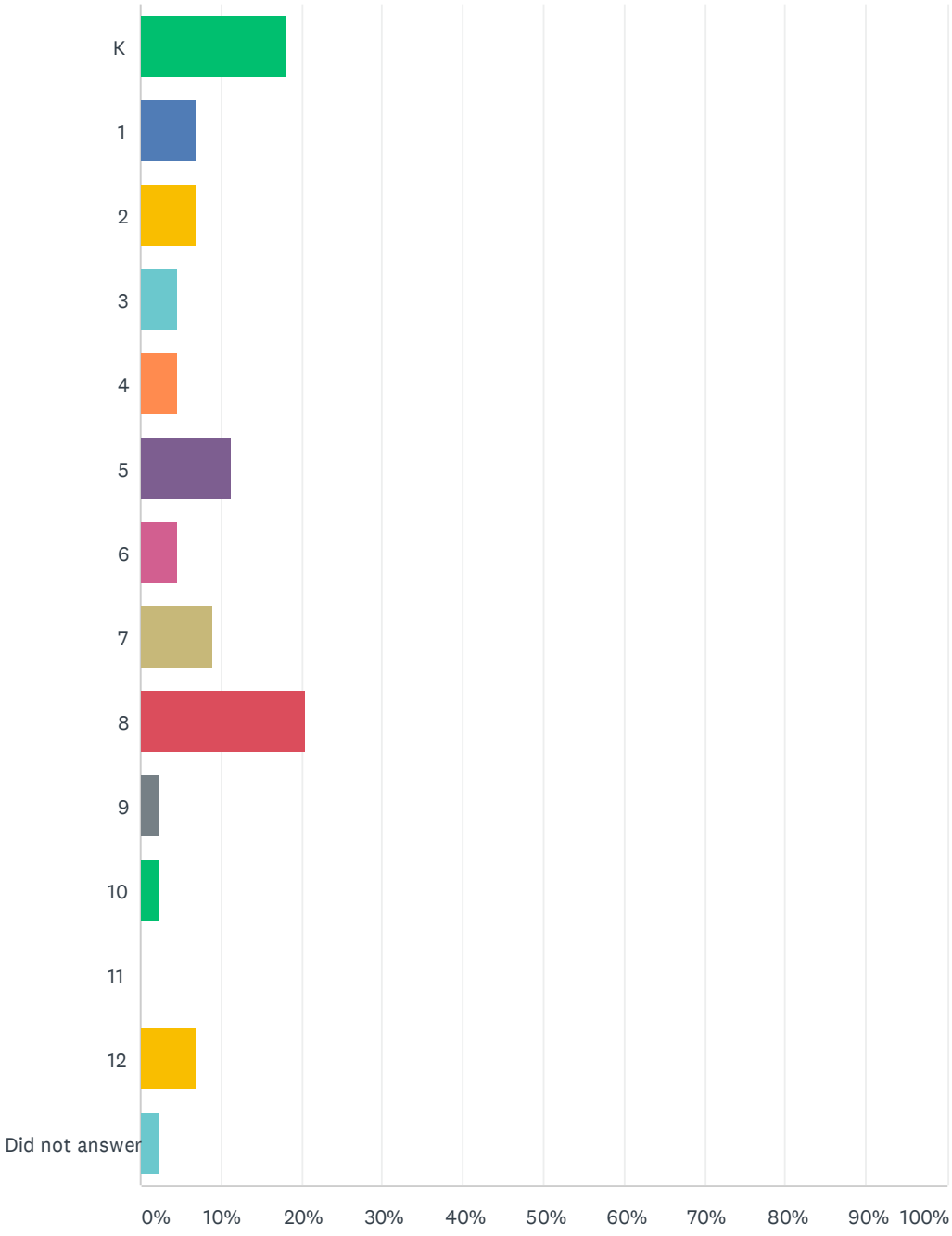
Combined High School



	Total Student Participants	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Tuesday AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tuesday PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wednesday AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WednesdayPM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thursday AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thursday PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	#DIV/0!	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**

Q1 What is the grade of the child who brought home the survey?

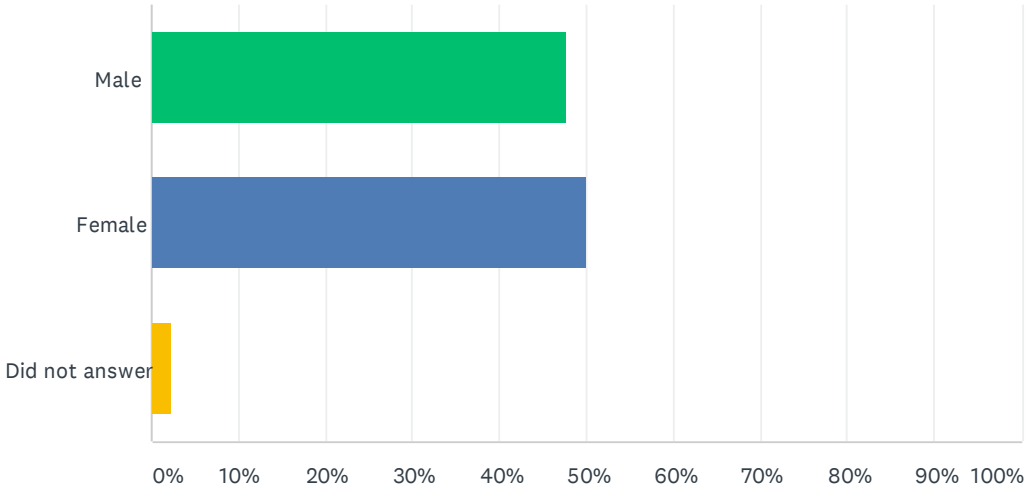
Answered: 44 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
K	18.18%	8
1	6.82%	3
2	6.82%	3
3	4.55%	2
4	4.55%	2
5	11.36%	5
6	4.55%	2
7	9.09%	4
8	20.45%	9
9	2.27%	1
10	2.27%	1
11	0.00%	0
12	6.82%	3
Did not answer	2.27%	1
TOTAL		44

Q2 Is the child who brought home the survey male or female?

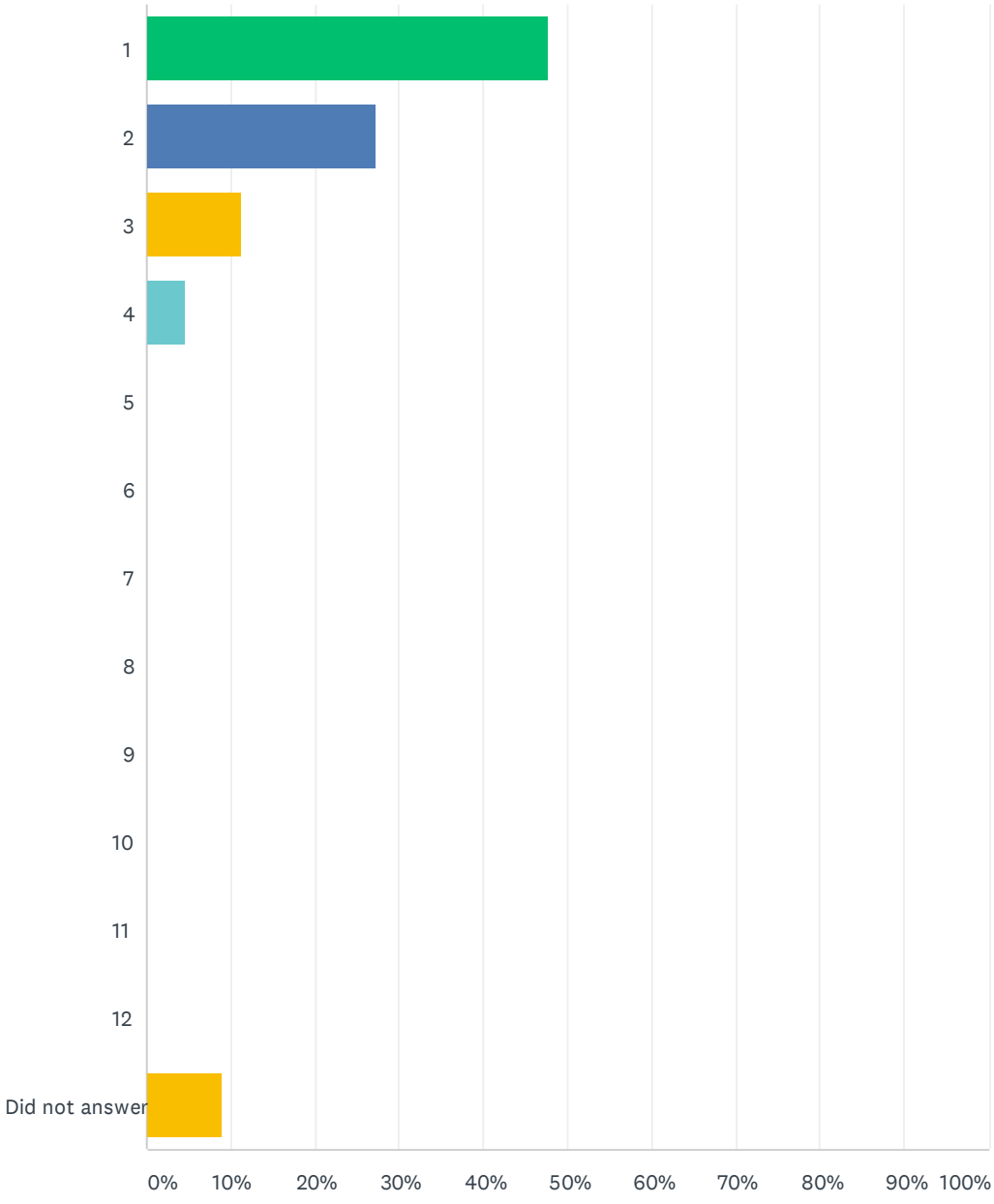
Answered: 44 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	47.73%	21
Female	50.00%	22
Did not answer	2.27%	1
TOTAL		44

Q3 How many children do you have in K-8th grade?

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	47.73%	21
2	27.27%	12
3	11.36%	5
4	4.55%	2
5	0.00%	0
6	0.00%	0
7	0.00%	0
8	0.00%	0
9	0.00%	0
10	0.00%	0
11	0.00%	0
12	0.00%	0
Did not answer	9.09%	4
TOTAL		44

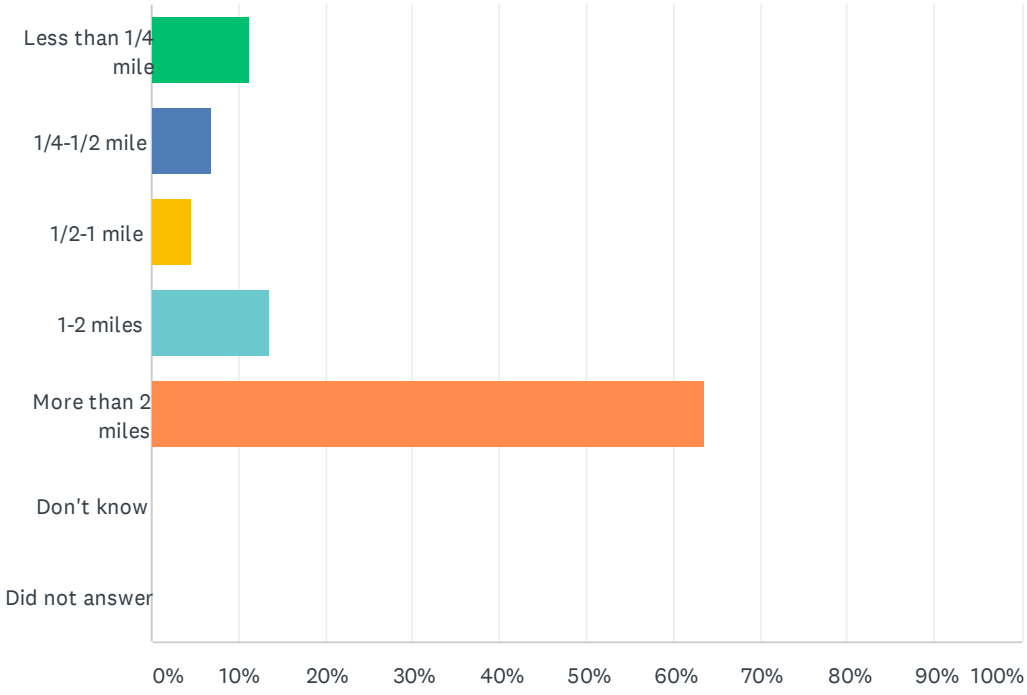
Q4 What is the street intersection nearest to your home?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 10

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	69th street	7/30/2020 3:00 PM
2	4th St S and Michigan Ave	7/27/2020 10:49 AM
3	2nd and summit	7/8/2020 11:00 PM
4	State Highway 64 and State highway 34	6/22/2020 11:03 AM
5	4th St	6/22/2020 7:44 AM
6	Highway 200	6/21/2020 2:38 PM
7	34	6/21/2020 9:59 AM
8	State Hwy 34	6/20/2020 11:24 AM
9	7th & Elm	6/20/2020 8:20 AM
10	4th Street and Michigan Ave	6/19/2020 12:25 PM
11	Onigum Road and Agency Bay Rd NW	6/19/2020 10:03 AM
12	56th Ave/oak point rd	6/19/2020 8:38 AM
13	64th st NW	6/19/2020 7:34 AM
14	Highway 38 and Lake Benedict Rd, Laporte, MN	6/18/2020 9:50 PM
15	Front st nw and 371	6/18/2020 9:40 PM
16	Park Ave and	6/18/2020 6:29 PM
17	County 12 and Sixth Lake Road	6/18/2020 6:29 PM
18	Hillside Ln and Horseshoe Rd	6/18/2020 6:21 PM
19	Francis Dr. and Long Lake Rd	6/18/2020 5:37 PM
20	Woodgate Lane	6/18/2020 3:10 PM
21	State 371 and Steamboat Loop	6/18/2020 2:34 PM
22	County 12	6/18/2020 2:13 PM
23	Hwy 200	6/18/2020 1:54 PM
24	Poquet Dr NW & Poquet Trail NW	6/18/2020 12:51 PM
25	Cleveland Blvd and Prospect Ave	6/18/2020 12:38 PM
26	Highway 34	6/18/2020 12:07 PM
27	Not sure	6/18/2020 12:04 PM
28	371 and county 5	6/18/2020 11:56 AM
29	Minnesota Ave & 3rd Street	6/18/2020 11:48 AM
30	6th lake road , Sweetbriar trail	6/18/2020 11:46 AM
31	5th street	6/18/2020 11:43 AM
32	Hwy 200	6/18/2020 11:38 AM
33	Hwy 84 and Hwy 200	6/18/2020 11:35 AM
34	371	6/18/2020 11:34 AM

Q5 How far does your child live from school?

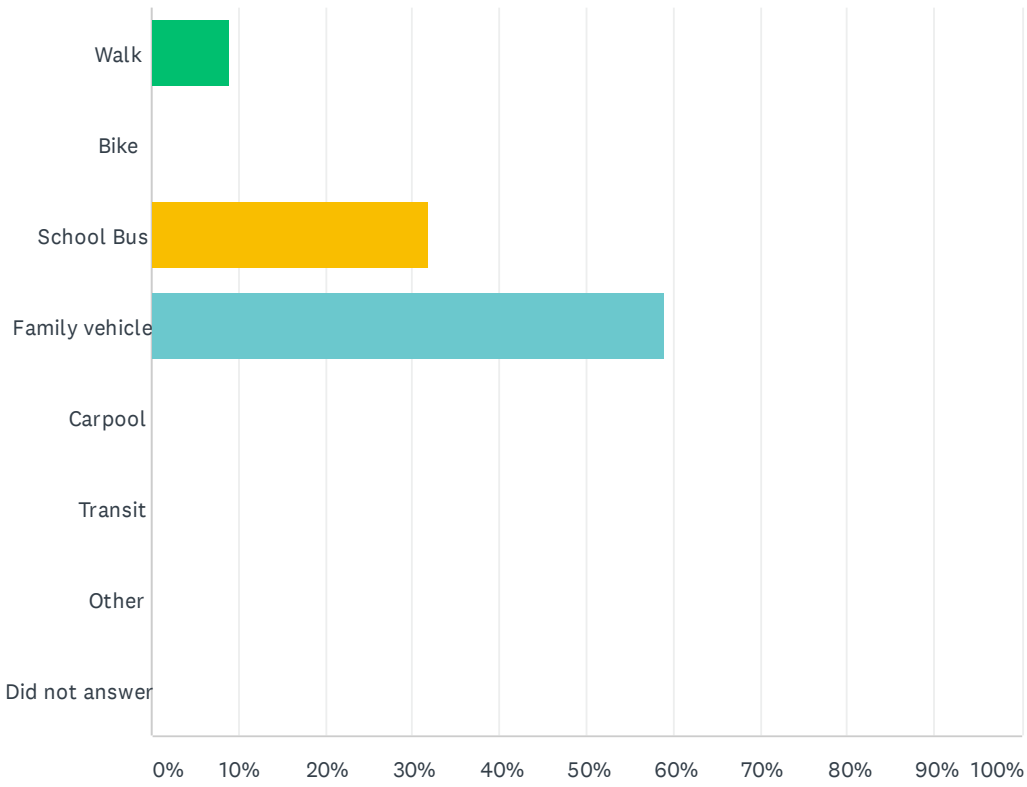
Answered: 44 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 1/4 mile	11.36%	5
1/4-1/2 mile	6.82%	3
1/2-1 mile	4.55%	2
1-2 miles	13.64%	6
More than 2 miles	63.64%	28
Don't know	0.00%	0
Did not answer	0.00%	0
TOTAL		44

Q6 On most days, how does your child arrive at school?

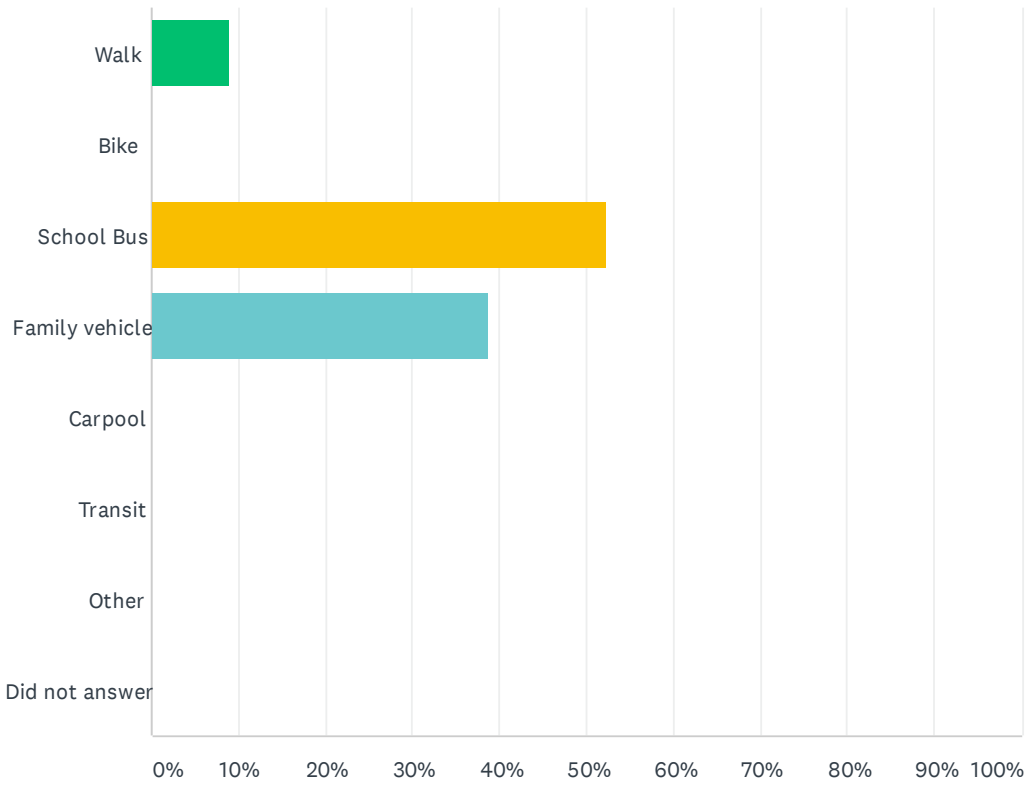
Answered: 44 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Walk	9.09%	4
Bike	0.00%	0
School Bus	31.82%	14
Family vehicle	59.09%	26
Carpool	0.00%	0
Transit	0.00%	0
Other	0.00%	0
Did not answer	0.00%	0
TOTAL		44

Q7 On most days, how does your child leave from school?

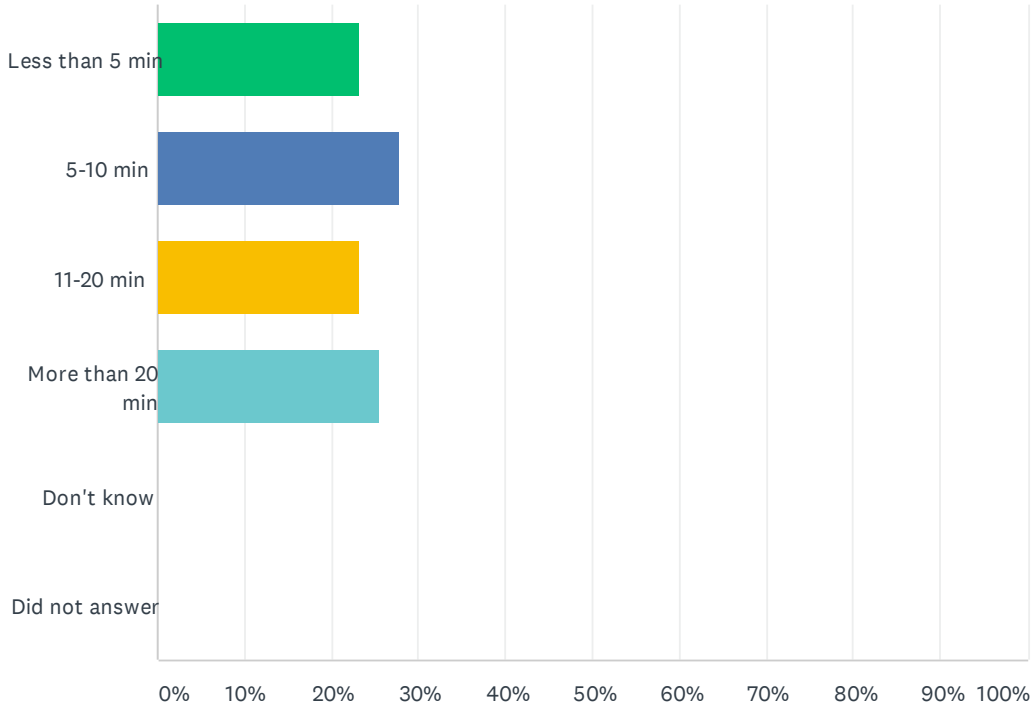
Answered: 44 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Walk	9.09%	4
Bike	0.00%	0
School Bus	52.27%	23
Family vehicle	38.64%	17
Carpool	0.00%	0
Transit	0.00%	0
Other	0.00%	0
Did not answer	0.00%	0
TOTAL		44

Q8 How long does it take your child to get to school?

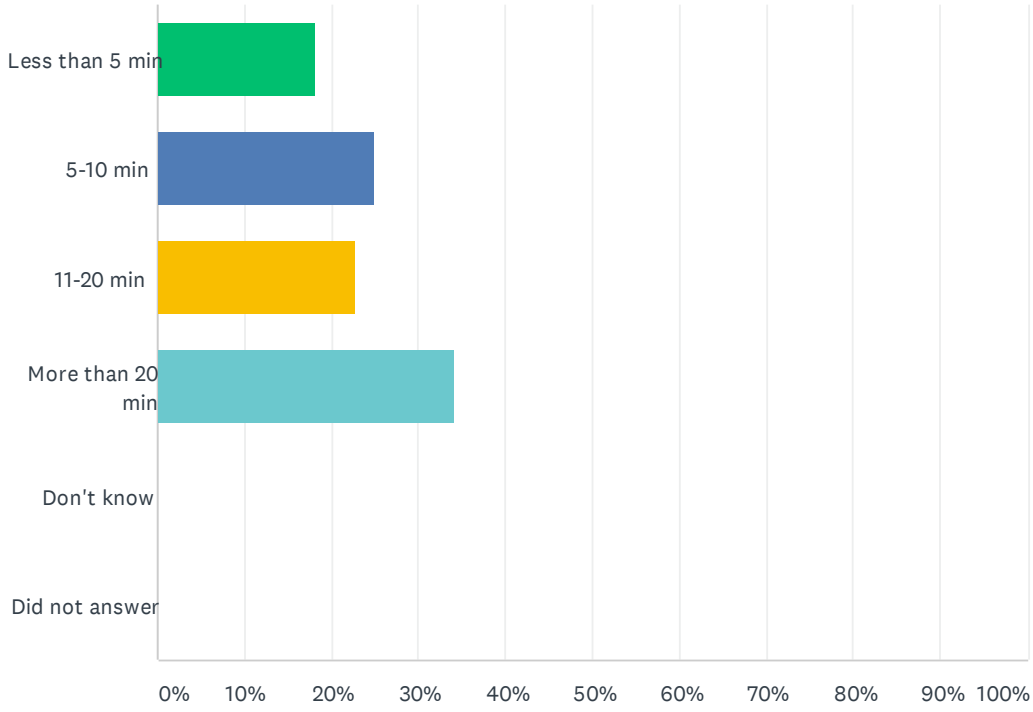
Answered: 43 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 5 min	23.26%	10
5-10 min	27.91%	12
11-20 min	23.26%	10
More than 20 min	25.58%	11
Don't know	0.00%	0
Did not answer	0.00%	0
TOTAL		43

Q9 How long does it take your child to get home from school?

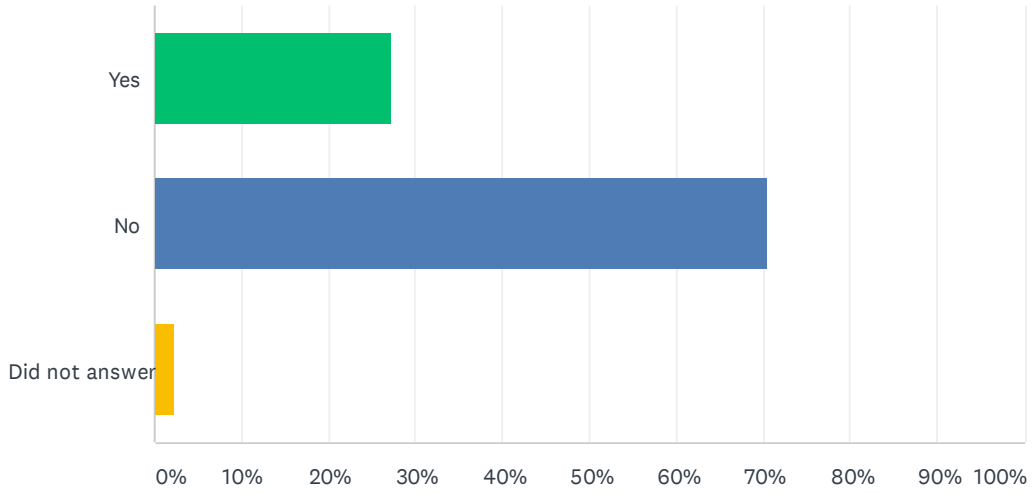
Answered: 44 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 5 min	18.18%	8
5-10 min	25.00%	11
11-20 min	22.73%	10
More than 20 min	34.09%	15
Don't know	0.00%	0
Did not answer	0.00%	0
TOTAL		44

Q10 Has your child asked you for permission to walk or bike to/from school?

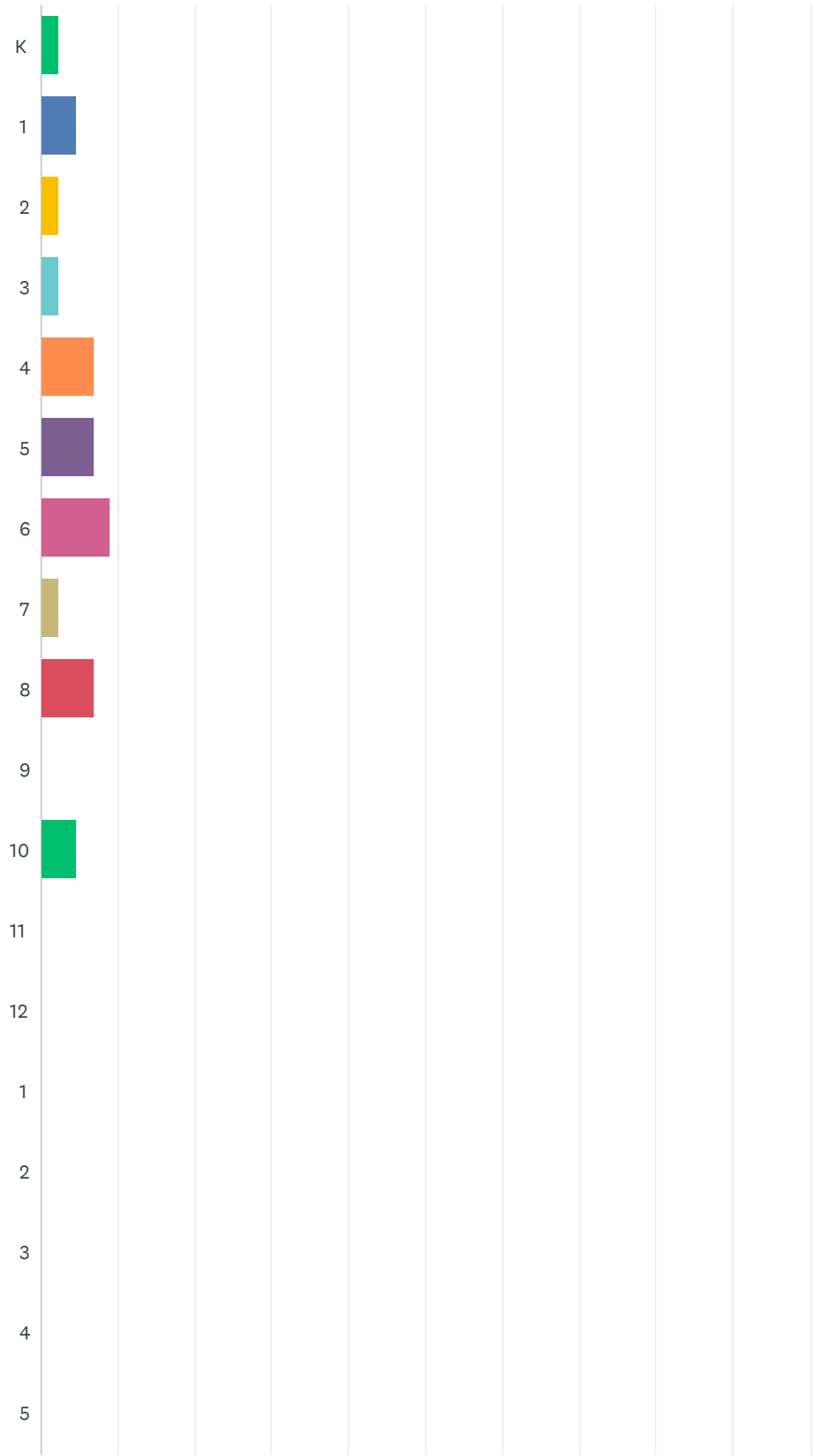
Answered: 44 Skipped: 0

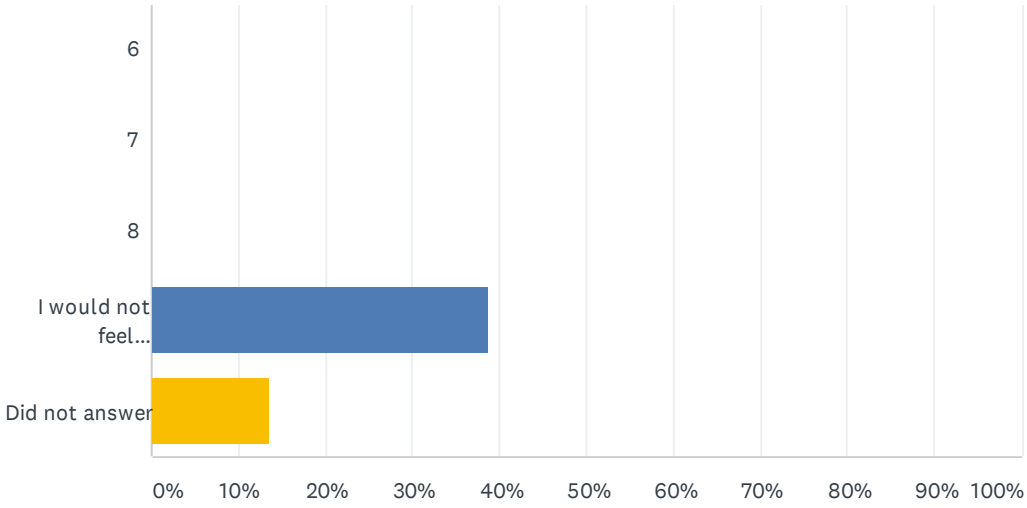


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	27.27%	12
No	70.45%	31
Did not answer	2.27%	1
TOTAL		44

Q11 At what grade would you allow your child to walk or bike to/from school?

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0

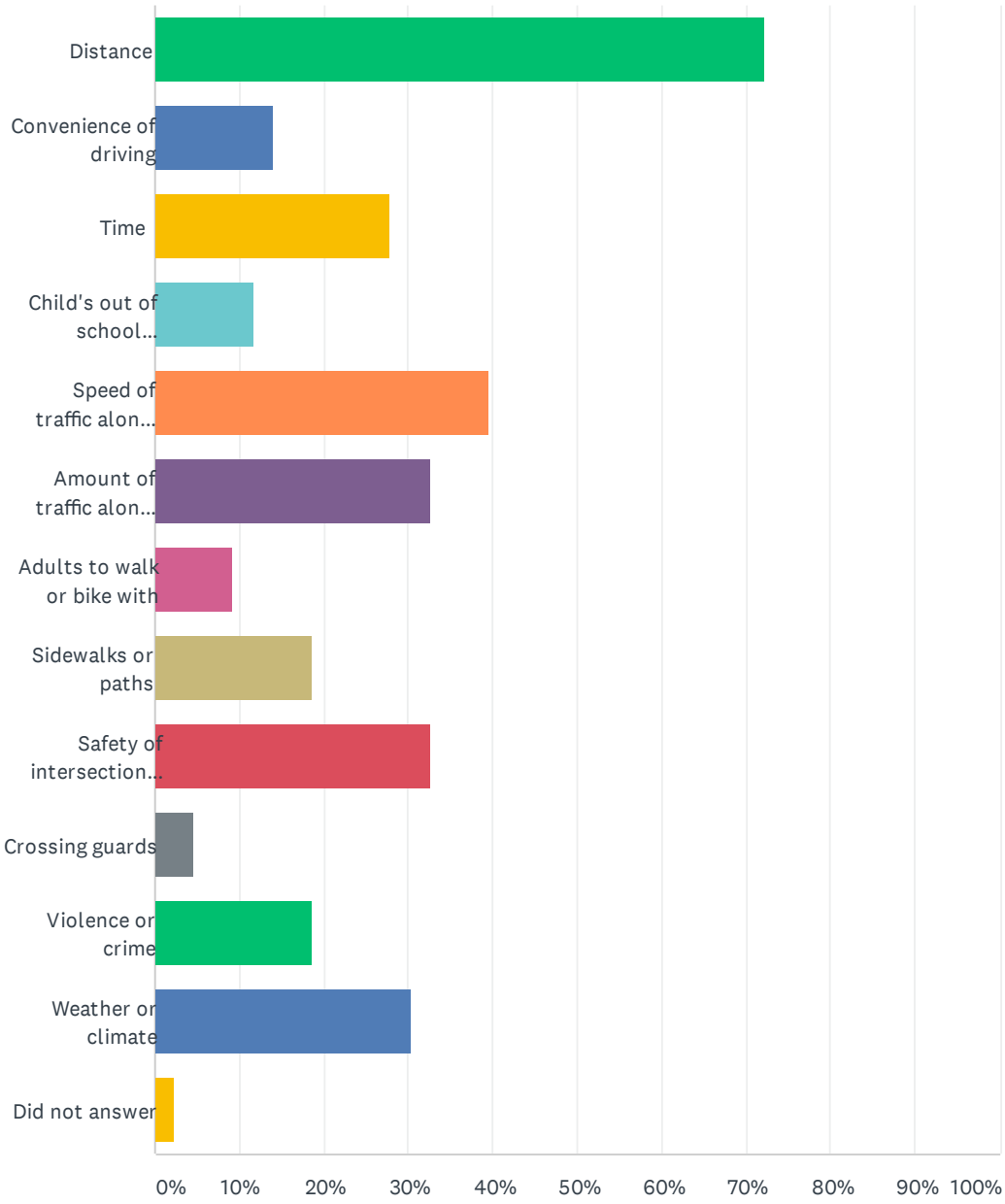



6
7
8
I would not feel...
Did not answer
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
K	2.27%	1
1	4.55%	2
2	2.27%	1
3	2.27%	1
4	6.82%	3
5	6.82%	3
6	9.09%	4
7	2.27%	1
8	6.82%	3
9	0.00%	0
10	4.55%	2
11	0.00%	0
12	0.00%	0
1	0.00%	0
2	0.00%	0
3	0.00%	0
4	0.00%	0
5	0.00%	0
6	0.00%	0
7	0.00%	0
8	0.00%	0
I would not feel comfortable at any grade.	38.64%	17
Did not answer	13.64%	6
TOTAL		44

Q12 Which of the following issues affected your decision to allow or not allow your child to walk or bike to/from school?

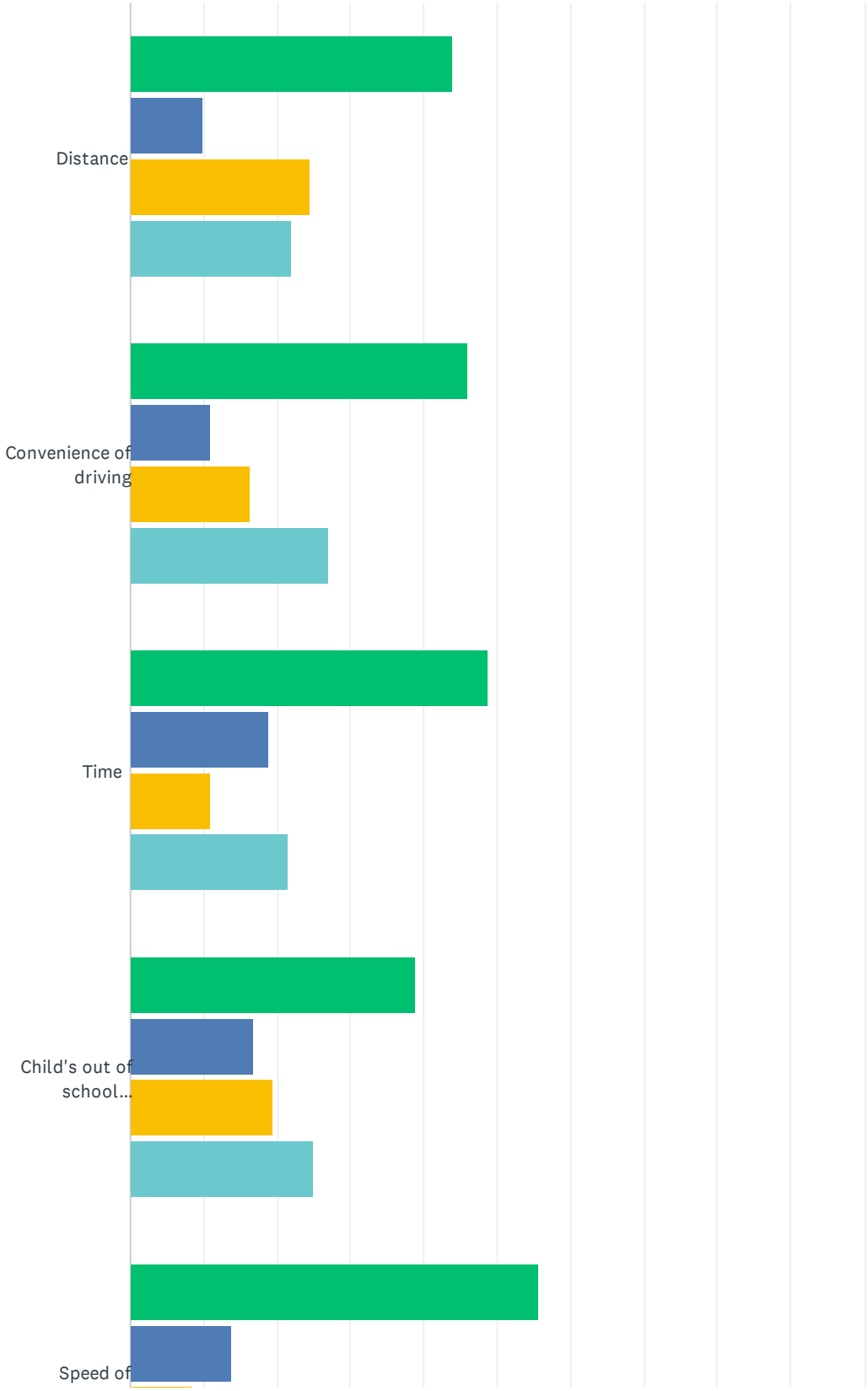
Answered: 43 Skipped: 1

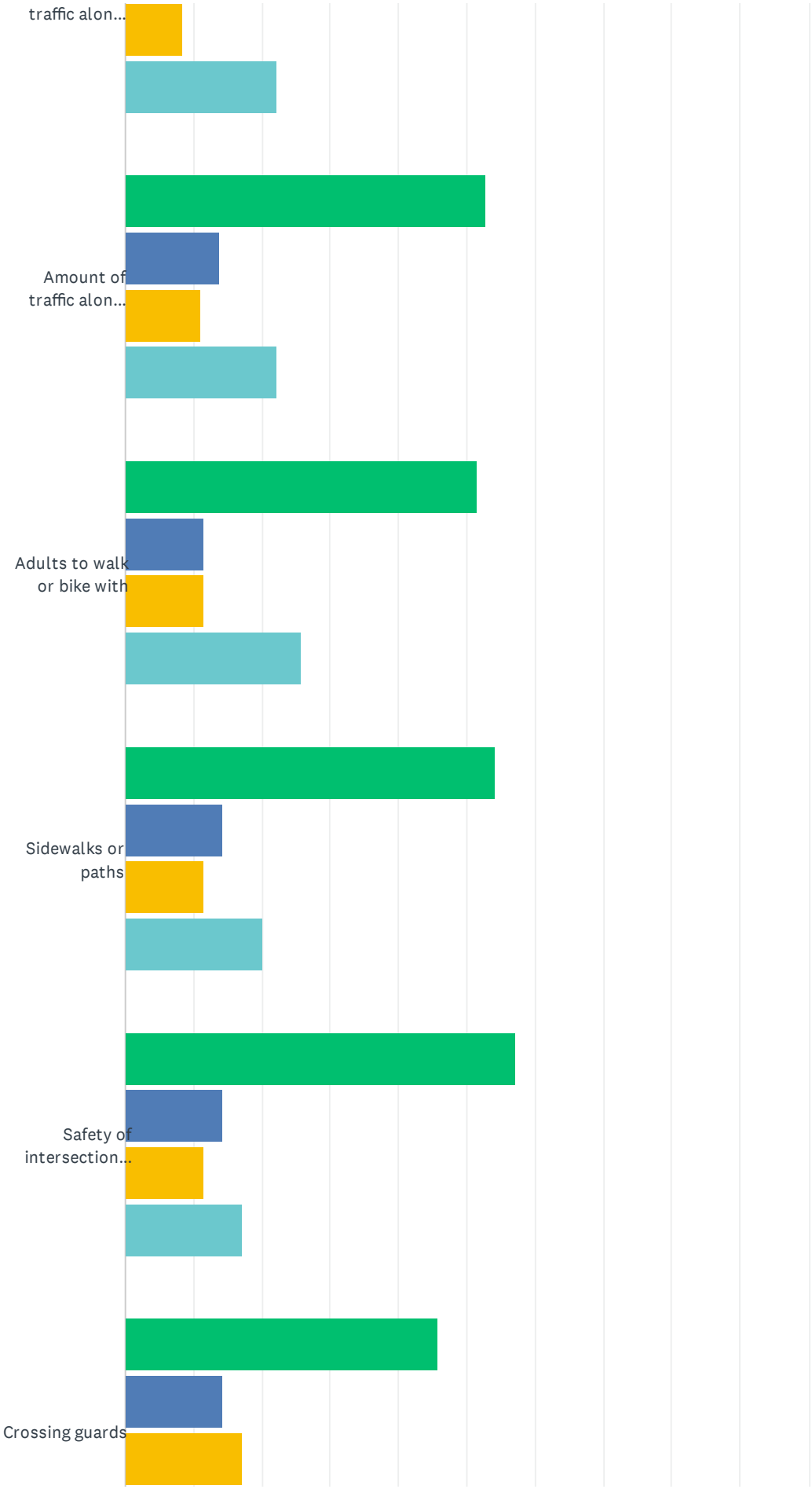


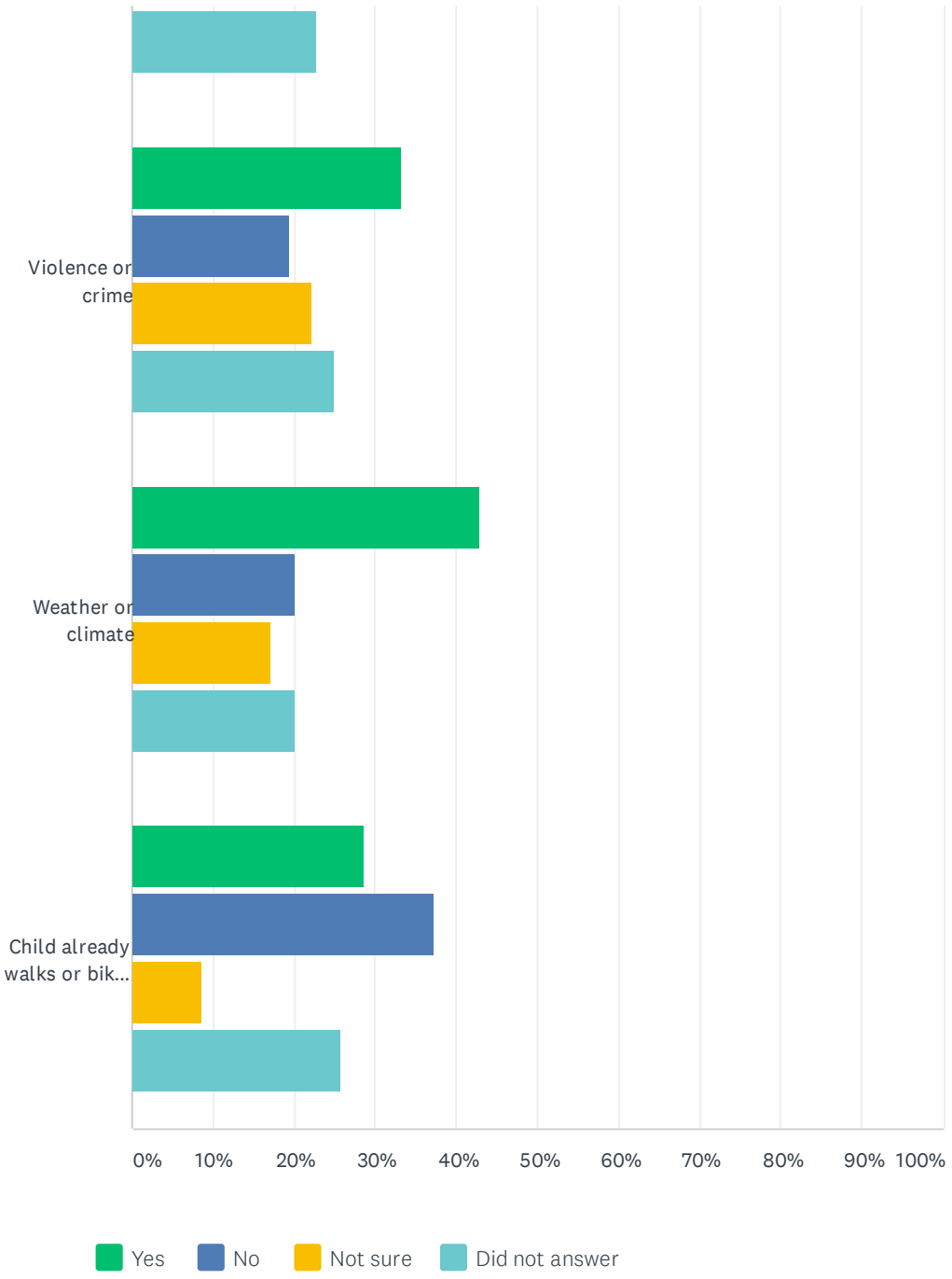
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Distance	72.09%	31
Convenience of driving	13.95%	6
Time	27.91%	12
Child's out of school activities	11.63%	5
Speed of traffic along route	39.53%	17
Amount of traffic along route	32.56%	14
Adults to walk or bike with	9.30%	4
Sidewalks or paths	18.60%	8
Safety of intersection crossings	32.56%	14
Crossing guards	4.65%	2
Violence or crime	18.60%	8
Weather or climate	30.23%	13
Did not answer	2.33%	1
Total Respondents: 43		

Q13 Would you probably let your child walk or bike to/from school if this problem were changed?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 1



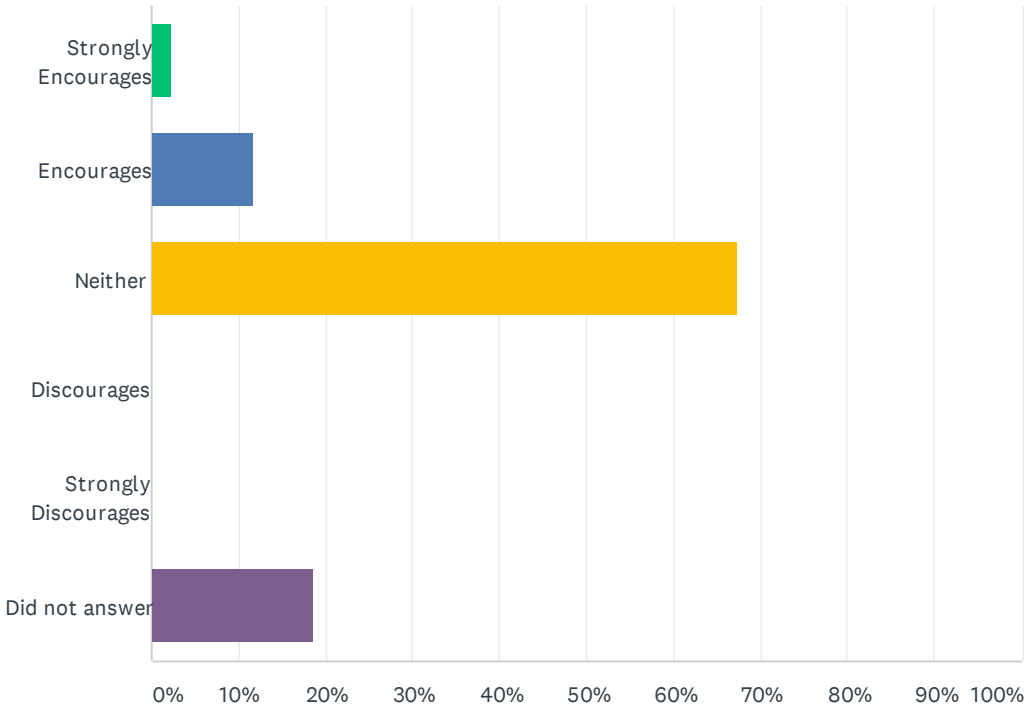

traffic alon...
Amount of traffic alon...
Adults to walk or bike with
Sidewalks or paths
Safety of intersection...
Crossing guards


Violence or crime
Weather or climate
Child already walks or bik...
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Yes
No
Not sure
Did not answer

	YES	NO	NOT SURE	DID NOT ANSWER	TOTAL
Distance	43.90% 18	9.76% 4	24.39% 10	21.95% 9	41
Convenience of driving	45.95% 17	10.81% 4	16.22% 6	27.03% 10	37
Time	48.65% 18	18.92% 7	10.81% 4	21.62% 8	37
Child's out of school activities	38.89% 14	16.67% 6	19.44% 7	25.00% 9	36
Speed of traffic along route	55.56% 20	13.89% 5	8.33% 3	22.22% 8	36
Amount of traffic along route	52.78% 19	13.89% 5	11.11% 4	22.22% 8	36
Adults to walk or bike with	51.43% 18	11.43% 4	11.43% 4	25.71% 9	35
Sidewalks or paths	54.29% 19	14.29% 5	11.43% 4	20.00% 7	35
Safety of intersection crossings	57.14% 20	14.29% 5	11.43% 4	17.14% 6	35
Crossing guards	45.71% 16	14.29% 5	17.14% 6	22.86% 8	35
Violence or crime	33.33% 12	19.44% 7	22.22% 8	25.00% 9	36
Weather or climate	42.86% 15	20.00% 7	17.14% 6	20.00% 7	35
Child already walks or bikes to/from school	28.57% 10	37.14% 13	8.57% 3	25.71% 9	35

Q14 In your opinion, how much does your child's school encourage or discourage walking or biking to/from school?

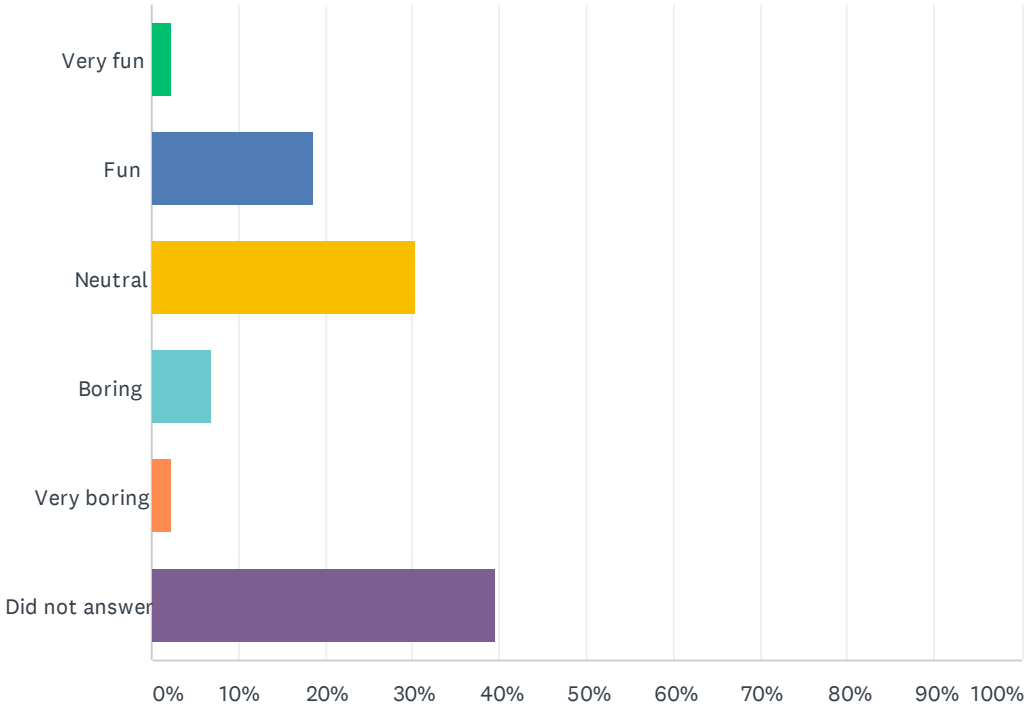
Answered: 43 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Encourages	2.33%	1
Encourages	11.63%	5
Neither	67.44%	29
Discourages	0.00%	0
Strongly Discourages	0.00%	0
Did not answer	18.60%	8
TOTAL		43

Q15 How much fun is walking or biking to/from school for your child?

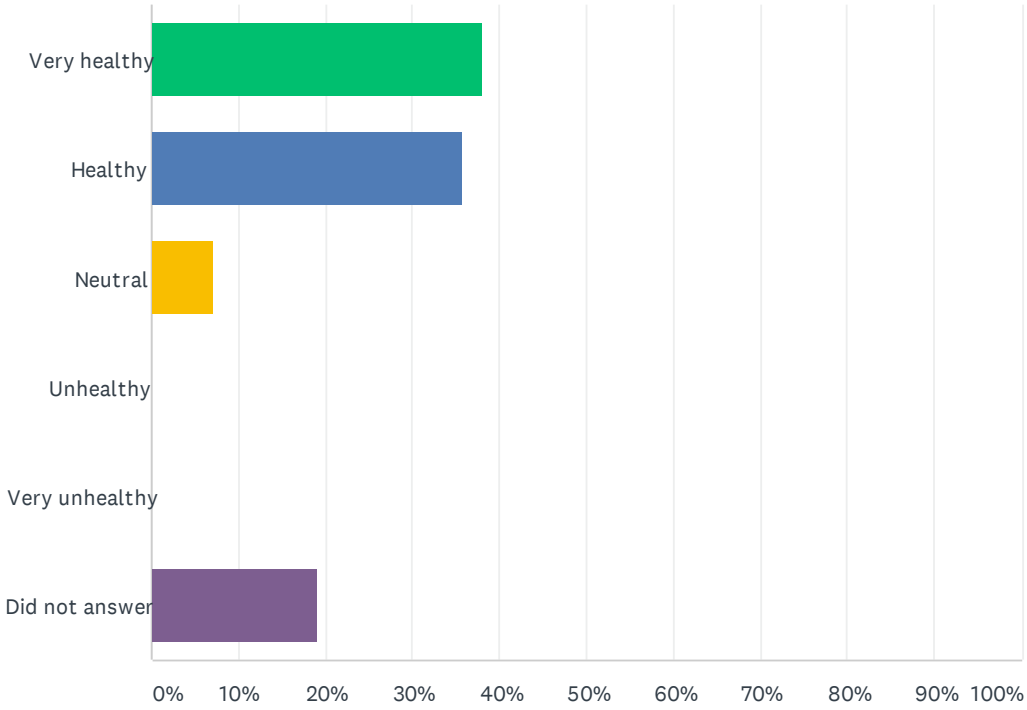
Answered: 43 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very fun	2.33%	1
Fun	18.60%	8
Neutral	30.23%	13
Boring	6.98%	3
Very boring	2.33%	1
Did not answer	39.53%	17
TOTAL		43

Q16 How healthy is walking or biking to/from school for your child?

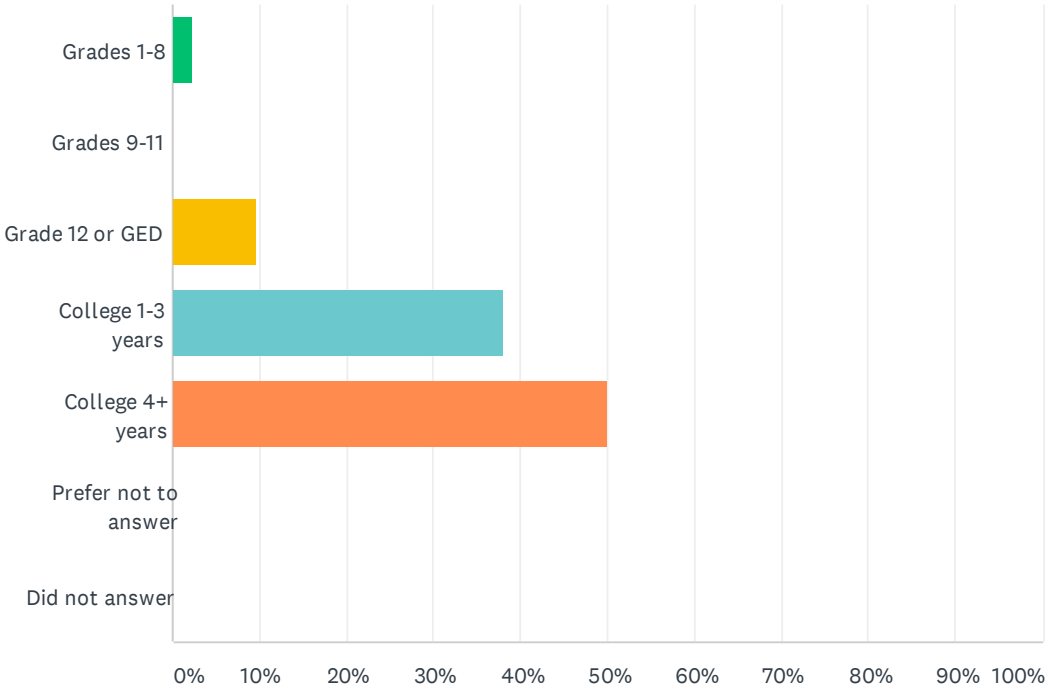
Answered: 42 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very healthy	38.10%	16
Healthy	35.71%	15
Neutral	7.14%	3
Unhealthy	0.00%	0
Very unhealthy	0.00%	0
Did not answer	19.05%	8
TOTAL		42

Q17 What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Grades 1-8	2.38%	1
Grades 9-11	0.00%	0
Grade 12 or GED	9.52%	4
College 1-3 years	38.10%	16
College 4+ years	50.00%	21
Prefer not to answer	0.00%	0
Did not answer	0.00%	0
TOTAL		42

Q18 Comments

Answered: 10 Skipped: 34

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Send our kids back to school	7/30/2020 3:00 PM
2	There is a fear allowing my child to walk to school alone- there is no safe spot to cross and no sidewalks for him and to be on	7/8/2020 11:00 PM
3	Child is to young to walk to school	6/21/2020 9:59 AM
4	We live 7 miles away and the climate is too cold most of the year.	6/18/2020 9:50 PM
5	We (and the majority of famies in the district) do not live in town so these survey questions really don't represent our district accurately when it comes to the importance of sidewalks to and from school. The city of Walker has many areas of incomplete sidewalks.	6/18/2020 6:21 PM
6	We live in a rural area. My child walking or biking to school would be more than 20 miles a day.	6/18/2020 1:41 PM
7	This survey really does not apply to schools in rural areas such as ours. Thanks for wasting more of our tax dollars.	6/18/2020 1:29 PM
8	Problem is she is 50% at home in Walker and 50% at home in Longville, so this survey is only based on the Walker residence	6/18/2020 12:04 PM
9	Our son will start 1 grade in fall...we dont live near school. I dont think I will encourage him to go walking or in bike to school.	6/18/2020 11:56 AM
10	We live 25 miles from the school so biking is not an option	6/18/2020 11:35 AM

WALKER, HACKENSACK, AKELEY
(WHA) SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

SAFE ROUTES to SCHOOL

A plan to make walking and biking to school a safe, fun activity

PROGRAMS EQUITY + EDUCATION + ENCOURAGEMENT + EVALUATION

EDUCATION

What: Provide education on pedestrian safety rules of the road etc.

Who: WHA School District and MN Bike Alliance.

How (Short Term): Invite MN Bike Alliance to host an annual bike rodeo on city or school property.

EQUITY

What: Create a translation toolkit of common SRTS terms schools can use in messaging sent home to family members with low-English proficiency.

Who: WHA School District

How (Short Term): Create a committee to develop toolkit for use.

What: Consider restricting traffic on Highland Road during peak drop off and pick up times.

Who: WHA School District in coordination with the City of Walker.

How (Mid. Term): Utilize city and school staff, parent volunteers and law enforcement to temporarily close this portion of the road.

EVALUATION

What: Continue to conduct In-Class Student Tally on an annual basis to track changes in number of students walking and biking to school.

Who: WHA School District.

How (Short Term): Continue to have the WHA SRTS planning team meet regularly.

ENFORCEMENT

What: Consider the increased need for school resources officers (SRO)

Who: City of Walker Police Department, and WHA School District.

How (Mid. Term): Begin discussion between the school and the city regarding this recommendation.

ENGINEERING

What: Install crosswalk systems at several locations identified in the plan.

Who: City of Walker and WHA School District

How (Mid. Term): Apply for Transportation Alternative Funds through MNDOT

ENCOURAGEMENT

INFRASTRUCTURE ROUTES + STREET PROJECTS

INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Install flashing crosswalk systems at several locations identified in the plan **(Mid. Term).**
2. Consider completing the important bicycle/pedestrian gap that currently exists between Michigan, and Highland. **(Long Term).**
3. Continue to pursue underpass at intersection of Shingobee Trail and Hwy 371. **(Mid. Term).**
4. Installation of traffic warning signs **(Long Term).**

GET INVOLVED

Learn more about Safe Routes to School at:
www.dot.state.mn.us/saferoutes/

CONTACT

Tad Erickson
Region Five Development Commission
terickson@regionfive.org
218.894.3233 Ext. #7

MINNESOTA SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL