



Rice Lake
Safe Routes to School Plan 2026






NO
PARKING
CORNER
TO HERE



Prepared for:

Rice Lake School District
30 Phipps Ave
Rice Lake, WI 54868
Phone: (715)-234-9007

City of Rice Lake
30 E. Eau Claire St.
Rice Lake, WI 54868
Phone: (715) 234-7088

Prepared by:

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
800 Wisconsin Street
Mail Box 9
Eau Claire, WI 54703
Phone: 715-836-2918
www.wcwrpc.org

An innovative leader in responsible planning and development for over 50 years
coordinate. partner. advocate. serve.

September 2026



Table of Contents

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TASK FORCE 8

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 10

Funding 12

The 6 E's 12

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION 14

Outcomes of Safe Routes to School 15

Background 15

Safe Routes To School Task Force. 16

Vision and Goals 16

Previous Safe Routes to School Work. 17

SECTION II. EXISTING CONDITIONS 18

Walk and Bike Audits 19

Classroom Tally Sheets. 19

Parent Surveys 19

Attendance Area and Walk Zones 20

Table of Contents

Crossing Guards 20
Crash Data 20
Walksheds 20
School District Boundary Map 22
Crash Density Map 23
High School, Middle School, Hilltop Sidewalk Gap Map 24
High School, Middle School, Hilltop Walkshed Map 25
Tainter Elementary Sidewalk Gap Map. 26
Tainter Elementary Walkshed Map 27
Haugen Elementary Sidewalk Gap Map 28
Haugen Elementary Walkshed Map 29

SECTION IV. SCHOOL ISSUES AND STRATEGIES 30

Issues and Opportunities 31
Rice Lake High School 32

Table of Contents

Rice Lake Middle School 36
Haugen Elementary School. 40
Hilltop Elementary School 42
Tainter Elementary School 46

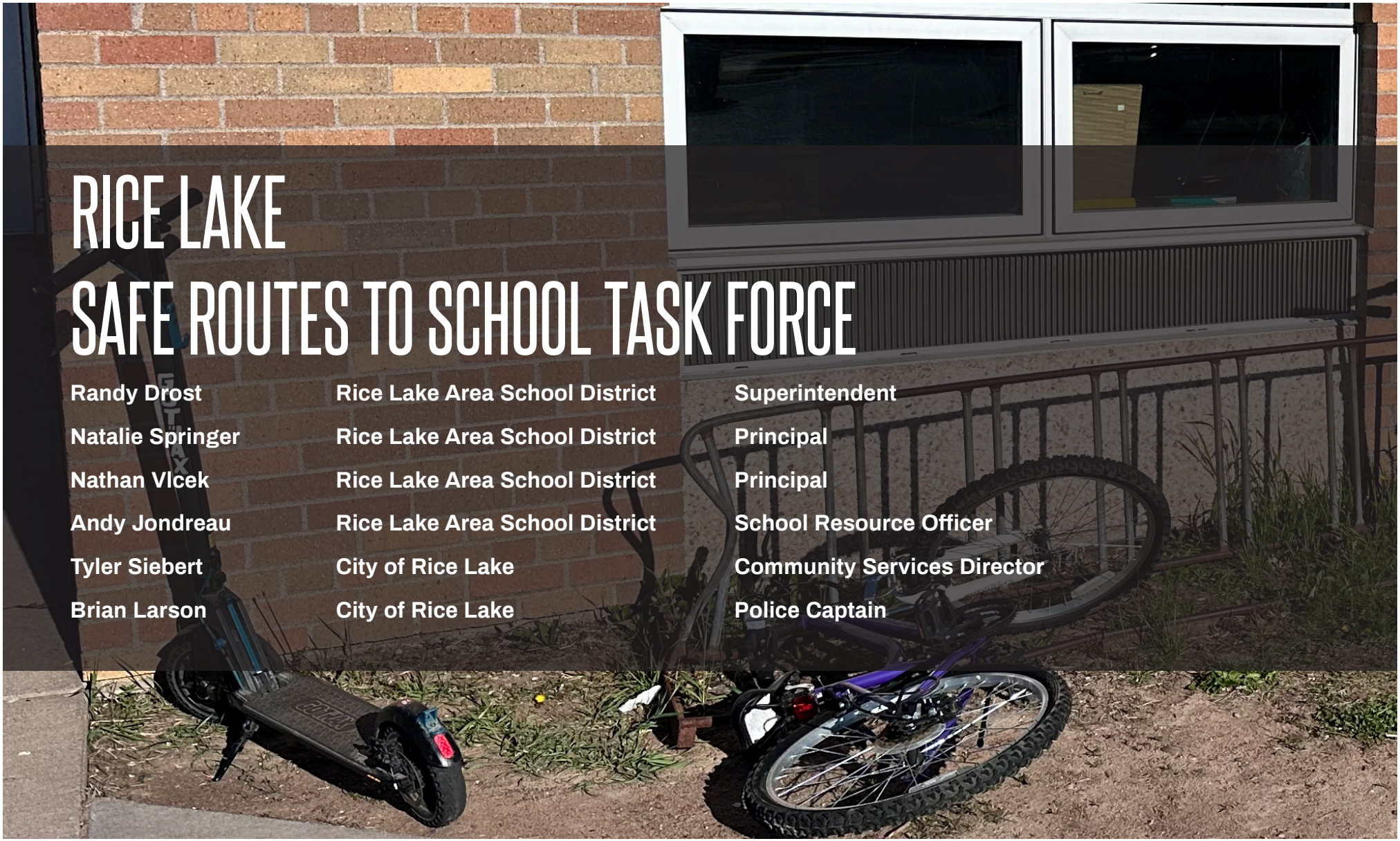
SECTION V. RECOMMENDED COMMUNITY STRATEGIES 50

Implementation 51
Education 52
Encouragement 52
Engagement 53
Engineering 54
Equity 55
Evaluation 55

APPENDIX A. 56

Parent Survey Comments A-56

Page was intentionally left blank.



RICE LAKE
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TASK FORCE

Randy Drost	Rice Lake Area School District	Superintendent
Natalie Springer	Rice Lake Area School District	Principal
Nathan Vlcek	Rice Lake Area School District	Principal
Andy Jondreau	Rice Lake Area School District	School Resource Officer
Tyler Siebert	City of Rice Lake	Community Services Director
Brian Larson	City of Rice Lake	Police Captain


The Rice Lake Safe Routes to School is a program to create a safer environment for students walking and biking to and from school.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Executive Summary

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an international movement with its roots in promoting walking and biking to school. During the 1970s in Denmark, there were an alarming number of child injuries and fatalities due to crashes on roadways This is where SRTS began. SRTS reached the United States in 1997 when The Bronx, New York received local funds to implement a SRTS program. By the year 2000, SRTS programs were nationwide after convincing other communities to adopt SRTS programs. By 2005, Congress saw the importance of these programs and consequently signed a federally funded SRTS program into law.

Safe and enjoyable environments for children walking and biking to and from school should be implemented in communities of all sizes. An active SRTS program will help Rice Lake create safer, easier, and more enjoyable routes for kids. There are many benefits to the entire community when walking and biking conditions are improved.

As part of the planning process, collecting and analyzing existing conditions and data are extremely important. The task force members discussed existing conditions, both for the district and individual schools, and summarized a list of key district-wide findings.

WHY SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL?



Roads near schools are congested, decreasing safety and air quality for children.



Kids are not getting enough physical activity

KIDS WHO WALK OR BIKE TO SCHOOL:

- Arrive alert and able to focus on school.
- Feel better about their physical health
- Are more likely to have good mental health
- Get most of their recommended daily physical activity just from traveling to and from school.
- Have better school performance and test scores.

THE REINFORCING CYCLE OF WALKING AND BIKING TO SCHOOL

More students walking and biking to school

Greater focus on policies, infrastructure, and programs to support walking and biking

Safer and easier routes to and from school

Better air quality and more pleasant bike and pedestrian environments

Funding

Funding sources vary widely in their eligibility and magnitude. Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding is the primary source for those projects that specifically address SRTS efforts, both infrastructure and non-infrastructure.

In 2023, the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission applied for TAP funding through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. In a consortium of various schools, WCWRPC was able to receive planning money to develop new SRTS Plans for school districts in the region. In Clark County, Colby and Neillsville were a part of the application.

Other grants may be appropriate for funding smaller projects. Other funding sources are listed and described at wcwsrts.com

The 6 E's

In order to accomplish the goals of the SRTS program. The school district and the City will use the 6 E's Framework: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Engagement, Equity, and Evaluation. This comprehensive approach allows communities to maximize the number of students walking and biking to school.

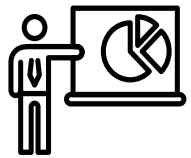
Engineering

Creating physical improvements to streets and neighborhoods that make walking and biking to school safer, more comfortable and more convenient.



Education

Providing students and the community with the skills to walk and bike safety, education them about the benefits of walking and biking, and teaching them about the broad range of transportation choices.



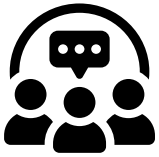
Encouragement

Generating enthusiasm and increased walking and biking for students through events and activities.



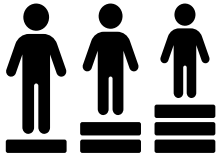
Engagement

All SRTS initiatives should begin with listening to students, families, teachers, and school leader and working with existing community organizations, and build intentional engagement opportunities into the program structure.



Equity

Ensuring that SRTS initiatives are benefiting all demographic groups, with particular attention to ensuring safe and fair outcomes for low-income students, students of color, all genders and students with disabilities.



Evaluation

Assessing which approaches are more or less successful, ensuring that programs and initiatives are supporting equitable outcomes and identifying unintended consequences or opportunities to improve the effectiveness of each approach.





Page was intentionally left blank.



SECTION I: INTRODUCTION



Introduction

Safe and enjoyable environments for students who walk and bike to/from school should not be viewed as an extreme concept. Rather, it should be a basic component of how we design a community. In other parts of society we protect people from vehicles with pedestrian zones, higher speeding fines, traffic calming, and reduced speed limits. We should enhance the same types of precautions adjacent to our schools and along corridors to our schools.

Outcomes of Safe Routes to School

Safer Routes

One of the reasons parents do not allow their children to walk and bike to school because the routes are too dangerous. Problems such as an incomplete sidewalk network, high traffic speeds, and congested streets in the vicinity of schools discourage walking and biking.

Healthier Children

In the past few decades, the number of active children in the United States has decreased and the number of overweight children has almost doubled. In addition kids are spending more and more time indoors and not being active. Numerous health organizations and associations recommend that children participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. One way to achieve a large portion of this goal is to walk/bike to and from school. Walking just one mile to/from school covers 2/3 of this goal.

Background

Rice Lake Area School District has a total enrollment of 2,076 K-12 students. Students who attend RLASD primarily live in the City of Rice Lake, Village of Haugen, and large rural areas in the towns surrounding both municipalities. There are three elementary schools (K-4), one middle school (5-8) and one high school (9-12) in the district. In the 2025-2026 school year, RLASD had 775 elementary school students, 639 middle school students and 662 high school students. Rice Lake's 2020 population was 9,040 with an estimated 2025 population at 8,882. Some school attendance areas have experienced more growth than others, and it is anticipated that in the near future there will be additional development near the school district boundary, specifically on the south side near Tainter Elementary.

Economic Status of students is closely monitored in Wisconsin by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Students are considered economically disadvantaged if the student is a member of a household that meets the income eligibility guidelines for free or reduced-price meals (less than or equal to 185% of Federal Poverty Guidelines) under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Economically disadvantaged students are more likely to rely on walking and biking to and from school. During the 2025-26 school year, 40.8% of students at Rice Lake were considered economically disadvantaged.

Cleaner Environment

Emissions from vehicles pollute the air our children breathe and can cause serious health problems such as asthma and bronchitis. Motor vehicle use is generally recognized as the source of more air pollutions than any other human activity. To decrease air pollution, communities should look to reduce the number of cars on the roads near schools. Fewer cars emitting pollutants will improve air quality, thus decreasing health problems in children.

Other Outcomes:

- Enhanced community accessibility
- Increased community involvement
- Improved partnerships among schools, local municipalities, parents, and other community groups.

Safe Routes to School Task Force

A SRTS Task Force is a group of people that represent different facets of the SRTS program in the community and work together to develop and implement a plan to increase the volume of students walking and biking to school.

The Task Force along with staff from WCWRPC first met in April 2026. There were a variety of city wide and school specific issues and opportunities that were brought up and discussed during the meetings. In addition, the Task Force reviewed all the survey data and parent comments from the surveys. They also reviewed the observations from the walk and bike audits.

Vision and Goals

A vision and two goals were developed to bring the SRTS program's direction into focus and to make it fit the specific needs and desires of the Rice Lake Area School District. It is important to revisit the vision and goals throughout the planning and implementation stages of the program to ensure that projects are heading in the intended direction and in a coordinated manner. There may be times when the vision and goals need to be updated to meet changing needs in the local environment.

Vision

The Rice Lake Area School District and the City of Rice Lake will work and collaborate with other community stakeholders to create safe and encouraging environment for walking and biking to and from school by encouraging safe driving habits, and creating viable options to get to school.

Goals:

- Make walking and biking safe ways to get to school
- Encourage more children to walk or bike to school.



Previous Safe Routes to School Work

Original SRTS Plan - 2008

In 2008, the City and the School District of Rice Lake developed the first Safe Routes to School plan for the community. This plan developed strategies and recommendations for all schools in the district.

Traffic Calming on Wisconsin

A recommendation in the first Rice Lake SRTS Plan was to “Consider bumpouts at the intersection of Wisconsin and Augusta/Messenger.” Since the adoption of the last plan the city constructed bumpouts at this interesection and at Wisconsin and Carson. These help narrow the road, and shorted the distance that students need to cross the street.

RRFB on Knapp and Wilson

Another recommendation from the first plan was to make the Knapp and Wilson crossing more visual. While there is not an active school there anymore, the City did install an Rectangular Rapid Flashing Becon (RRFB) on Knapp.

Walk and Bike to School Day

A couple of the school host Walk and Bike to School days throughout the acedemic year. Many students participate in this fun event to get kids active! The District hopes to continue supporting these efforts in the future.

Key Findings

1. Nearly 50% of all students throughout the district are dropped-off and picked-up by parents as their mode of transportation. This is why there are many congestion related issues around Hilltop Elementary and the Middle School.

2. There are schools where no students walk or bike to school. Haugen and Tainter can explore hosting additional walking and biking related events to incorporate more active transportation at their school.

3. Gaps in the sidewalk network near the schools are evident. The City continues to make strides in constructing new sidewalks or multi-use paths. They should continue to see funding through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to supplement funding needs.

SECTION II: EXISTING CONDITIONS



Walk and Bike Audit

Walk and bike audits allow the Task Force to specifically assess the issues and existing conditions of the physical environment near the school. These are done during drop-off (AM) and pick-up (PM). The audits allow members to observe and track street infrastructure and conditions, documenting barriers, positive features, behaviors and perceptions of the environment. Walk and bike audits were performed at various predetermined locations adjacent at all schools during the month of May 2026.

Classroom Tally Sheets

Classroom tally sheets were used to figure out how students were traveling to and from school during a one-week period. The tally sheets were completed in May 2026 at all schools in the district. This data showed that five percent of students walked to/from school and one percent biked to/from school. As is common among all districts, more students left their school via walking in the afternoon than in the morning. The graphic on the right shows the travel mode for all students in the district. Individual school stats are shown on their respective spread.

Parent Surveys

Surveys are one of the best tools in gathering input from community members about various topics. The survey allows parents to voice their reasons for why they do or do not allow their child to walk or bike to school. The District distributed and promoted the survey via social media and parent emails. There were a total of 213 responses. The results of the survey can be found in at the end of this section. Results of the open ended questions can also be found in Appendix A.

Of all the options listed, the parent survey showed that most are concerned with traffic related issues. District wide, the four biggest concerns (besides distance and weather) for parents were:

- Amount of traffic (57%)
- Speed of Traffic (56%)

Additionally, parents were asked about the school's stance on walking and biking to school. 85% of respondents said they felt like the school *neither encouraged or discourages* walking and biking. The next category to receive the highest amount of votes was *encourage* (11.7%).

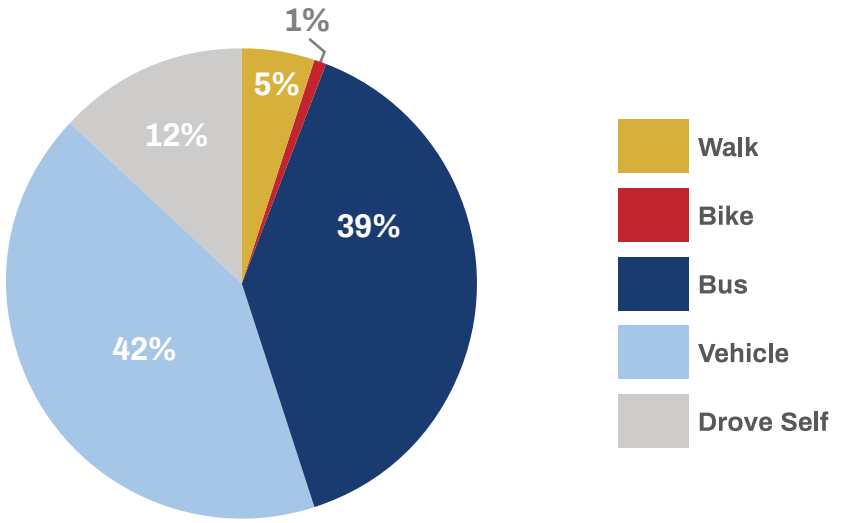


Chart showing district-wide student travel mode to/from school in percent (Classroom Tally).

Attendance Area & Walk Zone

The school district has areas that students are not eligible for bussing. This area should be prioritized when implementing SRTS strategies as those kids are the most vulnerable and exposed to dangerous situations.

Crossing Guards

There are currently five locations within the City of Rice Lake that have crossing guards. The Rice Lake Police Department staffs these positions with a total of seven employed crossing guards (two substitute guards.) Additionally, Tainter Elementary has a 4th grade safety patrol within their parking lot but no other school utilizes a safety patrol. These locations are shown in the Designated Safe Routes maps on individual school sections.



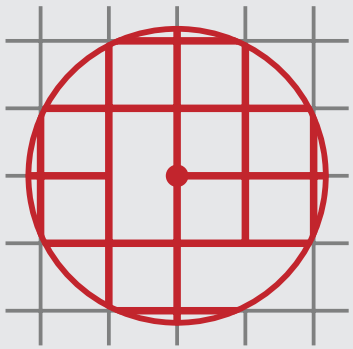
Crash Data

From January 1st, 2021 to December 31st, 2025 (5 years), there were a total of 732 crashes in the City of Rice Lake. Of those 732 crashes there were six crashes involving pedestrians and 11 involving bicyclists. The corresponding crash density map can be found on page 23.

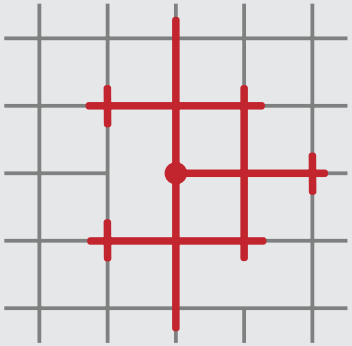
Walksheds

A walkshed is the network of streets within a defined walking distance of a specific location, such as a school. They are a more accurate way to identify actual walking routes and distances to destinations. Unlike approaches that measure straight-line distance to a destination, walksheds attempt to consider gaps in the network where streets don't connect and where there are physical barriers, cul-de-sacs, etc. Mapping walksheds on the street network helps identify individual street segments that pedestrians and cyclists are likely to take to a specific destination within a given walking distance or time.

Crow Flies Radius Network



Walkshed Network



Existing Conditions



ISSUES - "Which of the following issues affect your decision to not allow your child to walk or bike to/from school?" (from parent survey)

40-50% 50-60% 60%+

Schools	Distance	Convenience of Driving	Time	Speed of traffic	Amount of traffic	Lack of adults to walk With	Lack of sidewalks	Unsafe intersections	Lack of crossing guards	Violence or crime	Weather or climate
High School	63%	14%	19%	38%	49%	8%	30%	32%	6%	8%	19%
Middle School	61%	4%	16%	53%	54%	15%	31%	41%	14%	16%	22%
Hilltop Elementary	59%	6%	24%	65%	62%	26%	56%	53%	24%	15%	41%
Tainter Elementary	74%	9%	41%	68%	65%	21%	56%	71%	32%	15%	24%
District Wide*	64%	8%	25%	56%	57%	17%	43%	49%	19%	13%	26%

SOLUTIONS - "Would you let your child walk/bike to/from school if this problem was changed/improved?" (from parent survey)

50-60% 60-70% 70%+

Schools	Distance	Convenience of driving	Time	Speed of traffic	Amount of traffic	Adults to walk with	Sidewalks or pathways	Safety of intersections	Crossing guards	Violence or crime	Weather or climate
High School	71%	62%	63%	70%	70%	56%	70%	76%	62%	56%	59%
Middle School	69%	47%	57%	65%	68%	55%	59%	69%	65%	57%	57%
Hilltop Elementary	56%	38%	50%	50%	65%	29%	68%	68%	53%	47%	62%
Tainter Elementary	53%	35%	35%	38%	44%	38%	59%	56%	44%	29%	38%
District Wide*	62%	46%	51%	56%	62%	44%	64%	67%	56%	47%	54%

*District wide excluding Haugen Elementary. Haugen data on individual school page.

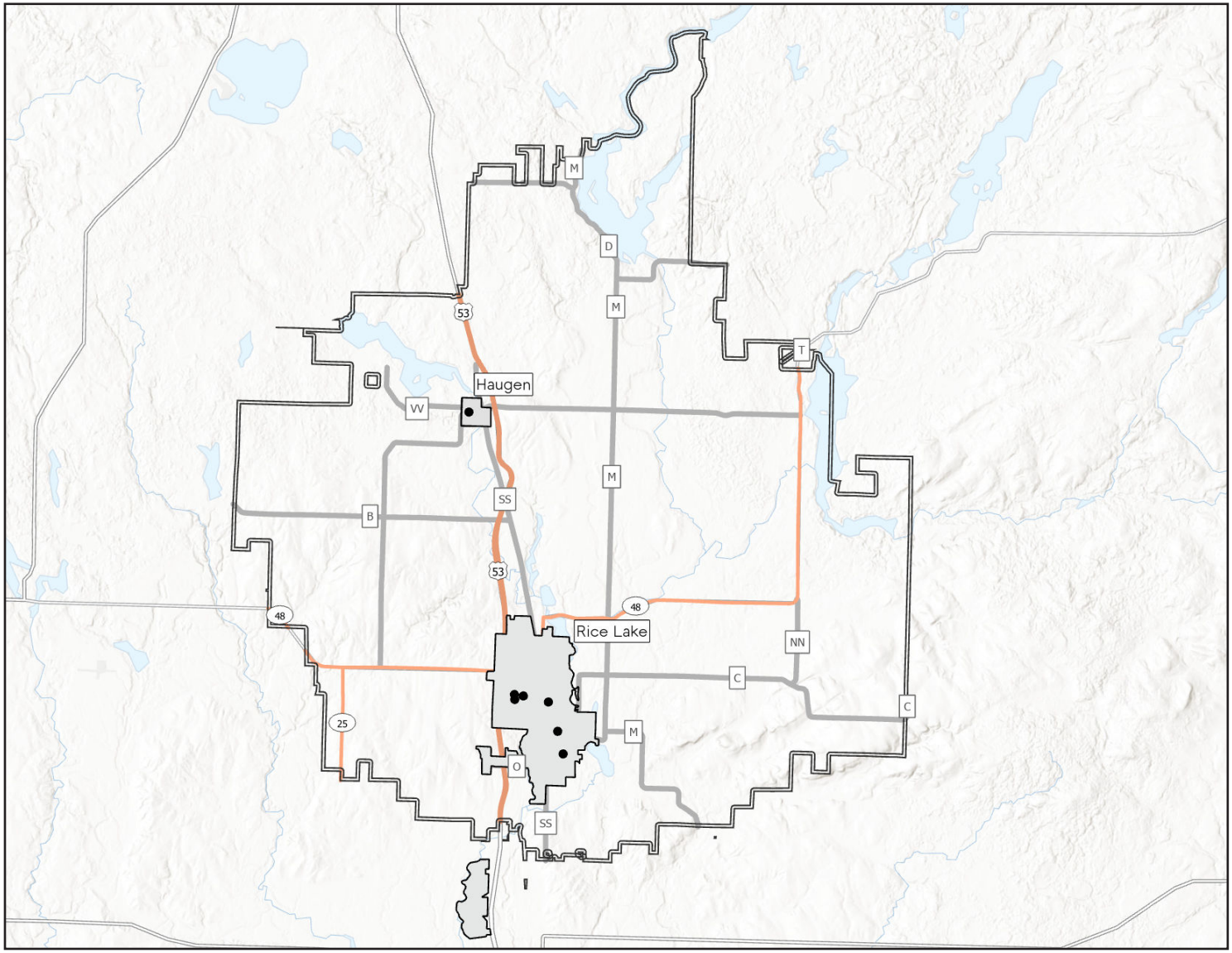
CONTEXT MAP

The map on the right shows the context in which the City of Rice Lake and Village of Haugen fall within the school district boundary and school locations.

Legend

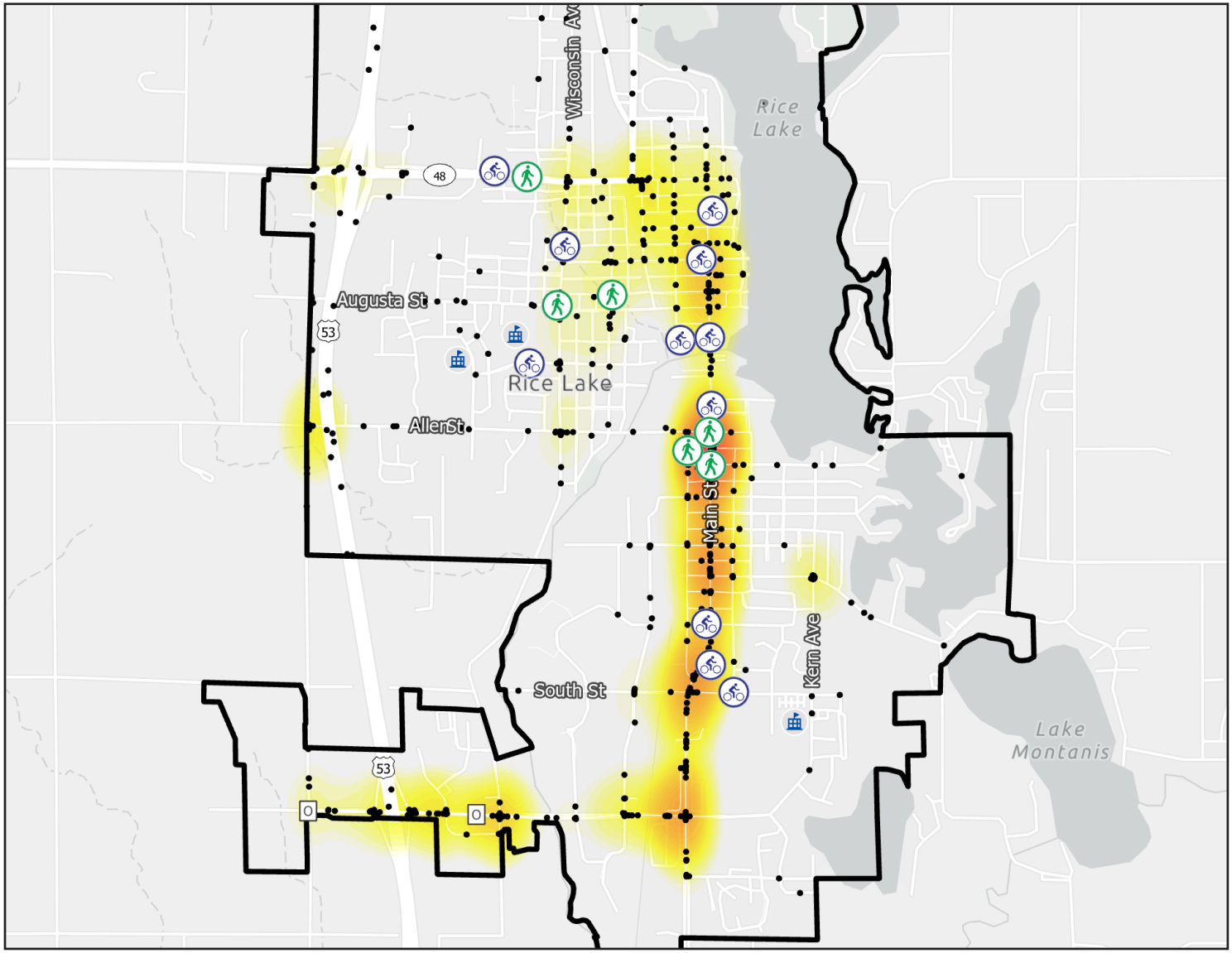
- School
- US Highway
- State Highway
- County Highway
- District Boundary
- Town Boundary
- City Boundary

June 2026



Maps prepared by: WCWRPC

CRASH DENSITY MAP



The map on the left shows the areas with the most crashes from 2021-2025. Additionally, it shows all bicycle and pedestrian crashes from the last 5 years.

Legend

- School
- Crash Location (732)
- Pedestrian Crash (6)
- Bicycle Crash (11)
- City Boundary

Crash Density
Low — High

June 2026

Maps prepared by: WCWRPC

SIDEWALK GAP MAP

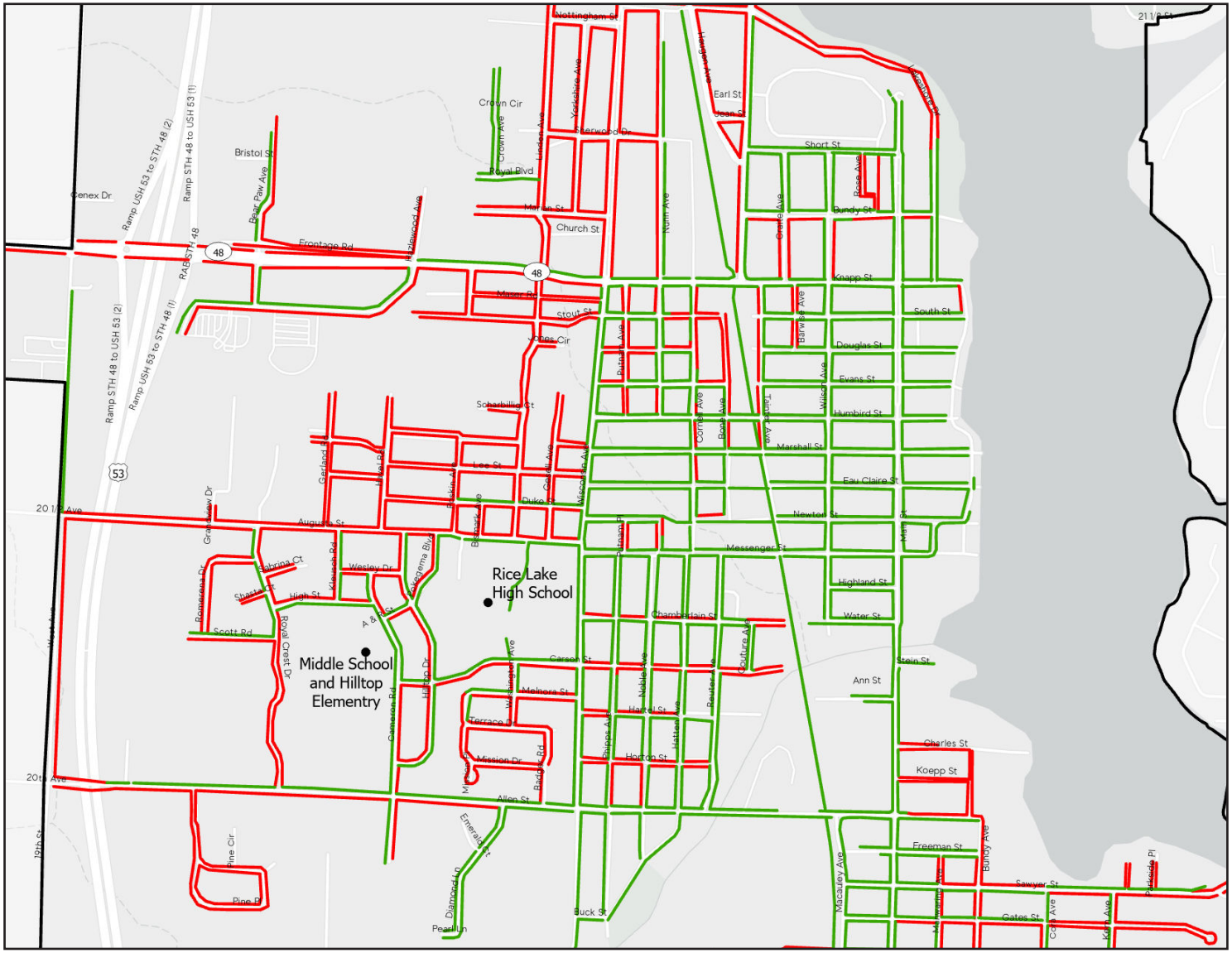
The map on the right displays gaps in the sidewalk network near the high and middle school and Hilltop Elementary.

Legend

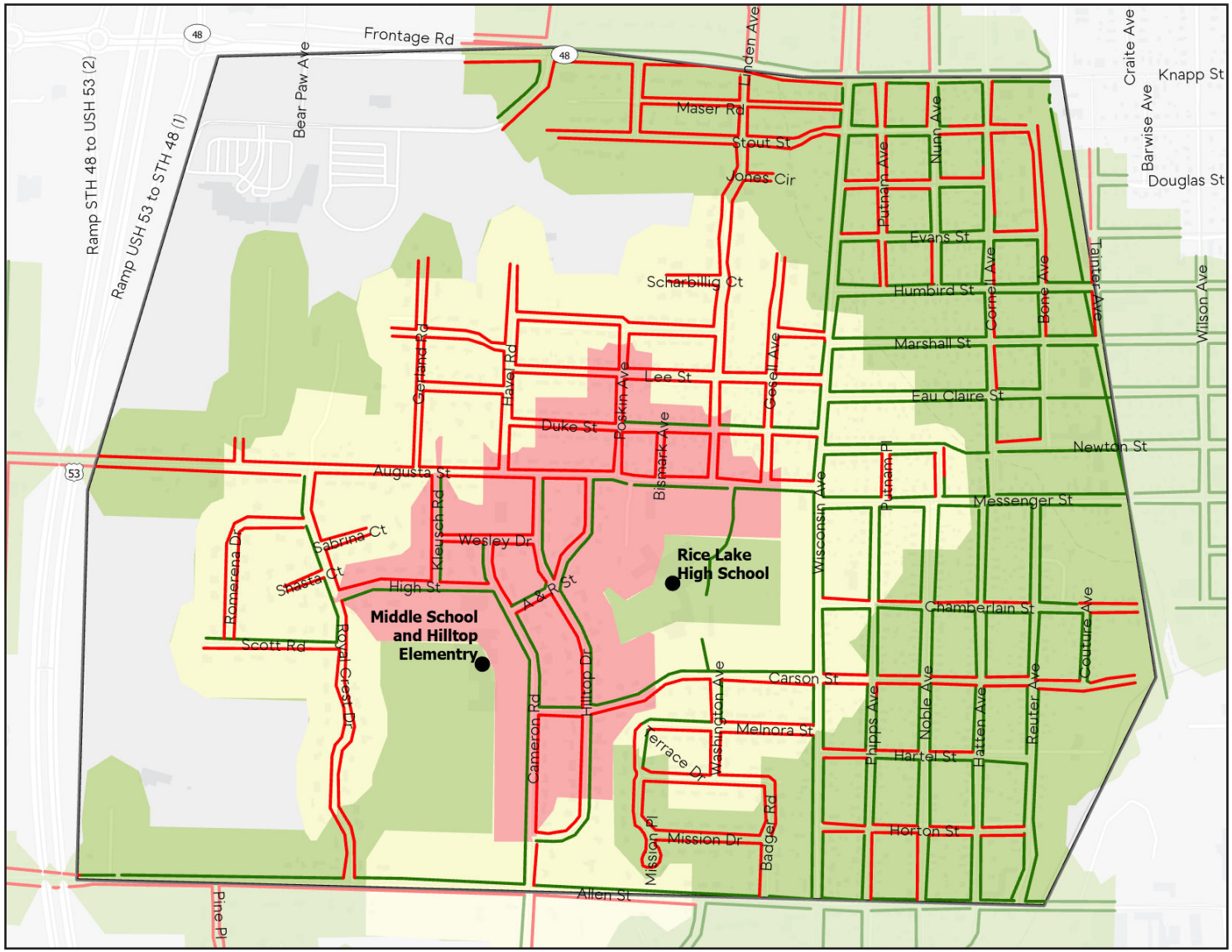
- School
- No Sidewalk
- Current Sidewalk
- City Boundary

June 2026

Maps prepared by: WCWRPC



High School, Middle School, Hilltop Elementary WALKSHED MAP



The map on the left shows the 1 mile, 1/2 mile and 1/4 mile walkshed from the school. In addition, it also shows the areas closest to school without sidewalks.

Legend

- School
- No Sidewalk
- Current Sidewalk
- 1/4 mi Walkshed
- 1/2 mi Walkshed
- 1 mi Walkshed
- Walk Zone

June 2026

Maps prepared by: WCWRPC

Tainter Elementary School

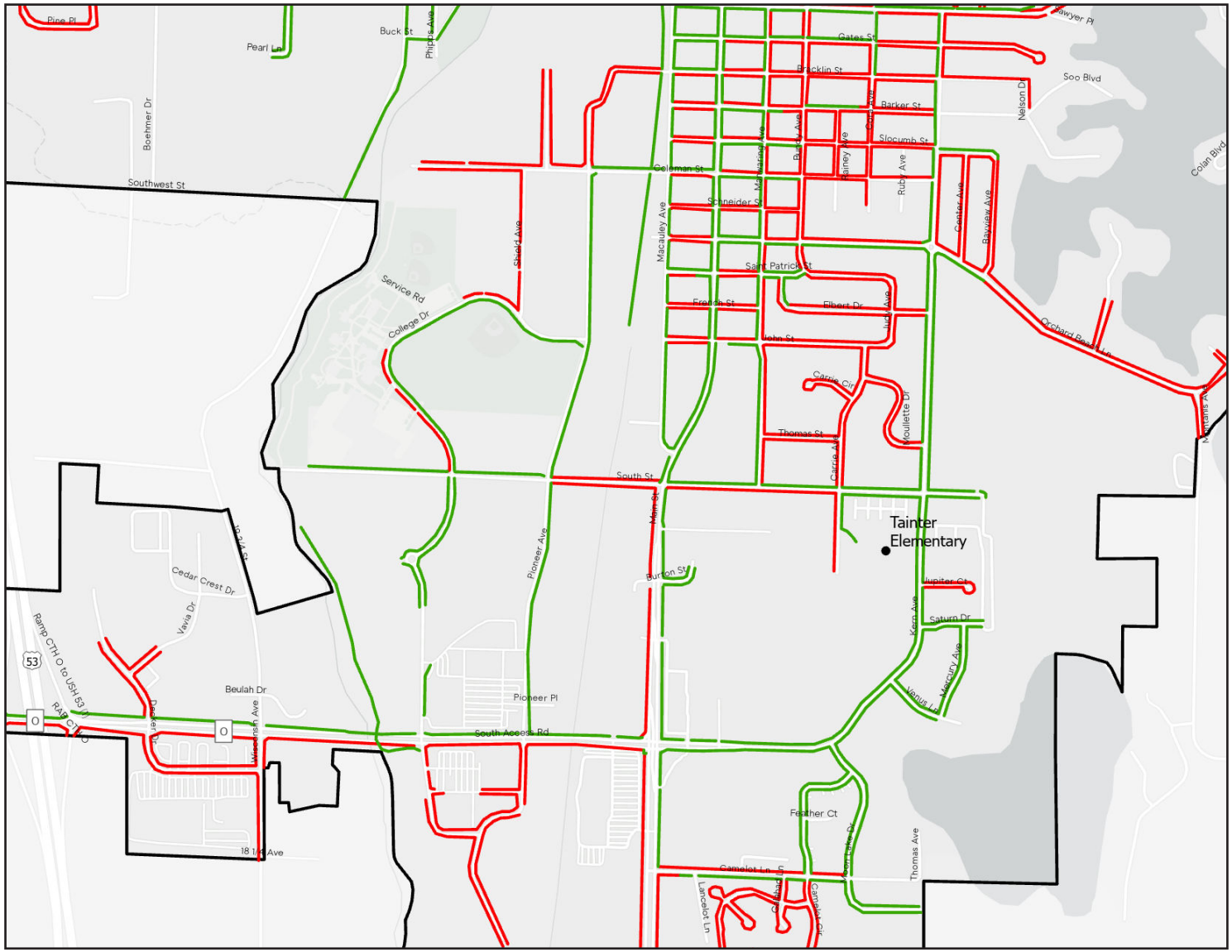
SIDEWALK GAP MAP

The map on the right displays gaps in the sidewalk network surrounding Tainter Elementary School.

Legend

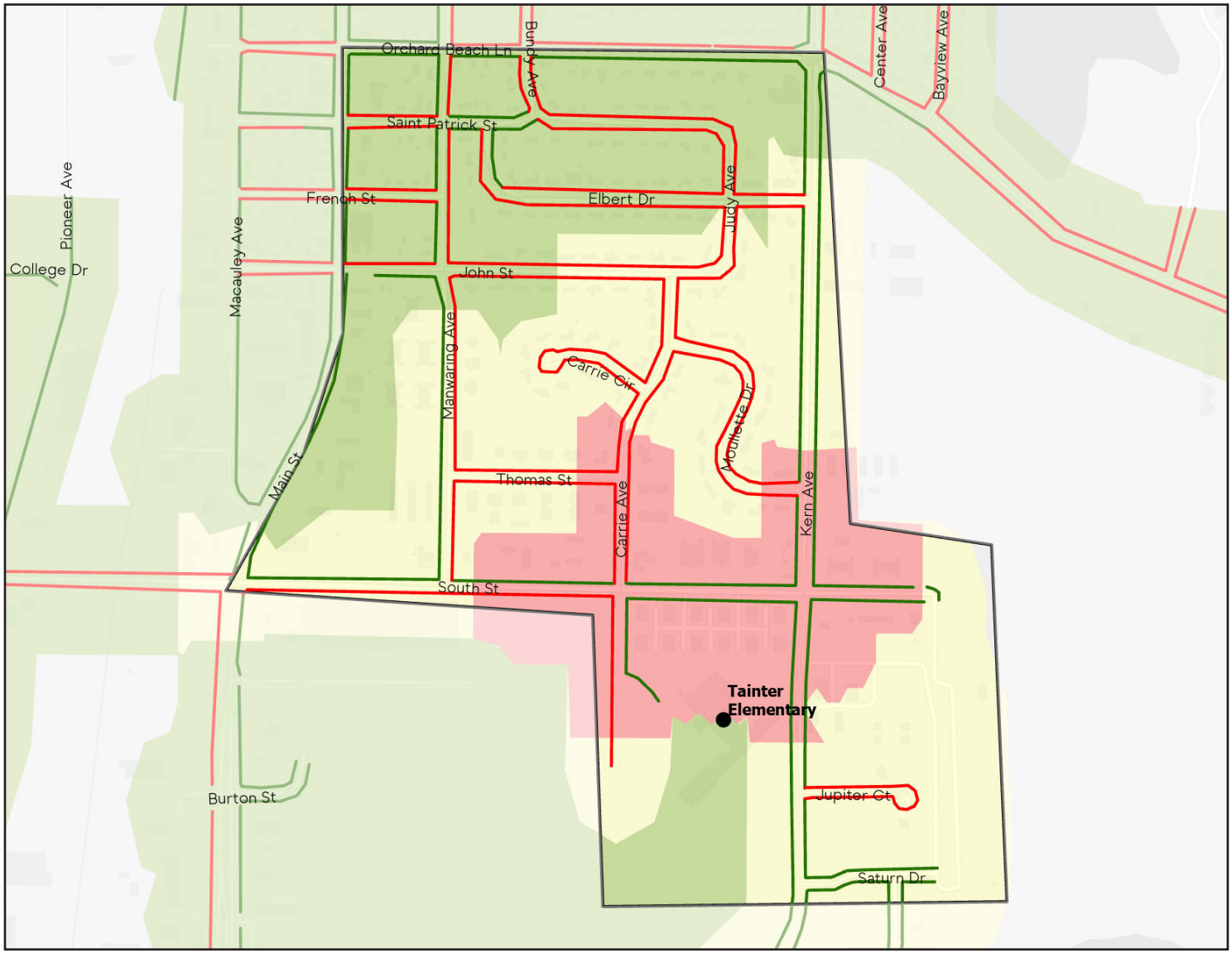
- School
- No Sidewalk
- Current Sidewalk
- City Boundary

June 2026



Maps prepared by: WCWRPC

Tainter Elementary WALKSHED MAP



The map on the left shows the 1 mile, 1/2 mile and 1/4 mile walkshed from the school. In addition, it also shows the areas closest to school without sidewalks.

Legend

- School
- No Sidewalk
- Current Sidewalk
- 1/4 mi Walkshed
- 1/2 mi Walkshed
- 1 mi Walkshed
- Walk Zone

June 2026

Maps prepared by: WCWRPC

Haugen Elementary School SIDEWALK GAP MAP

The map on the right displays gaps in the sidewalk network for the Village of Haugen.

Legend

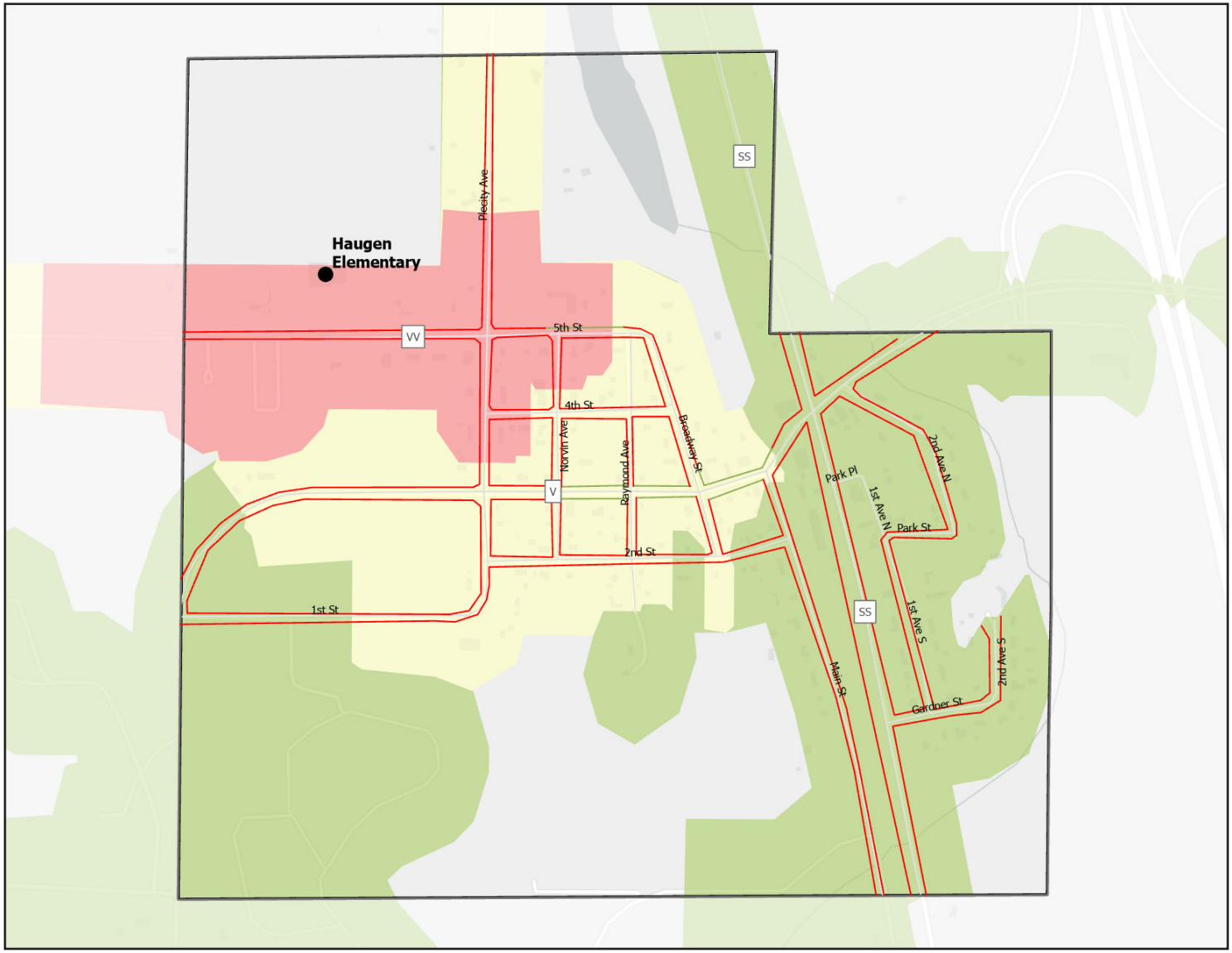
- School
- No Sidewalk
- Current Sidewalk
- Village Boundary

June 2026



Maps prepared by: WCWRPC

Haugen Elementary WALKSHED MAP



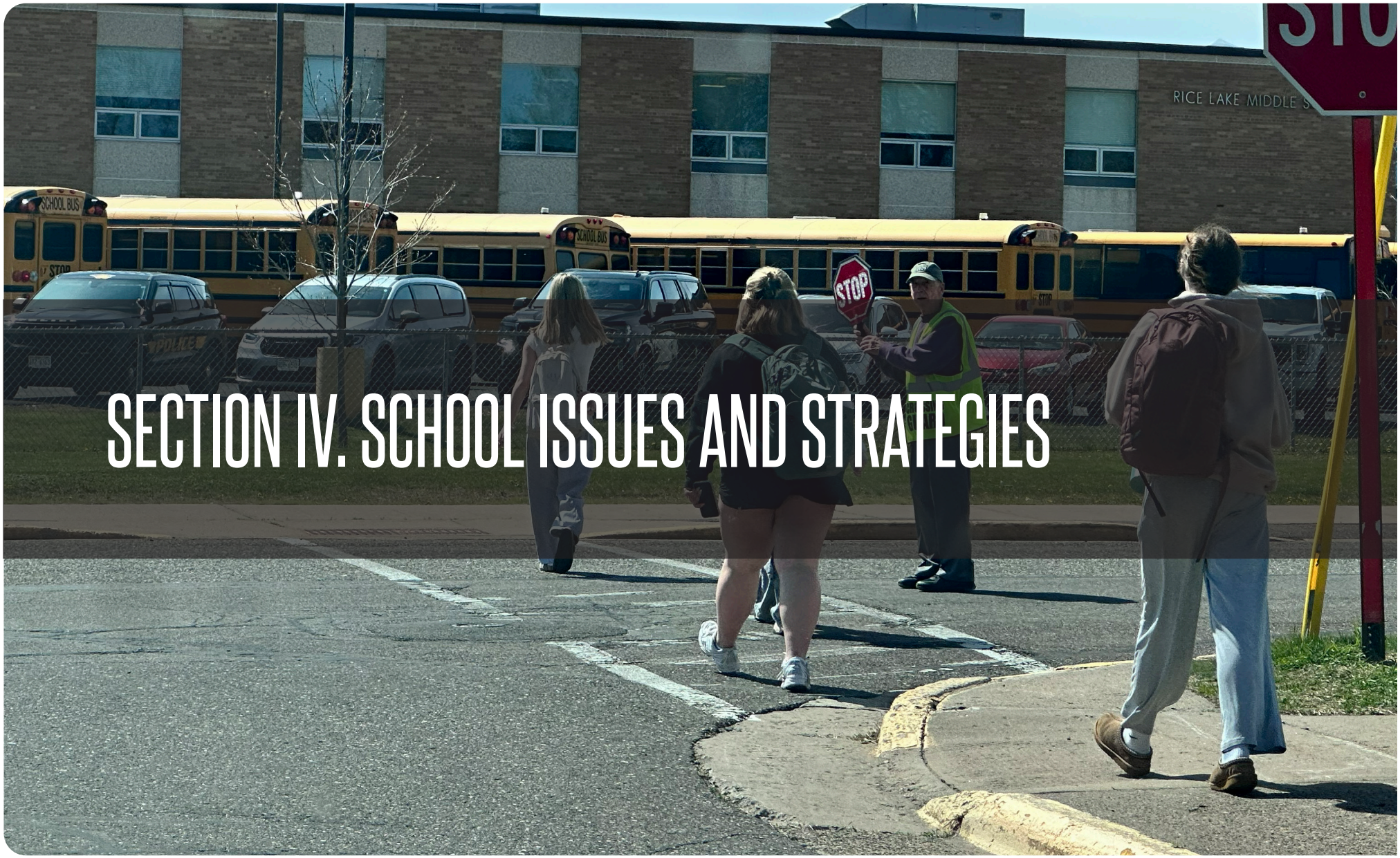
The map on the left shows the 1 mile, 1/2 mile and 1/4 mile walkshed from the school. In addition, it also shows the areas closest to school without sidewalks.

Legend

- School
- No Sidewalk
- Current Sidewalk
- 1/2 mi Walkshed
- 1/2 mi Walkshed
- 1/4 mi Walkshed
- Village Boundary

June 2026

Maps prepared by: WCWRPC



SECTION IV. SCHOOL ISSUES AND STRATEGIES



Issues and Strategies

After assessing the existing conditions collected from the walk and bike audits, parents survey, and tally sheets, the Task Force was then presented with a list of various issues and strategies. These issues range from physical environment, like lack of sidewalks and street lighting, to behavioral issues, like students not utilizing sidewalks when provided.

With each issue there is a provided recommendation to make walking and biking at that individual school safer for students. Each school has their own four-page spread with individual school issues and strategies. Due to the proximity of some schools, like the middle school and Hilltop Elementary, some of these strategies overlap.

Additionally, each four-page spread is accompanied with a Designated Safe Routes to School map. This map was determined by the Task Force as the safest ways to get to and from school. It should be noted, that along some of these corridors there still may need to be improvements. The City of Rice Lake should prioritize these areas as most students should travel here. These corridors should also be prioritized for municipal maintenance, such as snow removal and refreshing crosswalks.

The Designated Safe Routes map also shows future SRTS corridors pending improvements and network expansion.

PROJECT/PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST:

- ☑ **Identify a Project**, which will be implemented to produce an identifiable and usable facility or activity
- ☑ If the project includes non-infrastructure improvements:
  - **Work with the Task Force** to identify costs from similar efforts elsewhere or develop estimates for anticipated costs of programs and events
- ☑ If the project includes infrastructure improvements:
  - **Work with an Engineer** to define specific limits of the project and begin preliminary cost estimates
  - **Work with County or local municipality** to identify mutual opportunities

RICE LAKE HIGH SCHOOL

Positives

1. Since the previous plan in 2008, the City has made a lot of improvements to make Wisconsin safer for walking and biking. There are now curb extensions on Wisconsin at Messenger and Augusta and at Wisconsin and Carson.
2. There are two crossing guards - one at Wisconsin and Carson and the other at Wisconsin and Messenger.
3. There are 2 removable pedestrian crossing signs in the middle of Wisconsin, between Messenger and Carson.
4. Lighting along school property on all streets. Additionally, all intersections have lighting.
5. Drivers appeared to be attentive and slowing down in the school zone.
6. A lot of students walk between the schools during drop off and pick-up times. Middle school students walk to the high school for after-school activities, such as sports practice and some high school students walk up for the buses. They walk down A & R to Pokegema to Augusta or along Carson. Additionally, high school students walk up to the middle school via Carson to get on the buses.
7. There are two speed monitoring signs connected to the 15 mph school zone sign on Wisconsin south of Carson and north of Augusta.

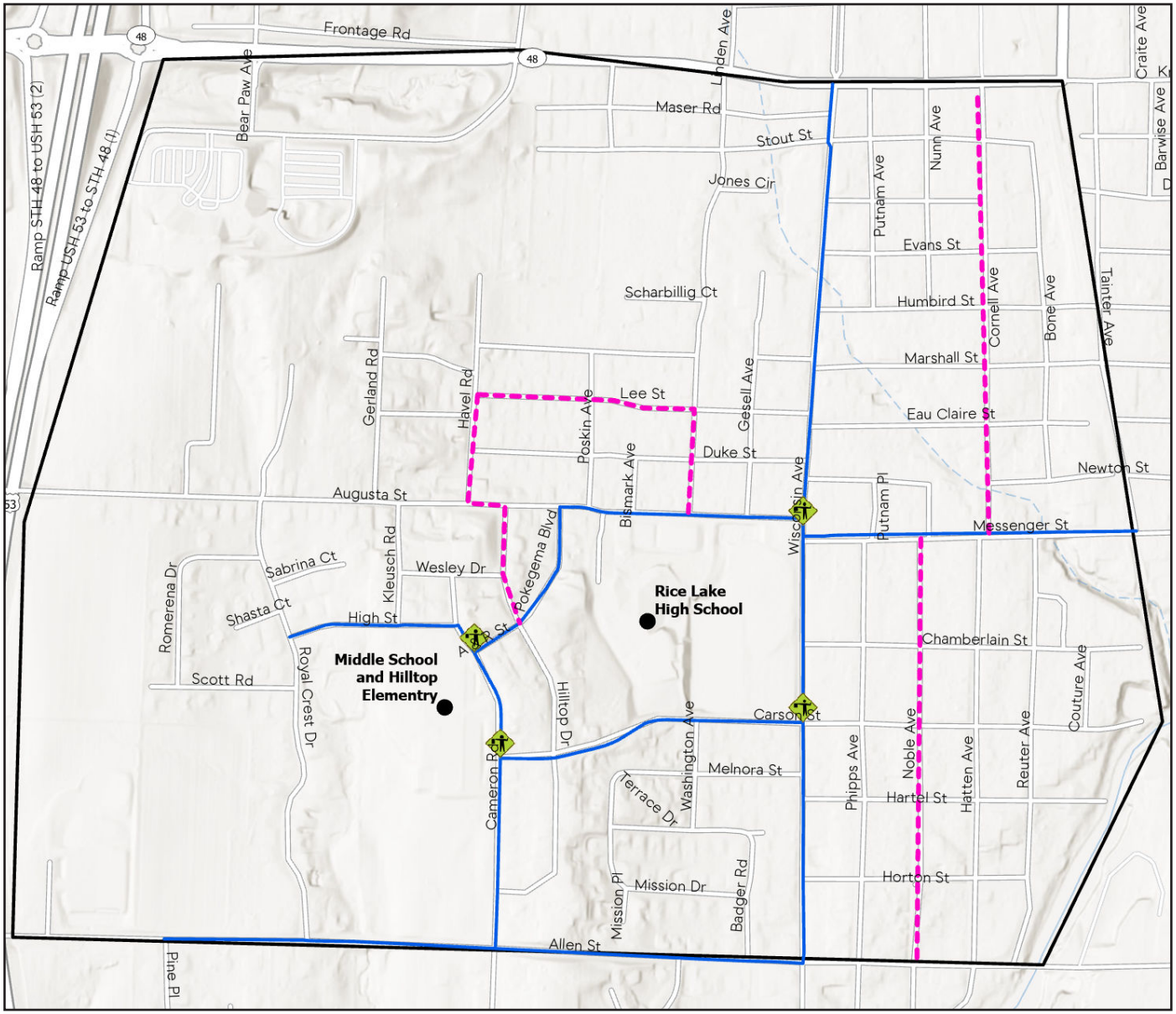
Issues

1. Neighborhood north of the school is in major need of sidewalks.
2. At Carson and Washington, there is a crosswalk. However, it is in the wrong style at an uncontrolled intersection, and there are no signs.
3. The bike rack available for students is tucked near the student parking lot, and can only hold about 5 bikes.
4. At all intersections adjacent to the school, crosswalks were faded and in the standard style.
5. There are school zone signs on all streets adjacent to the school, but they are faded.
6. The speed monitoring signs on Wisconsin do not appear to have an influence on driver behavior.
7. There are no marked crosswalks at any intersection along Augusta.

Recommended Strategies

1. Construct sidewalk along Lee, Havel and Linden to complete the SRTS Route network.
2. Create safer crossing at Carson and Washington by painting a zebra-style crosswalk, installing crossing signs. Research the possibility of installing bumpouts.
3. Locate bike rack at south side entrance.
4. Relocate bike rack near student lot to an area that is more visible from the school to deter theft. Consider installing shelter to encourage year round biking.
5. Ensure crosswalks at uncontrolled crossings are refreshed annually in the zebra-style *(example of page 57).*
6. Along Wisconsin, install flashing school zone signs. Program them to flash 30-45 minutes before and after school.
7. Increase enforcement for speeding vehicles during arrival and dismissal times.
8. Paint zebra-style crosswalk at Augusta and Linden, and Augusta and Havel.

DESIGNATED SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



The map to the left shows the designated safe routes for Rice Lake High School

Legend

- School
- Crossing Guard
- Safe Route
- Potential Safe Route
- Walk Zone

August 2026

Maps prepared by: WCWRPC



Middle school students walking to high school along Augusta (PM).



High school students walking to buses at middle school; Crossing at Carson and Cameron.



Unmarked crossing at Carson and Washington. Example of wide road adjacent to school.



Middle school students walking to high school (PM) alond Carson.

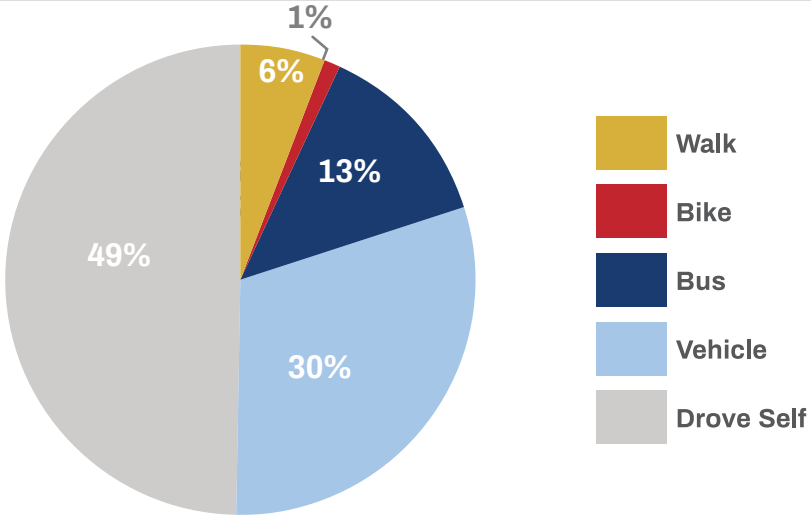


Chart showing student travel mode to/from school in percent (teacher survey tally).

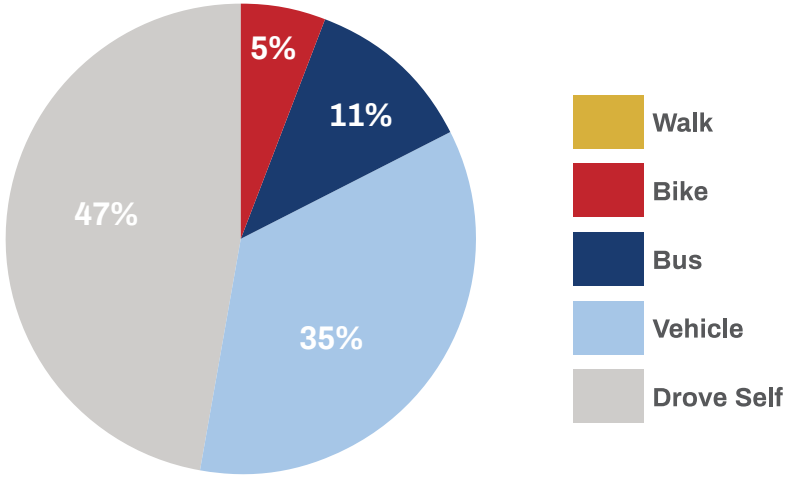
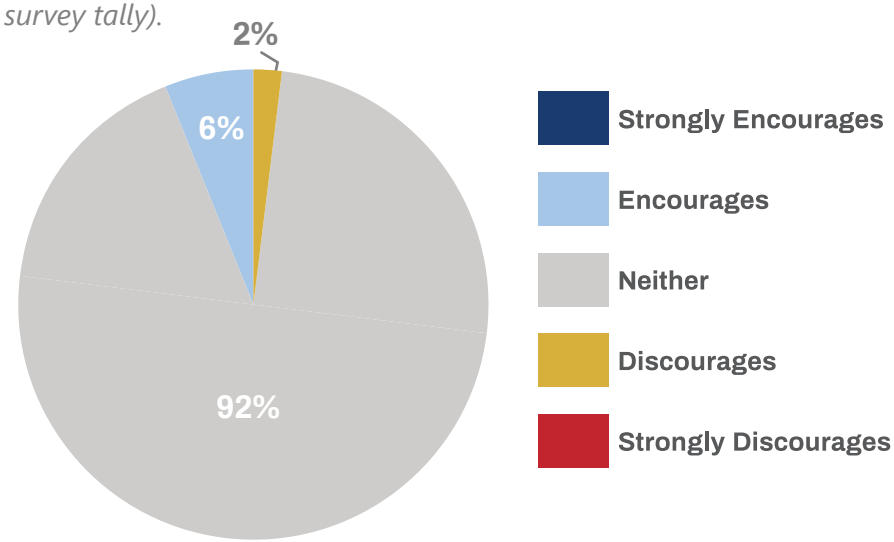


Chart showing travel mode for students who live within 1 mile of school. (Parent Survey)



Results of parent survey question: "How much does your child's school encourage or discourage waking/biking to/from school?

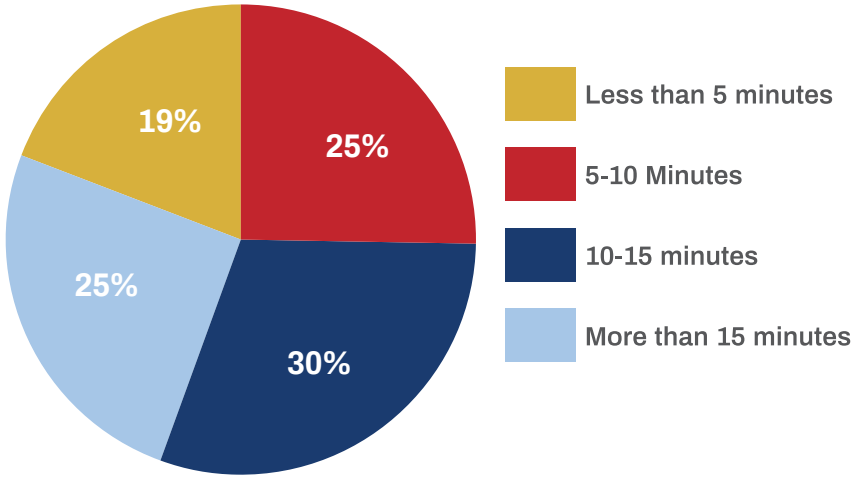


Chart showing average time spent traveling to school. (Parent Survey)

RICE LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Positives

1. There are two crossing guards adjacent to the school at Cameron and A&R, and at Cameron and Carson.
2. There are two removable pedestrian crossing signs in the middle of Wisconsin, between Messenger and Carson.
3. Lighting is present along school property on all streets and all intersections have lighting.
4. Drivers appeared to be attentive and slowing down in the school zone.
5. A lot of students walk between the schools during drop off and pick-up times. Middle school students walk to the high school for after-school activities, such as sports practice. They walk down A & R to Pokegema to Augusta. Additionally, high school students walk up to the middle school via Carson.
6. There is a bike rack in front of the school.
7. There is a removable pedestrian crossing sign at Hilltop and Cameron.

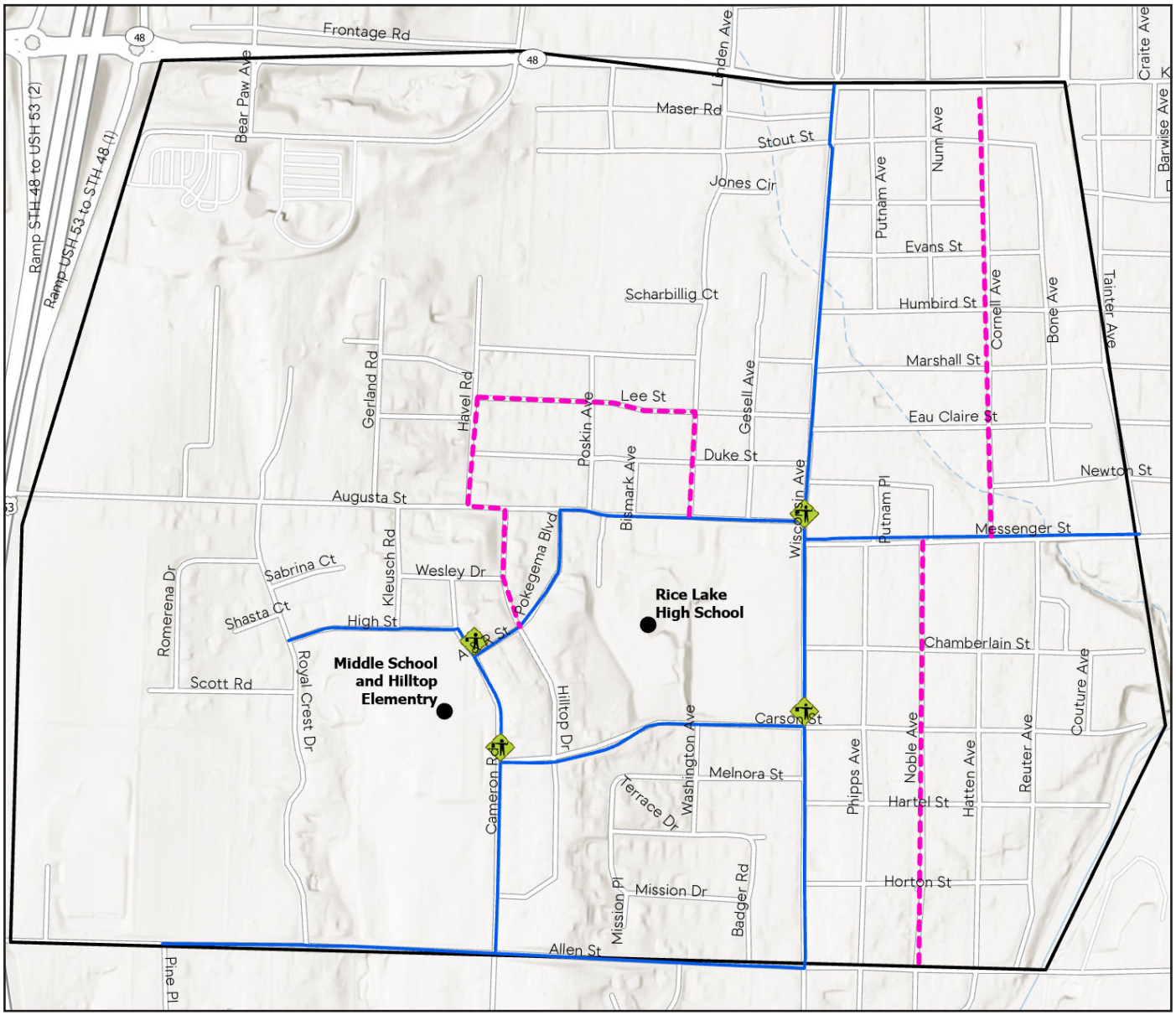
Issues

1. School Zone signs are faded.
2. Students were seen cutting through bus parking lot on the day of the audit.
3. Almost 50% of students travel via parent vehicle to and from school.
4. Bike rack is not able to be used from both sides.
5. On the day of the audit, the removable pedestrian crossing sign near Cameron and Carson was off-centered. Coupled with the congestion from parent drop-off and pick-up, buses had to veer into the left lane to get through lane.
6. Vehicles were observed turning south onto Cameron from Hilltop while crossing guard was actively crossing students.
7. Curb cuts on Cameron at Carson and A&R are not ADA compliant.

Recommended Strategies

1. Along Cameron, install flashing school zone signs. Program them to flash 30-45 minutes before and after school.
2. Educate students about the dangers of cutting through the bus lot. If necessary, increase faculty enforcement with positive reinforcement.
3. Rotate bike racks during warmer months 90 degrees, so rack can be used from both sides. This will double the amount of bike parking spaces.
4. Move removable pedestrian crossing sign closer to the crossing guard. Encourage them to check this sign during arrival and dismissal signs.
5. Construct ADA compliant curb cuts at Cameron/Carson and Cameron/A&R.
6. Research options for constructing sidewalk along Royal Crest.
7. Research options for creating an off-site parent drop-off/pick-up location such as a nearby church or park. This will help reduce immediate congestion.
8. Create programs that encourage more year round walking and biking to and from school. These programs include, mileage clubs, walk/bike to school days, bike rodeos, etc.

DESIGNATED SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



The map to the left shows the designated safe routes for Rice Lake Middle School

Legend

- School
- Crossing Guard
- Safe Route
- Potential Safe Route
- Walk Zone

August 2026

Maps prepared by: WCWRPC



On the day of the audit, these boys biked from neighborhood west of school via Royal Crest to Allen to Cameron.



Middle school student walking from high school (AM) crossing at Cameron and Carson.



Non-ADA compliant curb cut and faded crosswalks at Cameron and Carson.



Picture showing vehicle congestion along Cameron + off-centered pedestrian crossing sign.

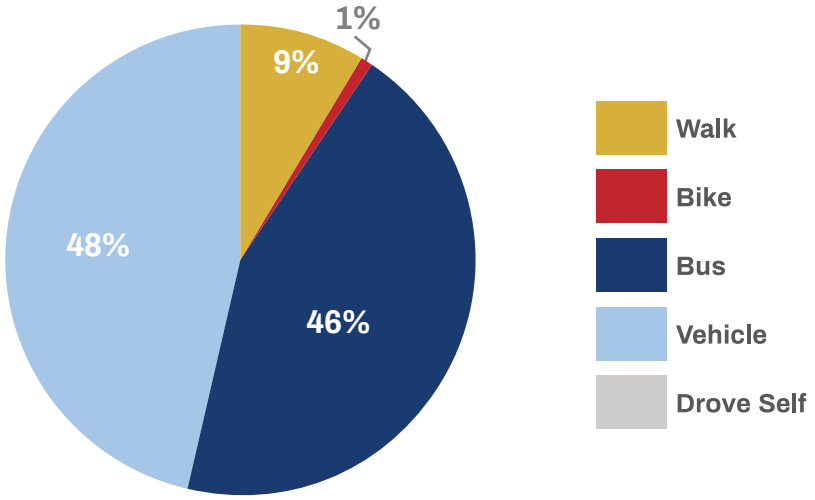


Chart showing student travel mode to/from school in percent (teacher survey tally).

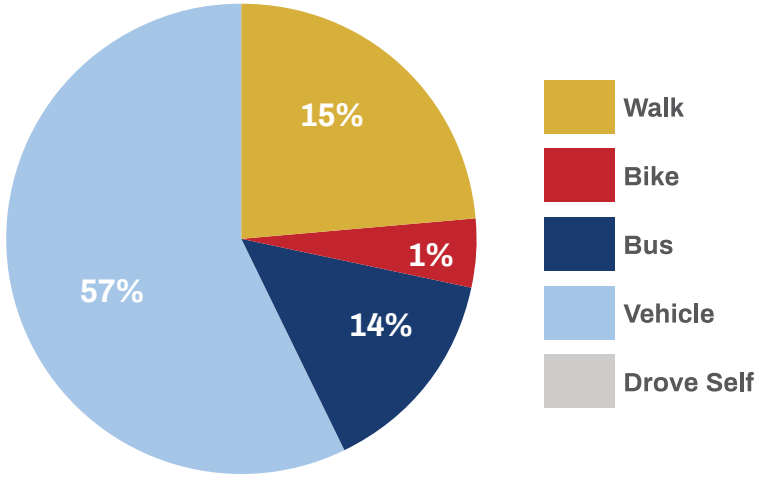
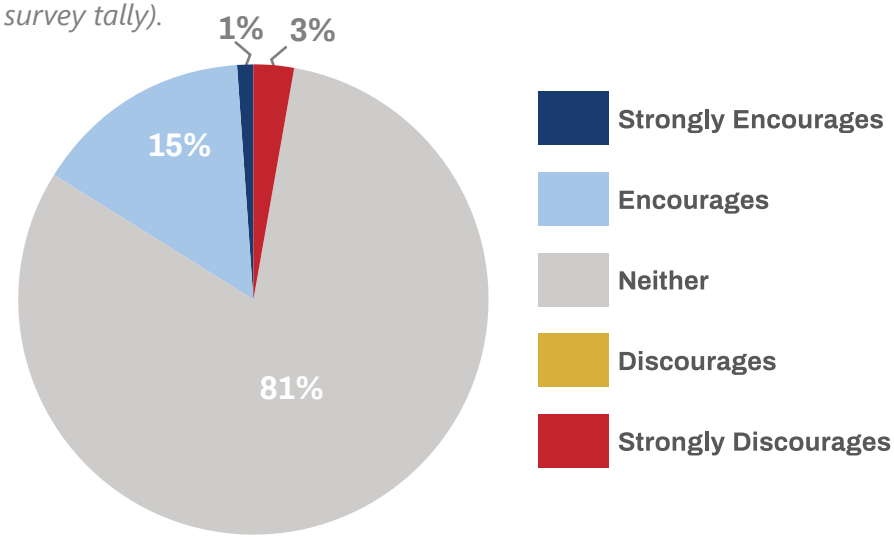


Chart showing travel mode for students who live within 1 mile of school. (Parent Survey)



Results of parent survey question: "How much does your child's school encourage or discourage waking/biking to/from school?

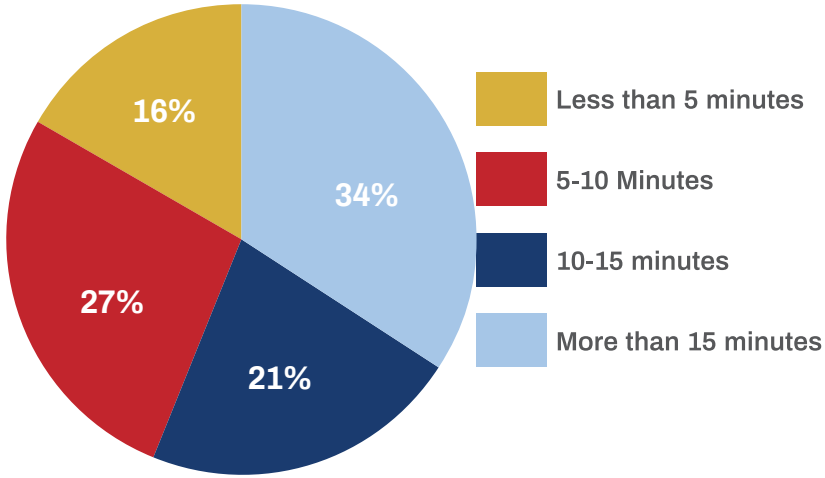


Chart showing average time spent traveling to school. (Parent Survey)

HAUGEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Existing Conditions

1. Haugen is a small village with few students living within the village limits.
2. There is minimal sidewalk throughout the village.
3. There is a small grid-style bike rack near the front of the school.
4. There is no sidewalk along CTH VV in front of school.

Recommended Strategies

1. Advocate and work with the Village of Haugen to construct sidewalk from elementary school to Holy Trinity Parish Church.
2. Host walk to school days and establish a spot for buses to drop off students off-campus and walk or bike to school.
3. Advocate for the Village to paint a walking path for students and community members along Designated SRTS (See page 41).

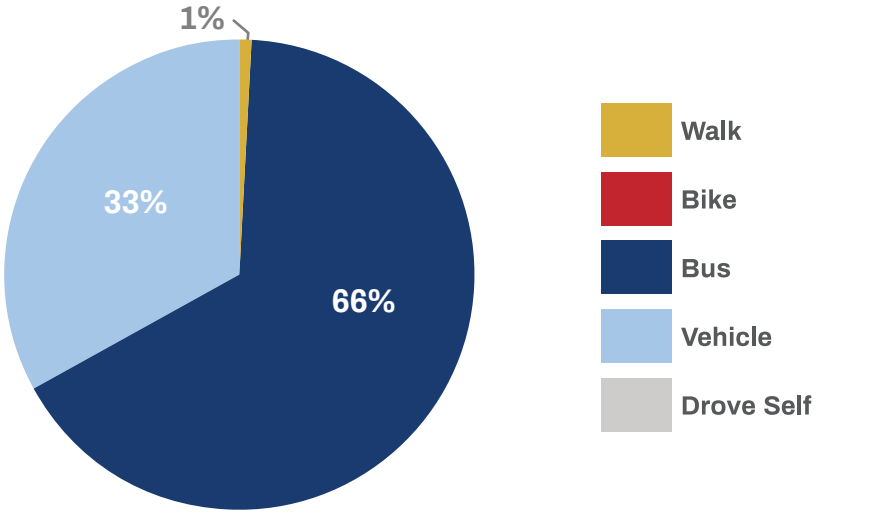
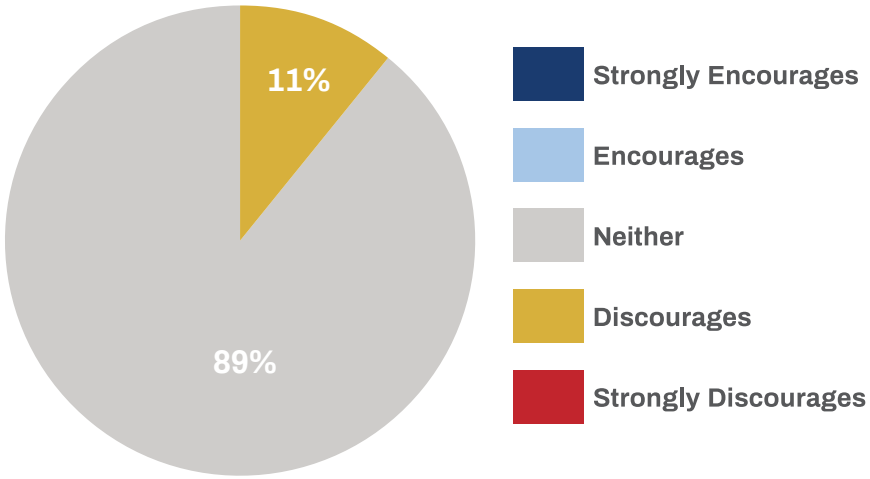
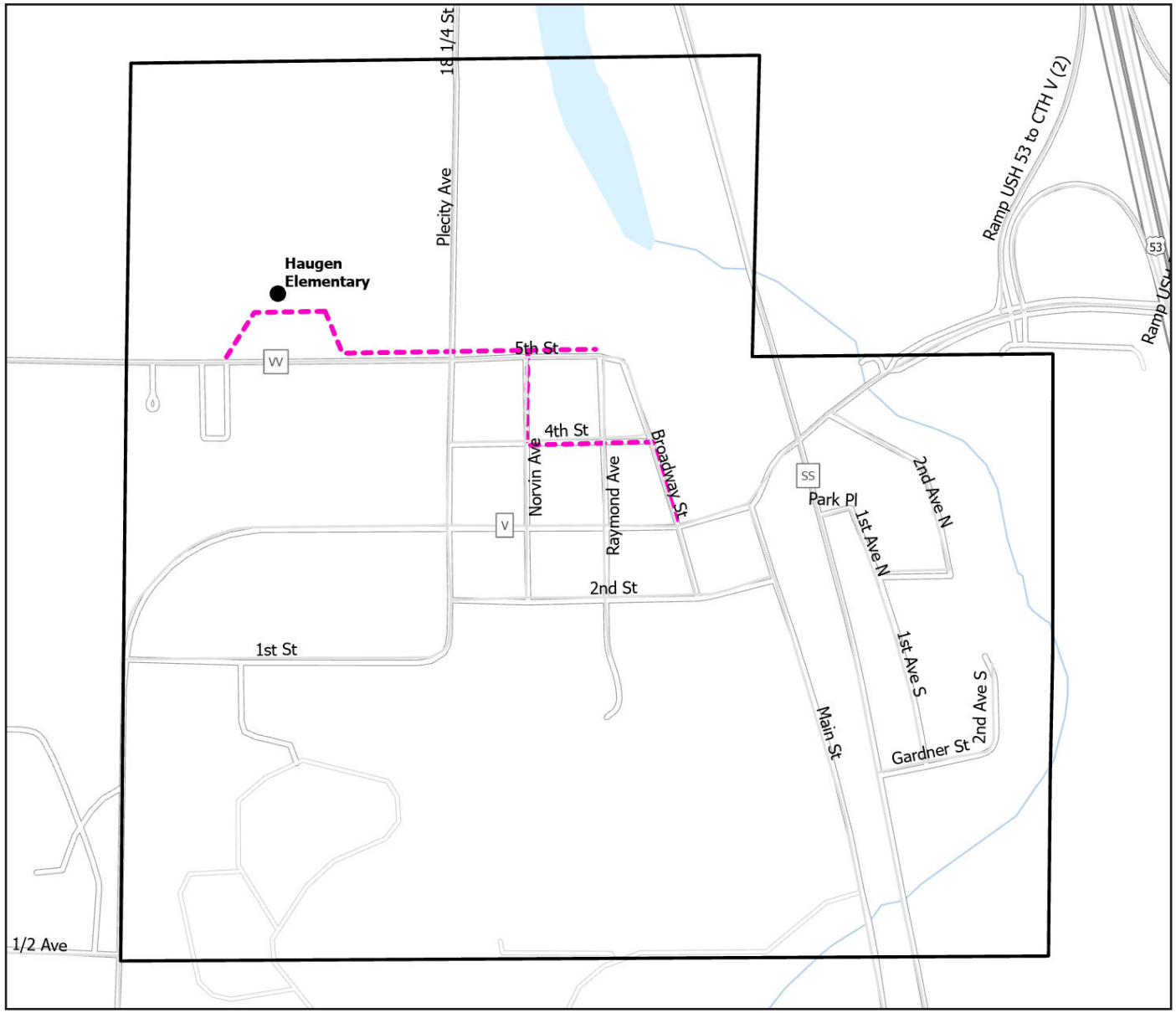


Chart showing student travel mode to/from school in percent (teacher survey tally).



Results of parent survey question: "How much does your child's school encourage or discourage waking/biking to/from school?

DESIGNATED SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



The map to the left shows the designated safe routes for Haugen Elementary School.

Legend

- School
- Potential Safe Route
- Municipal Boundary

August 2026

Maps prepared by: WCWRPC

HILLTOP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Positives

1. There are two crossing guards adjacent to the school at Cameron and A&R, and at Cameron and Carson.
2. There are two removable pedestrian crossing signs in the middle of Wisconsin, between Messenger and Carson.
3. Lighting is present along school property on all streets and all intersections have lighting.
4. Drivers appeared to be attentive and slowing down in the school zone.
5. There is a bike rack on north side of the school.
6. There is a removable pedestrian crossing sign at Hilltop and Cameron.

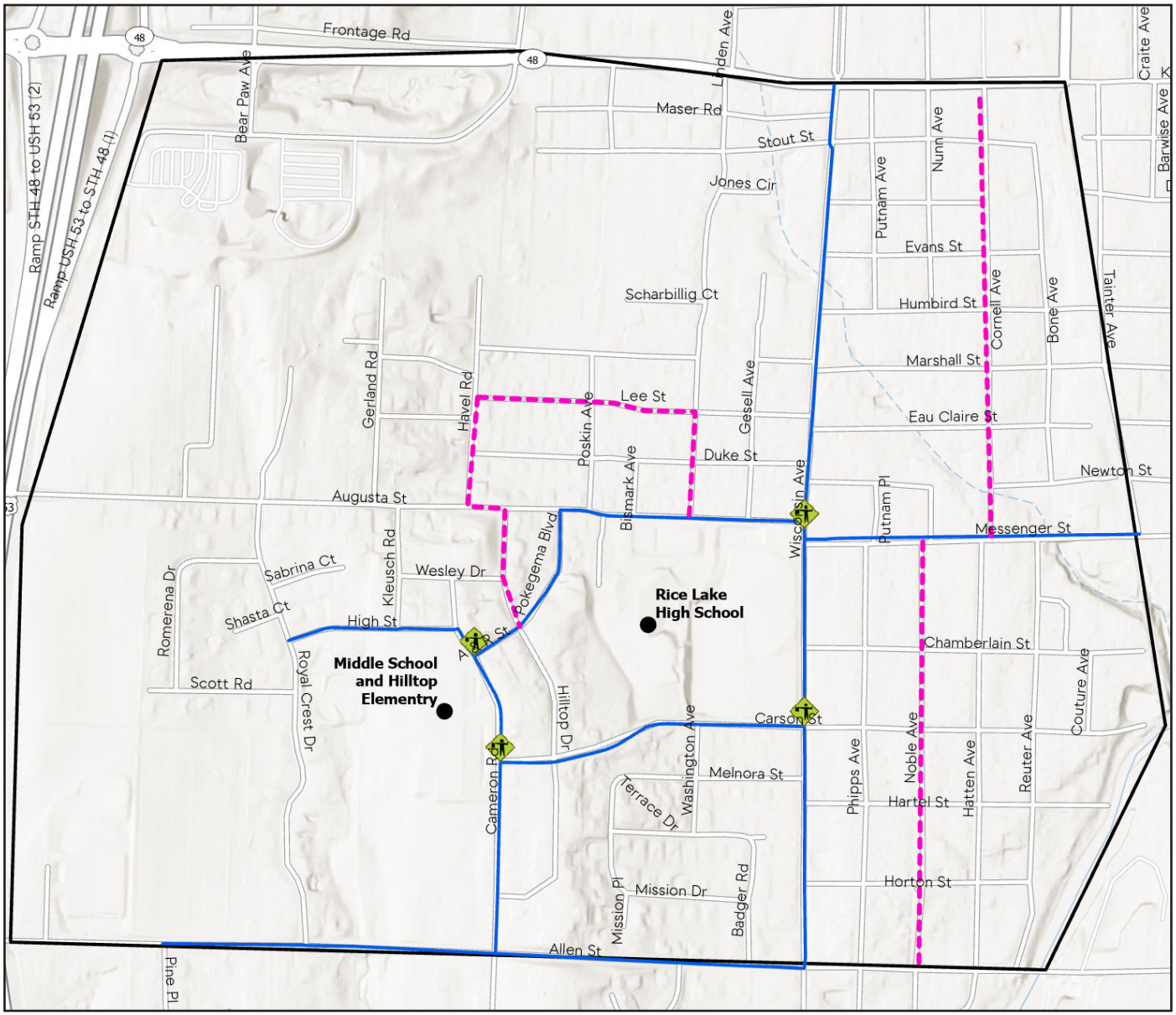
Issues

1. School Zone signs are faded. There are only two school zone signs along Cameron on each end of school property.
2. At High and Kleusch, there are curb cuts, but no crosswalk or signage. Additionally, construction workers park along High, making the crossing invisible.
3. Neighborhood west of school has many sidewalk network gaps, while Royal Crest has no sidewalks south of Scott.
4. Congestion from parent pick-up and drop-off is a major issue at this school. Parents are parked outside of school 45 minutes prior to school dismissal.
5. On the day of the audit, the removable pedestrian crossing sign was not in the middle. Coupled with the congestion from parent drop-off and pick-up, buses had to veer into the left lane to get through lane.
6. Vehicles were observed turning south onto Cameron from Hilltop while crossing guard was actively crossing students.
7. Curb cuts on Cameron at Hilltop and A&R are not ADA compliant.
8. Bike rack was pushed against the building.
9. There are no bumpouts at any crossing adjacent to the school.

Recommended Strategies

1. Research options for creating an off-site parent drop-off/pick-up location such as a nearby church or park. This will help reduce immediate congestion.
2. Create programs that encourage more year round walking and biking to and from school. These programs include, mileage clubs, walk/bike to school days, bike rodeos, etc.
3. Install “No Parking” signs along High.
4. Create more defined crossing at High and Kleusch with painted crosswalk and signs.
5. Relocate bike rack to be visible from the school, and ensure that both sides can be used. This will deter theft and create additional bike spaces.
6. Create a walking school bus or bike train program for students who live in surrounding neighborhood.
7. Make Cameron and A&R a 3-way stop.
8. Construct bumpouts along Cameron at Carson and A&R.

DESIGNATED SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



The map to the left shows the designated safe routes for Hilltop Elementary School.

Legend

- School
- Crossing Guard
- Safe Route
- Potential Safe Route
- Walk Zone

August 2026

Maps prepared by: WCWRPC



Hillcrest Elementary bike rack on north side of building.



Undefined crossing at High and Kleusch.



Non-ADA compliant curb cut and faded crosswalks at Cameron and Carson.



Picture showing vehicle congestion along Cameron + off-centered pedestrian crossing sign.

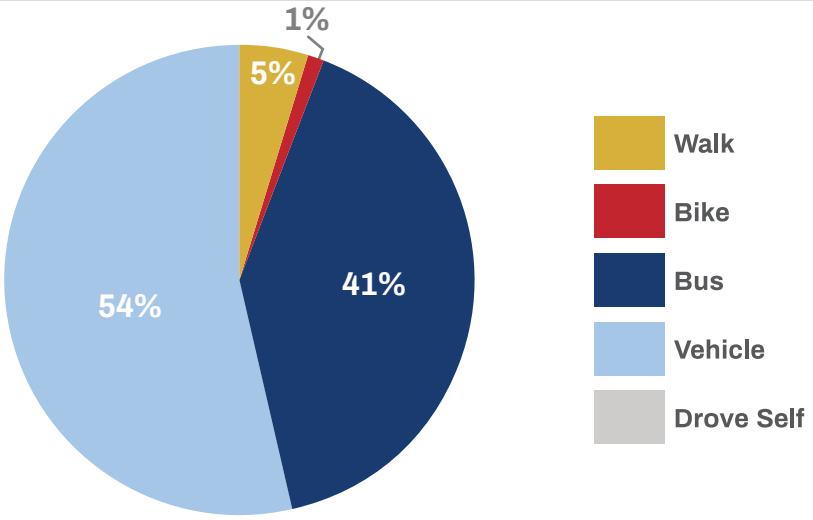


Chart showing student travel mode to/from school in percent (teacher survey tally).

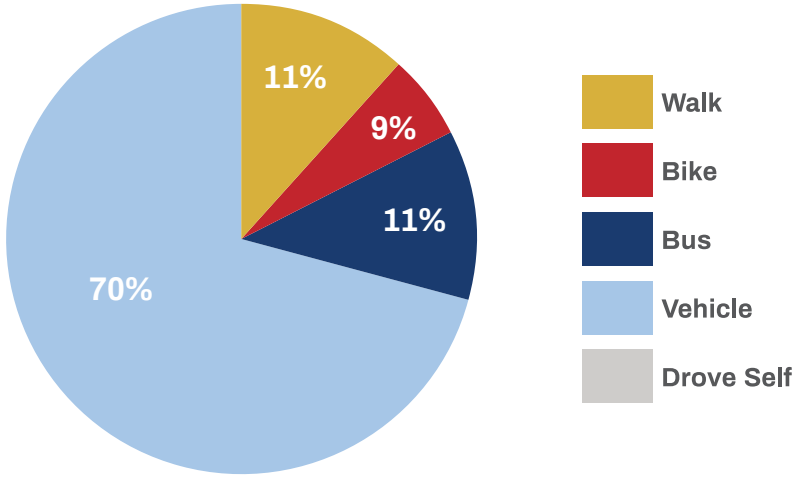
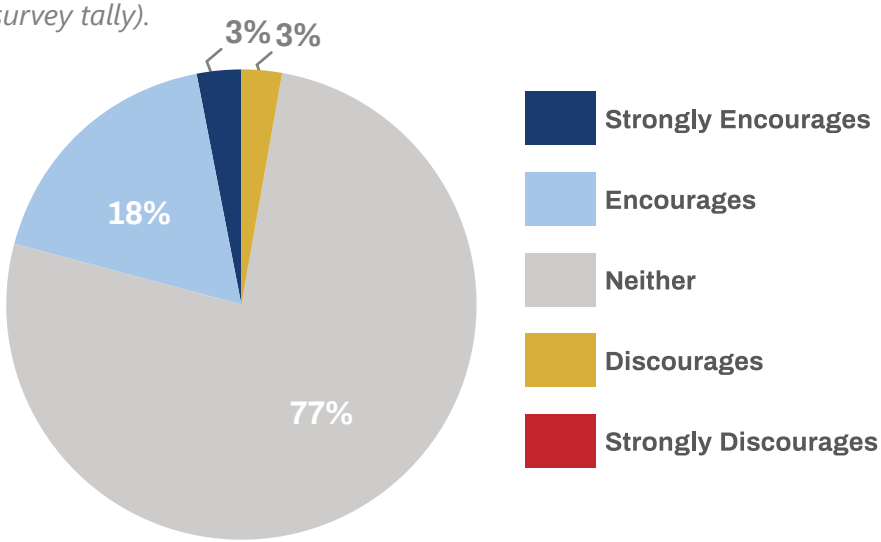


Chart showing travel mode for students who live within 1 mile of school. (Parent Survey)



Results of parent survey question: "How much does your child's school encourage or discourage waking/biking to/from school?

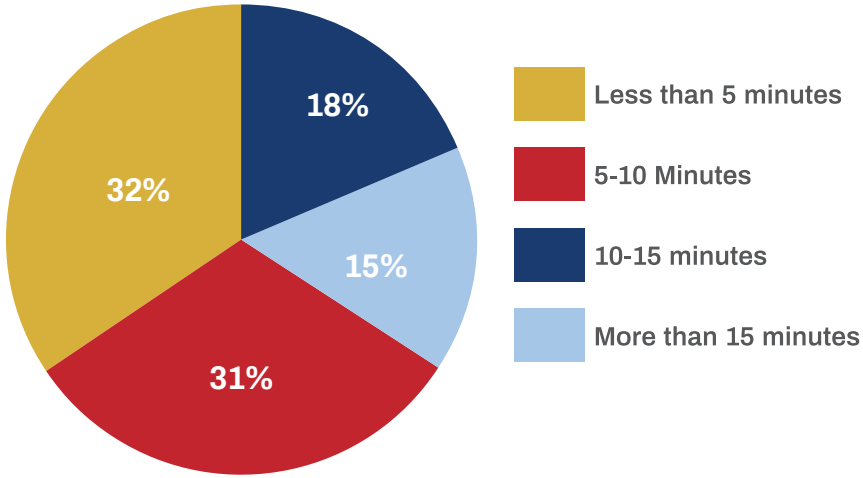


Chart showing average time spent traveling to school. (Parent Survey)

TAINTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Positives

1. During Summer of 2027, the City plans to reconstruct Kern from South to Sawyer. This project will include a sidewalk on one side and a multi-use trail on the other.
2. Vehicles stop fully at 4-way stop.
3. There is new residential development planned for field west of school.
4. Moon Lake Park continues to develop with single family homes.

Issues

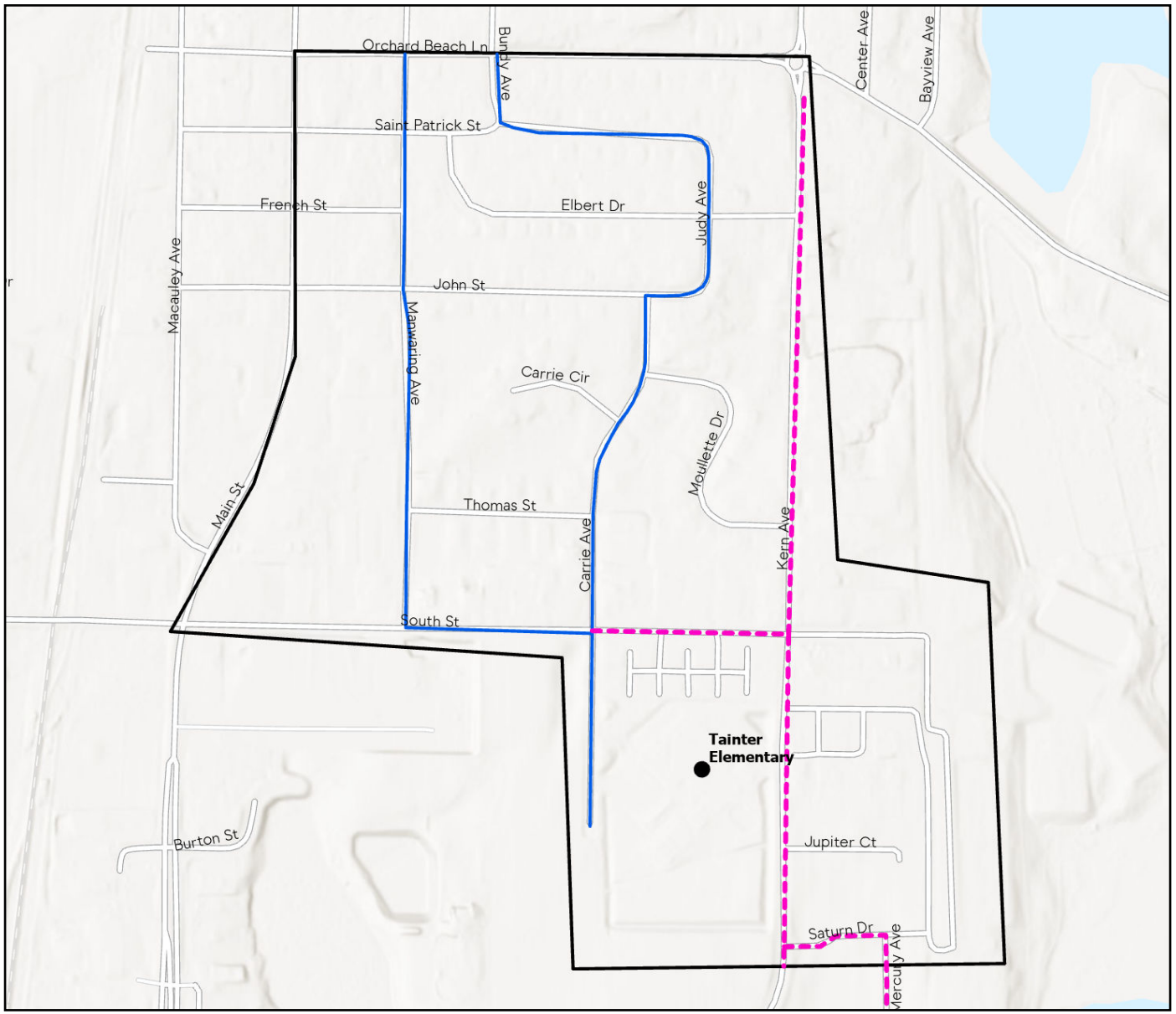
1. There are no students who walk or bike to school.
2. Neighborhood north of school has no sidewalks.
3. Crossing at Lemler and Saturn is unsigned.
4. Crossing in parking lot does not have crosswalk.
5. There are no bumpouts at any crossing adjacent to the school.

Recommended Strategies

1. Ensure school district staff are involved with development decisions regarding walking and biking access as a result of new construction west of school.
2. Develop programs that encourage more walking and biking to school. These programs include walking school buses, bike trains, walk/bike to school days, etc.
3. Consider painting walking lanes along Safe Route corridors.
4. Paint crosswalk at parking lot crossing.
5. Construct bumpouts at South and Carrie, and Kern and Saturn.

DESIGNATED SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL





The map to the left shows the designated safe routes for Tainter Elementary School.

Legend

- School
- Safe Route
- Potential Safe Route
- Walk Zone

August 2026

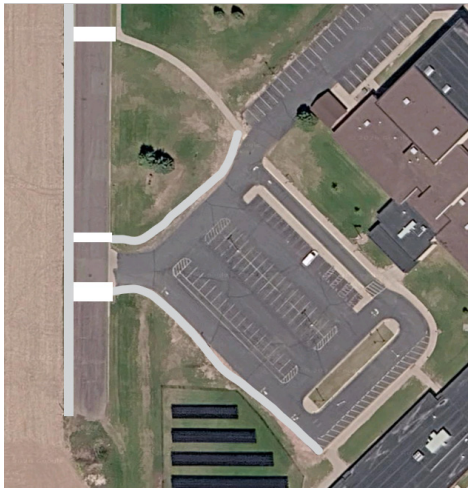
Maps prepared by: WCWRPC



Could improve this crossing at Carrie and South by adding a curb extension.



Unsigned crossing at Kern and Saturn.



Placement for potential crossings and additional sidewalks for new residential development next to Tainter.



Resident walking along Carrie. Sidewalk infill is beneficial for students and improves quality of life for all residents.

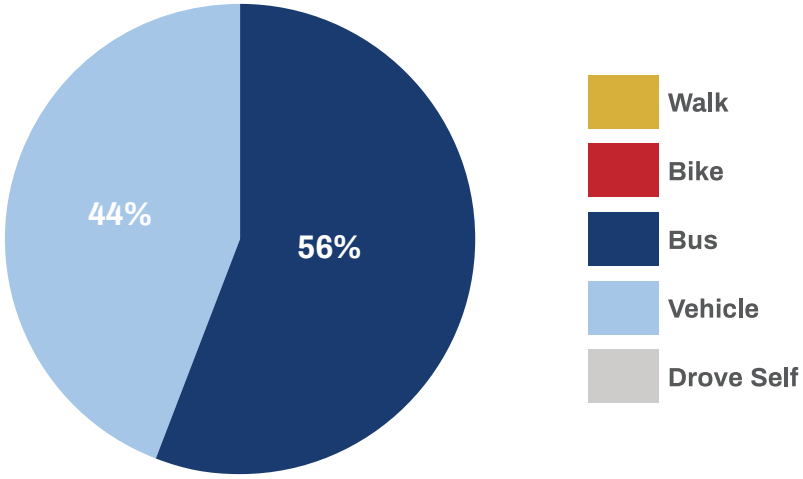


Chart showing student travel mode to/from school in percent (teacher survey tally).

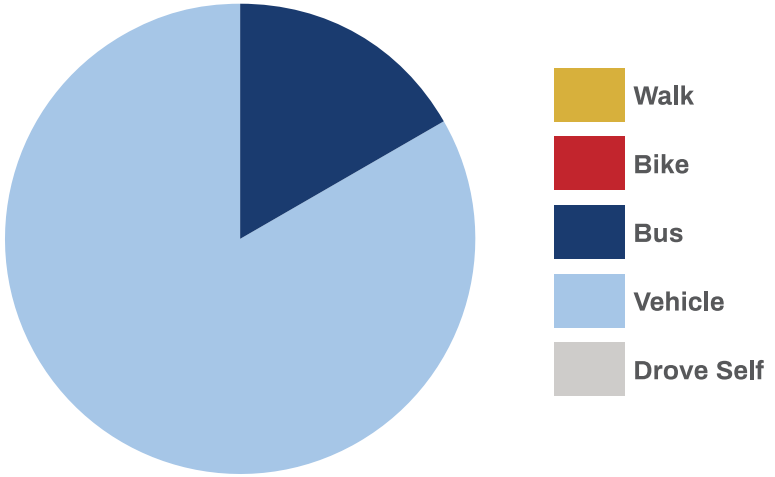
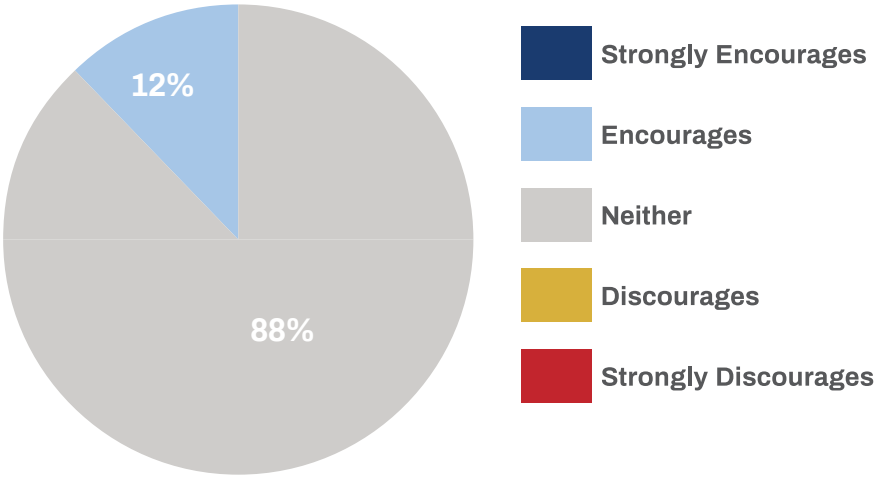


Chart showing travel mode for students who live within 1 mile of school. (Parent Survey)



Results of parent survey question: "How much does your child's school encourage or discourage waking/biking to/from school?

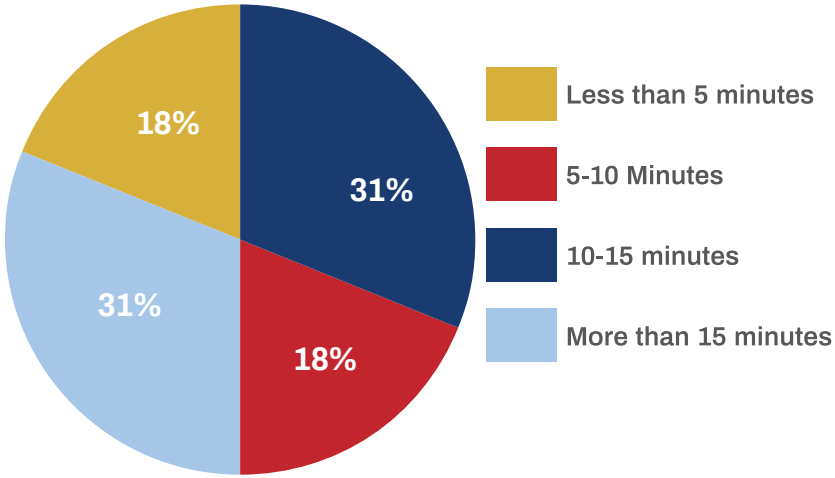


Chart showing average time spent traveling to school. (Parent Survey)



SECTION V. RECOMMENDED COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

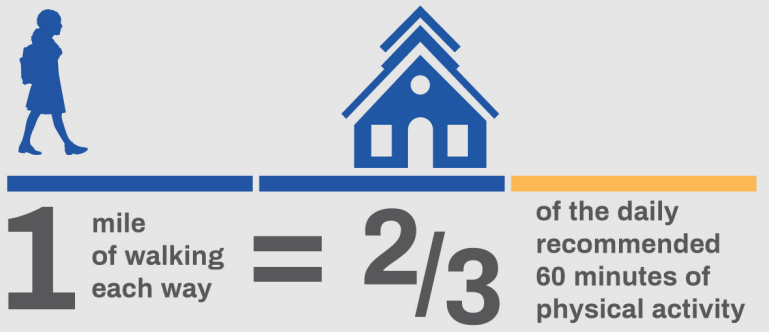
Implementation

In order for the recommendations to become a reality, it is best if the Task Force stay active in the years following plan completion. The group's role will be to evaluate, track and finalize projects that further SRTS efforts. They will serve as the champion of SRTS. It is important to have both City and School District representation on the SRTS Task Force. Meetings should be held at least twice a year to allow for updates and help keep implementation items on their proposed timeline. It is also recommended that the implementation strategies correspond with City and School District capital budget cycles to improve the likelihood of implementation as a function of normal municipal planning, engineering, and programming.

The following is a list of criteria that could be used by the SRTS Task Force. During the planning process, it was discussed that several strategies were of high priority. It is planned that over the coming months and years, the SRTS Task Force will update the strategies that are to be at highest priority levels. In addition, it should be noted that some strategies can be accomplished easily and that even though they are not the highest priority, these can and should be implemented when the resources are available.

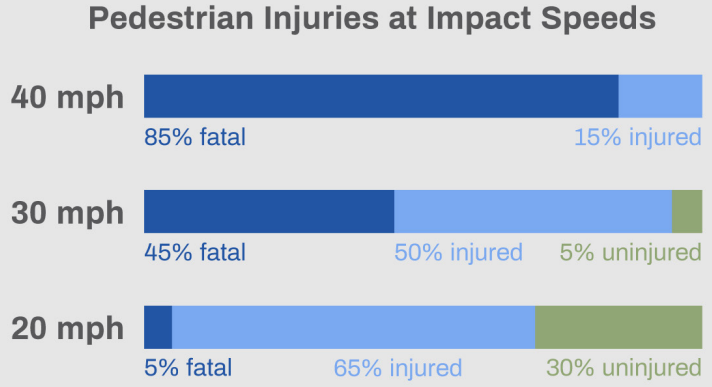
1. **Safety**
2. **Ease of Implementation**
3. **Usage**
4. **Cost**
5. **Healthy Outcomes**
6. **Time Required**

In addition, recommendations are put into three categories: short-term, medium- term, and ongoing. Short-term recommendations are items that can be implemented quickly and are less expensive. Medium-term recommendations cost more and take more manpower to implement. Ongoing items are things that are already happening for they need to be continuously monitored.



Source: Safe Routes Partnership, 2018

SLOW IT DOWN!



Source: Traffic Advisory Unit, 1993

Education

City

- Locate a sign at major entrances of the City that says “Rice Lake is a Safe Routes to School Community.” (short-term)
- Adopt City Council proclamation proclaiming Rice Lake as a “Safe Routes To School Community,” raising awareness of plans, strategies, partnerships, and City commitment. (short-term)

School District

- Adopt proclamation proclaiming Rice Lake Area School District as a “Safe Routes To School District,” raising awareness of plans, strategies, partnerships, and commitment. (short-term)
- Distribute an annual letter at the beginning of the school year with a brief description stating that the community has completed a SRTS plan and where designated SRTS corridors are located. (short-term)
- Include pedestrian skills and navigating neighborhoods section in physical education courses. (medium-term)
- Include vehicle/bike/pedestrian law education on school website and on social media. (short-term)
- Host fitness speakers at schools that promote walking/biking (athlete/coach from university or high school, members of the community, etc.). (medium-term)

City/School District

- Promote SRTS on website and social media. (short-term)
- Work with local media in promoting SRTS. (short-term)
- Work with local drivers education programs to include importance of driving safely around schools and in school zones. (medium-term)
- Share information about the physical, mental, and environmental benefits of active transportation. (short-term)

Encouragement

City

- Host bike rodeos in coordination with the school district and the police department. (medium-term)
- Provide incentives for vehicles traveling the designated school zone speed limit. (medium-term)
- Locate signage that shows designated Safe Routes, distance, and calories burned. Incorporate this with a community-based theme. (short-term)
- Provide annual training for crossing guards to review best practices and policies. (medium-term)
- Create consistency of safety patrol and crossing guard uniforms and flags, and replace equipment as necessary. (ongoing)

School District

- Host special events like International Walk to School Day (May) and Bike to School Day (October). (short-term)

- Create a mileage club with incentives to motivate students and families. (short-term)
- Create a Walking School Bus and/or Bike Train Program and utilize designated SRTS Routes. (medium-term)
- Dedicate days for walking and biking to school, whether weekly, monthly or annually. (short-term)
- Provide incentives for parents following designated drop-off and pick-up procedure. (short-term)
- Provide incentives to students who are smart and educated pedestrians and cyclists. (short-term)

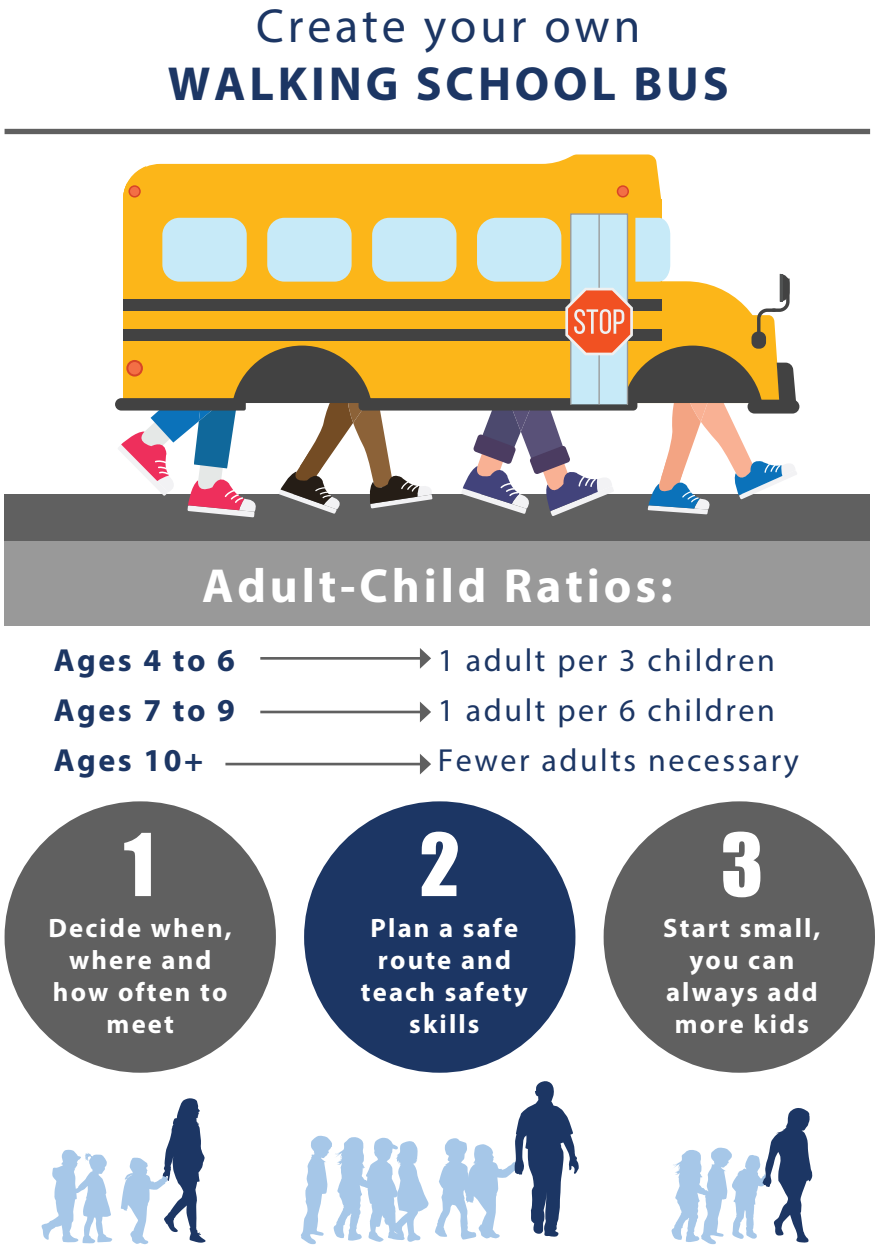
Engagement

School District

- Involve parents in the program through training, workshops, and volunteer opportunities. (short-term)
- Partner with school organizations like the Parent Teacher-Community Connection to raise awareness and promote participation. (short-term)
- Collaborate with local businesses, community organizations, and the City of Rice Lake to support SRTS initiatives. (short-term)

City

- Collaborate with the School District in supporting and commenting on SRTS initiatives. (ongoing)
- Contribute staff, funding or other resources to support SRTS



programs including grant writing, outreach and program implementation (ongoing)

» Oversee the construction and maintenance of sidewalks, crosswalks and other infrastructure improvements that enhance SRTS routes. (ongoing)

Engineering

City

» Annually maintain vegetation that obstructs SRTS signs like school zone and pedestrian crossings. (ongoing)

» Require future development to meet pedestrian, bicycle and SRTS policies. (medium-term)

» Require future development to have adequate pedestrian/bicycle facilities that feed to the schools. (short-term)

» Incorporate SRTS principles and recommendations in all applicable City plans and capital improvement projects.

» Locate appropriate crosswalk treatment at all SRTS intersection crossings. (short-term)

» Locate crosswalk signage at uncontrolled crossings. (short-term)

» Paint “SCHOOL ZONE” on street pavement when entering school zone. (short-term)

» Where they do not currently exist, construct sidewalks along all SRTS corridors. (medium-term)

» Extend and infill sidewalks that are adjacent to SRTS corridors. (medium-term)

School District

» Install speed limit signs and temporary speed bumps in school parking lots. (short-term)

» Improve bicycle parking areas with covered bike parking and student art. (medium term)

City/School District

» Allow school district to comment on all new City subdivision and rezoning applications. (short-term)

» Incorporate unique signage designating the SRTS route. This can include signage that has a city theme, school theme, or neighborhood theme. (medium-term)

» Incorporate street art in high pedestrian/cyclist intersections. (medium term)

» Improve lighting along SRTS corridors, where needed. (medium-term)



Equity

School District

» Make sure all population groups in the school are being positively impacted by SRTS implementation. (short-term)

City/School District

» Continue to incorporate SRTS programs and implement SRTS policies that work with and provide for all demographic groups. (ongoing)

Evaluation

City

» Update City committees and council on SRTS issues, opportunities, and progress. (ongoing)

School District

» Hire or designate a staff person to implement this SRTS Plan/ Program (short-term)

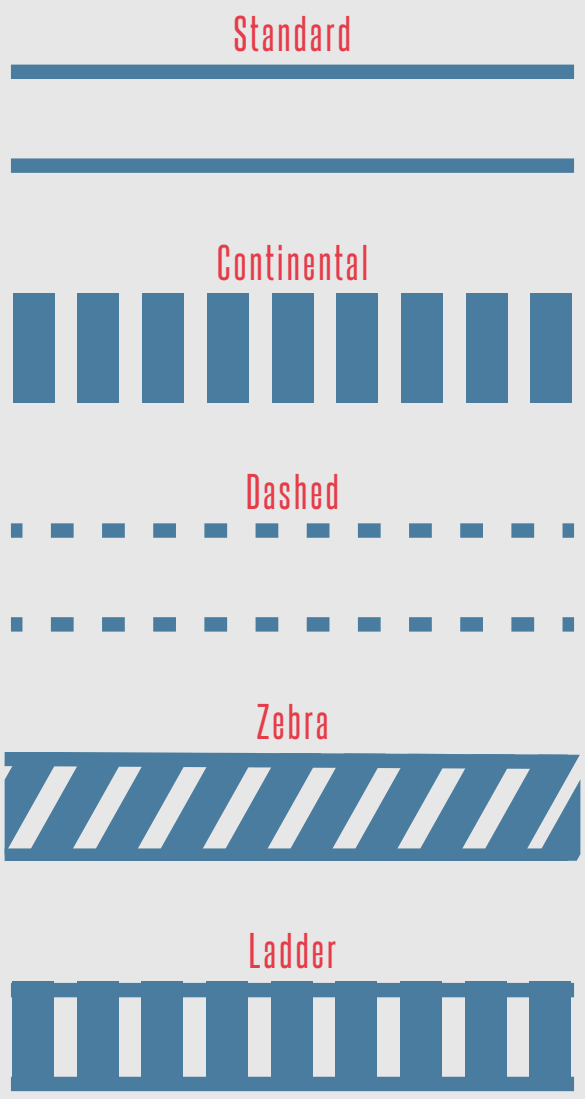
» Complete classroom tally sheet every two years to monitor the effectiveness of SRTS efforts. (short-term)

» Complete a parent survey every two years to monitor the concerns and opinions of parents. (short-term)

City/School District

» Continue to meet as an SRTS Task Force (at least twice a year). (ongoing)

Crosswalk Styles



APPENDIX A.

Parent Survey Comments

High School

- If we lived in town I see no reason the kids cannot walk to school. They have from friends houses in the past with no problems. We just make sure they know the route and check in before they leave/ after they get home. We live about 7 miles out so it is farther than I feel good about with the roads not having a shoulder , much less a bike lane. Also winter.
- When my child was in elementary school we lived a 1/2 mile from school. He always wanted to walk, but the lack of sidewalks the whole way made me nervous to send him by himself.
- My youngest child is a senior so I don't have much stake in the game but I absolutely would be willing to pay more taxes if it went directly to making the city more pedestrian friendly. I think this is a great initiative, and appreciate the work being put in on it.
- If its possible for children to bike to school, that would be wonderful
- We spend too much money on bussing
- "My child startled riding bike to school/walking to school in 6th grade. We live near the bus garage and it was easy to get to both schools. It wpuld have been impossible in elementary as she was put at Tainter. My child would often meet friends along the route and they would walk together which I feel is very beneficial.

  This would be a really wonderful opportunity to partner with the city to identify how the district and the city can make the streets and sidewalks more accessible for children biking and walking to school. It is really exciting to know that sidewalks and a trail will be added to Kern to connect that neighborhood to the Tainter Elementary school area!"
- We live to far away it would take her an hour or more for her to walk/bike
- Hope the district does more to encourage active lifestyle!
- I have had cars turn and swerve around my kids in a cross walk. It was a parent.. not a hs driver.
- We live to far out of rice lake to make this possible
- Our kids would need to ride bike around a dangerous curve that has little walking/biking space on Orchard Beach Lane, east of the boat landing, that would make me very nervous to allow them to do without an adult. The intersections are otherwise right turns with sidewalks or via a controlled intersection.
- Lower speed and better parking
- My kid walks to school even though I tell him to ride the bus. Both parents work early AM so not there most days.
- Unfortunately Rice Lake was not planned to be bike/walk friendly. My children would need to take S. Wisconsin Avenue to school. That road is too narrow with a large stretch of road without a sufficient sidewalk or shoulder. I am also not comfortable with my children crossing the stoplights at Hwy. O and Wisconsin Ave. Unfortunately it is not pedestrian friendly.
- I would allow my child to walk, but he is in a wheel chair... it is not safe with the amount of traffic and climate
- We live too far out for my child to walk/bike to school. If we lived in close proximity I would allow him to.
- Don't trust drivers of cars

- My child rides the bus
- it isn't the route, it is the other drivers as they drive like morons and do not watch for pedestrians, they text and drive, run red lights, speed.
- Wisconsin and Augusta by the WOW building and the intersection on the other side of the athletic complex(road that goes up to the MS) are not great intersections. A 4 way stop on each would maybe help? Roundabout?

Middle School

- Not currently were my daughter attends due to her riding the bus
- We have a huge population of kids walking from Duke,Lee, by roux park. They usually cross down by the hill by Methodist church and cars go very fast, no crossing no guards/ signs/ speed bumps.
- I think age 11 is an appropriate age and if things were safer I'd let my son walk more to his grandparents house to spend time with them
- I worry the most about distracted drivers and low visibility during sunrise/sunset hours. I think the exercise of walking or biking would be excellent. It was for me when I was young. A great way to start the day and end the school day, but I worry about the safety. Also, he is an only child and I would prefer if he walked or biked with others. I know that would be a big draw to get him interested as well, vs being told he's gotta walk to school alone because mom thinks it's good for him.
- We live in the Hawthorne Lane neighborhood. There is no safe way to get into town. There are two routes that are both too dangerous. Orchard Beach Lane has a blind curve with no sidewalk or shoulder and County Highway C has fast traffic and no sidewalk or bike lane. Putting a bike lane on Orchard Beach Lane would allow two large neighborhoods to have safe access into town and is desperately needed.
- temporary... but the construction around the new pool has created some safety concerns for students walking to school. With the large trucks and lifts, along with workers' vehicles parked on both sides of the road, it has made things very tight for both pedestrians and passing traffic. I'm very happy to see the new sidewalk has now been poured, and I'm hopeful our walks to school will be much safer soon!
- We live in the country so biking in isn't convenient. She'd have to bike up a big hill with not amazing visibility and fast vehicles on country roads.
- I would love to have a few designated routes through the city with reduced speed, increased traffic control & adult supervision. I would let my daughter walk to school if I thought it was safe but "drivers be crazy" right now.
- Walkers are unaware of surroundings (expect drivers to notice them), need safety instruction. Bicyclists don't know/follow the rules of the road;
- Allen Street has became a raceway for high school students driving.
- Haugen ave and Knapp, Wisconsin and Knapp, Wisconsin. Whole length of Haugen Ave has no side walk and small shoulders.
- We live 17 miles from the school
- We live way outta town. This doesn't really apply to us. She does however walk to friends houses sometimes. I feel like it's pretty safe

APPENDIX A.

- Would have to walk past the creepy low income housing and I'm not comfortable with that
- Son is special needs and very impulsive
- We are 7 miles out of town. It's pretty unrealistic that my kids would ever walk or bike to school.
- We simply live too far for this to be an option given the lack of sidewalks. Not to mention the speeds at which drivers go through a school zone when children are present I simply don't feel they would be safe
- I trust my kids. I don't trust other drivers. There are too many people texting and driving. I like the bike trails. I wouldn't feel my child is safe if she was riding in a bike lane next to traffic.
- "We live too far from town (about 5 miles) to safely bike and would have to take Hwy 48 to town. Although a biking lane would be helpful and I would consider my teens to be allowed to bike to town.
  Sometimes our middle school age kids bike from grandmas house near messenger to Middle school/back using Augusta St. and this seems very safe and easy with the current crossing guards."
- Walking with an adult or friend would make me feel better about safety from predators.
- I used to ride bike to school every day. I wish it was safer for my kids to do so.
- I don't trust teenagers driving
- Don't trust teens leaving school driving home

Hilltop Elementary School

- Going past the high school on the student parking side is nuts. Students barrel across roads with no crossing walk or guards. Students driving go way too fast. No sidewalks . No good bike racks or enough.
- This survey really doesn't affect my kids as we are open enrolled and live in Barron.
- In my opinion children nowadays are not mature enough as we were back in the 90s
- No sidewalks on Wisconsin north of 48th,or on linden. Sidewalks are quite narrow.
- Somewhat unrelated, but the crossing guard in front of hilltop stands in the intersection even when children are not crossing and makes it very difficult to turn into the pick up line. The crossing guard also stops all traffic while waiting for children to walk to the road making cars back up while no children are actually crossing. This makes it take sometimes 10 minutes for me to turn into the school, and then another 10 minutes to be able to get back through the intersection and head home.
- Does not really relate as we live quite far from the school
- No sidewalks on Augusta St for her to walk, and currently not comfortable with her walking alone due to age.
- Southwest Ave is heavily trafficked and the sidewalk ends before the road to our house. Traffic goes over the posted 35mph quite frequently and my child would cross it twice to get to school and staying on sidewalks
- There are a lot of drivers who speed and drive recklessly through the school zones and not enough law enforcement to monitor it on a regular basis. I even have concerns for the crossing guards' safety at times.

- The question asking for people's concern should have had an option of "this is not a concern for me"
- If there was a supervising adult along the trail to bike or walk with kids traveling south into town on their way to school, and provide leadership and guidance to kids from Wild Rivers Trail - as far out as 22 1/2 Ave (the road Rice Lake Speedway is on) and along Wisconsin Ave, I would love for my daughter to have the freedom to walk or bike to school.
- We love too far from school where biking would not be an option.
- Cars go very fast in that are and dont always stop for pedestrians.

Tainter Elementary School

- I don't know if my kids will ever get up early enough to bike to school. As they get older, their school gets farther away.
- We live on HWY 48 near Hoots...not sure how to improve that area.
- With kids at multiple schools it doesn't make sense to bike to school if I still have to pick a child up.
- We live much closer to the middle school, and our children will walk/bike at that time
- There are no sidewalks on kern to feel safe enough for biking/ walking to school
- We live across town by the high school so it's to far to allow her to walk or bike
- We just live 2 miles from school so wouldn't allow walking or biking just because of the distance
- Please change the speed limit on Allen st!
- We open enroll
- If my child must continue to ride the bus maybe cameras could be installed to catch drivers who run the school bus stop sign or pass the bus when the bus is stopped.
- We live up near hilltop, however attend tainter school. Walking and biking to school would be too difficulty and dangerous.
- If there was a path that connected 21 1/2 st and Kern Ave, through Moon Lake park, it would make it easier for many kids in near our us to safely get to school, while avoiding busy roadways.
- I will not let my child walk or bike across town for school
- There are not sidewalks on Kern Ave, and in the mornings there is a lot of traffic and they don't slow down- even with kids out there
- I want to see my daughter make it to 6th grade and then 10th grade with RLSD. && it's winter 90% of the school year in this part of the states. so walking to elementary school in rice lake doesn't seem logical for us. maybe if she went to hilltop which is directly behind our home. but not with it being across the main road and along side it or down around on back roads without sidewalks. unfortunately she will continue to do the bike day every year. cause i can watch. but not for this small family. thank you.
- Violence, crime, kidnapping, cars driving main roads,

WARRIORS

WEST CENTRAL

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

SINCE 2007

WISCONSIN

WCWRPC

WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION