



Chippewa Valley Safe Routes to School Partnership

2021 Summary Report





Prepared for:

Chippewa Valley Regional Partnership

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Chippewa Valley SRTS Partnership

Eau Claire Area School District
Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District
School District of Altoona
West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission





Making it safer and easier for kids to walk and bike to school in the Chippewa Valley







Background

In 2019, the School District of Altoona, Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District, and the Eau Claire Area School District, along with partners from each city, chose to work collaboratively to create a regional safe routes to school (SRTS) program. The intention of forming a regional partnership is to share messaging and delivery of the SRTS program throughout the Chippewa Valley, where residents often live, work, and recreate in all three communities. Now known as the Chippewa Valley SRTS (CV SRTS) Partnership, the partners will implement a SRTS program at the regional scale by following the six “E’s” framework of a the national SRTS program: education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering, equity, and evaluation. This approach will help the participating districts work together to maximize the number of students walking and biking to school throughout the Chippewa Valley.

The West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) initiated this effort and works as the regional SRTS coordinator for the three districts. In addition, to working on regional projects and programs, WCWRPC work with each district and city individually on their respective plans and implementation. This program is funded by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

A steering committee was formed to guide planning and implementation and comprised of representatives from each school district and city. Funding for the coordinator position was provided by the school districts. Due to COVID-19, the CV SRTS steering committee did not meet



as a group in 2021. Each steering committee meeting includes a partner check-in, during which each partner shares what they have done to progress their SRTS plan in the time between meetings. The meetings provide time for the members to collaborate on ideas, learn from one another, and coordinate regional implementation activities. WCWRPC facilitates the meetings, tracks progress, and serves as the liaison between the schools, cities, and other partners.

Awarded 2020-24 TAP Funding

In the fall of 2019, WCWRPC submitted an application for funding from the WisDOT TAP to fund the SRTS Coordinator position for three additional years. The application included three components:

1. New SRTS plans for five school districts in western Wisconsin that do not currently have a plan (Amery, Bloomer, Cumberland, Fall Creek, and Thorp)
2. SRTS Coordinator for the CV SRTS Partnership and the School District of Osceola
3. A regional SRTS outreach program, to include a website and online interactive route maps covering the west central region

The application requested \$548,800 in TAP funds, with a match of \$137,200 coming from the nine participating school districts, and the WCWRPC, for a three year project cost total of \$686,000. In the summer of 2020, WCWRPC was awarded the full fund grant request.

New SRTS Coordinator

A major component of the successful TAP grant application to the WisDOT was the SRTS Coordinator position. In July, Hailee Bushman was hired by the WCWRPC to fill that position. In the spring of 2021, Hailee graduated from the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Geography, minor in German and GIS certificate. She also has skills with Adobe products such as InDesign, and Illustrator. Prior to working for the WCWRPC, she worked as an intern for the City of Eau Claire working in the Planning Department. Hailee grew up in Watertown, Minnesota. While at UWEC, she played on the Women's Volleyball Club, where she served two years as the Vice President.





Application for 2022-26 TAP Funding Cycle

In fall of 2021, WCWRPC completed another application for TAP funding. Because the last application was successful with the coordinator position, the WCWRPC thought to expand on that and combine it with the outreach program. With that, the coordinator will be able to reach more communities in West Central Wisconsin. The application will thus include three components:

1. New SRTS Plans for three school districts in western Wisconsin that do not currently have a plan (River Falls, Stanley-Boyd and Turtle Lake)
2. SRTS Coordinator for the CV SRTS Partnership, the School District of Osceola and Bloomer School District.
3. A regional SRTS outreach program, to include a website and online interactive route maps covering the west central region, encouragement and education programs, and broader SRTS inclusion



Through the coordinator position, the WCWRPC can deliver tangible products that can help further grow the CV SRTS Partnership program. These products range from maps and infographics to programs and media.

2020 Deliverables

Crossing Guard Training Video

Footage for the crossing guard training video was collected at Putnam Heights Elementary School and Locust Lane Elementary School (ECASD) in fall 2019. The video is seven minutes long and instructs students and adults on proper crossing procedures. It also provides tips and suggestions for success of the crossing guard program. The video was branded with the CV SRTS Partnership logo and made available to all schools in the three districts. It can also be found on the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's Youtube Channel.



Eau Claire
Crossing Guard Safety Training Video for Students
138 views • Aug 31, 2020

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
4 subscribers

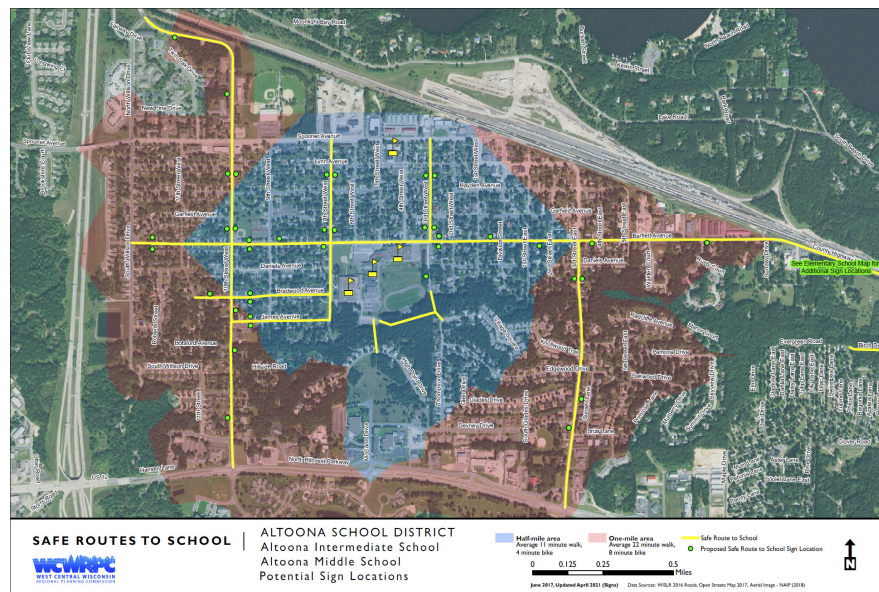
SUBSCRIBE

ECASD Bike Parking Audit

A bike parking audit was started in 2019, but was completed in October 2020. Data provided by the City of Eau Claire Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) was field verified by the WCWRPC and evaluated using bike parking criteria from the National SRTS Program and the City of Eau Claire. The results of the audit were organized into a report detailing the findings and recommendations from each school in the district.

Altoona SRTS Community Signage

The City of Altoona was interested in installing community-wide signage indicating its status as a Safe Routes to School community. These signs would be placed along the primary SRTS corridors. WCWRPC provided a map with proposed sign locations, the signs are currently in the city's budget to purchase and install.





2021 Deliverables

CFAUSD Plan update

Written in 2015, the CFAUSD plan was the oldest in the Chippewa Valley. A 5 year update is appropriate to evaluate progress made, identify new issues and opportunities, and reassess priorities. WCWRPC facilitated the plan update using an effective planning method that results in actionable recommendations with quantifiable results. The planning began with the establishment of a task force of local stakeholders including school staff, law enforcement, and municipal staff and elected officials. Next, existing conditions were assessed through audits, surveys, classroom tallies, evaluation of road conditions within walk zones, and review of local crash data. The task force then reviewed the data collected, identified patterns and themes, and layout the issues that can be addressed in the plan. The last step of the SRTS planning process was for the task force to collaboratively develop realistic, measurable solutions to the identified issues. The plan was completed in March 2021

SRTS Posters

Two separate informational posters were developed to be displayed at school administration offices, and at school entrances in August 2021. The poster for the administration offices included descriptions of the 6 E's, while the one for school entrances included a map of the designated safe routes, safety tips, and school specific facts about walking and biking. An example of the SRTS poster is on the right.

School District of Altoona
Safe Routes to School Program

The School District of Altoona Safe Routes to School is a program to create a safer environment for students walking and biking to and from school.

The 6 E's

- » **Education**
Students and parents need to learn about walking and biking safety and the benefits with biking and walking to school.
- » **Equity**
Working to support safe, active, and healthy opportunities for students and parents in low-income communities, communities of color and beyond.
- » **Engineering**
Infrastructure improvements designed to improve the safety of people walking, biking, and driving along Safe Routes.
- » **Engagement**
Safe routes initiatives begin by listening to students, families, teachers and school leaders and working with community organizations, and build ongoing opportunities into the program.
- » **Evaluation**
Assessing which programs are more or less successful, ensuring that programs have equitable outcomes and to improve the effectiveness of each approach.
- » **Encouragement**
Generating enthusiasm and increased walking and biking through events, activities, and programs.

Why this Matters:

- » Kids who walk or bike to school are more susceptible to being in crashes
- » Roads near schools are congested, decreasing safety and air quality for children
- » The state of Wisconsin scored a 23/200 on the 2020 Safe Routes to School Report Card
- » On average, the US spends \$854/year per child that is transported to school

Kids who walk or bike to school:

- » Get 2/3 of their recommended daily physical activity
- » Arrive alert and able to focus on school.
- » Are less likely to suffer from depression and anxiety

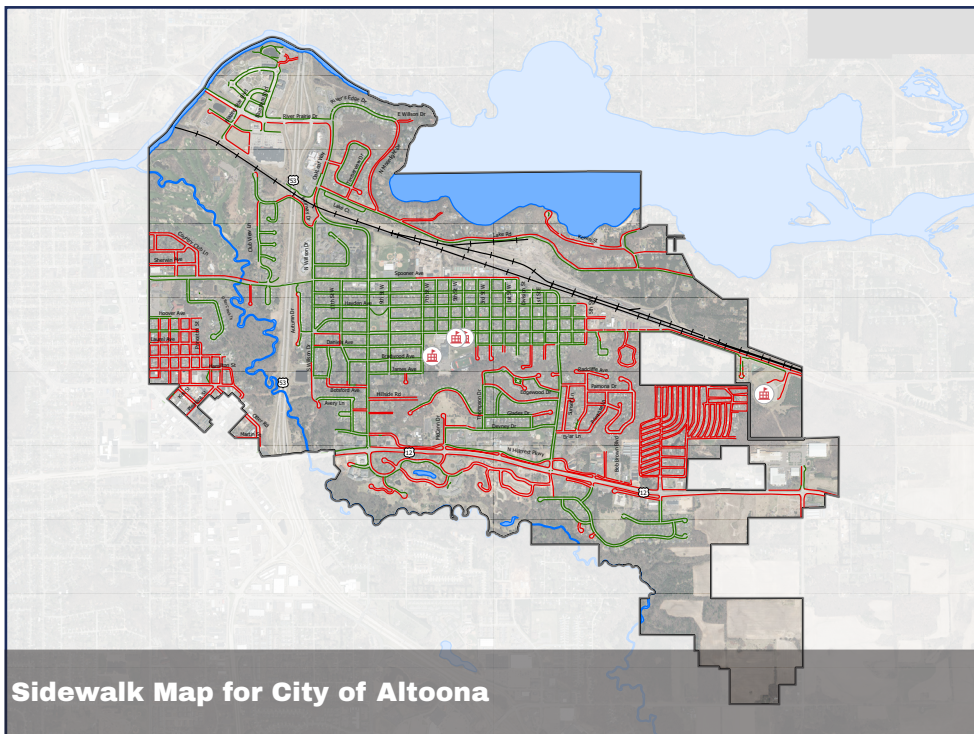
Safe Routes to School
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Eau Claire Sign Inventory

In the September of 2021, a school zone sign inventory for the City of Eau Claire was completed. Data was collected based on what kind of sign, the condition of the sign, and if there were any obstructions. The data was collected through Esri's Survey123 for ArcGIS software. This data was mapped and given to the City of Eau Claire.

Sidewalk Maps

Sidewalks are the most important infrastructure to ensure safe walking in a community. Without sidewalks, pedestrians are much more susceptible to being involved in a crash. WCWRPC developed the capability to create sidewalk maps with aerial imagery.

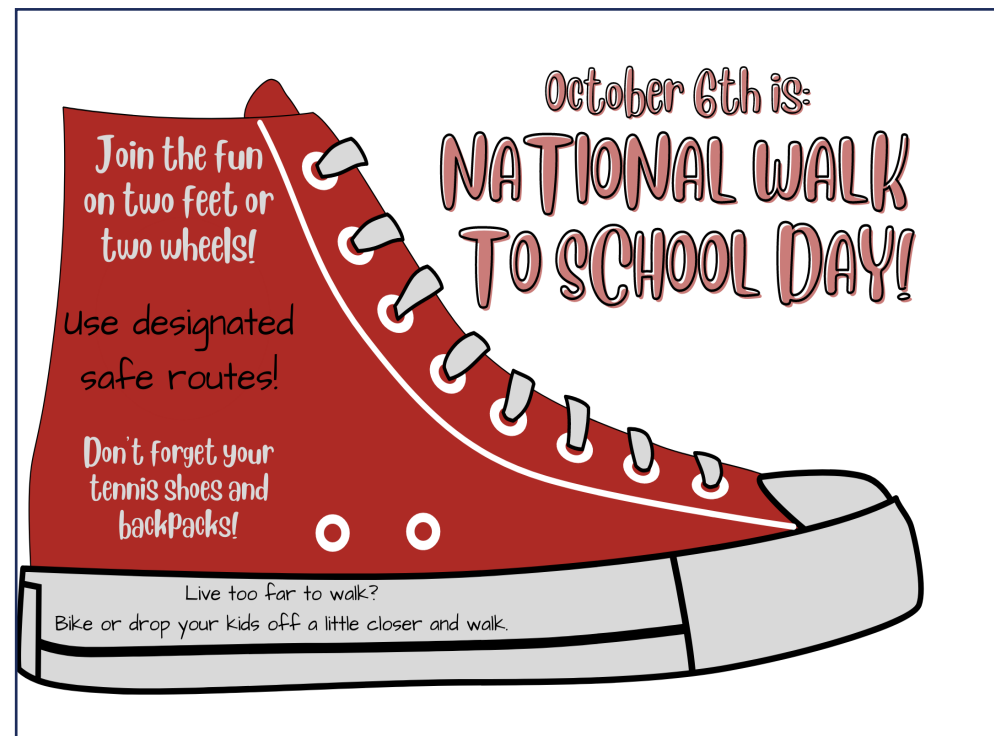


Walk to School Day

Beginning in 1997, the first Wednesday of October is recognized as National Walk to School Day. Thousands of schools all across the nation celebrate each year. The WCWRPC staff promoted the event with the infographic shown below. This year, the CV had many schools participate. WCWRPC attended Walk to School Day at Locust Lane Elementary School.

Special Projects

Programs and projects are an important component to a successful partnership program. These projects are not necessarily region-focused but contribute to a district's own implementation priorities.





Crossing Guard Pilot Program

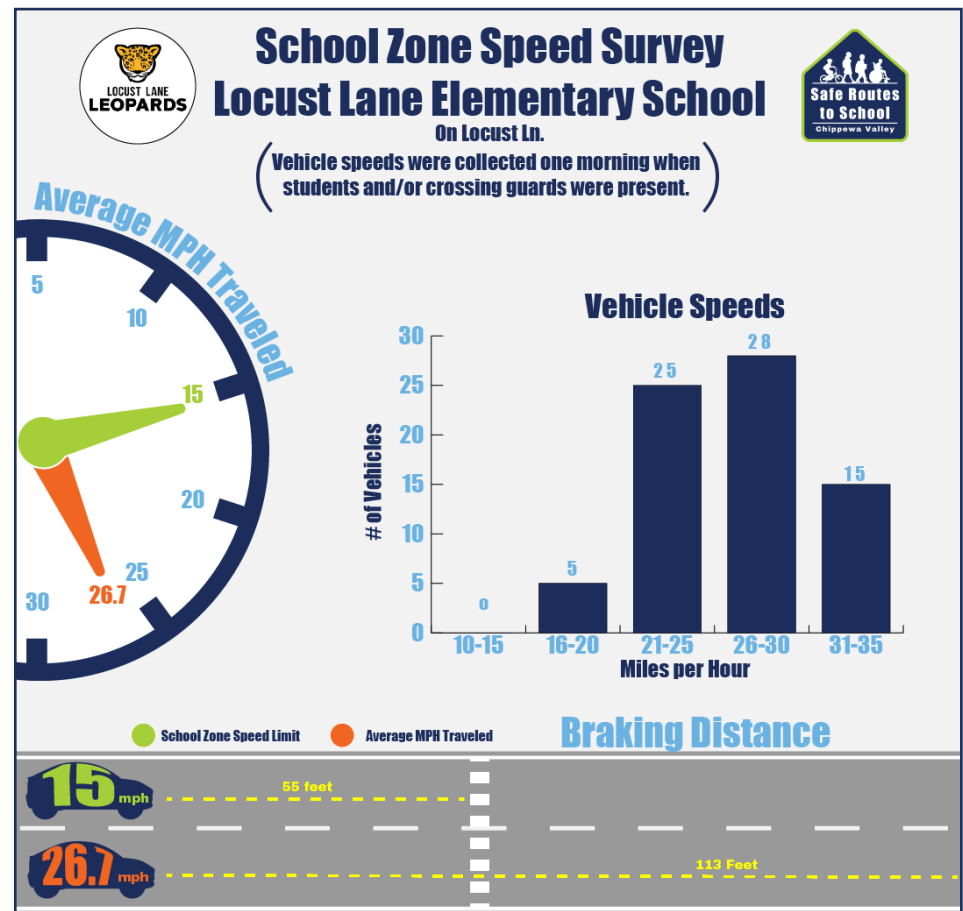
One program that was started this past fall was the Crossing Guard Pilot program. In this program we asked elected officials, city staff members, school board members, and principals to volunteer an hour of their morning or afternoon to visit a crossing guard at one of their schools. After they participated, they were given a short survey in which we asked them what kinds of issues were presented and how they thought the initial program went. From here, WCWRPC will take these suggestions to create a bigger and better program for the spring. Representatives from all three districts participated.

School Zone Speed Studies

With brand new radar guns, the CVSRTS Partnership has started a new study. High traffic speeds is a common reason why parents don't allow their child to walk or bike to/from school. WCWRPC collected speeds from cars that were traveling in the school zone when children and/or crossing guards were present. Cars are supposed to be traveling 15 mph but the study showed the vast majority of cars traveling faster. Once speeds are collected, WCWRPC produce an

infographic that the schools then send out to their parents and post on social media. In December 2021, WCWRPC teamed up with Putnam Heights Elementary School and did a study with students. The students were able to collect the data themselves. There are three items shown in the infographic.

1. The speeds of vehicles traveling through the school zone
2. The average speed traveled by the vehicles
3. The braking distance of the average speed traveled compared to the braking distance of the speed limit



2022 Preview

Starting in 2022 there will be larger programming efforts that focus around community promotion of the SRTS program and encouraging students to do more walking and biking to school. The following is a brief overview of the planned projects:

Website Development

A regional website for the Chippewa Valley Safe Routes to School Partnership will be produced by the end of 2022. This website will contain story maps, infographics, and other program information for each school district.

Develop “Walk and Roll Challenge”

The Walk and Roll Challenge is a rewards program aimed at getting an increased number of students walking and biking to school through incentivization. Students participating in the Walk and Roll Challenge will self-track the days that they walk or bike to school, and participating students will be entered to win prizes. The challenge will be held in May of 2022 with hopes that this will turn into an annual event if successful and well supported.

15 Means 15 Campaign

The 15 Means 15 campaign is a public education program aimed at drawing the attention to the importance of driving the 15 mph speed limit in school zones. This campaign will include activities such as students and school resource officers or police officers conducting speed tests with radar guns, increased police monitoring, and press releases.

School District of Altoona SRTS Plan Update

Written in 2017, the SDA’s plan is the oldest of the three district’s plans, and a five-year update is appropriate to evaluate progress made, identify new issues and opportunities, and reassess priorities. The WCWRPC will facilitate the plan updates using a similar effective planning method as CFAUSD. This plan will be updated by the end of summer 2022.

Eau Claire Area School District SRTS Plan Update

ECASD’s SRTS plan was completed in 2018. ECASD is the biggest school district in the Chippewa Valley and in West Central Wisconsin. By the time the plan update is completed, the plan will be five years old. The update will be completed by spring 2023.





School District of Altoona
Altoona, Wisconsin

Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District



EAU CLAIRE
AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT



West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission