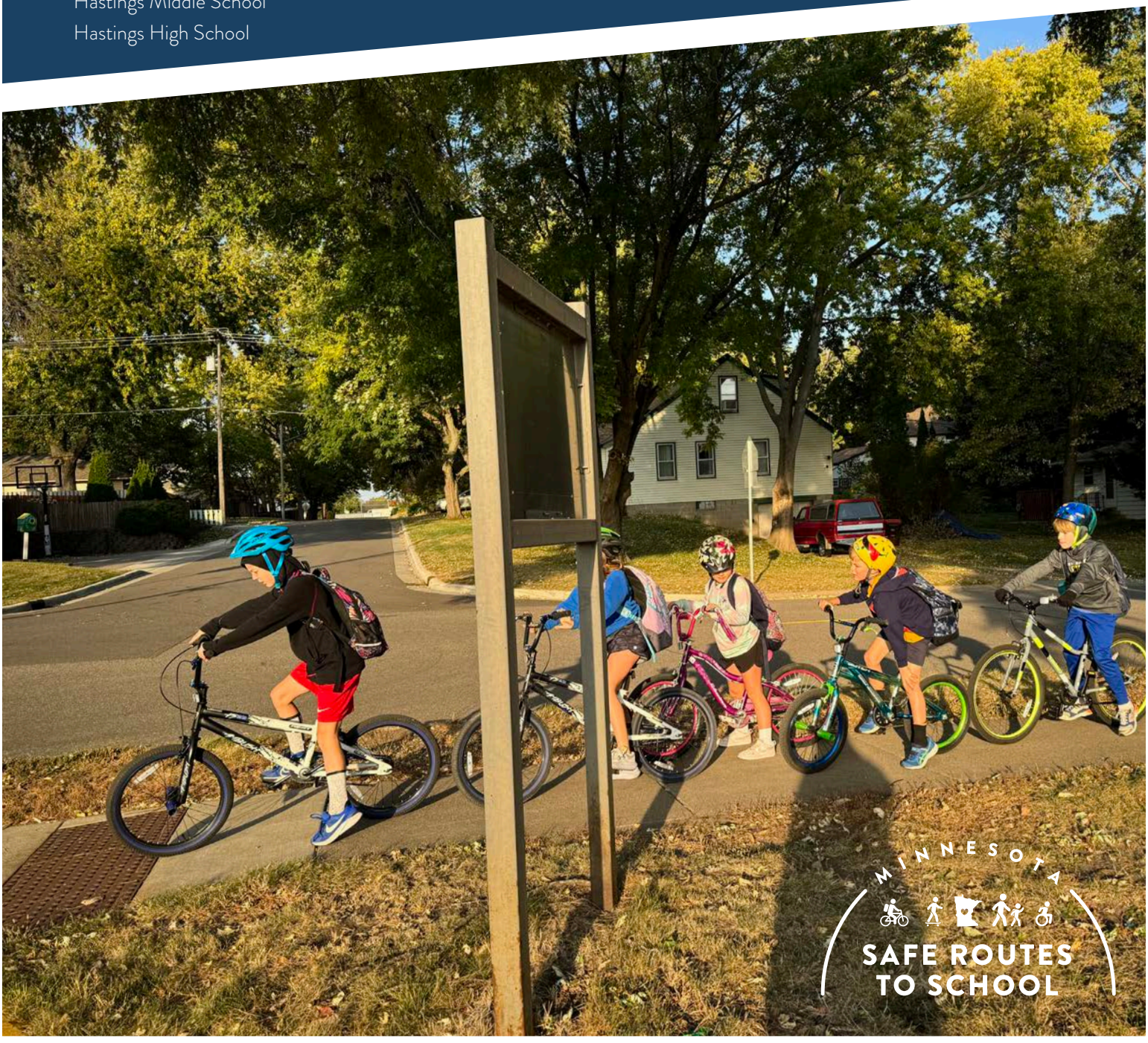
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

A plan to make walking, biking, and rolling to school a safe, accessible, and fun transportation choice benefiting the physical and emotional health of students, parents, and all members of the Hastings community.

HASTINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Kennedy Elementary School
McAuliffe Elementary School
Pinecrest Elementary School
Hastings Middle School
Hastings High School

JUNE 2025



Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the participation of the following individuals and organizations in the development of this Safe Routes to School Plan.

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MINNESOTA SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

This report is designed to support and be accessible to multiple groups of people involved with Safe Routes to School in Hastings, including students, caregivers, teachers, school administrators, City staff, elected officials, and county and state employees. This plan focuses on key information and recommendations, while the appendices document additional participation, analysis, resources, and deliberation that shaped the development of the plan.

THE VISION

A plan to make walking, biking, and rolling to school a safe, accessible, and fun transportation choice benefiting the physical and emotional health of students, parents, and all members of the Hastings community.

THE 6 Es

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs rely on six core strategies, called the "Six Es," to work toward their vision.

EQUITY – THE OVERARCHING E

Prioritizing positive outcomes for students from lower-income households; Black, Indigenous, and other students of color; students with disabilities; and other students who face disproportionate barriers to walking, biking, and rolling to school because of their group membership. This plan uses the term "priority populations" to refer to disproportionately impacted groups of students and other community members.

ENGAGEMENT

Working with students, families, school staff, and community members and organizations, especially those from priority populations, to identify needs, better understand barriers, and create solutions together for walking, biking, and rolling.

EVALUATION

Measuring how Safe Routes to School initiatives are implemented (process evaluation) and what their impacts are (outcome evaluation), especially how initiatives Engage with and support priority populations.

EDUCATION

Providing students and other community members, especially those from priority populations, with skills and knowledge about walking, biking, and rolling.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Normalizing a culture of walking, biking, and rolling through incentive programs, events, and activities that center priority populations.

ENGINEERING

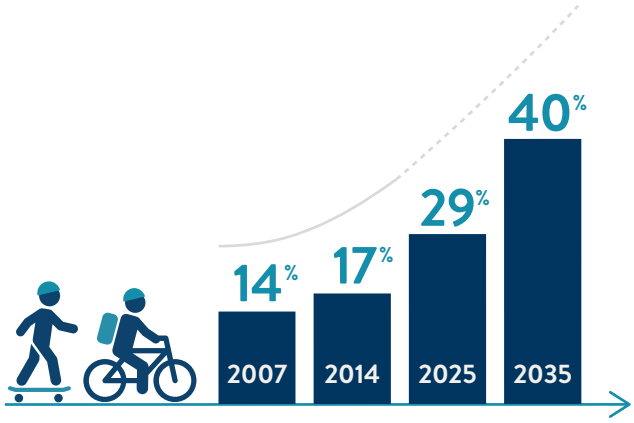
Developing Equity-focused changes to the built environment that support youth travel, designed and prioritized through community Engagement.


BOOKS
BOOKS
BOOKS

01. WHY SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL?

Why Safe Routes to School?

Today, less than 20% of K-8 students walk or bike to school, but as recently as 1970, nearly 50% of students walked or biked to school. Where schools and housing are located, how roads are designed, and how automobiles are regulated have all contributed to this decline. Through policy changes, infrastructure improvements, and programs, Safe Routes to School helps create physical and social environments that empower students, their families, and their communities to walk and bike more often. Communities that participate in Safe Routes to School also benefit from less air, noise, and water pollution; lower road maintenance costs; and more pleasant streetscapes for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers alike.



SRTS initiatives are contributing to more students and families walking and biking to school.

Most kids are not getting enough physical activity.

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

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

A 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

*More information, including primary sources, can be found at http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org.

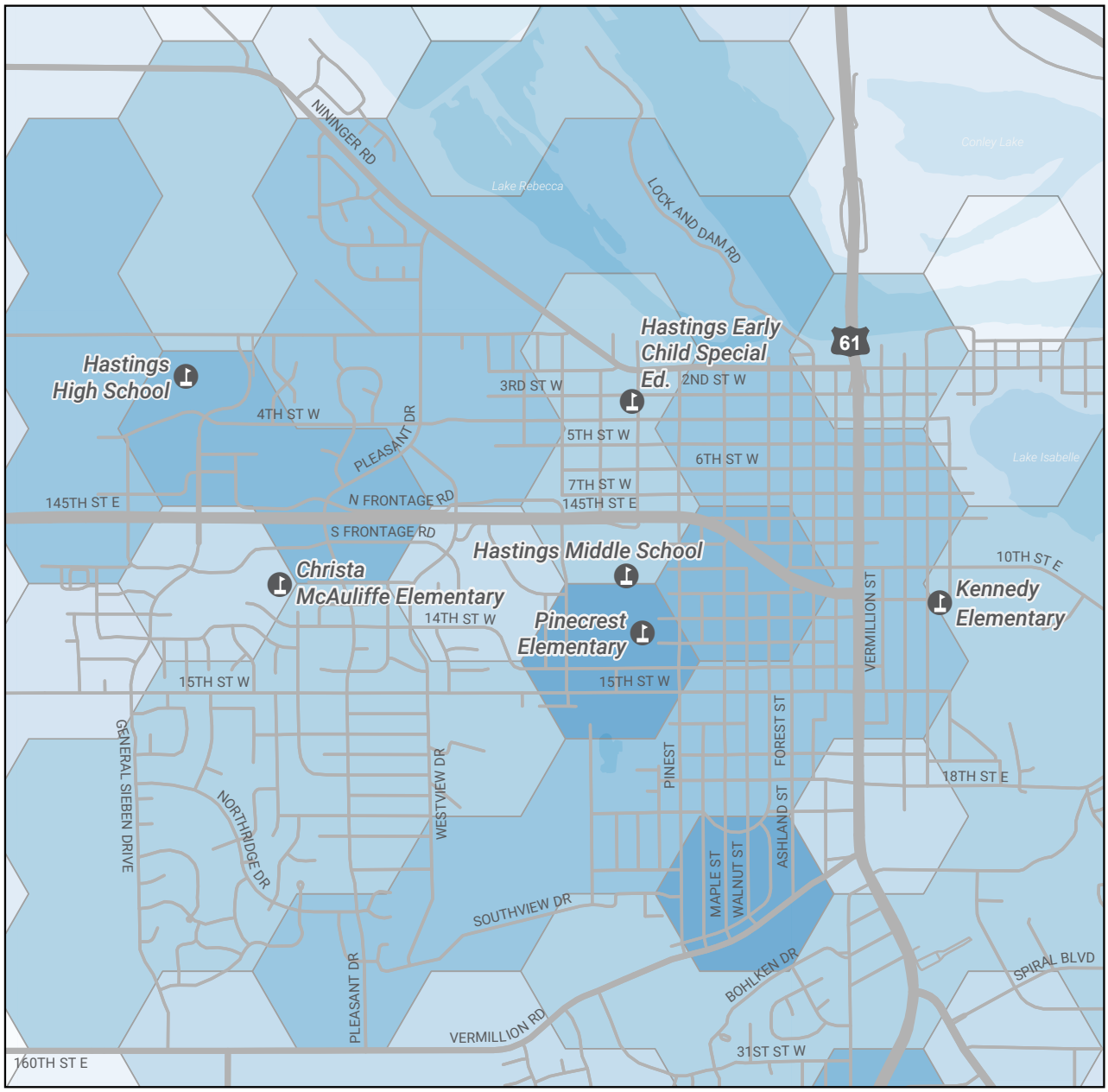
Equity in SRTS

Disparities in access to resources such as high-quality jobs, schools, parks, healthcare, food, and a full range of transportation choices impact the health and well-being of communities. These differences are not random—they are the results of government policy and funding in the past and present, which has worked to the benefit of some and to the disadvantage of others.

Equity in Safe Routes to School is impacted by transportation system inequities—such as limited access to high-quality walking and biking infrastructure or the presence of highways or busy roads in lower-income neighborhoods and neighborhoods with more BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) individuals—as well as inequities in related systems. For example, racial wealth inequities and racial discrimination in housing mean that BIPOC or lower-income students may live further away from schools than their white peers and those from higher-income families.

Safe Routes to School works to address these inequities through programs, infrastructure, and policy improvements that help priority populations. Priority populations include individuals, groups, and communities who are more likely to rely on walking, biking, or transit for transportation; are more vulnerable to unsafe traffic conditions; or have suffered historic disinvestment in safe, comfortable, walking and biking infrastructure.

By looking at demographic data, examining existing transportation services and policies, and speaking with members of the community, the Hastings Safe Routes to School team worked to develop recommendations that support equity in walking and biking to school. In Hastings, the equity map (next page) shows priority equity areas near Pinecrest Elementary, Hastings High School, northeast of McAuliffe Elementary, and in the southeastern corner of town.



HASTINGS
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

0 0.25 MILES

CHRISTA MCAULIFFE ELEMENTARY
HASTINGS EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL ED
HASTINGS HIGH
HASTINGS MIDDLE
KENNEDY ELEMENTARY
PINECREST ELEMENTARY

Active Transportation Equity Score

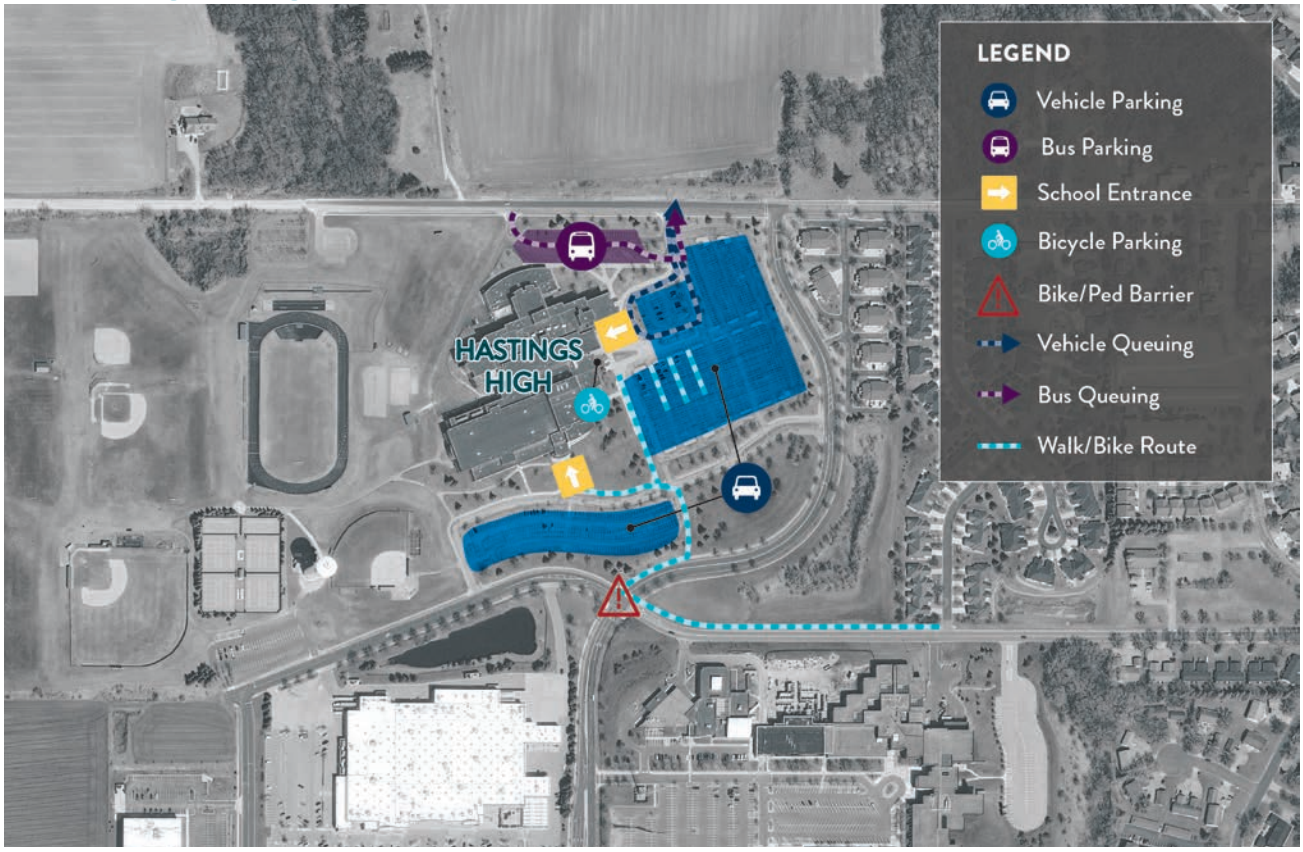
Lower Priority for Equity Investments

Higher Priority for Equity Investments

MINNESOTA SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

alta

Hastings High School



SITE CIRCULATION:

Pedestrians and Bicyclists: Some students walking from the east on 4th St W walk to the Walmart receiving driveway and cross there, cutting through the school south parking lot to access the entrance.

Students walking from parked cars through the parking lots sometimes face conflicts with vehicles.

School Buses: School buses drop off and pick up students in the loop at the back (north) of the school.

Vehicles: Parents and caregivers drop off and pick up students from the parking lot loop east of the building. Drivers enter the school grounds for drop-off and pickup from 1st St W and exit out of the same driveway. Students driving themselves enter and exit the school campus using driveways from General Sieben Dr and 4th St W. Site circulation:

SCHOOL CONTEXT:

- The distance within which busing is not provided is 1.75 miles, which encompasses most of town west of Highway 61 and north of 160th St E. Student residential locations are distributed throughout town, and many need to cross Highway 55 to access the high school.
- Hazard busing for students who live within the school's walk zone but cannot walk or bicycle due to unsafe conditions is not provided.
- Currently, Hastings High School students travel to and from school mostly by bus or family vehicle (about 80%). About 5-15% of students said they walked or biked to/from school, according to student travel tallies from Fall 2024 (Appendix H).
- There are higher-priority equity areas directly southeast of Hastings High School, as well as near

SCHOOL CONTEXT:*

Hastings High School

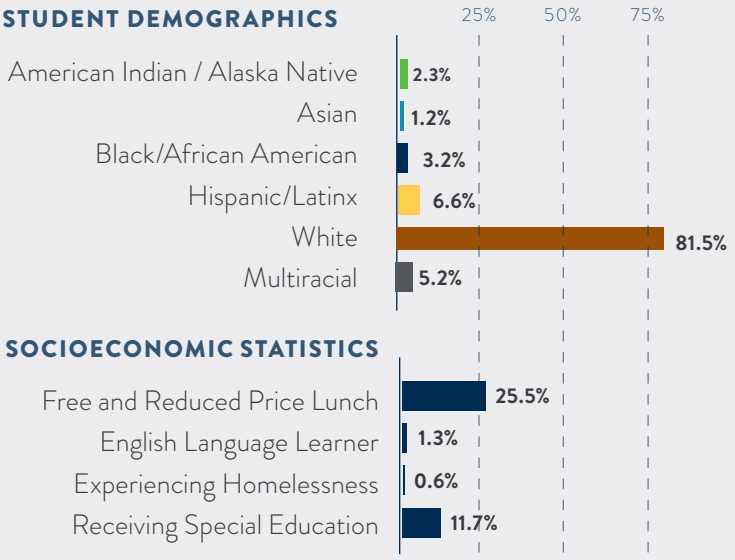
ENROLLMENT:

1390

GRADES SERVED:

9-12

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



SOCIOECONOMIC STATISTICS

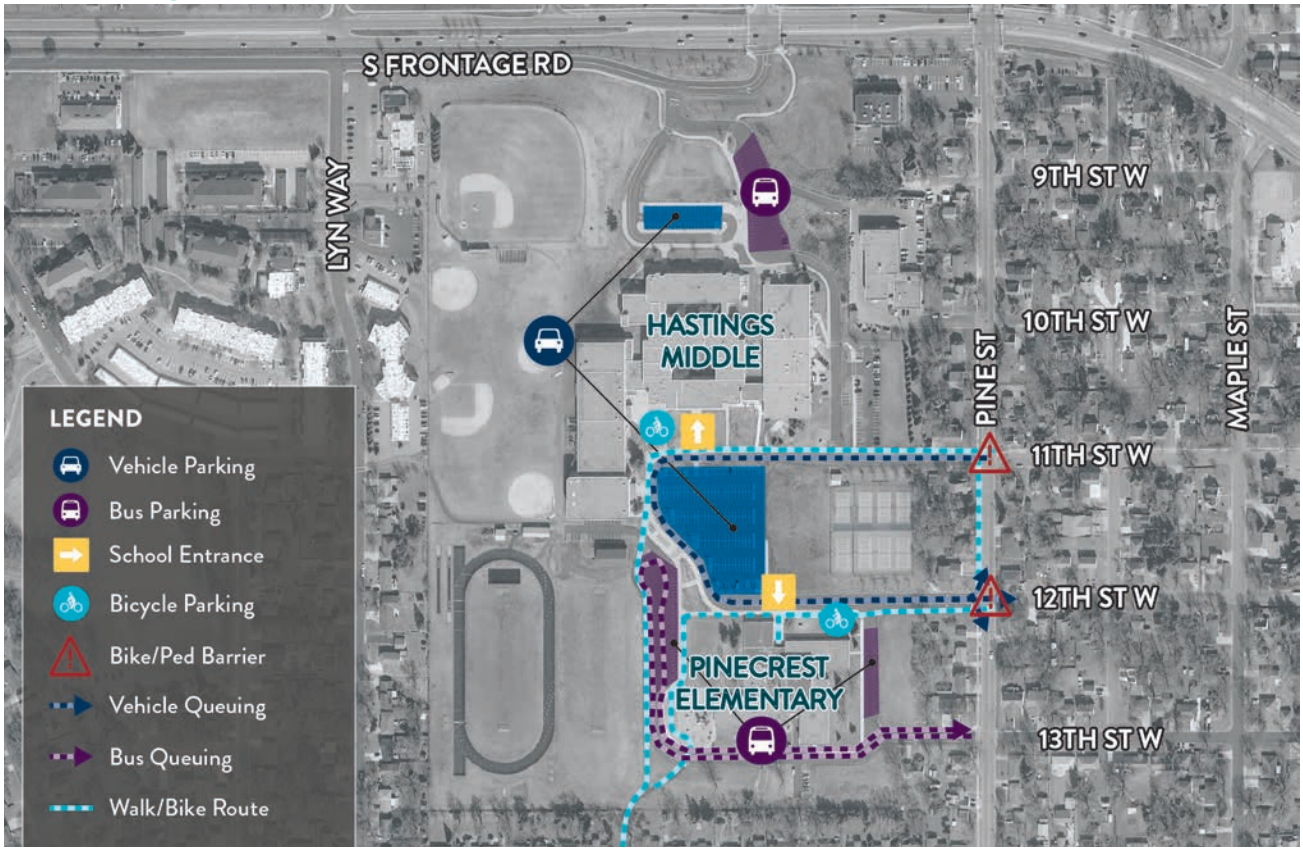
Source: SY 23-24 student enrollment data from Minnesota Department of Education.

Pinecrest Elementary and on the south side of town (map, page 9).

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

- The Hastings High School student population is predominantly White, with smaller subsets of students who are Hispanic/Latinx or Multiracial. Few students are Black, American Indian / Alaska Native, or Asian.
- The school's proportion of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (25.5%) is lower than that of the state of Minnesota as a whole (42.4%).

Hastings Middle School and Pinecrest Elementary



SITE CIRCULATION:

Pedestrians and Bicyclists: Students walk and bike to school from the east, crossing Pine St at 11th St W and 12th St W. There are crossing guards at both intersections at school arrival and dismissal times. Crossing guards set out small orange cones to create a temporary curb extension at the 11th St intersection to prevent drivers from doubling up in the lane to go around turning vehicles. Some students also walk from the south and connect with paths on the school campus.

School Buses: School buses drop off and pick up students in the loop at the south of the campus.

Vehicles: Parents and caregivers drop off and pick up students using the one-way loop connecting to 11th St W and 12th St W. Drivers enter the school grounds for drop-off and pickup on 11th St W and exit on 12th St W. The driveway exit at 12th St W has three lanes: left- and right-turn lanes and a center forward lane. Turning vehicles tend to inch forward, blocking the crosswalk.

SCHOOL CONTEXT:

- The distance within which busing is not provided for Pinecrest students is 0.75 miles, which encompasses much of town west of Highway 61 and north of Vermillion Rd. Most Pinecrest students live within the walk zone, and most do not have to cross a major barrier like Highway 55 or Highway 61. Pine St or 15th St W are likely the biggest barriers for most students.
- The distance within which busing is not provided for Middle School students is 1.75 miles, encompassing most of town. Student residential locations are distributed throughout town. Some students within the walk zone have to cross Highway 55 or Highway 61 to access the middle school.
- Hazard busing for students who live within the school's walk zone but cannot walk or bicycle due to unsafe conditions is not provided.
- Currently, Middle School and Pinecrest students travel to and from school mostly by bus or family

SCHOOL CONTEXT:*

Hastings Middle School

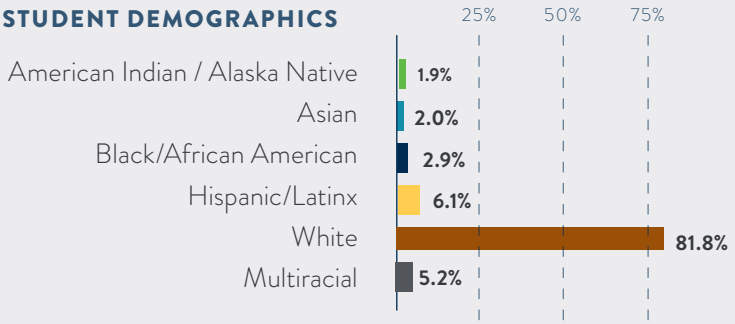
ENROLLMENT:

1178

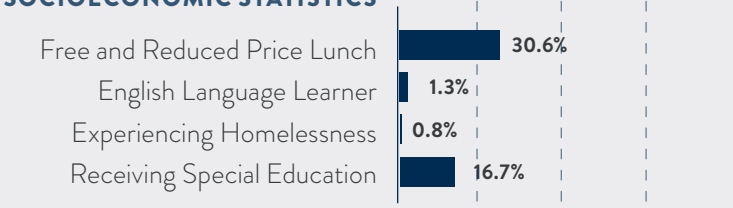
GRADES SERVED:

5-8

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



SOCIOECONOMIC STATISTICS



**Source: SY 23-24 student enrollment data from Minnesota Department of Education.*

vehicle (about 85%). About 5-15% of students said they walked or biked to/from school, according to student travel tallies from Fall 2024 (Appendix H).

- There are higher-priority equity areas directly southeast of Hastings High School, as well as near Pinecrest Elementary and on the south side of town (map, page 9).

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

- The Hastings Middle School student population is predominantly White, with smaller subsets of students who are Hispanic/Latinx or Multiracial. Few students are Black, American Indian / Alaska Native, or Asian.
- The school's proportion of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (30.6%) is lower than that of the state of Minnesota as a whole (42.4%).

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SCHOOL CONTEXT:*

Pinecrest Elementary

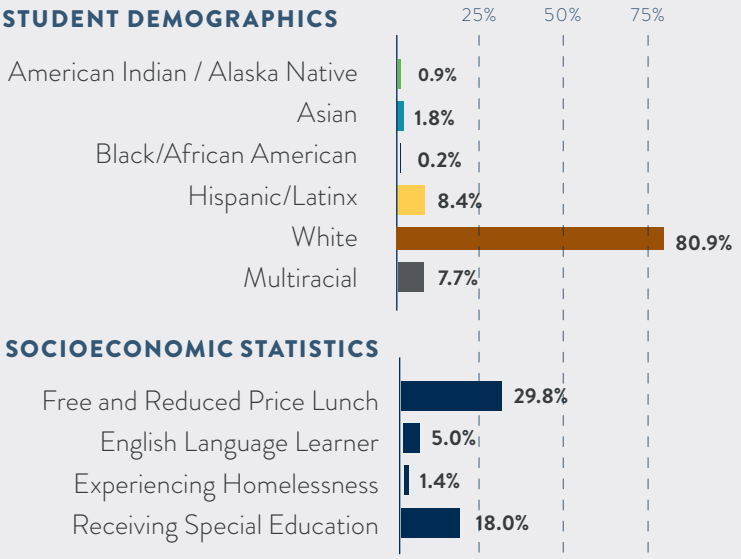
ENROLLMENT:

439

GRADES SERVED:

K-4

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



SOCIOECONOMIC STATISTICS

Source: SY 23-24 student enrollment data from Minnesota Department of Education.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

- The Pinecrest Elementary School student population is predominantly White, with smaller subsets of students who are Hispanic/Latinx or Multiracial. Few students are Black, American Indian / Alaska Native, or Asian.
- The school's proportion of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (29.8%) is lower than that of the state of Minnesota as a whole (42.4%).

Kennedy Elementary

SITE CIRCULATION:

Pedestrians and Bicyclists: Students walk and bike from the north, south, and west. Crossing guards help students cross 10th St E at Tyler St. There is a trail connection at 10th St E and Bailey St, but crossing 10th St E can be a barrier. The Minnesota River Trail runs behind the school and to the southeast.

School Buses: School buses drop off and pick up students in the loop at the front (west) of the school.

Vehicles: Parents and caregivers drop off and pick up students in the parking lot north of the building. Drivers also park cars along Tyler St and 11th St E, which can cause congestion and conflicts between drivers and students walking from parked cars.

SCHOOL CONTEXT:

- The distance within which busing is not provided is 0.5 miles. The walking area includes sections of town east of Highway 61 between Bailey St and 18th St. Student residential locations are mostly east of Highway 61. There are a fair number of students living outside the walk zone in the southern part of town.
- Hazard busing for students who live within the school's walk zone but cannot walk or bicycle due to unsafe conditions is not provided.
- Currently, Kennedy Elementary School students travel to and from school mostly by bus or family vehicle (about 90%). About 5-10% of students said they walked or biked to/from school, according to student travel tallies from Fall 2024 (Appendix H).

SCHOOL CONTEXT:*

Kennedy Elementary

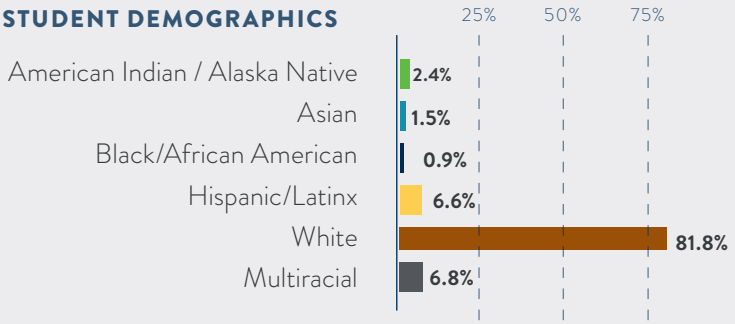
ENROLLMENT:

455

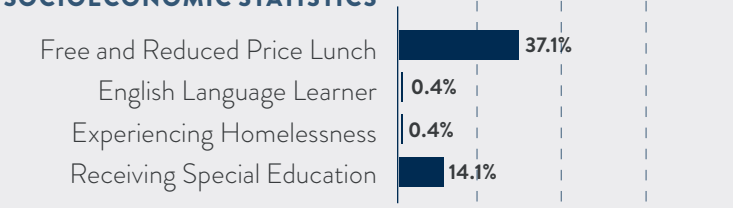
GRADES SERVED:

K-4

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



SOCIOECONOMIC STATISTICS

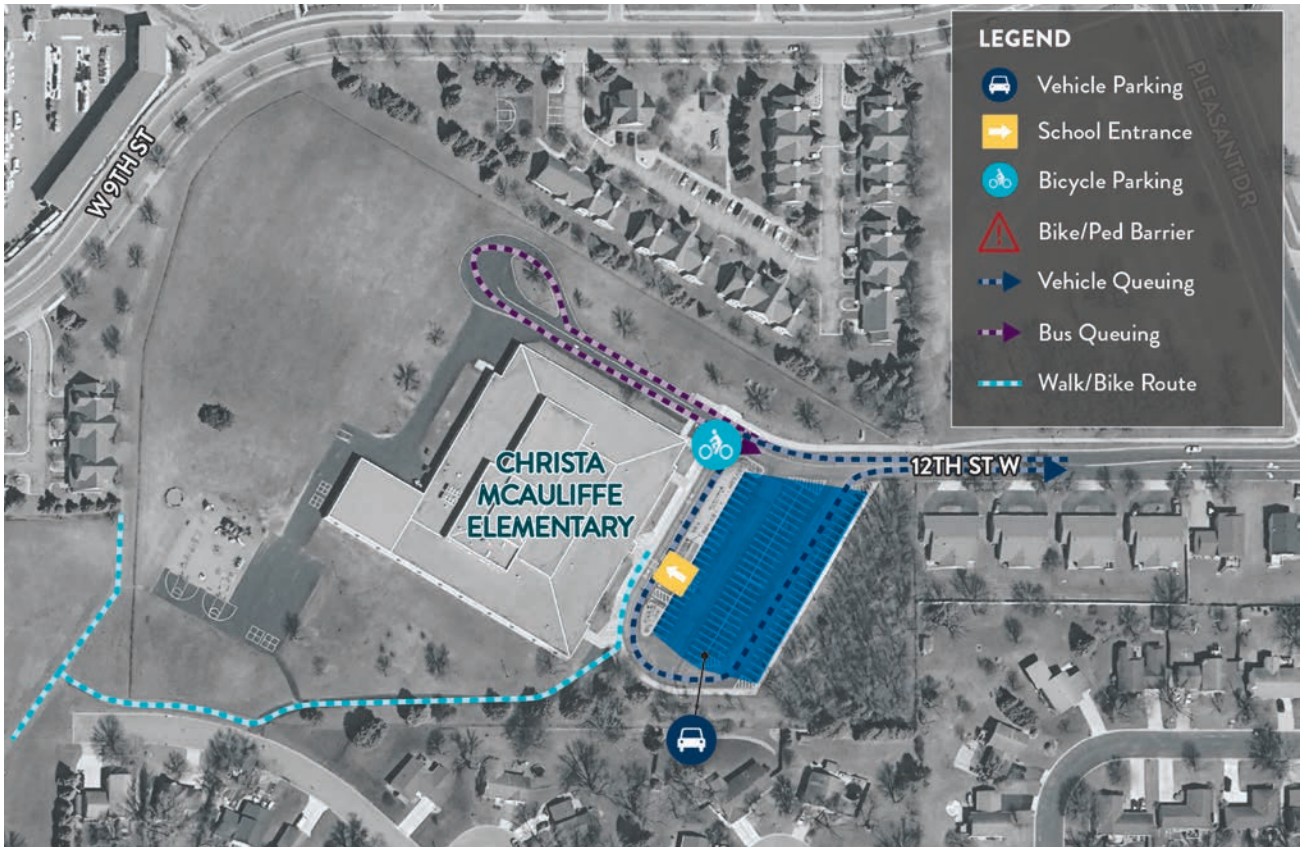


Source: SY 23-24 student enrollment data from Minnesota Department of Education.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

- The Kennedy Elementary School student population is predominantly White, with small subsets of students who are Multiracial or Hispanic/Latinx. Few students are Black, American Indian / Alaska Native, or Asian.
- The school's proportion of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (37.1%) is lower than that of the state of Minnesota as a whole (42.4%).

McAuliffe Elementary



SITE CIRCULATION:

Pedestrians and Bicyclists: Students walk and bike to school from neighborhoods to the west and south on trails connecting to the school campus.

School Buses: School buses drop off and pick up students in the loop at the back (northwest) of the school.

Vehicles: Parents and caregivers drop off and pick up students from the parking lot loop east of the building. Drivers enter the school grounds for drop-off and pickup from 12th St W and exit out of the same driveway.

SCHOOL CONTEXT:

- The distance within which busing is not provided is 0.5 miles. The walking area is roughly between Highway 55 to the north, 19th St W to the south, General Sieben Dr to the west, and Westview Dr to the east. Student residential locations are distributed throughout the southeast part of town, with a large proportion of students also living north of Highway 55. Many who live north of Highway 55 are within a half mile of school and could walk or bike to school if not for the barrier posed by Highway 55.
- Hazard busing for students who live within the school's walk zone but cannot walk or bicycle due to unsafe conditions is not provided.
- Currently, McAuliffe Elementary School students travel to and from school mostly by bus or family vehicle (about 90%). About 5-10% of students said

SCHOOL CONTEXT:*

McAuliffe Elementary

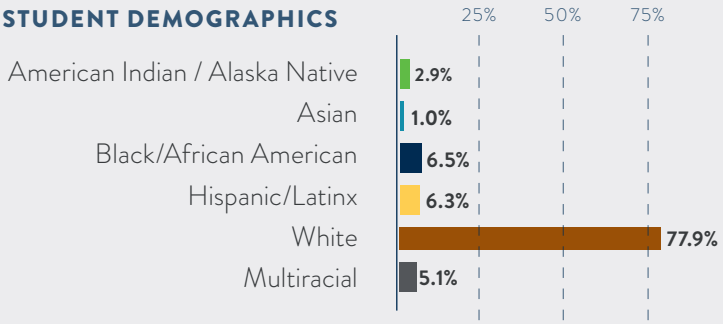
ENROLLMENT:

489

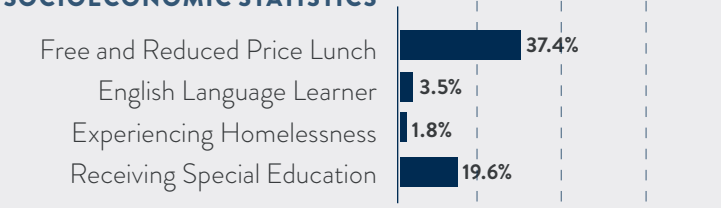
GRADES SERVED:

K-4

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



SOCIOECONOMIC STATISTICS



Source: SY 23-24 student enrollment data from Minnesota Department of Education.

they walked or biked to/from school, according to student travel tallies from Fall 2024 (Appendix H).

- There are higher-priority equity areas directly north and northeast of McAuliffe Elementary (map, page 9).

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

- The Christa McAuliffe Elementary School student population is predominantly White, with smaller subsets of students who are Hispanic/Latinx or Black. Few students are Multiracial, American Indian / Alaska Native, or Asian.
- The school's proportion of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (37.4%) is lower than that of the state of Minnesota as a whole (42.4%).

Developing the Plan

The Hastings SRTS plan was developed based on issues and opportunities identified through stakeholder and community engagement, data evaluation and a site visit including a walk audit and observation of student arrival to school and dismissal from school. Hastings' SRTS team met regularly through the planning process to give feedback at key milestones. The larger SRTS team and stakeholders including the City of Hastings, Dakota County SHIP, and MnDOT participated in the Rapid Planning Workshop, site visit and Action Planning Workshop.

The following sections in this SRTS plan include findings from stakeholder engagement, data analysis, and observations during the site visit. More details including maps and an engagement summary are in the Appendices. Recommendations are organized into two sections: 1) Infrastructure and 2) Programs.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement included a survey for caregivers, an interactive engagement webmap, in-person engagement, and the Rapid Planning Workshop.

Key takeaways from engagement include:

- Highway 55, Highway 61, Vermillion Road and the Vermillion River are major barriers for walking and biking to school.
- Families desire new infrastructure and/or crossing guards at busy intersections where drivers do not look for pedestrians.
- Some families don't consider walking or biking to/from school as an option because they live over two miles away from school.

Caregivers were asked what would help their child walk or bike more often. They identified the following, in order of most to least commonly chosen:

- Safer intersections/crossings
- A shorter distance to walk or bike
- A group of students to walk or bike with
- Less traffic along the route
- An adult to walk or bike with
- Crossing guards/student patrols
- More/better sidewalks or pathways
- Better snow/ice removal
- Slower car speeds along the route
- Learning traffic rules/regulations

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02. INFRASTRUCTURE

Introduction to Infrastructure

Physical changes to the streetscape are essential to making walking, biking, and rolling to school safer and more comfortable.

An in-person walk audit and discussions with the Safe Routes to School Team, school and district staff, caregivers, students, community members, and city and county staff informed recommendations to address key barriers to walking and biking around Hastings.

Recommendations are prioritized on the basis of community and stakeholder input, traffic and roadway conditions, cost, number of students impacted, and benefit to priority populations. This planning process was designed to address historical and contemporary inequities in who benefits from and who is burdened by transportation systems, and equity considerations accordingly played a central role in the prioritization of infrastructure recommendations. Especially in the winter months, improved maintenance and lighting can contribute to improving equitable access to walking and biking routes, even where a sidewalk or path is present.

WINTER MAINTENANCE

For students and community members with disabilities, winter maintenance is key to being able to access sidewalks and trails during snowy months. This is also true for students and families who walk and roll as their primary means of transportation, either because they cannot afford or choose not to own a vehicle, or because other transportation options aren't accessible to them. Cities can adopt policies that prioritize winter maintenance of existing infrastructure and make it easier for the most vulnerable users of our transportation system – including students – to get around in winter. These policies help to increase transparency and improve reliability for the active transportation network.

For example, they can:

- Adopt policies that prioritize snow clearing and removal on active transportation facilities.
- Prioritize clearing of routes that provide access to transit.
- Develop and share information publicly regarding sidewalk and shared use pathway snow clearing and removal practices.
- Hold a winter maintenance forum or conduct a survey around specific winter engagement concerns.
- Work with schools to establish volunteer groups of residents to clear sidewalks on priority routes to school.

LIGHTING AND VISIBILITY

Similarly, lighting for people walking and biking is important for both actual and perceived sense of safety and security. In winter climates like Minnesota, where darker days mean school arrival and dismissal can occur in the dark, lighting is especially important for mitigating safety concerns and encouraging active transportation throughout the year.

While lighting can sometimes be seen as a costly investment, it is an important step for ensuring equitable access to walking and biking routes. Lighting should be seen as a necessary component of bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements, not seen as a potential add-on or "nice to have."

Communities can consider:

- Creating a lighting plan for priority pedestrian routes to install trail or sidewalk lighting over time
- Partnerships with or requirements for private development to provide lighting
- Incorporating high-visibility safety vests into crossing guard and walking school bus events
- Give-aways that help kids access winter gear such as clothing or bike lights

RECOMMENDATIONS OVERVIEW

This plan does not represent a comprehensive list of every project that could improve conditions for walking and bicycling in Hastings. Instead, it calls attention to existing key conflict points identified during the planning process and potential improvements. Recommendations range from simple striping changes to more significant dimensional changes to streets, intersections, and school infrastructure.

Priority infrastructure recommendations include:

- Coordinate with MnDOT projects on Highway 61 and Highway 55 to include traffic calming and pedestrian safety elements.
- Coordinate with Todd Field construction to reduce vehicle volumes near the stadium and provide spaces for safer pedestrian travel and placemaking.
- Improve pedestrian safety at crossings near schools. Consider demonstration projects or quick-build to test concepts.

The City of Hastings, Dakota County, and MnDOT were important partners in developing this plan. Recommendations identified in this plan are not necessarily endorsed by these agencies, but are planning-level concepts that will require additional engineering design.

Cost estimates are not included here, but once project design is farther along, *MnDOT's resource Minnesota's Best Practices for Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety* is a good resource, and can be accessed here: https://edocs-public.dot.state.mn.us/edocs_public/DMResultSet/download?docId=20072588

Infrastructure Opportunities

4TH ST W AND GENERAL SIEBEN RD

RECOMMENDATION

A mill and overlay is planned on 4th St, which presents an opportunity to assess the alignment of crosswalks, the ADA compliance of pedestrian ramps, and sidewalk and trail condition. Consider improvements to shorten crossing distance and enhance visibility, such as high-visibility crosswalks, curb extensions, or roadway reallocation.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This intersection is an important access point for students walking or biking to the High School. There is heavy car traffic at school arrival and dismissal times. The intersection is currently a four-way stop with multiple lanes in each direction (turn lanes and through lanes). The diagonal alignment of the crosswalk markings creates a long path for people walking across the intersection. The adjacent trails and sidewalks are in poor condition.

PRIORITY Medium ○●○

School stakeholders supported this project as it will provide significant safety and comfort benefits for students walking and biking to/from school.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City of Hastings< Hastings Public Schools

HIGHWAY 55

RECOMMENDATION

Consider short-term crossing improvements as part of the upcoming signal improvement project, including leading pedestrian intervals and prohibiting right turns on red. Consider including ADA scoping to integrate ADA improvements in the signal improvement project.

Longer-term improvements to improve pedestrian crossings could include curb reconfiguration, especially near schools, roadway reallocation, or traffic calming.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

Highway 55 can be a barrier for students traveling to and from school around the city. The intersection with General Sieben Rd is particularly challenging (see B1, next page).

There is an upcoming signal improvement project on Highway 55. A reconstruction project is planned for 2032 or later, although it could be a less extensive pavement maintenance project.

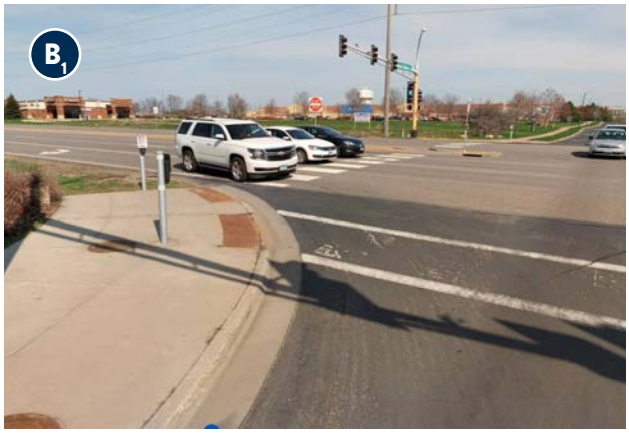
PRIORITY High ●○○

Highway 55 was commonly discussed as a barrier for students to walk and bike to school during engagement with the school community. The high speed of traffic and the large size of intersections make caregivers wary of allowing students to walk or bike to school if they need to cross Highway 55.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

MnDOT, City of Hastings

HIGHWAY 55 AND GENERAL SIEBEN DR



RECOMMENDATION

Consider crossing improvements, such as curb reconfigurations, pedestrian refuge islands, leading pedestrian intervals, and/or prohibiting right turns on red.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This intersection near the High School and McAuliffe Elementary was identified through public engagement as particularly challenging for students to cross.

It is identified in the 2021 Hastings People Movement Plan as a potential location for an improved crossing.

PRIORITY Medium ○●○

This intersection is near the High School campus, and improvements are supported by school and district stakeholders and public engagement findings.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

MnDOT, City of Hastings

PLEASANT DR

RECOMMENDATION

At intersections, including 4th St W, 12th St W, and 15th St W, evaluate alignment of crosswalks. Consider improvements to shorten crossing distance and improve visibility, such as high-visibility crosswalks, roadway reallocation, and/or curb extensions. Consider testing designs with a demonstration project.

Pleasant Dr from Highway 55 to County State Aid Highway 42 will be reconstructed in 2026. There will be a trail on one side of the road.

Consider bike/pedestrian origins and destinations when choosing the side of the road for the trail. Consider locating the trail on the west side of the road to avoid the First National Bank driveway and so the trail is on the same side of Pleasant Dr as the schools.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

Intersections along the corridor came up during public engagement as posing challenges including long pedestrian crossings and inconsistent driver compliance with crossing guard signs.

PRIORITY Medium ○●○

The upcoming reconstruction is an opportunity to address challenging intersections.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City of Hastings

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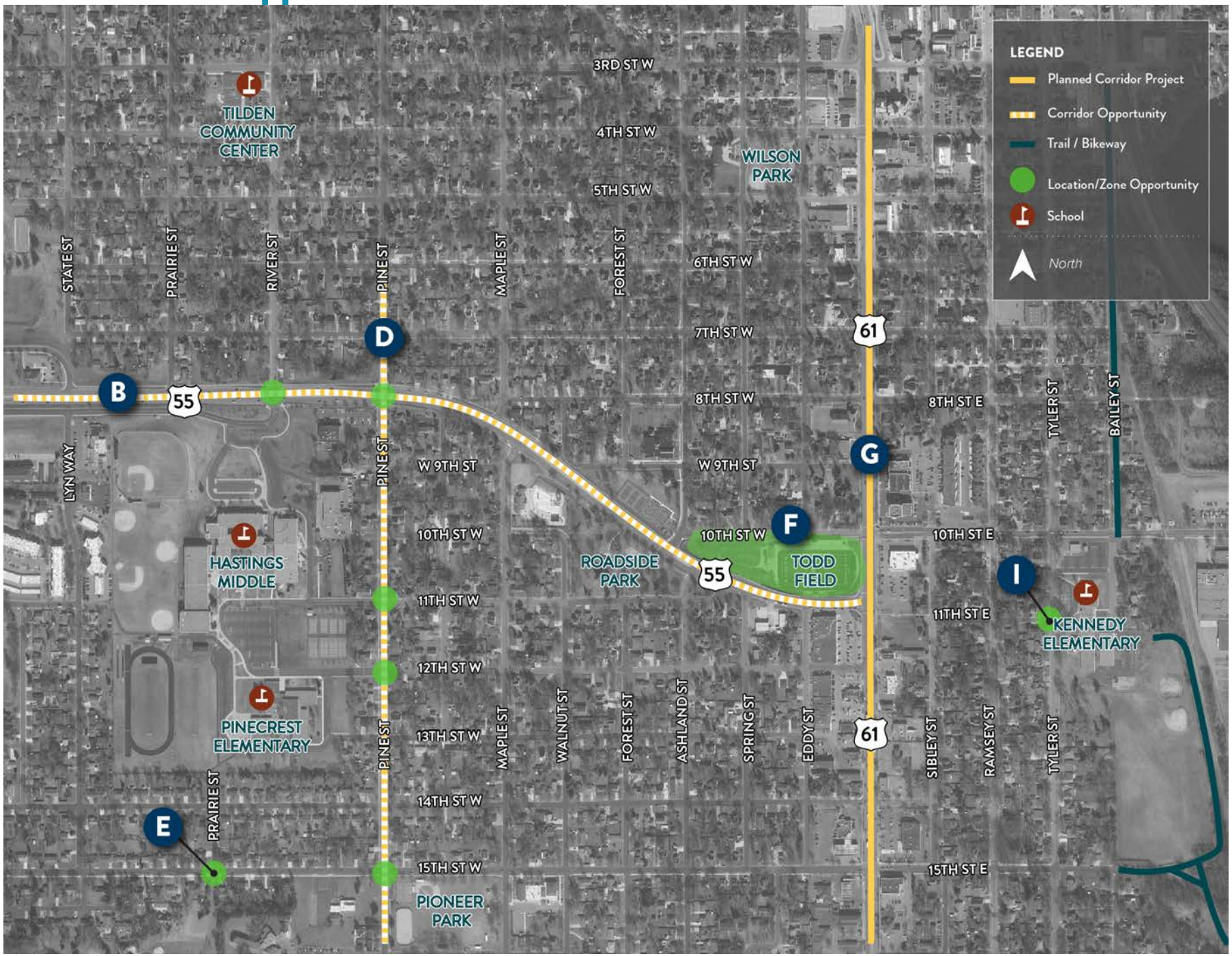
Infrastructure Opportunities



HIGHWAY 55 AND RIVER ST

RECOMMENDATION

Consider crossing improvements, such as curb reconfigurations, pedestrian refuge islands, leading pedestrian intervals, and/or prohibiting right turns on red.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This intersection, adjacent to the Middle School campus, was identified through public engagement as particularly challenging for young children to cross. It is identified in the People Movement Plan as a potential location for an improved crossing.

PRIORITY High ●○○

This intersection is near the Middle School and Pinecrest campus, and improvements are supported by school and district stakeholders and public engagement findings.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

MnDOT, City of Hastings

HIGHWAY 55 AND PINE ST

RECOMMENDATION

Consider crossing improvements, such as curb reconfiguration, pedestrian refuge islands, leading pedestrian intervals, and/or prohibiting right turns on red.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This intersection was identified through public engagement as particularly challenging for young children to cross. It is identified in People Movement Plan as a potential location for an improved crossing.

PRIORITY High ●○○

This intersection is near the Middle School and Pinecrest campus, and improvements are supported by school and district stakeholders and public engagement findings.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

MnDOT, City of Hastings

PINE ST

RECOMMENDATION

Consider crossing enhancements, especially near schools (11th St and 12th St). Potential improvements could include high-visibility crosswalk markings, RRFB, and/or traffic calming elements such as mini-roundabouts or curb extensions. Evaluate signage along the corridor to reduce visual clutter and highlight school crossing signs. Consider testing designs with a demonstration project.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

Pine St can be a barrier for students walking or biking to and from the middle school and Pinecrest. Intersections including 11th St, 12th St, and 15th St are particularly challenging. Crossing guards currently help students cross 11th St and 12th St at school arrival and dismissal times.

Vehicles turning through the intersection of 15th St and Pine St were identified through stakeholder engagement as a hazard.

PRIORITY High ●○○

School stakeholders supported improvements at this location as they would provide significant safety and comfort benefits for students. A fair number of students live within the walk zone, but must cross Pine St to get to/from school.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City of Hastings, Hastings Public Schools

15TH ST AND PRAIRIE ST

RECOMMENDATION

Consider adding additional traffic calming elements or enhanced crossing improvements, such as RRFB. When establishing citywide warrants for RRFB, consider including proximity to school(s) as one of the factors.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

The intersection of Prairie St with a trail that connects residential areas south of 15th St with the Middle School/Pinecrest campuses was identified through public engagement as challenging for young children to cross.

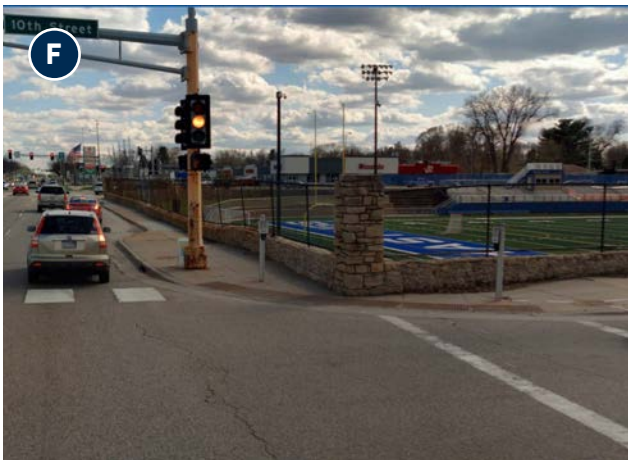
PRIORITY Medium ○●○

Recent improvements have been made at this crossing location to reduce crossing distances. Additional traffic calming could slow traffic and improve visibility to increase safety and comfort for students crossing.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City of Hastings, Hastings Public Schools

TODD FIELD AREA



RECOMMENDATION

Reducing car volumes around the stadium and converting 10th St W to a one-way street will provide safety benefits for people walking, biking, and driving through the area.

Increased pedestrian/plaza space will allow for placemaking.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

The area surrounding the stadium can become busy during football games and other events with street parking and people walking from parked cars.

PRIORITY Medium ○●○

While this intersection is not directly adjacent to a school, the Highway 61 project and associated construction on streets surrounding Todd Field is an opportunity to consider improvements at nearby intersections to improve pedestrian safety.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

MnDOT, City of Hastings

HIGHWAY 61

RECOMMENDATION

Consider roadway reconfiguration to improve safety at key pedestrian crossings, with traffic calming such as curb extensions and/or truck aprons.

Where possible, extend medians or harden centerlines at intersections with pedestrian crossings. Consider adding forward stop bars and associated “Stop Here” signs and/or RRFBs at key pedestrian crossings to improve safety.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This busy highway bisects the town, passing through downtown Hastings. Middle and high school students who live east of Highway 61 must cross the highway to get to school.

A full reconstruction of Highway 61 is planned for Fall 2027–Fall 2028.

PRIORITY Medium ○●○

The MnDOT project provides the opportunity to create safe pedestrian crossings of Highway 61, especially at key intersections, such as 4th St, 10th St, and Hwy 55. This will support walking and biking for students who need to cross Highway 61 to get to and from school.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

MnDOT, City of Hastings

11TH ST E AND TYLER ST

RECOMMENDATION

Limit parking on one side of the Tyler St during school drop-off hours.

Consider a school street pilot on Tyler St or 11th St or both, or changes to traffic circulation during drop-off and pickup.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

During school drop-off, drivers park on both sides of 11th St, which is a narrow residential street perpendicular to Tyler St, the street the school is on. Drop-off can feel disorganized and chaotic, with car traffic and students walking and biking to school.

PRIORITY Medium ○●○

School stakeholders supported improvements at this location as they would provide safety benefits for students walking and biking to school. There are a fair number of students who already walk or bike to Kennedy Elementary, and infrastructure or program changes could support them and increase interest in walking or biking.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City of Hastings, Hastings Public Schools

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03. PROGRAMS

Introduction to Programs

Programs are opportunities to increase awareness, understanding, and excitement around walking, biking, and rolling to school.

Programs are focused on educating students, families, and the broader community about walking and biking. Programs also help to build a culture that supports and normalizes walking and biking to school and other destinations. Because programs are low cost and can often be implemented quickly by an individual school or the school district, they represent an important Safe Routes to School strategy that complements longer-term strategies, including infrastructure improvements and policy changes.

Program Recommendations

EXISTING PROGRAMS

Hastings has a great start with existing walking and biking programs and a previous SRTS plan for the middle school. There is potential to build on existing programs and establish new ones to encourage more students to walk and bike.

Active or previously implemented programs include:

- Crossing guards at the elementary and middle schools
- An active bike train at Kennedy Elementary
- A district-wide bike rodeo partnering with the local police department, Children's MN, and the mountain bike club
- Walk and Roll to School Day
- Safety camp hosted by City of Hastings with Hastings Community Education contributing
- Bike safety day at preschool

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Conversations with school and district staff, caregivers, students, community members, and city and county staff led to the following program recommendations. Programs were identified to meet the needs, capacities, and interests of the community and were prioritized based on existing programs, input from local stakeholders, the extent to which the program would serve priority equity populations, and the readiness of the school to launch the program.

Recommended Programs:

- Drop and walk
- Walking school bus and bike train
- Bike rodeo
- Walk and bike education
- Walk, bike, and roll to school days
- School streets
- Bike fleet

EQUITABLE IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Each of the recommended programs can be implemented to benefit priority populations. In some cases, programs are inherently beneficial, but other times they require intentional thought to make sure they are implemented equitably and reach students who could benefit the most from them.

When working to start a new or update an old program, school staff and partners should ask themselves:

- Who could benefit the most from this program?
- Are there any barriers to participating in this program, including cultural, social, or financial?
- Are there any school resources that can help reduce barriers to participation?
- Are there community partners who could help us spread the word about this program, or help make it more effective?

After an event, it is also important to think about what went well and what could be improved in the future. Helpful questions to consider include:

- Is this a one-off program, or is there a way to provide ongoing support for it?
- Were any student or family groups absent? Is there something that could help them participate in the future?
- What did students think of the event? Families? Staff?

Taking a few minutes before and after an event to check in on these questions can make a big difference in building a culture of walking and biking that is accessible to all students and families.

DROP AND WALK

During a drop-and-walk event (also called park and walk) bus drivers and caregivers drop students at a designated off-campus location and students walk to school from there. Remote drop-off events can help reduce congestion on campus and provide students who live further from school with an opportunity to walk.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
School communications can encourage families driving to school to drop students at a central location.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
Walking part of the way to school provides students an opportunity to start their day with activity and spend time in green space.

How will this address transportation inequities?
This program will promote walking and will address transportation inequities for students who live outside the walking area. In Hastings, 30-60% of students in all grades ride the school bus, and another 30-50% arrive in a family vehicle.

How will this be evaluated?
Annual caregiver survey.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
Students, school staff, crossing guards.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Medium term (2 years).

WALKING SCHOOL BUS AND BIKE TRAIN

A Walking School Bus or Bike Train is a group of students walking or bicycling to school with one or more adults. Parents, caregivers, or even older students can take turns leading the group, which follows the same route every time and picks up children from their homes or bus stops at designated times. An existing bike train at Kennedy Elementary could be a model for other schools.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
Parents or caregivers of students who already walk or bike to school can organize along their current route. School staff can share materials with families to support the initiative.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
These events build enthusiasm for walking and biking, and help parents and caregivers feel more confident in their student's safety getting to school.

How will this address transportation inequities?
These groups help parents or caregivers who have inflexible work schedules, such as shift work, feel confident that their student can get to school safely.

How will this be evaluated?
Student participation counts.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
Students, parents/caregivers, and school staff.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Medium term (2 years).

BIKE RODEO

Bicycle safety education should involve comprehensive skills-based sessions designed to encourage students to bike more, by giving them the knowledge and skills they need to be able to ride a bike safely and confidently. Events such as bike rodeos can teach bike-handling skills, as well as knowledge about the rules of the road and safe cycling practices. Hastings can carry forward momentum from the 2025 bike rodeo to future events.

When, where, and how will this be implemented? The City and school could partner on an annual bike rodeo event held at the school.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
Bike rodeos are a skill-building event, providing students and families an opportunity to learn if they are not confident on a bicycle.

How will this address transportation inequities?
If paired with a bike donation event or the addition of a Hastings bike fleet, this event will support all students' knowledge of and comfort with biking.

How will this be evaluated?
Student participation counts.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
City, district, and school staff; local law enforcement; volunteers; community/business partners.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Current/short term (1 year).

WALK/BIKE EDUCATION

Walk! Bike! Fun! is a two-part curriculum designed specifically to meet Minnesota education standards. The program helps students ages 5 to 13 learn traffic rules and regulations, the potential hazards to traveling, and handling skills needed to bike and walk effectively, appropriately, and safely through their community.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
Physical education or health teachers can integrate Walk! Bike! Fun! as a component in their annual curriculum for students of all ages.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
Walk! Bike! Fun! is tailored to meet physical education standards for students in Minnesota.

How will this address transportation inequities?
In-school curriculum provides all students an opportunity to engage with walking and biking safety, regardless of the resources available to them outside school.

How will this be evaluated?
Student participation counts.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
School staff, Bike MN, students.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Medium term (2-3 years).

WALK AND BIKE TO SCHOOL DAYS

National Walk and Bike to School Days engage millions of students and families every October and May. Minnesota also celebrates Winter Walk to School Day in February. Additional education and encouragement programming can increase awareness and expand participation. Events can also take place more frequently (e.g., Walking Wednesdays) if there's interest and capacity.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
In October, February, and May to start, adults or high school students can lead walking or biking groups along pre-identified routes. MnDOT provides materials and contests to promote the events.

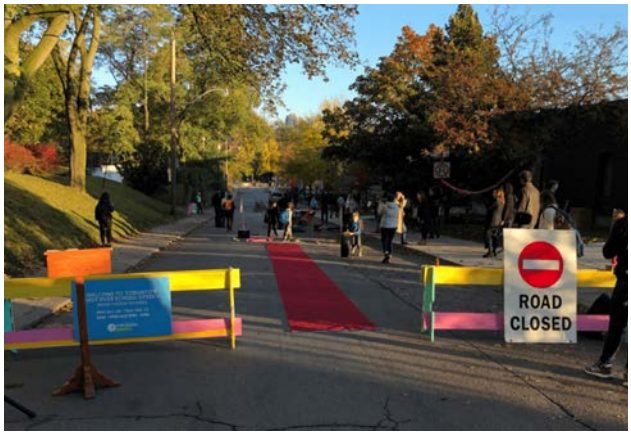
Why is this relevant and recommended?
These events build enthusiasm for walking and biking, and help families try out new transportation options/routines. This could be a great volunteer opportunity for Hastings High School students.

How will this address transportation inequities?
Coordinated events make walking and biking accessible to students disproportionately impacted by unsafe crossings.

How will this be evaluated?
Annual caregiver survey, student participation counts.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
School staff, students, parents.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Short term (1 year).



SCHOOL STREETS

School Streets are temporary car-free zones adjacent to or leading up to a school that are strategically closed to vehicle traffic and opened to children walking, biking, and rolling. School Streets help manage traffic and improve safety during school arrival and dismissal by eliminating vehicle congestion in front of schools and creating an environment where children can safely walk, bike, roll, play and learn before, during, and after school.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
11th St E and/or Tyler St along Kennedy Elementary could be established as a "School Street" by closing it to through traffic and working with staff to supervise the area before/after school.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
This eliminates through traffic along this portion of the school and creates a new space for students to engage in physical activity before and after school.

How will this address transportation inequities?
A School Street provides additional space for recreation for all students. This allows students who might not have the opportunity to walk or bike to school with recreation time.

How will this be evaluated?
Student participation counts.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
Students, parents/caregivers, and school staff.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Medium term (2-3 years).

BIKE FLEET

Access to bicycles is a key to educating students on safe bicycling skills. BikeMN has a bike fleet that is available for use at school events, including biking field trips or in conjunction with Walk! Bike! Fun! education. The school or district could also apply for their own bike fleet to have greater access. Fleets often include about 30 to 40 bicycles (including adaptive bicycles) helmets, basic supplies, and a trailer to store and move equipment.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
School or district staff can apply for a MnDOT Boost grant to acquire a bike fleet. Schools can also partner with BikeMN to use their bike fleet for bike education efforts.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
Bike fleets help students learn basic skills and enjoy bike field trips.

How will this address transportation inequities?
A bike fleet provides access for students who may not have access to a bicycle outside school hours; especially for students with special needs or mobility considerations.

How will this be evaluated?
Student participation counts.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
School/district staff.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Medium term (2-3 years).

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04. WORKING FOR CHANGE

Action Steps

This plan provides two critical ingredients for creating a more equitable transportation system around Hastings: prioritized sets of infrastructure and program recommendations. To make these recommendations a reality, all members of the Hastings community can play a role. The following text provides ideas for where to start.

PRIORITY SRTS INITIATIVES

- Coordinate with MnDOT projects on Highway 61 and Highway 55 to include traffic calming and pedestrian safety elements.
- Coordinate with Todd Field construction to reduce vehicle volumes near the stadium and provide spaces for safer pedestrian travel and placemaking.
- Improve pedestrian safety at crossings near schools. Consider demonstration projects or quick-build to test concepts.
- Implement programs (e.g., drop and walk, walking school bus/bike train) to make walking and biking more comfortable and accessible to students

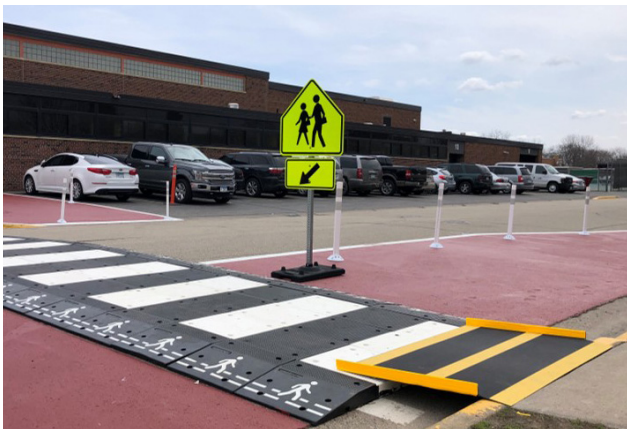
IMPLEMENTING INFRASTRUCTURE CHANGES

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

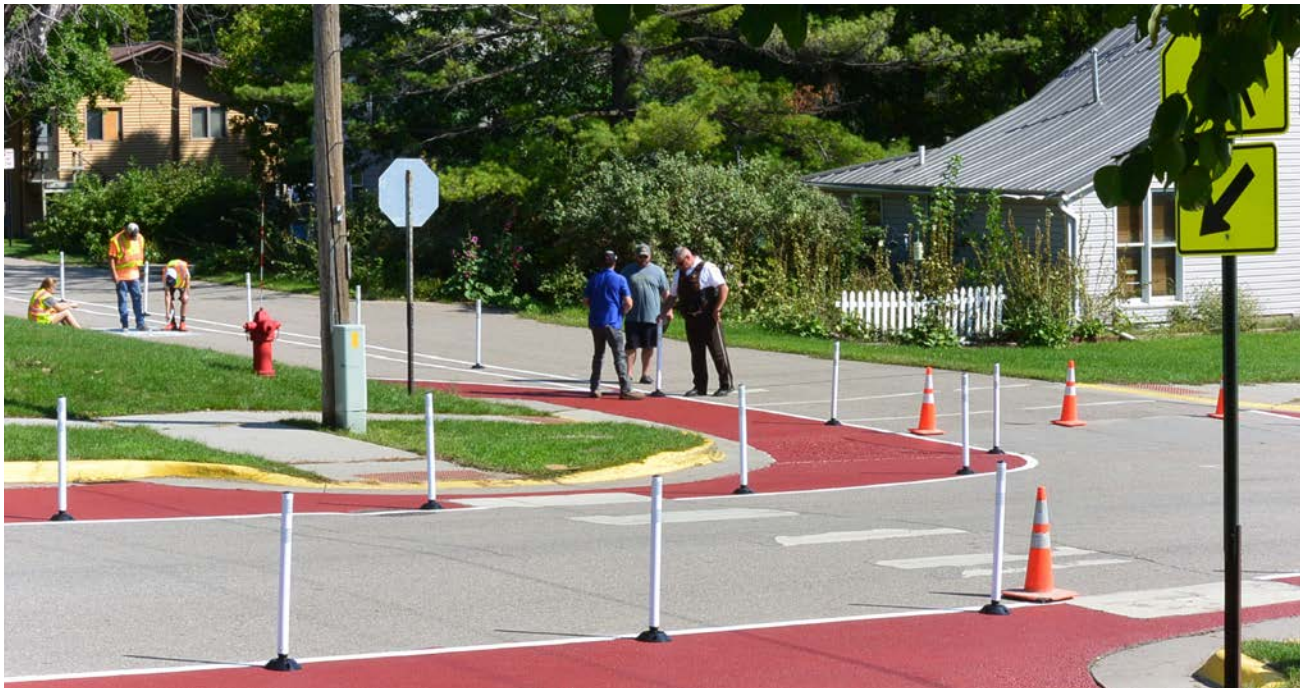
Before investing in a long-term infrastructure change, cities and partners may implement a demonstration project to test out an idea. These temporary projects are quick, have a relatively low installation cost, and build support for a long-term permanent change. Demonstration projects can also help engineers and designers make sure that design details are worked out before any new concrete is installed, such as making sure school buses have enough room to turn.

Demonstration projects can also be paired with programming or educational events to encourage additional behavior change. For example, new curb extensions may be paired with a crossing guard to bring additional attention to tricky crossing locations. Or a school may organize a Walk or Bike to School Day after installing a demonstration project to encourage students and families to try out the new infrastructure.

This raised crosswalk connects to a school entrance and slows traffic on the adjacent road.



A demonstration project can include multiple components. The project shown here includes curb extensions and an on-street walking lane where there is currently a sidewalk gap.



DEMONSTRATION PROJECT EXAMPLES

Demonstration projects can take many forms, with a few examples shown here. In previous SRTS efforts, communities have installed a shared use path on the street where there are no sidewalks (top left image, below), curb extensions at wide and uncomfortable intersections (top right and bottom), and a number of other creative solutions.

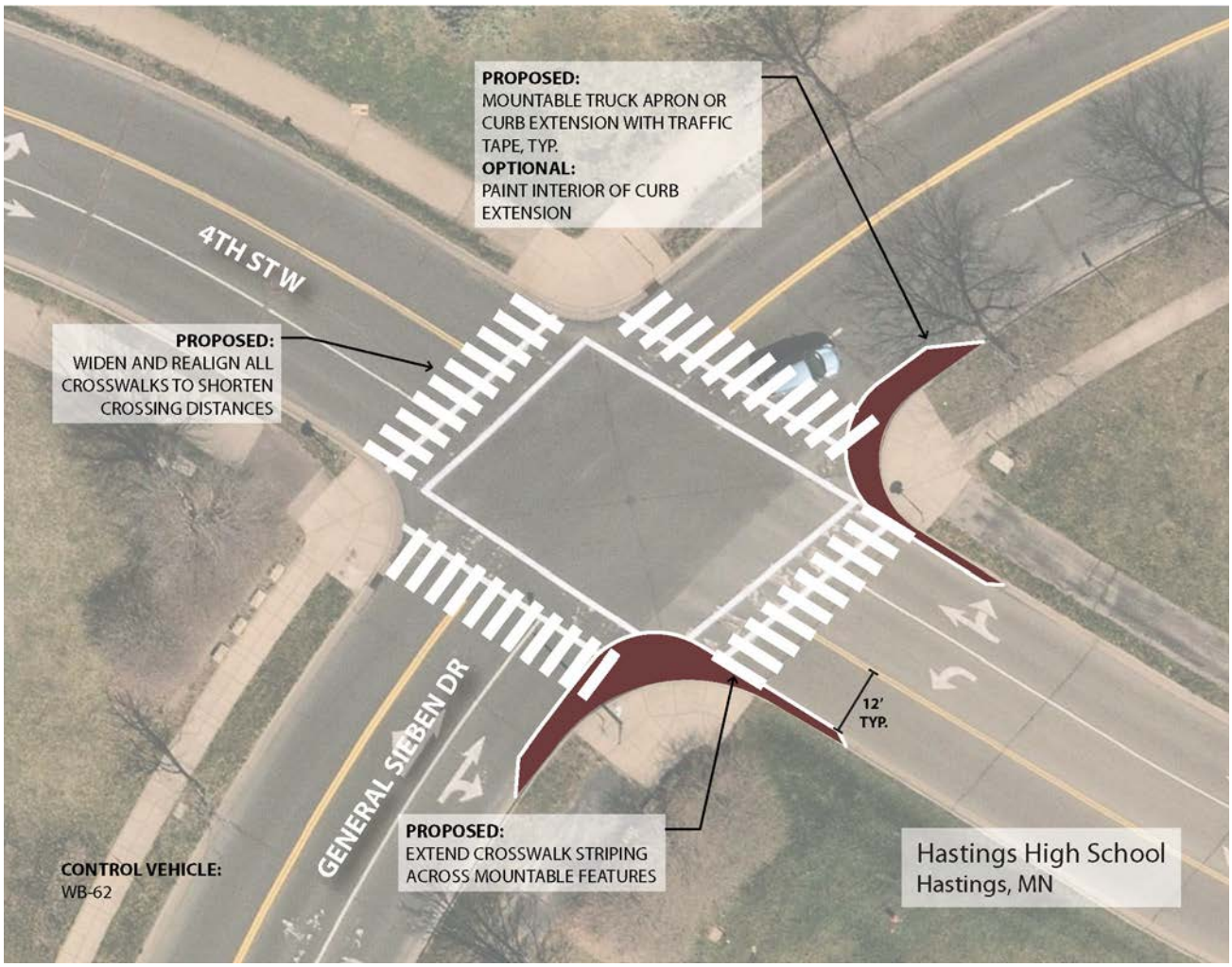
Demonstration projects are typically installed in the spring or fall to leave enough time to observe their impacts before winter arrives. In some cases, a community may be specifically interested in a component of winter maintenance and may design the project to stay in place through the winter.

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

One demonstration project concept was developed for Hastings High School and two for Hastings Middle School / Pinecrest Elementary based on conversations during team meetings, site observations, and during the Rapid Planning Workshop.

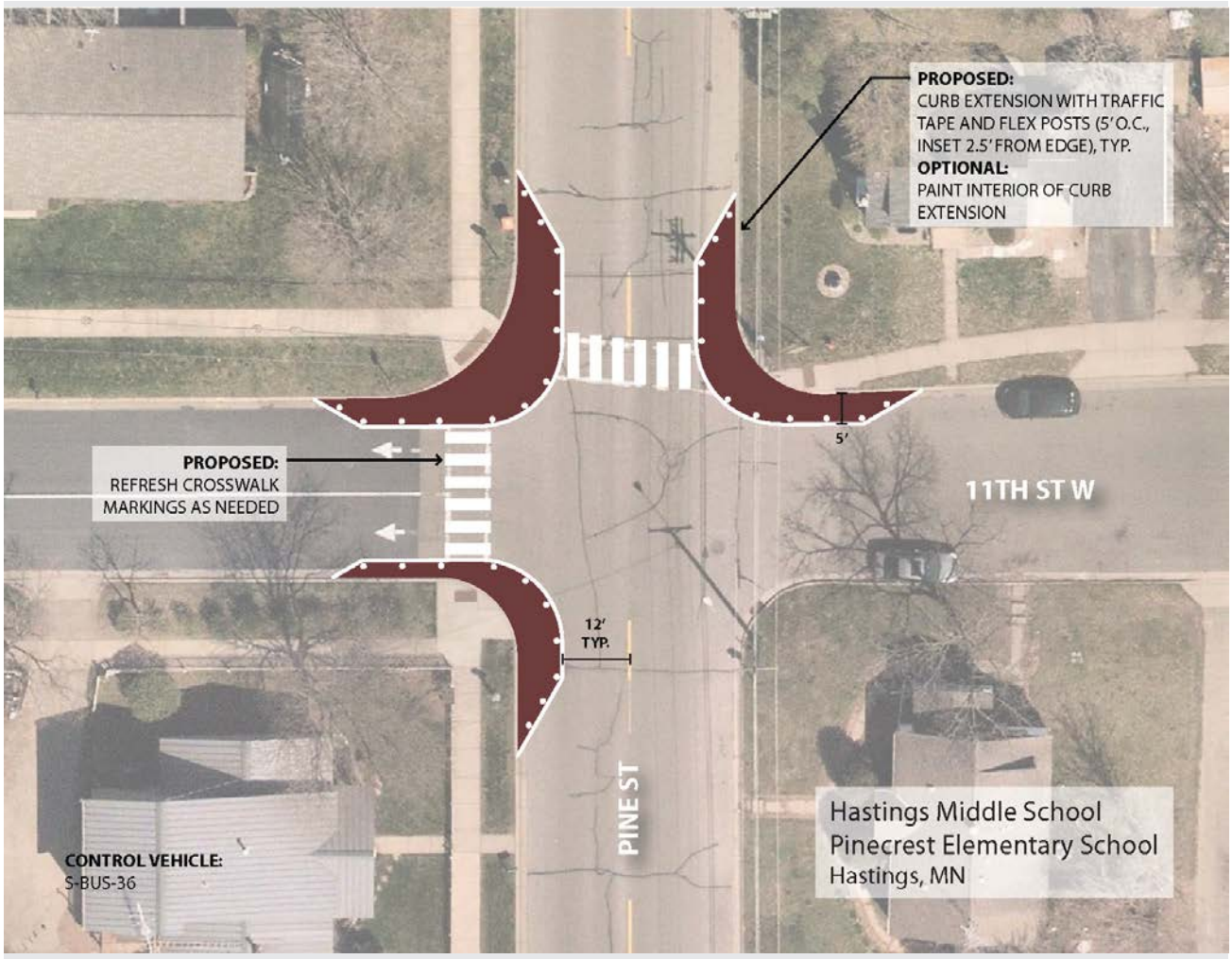
Option 1: 4th St W and General Sieben Dr

Curb extensions added with paint, tape, and bollards, in addition to high-visibility crosswalk markings, would improve crossing visibility. A permanent installation could include mountable truck aprons.



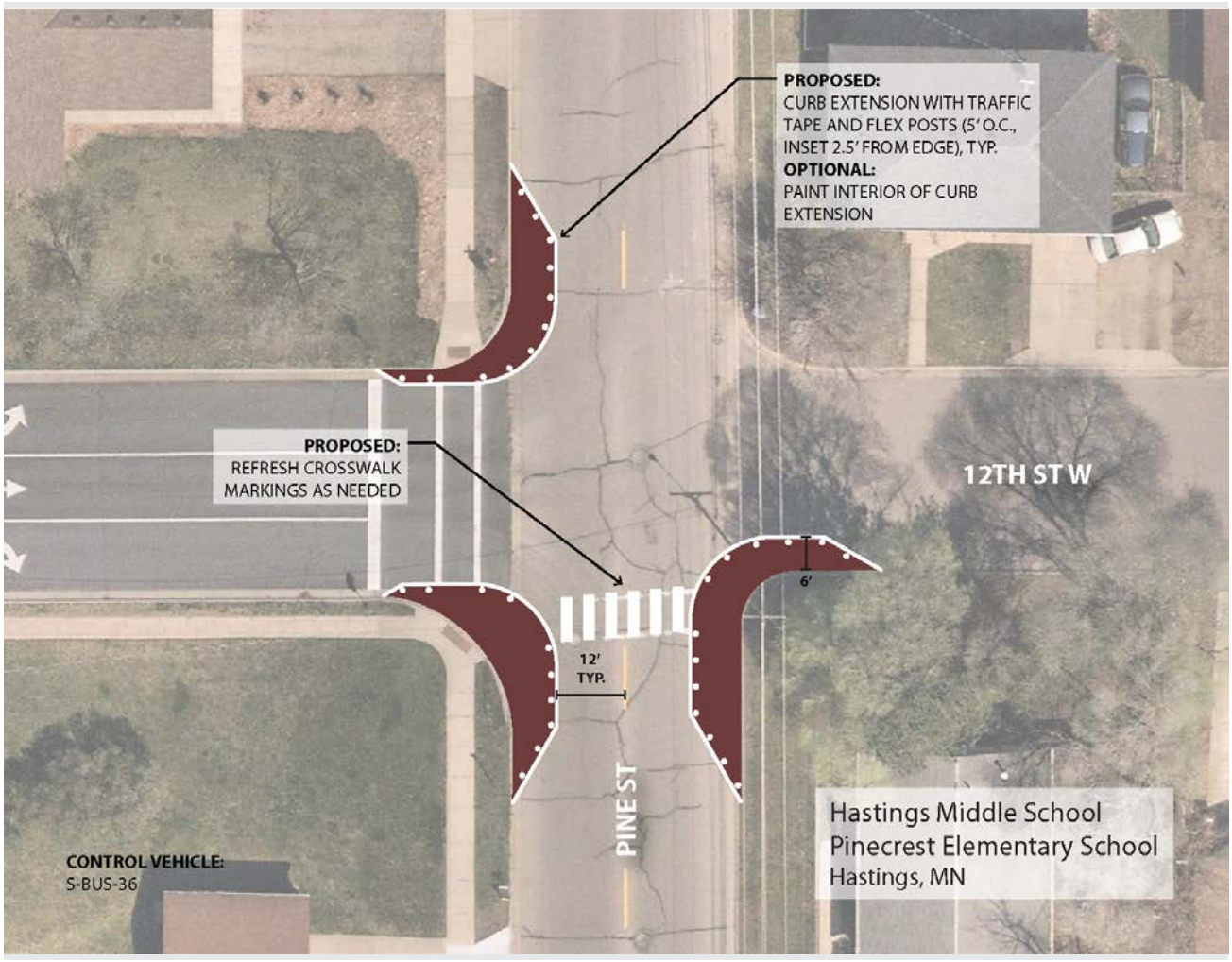
Option 2: 11th St W and Pine St

Curb extensions added with paint, tape, and bollards, in addition to high-visibility crosswalk markings, would improve crossing visibility. A permanent installation could include mountable truck aprons.



Option 3: 12th St W and Pine St

Curb extensions added with paint, tape, and bollards, in addition to high-visibility crosswalk markings, would improve crossing visibility. A permanent version could include mountable truck aprons.



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TAKING COMMUNITY ACTION

A more equitable transportation system that prioritizes safe, comfortable, and fun opportunities to walk, bike, and roll benefits everyone. While this plan is focused on addressing connections to schools, many improvements will benefit people with no relationship to the schools because we all share the same streets, sidewalks, and trails. Likewise, many needed changes, such as reducing speed limits and normalizing walking and biking, extend far beyond the school system.

Your number one role as a community member is to advocate for changes that make walking, biking, and rolling safer, more comfortable, and more fun. Speak to elected officials, show up to community meetings, talk about walking and biking at school events and with school administrators, and organize and vote for candidates who support walking, biking, and public transit.

I AM A STUDENT, CAREGIVER, OR COMMUNITY MEMBER

Students, families, neighborhood associations, advocacy groups, and local businesses can have incredible influence when advocating for change in their school and broader community. This is true both as individuals, as well as when community members come together into groups, such as a Parent Teacher Organization or disability advocacy groups. For example, students, caregivers, and community members can support and lead SRTS initiatives including:

- Advocating for policy change and funding at City Hall
- Developing campaigns to generate enthusiasm and improve social conditions for SRTS
- Volunteering time to lead a Walking School Bus or organize a bike drive
- Fundraising for SRTS programs and small infrastructure projects

I AM A SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE

School district staff bring an important perspective and voice to advocating for a more equitable transportation system. By describing the challenges and opportunities their students face around walking and biking, and by petitioning local elected officials for improvements, school district employees can support policy and infrastructure improvements that benefit their students and the broader community. Staff are also ideally positioned to implement the recommendations in this plan, whether it be a classroom-level curriculum or school district–wide policy around walking and biking.

I WORK FOR THE CITY OR COUNTY

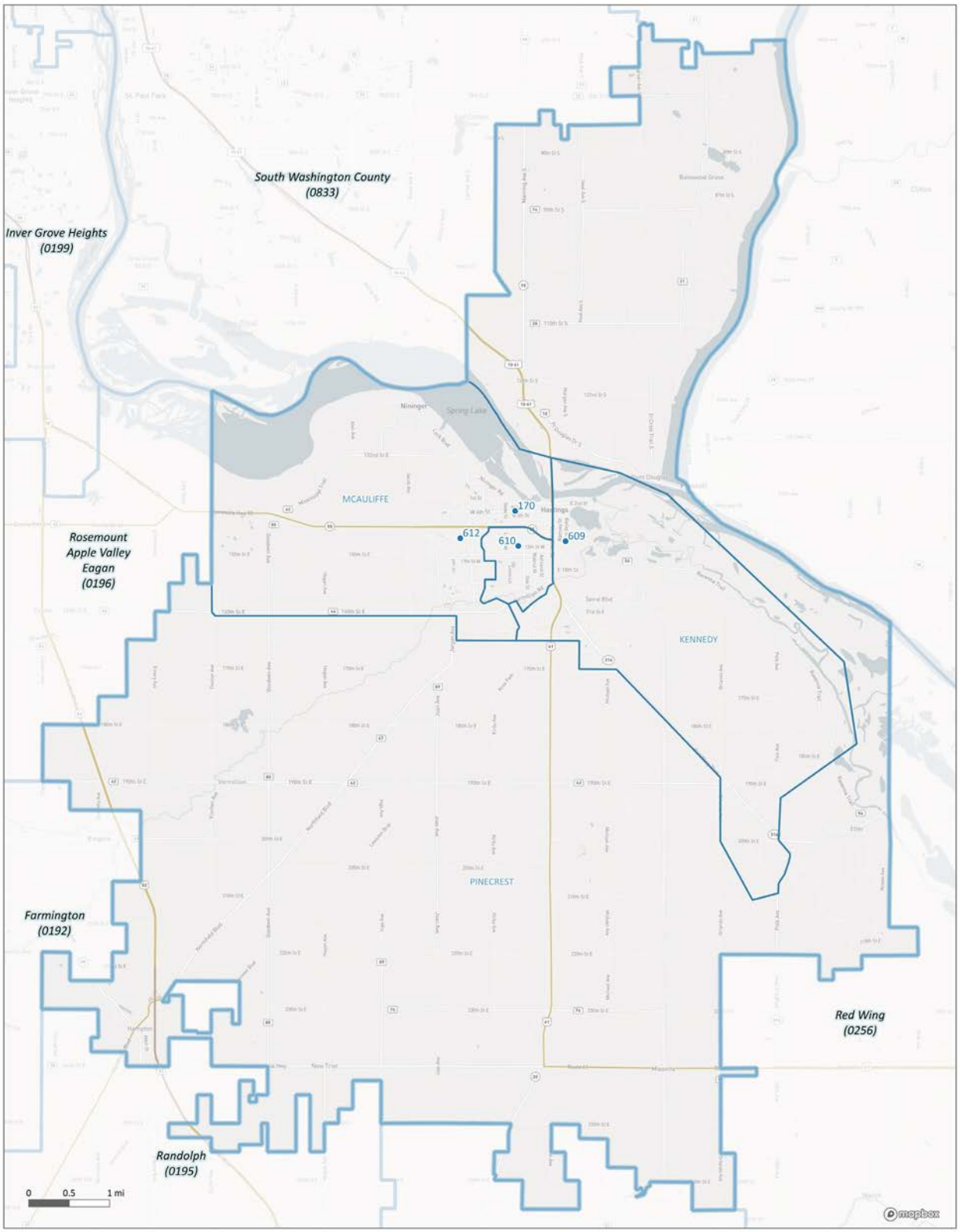
As members of the governments that own, regulate, and maintain the roads, city and county staff can be instrumental in reorienting transportation policies and infrastructure around walking and biking to schools and other destinations. City and county staff can leverage their expertise to identify, advocate for, and implement changes that contribute toward a more equitable transportation system. Key policies that staff can support include:

- Reducing lane widths and vehicular speed limits
- Reducing minimum parking requirements
- Revising land use regulations to promote denser and more integrated land uses that promote walkable and bikeable trips
- Prioritizing municipal maintenance and snow clearing of all pedestrian and bike facilities
- Requiring complete streets infrastructure as part of all road resurfacing and reconstruction projects

City staff can also use this report to support Safe Routes to School funding applications to programs such as MnDOT SRTS grants, federal infrastructure grants, and the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP).

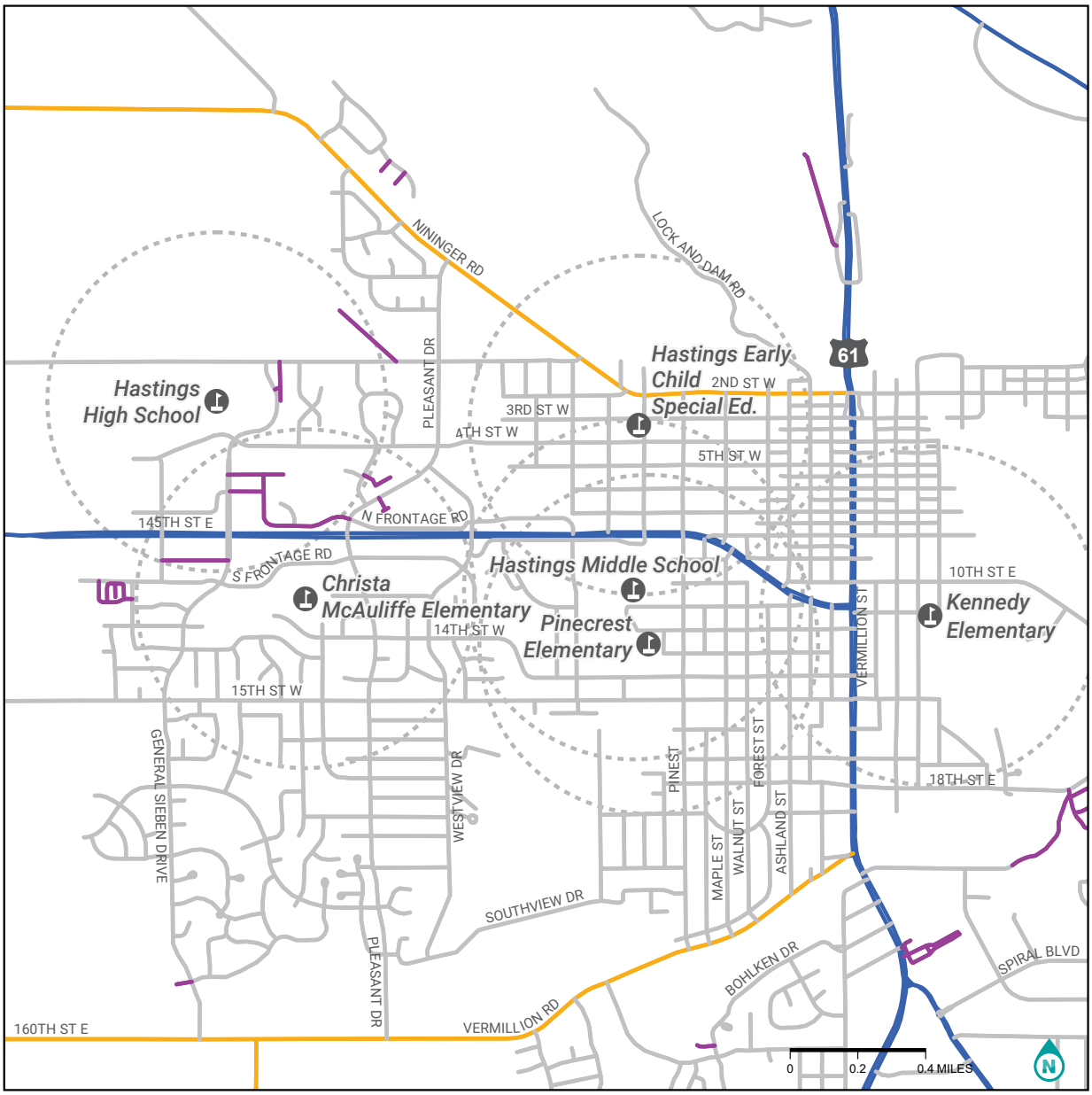
05. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Hastings Public Schools Attendance Zone



Map produced by Minnesota Department of Education.

Appendix B: Road Ownership



HASTINGS
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

CHRISTA MCAULIFFE ELEMENTARY
KENNEDY ELEMENTARY
PINECREST ELEMENTARY
HASTINGS MIDDLE
HASTINGS HIGH
HASTINGS EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL ED

10-Minute Walk (0.5 Mile)

10-Minute Walk (0.5 Mile)

Road Ownership

- State
- County
- Local
- Other

HPMS Baselayer

MINNESOTA SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

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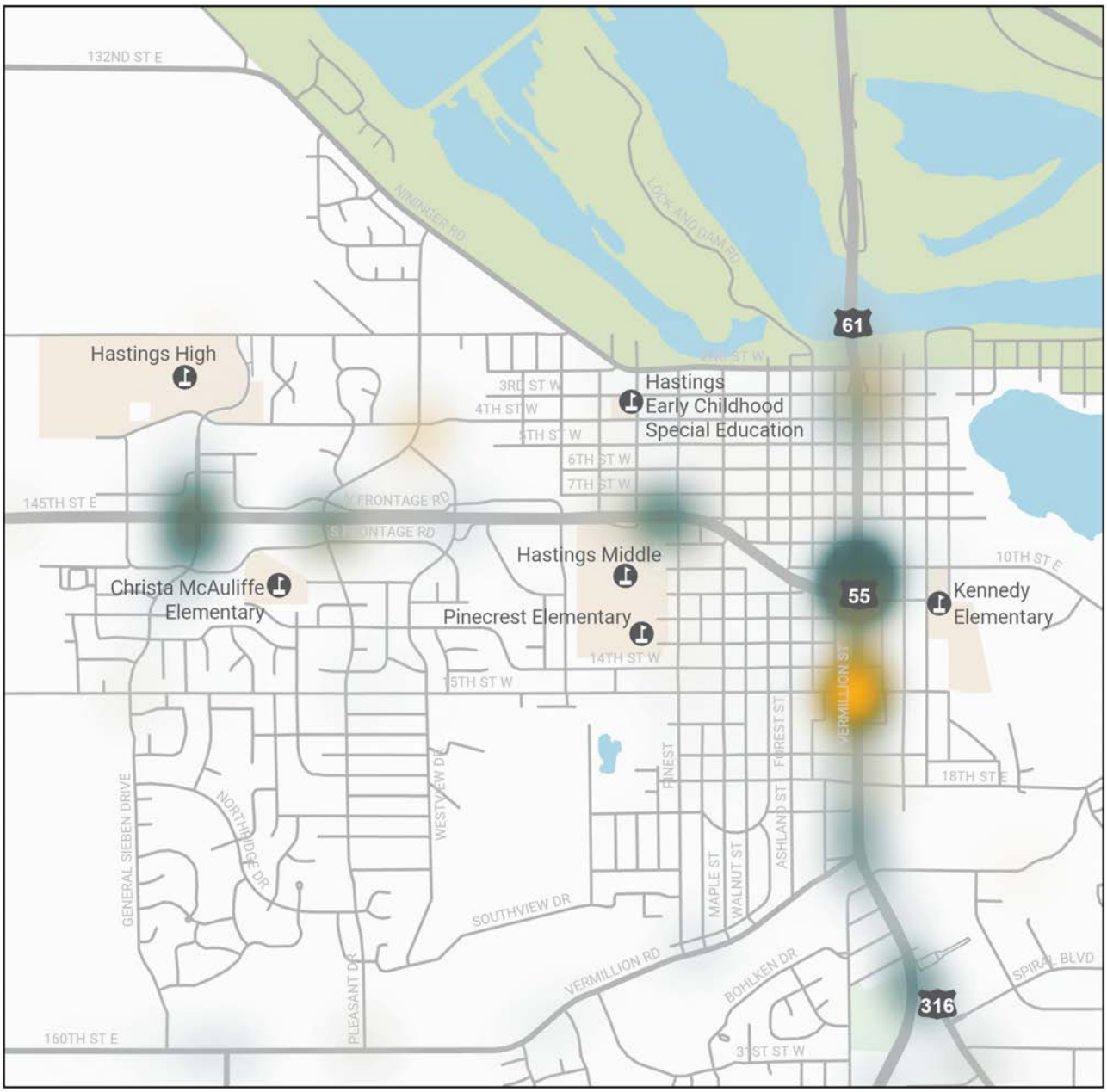
Refer to Appendix G for a description of the methods used to produce this map.

Appendix C: Crashes by Road User Vulnerability (2014 - 2023)



HASTINGS
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

- CHRISTA MCAULIFFE ELEMENTARY
- KENNEDY ELEMENTARY
- PINECREST ELEMENTARY
- HASTINGS MIDDLE
- HASTINGS HIGH
- HASTINGS EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL ED

Fewer Bike/Ped Crashes

More Bike/Ped Crashes

Fewer Vehicle Crashes

More Vehicle Crashes

MINNESOTA SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

alta

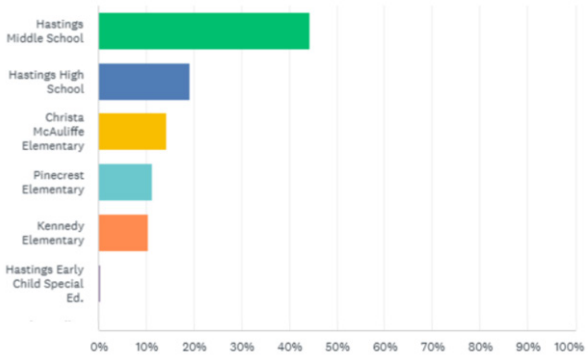
0 0.1 0.2 0.3 MILES

Refer to Appendix G for a description of the methods used to produce this map.

Appendix D: Caregiver and Student Survey Results

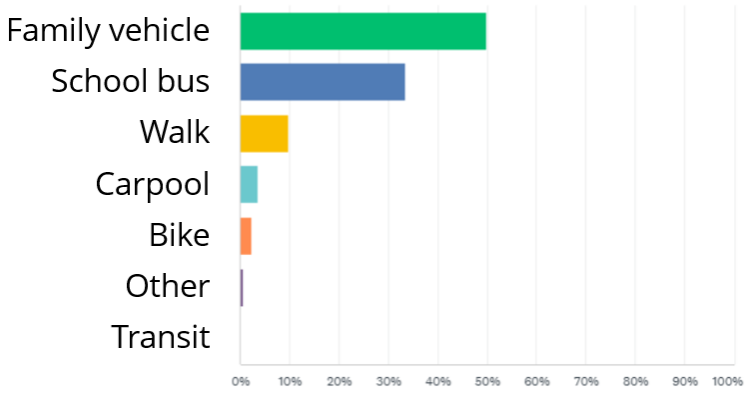
Which school would you like to provide feedback for?

Answered: 230 Skipped: 0



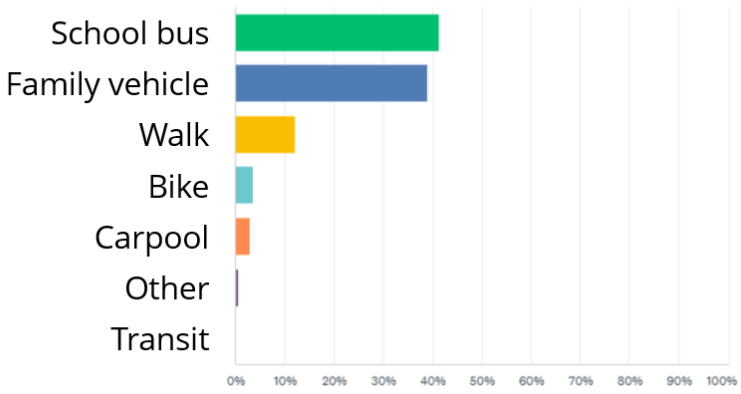
On most days, how does your child travel to school?

Answered: 164 Skipped: 66



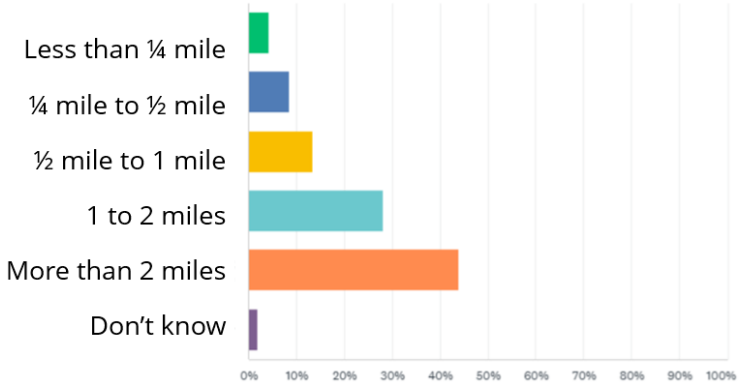
On most days, how does your child travel from school?

Answered: 164 Skipped: 66



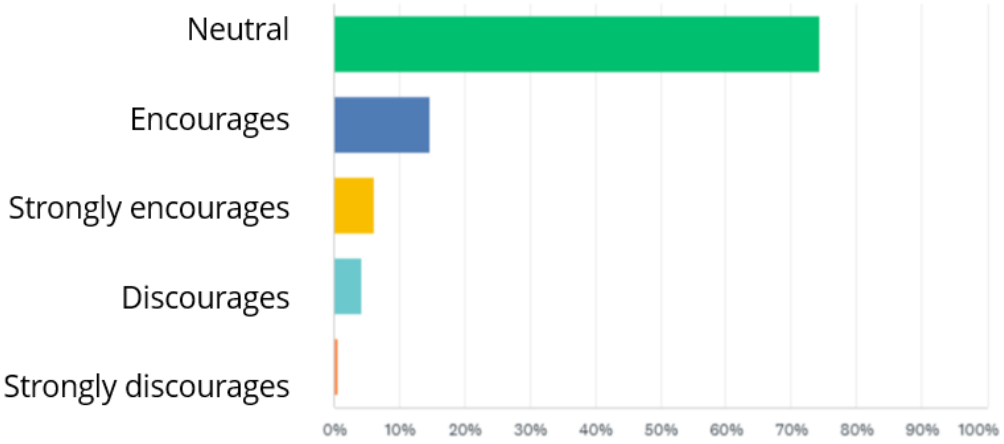
How far does your child live from school?

Answered: 164 Skipped: 66

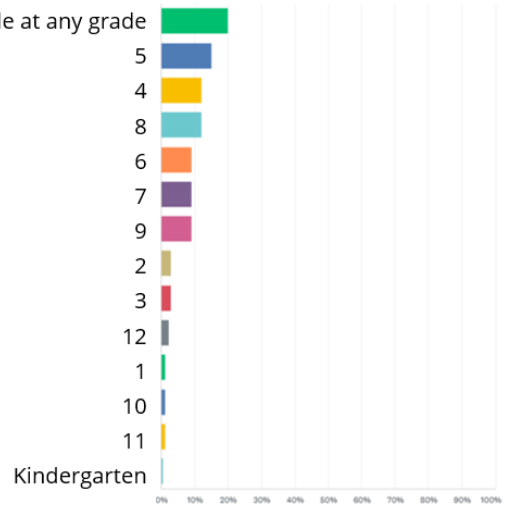


How much does your child's school encoura walking and biking to/from school?

Answered: 164 Skipped: 66



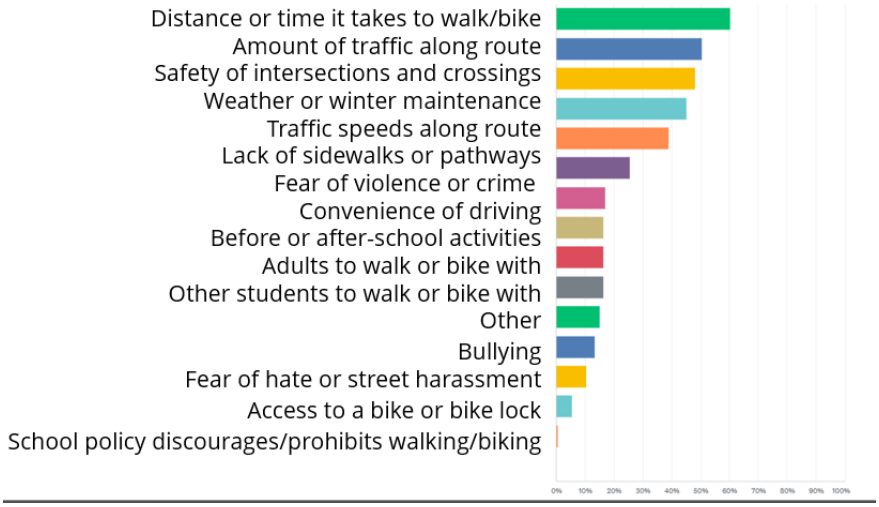
At what grade would you allow your child to v or bike to/from school without an adult?



Answered: 164 Skipped: 66

Parent: Which of the following issues prevent your child from walking or biking to/from school? (check all that apply)

Answered: 164 Skipped: 66



Student: What keeps you from walking or biking to/from school more often? (check all that apply)

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0

Parent: What would help your child walk to/from/at school more often? (check your top 3)

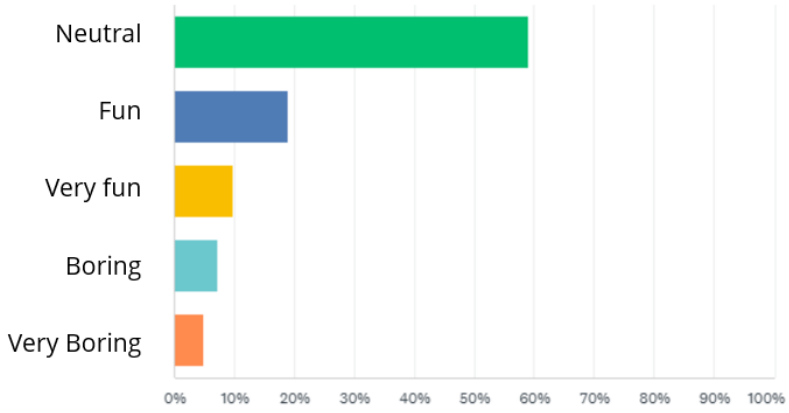
Answered: 164 Skipped: 66

Student: What would make you more likely walk or bike to/from school? (check all that apply)

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0

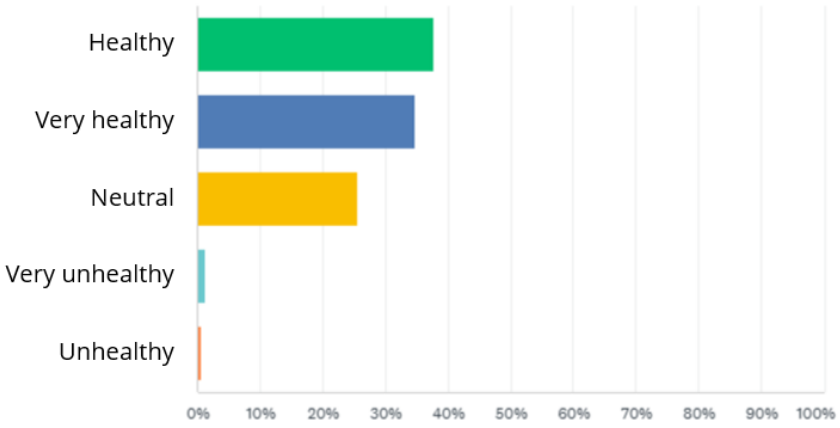
How much fun is walking or biking to/from school for your child?

Answered: 164 Skipped: 66



How healthy do you think walking and biking to/from school are for your child?

Answered: 164 Skipped: 66



Appendix E: Project Process and Timeline

Intro Call: SRTS staff and consultants meet with local SRTS team lead(s), review the timeline of the planning process, talk through the responsibilities of the different stakeholders, and identify short-term next steps, such as scheduling the kick-off meeting and finalizing stakeholders for the SRTS team, including local community members and staff from the school(s), city and county governments, and MnDOT.

Kick-off Meeting: the SRTS team, including SRTS staff and local and county participants, reviews the planning process and talks about high-level goals.

Engagement + Data Collection: SRTS staff and consultants work with the schools, non-profits, and the broader community to build awareness of the planning process, solicit input, and identify opportunities for programs and infrastructure improvements.

Rapid Planning Workshop: the SRTS team discusses past efforts around walking and biking in the community, identifies areas of need, and brainstorms possible resources, collaborations, and opportunities to implement new programs and infrastructure improvements.

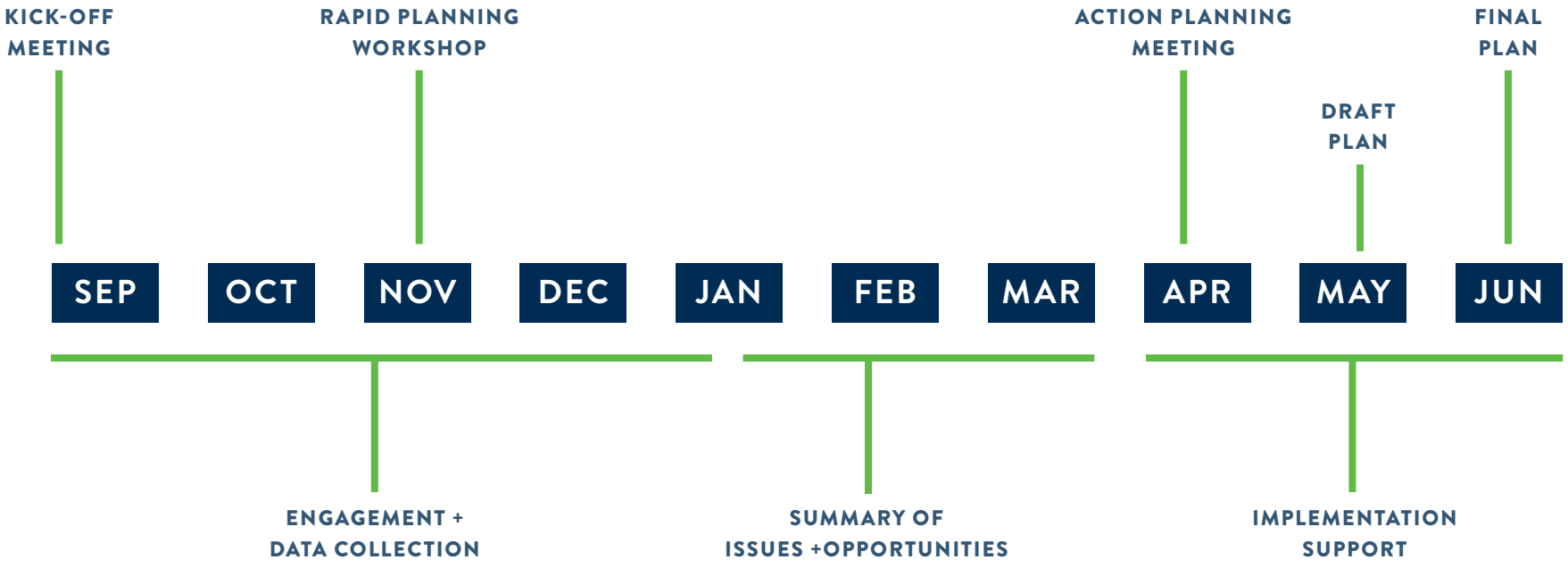
Summary of Issues + Opportunities: building on input from community engagement, data collection, the rapid planning workshop, and the technical meeting, SRTS staff and consultants compile identified program opportunities and locations where infrastructure improvements could support walking and biking to school.

Action Planning Meeting: the SRTS team reviews the summary of issues and opportunities and discusses possible actions to take in response to issues/ opportunities.

Draft Plan: the SRTS team reviews and provides feedback on a draft of the full plan.

Implementation Support: SRTS staff and consultants assist the community with short-term actions, such as designing and installing a concept for a demonstration project to test improvements at a problematic intersection near the school.

Final Plan: the completed plan is published online and in print and is formally adopted to guide future SRTS efforts for the school/district.



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Appendix F: Engagement Summary

INTRODUCTION

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) staff provided community engagement support to ensure that the SRTS plan captured the issues and opportunities with walking and biking to and from school in Hastings. SRTS staff assisted local teams in gathering information through an interactive online map, caregiver and student surveys, two in-person engagement events, a student discussion and a virtual Rapid Planning Workshop.

The goals and purpose of this engagement were to:

1. **Connect** with families where they're at
2. **Create** excitement for walking and biking
3. **Understand** walking and biking challenges
4. **Identify** opportunities related to infrastructure and programming
5. **Build** awareness for the Hastings Safe Routes to School Plan

These engagement strategies were chosen to make it easy for the Hastings community to talk to staff and participate.

Figure 1: A McAuliffe Elementary caregiver uses the table map to point out an unsafe intersection.

TABLE 1: ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

DATE	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	COUNT
August 12, 2024	Kick-off meeting and equity discussion	SRTS staff and stakeholders met to discuss key demographics and potential partners within the Hastings community.	9 participants
October 15, 2024	Pop-up table at McAuliffe Elementary conferences	SRTS staff and local team members engaged with students and families through a sticker survey, interactive map activity, informational handouts and question game.	45 participants
October 15, 2024	Pop-up table at Kennedy Elementary conferences	SRTS staff and local team members engaged with students and families through a sticker survey, interactive map activity, informational handouts and question game.	36 participants

DATE	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	COUNT
August -November 2024	Online interactive map	Participants left location specific comments and mapped out their routes to school.	31 comments
August - November 2024	Online caregiver survey	Caregivers identified why their student may or may not walk and bike to/from school and what would help make it safer.	231 participants
August - November 2024	Online student survey	Students shared why they may or may not walk and bike to/from school and what would help make it safer.	6 participants
November 18, 2024	Virtual Rapid Planning Workshop	SRTS staff and stakeholders met virtually to share existing data, propose infrastructure and program recommendations and discuss potential next steps.	19 participants
November 18, 2024	Student discussion	Students from Hastings Middle School and Hastings High School shared their experiences walking and biking to/from school and their "big ideas" to make it better.	6 participants

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Many families don't consider walking or biking to/from school as an option because they live over two miles away from school.
- Highway 55, Highway 61, Vermillion Road and the Vermillion River are major barriers for walking and biking to school.
- Families desire new infrastructure and/or Crossing Guards at busy intersections where drivers do not look for pedestrians.

IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Intending to meet families at popular events, SRTS staff attended McAuliffe Elementary conferences on Thursday, Oct. 10, and Kennedy Elementary conferences on Tuesday, Oct. 15. SRTS staff brought a map of the school area and encouraged participants to share their route and highlight areas of concern and potential ideas for improvement with sticky notes. The map also included a sticker survey for students to share demographic information, how often they walk or bike to or from school and what would make them more likely to do so. Finally, staff gave families an informational handout with a QR code that led them to the interactive engagement site. Handouts were available in English, Spanish, Hmong and Somali.

Staff engaged with about 45 people at McAuliffe Elementary conferences. Eleven students completed the sticker survey, with balanced participation across all grades. Responses to the question "what would make you more likely to walk or bike to/from school?" were mixed, but safer ways to cross roads received the most stickers with four. More sidewalks, more walking education or fun programs in the school and someone to walk or bike with all received two stickers. Feeling safe when walking or biking received one. Common conversation themes include:

- Students who live north of McAuliffe cited Highway 55 as a major barrier to walking and biking to/from school and many students who live south of McAuliffe shared 15th Street W as a barrier.
- Many caregivers shared that they would feel more comfortable if their student walked with an adult or a group of students.

Staff engaged with 36 people at the Kennedy Elementary conferences. Due to space constraints, the Kennedy Elementary pop-up did not include the sticker survey. However, with assistance from the neighborhood map, caregivers and students shared these common themes:

- Most of the families that live outside of the boundary created by Highway 61, the Mississippi River and Vermillion River do not feel comfortable traveling to school on foot or bike. Many of the families who live inside this boundary already walk or bike.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Beginning in August, members of the Hastings community had access to an online interactive engagement site. The site offered information on the school district's SRTS plan and two different ways for families to leave their thoughts and ideas: a survey and an interactive map. Online engagement was advertised at in-person events and via a district-wide newsletter.

SURVEY

Over 200 people from all over the city took the survey, which prompted students and caregivers to answer a set of questions tailored to each group, including 231 caregivers and 6 students. Though surveys were offered in English, Spanish, Hmong, Somali and Karen, only the English survey saw participation.

Of the 231 caregivers to fill out the survey, 102 (~44%) were providing feedback for Hastings Middle School, 44 (~19%) for Hastings High School, 33 (~14%) for McAuliffe Elementary, 26 (~11%) for Pinecrest Elementary, 24 (~11%) for Kennedy Elementary, and 2 (>1%) for Hastings Early Child Special Ed. Caregivers of students from every grade, Pre-K through 12th, were represented in the results. 29% of survey respondents filled out only the demographics section. Some findings from the survey include:

- Of the 164 caregivers to respond, 50% reported that their student travels to school via a family vehicle. 33.5% of students travel to school via school bus, 10% walk, and 4% carpool and 2.5% bike. On the way back from school, travel habits are different: 42% of students travel via school bus, 39% via family vehicle, 12% walk, 4% bike and 3% carpool.
- 60% of caregivers chose distance or time it takes to walk/bike as something that prevents their child from walking or biking to/from school; 33% of students answered distance or time when asked the same question. 72% of families who participated in the survey shared that they live more than one mile from their school—of these families, 64% had students who are in high school or middle school, which draw from a larger area.
- All of the other factors that prevent students from biking/walking to school included on the survey received a similar number of responses (Figure 2). Caregivers who chose "other" shared many different reasons, including that their child doesn't have the energy early in the morning, they carry a heavy

instrument, they must travel uphill and they face harassment during their commute.

- 74% of caregivers answered "Neutral" when asked how much their child's school encourages walking and biking to/from school.
- When asked at what grade they would allow their student to start walking or biking to/from school, 20% of caregivers answered that they would not feel comfortable at any grade. The median grade was 8th.
- When asked what would help their student walk or bike to/from school, safer intersections and a shorter distance to walk or bike were the most popular answers chosen by caregivers. When students were asked this question about themselves, more walking education or fun programs and some to walk or bike with were the most popular answers.

"My child is harassed by high school kids on her walk to the middle school. They follow her and want to take her backpack. She hides in bushes to avoid them. Terrible she is forced to walk."

-Hastings Middle School caregiver

INTERACTIVE MAP

Participants could also share their opinions about walking and biking in their community by leaving a pin or drawing a route on an online interactive map of Hastings. In addition, participants were able to 'like' or 'dislike' any of the messages left by other community members. Over 30 comments were left on the map, with common themes such as unsafe intersections and poor driver behavior.

A pin with this comment, left at Highway 55 West never River Street, received the second-most likes, with nine:

- "At school beginning and ending times I would not feel comfortable having my child cross [Highway] 55. There is so much extra traffic at those times & everyone is in such a hurry."

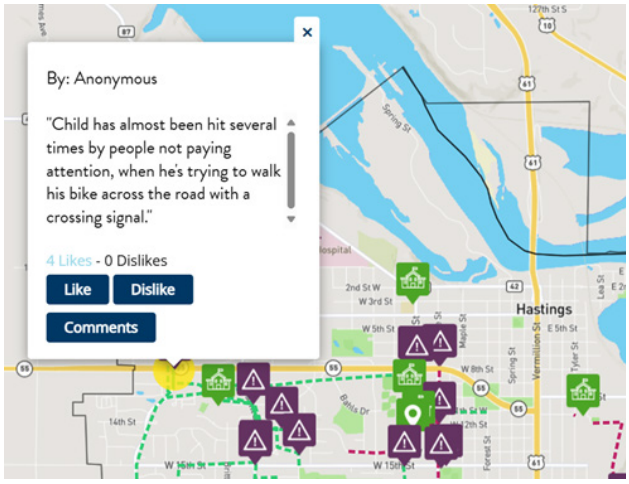


Figure 2: A pin left at Highway 55 East and General Sieben Drive received four likes.

EQUITY

At the project kick-off meeting, participants emphasized that the Hastings School District is very large geographically and there are many different start and end times across the district, making it important to assess these challenges and hear from students and families across the district.

Participants also suggested potential partners in future engagement including PTA members, the four new school board members, and the Hastings Wellness Committee. Participants also noted that students seem to have the most credibility amongst other students and could be the strongest partners in future engagement. The Hastings Middle School and the Hastings High School's respective student councils were mentioned as potential partners to help reach students.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Throughout engagement, the project team heard that busy streets and highways with dangerous intersections serve as major barriers for students when walking and biking to/from school. At many of these locations, families shared that they had witnessed drivers fail to obey traffic laws and yield to pedestrians.

HIGHWAY 55

Families that live on the other side of Highway 55 from the school their students attend feel nervous allowing them to walk or bike. Specific intersections of concern included Pine Street, River Street and General Sieben Drive. The high speed of traffic combined with the large size of these intersections make caregivers wary of drivers. Several caregivers mentioned wanting to see infrastructure or signage that addresses the high number of cars turning right on red; something like a bump out could make pedestrians more visible to these drivers, while a "no turn on red" sign would prevent drivers from creeping into the crosswalk altogether.

WEST 15TH STREET AND PINE STREET

Many caregivers throughout engagement shared stories of seeing or hearing that their students were almost hit by drivers at this intersection. Several caregivers listed it as the primary reason that they don't allow their students to walk or bike to/from school. Caregivers would like to see crossing guards at this intersection to slow down fast drivers and help their students cross traffic safely.

"[15th Street and Pine Street] is a four-way stop and is way too busy for kids to cross without a crossing guard. Traffic does not always pay attention to students crossing. This intersection is in close proximity to the school and is widely used. This is the only reason I do not let my middle and elementary school kids walk to school."

-Most liked interactive map comment with 11 likes

Interactive map users also shared that they would like to see a sidewalk on the east side of Pine Street so that students can wait to cross Pine Street until they reach a safer intersection.

GENERAL SIEBEN DRIVE

Located near Hastings High School, many students must cross or travel along General Sieben Drive to get to school. However, this road is concerning for many due to minimal and faded crosswalks and high speeds and traffic, especially during drop-off and pick-up hours.

VERMILLION ROAD AND VERMILLION RIVER

Families that live south of the Vermillion River must cross it to get to school. Caregivers highlighted several of the bridges as areas for improvement, including one at Vermillion Road and one at 18th Street. Both bridges have little or no shoulder.

"This bridge has very narrow shoulders and no path or sidewalks on either side. Cuts off a lot of southwest Hastings from the rest of the city."

-Interactive map comment on Vermillion Road over Vermillion River

An interactive map user complimented the trail along the river but requested more lighting for safety reasons. The same user noted that the ADA ramps at Vermillion Road and Vermillion Street are narrow and steep.

PROGRAMS

Across all engagement efforts, Hastings families expressed their concern for specific streets and intersections that feature high traffic and speeds. Some caregivers suggested ideas for programs that could address these concerns.

PARK AND WALK

Distance from school and time it takes to walk/bike, traffic along routes and safety of intersections were the top three answers given by caregiver survey participants when asked what prevents their students from walking or biking to/from school. Park and Walk could be the most effective program solution, especially for families that must cross Highway 55 and Highway 61. Park and Walk could help address safety concerns and cut down on the time it takes for students to get to school. Finally, if caregivers carpooled a group of students to a closer location, this program could help reduce traffic congestion on the busy streets near schools.

BIKE TRAIN

Many caregivers shared that they would like their student

to walk or bike to/from school but are not comfortable with letting them travel alone. "Someone to walk or bike with" was tied as the most popular answer from students when asked what would help them to walk or bike more often; in the caregiver survey, this answer was the third-most popular. Since most students have to travel far to get to school, a Bike Train may be a better option than a Walking School Bus for Hastings students.

CROSSING GUARDS

Families with students that attend schools across the city shared that they would like to see more crossing guards at busy intersections, especially those along Highway 55. Since these intersections are often the main reason caregivers don't allow their student to walk or bike to/from school, placing a trained individual could give caregivers the peace of mind and confidence to allow their student to try to walk/bike.

"I think there should be two crossing guards here or one of those crosswalk reminders on Pine St. I have seen a lot of people drive through the crosswalk as the crossing guard has come out into the intersection."

-Interactive pin left at 12th Street and Pine Street that received eight likes

Appendix G: Methods and Data Sources

CRASHES BY ROAD USER VULNERABILITY

Visualized crashes are taken from a crash database that spans from 2014 to 2023. Pedestrian- and bike-involved crashes were those events with "Crash Type Description" values of either "Pedalcycle (bike)" or "Pedestrian". If any crashes involved a pedestrian, the Pedestrians (Focus Area) will be labeled with a Y. Similar for bicycles, younger drivers, and a number of other focus areas.

ROAD OWNERSHIP

Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data from 2021 were visualized on the basis of each road segment's "Ownership" value. These values were consolidated from 26 categories down to four for visualization purposes; these four categories were "State," "County," "Local," and "Other."

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT CHARACTERISTICS

School year 2024-2025 enrollment data were downloaded from the Minnesota Department of Education Data Center.

PRIORITY EQUITY AREAS

Data representing priority populations used for this report is from MnDOT's Active Transportation Equity application. This process used a set of data inputs to assign an equity score to half-mile hexagons across the state of Minnesota, for use in awarding Active Transportation Program grants.

Scores range from 0 to 13 out of a possible 15 points (note that no hexagon received 15/15 points). Higher numbers of points indicate areas with greater equity needs that will receive more points in the equity section of grant solicitation.

Input data sets used to create the scores include:

- Life expectancy lower than MN average (CDC U.S. Small-area Life Expectancy Estimates Project 2010-2015)
- Presence of transit (Metropolitan Council, 2019; MnDOT Office of Transit and Active Transportation)
- Presence of pedestrian-generating jobs (On the Map LEHD 2017)
- Presence of schools (Minnesota Department of Education SY 2019-2020)
- Two or more pedestrian crashes within 5 years (DPS Crash Data, 2014-2018)
- Tribal government areas (MnDOT Tribal Government Areas)
- Foreign born population greater than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people 17 and under than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)

(Continued on next page)

- More people 65 and older than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people with disabilities than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people of color than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people with low incomes than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people without vehicle access than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people who do not speak English than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people without high school diplomas than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)

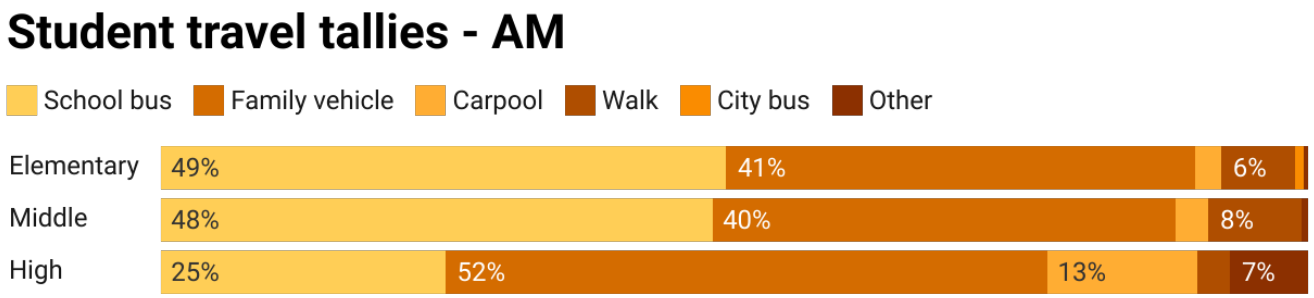
Appendix H: Student Travel Tally

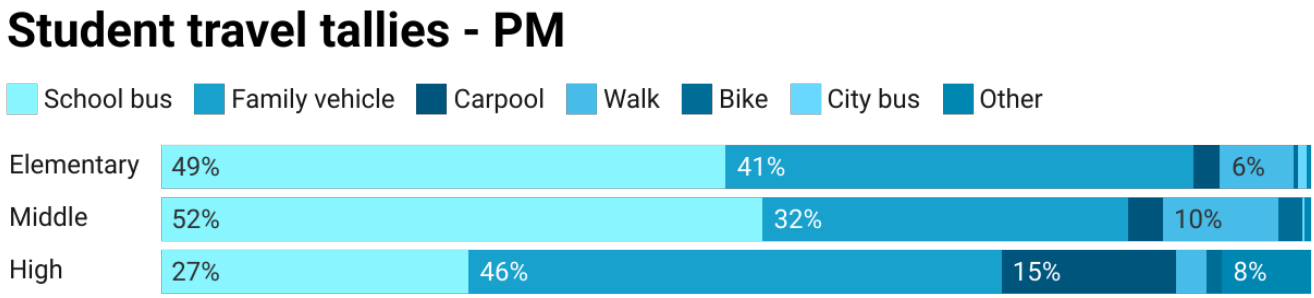
BACKGROUND

This report contains information from Hastings about students' trip to and from school. The quantities shown here were collected using the in-class Student Travel Tally questionnaire from the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

Results from Hastings reflect responses from grades K-12 at Kennedy Elementary, Hastings Middle School, and Hastings High School. Travel surveys were provided for the morning and afternoon commute over three days in late October, 2024.

Figure 1: Results from Hastings travel tallies.





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MINNESOTA

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL